Abstract

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The anarchosyndicalist labour movement in France between the years, 1890 and 1914, developed a unique ideology which differentiated it from other labour movements of the western world. Unlike other movements, the syndicalists opposed political action, rejected ties with political parties and concentrated on direct action on the economic level against the state and the capitalist class. The political conditions in France are not sufficient to explain why the syndicalist movement became a consciously anarchist organization. The influence of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the first French anarchist, and the anarchist movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century were paramount in this development. Such anarchists as Fernand Pelloutier, Paul Delesalle and Émile Pouget, who considered themselves to be disciples of Proudhon, were instrumental in transforming the CGT from a "trade-unionist" to a "syndicalist" movement. Also, syndicalism must be contrasted with the Sorelian philosophy with which it has often been mistaken.

Proudhon, the Anarchists and the Anarchosyndicalists

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Preface

My first interest in anarchist theory arose while writing a research paper in an undergraduate course in nineteenth century French history under Professor John Sherwood of Queen's University. I determined to study more deeply into the seemingly tenuous relations between Proudhon and the syndicalist movement, a connection to which many historians make passing reference but do not analyze in depth. The only historical work directly relating the two topics, by Gaétan Pirou (Proudhonisme et Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire), was concerned more with Sorel's theories than with the ideas of the syndicalist leaders.

I am indebted to my thesis director, Professor John Hellman of McGill University, for his suggestions and criticisms during the research and early draft stages of this thesis. I am also in debt to the Inter-Library Loan Department of the MacLennan Library for help in procuring books and articles on the subject which were unavailable at McGill University.

Klaas Bylsma,

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The industrial revolution in the advanced countries of the West in the latter part of the nineteenth century brought with it the rise of a new industrial and commercial élite and new social problems with regard to the difficulties of a growing industrial proletariat. The attempts to mitigate or solve these problems included Tory or Bismarckian paternalism, Christian charity or liberal humanist reform, the escapism of Utopian philosophers, trade-union reformism and ideologies of proletarian revolution. For the working-class, most of these solutions implied the continued subordination to their superiors whether these be capitalists or the parliamentary or revolutionary leaders.

The more class-conscious workers reacted to their problematic social situation by forming political and economic associations committed to developing the political voice or improving the material conditions of the working class. The political organizations usually were initiated by bourgeois intellectuals who continued to hold leading positions in the parties as these grew stronger although their constituency was usually wholly proletarian. The economic organizations, the unions, on the other hand, were developed spontaneously, largely by the workers themselves, to struggle for immediate ends such as better wages and working conditions. The unions, although legitimized in the world-view of the politicians, were denigrated to an inferior status in relation to the party which was to be concerned with the ultimate end--political power and revolution through conquest of the state.

Within this general framework, the French example presents an anomaly in comparison with most of the other countries. Although the German and British union leaders may, at times, have been more reformist than their political leaders, their ultimate goals remained the same--the conquest of the state by

the socialist party, socialization of property and direction of economic life by the state in the interests of the people. In France, on the other hand, the syndicats[1] refused to be co-opted by the socialist parties, developed a different conception of revolution and wished to destroy the state in the interest of liberty rather than to use it for social revolution. As expressed by a contemporary syndicalist, Pierre Monatte, "The Confédération is totally unique in the international working class movement. It is the only organization which, while declaring itself to be revolutionary, has no connections with even the most advanced political parties."[2] A unique ideology --anarchosyndicalism--which was radically opposed to any political socialism arose from the syndicats.

The question which will be examined below is the origins of the anti-political and anti-statist ideology of the French syndicalist movement. Were the political and social conditions and conflicts in the France of the Third Republic a sufficient reason for the development of such a movement? Or did syndicalism, as an ideology, grow largely out of the anarchists' critique of bourgeois society and the state and their conception of the future free society, a system of ideas which originated with Proudhon? In other words, does the specific historical context explain adequately the phenomenon of syndicalism or was a certain set of ideas indispensible in the development of the new ideology?

The former view was held by many leaders of the syndicalist movement. Typical is the attitude of Victor Griffuelhes, secretary-general of the Confé-

1. The French term for union will be retained in this thesis because syndicat implies a qualitative difference from trade-union, an association which has more limited aspirations.

2. Henri Dubief, Le Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire (Paris, 1969), p. 135.

dération Generale du Travail (CGT), who claimed that "the working class movement....results from long practice, deriving much more from events than from specific leaders."[3] Similarily, another syndicalist theorist, Hubert Lagardelle, claimed that "syndicalism is a new social theory"[4] with little relation to the ideas of earlier intellectuals. According to this view, the syndicats developed a distaste for the vying socialist parties which were struggling for the control of the new syndicats for the sole purpose of using them as a base for electoral propaganda and as a source of party funds. The political socialists, interested primarily in gaining power, became opportunists, appealing for the votes of the whole population rather than remaining purely proletarian parties.[5] The syndicats, on the other hand, believed that economic action in the forms of strikes and sabotage directed toward obtaining immediate ameliorations of their condition was primary.

From their conflicts with the socialists and with the state during strike action derived the growing anti-statism of the syndicats. The state was condemned as a bourgeois institution and the parliamentary system as a ruse which would lead to the co-opting of the workers within that order. As Lagardelle put it, "Is not parliamentary action the practice, par excellence, of collaboration between classes?"[6] Reacting against a powerful centralized state, the syndicalists developed a revolutionary ideology based on economic action, where the real power of the workers lay, culminating in the general strike which was to be the ultimate revolutionary weapon. The basis of the

3. Victor Griffuelhes, La formation du syndicalisme français in Le Mouvement Socialiste, Dec. 15, 1907, p. 473.

4. Hubert Lagardelle in Syndicalisme et Socialisme, Conference Internationale (Paris, date unknown), p. 62.

5. Ibid, p. 39.

6. Henri Dubief, op. cit., P. 150.

new society was already being built in the syndicats and the Bourses du Travail (the labour exchanges under worker control).

The central thesis of this "empiricist" explanation for the growth of the syndicalist ideology is that practice preceded ideas; it was from the syndicalist organization--"the natural cadres of the class struggle--the extension of the work-shop, that the psychology of the producers is formed.... that their union becomes reality."[7] From this "natural" base, an ideology was developed as well as a revolutionary morality and the basic cells of the new society.

The other explanation stresses the importance of the anarchist tradition deriving from Proudhonist principles. There is indeed a close similarity between the anarchist and syndicalist analyses of the nature of the capitalist state, the importance accorded to the workers' associations and the underlying principles and organization of the future society. Anarchists such as Tortelier and Pelloutier were among the first to clearly develop the syndicalist idelogy. Fernand Pelloutier, the most significant leader of the anarchosyndicalists, and Édouard Berth, a theorist of the movement although unconnected with it, strongly affirmed Proudhon's paternity of the movement. Berth even went so far as to claim that Proudhon's "pretended anarchism....is really what we now call syndicalism....in its spirit and its innate tendencies."[8] Anarchists were very numerous among the leaders of the CGT and the Bourses du Travail and in the syndicalist publications, having moved into the syndicats en masse during the 1890's.

7. Hubert Lagardelle in Le Parti Socialiste et la CGT, La Bibliothèque Socialiste (Paris, date unknown), p. 20

8. Édouard Berth, Les Nouveaux Aspects du Socialisme (Paris, 1902), p. 43.

But, given this anarchist predominance in the development of syndicalism, this does not necessarily imply that they remained true to their previous commitment. Indeed, certain anarchists within the movement believed that syndicalism was a totally novel ideology. Lagardelle claimed that the emphasis on the group as the creative basis of society was a radical departure from the supposed libertarian faith in the individual or the socialist reliance on the state.[9] Others refused to accept the self-image of the syndicalists as a unified anti-political and revolutionary force. The Italian anarchist, Enrico Malatesta, pointed out that many workers were still engaged in political action outside the syndicats and that a large proportion of the syndiqués were reformists. He concluded that true anarchists might work in the syndicats but must remain independent in their ultimate loyalties.[10]

But others believed that the syndicalist organizations represented the revolutionary base for which the libertarians had been striving for fifty years. Monatte claimed that the years in the wilderness where the anarchists had hidden in their "ivory tower of philosophical speculation"[11], alienated from the workers, were now over. He argued that "syndicalism....has recalled anarchism to the awareness of its working class origins; on the other hand, the anarchists have contributed greatly towards putting the working class movement on the path of revolution and to popularizing the idea of direct action."[12] Pelloutier's conception of the syndicat is purely anarchistic: "Laboratory of class conflict on the industrial level, detached from electo-

9. Hubert Lagardelle, Sources du Syndicalisme in Plans, Feb., 1932, p. 15.

10. Henri Dubief, op. cit., pp. 140-1.

11. Ibid, p. 137.

12. James Joll, The Anarchists (London, 1964), p. 204.

ral campaigns, favourable to the general strike with all its consequences, administering itself without authority, the syndicat is thus the organization which is both revolutionary and libertarian and which alone can counter and destroy the harmful influence of the collectivist politicians."[13]

Proudhon was recognized as the seminal thinker of the movement by many anarchists within the syndicats. Léon Jouhaux credited the continued importance of his philosophy to his "proletarian instinct"[14]; as a conscious perceptive worker himself, Proudhon expressed the sentiments of the working class better than the "bourgeois" theorists. Berth claimed, "I have a great respect for Proudhon; for me, he is much more than an intellect and an intelligence; he is a conscience, a man....in the full sense of the word."[15] Pelloutier, the most significant theorist within the movement, claimed Proudhon as the primary inspiration of anarchosyndicalism.[16]

But, notwithstanding the extent of the influence of Proudhon on the new syndicalist movement, the growth of two similar anti-statist proletarian ideologies fifty years apart does reflect on the nature of French government and society. In post-revolutionary France, the central government had grown even stronger than the already very centralized ancien régime. Local government was very limited in functions; the central government and bureaucracy interceded in the daily lives of the people to an oppressive ex-

13. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France (Paris, 1955), p. 255.

14. Georges Lefranc, Histoire des doctrines sociales dans l'Europe contemporaine (Paris, 1967), p. 70.

15. Édouard Droz, P.-J. Proudhon (Paris, 1909), P. 91.

16. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des Bourses du Travail (Paris, 1946), pp. 228, 262-4.

tent.[17] Radicals and socialists who had gained control of municipal governments during the 1880's and 1890's found their freedom of initiative severely restricted by national laws, police and bureaucracy. The attempt to gain power nationally through parliamentary methods was handicapped by a still predominantly rural and conservative population. This was as true in the France of Proudhon's time which elected Louis Napoleon as president in 1848 as it was during the first half of the Third Republic when predominantly conservative or moderate assemblies were elected.

Similarily, the France of Louis Napoleon and of the Third Republic was committed to defending the institution of property and maintained a laissez-faire capitalist economic policy which implied the total freedom of the patron to dispose of his property as he wished without considering social consequences. The state acted as the guarantor of these institutions, as Proudhon sadly discovered in 1848. The anarchosyndicalists similarily became aware of the "bourgeois" nature of the state through the suppression of strikes and demonstrations by the police and army. The workers believed that they could not expect to improve their situation by collaborating with bourgeois parliamentary institutions. From this derived their anti-electoralism, their anti-militarism and anti-patriotism.

The significance of Proudhon for the anarchosyndicalists was that he realized the nature of the workers' plight and the means of change relevant to that situation before most of his contemporaries. Only in his later

17. Daniel Halévy, Essais sur le mouvement ouvrier en France (Paris, date unknown), pp. 90-95. Halévy discusses the extent to which laws restricted the early development of the syndicats and also the power local officials of the central government utilized to suppress the syndicats and to force opposing sides in an industrial conflict to submit to arbitration.

years did he gain support for his anti-statist ideas among the working class. His ideas of association and economic action as basic to social activity were adapted to a more industrial age by his immediate followers.

The thesis which will be developed below is that the syndicats were confronted, in their formative years, with socialist parties committed primarily to political action in a vain attempt to gain power in a basically anti-socialist society and with a highly bureaucratized central government concerned with defending the property and interests of the bourgeoisie. The syndicalists became progressively alienated from a belief in political means of effecting change and, under the leadership of a largely anarchist élite, developed a philosophy based on economic direct action. By purely syndicalist methods, the workers were to act freely, outside the legitimate political channels, to attain the desired ends of immediate improvements of their situation and the ultimate aim of revolution through the general strike. Most of the leaders were influenced by Proudhon, either directly thorugh the reading of his works or indirectly through a continuous tradition from the signatories of the famous Manifeste des Soixante of 1864. From their anti-statism derived their theories of direct action, association as the basis of revolutionary action and the future society and their federalist decentralized organization. For all of these ideas, the anarchosyndicalists were, in some way, in debt to Proudhon.

First, we will examine the development of the syndicats and the Bourses du Travail and their attainment of independence from the parties. In later chapters, we will return to the anarchist tradition as it developed from its Proudhonist origins.

Chapter 2: The Development of Syndicalism: 1880-1910

To examine the assertion of the "empiricist" school that syndicalism arose from practice and not from a previous system of ideas, we will outline, in this chapter, the development of the *syndicats* from the first years of the Third Republic. The industrial and political conditions in France were a sufficient cause for the type of movement which developed. However, we will attempt to show, in later chapters, that the anarchist ideology experienced a renaissance in being applied to a movement which already shared many of the libertarians' prejudices.

The development of the syndicalist organization in France was retarded by a number of factors peculiar to that country. The economic backwardness and the small size of the average factory in France in comparison to England, Germany, Belgium and the United States was of significant importance. The Commune had been followed by a hardening of government opposition to the *syndicats* which, while still always illegal, had enjoyed healthy development during the Empire, especially in the latter years. A law of August, 1868, had allowed for the toleration of the *syndicats* but they still had no legal right to exist, according to the Le Chapelier Law of 1791 which forbade all associations. Local officials could decide, on their own discretion, to suppress any *syndicat* which was felt to be potentially dangerous: "For example, all the *syndicats* of Lyons were dissolved by a simple decision of the prefect of the Rhône...."[1]

The movement which developed in the 1870's was therefore cautious and concerned itself primarily with insurance and self-help funds. These

1. Léon de Seilhac, *Syndicats Ouvriers, Fédérations, Bourses du Travail* (Paris, 1902), p. 28.

Mutualists, claiming Proudhon as intellectual parent, represented the continuation of the reformist wing of the French section which had defended the institution of property at the First International Congress of 1868. As expressed by the Radical, Barbêret, the workers were to develop cooperatives and syndicats committed solely to improving the economic lot of the workers; the strike was rejected as a weapon.[2] The syndicats were to use only legal bourgeois methods, not challenging the capitalist nature of society. Their apolitical attitude was not part of any ideology but resulted from a fear of the hostility of the state to their initiatives.

These reformist attitudes were propagated especially by two positivist syndical leaders, Finance and Keüfer. Consistent with their views, these leaders accepted the justice of the authority of the state and the capitalist élite and urged the syndicats to be apolitical, to provide unemployment and sickness funds and to negotiate amicably on the issue of wages with the patron. Within the syndicat itself, Finance argued for an authority based on competence: "Only a minority of workers in each corporation possesses enough social consciousness to devote itself to the general improvement; besides, among these, only a minority has the necessary aptitudes for leadership."[3]

These conclusions underline another constant element within the early French syndicalist movement. Only a minority of the workers ever belonged

2. Georges Lefranc, Le Mouvement Syndicale sous la Troisième République (Paris, 1967), pp. 22-7.

3. Léon de Seilhac, op. cit., p. 96.

to the syndicats.[4] But the size of the association is no reliable indicator of the extent of militancy of the workers because many more joined the strikes than belonged to the organizations.[5] Usually, the syndicats followed rather than led strike movements.

A more political and revolutionary ideology appeared suddenly in 1878. Jules Guesde initiated the first explicitly Marxist party and immediately set to work to capture the new syndicalist movement for his cause. The early success of the Guesdists at the 1879 congress of syndicats at Marseilles reveals that many syndicalist leaders were not satisfied with the reformist path; the former passivity of the syndicalists was based on a fear of repression and did not reflect their temperament.[6] Explicitly revolutionary, the Guesdists were supported by the majority on a motion supporting collectivism, by which was meant collective ownership of property, as the revolutionary goal. In the Marxist Weltanschauung, the syndicats were recognized as the instruments of propaganda and revolution but were to be clearly under the control of the political leadership of the party.[7]

4. Paul Louis, Histoire du Mouvement Syndicale (Paris, 1947), pp. 233-4. In 1912, the maximum proportion of syndiqués to workers was attained before the war. Only 1,060,000 workers of a total 7, 630,000 workers in France belonged to the syndicats.

5. J. A. Estey, Revolutionary Syndicalism (London, 1913), pp. 81, 143; Maxim Leroy, La Coûtume ouvrière (Colin, 1913), p. 33. In the 1890's, the greatest number of strikes occurred in the textile industry which was the least organized. The strikes were seldom led by the syndicats who supported them only after the fact. In 1902 and 1906, the miners' strikes in the northern coal regions were largely spontaneous and were not initiated by the weak syndicats.

6. The majority was composed of a conglomerate of revolutionary factions which was united solely in opposing a passive reformist policy. See G. Lefranc, op. cit., p. 33.

7. On Marx's attitude on the relation between the intellectual leaders and the syndicats, see Michel Collinet, La Tragédie du Marxisme (Paris, 1948), pp. 71-74, 101, 142-3.

But the reformists, led by the Fédération du Livre[8], refused to accept this defeat and, at the following congress, gained a majority on a motion to exclude intellectuals and other non-syndiqués from the gathering. The reformists wished the syndicats to remain apolitical, incorporating all political tendencies and not to become cells of the Guesdist party. But the majority of federations wished to remain tied to the party, forcing the reformists to secede to form their own short-lived Union Syndicale. But it was these reformists "who carried on the tradition of trade-union independence in the 1880's."[9]

However, the dominance of the syndicalist movement by the Guesdists was quickly broken as the anarchists seceded from the party in 1881. They were followed by the "Possibilists" led by the former anarchist Paul Brousse who refused to recognize the "Pope" in London, Marx.[10] The three socialist parties, the Guesdists, the Possibilists and the Blanquists struggled for control of the evolving syndicalist movement. In 1890, the Possibilists split on the question of interference in syndical affairs. The ouvrieriste[11] wing of the party, led by the worker, Jean Allemane, believed in the need for syndicalist independence and grew more and more sceptical of the utility of parliamentary action.[12] The Allemanists followed the lead of the syndicalists in policy and were also significant members of the syndicats. However,

8. The Fédération du Livre, henceforth referred to as Livre, was the organization of the printers and bookbinders.

9. J. C. Butler, Fernand Pelloutier and the Emergence of the French Syndicalist Movement, 1880-1906 (Ph. D. thesis, Ohio State University, 1960), p. 29.

10. Sylvain Humbert, Les Possibilistes (Paris, 1911), p. 10.

11. The concept of ouvrierisme implies a distrust of non-worker elements within proletarian organizations and a belief that workers' interests can only be safely entrusted to workers.

12. Maurice Charnay, Les Allemanistes (Paris, 1912), passim.

they may have disagreed with the more apolitical members of the syndicats in maintaining that at least some political action was desireable.

What was the likely reaction of the syndicats to the struggle of the conflicting socialist parties to gain influence with or control over the corporate movement (when many conflicting opinions, from Catholicism to anarchism, were represented within the syndicats themselves)? It is evident that the growing desire to banish politics from the movement and to be concerned with economic ends alone resulted from the impossibility of reaching political accord. The wisdom of the moderates who had seceded from the Guesdist-controlled movement became more evident. An even stronger anti-political sentiment developed when the syndiqués realized how little socialist deputies or municipal councils could actually accomplish within the bourgeois order; for many, reformism was judged bankrupt and only apolitical syndical action was regarded as fruitful.[13]

The syndicalist movement had grown steadily in size during the 1880's.[14] Many trades developed their organizations to a sufficient extent to form national federations. The forms were however still quite rudimentary; often the syndicats formed only after a strike had already been called and disappeared after its conclusion, whether or not it was successful. Most strikes were spontaneous and were not supported by the syndicat until after the fact. Often, the leaders lacked self-confidence and called upon intellectuals of journalists to speak for them with the patron or the local bureaucracy.[15]

13. Robert Goetz-Girey, La Pensée Syndicale Française (Paris, 1948), pp. 35-38.

14. In 1880, the number of syndicats and members is estimated at 438 and 60,000 respectively. By 1893, these had grown to 1900 and 402,000. See Paul Louis, op. cit., pp. 125, 149.

15. Daniel Halévy, Essais sur le Mouvement ouvrier en France (Paris, date unknown), p. 60.

Such intellectuals were sometimes later elected as deputies from that region. But this early deference quickly waned as parliamentary socialism seemed to prove ineffective. The development of national trade federations led to a new revolutionary consciousness of the workers as a class. It was within the syndicalist organization rather than within the parties that an actual working-class leadership developed. Although the federations were avowedly decentralist, an élite developed within the central bodies which was conscious of the theoretical and revolutionary precedents of the workers' movement and which developed a theory of its own to fit the new industrial situation. This élite was able to disseminate its views through various syndicalist publications although, it must be admitted, these influenced only a small minority.

It was as much this growing sentiment of ouvrieriste self-sufficiency, as well as the fear of police surveillance, that led most of the syndicats to neglect to register their organizations and its officials with the local prefect in accord with the new law of 1884 regarding associations. Previously illegal, the syndicats were given the legal right to exist if they agreed to register. Many syndicalists feared co-option and charged that the law "was an infamous manoeuvre to bring the labour movement under the control of the state."[16]

A new attempt to form a national federation, the Fédération Nationale des Syndicats[17], was made by certain reformists with a first congress at Lyons in 1886. However, revolutionary socialists and anarchists also attended as delegates and the Guesdists were able to bring it under control at the

16. J. C. Butler, op. cit., p. 62.

17. The National Federation of Syndicats (FNS)

second congress at Montluçon. Thus, a primarily political party which regarded the syndicats as corporative and retrograde in character and as a distraction from the revolutionary task controlled that movement. This anomaly was bound to lead to friction.[18] The Guesdists regarded the strike as a useless weapon and valued the syndicats primarily for their utility for propaganda and as a source of funds. Thus, the syndicalists' immediate ends such as the improving of the workers' lot would have to await the final revolution. Few syndicalists were willing to accept this. (In practice, even the faithfully Guesdist syndicats were as concerned with strikes and wage increases as were those that were less political.) The Allemanist wing of the Possibilist party, above all, favoured syndical liberty from party control and, significantly, were also the most proletarian of all the socialist parties with fewer members that were intellectuals.

The struggle which developed between 1890 and 1894 over the issue of the general strike represented the decisive struggle as to whether the syndicats would be free and apolitical. Already, in 1888, at the Bordeaux Congress of the FNS, a motion that "urges the workers to separate themselves from the politicians who lead them to error"[19] had been passed. The anti-political elements had come under the influence of the anarchists who had seized onto the general strike as the ideal apolitical weapon in the hands of the workers.[20] The FNS congress at Calais in 1890 had accepted this as the ultimate weapon but because of the opposition of the Guesdists it was not established as syndicalist doctrine until the latter withdrew.

18. For Guesde's views, see Le Parti Socialiste et la Confédération Générale du Travail (Paris, date unknown).

19. Léon de Seilhac, op. cit., p. 264.

20. The role of the anarchists in this period will be discussed in depth in Chapter 5.

A new development in the labour world, the Bourses du Travail, introduced a new wealth and unity and a new radicalism into the movement in the 1890's. The Bourses originated as labour exchanges in which studies of the labour situation in a locality made statistical information available which helped workers to find employment. The first was chartered with municipal funds by the city government of Paris in 1886 and was established the following year. The syndicats had been able to demand that it be under worker control; the municipality hoped that such magnanimity would temper the workers' radicalism; a participating official claimed at the opening of the Bourse that the workers now had "the means to struggle against capital with an equal and legal arm."[21]

The Bourses, or Unions des Syndicats, as they were called in some cities, developed rapidly in the rest of France. Originally controlled by the local syndicats, the directing councils gradually became independent and self-perpetuating. Because of the type of militant which the Bourses attracted, because of their relative financial strength in comparison with the syndicats, and because they represented working class unity across métier lines, the new Fédération des Bourses was able to claim equal importance with the FNS within the syndicalist movement. The Bourses were fulfilling the syndicalist duties of services for the workers which the FNS had assumed but had never fulfilled because of a primary political orientation.[22] Vaillant, a protagonist of an independent syndicalism although he himself was a political socialist, claimed:

21. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des Bourses du Travail (Paris, 1946), p. 25.

22. Ibid., pp. 129-30.

> "The political groups....provoked the formation of the syndicats, hoping to use them for their own growth and dominance. Thus, they were themselves obstacles to the progress of the corporate organizations. The corporate organization appeared to be condemned at birth....when the Bourses du Travail came to create a milieu where, outside of all political interference and of all struggles among groups, they were able to grow freely, forming the cadres of the working class army."[23]

The Bourses gradually added to their functions, especially under the impetus of the dynamic secretary of the Fédération des Bourses du Travail, Fernand Pelloutier. They provided insurance and other funds, libraries and courses of instruction; they also became the propaganda base for syndicalism and organized local strikes. Pelloutier developed a philosophy wherein the principle of working class unity, embodied in the Bourses, was exalted as leading to "the will to drown corporate egotism in intercorporative solidarity."[24]

Pelloutier and his confrère, Aristide Briand, launched a campaign at the congresses of the FNS and the socialist parties in 1892 to establish the general strike as the tactic which would unify the socialist movement while they urged that political action be abandonned. They were successful at the FNS congress at Marseilles against Guesdist opposition although the latter were able to pass a motion affirming the utility of political action. "Although [the syndicalists] acknowledged the need for the proletariat to be represented in Parliament, few among them are willing to sacrifice syndicat unity to that end. To almost all of them, the General Strike was the symbol of a strong and unified syndicalism."[25] Guesde was enraged at this defeat and

23. Quoted in February, 1893, from Le Parti Socialiste in J. C. Butler, op. cit., p. 125.

24. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 57.

25. J. C. Butler, op. cit., p. 168.

became even more hostile to the utility of any type of strike; he claimed, "No corporate action, no matter how violent, whether it be a limited or a general strike, can transform society; even when the strike is victorious, on the morrow, the salaried workers will still be salaried and exploitation will remain."[26]

Pelloutier predictably failed to urge the general strike tactic on the Guesdist Congress. He then resigned from that party to which he had never belonged in spirit. The general strike was again affirmed at the 1893 Congress of the FNS at Paris and was also accepted by the Fédération des Bourses which came under Pelloutier's leadership in 1893. This issue became the unifying theme in the syndicalist movement. Unity was possible after the secession of the Guesdists after the 1894 congress at Nantes. (This was consistent with their practice of abandonning bodies which they could not dominate.) Unity of purpose was finally achieved between the Bourses and the FNS in the new Confédération Générale du Travail,[27] a federal union which was finally attained, after many disagreements, in 1902.

The syndicalist movement, in 1895, already contained all the elements, both in organization and ideology, that it would have before the First World War. From this base, it could grow stronger in numbers and militancy until, in 1906, the bourgeois régime feared for its existence during the wave of strikes and CGT propaganda for the May day general strike. The CGT militants derived their world-view, their ideals and their hopes for the future society, in large part, from the anarchist movement. Anarchist publications and active members within the syndicalist movement served to unify and give a consistency

26. Sylvain Humbert, Le Mouvement Syndicale (Paris, 1912), p. 80.

27. The General Confederation of Labour (CGT)

of ideas to the movement which it would probably have lacked otherwise. Guesde recognized and condemned this influence while many syndicalists were under the illusion that they had developed a totally novel philosophy.

The Guesdists were especially enraged by the senseless actions of those anarchists who believed in "propaganda by the deed", that is, through bombs and assassinations, which had led to the severe lois scélérates of 1893. These laws limited syndical independence by finally forcing the unions to register while many organizations were repressed. Severe press controls and stiff penalties against associations suspected of "acts of propaganda disruptive of public order were instituted."[28] To that end, the Paris Bourse was forcibly closed from 1893-96.

Such laws convinced many syndicalists that if the government could not co-opt them, it would attempt repression. This only served to strengthen their anti-statist prejudices and added to their belief that the state was primarily concerned with defending privilege.

The Allemanists were also in agreement with this growing sentiment and had, by this time, totally rejected attempting to gain political power. After the significant socialist electoral gains in 1893,[29] "the Allemanists had sharply warned the Socialists about the limits of their role, seeing in victory the opportunity, not for reforms, but for the spread of revolutionary propaganda."[30] However, it must not be thought that all the syndiqués were in accord with the growing anti-political sentiment. Although many of them

28. Harvey Goldberg, French Socialism and the Congress of London (The Historian, 1957), p. 407.

29. In 1893, the various socialist parties gained approximately fifty seats, more than double their previous representation. See Georges Weill, Histoire du Mouvement Social en France, 1852-1924 (Paris, 1924), pp. 262, 293.

30. Harvey Goldberg, op. cit., p. 414.

agreed that politics should be excluded from the syndicats, they themselves wished to be free to support a political party. The moderates who desired politically-initiated reform were totally in accord with the attempts of Jean Jaurès and Alexandre Millerand to that end although the revolutionary leaders of the CGT opposed such solutions.

These conflicts came to a head during the ministérialiste crisis of 1899-1901. The Dreyfus affair led to such violent repercussions from the Right that the Radical premier, Waldeck-Rousseau, decided to call upon support from the moderate wing of the socialists for his ministry. He chose the reformist socialist, Alexandre Millerand, as Minister of Commerce and gained the support of the non-revolutionary wing of the Socialists. Now the radical élite of the CGT was presented with a clear example of socialist collaboration with the bourgeois regime which they had warned against as inevitable if socialists submitted to the legal parliamentary process. Pelloutier led the Fédération des Bourses to condemn ministérialisme in 1900. After an initial interest in the initiatives of Millerand, even the moderates, led by Keufer, grew sceptical, largely because they wished to remain independent from state control.

Millerand was genuinely interested in bringing an end to the alienation of the working class from the political process and in improving the lot of the workers through political reform. He attempted to legislate maximum working hours, to initiate social welfare programs and to improve the weak legal status of the syndicats through providing for compulsory arbitration under state auspices between capital and labour.

The syndicats were sympathetic toward the attempt to pass the "social" laws but remained sceptical toward parliamentary reforms within the bourgeois

order. But they were totally opposed to the workers' councils which were to be created in order that the workers could deal on equal legal terms[31] with the patron. They believed that the councils would lead to an acceptance of the ends and ideals of the ruling class[32] and were thus a "threat to the independence and élan of the trade unions."[33] They preferred to remain in a state of war with the enemy rather than to conciliate conflicts. The strong hostility of almost all the syndicalist leaders to the Millerand reforms reveals the strength of the revolutionary sentiments.

The Socialists, on the other hand, were badly divided, with many continuing to support Millerand who still called himself a socialist although the government in which he participated engaged in such actions as expelling all foreign socialists from France, removing Socialist mayors who refused to submit to central directives and Socialist professors from the universities, and forming an alliance with Tsarist Russia.[34] Millerand, Hubert Lagardelle charged, was leading the workers to a state socialism: "The social politics of the minister is only one of government control."[35]

Millerand's reforms ended in total failure before a conservative assem-

31. See M. Moutet, La Réforme de la Loi sur les Syndicats in Le Mouvement Socialiste, September 1, 1900. Moutet recognized that this "legal" existence would lead to a co-opting of the syndicats into the capitalist system to struggle for their share of the material goods of society while the revolutionary goal would be forgotten.

32. Georges Sorel, L'Avenir Socialiste des Syndicats (Paris, 1901), p. 62.

33. J. C. Butler, op. cit., p. 367.

34. Hubert Lagardelle, Ministérialisme et Socialisme in Le Mouvement Socialiste, April 19, 1902, p. 723.

35. Ibid., p. 724.

bly and Senate. The Conseil Supérieur du Travail[36], which was formed, was regarded with great scepticism by the syndicats as indicated by the large number of abstentions in the voting for delegates.[37] The institution became a dead letter within a year as the cabinet declared it to be only a consultative council with no power to establish minimum wages. The total bankruptcy of ministérialisme gave revolutionary syndicalism a strong propaganda issue. Hubert Lagardelle, the influential editor of Le Mouvement Socialiste, now totally supported syndicalism rather than political socialism as the sole means of revolution.[38]

The crisis of socialism was heightened by Eduard Bernstein's critique of Marx's analysis of capitalist development culminating in the inevitable proletarian revolution, a schema on which most socialists based their faith. Realizing that legitimate political action could lead to nothing but compromise with the established order in the manner of Millerand, Bernstein suggested that socialists recognize the fact that they had become reformists. With all their revolutionary slogans, neither the German SPD nor the French socialists were to resolve the gulf between word and action before the painful truth became apparent in 1914 when they rallied to the state in national defence.

On the other hand, to gain their ends, the syndicalists were to rely on the revolutionary means of "direct action" outside of the legal political process. Such action was dramatically carried out in 1900 when the workers agitated to force the Assembly to abolish private labour exchanges. These

36. The Superior Council of Labour was composed, equally of representatives of labour, patrons and government.

37. Victor Griffuelhes, Le Conseil Supérieur du Travail in Le Mouvement Socialiste, October 15, 1903, pp. 238-44.

38. Hubert Lagardelle, Ministérialisme et Socialisme in Le Mouvement Socialiste, July 15, 1901.

had long been a grievance of the workers because they served primarily the employers' interests and because they blatantly represented their work as a commodity. Although the Assembly assented, the Senate blocked the bill in 1902. New demonstrations in 1903 finally forced the Senate to pass a limited bill which allowed the municipalities to suppress private exchanges. This fitted in with syndicalist theory; apolitical action had forced the government to ameliorate the situation of the workers and helped pave the way for the eventual ultimate action, the general strike.[39]

In the CGT congresses, the revolutionary syndicalists were able, constantly, to defeat the reformists, led by Keüfer, on every issue. Under the urging of the anarchist leaders of the syndicats, the CGT developed campaigns which were totally in conflict with the legal gradualist principles of the reformists. Typical were the campaigns of anti-patriotism and anti-militarism under the urging of the anarchist secretary of the Bourses du Travail after 1901, Georges Yvetot, or those urging limited general strikes on May day or for specific issues. At the Congress of Bourges in 1904, the revolutionaries used the anarchist idea of "conscious minorities" to defeat a motion by Livre to base representation in the CGT on the relative strengths of the member federations. Keüfer, who charged that the central council was controlled by the anarchists, believed that the reformists would comprise the majority if proportional representation were instituted. Émile Pouget rejected this by statistically proving that the proportion between reformists and revolutionaries would not be significantly changed under such a system.[40]

39. A. Luquet, La Suppression des Bourses du Placement in Le Mouvement Socialiste, November 15, 1904.

40. Émile Pouget, Le Congrès Syndical de Bourges in Le Mouvement Socialiste, 1904, Vol. 2: 2, p. 62.

The argument used by the revolutionaries was that "democracy gives control to the unconscious, to the tardigrade....and smothers minorities which embody the future. The syndicalist method....does not take account of the masses which refuse to will; only the conscious are called upon to decide and act."[41] At this congress, it was also decided to plan agitation for the eight-hour day.

Early in 1906, the CGT commenced a campaign whose underlying theme was, that after the May day general strike, all the workers would refuse to work more than eight hours a day. The authorities became alarmed when this was coupled, in March, with a spontaneous miners' strike. The mines of the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais and contiguous regions had been a festering labour problem for years. This was strong Guesdist territory and the syndicats were relatively undeveloped. Griffuelhes, the secretary-general of the CGT, expressed his opinion on this paradox by the dictum: "Where electoralism is strong, the syndicalist movement is weak,"[42] claiming a similarity between the submission of the people to the party after earlier accepting the authority of the priest in the strongly Catholic rural areas of the Nord.[43]

The strike movement was doubly hampered by the existence of two rival syndicats, the larger being reformist and only the smaller more militant syndicat being affiliated with the CGT. At times, clashes broke out between the two rival groups.[44] The strikes broke out after disastrous mine acci-

41. Ibid., pp. 45-6.

42. Victor Griffuelhes, Voyage Révolutionnaire (Paris, date unknown), p. 57.

43. Ibid.,

44. L'Humanité, March 21, 1906.

dents, completely independent of control of their leaders. They spread from one mine to another until the whole region was up in arms. The Radical Justice Minister, Clemenceau, notwithstanding his earlier claim of sympathy for the workers, revealed his true colours as he sent in the army to protect private property and to defend those who wished to return to work.

The activity in the Nord enflamed the CGT and lent a new urgency to their campaign. New strikes broke out among the postmen and the type-setters in April. Thoroughly alarmed, the bourgeoisie began to fear that the final revolutionary strike was imminent and many moved out of Paris or stocked up with supplies as May day approached. But the strike in the Nord was on the wane toward the end of April and Clemenceau attempted to intimidate the workers by calling 20,000 soldiers into Paris, ready for any eventuality. This led Griffuelhes to reflect bitterly on the "neutrality" of the government: "One might believe oneself in Tsarist Russia....all governments, whether they are composed of Clemenceau, Briand or Méline, have the same methods. Only the actors change."[45]

On the eve of the strike, the government arrested Griffuelhes and Lévy, the two key leaders of the CGT after allegedly finding proof of complicity between right-wing extremists and syndicalists who were intent on a coup d'état. Although this was patentedly false, it served its purpose at the critical moment. The strike failed in its purpose; the police and army stopped any demonstrations and most workers were eventually forced to return to work gaining only part of their ends. Many workers were able to obtain work-days of $8\frac{1}{2}$, 9 or 10 hours in contrast to previous work-days of 10-13 hours.[46] The syndicalist leaders believed that they had gained part of their

45. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 135.

46. M. Dommanget, Histoire du Premier Mai (Paris, 1953), pp. 220-7.

main objective—"to spread among the greater working masses the ideas that animate the militants and the syndical organization."[47]

A segment of Livre had won the nine-hour day in a manner which is of great ideological interest. At first, Keüfer had attempted to gain his ends by peaceful negotiations through mixed commissions. He admitted that this had failed miserably: "The abortion of the mixed commissions is the abandonment of all peaceful negotiations and the beginning of a period of conflict. I do not hide the fact that this is a defeat for our tactics and for myself who has always defended it..."[48] On the other hand, the more revolutionary Parisian wing of the Federation used the means of direct action during the May day movement and gained their ends.[49] Here was confirmed what the revolutionaries had always claimed would be the case: during any labour struggle, even the reformists would be driven to use more and more violent means to gain their ends from intransigent employers.

That a conception similar to the Sorelian "myth" was not entirely foreign to the syndicalist leaders is attested by Paul Delesalle's statement about the eight-hour day agitation:

> "The movement had its own value. It shows us the effort of which the working class is capable. The eight-hour day question should be regarded only as a springboard which allows us to intensify our propaganda during a specific period of time. Above all, it is only a pretext for action and agitation, a means of keeping the spirit awake."[50]

47. Victor Griffuelhes, quoted in Édouard Dolléans, Histoire du Mouvement Ouvrier, Vol. 2, (Paris, 1953), p. 138.

48. Émile Pouget, Les Résultats du Mouvement du Premier Mai in Le Mouvement Socialiste, July, 1906, p. 285.

49. Ibid., p. 286.

50. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 128.

The import of this view is related to the idéo-réaliste world-view of the syndicalists; from action derives an idea, an ideal conception of the world, which leads to further action to attain this ideal.[51] This is totally foreign to the Marxist materialist world-view to which the socialists adhered.

That the spirit had indeed been awakened is attested by the extent of syndicalist militancy at the famous CGT congress at Amiens in October, 1906. A strong anti-militarism and anti-statism, resulting in part from the harsh state repressions from March to May by the supposedly pro-labour Radical government and by the acquiescance of many Socialists in the defeat of May was evident. Lagardelle had been quick to point out the contradiction between the defence of the legal rights of Dreyfus by the "democratic" forces including most Socialists and their acquiescance in the arbitrary unjustified arrests of Griffuelhes and Lévy.[52] The whole state apparatus stood condemned in the eyes of the revolutionary syndicalists; their alleged "neutrality" was now without basis--the state existed to defend capitalism and the Socialists acquiesced, having become reformists.

However, the syndicalists realized that the Socialists had been strengthened by a new unity and the rejection of ministérialisme in 1905 and the attraction of cooperation with the Socialists was strong for many reformists within the CGT. The Congress opened with an attack by the Guesdist, Renard, on the "anarchist dictators" of the CGT who had been responsible for the unsuccessful May day strike movement. He demanded that the CGT recognize the necessity for political activity. The reformists were sympathetic but

51. This central conception of the anarchist-syndicalist tradition will be discussed in the following chapters.

52. Hubert Lagardelle, La Démocratie Triomphante in Le Mouvement Socialiste, May 15, June 15, 1906.

realized that political affiliation would trigger undesireable ruptures within the movement. The CGT again affirmed syndical independence and the primacy of economic activity divorced from the parliamentary system. Only through political neutrality would there be a unified syndicalism. On the other hand, an individual was to be free to act according to his political prejudices outside the syndicats. The revolutionaries were also able to defend their policies of anti-militarism and anti-patriotism successfully. Thus, the anarchist-leaning leaders of the CGT were successful on most issues but were forced to accept the fact that individuals were to be free to support political groups on their own account, which conflicted with the anarchist contention that the syndicalists should totally reject activity in the arid political sphere. The Charte d'Amiens, which was supported almost unanimously, became the central creed of the syndicalist movement in pre-war years. This doctrine was discussed and analyzed by the intellectual leaders connected with the CGT in many books and articles during later years.[53]

The CGT developed further after 1906 from its set doctrinal and organizational base. New federations, such as those of the civil servants and teachers, joined after harsh repression by Clemenceau. The latter was determined to bring the workers within the political community but on his own terms--they had to accept the reforms as proposed through governmental initiative and to forego the method of direct action. Briand, the traitor to the syndicalist movement, who had joined the cabinet in 1906 and was repudiated by the Socialists, was of the same mind. Vigorous state action robbed the syndicats of any new gains on their own terms. In 1909, a limited general strike in the P. T. T. (the postal and telegraph workers) broke out al-

53. The ideas of this charter will be discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

though Clemenceau had warned them that state employees could not federate or strike. Many were fired and the strike ended as a failure. In 1910, another limited general strike, this time of the railway workers, was called by their federation but failed miserably as only a small number of workers walked off and as the central committee was arrested.

A new generation of syndicalist leaders succeeded to positions of authority during the latter part of the decade. First, Louis Niel and then Léon Jouhaux succeeded Griffuelhes as secretary of the CGT in 1909. Jouhaux had developed his ideas totally within the syndicats and succeeded in maintaining the CGT in its doctrinal and tactical tradition but added nothing new before the war.[54] Pierre Monatte, an anarchist and a journalist, began to take over the leadership from Lagardelle and Pouget in propagating syndicalist ideas. He became the conscience of the movement when he defended the anti-patriotism of Yvetot as elucidated in the Charte d'Amiens, in 1914, when Pouget and others were ready to come to terms with the regime in national defence.

Although the syndicalist organization, its leaders and sympathizers have been discussed facilely as if the only realities to contend with were the government, the capitalists and the political socialists, other forces were also developing which likewise threatened bourgeois democratic society. Nationalist and clerical counter-revolutionary forces threatened the republic from the right. The cooperative movement also aspired to be the vehicle of liberation from capitalism. Like syndicalism, it was also a non-political movement and claimed the loyalty of many on the left. However, the syndicalists believed that cooperatives could never challenge the fundamental capitalist nature of society.

54. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., pp. 149-50.

New forms and developments in the arts and literature provided an added critique of the bourgeois parliamentary status quo. These reacted against the same industrial revolution and its concomitant miseries and starvation from which revolutionary syndicalism developed. Although seldom explicitly ideological, the literature and art of the period expressed a revolt against and disgust with the contemporary order which could only add to the uncertainty and wariness of the government of the bourgeoisie and the comfortable classes. The novels of Zola, France and Octave Mirbeau, the unsympathetic and cold new art forms, the growth of revolutionary theatre and of a poetry which lauded rebellious untamed heroes and earned their authors jail-terms,[55] all signalled that theirs was an age of pessimism, of dark revolutionary expectations.[56]

The working class was inevitably influenced by the Bohemian and intellectual circles whose ideas often filtered down to them through the syndicalist press and periodicals. The exposés of the situation of the working class could lead to a wider class consciousness among the workers and the poetry and songs of the literati could inspire them to admiration but these did not, in themselves, constitute a revolutionary formula. We may regard these intellectuals solely as allies and not as part of the syndicalist milieu or as contributors to a revolutionary ideology.

The intellectuals who exercised the greatest influence among the workers in the development of the syndicalist ideology were not the literati but the anarchist leaders and journalists inside the movement. The "empiricist"

55. A. F. Sanborn, Paris and the Social Revolution (Boston, 1905), pp. 117-366.

56. Ibid, pp. 239-390.

interpretation[57] is inadequate to explain the complexity of the syndicalist ideology and the types of programs and campaigns carried out because it neglects the central role of ideologically committed leaders who shaped the multiform tendencies of the workers' movement, in its early stages, into a uniform ideology.

Many syndicalists inherited the anarchists' alienation from bourgeois society and jealously guarded their independence. The extent of this faith in themselves is best epitomized in the Charte d'Amiens and in the elaborations of its basic themes by the syndicalist leaders, notably Pouget, Griffuelhes, Monatte and Yvetot and, to a lesser extent, Jouhaux, Paul Delesalle, and others.

However, it was not through these syndicalist militants that revolutionary syndicalism was introduced to the world. The key intellectuals with whom syndicalism is intimately connected in the popular mind are Georges Sorel and, to a lesser extent, Edouard Berth and Hubert Lagardelle. While often accurately describing the movement with which they strongly sympathized, these intellectuals all too readily read into their accounts elements which more accorded with their own irrationalist prejudices than with the nature of syndicalism. Sorel admired the moral fervour and devotion with which such a militant as Pelloutier attacked the problems of the working class. However, Sorel was, himself, committed primarily to his own intellectual ideal of social regeneration rather than to the working class, proper. For this reason, a special account must be reserved for these intellectuals who have often, mistakenly, been regarded as the creators of anarchosyndicalism.[58]

57. See Chapter 1, p. 4.

58. See Chapter 7.

The key individual in the early stages of syndicalism was Pelloutier from whom both Sorel and the later syndicalist leaders took much of their inspiration concerning the tactics and goals of the syndicalist movement. Pelloutier was able to combine the social given, the rudimentary syndical organizations, with certain tactics and principles inherited from the anarchist tradition such as the general strike, the primacy of education and the necessity for propaganda by word and deed, into a consistent ideology uniting ideas and action. The importance of the anarchists: Pouget, Briand, Tortelier, Delesalle and, especially, Pelloutier in the development of the syndicalist ideology will be discussed below.[59]

But the situation of the working class and the solutions for the amelioration of their miseries had already been anticipated by the father of French anarchism, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. It is to him that Pelloutier, Pouget, Sorel, Berth and many others looked for their primary inspiration.

59. See Chapter 5.

Chapter 3: Proudhon and the Society of Groups

Proudhon was probably the most effective French critic of parliamentarism and capitalism in the nineteenth century. His thought can be understood both as a reaction against the dominant themes of the Enlightenment with its abstract conception of man and society but also as heir to its optimistic view of human progress and the perfectibility of man. From his vantage point in the France of the nineteenth century, he was able to assess the practical application of liberal principles in constitutions and laissez-faire capitalism. His conclusion was that liberal society was little improvement over the aristocratic and monarchial system because it was also characterized by limited privileged élites and oppressed and powerless masses.

Unlike other socialists, Proudhon saw no use for government which, by nature, he regarded as an oppressive and élitist institution. Like the syndicalists, he claimed that the only necessary social bonds are those based on face-to-face interaction in the workshop and in exchange. Distrusting abstract concepts such as fraternity and community, Proudhon was the indefatigable enemy of those socialists who proposed to establish a new order based on universal principles to which society must be subjected. In this, Proudhon's attitude was intimately in harmony with that of the more revolutionary French workers who grew increasingly suspicious of sympathetic bourgeois intellectuals and politicians during the nineteenth century. In calling for the abolition of all government, Proudhon voiced an opinion which became more and more widespread among working-class circles in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This sentiment eventually found expression in the fin de siècle syndicalist movement of which Proudhon was the most significant prophet.

To analyze Proudhon's influence on, and contribution to, the working

class movement, we must understand not only what he suggested as the alternative to parliamentarism and capitalism but also his basic critique of that order. In his attacks on the state and on capitalism, we may already discern his fundamentally different criteria for what should be as compared with the Utopians and Marx. Proudhon was basically a moralist, obsessed with the ideal of Justice in human relations. Contrary to the Utopians, Justice cannot be attained through developing some artificial Utopia; it must be struggled for within society and must develop from existing conditions. Contrary to the positivists and Marx, it cannot be awaited as the inevitable end of history; the struggle for Justice demands a moral commitment from the individual and the group.

Individual man, in his daily occupations and in his aspirations, is at the centre of history. Neither the theological God-centred conception of reality nor the abstract metaphysical or the scientific views fulfilled this criterion because all of these related society as a whole to some higher principle. For Proudhon, what is essential is how the individual perceives the world and attempts to improve it rather than the universal systems of the intellectuals.

The central concept of Proudhon's philosophy is the idea which develops in man's consciousness from reality and from action but which, through man's reason, becomes something which can be, an ideal. Because of the close interaction between idea and act, "the social [reality] is idéo-réaliste."[1] The idea is something which is given, ulterior to scientific investigation.

1. Pierre Ansart, Sociologie de Proudhon (Paris, 1967), p. 162.

"The conception, the faculty of discovering and expressing the diversified unity, is the ulterior, immediately given, and thus inexplicable, primitive fact of science and the universe."[2] The human mind performs the creative function of generalizing from sense perceptions until the outside world can be categorized in a rational whole,[3] or as Proudhon would say, into groups of series. This structuring of the outside reality in the mind is not purely an individual but is also a social collective phenomenon. Reality, as understood by the collectivity, is social, forming a comprehensive world-view and unites the Me and the non-Me.[4]

But the idea can never be fixed: "The idea, with its categories, is born from action....This means that all knowledge, including the a priori and metaphysics derives from work,.."[5] In other words, man is the creator of social reality and all its elements; the scientistic views of social reality and human evolution in which man is subject to immutable historical laws are rejected. Marxian economic determinism is foreign to this view.[6]

Proudhon's philosophy of history is based on the conflicting antinomy

2. P.-J. Proudhon, Philosophie du Progrès (Paris, 1946), p. 126.

3. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Création de l'Ordre dans l'Humanité (Paris, 1927), p. 235.

4. P.-J. Proudhon, Philosophie du Progrès, pp. 127-8.

5. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église (Paris, 1930-35), III, p. 69.

6. The closeness of Proudhon's conception to that of the more idealist school of sociology, the Symbolic Interactionists, who believe that man's actions are based on a shared symbolic understanding of social reality (as opposed to the functionalist school) suggests one reason why there is a revival of interest in Proudhon in France today.

between opposite absolutes.[7] The continual tension between the present reality based on false principles and the ideal, of which man gradually becomes conscious, results in a continually changing equilibrium. But, unlike Hegel, there is no end: "The antinomy cannot be resolved. There lies all the imperfection of the Hegelian philosophy. The two terms of which it is made up are balanced, either among themselves or with other antinomies..."[8]

Within history, the motor in society which leads to a more just form is man's rationality which demolishes the false absolutes which are used to defend privilege and to stifle progress. Here, Proudhon approached the existentialist dilemma but is not satisfied with a nihilistic relativism. Akin to Sartre's concept of engagement, man must work for a social order more consistent with his own moral tenets—principles which man freely accepts; in other words, man is obliged to help create a more just society.[9] The artificial dreams of a future Utopia in the minds of the philosophers, which lead inevitably to new absolutisms, are revealed to be chimeras. "The philosophical problem is resolved; it would be true to say that the philosophical movement is accomplished; instead of systems which derive from arbitrary conceptions and which result in fatal contradictions, we will have a progressive science with an increasing apprehension of such concepts as Being, Law and Unity."[10]

The concept of the ideal which man consciously works toward is the gua-

7. Proudhon's notion of absolutes is akin to Max Weber's concept of ideal types which are never attained in reality; see P.-J. Proudhon, Du principe Fédératif (Paris, 1921), pp. 74-8.

8. H. de Lubac, The Un-Marxian Socialist (New York, 1948), p. 153.

9. Herbert Read, Anarchy and Order (London, 1954), pp. 144-7.

10. P.-J. Proudhon, Philosophie du Progrès, pp. 128-9.

rantee of man's liberty.[11] "Humanity moves faster in ideas than in their realization."[12] Because of this ideal, the elements of reality which conflict with it are "impossible"; in other words, man's passion for Justice in achieving that ideal will eventually result in the abolition of these evils.

All social inequality and their consequent evils derive from the use of force. Paradoxically, the right of force, or war, was man's earliest means of determining Justice. A vital function of the priests was to legitimize the rule of the military élite through divine sanction. Justice, as defined by the Church, was absolute and ulterior to society.

> "All religions entrust the principles of right and truth to a transcendent being by which they create a divorce and hierarchy between the gods and men. It is in the nature of religions to institute an unequal relation between the sacred and the profane, the divine and the human: this unequal and hierarchical dichotomy is translated in the political order by the hierarchy of rulers and ruled and by particular privileged hierarchies."[13]

Legitimization of authority by the supernatural through the agency of the priesthood also led to the "mystification" of the people as to the real source of power and authority.

But Justice must also appeal to human reason, the fatal germ which would eventually lead to a rejection of all authority. In the middle ages, the power of the king was never absolute; he was as equally bound by laws and customs as were his subjects. "The head of state, at first inviolable, irresponsible, absolute, as a father, becomes amenable to reason and declines to first subject of the law. Finally, he becomes a simple agent or servant of Liberty itself."[14] As law perfects itself, it slowly breaks down absolute

11. Georges Sorel, Essai sur la Philosophie de Proudhon (Révue Philosophique, June, July, 1892), p. 338.

12. Daniel Halévy, La Vie de Proudhon (Paris, 1948), p. 379.

13. Pierre Ansart, op. cit., p. 174.

14. P.-J. Proudhon, Du Principe Fédératif, p. 97.

authority.

Thus authority, by its very nature, must be absolute and unquestionned if it is to survive. Mature critical man will not tolerate his extended childhood because of the imminent justice in the minds of men.[15] The polar opposite to absolutism, as embodied in Religion, is Revolution which will ultimately liberate man. What Proudhon had in mind was not the actual events of the French Revolution but the conception which he and many of his contemporaries had of the Revolution and its motivating ideas.[16]

Revolution, as opposed to Revelation through the Church, defines Justice as evolving rather than absolute. Justice is imminent in man and evolves with him: "Justice is human....we wrong it by relating it, closely or distantly, to a principle superior or anterior to humanity."[17] The idea of justice in the minds of men sets up a dialectical conflict between social reality and the "idea of a society in equilibrium."[18]. Justice becomes increasingly a reality as well as an idea.[19]

Two opposing world-views confronted each other in 1789. The ideas of the bourgeois revolution were "to substitute the economic and industrial regime in place of the governmental, feudal and military regime,"[20] through the justification embodied in "the rights of man. The forms of government concomi-

15. M. Harmel in C. Bouglé, Proudhon et Notre Temps (Paris, 1920), p. 41.

16.. J. J. Chevalier, Cours d'Histoire des Idées Politiques: P.-J. Proudon (Paris, 1964), p. 228.

17. George Woodcock, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (London, 1956), p. 206.

18. Pierre Ansart, op. cit., p. 16.

19. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église, III? p. 300.

20. P.-J. Proudhon, Idée Générale de la Révolution au XIX^{e} Siècle (Paris, 1868), p. 177.

tant with the Rousseauvian ideas were democratic republics or constitutional monarchies which were established after 1789. Justice, for the bourgeoisie, meant the political and legal equality of the members of society in the unitary state while property was declared to be inviolable because it was the guarantor of the liberty of the individual against the state.

What was Proudhon's central criticisms of the "bourgeois" idea of Justice? (We shall see later that the syndicalists inherited Proudhon's estimations of parliaments, the state and capitalism.) What he condemned was the development of new absolutisms from the abstract ideals of the revolutionaries. A new authority of representative government, as absolute as that of the ancien régime, made impossible the ultimate success of revolution in liberation. Proudhon's great adversary was Rousseau, the prophet of the social contract, whose ideas influenced the actions of the constitutionalists. A new authority of parliamentarians had been erected; he condemned "what is today called direct government, a means by which, even in the absence of royalty, aristocracy and priests, the abstract collectivity of the people could still be used for maintaining the parasitism of the minority and the oppression of the majority."[21] The social contract of Rousseau is mythical and is on the abstract political level, which has no relation with social reality, rather than on the functional economical level.[22] Even within a small city-state, which was Rousseau's ideal, the minority would be forced to submit to the will of the majority; thus the "collective being" is not only a "reasoning being.... [but also] a veritable person with its own reality, individuality, essence,

21. Ibid., p. 122.

22. Ibid., p. 120.

life and its own peculiar reason,"[23] which limits the freedom of the individual in the interests of the whole. Within a huge state such as France, a small élite of deputies was created which was not answerable to its constituents for a period of time but which became the absolute authority.[24]

While the political structure made possible the development of a new authority group, the economic organization also spawned a new élite which was absolute in its own sphere. The constitutionalists made the rise of a capitalist élite possible by declaring property to be sacrosanct and by forbidding association, in conformity with the liberal principle of liberty of work. Capital tended to become the monopoly of a few; to increase profits, salaries would be lowered and the state could always be counted upon to suppress workers' initiatives and strikes.[25] The will to power no longer was evidenced primarily in war but in the exploitation of those without property by the new administrative élites.

The ideology of the new élites rested on both religious and rationalist beliefs. The bourgeoisie utilized Providence as revealed in economic progress to justify the miseries concomitant with industrialization.[26] Proudhon was also critical of the liberal economists who accepted as inevitable the poverty of the workers and held out hope only for the future felicity to which industrial progress would lead. This critique was later renewed by Kropotkin and the anarchosyndicalists. Proudhon rejected the economists'

23. Ibid., p. 152.

24. Ibid., p. 158.

25. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières (Paris, 1924), pp. 377-8.

26. H. de Lubac, op. cit., p. 199.

"excessive cult of liberty" as an end in itself; however, he claimed: "I want and claim liberty but it is not enough. I also demand truth, mutuality and justice in my relations with others."[27]

Proudhon attacked the unequal distribution of property as the chief source of social injustice and oppression. The idea of absolute property is "impossible" because, although ideally, in the ideology of the liberals, it defends the liberty of the individual against the state, its ownership is limited to only a few and only they are relatively free.[28] The idea of absolute property conflicts with the idea of work which is the source of all wealth, including property: "Work is the only source of value....and this proves....that the producer has the right over the fruit of his efforts."[29] If the means of production are not owned by the worker, a portion of his work is alienated from him and becomes part of the capital of the patron. Thus, "property is theft"[30]; the idea of absolute property must be replaced by the idea of possession of the means of production by those who use them.[31] "The cultivation of the soil....developed an organic rapport between man and his possessions..."[32] What must be retained in the future society is "a necessary immutable and absolute element in property....individual and transmissible

27. Proudhon, quoted from Capacité Politique... in Gaétan Pirou, Proudhonisme et Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire (Paris, 1910), p. 131.

28. P.-J. Proudhon, Qu'est-ce que la Proprieté (Paris, 1966), pp. 185-250.

29. M. Harmel in C. Bouglé, op. cit., p. 43.

30. P.-J. Proudhon, Qu'est-ce que la Propriété, p. 57.

31. Ibid., p. 307.

32. Pierre Ansart, op. cit., p. 35.

possession, susceptible of change but not of alienation, founded on labour..."[33]

Although Proudhon's attitude seemed to mellow between 1840 and 1860, from regarding property as theft to property as inalienable, he remained consistent; to ensure equality, property must be divided among all workers and under their exclusive control. In his later years, he expressed concern that this property be inalienable from those who used it, even in the interest of the "social collectivity" which he regarded as an abstract concept which would lead to new forms of oppression.[34]

Consistent with the developing Justice, the idea of the ideal future society grows within the minds of the workers. Within the functional associations of the working class, the new morale of the future is born: "To organize work is to find the natural series of workers...."[35] The basis of the future society is the workshop, "the school of truth,...of justice,... of loyalty,...of accepted discipline; the output depends upon the agreed organization of work."[36] Within such associations, the absolutism of the individual ego is countered by that of the other; "Before his equal, absolute like himself, the unlimited and tyrannical exigencies of man are immediately checked,"[37] necessitating the negotiation of opposing absolutes in compromise. Thus, Proudhon was no extreme Stirnerian individualist who denied

33. George Woodcock, op. cit., p. 58.

34. P.-J. Proudhon, Idée Générale de la Révolution au XIX^e Siècle, p. 158.

35. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Création de l'Ordre dans l'Humanité, p. 325.

36. Jacques Rennes, Syndicalisme Français (Paris, 1948), p. 204.

37. Pierre Ansart, op. cit., p. 185.

the social needs of man. But associations must remain purely functional; they must never become ends in themselves.

Between associations, reciprocal trade would be carried on. "For there to be a relationship between interests, the interested parties themselves must be present, answering for themselves, making their demands and commitments, acting....In the last analysis, everyone is in the government so there is no government."[38] The functional organizations of work and exchange would be the basic social relations, not the artificial governmental structure headed by a parasitic class. The lynch-pin which would integrate production in the future society was epitomized in the idea of "mutuality, the principle of reciprocity of exchange between workers' associations without intermediaries."[39] In such an organization, the Christian ideal of "reciprocity of love" would be realized in "reciprocity of service."[40] Although Proudhon did not want to give a blueprint for the future society, his attempt to establish his Banque du Peuple, in 1848, does indicate the general form which he wished it to take. All associations would deposit their goods at the bank in exchange for tokens which were valued in the number of man-hours invested in the product--the "just price". With these tokens, they could make their own purchases; free credit would be available to associations which wished to initiate new industries.

Within the new associations, a new morale develops which counters the

38. James Joll, The Anarchists (London, 1964), p. 74.

39. Edmond Lagarde, La Revanche de Proudhon, ou l'Avenir du socialisme mutuelliste (Paris, 1905), p. 299.

40. H. de Lubac, op. cit., p. 206.

idea of Work to that of the bourgeoisie, Property, which will ultimately result in the abolition of the rule of Capital.[41] Contrary to Marx, this new consciousness does not arise inevitably from specific material conditions, but only through the efforts at education and self-improvement of the workers. Such consciousness can develop at any time; a specific level of economic development is not a prerequisite. In the first place, the worker must overcome the moral and physical degradation imposed on him by the machine. Man must become master of the machine rather than a functional part of a manufacturing process. But he must also repudiate the egotism and envy which he has learned from the rich. A new communal morale must develop within the workshop.[42] Through self-education, the worker must learn to understand the industrial process within his own work-place and also the political and economic structure of the whole society such that he will ultimately be able to participate in the decision-making of a functional society without the need for authority.

The question of the role of authority was the central bone of contention between Proudhon and both the liberals and the state socialists, whether they were Jacobins or Marxists. Proudhon exclaimed, "Whoever calls for power to organize work has lied, because the organization of work must be the decay of capital and power."[43] Also, "the social revolution is seriously compromised if it comes through a political revolution."[44] The workers become progres-

41. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église, III, p. 139.

42. James Joll, op. cit., p. 68.

43. Daniel Halévy, op. cit., p. 391.

44. George Woodcock, op. cit., p. 75.

sively alienated from the state because of its function of legitimizing and defending the institutions of capital and property. The Rousseauvian idea of "popular sovereignty" is dangerous because, in practice, it had been used to justify representative government.[45]

Like capital in the economic sphere, delegated political power is a "surplus, the alienation of collective power."[46] "Since the state is only the alienated expression of the power of the collectivity, a change in governmental personnel would not lead to the desired results."[47] The tendency of authority is to extend itself indefinitely: "Whoever is in authority aspires to render himself inviolable..."[48] This condemnation would apply to state socialists as well as to liberals; Proudhon feared the concomitant centralization of the former even more: "Centralization is expansive, rapacious by nature; the functions of the state grow continually at the expense of individual, corporative, communal and social initiative."[49] Proudhon had great faith in the spontaneity and good sense of the individual and thus refused to submit the workers to a new state organization which would presumably work in their interests. He exclaimed, "It is necessary to conquer power but not to ask anything from it; to prove the parasitical nature of capital by replacing it with credit; to found individual liberty by organizing the initiative of the masses."[50] The individual must not be hampered by unnecessary social

45. Georges Sorel, Matérieux d'une Théorie du Prolétariat (Paris, 1929), pp. 375-6.

46. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église, II, p. 266.

47. Pierre Ansart, op. cit., p. 104.

48. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières, p. 321.

49. Ibid., p. 297.

50. Jacques Rennes, op. cit., p. 39.

controls: "The 'I' feels itself to be free and active; it believes in its spontaneity and its creative potential; nothing is more true."[51]

The gulf between Proudhon and the "scientific" authoritarian socialists, of which Marx is the prototype, is obvious. Although their analyses of capitalist society were quite similar, the forms of the workers' movement and the nature of the future society envisaged by Proudhon and Marx differed radically, "If for Marx, the proletariat was the class destined by the immutable laws of history to triumph, for Proudhon, the proletariat was to be the class whose toil and sufferings made possible a new moral as well as a new social order."[52]

There were few persons whom Marx hated more than Proudhon. Marx's anger resulted not only from the latter's strong influence on the French workers as contrasted with that of Marx but also because of his jealousy of Proudhon for introducing certain ideas which Marx himself intended to discuss. Marx shared Proudhon's ideas on property, on the relation between work and capital and the nature of political authority. The reason for the break between the two occurred in 1846 when Proudhon refused Marx's invitation to join a union of socialist intellectuals. Proudhon, here, already indicated a distrust of Marx's authoritarian tendencies; he rejected the forming of an intellectual elite whose purpose was to guide the workers, a proceeding which Proudhon implicitly rejected because he believed that the workers alone must create the revolution. The last straw was Proudhon's Système des Contradictions Économiques of 1847 in which he discussed the fateful contradictions within the capitalist order which heralded its collapse, a subject which Marx him-

51. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Création de l'Ordre dans l'Humanité, p. 271.

52. James Joll, op. cit., p. 67.

self was pursuing and in which many of the ideas which Marx later discussed already appeared.

The conflict between the two philosophers had been preceded by Proudhon's rejection of Hegel's deification of history. Man is not part of an abstract Humanity which is realizing its Idea in History but is a free creative individual.[53] Man is not, collectively, a divinity but simply a man with a creative potential. But if he rejected the German Idealist holistic world-view, he also repudiated the scientistic and holistic world-view of Comte and Marx: "there are no universal historical laws because there is no universal science."[54] To search for progress in the whole of history is fruitless; only in more limited areas of human endeavour such as science, industry or the progressive realization of Justice can progress be discerned. Although economic development is important in the ultimate liberation of the proletariat,[55] this is not sufficient; man must be able to transcend reality, to envisage an ideal future society and to work consciously for it before he does become free. There is nothing inevitable about historical development; progress depends on the workers realizing their ideas, consistent with the developing Justice. Thus, Proudhon is scornful toward a positivist view of society: "Society is not governed by a determinism....There is a life, a soul, a freedom which escapes precise measurement and a material conception. Materialism, as related to society, is absurd."[56] The loss of faith in scientistic history

53. H. de Lubac in Albert Béguin, Traditions Socialistes Françaises (Neuchatel, 1944), p. 73.

54. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Création de l'Ordre dans l'Humanité, p. 359.

55. Ibid., p. 361.

56. Gaétan Pirou, Proudhonisme et Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire (Paris, 1910), p. 122.

and sociology, and concomitantly, in the Marxian prophecy of revolution, led many socialists to return to Proudhon after the critique of Bernstein and Sorel.[57]

Proudhon was not only a forceful philosopher but, as a worker himself, understood the psychology of the French proletariat. Proudhon claimed that the workers did not need to read him to understand him: "The people do not read my works but they hear me."[58] In fact, many workers were well aware of Proudhon's ideas through vulgarization by the popular press and by word of mouth. Running through Proudhon's works is "the love of one's craft and a mystique of work."[59] A glance at Proudhon's ideal city reveals that his instincts, his proud independence and his love for his work were similar to the attitudes of the free medieval artisan.[60] But this attitude was also that of many of the French workers who resented authority and the power of the rich. Proudhon's ideal had, "as foundation, the working class condition and psychology."[61] To affirm that Proudhon's ideal society was based on craft production in small shops (such was the dominant pattern in France at the time) is not to deny his continued relevance in a more industrial age. Proudhon accommodated himself to industrialization by accepting the workers' associations in larger industries, which were just starting to develop, as the organizational base for a free society of producers.

Proudhon regarded the revolution of 1848 as the first significant stage

57. M. Harmel in C. Bouglé, op. cit., p. 40.

58. Édouard Droz, P.-J. Proudhon (Paris, 1909), pp. 38-9.

59. Édouard Dolléans and G. Dehove, Histoire du Travail en France (Paris, 1953), I, p. 337.

60. Daniel Halévy, op. cit., p. 401.

61. Édouard Dolléans, Proudhon (Paris, 1948), p. 473.

on which the workers introduced their ideas. The bourgeoisie had won society to their ideas after 1789 but had, in the process, lost their class consciousness. They were thus hostile to any suggestion that classes still existed. But the spontaneous organization of workers' associations during the revolution indicated a new consciousness within the working class; for the Proudhon of 1848, "this nascent autogestion of workers' productive associations was the 'revolutionary fact', not the political revolution."[62] The 1848 revolution distinguished the working class as "a separate body, breathed an idea, a soul into it, created rights for it, suggested ideas of all sorts: right to work, abolition of salaried work, reconstitution of property, association, abolition of poverty, etc. In one word, the proletariat ....has suddenly become...something; like the bourgeoisie of '89, it aspires to become everything."[63] In his famous Toast to the Revolution, Proudhon exclaimed,

"Revolution of 1848, what is your name?
--My name is Right to Work.
--What is your flag?
--Association.
--Your motto?
--Equality in Property
--Where to you lead?
--To Fraternity."[64]

Notwithstanding his anti-parliamentarism, Proudhon allowed himself to be elected in 1848 but quickly saw his scepticism vindicated. The conservative Assembly had no sympathy with the misery and the new class consciousness of the workers. The sop thrown to Louis Blanc and the Luxembourg Com-

62. Daniel Guérin, L'Anarchisme (Paris, 1965), p. 52.

63. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières, p. 62.

64. Jacques Bourgéat, P.-J. Proudhon, père du socialisme français, (Paris, 1943), pp. 124-5.

mission, the National Workshops, soon failed. The Assembly was concerned primarily with keeping the workers in check even though the latter had carried through the February revolution which made parliamentary rule possible. Almost alone, Proudhon defended the aspirations of the workers wholeheartedly during the desperate and hopeless June rebellion. He thus earned the enmity of the great majority of deputies, including the Jacobins who, as Proudhon believed, were primarily interested in their share of power. To the bourgeoisie, Proudhon became the vilified pariah who defended the unwashed revolutionary masses.

But Proudhon was not uncritical toward the workers. Although he realized the desperate reasons for the June rebellion, he condemned it as "a revolution without ideas"[65] in contrast with the February revolution. He carried on his own efforts at education through editing a journal, Le Représentant du Peuple, in which he spread his ideas about association and credit. It was during this tumultuous period that he initiated his bank which soon failed. Proudhon quickly lost faith in such a bank as the weapon to overcome capitalism.[66] The ignorance of the people was especially revealed in the election of Louis Napoleon as president. Proudhon was very disillusioned at the outcome of the political developments of 1848-51 and reflected bitterly on the workers' apathy after the coup d'état by Louis Napoleon. For Proudhon, "what the events of 1848-51 had shown was the complete bankruptcy of conventional political and economic thought."[67] Only through a process of

65. George Woodcock, op. cit., p. 119.

66. M. Bourguin, "Des Rapports entre Proudhon et Karl Marx", Revue d'Économie Politique, March, 1893, p. 191n.

67. James Joll, op. cit., pp. 73-4.

self-education would the workers eventually arrive at political maturity; they could no longer depend on bourgeois tutelage—"the most sure educator of the people is the people themselves."[68]

A part of the bourgeoisie must be converted to the proletarian idea such that they might assume the technical and educative roles in the future society. Increasingly, the bourgeoisie divides into the "industrial and mercantile feudalism and the middle class."[69] The latter, which included intellectuals and artisans, was fated to merge into the proletariat because of the tendency of industrial society to move toward two strictly defined classes, a limited oligarchy and a massive proletariat with no intermediary class.[70]

But Proudhon's hopes were dashed, by 1864, as the petit bourgeoisie chose to merge into the liberal parliamentary system which slowly developed in the second decade of the Empire, either as defenders of the official regime or as supporters of the Opposition. They had submitted to the oppressive Imperial regime and accepted the world-view of the haute bourgeoisie, wishing to remain free to invest for personal profit rather than to work in the interests of an association.[71]

Proudhon continued to spread his gospel of electoral abstention and did gain significant support because of a growing hearty distrust in political

68. Édouard Dolléans and G. Dehove, op. cit., p. 340.

69. Pierre Ansart, op. cit., p. 71.

70. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Capacité Politiquedes Classes Ouvrières, p. 230.

71. Ibid., p. 226.

methods of change among the working class; the 1830 and 1848 revolutions had shaken the faith of the more revolutionary workers in the wisdom of trusting Assemblies and deputies.[72] The manifesto of a group of workers in 1864 reveals both a growing class consciousness and the strong influence of Proudhon. The Manifeste des Soixante expressed a distrust of bourgeois parliamentarians who were concerned only with their own particular interests; workers should elect workers who shared their interests and aspirations. They claimed, "Universal suffrage has made us politically adult, but it still remains for us to emancipate ourselves socially."[73] Working class deputies must work for the attainment of the ideas of the workers: the right to work, free credit, freedom of association. Only through social equality would political equality become more than an abstraction. Except for the continued belief in parliamentarism of the Sixty, Proudhon himself could have written this manifesto. Another development which reflected his profound influence on the working class was the spontaneous growth of mutual associations, in the early 1860's, in accordance with Proudhon's ideas: productive associations, credit societies which offered very cheap loans and workers' associations under the guise of self-help agencies. Workers often came to Proudhon to ask for advice. The question must remain open as to the extent to which the workers were directly inspired by Proudhon and the extent to which Proudhon and the workers shared common aspirations.

Proudhon wrote his last important work, De la Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières, in response to this manifesto. At last, the workers had

72. George Woodcock, op. cit., pp. 250-1.

73. Ibid., p. 261.

become politically mature: "To have political capacity is to have consciousness of oneself as a member of a collectivity, to affirm the resultant idea and to pursue its realization. Whoever fulfils these three conditions is capable."[74] Proudhon lauded the declaration of the Sixty: "To distinguish, define and be ourselves...To break away legitimately is the sole means which we have to affirm our right and to make ourselves recognized as a political party."[75] But government exists to defend capitalist interests and the workers have nothing to gain from parliamentary politics. To the Sixty, Proudhon declared, "Only through separation will you conquer; no representatives, no candidates."[76]

By 1864, the workers had arrived at "self-consciousness,...the expression of their idea, but had not yet deduced, from their theory, a practice which suited their situation."[77] To that end, the workers must develop their organizations into the basic cells of the future society. "Far from conceiving itself as a party with a political role, the workers' party should separate from the bourgeois parties, concentrate on the problems of production and create, without hesitation, the workers' economic organizations which will characterize the socialist society."[78] In a statement which the anarchosyndicalists could wholly endorse, Proudhon claimed:

74. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières, p. 90.

75. Ibid., p. 237.

76. P.-J. Proudhon, Correspondance, XIII, (Paris, 1875), p. 265.

77. Pierre Ansart, op. cit., p. 159.

78. Ibid., p. 208.

> "Every industry and enterprise which necessarily employs a large number of workers with different specialities is destined to become the nucleus of a society or company of workers....A railway, a mine, a factory, a ship, etc....are for the workers who occupy it what the hive is for the bees; it is both their instrument and their home, their country, their territory and their property."[79]

The national state and patriotism, as the bourgeoisie conceive them, were totally foreign to the world-view and experience of the workers.

The character of the workers' associations was thus vital in the achieving of the social revolution and in the success of the future organization. "Do not the workers' societies serve as the womb of the social revolution...? Are they not the school which is always open, which is both theoretical and practical, where the worker learns the science of production and distribution of wealth; where he studies without books and masters, only through his experience, the laws of this industrial organization...?"[80] Within the association, the morale of the future society must develop, based on reciprocity and contract and tolerating different religious and political beliefs.[81] The only moral principle which need be retained and from which all social obligations derive is the Golden Rule of the Christian tradition. Through moral education and propaganda, the workers must attempt to conquer the majority to their idea.

Education of the youth, apprenticeship, must become an integral process within the workshop under the leadership of the association and must combine theory and practice. Work itself is the source of the morale of the individual; "the time will come when, from practice, he will advance to theory."[82]

79. Quoted in M. Harmel, C. Bouglé, op. cit., pp. 44-5.

80. P.-J. Proudhon, Idée Générale de la Révolution au XIX^{e} Siècle, p. 77.

81. Ibid., pp. 178, 234, 268.

82. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Création de l'Ordre dans l'Humanité, p. 436.

Education must thus take place within the workshop and not in the classroom where only an abstract conception of reality can be imparted. "If the mining school is something other than mining itself accompanied by studies related to the mineral industry, its purpose is not to train miners but the administrators of miners, aristocrats."[83] The worker must learn to understand the whole productive process and is not to be trained solely for one limited role. Only in this manner will the individual be prepared for his future role in an association of free producers where he will have to participate in decision-making.[84]

The importance which Proudhon attached to the associations in the future functional industrial society reveals the political structure which he hoped would develop. He claimed, "We wish these associations to be....the primary nuclei of a vast federation of companies and societies, united in the common bond of the democratic and social republic."[85] Government was destined to disappear: "The revolutionary mission is to dissolve government in the industrial organization...."[86] But industry, by its very nature, is decentralist and federalist. The local associations would operate the factories while the local commune would administer the schools and other needed social services but would necessarily be secondary to the industrial organization. Proudhon defined this organization as an-archism: "While the community remains the dream of most socialists, anarchism is the ideal of the economic school, which tends to suppress all governmental functions and to constitute society on the sole bases of property and free labour."[87] Anarchism itself,

83. P.-J. Proudhon, Idée Générale de la Révolution au XIX^{e} Siècle, p. 290.

84. Georges Weill, Histoire du Mouvement Social en France, 1852-1924, (Paris, 1924), p. 39.

85. Daniel Guérin, op. cit., p. 54.

86. M. Harmel in C. Bouglé, op. cit., p. 46.

87. P.-J. Proudhon, Du Principe Fédératif, p. 73.

as an absolute, "is an unrealizable ideal, in its fullness, but our duty is to approximate it."[88] The functional bonds of mutuality between associations organized on the local level, and hierarchically, on regional and national levels are the only necessary political ties; representatives must always be answerable to the associations which they represent and can make no initiatives without the consent of the former. All political and economic contracts would be true rather than assumed bonds, mutually agreed upon by the participating parties.

Federalism would allow the natural differences among people to develop, free from the artificial centralized political culture of contemporary France.[89] France would be able to return to a natural functional organization which would be characterized by "small property-holding, honest mediocrity, a more and more equalized level of fortune, equality; France returned to her genius and her morals."[90]

Proudhon had no sympathy for the unitary centralized state and thus, to the disappointment of many of his friends, condemned the national aspirations of the Italians, the Poles and the Germans. "He had no sympathy with the demands for 'natural frontiers' and national self-determination."[91] Europe, like France, should also be decentralized into a universal federal system; he was no defender of the central and eastern European autocracies.

88. Édouard Droz, op. cit., p. 178.

89. P.-J. Proudhon, Du Principe Fédératif, pp. 188-9.

90. Ibid., p. 179.

91. James Joll, op. cit., p. 77.

But the most important question remains: how will the worker attain his idea of a free society? Proudhon was not very specific on the means of revolution because he realized that the onus would ultimately rest on the spontaneous actions of the proletariat--both in carrying through the revolution and organizing the future society. Proudhon only wished to offer the basic principles on which he believed that society should be founded. There is a considerable body of opinion which considers Proudhon to have been a pacifist and a reformist, concerned primarily with evolutionary change.[92] Proudhon's distaste for violence is cited. His La Guerre et la Paix is an analysis of the causes of war in which he concluded that the increasing wealth and equality within societies and the growth of the idea of Justice lessened the need for war and violence in determining justice and would eventually result in its abolition. Proudhon feared that a revolution might be compromised through the use of dubious means. In 1845, he claimed, "The workers, once they are organized and marching through work to the conquest of the world, should in no event make an uprising, but become all by invading all through the force of principle."[93]

Certain of his followers, later called the Mutualists, believed that solely through the organization and growth of a system of free exchange and credit, as advocated by Proudhon, would the capitalist system decline and wither away because its methods and habits, such as usury and parasitism, were clearly inferior. However, Proudhon himself seemed to have given up hope in the efficacy of credit methods in achieving change, after 1848.

92. See, e. g. G. Woodcock, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, p. 75; G. Weill, op. cit., pp. 83-4; G. Guy-Grand in C. Bouglé, op. cit., p. 94; G. Pirou, op. cit., Part 2.

93. George Woodcock, op. cit., p. 75.

Most often, Proudhon's opposition to strikes is cited. He believed that limited strikes were powerless before the police and capital power of the enemy, that capital could always outlast strikes and that, even if the strike were victorious, the workers would thus be becoming reformist, accepting the materialist values of the employer. Wages would not depend on the just price but on the strength of the syndicat, thus conflicting with the ideal of justice. Strikes were nothing more than an aping of the egotism of the bourgeoisie, a morality which the workers must transcend.[94] What was gained by one group of workers in a strike would result in increased prices for the rest of the working class.

But the protagonists of the "reformist" Proudhon ignore too many aspects of his ideas. Proudhon, the harsh critic of the bourgeois and parliamentary synthesis, believed in the justice of the proletarian idea and the need to realize it. Although Proudhon, like most people, disliked violence, he valiantly defended the 1848 revolutionaries. He, himself, said, "I would consent to killing if I felt myself truly mortified."[95] Proudhon was very much aware of the deprived and desperate state of many workers and their strong hatred of the rich. He prophecied that terrorist tribunals similar to the German medieval Vehme might develop in reaction to government repressions. Here, the "private justice" of the violent anarchists of the 1890's found its first expression.[96]

Proudhon was too much of a realist to believe that he could forecast the form and nature of the revolution. He realized that a revolution depended on

94. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières, pp. 372-99.

95. P. -J. Proudhon, La Guerre et la Paix (Paris, 1927), p. 7.

96. Georges Sorel, Matérieux d'une Théorie du Prolétariat, pp. 427-8.

special circumstances and arose only on a chance confluence of events. To succeed, the revolution must be carried out by a conscious and spontaneously-acting working class which, imbued with mutualist and federalist ideas, would tear down the whole authority structure. "He was expecting the revolutionary mutation from an initiative, from an action, from a practice of the working class."[97] In La Guerre et la Paix, Proudhon declared that the proletariat would conquer, either legally or by force: "Force and might are to the arms, to work, to the masses: at present, arms, work and the masses are of no account....The industrial democracy will smash, in the name of the right of force, the synonym of the right to work....the suzerainty of money in order to constitute economic equality....This will be justice: force will once again be in the right."[98] Only after the final success of the social revolution would war finally become outmoded; its result would be equality in social situation and would take away any purpose for struggle. "Force is, in the last resort, the only means of realization of the Idea."[99]

Proudhon did not totally exclude the parliamentary method of achieving socialism but he believed that the proletariat "would do better, for its idea, its dignity and its interests, without always deviating from legality, to take on another attitude."[100] Proudhon's insistence on the need for the workers to separate totally from bourgeois institutions, methods and morality itself implies more than an escape from the world as it is. This is as revo-

97. Pierre Ansart, op. cit., p. 14.

98. Cited in E. Fournière, Les Théories Socialistes du XIX^{e} Siècle (Paris, 1924), p. 376.

99. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Création de l'Ordre dans l'Humanité, p. 412.

100. Georges Sorel, Matérieux d'une Théorie du Prolétariat, p. 240.

lutionary a step as that of the early Christians who believed that they were not of this world and thus broke radically with its mores, beliefs and institutions.[101] The workers must wait and prepare for the final revolution when, through the superiority of their ideas, they would become everything. For Proudhon, the means of revolution were still undefined; he was waiting for the development of a working class practice, from the syndicats, which would promise the eventual realization of Justice. This idea first appeared eight years after his death in 1865—the general strike.

Such a conception had already been intimated in Proudhon's discussion of the possible means of resistance open to the revolutionary clubs after their suppression in March, 1849. This resistance could take the forms of either open insurrection or methodical nation-wide resisting of central administration.[102] Such "legal resistance" could take the form of refusing to pay taxes and to submit to central officials on the local level until the government rescinded its oppressive laws. Proudhon caught a glimpse of the possibility that such activity could lead to a final dissolution of all authority as the people would soon awaken to the infirm bases on which all government rests.[103] France would then dissolve into its natural communal bases of organization. The strong similarity between this conception and the general strike is evident.

Proudhon's voice was one of the many which spoke out against the amorality and materialism of bourgeois society. Unlike the aristocratic and culturally-minded counter-revolutionaries, Proudhon's concern was with the

101. Sorel makes use of this image in Réflexions sur la Violence.

102. P.-J. Proudhon, Les Confessions d'un Révolutionnaire (Paris, 1929), p. 296.

103. Ibid., pp. 297-303.

impact of industrialism and capitalism on the workers although he was also aware of and condemned the cultural degradation which accompanied bourgeois values. He must be primarily regarded as a moralist; the old world must collapse because of its lack of justice: "The old world is in dissolution ....One can only escape it through an integral revolution in the ideas and hearts of the people."[104] The dilemma was primarily moral rather than material and man must become more moral before social change can be effected.

The new order must develop from the freedom and autonomy of the local economic unit: "The urge for social justice can only develop properly and be effective when it grows out of man's sense of personal freedom and is based on that."[105] The just society can never emanate from an enlightened elite as the reactionary or communist authoritarians believed; it depends on an intelligent mass movement which must abolish all vestiges of authority and privilege. But Proudhon's vigourous anarchism never lost touch with the social reality of man's interdependence which increases in an industrial society, an interdependence which Max Stirner and many of the later French anarchists tended to minimize. Through Association and Mutuality, man consciously creates the necessary bonds with his fellow men on the basis of equality rather than hierarchy.

In the following chapters, the development of the French anarchist movement and its adaptations of Proudhonist principles will be discussed.

104. Quoted from Proudhon's Carnets in Édouard Dolléans, Proudhon, p. 119.

105. Rudolf Rocker, Anarchosyndicalism (Indore, India, 1928), p. 28.

Chapter 4: The Anarchist Movement: 1865-1890

The anarchist movement which developed in France after Proudhon's death may be divided into two distinct groups, the Mutualists and the Bakuninists. Both traced their inspiration to Proudhon and both contributed certain elements to anarchosyndicalism. This dichotomy resulted from the apparent uncertainty as to whether Proudhon was essentially a reformist or a revolutionary.

The Mutualists, among whom were numbered the authors of the Manifeste des Soixante, believed that they could conquer through such peaceful means as exclusively proletarian political action and mutualist production and credit associations. They agreed with Proudhon's arguments against strikes; strikes would be suppressed and could lead only to greater misery. The workers would remain "the victims of a social order which they must change, not by insurrections which accomplish little, but by a transformation of their actual situation."[1] The proletariat must improve their circumstances through production cooperatives: "The Cooperative is the collectivity which organizes itself in order to give to the individual all the means of extending his liberty of action, to develop his individual initiative..."[2] Such a view indicates the relative lack of concentration of French industry at that time since the Mutualists still believed that the workers could initiate their own viable ventures within the capitalist system. Many Mutualists were artisans in small independent workshops.

Like Proudhon, the Mutualists agreed on the primacy of the functional

1. J.-L. Puech, Le Proudhonisme dans l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs (Paris, 1907), p. 180.

2. Georges Weill, Histoire du Mouvement Social en France, 1852-1924 (Paris, 1924), p. 105.

group over the individual: "In the association, the general interest was the superior principle to which the individual submitted himself..."[3] Between associations, mutual exchanges would be initiated. They also strongly distrusted bourgeois intellectuals; Tolain, one of the Sixty, claimed, "We must consider all individuals from the privileged classes as enemies, whether they be capitalists or hold diplomas."[4]

The Mutualists were among the initiators of the First Workers' International in London in 1864 and they dominated the first Congress at Geneva in 1866. They came well prepared with policy statements which, Marx remarked, were imbued with "the emptiest Proudhonian ideas."[5] Like Proudhon, they agreed that the workers must develop their idea and organization before action.[6] They agreed with his conception of work and exchange: "The work of today which is not consumed will be the capital of tomorrow; thus the most perfect equality must preside at the exchange of produce."[7] As with Proudhon, associations must accommodate all political and religious beliefs.

But the relatively passive doctrine of the Mutualists quickly lost its attraction with the more revolutionary workers; strikes and physical confrontations with the state occurred despite the hopes for peaceful change among the reformists.[8] At the following International Congress at Lausanne in 1867,

3. J.-L. Puech, op. cit., pp. 129-30.

4. Ibid., p. 136.

5. Édouard Dolléans, Histoire du Travail en France (Paris, 1953), Vol. I, p. 315.

6. J.-L. Puech, op. cit., p. 156.

7. Ibid., p. 122.

8. The role of the Mutualists in the early formation of the syndicats was discussed in Chapter 2. By the 1870's and 1880's, the Mutualists were no more than reformist trade-unionists although, after the Commune, they had also rejected participation in parliamentary politics.

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Mutualism was rejected as a revolutionary weapon. Although the influence of revolutionary Marxism was significant in affecting this change, the more revolutionary Proudhonists who regarded Bakunin as leader were also important.

Michael Bakunin was an exiled Russian nobleman who had come under the influence of Proudhon early in his career, in the 1840's. Bakunin's attitude toward Proudhon is somewhat equivocal. In his Confession to the Tsar, a dubious source for his true attitude, he called Proudhon a utopian, although a remarkable intellect.[9] Bakunin had been influenced, to some extent, by the scientism of Marx and he reproached Proudhon for not having adequately studied scientific problems and for developing a metaphysical philosophy.[10] On the other hand, Bakunin affirmed that, before Proudhon, all socialists had developed an authoritarian and abstract conception of the ideal post-revolutionary society; Proudhon, for the first time, placed the onus for the nature of the future society squarely on the workers' shoulders; the society was to be based on free workers' associations rather than subjected to an authoritarian state.[11] But Bakunin was firstly an activist rather than a theoretician; "it was Proudhon who provided Bakunin with the theories and concepts which were essential to him in his later creation of a species of anarchist doctrine when this became necessary for Bakunin in his duel with Marx."[12]

The many sides of Bakunin's ideas and actions are, however, quite contradictory. On the one hand, his public pronouncements and writings give evi-

9. M. Bakunin, Confession (Paris, 1932), p. 83.

10. J.-L. Puech, op. cit., p. 246n.

11. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître (Paris, date unknown), pp. 171-2.

12. Eugene Pysiur, The Doctrine of Anarchism of Michael A. Bakunin (Milwaukee, 1955), p. 32.

dence of an almost purely Proudhonist critique and analysis of capitalist society and organization of the ideal future society while, on the other hand, his secret instructions to his followers concerning the formation and activities of conspiratorial secret societies reveal a very different authoritarian element. Also, his universalism and anti-nationalism conflicted with his Panslavism and his valiant defence of the French during the Franco-Prussian war.

Bakunin was the revolutionary agitator par excellence. The development of a destructive revolutionary mentality was much more important than constuctive organization.[13] The revolutionary imperative demanded first the total destruction of the old order before reconstruction could profitably be carried out. "To carry out a radical revolution, it is necessary to attack positions and things, to destroy property and the State."[14] Although Bakunin, like Proudhon, did claim that the workers' counter-organizations, the trade-unions, "bear in themselves the living germs of the new social order which is to replace the bourgeois world,"[15] these were secondary in his world-view. The distinction between Proudhon and Bakunin is between the classes from which they expected the revolution to originate; for Proudhon, that class was the independent self-educated working class which would consciously work in concert to build the ideal society while, for Bakunin, it was the oppressed peasants and workers who had nothing to lose, a desperate instinctive revolt to appropriate one's own share of the spoils of society.

Primary in Bakunin's conception of the revolution were the secret con-

13. James Joll, The Anarchists (London, 1964), p. 114.

14. Daniel Guérin, op. cit., p. 227.

15. Rudolf Rocker, Anarchosyndicalism (Indore, India, 1938), p. 78.

spiratorial groups who would incite the masses to revolt through underhanded means and who would lead the revolution to a successful end. Such groups were to be characterized by unquestionning obedience and strict organization.[16] All means were considered legitimate in inciting the revolution: terrorism, perjury and the use of criminals. The fleeting influence of the Russian terrorist, Nechaev, in 1868, had left its mark.

But Bakunin's ideas about these conspiratorial groups were known only by his closest followers; the mass of his supporters knew only of his anarchist and federalist ideas as expressed through his articles and personal discussion. The state and authority were regarded as being implicitly evil.[17] Bakunin followed Proudhon in discussing the role of religion in legitimizing and absolutizing the imposition of rule through force.[18] "If God exists, man is a slave; but man should and can be free, thus God does not exist."[19] The revolution must usher in equality through the total destruction of all positions of authority. As opposed to the Jacobin centralists, he claimed, "I detest communism because it is the negation of liberty and I can conceive of nothing which is human without liberty. I am not a communist because communism concentrates and absorbs all the capacities of society within the State while, as for me, I desire the abolition of the State."[20]

Revolutionary tactics must be directed towards destroying the faith of the people in authority. To that end, Bakunin supported the use of strikes as a means of affirming the class struggle and as a propaganda tactic rather

16. Eugene Pyziur, op. cit., pp. 93-103.

17. I. L. Horowitz, The Anarchists (New York, 1964), p. 127.

18. Daniel Guérin, op. cit., pp. 255-8.

19. Ibid., p. 275.

20. Daniel Guérin, L'Anarchisme (Paris, 1965), p. 26.

than as ends-in-themselves as the syndicalists were to do later. He claimed, "Strikes are valuable because they destroy in the minds of the now exploited and enslaved masses of people the belief in the possibility of any compromises or deals with the enemy; they destroy at the roots that which is called bourgeois Socialism, thus keeping the people free from any entanglements in the political and economic combinations of the propertied classes."[21] Liberation depends on the wilful action of the workers rather than on "socialist scientists and professors"[22] who, like Marx, the "socialist Bismarck", still believed in the "cult of the state."[23]

As opposed to Marx, Bakunin "wanted the organization of society and collective or social property from the bottom up by free association and not from the top down by any type of authority."[24] Instead of a dictatorship of the proletariat, Bakunin affirmed the need for a radically decentralized organization: "Each individual, each association, each commune, each province, each region and each nation have the absolute right to dispose of themselves, to associate or not to associate, to ally with whomsoever they wish, to break alliances without regard either for so-called historical rights or for the convenience of neighbours."[25] Organization must be related to work patterns rather than to the state authority structure: "Labour is the sole source of all values, utilities and wealth in general; man, who is primarily a social

21. G. P. Maximoff, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin (Glencoe, Illinois, 1953), p. 384.

22. L. I. Krimerman and L. Perry, Patterns of Anarchy (New York, 1966), p. 97.

23. Ibid., p. 84.

24. Georges Lefranc, Histoire des doctrines sociales dans l'Europe contemporaine (Paris, 1960), p. 111.

25. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître, p. 197.

being, must work in order to live."[26]

The unitary national states are artificial creations of military potentates and must disappear with the revolution. "The state....is the most flagrant negation, the most cynical and complete negation of humanity."[27] Bakunin's Panslavism did not imply the erection of new nation-states but liberation from the German, Austrian and Russian autocracies on the basis of a communal decentralization. "The state, however popular it may be in form, will always be an institution of domination and exploitation."[28] But, like Marx, he believed that individual and group ownership of property must dissolve into communal control. The anarchists in the First International called themselves "collectivists", implying communal independence, as opposed to the Marxist and Jacobin statist "communists",[29] Associations of workers would direct all industries while strictly limited elected officials would administer communal institutions.

Unlike Marx, Bakunin believed in the revolutionary potential of the peasants. Revolution does not depend on the level of industrialization[30] but, as Proudhon had claimed, on the extent of consciousness of the idea of the future society in the minds of the peasants and workers.[31] But Bakunin was also influenced by Marx and claimed to be a material determinist: the masses would revolt only when they became conscious that their interests lay in expropria-

26. I. L. Horowitz, op. cit., p. 137.

27. G. P. Maximoff, op. cit., p. 138.

28. Eugene Pyziur, op. cit., p. 66.

29. Ibid., p. 41.

30. Ibid., p. 64.

31. Ibid., pp. 64-9.

ting the property of the bourgeoisie.[32] The revolution is inevitable and will break out when private and public governments become totally bankrupt.[33] But here, Bakunin attempted to resolve two mutually incompatible systems, the idealism of Proudhon where man's conflicting ideas are the motive force of history and the historical materialism of Marx where man's future felicity is inevitable because of determinist economic laws. Bakunin denied man's free will[34] but this assertion is incompatible with his conception of the revolution and the future free society where man would act freely to bring to reality the ideas in his mind of an ideal social order. By the logic of the type of revolution which he expected and the nature of human relations in the future ideal society, Bakunin could not claim to be a determinist. He said, "The liberty of each person is not realizable except in the equality of all. The realization of liberty in equality of rights and situation is justice."[35] Value-laden terms such as liberty and justice depend on an individual moral acceptance of absolute principles; they have no place in a value-free determinist world-view. Bakunin also said, "To make men more moral, it is necessary to make their social environment moral....by assuring the triumph of justice, that is, the complete liberty of everyone in the most perfect equality for all."[36] Marx took great care not to use such terms because he claimed his analysis to be scientific.

Bakunin's great contribution to European anarchism was not on the theo-

32. G. P. Maximoff, op. cit., p. 303.

33. Ibid., pp. 374-5.

34. Ibid., p. 148.

35. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître, p. 203.

36. G. P. Maximoff, op. cit., p. 155.

retical but on the concrete level. He was able to impart the central themes of Proudhon in a simplified form to thousands of militant workers, intellectuals and peasants. He was a truly European figure as he influenced the new anarchist movement in Russia, as he helped form the Panslavic movement and as he contributed to or instigated the revolutionary anarchist movements in Switzerland, Italy, Spain and France. Because of his wide-ranging experiences and contacts, he became the unofficial leader of those Internationalists who opposed Marx's attempt to impose a rigid doctrine and unity on the movement.

The International gained in popularity in France as foreign support was given to French strikers in 1866; this led to the rise of a more revolutionary mentality than that of the Mutualists. Led by Eugène Varlin, the French secretary of the International, many French workers developed the same attitude toward the utility of strikes as Bakunin. In the International Congress at Lausanne in 1867, Mutualism was already a declining force as proletarian practice had bypassed it. It was claimed that Mutualism, within the contemporary order, would develop an intermediary class between the bourgeoisie and the poorest workers but could, in no way, lead to fundamental change. Calling themselves "collectivists", these new revolutionaries called for a national bank as a source of free credit and collective ownership of property; they rejected the inheritance of property. "Possession" of land and the means of production would replace ownership. But unlike Proudhon, the collectivists now called for the progressive use of the strike.

Opposed to the collectivists were the English trade-unionists, the German communists, the Blanquists and parts of the other national groups, all of whom believed in the need for a strong state. Marx came to influence this wing and attempted to use the statists, especially the Germans, to impose his own doctrine on the International. The collectivists, however, desired a

federalist International in which each section would be independent in matters of ideology; the anarchist revolution moreover implied the negation of the state rather than its use in carrying through the revolution.

The contradiction in the International came into the open during the Franco-Prussian war as Marx hoped for a Prussian victory to chastise the French for their recalcitrance to his blandishments while Bakunin attempted to rally the French.

The years of 1870-71 in France are remarkable for the rapid spread of anarchist ideas. The sudden collapse of the French armies before the Prussian invador led to a questionning of the very nature of the state and the role of the élites. After the revolution of September, 1870, and the institution of the provisional government, many workers were not content to trust bourgeois politicians. The memories of 1830 and 1848 were still clear. The workers could trust only in themselves; they feared that the bourgeoisie was only too willing to accept defeat and to return to a peaceful situation. The revolts of Lyons and Marseilles, in which Bakunin participated, revealed the spread of anarchist ideas. Similar agitation broke out in Rennes, Lille, Clermont-Ferrand, Rouen, Strasbourg and Metz. In Lyons, the municipal government was abolished, taxation was halted and the revolutionaries, calling themselves Mutualists, appealed for a union of federated communes to struggle against Prussia.[37] Bakunin described the movement as a popular communal reaction against the inactivity of the provisional government against Prussia; he claimed that the government feared the workers' reaction to capitulation more than they feared the Prussians.[38] The bourgeoisie would prefer

37. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître, p. 239.

38. Ibid., p. 236.

Prussian dictatorship, as they had earlier accepted Louis Napoleon, to social revolution.

Bakunin ridiculed Gambetta's appeal for a rallying to a social republic in which the bourgeoisie would respect the workers' aspirations while the proletariat would respect property; the bourgeoisie were at fault for throwing France into the war and now the workers must take the situation into their own hands. He called for a worker-peasant alliance in social revolution and national defence.[39]

As Bakunin claimed, if the Paris Commune had erupted in October rather than in March, 1871, the social revolution would probably have succeeded. As it was, the French authorities were able to suppress the regional revolts before the fateful struggle in Paris. The Paris workers seized the institutions of government when it seemed that the authorities were on the point of disarming the Paris proletarian National Guard. Thiers pulled the troops back to Versailles and the revolutionaries were left in control of the city.

The majority of the ideologically committed revolutionary leaders were Blanquists and Proudhonists and the actions of the Commune reflect both elements; the election of a municipal government to carry through the revolution and to lead the defence of the city gave evidence of the elitist Blanquist prejudices while the appeal for decentralization showed the Proudhonist influence. The Commune Manifesto proclaimed, "The autonomy of the Commune will have for its limts only the equal autonomy of all the other communes adhering to the contract; these associations must assure the unity of France."[40] But by creating a new elected elite, the Parisians were giving the task of pushing

39. Ibid., p. 242.

40. E. S. Mason, The Paris Commune (New York, 1930), p. 257.

through the revolution to a new state power; Bakunin claimed that the Commune failed, in part, because it did not depend on the spontaneous organizing capacity of the workers, on the development of mutualist ties between free workers' associations.[41] Certain Proudhonists suggested that the inoperative factories be organized on mutualist lines but, because of the nature of the authority structure, the people never had the opportunity of doing so. Both Engels and Bakunin criticized the Communards and, specifically, the Proudhonist, Beslay, who was in charge of economic policy, for not appropriating the funds of the Bank of France for use in the struggle against the provisional government.[42] Engels attributed this failure to the Proudhonist desire to use the Bank as a source of free credit.

After the defeat of the Commune, many Communards streamed to London and Switzerland; to Geneva came many future socialist leaders such as the Reclus brothers, Beslay, Malon, Brousse and Guesde. They became involved in the remarkable anarchist Jura Federation in Romande Switzerland which was to be of great importance to the French movement during the repressive years following the Commune.

The Jura Mountains region thrived mainly from watch-making and the raising of livestock. Craft production was carried on in the home. The early workers' movement had developed under the leadership of Pierre Coulléry, a social democrat. A more anarchist mentality developed with growing opposition to electoral politics and with participation in the First International. The Jurassians came into contact with Bakunin in 1867 and this strengthened their

41. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître, p. 254.

42. E. S. Mason, op. cit., p. 257; L. S. Feuer, Marx and Engels (Garden City, N. Y., 1959), p. 358.

anarchist tendency; they became increasingly alienated from the social democrats who exercised their strongest influence in Geneva. In 1868, the Jurassians seceded from the Romande Federation section of the International. The struggle in the Romande Federation was a prologue to the quarrel between the Marxists and the Bakuninists in the whole International. In 1870, the Jurassian Federation was formed under the leadership of Bakunin, Élisée Reclus and James Guillaume. Their journals, l'Égalité and, later, La Solidarité, were significant in spreading anarchist propaganda and organization news in a period of harsh repression in the other states, France, Italy and Spain, where anarchism was strong. In 1870, the Jura Federation urged a national revolution in France to rise up and drive out the Prussian invador.

In the 1870's, the Jura Federation developed an ideology which anticipated that of the later anarchist and syndicalist movements in France. The most significant intellectual in the movement was James Guillaume, a former teacher, who devoted all his energy to the workers' movement; he had himself been involved in initiating the cooperative movement in the Jura region. He studied the works of Proudhon intensively[43] and learned from Bakunin the need to devote oneself to collective action. Liberation could only come through mass action rather than administrative fiat.[44]

It is impossible to determine from where the idea of the general strike first originated. This idea probably crystallized in the minds of the workers who participated in more limited strikes and sought a means of making the strike a more efficacious weapon.[45] It was introduced as the ultimate,

43. C. Thomann, Le Mouvement Anarchiste dans les Montagnes neuchâteloises et le Jura bernois (La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, 1947), p. 206.

44. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître, pp. 299-300.

45. Alexandre Zévaès, Le Syndicalisme Contemporaine (Paris, 1911), pp. 343-6. Zévaès claims that the first mention of the general strike occurred among the English trade-unionists in the 1830's.

although relatively pacific, weapon in the hands of the workers at the International Congress of 1873. Bakunin accepted the idea as he would any action directed against authority but, like Marx, held the destructive violent revolution to be necessary before the new social order could be constructed. Guillaume, however, regarded it otherwise; he claimed that the workers must "attempt one day the general strike, the only truly efficacious strike, to realize the total emancipation of work."[46] The organization of the general strike would be in the hands of the workers' associations based on the workshop. The future commune would be based on a union of workers' associations, each wholly independent but associated through mutuality.[47]

The Federation suggested an organization which was very similar to the later CGT. Trades would be organized on regional and national bases while the Commune de Travail would be a federation of local unions. The CGT was composed of unions which belonged to both their national trade federations and the local Bourse du Travail. The commune would be charged with providing education, apprenticeship programs and local services. Also the communes would federate on regional and national bases,[48] while the state would no longer have a raison d'être. Thus, the Federation was characterized primarily by an uncompromizing independence and opposition to all authority: "The autonomy of the group is the natural starting point of all workers' associations; the Federation must be the product of the action of autonomous groups to be real and vibrant."[49]

46. James Guillaume, L'Internationale, Documents et Souvenirs (Paris, 1905-10), 4 vol, Vol. 3, p. 118.

47. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître, p. 303.

48. C. Thomann, op. cit., p. 222.

49. Ibid.

The Jura Federation agitated against electoral action and urged that workers spoil their ballots by writing "La Commune" on them.[50] Anti-patriotism and anti-militarism were also frequent themes. Although the Jura Federation had developed a strong cooperative movement, many feared that this would lead to a cooling of the revolutionary ardour and to bourgeois attitudes. Guillaume claimed, "What must be condemned....is the tendency of those who propose cooperatives to the proletariat as a means of emancipation or, even more, as the sole means of emancipation. Cooperation actually cannot radically transform society."[51] Like Bakunin, the Federation declared itself to be collectivist; private property would be abolished and savings would revert to the commune after death.[52]

The Jura Federation was Bakunin's strongest ally in his struggle against Marx and the General Council of the International. Marx had succeeded in dominating this Council which resided permanently in London and he used it to oppose any initiatives which might challenge his doctrinal authority. In 1868, the Council condemned Bakunin's International Social-Democratic Alliance whose purpose was to train "propagandists, apostles and finally organizers"[53] as elite shock troops for the revolution. Bakunin submitted but determined to challenge Marx on an important issue to break his domination. At the 1869 Basel Congress, he attacked not only the centralized organization but also demanded that the International pronounce unequivocably against property,

50. Ibid., pp. 165-8.

51. Ibid., p. 189.

52. Ibid., p. 206.

53. James Joll, op. cit., p. 101.

an issue which Marx did not wish to put before the Congress. But Bakunin won his point with the support of his southern European supporters. The struggle continued in 1870-71 with the antagonists supporting opposite sides in the Franco-Prussian war.

Marx realized that he could not control an International Congress; even the English trade-unionists abandoned him for his defence of the revolutionary Commune. He thus called a hasty Conference in London in September, 1871, which was dominated by his own supporters from the General Council.[54] The few anarchists attending were ignored. Recognition of the Jura Federation was rejected.

Marx called the next Congress at the Hague on September 2, 1872; he chose a northern site to make more difficult the attendance of Bakunin's southern European supporters. Marx's manipulations were again successful; French Blanquist exiles were recognized as the French delegates because they were favourable to Marx while Bakunin and Guillaume were expelled from the International. Italy even refused to attend and called its own International congress at St. Imier for anti-authoritarian socialists on September 15. The the Hague Congress dissolved itself after relocating the General Council in New York where Marx hoped to bury the International; he realized that in a democratic congress he would lose control.

The St. Imier Congress, which was attended by Spanish, French, Italian, American and Jurassian dlegates, rejected all the resolutions of the the Hague Congress. They also resolved against electoral political action, which Marx had urged, and affirmed the progressive use of the strike. Above all, they regarded themselves as the legitimate successors of the First Interna-

54. James Guillaume, op. cit., II, pp. 193-4.

tional; the anarchists were heartened as all the national sections of the International except the German rejected the legitimacy of the actions at the Hague by early 1873.[55]

The New York General Council called a congress in Geneva in September, 1873, but even Marx regarded it as a total failure. On the other hand, the libertarian International congress, also held in Geneva in the same month, was a great success as every western European state except Germany was represented.[56] The International voted to abolish the General Council. A motion was made against political action but, consistent with the federalist principles for which they had struggled, the delegates left this up to the individual federations.[57] The general strike was suggested for the first time as the ultimate revolutionary weapon; it was judged to be a significant means only in the more industrialized nations. The Italian and Spanish delegates believed, like Bakunin, that violent revolutionary action was necessary to destroy the old order.[58]

The anarchist International continued to hold congresses from 1874-78 in Belgium or Switzerland. However, a lassitude entered the movement toward the end of the decade; the Italians abandoned the movement, as had Bakunin, claiming: "This is no longer the time for ideas but for deeds and for acts."[59] From its earlier vitality, the Jura Federation had decayed by the end of the decade as reformist socialism made its inroads. Disillusioned, Guillaume

55. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, 1880-1914 (Paris, 1955), p. 43.

56. James Guillaume, op. cit., III, pp. 109-12.

57. Jean Maitron, op. cit., p. 73.

58. James Guillaume, op. cit., III, p. 116.

59. Jean Maitron, op. cit., p. 71

moved to France and participated in the developing French anarchist movement; significantly, he later regarded the CGT as the successor of the anarchist wing of the International.

Before examining the spread of anarchist ideas in France from the Jurassian base, we must discuss the importance of the second Russian aristocrat to revolutionary anarchism in Switzerland and France: Peter Kropotkin. As opposed to Bakunin, he was primarily an intellectual rather than an activist and he contributed much more significantly to anarchism as an ideology.

Kropotkin first became a socialist through the reading of Proudhon.[60] His devotion to Proudhon as the first true anarchist is undoubted; he claimed, "I have been reproached for being the father of anarchism. This is too great an honour. The father of anarchism is the immortal Proudhon who presented it for the first time in 1848."[61]

Kropotkin entered the Jura Federation in 1872; he found himself totally in accord with its ideas rather than those of the parliamentary socialists because of its strong egalitarian and anti-authoritarian character.[62] After a period of activity in Russia, he returned as an exile to Switzerland to take a leading role in the flagging Jura Federation. He struggled against the growing tide of political socialism in the last years of the First International as delegate from the Jura region. He also edited Le Revolté, the last important anarchist journal of the federation, in which he first developed his ideas for a larger audience.[63]

60. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître, p. 357.

61. Jean Maitron, op. cit., p. 43.

62. Peter Kropotkin, Memoirs of a Revolutionist (Boston and New York, 1899), pp. 280-87.

63. Ibid., p. 390.

Starting from the anarchist insistence on communal and syndical independence and the superfluity of government, as urged by the Jura Federation, Kropotkin developed a philosophy of history whose prime trait, as with Proudhon, was the increasing liberty and justice for all men. Society tends more and more toward a state of cooperation rather than competition. From his own experience of observing the primitive tribes of Siberia, he concluded that cooperation and mutual aid are the natural social relations between men. Kropotkin challenged the Social Darwinist conclusions from the theory of evolution; he concluded that the existence of life depends on a mutual dependence between and within species instead of a struggle for survival; the "law of mutual aid is the law of progress."[64] With the increasing productivity resulting from improved industrial and agricultural methods, man must search for a more just form of organization of work and distribution of goods. He believed that the growth of industry implied a universalization of techniques and a decentralization of organization rather than specialization and centralization, that each state could provide most of its own industrial and agricultural necessities.[65]

Like Proudhon, Kropotkin was harshly critical of the liberal economists who, he claimed, examined only the functioning of the economy and determined "universal laws" which justified the role and defended the interests of the dominant class.[66] The laws of production were immortalized to prove that the mass of the population must live poorly.[67] Kropotkin vigourously attacked

64. L. I. Krimerman and L. Perry, op. cit., p. 233.

65. Peter Kropotkin, Fields, Factories and Workshops (New York and London, 1913), passim.

66. Peter Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread (London, 1906), p. 246.

67. Ibid., p. 238.

the grim prophecies of Malthus and their contemporary proponents. Here, he was truly an innovator because both Proudhon and Marx had accepted the Malthusian arguments concerning the limited resources of the world; Proudhon believed that man had to reconcile himself to a life of toil and scarcity and demanded only a more egalitarian distribution of the means of production to alleviate suffering; he urged also that parents willingly limit the size of their families for the common good. With a wealth of scientific proofs of the possibilities of science and industry to create a life of plenty for all, Kropotkin demonstrated the fallaciousness of the Malthusian theses.[68] He discussed the possibilities provided by intensive agriculture and increased industrial production.

Kropotkin rejected the thesis that depressions were caused by over-production, as the economists claimed; the problem was one of under-consumption; the workers were paid only part of their just wage and thus were unable to buy many of their necessities. The competition for employment allowed the employer to pay as little as possible: "The wealth of the wealthy springs from the poverty of the poor."[69] If production were geared to social need, to consumption rather than profit, there would be no unemployment or misery.[70]

The economists also lauded the increasing specialization of different countries and the interdependence between industrialized societies and the producers of raw materials. Since Adam Smith, economists had celebrated the increasing specialization and division of labour in modern industry because this led to increased production. But Kropotkin condemned the brutalizing of

68. Peter Kropotkin, Fields, Factories and Workshops, passim; The Conquest of Bread, passim.

69. Ibid., p. 57.

70. Ibid., pp. 242-3.

man who becomes little more than a machine; extreme division of labour serves only the interests of the dominant class because it renders impossible all intelligent individual action from the worker. Kropotkin urged instead the universalization of industry and a social organization in which man does both industrial and agricultural work and participates in cultural endeavours.[71] Political economy must become a progressive and applied science; it "must study the means of best satisfying the present and future needs with the least expenditure of energy (with economy) and with the best results for mankind altogether."[72]

The institution in the worst situation to realize appropriate action in industry or the commune is the central government. Thus, it is destined to disappear. "The tendency of the human race is to reduce Government interference to zero; in fact, to abolish the state, the personification of injustice, oppression and monopoly."[73] The state destroyed the medieval communal societies by enclosure acts and by the spread of central jurisdiction. Individual wealth can only accumulate through the active support of the state; the institution of property itself would be impossible without the state.[74]

Government also, by its very nature, is counter-revolutionary; the institution of a government in a revolutionary situation crystallizes progress at that point after which future progress is resisted.[75] The Commune failed because its first step was the election of a government which quickly became

71. George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumović, The Anarchist Prince (London, 1950), p. 326.

72. Peter Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism (London, 1912), p. 78.

73. Peter Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, p. 40.

74. Ibid., p. 53.

75. George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumović, op. cit., p. 309.

ineffective because of its alienation from the people.[76] The anarchist revolution must take another approach: "We must throw ourselves, body and soul, into the social Revolution; to that end, any government, whatever its nature, is an obstacle which we must render impotent; we must also control the ambitious who wish to impose themselves to govern our destinies. Enough governments, give way to the people, to anarchism!"[77]

The moral sentiments of man can develop only with the solidarity of the functional and communal groups. Kropotkin regarded the collectivist form of property-holding as suggested by Bakunin as only a transitory stage; property must eventually revert to society rather than to the involved workers who, however, would still stay in control. Kropotkin called himself an "anarchist comminist" to distinguish himself from the "collectivism" of Bakunin although the difference is not very significant.[78] Another reason was that the Marxists had appropriated the term "collectivism" and Kropotkin wished to dissociate himself from the statists.

The first act of the revolutionaries must be the expropriation of land and the means of production because these are the common inheritance of humanity and not of a limited class. The resultant paralysis of government and the old élites would necessitate an awakening of the human intelligence; the people would be forced to search new and better ways to fulfil human needs. This implies "a revolution in the minds of men, more than in their institutions."[79] Thrown on their own resources, the people on the local level would spontaneously organize the necessary mutual agreements between producers.

76. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître, pp. 368-9.

77. Ibid., p. 374.

78. Jean Maitron, op. cit., p. 80.

79. Peter Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, p. 264.

"The independence of each small territorial unit becomes a pressing need; mutual agreement replaces law, and everywhere regulates individual interests in view of a common object."[80] The nature of the industrial society would still imply the necessity of strong ties between communes.

In his ideas about achieving the social revolution, Kropotkin initially accepted the Bakuninist legacy; he claimed that practical anarchism implied "permanent revolt by word of mouth, in writing, by the dagger, the rifle, dynamite....Everything is good for us that falls outside legality."[81] Later, he tempered his prescriptions significantly after the violent activities of such anarchists as Ravachol. Revolution is an act of the masses but is instigated by enlightened minorities. The duty of the conscious workers is to inspire the masses by "propaganda by the deed". The anarchist must act "in order to keep the spirit alive, to propagate and find expression for dissatisfaction, to excite hatred against exploiters, to ridicule the government and expose its weaknesses and above all, by actual examples, to awaken courage and fan the spirit of revolt."[82] As with Bakunin, these activists must never take actual power but must act surreptitiously behind the scenes to keep the revolution directed toward fundamental goals.

The workers' associations must be the organizational bases of the revolution as well as of the future society. Kropotkin hailed the development of French syndicalism as anarchism in practice from its natural industrial base: "Syndicalism is the industrial manifestation of anarchism. Anarchism itself

80. Ibid., p. 40.

81. Jean Maitron, op. cit., p. 77.

82. George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumović, op. cit., p. 310.

is a doctrine that teaches the necessity of a society without government."[83]

Kropotkin was the most significant living influence on the small anarchist circles in France in the 1880's. These groups were composed mainly of self-educated workers and a minority of bourgeois intellectuals and students. Using any useful pretext to spread agitation among the workers, their small number does not indicate their relative influence.[84] The anarchists "used primarily oral propaganda, from worker to worker, which was easy among the unfortunate who inflamed each other by the sight of their common misery;.... simple and violent brochures which cost one or two cents were sold in the workshops: all teaching the hatred of contemporary society and the necessity for revolution."[85] With regard to politics, their attitude was "abstention, while using the electoral period to agitate."[86] The anarchists were always active in the syndicats but, as "true believers", their first loyalty was usually to the anarchist sects. From the first, the anarchists fought the Guesdist control of the syndicalist movement; they seceded from the movement in 1881 after disagreement over political action. They commanded a great deal of respect from the workers who admired the disinterestedness of the anarchists as contrasted with the political socialists who, many believed, were concerned primarily with their own careers.

The anarchists were subject to constant police surveillance and infiltra-

83. L. I. Krimerman and L. Perry, op. cit., p. 38.

84. Jean Maitron, op. cit., p. 124. Maitron estimates that, in 1894, there were approximately 1000 active militants, mostly in the Seine, Rhône, and Loire valleys, 4500 sympathizers who regularly bought anarchist journals and 100,000 who would indicate a certain sympathy for anarchism.

85. Georges Weill, op. cit., p. 275.

86. Georges Lefranc, Le Mouvement Syndical sous la Troisième République (Paris, 1967), p. 39.

tion and their publications and activities were often suppressed. During a wave of strikes and violence in Lyons in 1882, Kropotkin himself was arrested with many other anarchists although he was completely innocent of the charge of having instigated these actions.[87] Influenced by the Russian anarchist activities, including the assassination of the Tsar in 1881, the French anarchists started similar activities in the 1880's; these came to full flower during the bombings and assassinations of the early 1890's.

It was through the actions of men like Ravachol, Vaillant and Émile Henry that anarchism became most widely known and that the popular image developed of the anarchist as "a slinking figure with his hat pulled over his eyes and a smoking bomb in his pocket."[88] Proudhon had already warned of the probable development of such a form of "private justice". Such men usually came from desperately poor circumstances and seldom found constant employment. Although usually unknown in the anarchist circles, they were well aware of the anarchist critique of bourgeois society and explanation of its miseries.[89] They became convinced that only through a great destructive action could they contribute to the furthering of the social revolution. Vaillant claimed at his trial, "The explosion of my bomb is not only the cry of the rebel Vaillant, but also that of a class which demands its rights and which will soon combine action with words."[90]

Certain anarchists had suggested the use of bombing attacks on institutions of authority during the 1880's but terrorism was no longer urged after

87. George Woodcock, Ivan Avakumović, op. cit., p. 189.

88. James Joll, op. cit., p. 128.

89. Jean Maitron, op. cit., pp. 522-7; ——, Ravachol et les Anarchistes (Paris, 1964), pp. 42-5.

90. G. Guilleminault and A. Mahé, L'Épopée de la Révolte (Paris, 1963), p. 285.

1888.[91] However, only between 1891-94 did such activities become widespread; even the President of the Republic was assassinated. It is a strong commentary on the situation of the working class with relation to the rest of society that "the anarchist attacks, while condemned by the socialist leaders, found a much more indulgent appreciation among the workers."[92] Ravachol and Henry became minor folk heroes among the revolutionary workers and popular songs celebrated their exploits.

The infamous lois scélérates were passed in response to these attacks and many socialist and anarchist journals and organizations were suppressed. The courts attempted to implicate anarchist propagandists such as Grave and Sebastien Faure with instigating bombings and thefts but were unsuccessful.[93]

These repressions led to a total re-appraisal of what actions were legitimate under the rubric of "propaganda by the deed". Jean Grave, the editor of Le Revolté after it was removed to Paris, had led a critique against dubious tactics since the 1880's. Certain anarchists had justified systematic theft because the inequality of property was condemned as unjust; property, according to Proudhon, was the incarnation of theft.[94] Grave condemned theft because it conflicted with the supeior morality demanded for the future society; he said, "Under the colour of attacking Property, certain people have defended theft; others propose free love and have come to defend the most absurd fantasies which they would not hesitate to condemn as debauchery

91. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, 1880-1914, p. 245.

92. Georges Weill, op. cit., p. 285.

93. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, 1880-1914, p. 238.

94. Jean Grave, Le Mouvement Libertaire sous la Troisième République (Paris, 1930), p. 62.

and crime if committed by the bourgeoisie; the most outrageous are those who make war against principles--another absolute, they say, and claim 'I ridicule principles and do not accept them; to instigate the Revolution, all means are good; we must not allow ourselves to be stopped by untimely scruples.'"[95] Many anarchists also developed a culte du moi and totally rejected all social bonds which limited individual liberty. Grave realized that many of the mouchards were agents provocateurs sent by the police to demoralize the movement by directing it toward mindless whims.[96] The advantage, to the police, of the anarchists turning to theft or counterfeiting was that these were more readily indictable crimes than the spreading of propaganda or agitation.[97]

Grave urged that the only legitimate forms of "propaganda by the deed" were those directed toward developing a revolutionary mentality among the workers for the eventual exercise of the general strike weapon. Like Proudhon, Grave and other anarchists condemned the limited strike as a purely reformist non-revolutionary weapon: "A strike is either a revolt or a deception."[98] A genuine revolution "can only succeed by the work of men freed from all servitude, strongly imbued with ideas of independence, conscious of their power and knowing, themselves, how to agitate."[99] Violence only becomes necessary against the counter-revolutionaries who attempt to suppress the general strike. "But if anarchism does not reject violence, since it is

95. Jean Grave, La Société Mourante et l'Anarchie (Paris, 1893), p. 214.

96. Jean Grave, Le Mouvement Libertaire sous la Troisième République p. 182.

97. Ibid., p. 192.

98. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, 1880-1914, p. 146.

99. Jean Grave, L'Anarchie, Son But--Ses Moyens (Paris, 1924), p. 202.

shown to be necessary for liberation, the anarchist does not make a system of it."[100] The anarchist examples of "propaganda by the deed" had great influence among the workers; with regard to the struggle for the eight-hour day, "it was the anarchist propaganda of the deed that woke them to recognition of what they wanted and the necessity of fighting for it."[101]

However, the anarchists were as influential in "propaganda by the word" as in "propaganda by the deed". During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the anarchists developed a synthesis of the ideas of their predecessors: Proudhon, Kropotkin, Bakunin and the anarchist International, uniting ideas and action into an ideology which was to serve the syndicalist movement. Such intellectuals as Guillaume, Louise Michel, Élisée Reclus, Jean Grave and Émile Pouget had a strong influence among the workers through their journals and books.

As with Proudhon and his successors, electoral politics was rejected because it implied a recognition of the legitimacy of the state and adaptation to bourgeois authoritarian institutions. Reclus claimed, "To vote is to abdicate....or rather, the representative submits to the will of the voter ....those who have delegated him are no longer free."[102] Following Proudhon and Kropotkin, the state was condemned for making possible the institution of property and, concomitantly, the increasing inequality in situation between men. The state was not neutral; its most important function was the defence of privilege as revealed by police and military suppression of strikes. The

100. Ibid., p. 130.

101. I. L. Horowitz, op. cit., p. 458.

102. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, 1880-1914, pp. 457-8.

anarchists developed a rigourous anti-militarist campaign which was later accepted as an integral element in the syndicalist ideology. Grave claimed, "If you wish to remain men, do not become soldiers."[103] As with Proudhon, the existence of a state army was the most ostensible proof that all authority rests on the exercise of coercion or its possibility.

Because of the nature of the state, the workers could expect nothing from authority. Grave opposed allowing the state to intervene to fix salaries; by doing this, he claimed, "Does one not recognize the right of the state to exist?"[104] Echoing Proudhon's warning about entrusting one's fate to the authorities, the anarchists urged the workers to take authority into their own hands. Louise Michel claimed that anarchism would abolish the evils of authority: "If power renders man ferocious, egotist and cruel, servitude degrades; thus anarchism will be the abolition of the horrible miseries under which the human race has always groaned."[105] Anarchism, as for Proudhon, implied the decentralization of authority and the abolition of inequality; from the natural bases of authority, the place of work and the community, the involved individuals would be in complete control of their destinies. The central state must disappear. Guillaume said, "In a federal society, there is no nation, or no national or territorial unity. There is only a federated agglomeration of communes, an agglomeration that has no other determining principle than the interests of the contracting parties and which consequently has no regard for national or territorial questions."[106] All that remains

103. Jean Grave, La Société Mourante et l'Anarchie, p. 170.

104. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 39.

105. Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître, p. 412.

106. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, 1880-1914, p. 482n.

is the solidarity of interests between men as fixed in actual contractual agreements. The anarchists also continued to insist, as had Proudhon, on the need for an enlightened self-educated working class which must be able to determine the means of best organizing their work.[107]

The anarchists accepted Kropotkin's attitude toward property but the distinction with that of Proudhon, of equality in property, was not very significant. Proudhon had still retained the idea of salaries based on the amount of work accomplished while Kropotkin and the anarchist circles insisted on the primacy of consumption; work would be geared solely to the needs of men rather than to the bourgeois ideas of property and salaries. However, the principle of worker autogestion, of self-administration by the association, remained the central idea. This was the form in which the legacy of Proudhon was passed on to the syndicalist movement.

However, the question arises as to why the majority of the anarchists did not integrate into the syndicalist movement, especially after it grew into a vigourous movement in the 1890's. This movement was anti-political, anti-militarist and decentralist and a large sector was explicitly revolutionary. In 1894, certain anarchists claimed, "We must do everything to alienate the workers from the so-called socialists who today use the people to obtain a position and tomorrow will be masters;"[108] however, the syndicalist movement already rejected political action and interference in the syndicats at that time. The Italian, Malatesta, argued that the syndicalists

107. Jean Grave, Le Mouvement Libertaire sous la Troisième République, p. 6.

108. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, 1880-1914, p. 251.

remained reformists, concerned only with material improvements within the legal limits of the bourgeois order and that the anarchists should remain distinct while still spreading their ideas among the syndicalists.[109] This attitude reveals the continued influence of Bakunin's and Kropotkin's ideas; the anarchist circles regarded themselves as the revolutionary élite which best realized the proper means and ends of revolution. Such undoubted truths must not be sullied in a situation of equality with less conscious, often misguided, workers in the syndicats; for example, many syndicalists still believed in political action.

Proudhon had also recognized that certain workers are more enlightened than others but he had always urged unity, the developing of workers' associations in which the more advanced workers would give leadership. Proudhon had never allowed his ideas to be regarded as an ideology which must be applied unquestioningly in all situations; the proper response to a situation can only be made by workers involved in ongoing participation in the place of work. If the middle class would accept the revolutionary ends, they too would be accepted into the associations; the prime consideration was the need for total alienation from the unjust bourgeois institutions of absolute property and parliaments.

However, a significant number of anarchists did accept the syndicats as the natural organizational bases of the revolution and the future society; these men integrated into the movement in the late 1880's and the 1890's. In the following chapter, the growth of anarchism on a mass basis rather than on a sect basis will be discussed.

109. Henri Dubief, Le Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire (Paris, 1969), pp. 134-41.

Chapter 5: The Anarchists and the Syndicalist Movement

Although the number of strongly committed anarchists was never significant, their influence among the French working class was much greater than their numbers would indicate. During the 1880's and 1890's, the institution of the anarchist *trimardeurs*[1] developed. Usually unemployed, these men travelled around France in search of work and spreading their gospel. They reported news of local strikes and organizations back to the anarchist journals in Paris. These journals, in turn, were instrumental in developing a wider class consciousness among the whole French working class. Among the isolated *syndicats*, the anarchists imbued a stronger revolutionary mentality and spread current ideas about revolutionary action. Such proselytizing was very efficacious if strikes or other syndicalist activities were taking place.[2]

One of the most effective of these propagandists was Tortelier, a former supporter of the Allemanist wing of the Possibilist party. By 1884, he had become an active member of the Paris anarchist circles. During the 1880's, he was engaged in popularizing the idea of the general strike at local strikes throughout France.[3] He also strenuously urged electoral abstention in conformity with his anarchist views. The influence of the *trimardeurs* such as Tortelier or Paul Delesalle in spreading revolutionary anarchist ideas among the nascent *syndicats* cannot be under-rated. Later, such men were important leaders of the CGT.

The complement to active propaganda was the anarchist press. The most

1. From the French dialect word *trimard*: highway.

2. A. F. Sanborn, *Paris and the Social Revolution* (Boston, 1905), pp. 40-1.

3. Georges Lefranc, *Le Mouvement Syndical sous la Troisième République* (Paris, 1967), p. 46.

significant anarchist journals were Jean Grave's Le Revolté and Émile Pouget's Père Peinard while other more ephemeral publications also appeared.[4] Although Grave never urged that the anarchists join the syndicats, he did consider the workers' organizations as the natural terrain on which to spread libertarian ideas. Pouget, on the other hand, while sharing Grave's suspicion of the reformism and political activity of the FNS, rallied to the syndicalist organizations in the 1890's. Pouget's great asset was an ability to spread revolutionary ideas expressed in the working class vernacular.[5] Often very violent and outrageous in his attacks on capitalism and the state, Pouget was able to translate the workers' resentments into concrete terms directed against specific evils. From the first, he urged, "If there is a group in which the anarchos (sic) should involve themselves, it is evidently the syndicalist chapter."[6] The role of the anarchists was to counter the electoral methods of the socialists. Like Proudhon, Pouget also urged that "political equality is a 'mystifying' dupery: capitalist and proletarian are not in fact equal. Also, democracy is the means of enervating the working class; it kills all will to action. The class enemy becomes the electoral friend. The electoral grouping is too heterogeneous and temporary a basis for long-term action."[7]

Like the anarchists of the older generation, such as Kropotkin and Guillaume, who had recognized the syndicats, from the first, as the natural

4. A. F. Sanborn, op. cit., p. 68.

5. Paul Delesalle in Daniel Guérin, Ni Dieu ni Maître (Paris, date unknown), p. 425.

6. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 91.

7. Robert Goetz-Girey, La Pensée syndicale française (Paris, 1948), p. 45.

anarchist revolutionary base,[8] Pouget urged the anarchists to espouse syndicalist activity in the 1890's. From the first, the Allemanists and anarchists tended to be attracted to the Bourses du Travail in preference to the FNS which was too closely tied to the parties. The Bourses were apolitical and necessarily excluded party rivalry. From this base, the libertarians could attack the party affiliations of the member syndicats.[9] The Allemanists shared, more and more, the anarchists' distrust of electoral politics and also wished to free the syndicats from the parties. In 1892, the Fédération National des Bourses du Travail was formed largely under Allemanist instigation; its avowed purpose was to undermine the political orientation of the FNS by counteracting the influence of the socialists.

The most influential syndicalist leader, Fernand Pelloutier, was attracted to the new Federation des Bourses. Originally connected with local Radicals in his native St. Nazaire in the Loire valley, Pelloutier became disillusioned with politicians in 1885 for not implementing electoral promises. His distrust was sharpened after the shocking revelations of corruption. He became a socialist in 1889 through the reading of Proudhon and Marx. In 1892, he joined the Guesdist party but he deplored the division of the socialist parties. With his friend, Aristide Briand, he attempted to urge the general strike as the unifying issue for both the socialist and syndicalist organizations. They were successful with the FNS but were rejected by the Guesdists. Through the general strike conflict, Pelloutier was successful in expelling the socialists from the syndicats. This led to the dissolution of the FNS

8. James Joll, The Anarchists (London, 1964), p. 248.

9. J. C. Butler, Fernand Pelloutier and the Emergence of the French Syndicalist Movement, 1880-1906 (Ohio State University, 1960), pp. 90-110.

and the development of the independent CGT.

Pelloutier became secretary of the Fédération des Bourses in 1895. From this position, he exercised strong influence on the whole syndicalist movement. Pelloutier's critique of bourgeois society and his ideas concerning the workers' movement remarkably paralleled those of Proudhon. For Pelloutier, "The basic cause of the social problem was the monopolization of wealth by the few. An equal distribution of property would eliminate all the economic ills of society, for then the real value of a product would be equal to its exchange value."[10] The wealthy profited from the socially productive work of the proletariat; thus the power of the rich and their protector, the state, must be overthrown. Pelloutier shared the Proudhonist (and Marxist) view of the state as the alienation of individual and group power; similarily, he urged that centralized authority be abolished and be replaced by associational control of production and communal services.

The vehicle of liberation was to be the workers' associations. Through daily experience in the place of work and in the syndical organizations, the worker developed an empirical understanding of his situation and, through his reason, determined the ideal organization. Like Proudhon, Pelloutier espoused the empirical attitude of the worker rather than the theoretical constructions of the intellectuals in determining proper policy.[11] A morale and an organization develop through direct action by individuals involved in a specific place of work.

Like Proudhon, Pelloutier rejected economic determinism: through self-

10. Ibid., p. 208.

11. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des Bourses du Travail (Paris, 1946), p. 155.

education and an act of will, the workers must rise above their situation. The libertarian society must be struggled for because it is morally desirable. "It was his faith in man's ability to think and act independently of his social environment that gave moral fibre to Pelloutier's socialism."[12]

The new morale of the future develops in the workers' organizations rather than from the parties. The syndicats were "a means of habituating men in directing themselves and of organizing, in the face of state socialism, a democratic league opposed to all authoritarian administration and also, a means of forming the germ of the workers' society within capitalist society."[13] Here, the Proudhonist influence is clearly evident; the workers must develop their own counter-institutions and methods free from but within the capitalist system. Pelloutier consciously saw himself in the libertarian tradition of Proudhon and Bakunin[14] and regarded the Bourses as the heralded "free association of producers."[15]

Pelloutier agreed with Proudhon that "any activity or doctrine, other than economic matters, which was controversial and capable of dividing the workers"[16] must be excluded from the associations. The anarchist suspicion of any authority is expressed in his description of the syndicat: "An association you are free to enter or leave, without a president, having as its only officials a secretary or a treasurer who are instantly dismissible."[17]

12. J. C. Butler, op. cit., p. 310.

13. Daniel Halévy, Essais sur le Mouvement ouvrier en France (Paris, 1901), p. 282.

14. Fernand Pelloutier, op. cit., p. 262.

15. Ibid., p. 264.

16. J. C. Butler, op. cit., p. 216.

17. James Joll, op. cit., p. 199.

The economic associations rather than the political sects were the natural base for revolution; Pelloutier agreed with a report of the Fédération des Bourses in 1893:

> "We must recognize that the great mass of workers, unconscious of the future, has remained refractory to the spirit of association... Many would have accepted association if this did not imply joining some political party and accepting and defending its theories.... It is thus on the purely economic level that we should now attempt to rally all the forces of the proletariat..."[18]

The syndicat was the anarchist base of struggle against the authoritarian centralists: "The syndicat is thus the revolutionary and libertarian organization which, alone, can counterbalance and eventually destroy the harmful influence of the collectivist politicians."[19] Pelloutier called it the "practical school of anarchism".[20]

Thus, Pelloutier was in total agreement with the socialist tradition which "agreed with Proudhon that the social functions could and should be limited to the satisfaction of all human needs, claiming that the sole raison d'être of the state is the safe-guarding of superfluous or conspiring political interests and that these should be replaced by the free associations of producers."[21] To that end, the workers must educate themselves for their future role. Pelloutier claimed, "The revolutionary mission of the enlightened proletariat is to pursue more methodically and obstinately than ever before the work of moral, administrative and technical education necessary for the

18. Fernand Pelloutier, "La Fédération des Bourses du Travail; Ses Congres," Le Mouvement Socialiste, Oct. 15, Nov. 1, 15, 1900, p. 485.

19. Fernand Pelloutier in Daniel Guérin, op. cit., p. 422.

20. R. Garmy, Histoire du Mouvement Syndical en France (Paris, 1933), Vol. 1, p. 27.

21. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des Bourses du Travail, p. 99.

viability of a society of free men."[22] Education must not be narrow and limited but must be directed to the development of the integral man. This "integral education" must include the physical, intellectual and technical development of man. The syndicalists claimed, "If the working class wishes to liberate itself, the first thing that it must do is to regard its ignorance as its worst enemy."[23] The Proudhonist attitude is strongly evident in Pelloutier's discussion of the need for proletarian independence and self-respect: the workers "attain consciousness of their intellectual faculties and their dignity, resolve to depend only on themselves for a conception of social duty, to detest and throw off all alien authority and finally to conquer peace and live free."[24]

Pelloutier and the anarchists were instrumental in the development of the Universités Populaires which developed at the turn of the century. These were often connected with the local Bourses.[25] Intellectuals were invited to lecture on a whole range of topics—philosophical, literary and technical. The basic raison d'être of the Universités was "to work to make the people conscious; the day when all men are conscious, the social question will be resolved...."[26] The anarchist, Paul Robin, who was a leader in the developing of these schools, claimed:

> "A genuine intégral is at once theoretician and practician. He unites the two qualities systematically separated by the official routine which maintains, on the one side, primary and professional instruction and, on the other, secondary and higher instruction.

22. Ibid., p. 197.

23. Daniel Halévy, op. cit., p. 181.

24. R. Garmy, op. cit., p. 269.

25. Daniel Halévy, op. cit., p. 185.

26. Ibid., pp. 180-1.

> He is the brain that directs and the hand that executes. He is at one and the same time artisan and savant."[27]

This expresses well the attempt at application of the Proudhonist idéo-réaliste view of reality to the social situation of the workers. Man's ideas and his daily action cannot be divorced but constitute a mutually reinforcing duality. Concrete attempts by the worker to improve his understanding of the world heightens his consciousness and political maturity and, therefore, radicalizes his actions.

Within the Bourses themselves, Pelloutier urged the development of libraries and courses on all subjects. To further the end of rendering the workers more conscious of their importance in the whole productive process in a factory and their role in the whole national economy, he also pressed for the institution of Musées du Travail in the Bourse building. These would illustrate the history and technique of various productive processes.[28] Thus, the worker would learn his integral place in industry; "to the extent that he becomes conscious of his value, he enobles work instead of debasing it....I believe that, in educating ourselves to the greatest extent, we will constantly approach the ideal to which we are moving--the total liberation of the individual."[29]

The workers' movement must delegate different functions to the syndicats and to the Bourses. Organized by trades, the syndicats were the natural cells of the workers' movement. They were to organize their own strikes and their own apprenticeship programs. However, the danger of a syndicalist movement organized on the basis of trades was that it would lead to a corporatist ra-

27. A. F. Sanborn, op. cit., pp. 83-4.

28. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des Bourses du Travail, p. 199.

29. Ibid.

ther than a class consciousness. Limited strikes by lone *syndicats* represented corporate egotism rather than a wider consciousness. The peculiar virtue of the *Bourses* was that they would inspire a "will to drown this corporate egotism in intercorporative solidarity."[30] As Proudhon had claimed, the workers could only liberate themselves through a total alienation from bourgeois methods and institutions and from egotistic self-interest by uniting around new methods and institutions which would eventually lead to a radical restructuring of society. The nucleus of the workers' counter-society was the *Bourse du Travail* which would integrate local *syndicats*. "The importance of the *Bourses du Travail* gave the French syndicalist organization its originality; they permitted it to have a political independence which has hardly any foreign analogy."[31]

In Pelloutier's world-view, the *Bourses* were the sole revolutionary force in France. To these "foyers of revolutionary instruction....he assigned the task of leading the workers out of the capitalist desert, across the sea of revolution and into the new society."[32] Only the *Bourses* with their resources and facilities could provide the services which the *syndicats* and federations had failed to develop. Under Pelloutier's leadership, the *Fédération des Bourses* initiated and developed a large number of valuable services which contributed to the mentality of self-sufficient *ouvrierisme*. As the counter-organization developed, the workers were less in need of the services of the state. The syndicalist organizations and services thus "constitute,

30. Georges Lefranc, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

32. J. C. Butler, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-7.

within the bourgeois state, a truly socialist, economic and anarchist state."[33]

These services included an employment agency, unemployment aid, the Viaticum (aid given to workers moving from one city to another in search of work), a statistics service (which helped the syndicalists to direct workers to areas of higher demand) and special emergency funds to be used for health insurance and as strike funds. The facilities provided by the Bourses for education have already been described. The last function of the Bourses was propagandizing among unorganized workers, agricultural labourers and seamen. The Bourses were often also the social and recreational focus of the lives of the syndiqués. By providing an environment where the workers could develop a class consciousness and a nobler vision of their role in society, Pelloutier hoped to attract the workers from the debilitating cafe milieux.

On face value, these services may seem purely trade-unionist in character; for the reformists, no special role was accorded to them beyond their immediate utility. However, for Pelloutier and the revolutionaries, they served a qualitatively different purpose; as the "womb of the social revolution", the Bourses developed the skeletal form of the future society. The syndicalists agreed with Proudhon that the apolitical workers' organizations rather than the parties were to introduce the new society by universalizing the methods which they had developed.

What means were the syndicalists to use to bring about the social revolution? Pelloutier agreed with Proudhon's judgment of the strike weapon. If

33. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des Bourses du Travail, p. 161.

successful, a strike would mean higher wages for only certain workers and the growth of corporate materialism; strikes were also easily suppressed through collaboration between the state and the patrons.[34] However, Pelloutier realized that limited strikes were inevitable and that they had the value of increasing the militancy of the workers. His final conclusion was to agree with the judgment of the 1893 Congress of the Fédération des Bourses:

> "If we observe that the partial strike is often inevitable, this does not stop us from concluding also that it is a double-bladed weapon ....and that it wounds the proletariat as well as the capitalist. However, it has this advantage: of making evident to the workers that there is no solution for them except in the complete transformation of society."[35]

The important educative function of the strike was that the worker was committed to direct action as opposed to the passive act of voting. The strike had great symbolic value for the workers: "in the eyes of all, the symbol of the workers' revolt is the strike. It is during a strike that the worker becomes conscious of his strength: he stops a factory."[36]

As in the Proudhonist philosophy, the syndicalists agreed that action and practice on the economic level are paramount in the life of the individual rather than alienated political activity. Proudhon had claimed, "Working men's associations....should be judged, not by the more or less successful results they obtain, but only according to their tendency to assert and establish the social republic."[37]

Pelloutier agreed wholeheartedly with Proudhon's assessment of political

34. Fernand Pelloutier, Les Syndicats en France (Paris, 1921), p. 9.

35. Colette Chambelland, "La Grève Générale, Thème de la pensée de Fernand Pelloutier et d'Aristide Briand", L'Actualité de l'Histoire, Oct., 1957, p. 4.

36. Ibid., p. 20.

37. George Woodcock, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (London, 1956), p. 170.

revolution. He claimed, "All the bloody revolutions have benefited only agitators and the bourgeoisie."[38] With the means of repression available to the state, open revolution was rejected as impracticable. Like Proudhon, Pelloutier was also instinctively revolted by violence. Even if successful, a political revolt could only be resolved by the institution of a new state authority to which the anarchosyndicalists were fundamentally opposed.

Pelloutier found the ideal weapon available to the workers in the general strike. As a further development of workers' practice on the economic level and appealing to their experience, the general strike had the capacity of bringing the capitalist system to a standstill. Such a conception had been anticipated in Proudhon's writings and was promoted by the libertarian section of the First International. Because the general strike relied on the position of strength of the workers, the dependence of society on their work, the total arresting of the economic life of a state would be catastrophic.[39] For the anarchists, its peculiar virtue lay in the fact that political leaders were unnecessary. Also, through its lack of violence, the strike "of folded arms"[40] gave no opportunity to the state to violently suppress the movement. The general strike was the proletarian practice which Proudhon had awaited; it was "the substitution of a working class practice in place of a bourgeois practice in which violence was no more than a short episode..."[41] After a short period, the bourgeois state would crumble away and the workers

38. Quoted by Jules Guesde in Le Parti Socialiste et la CGT (Paris, date unknown), p. 38.

39. Colette Chambelland, op. cit., passim.

40. Lucien Febvre, Proudhon et le Syndicalisme ouvrier in Pour une Histoire à part entière (Paris, 1962), p. 779.

41. Pierre Ansart, Sociologie de Proudhon (Paris, 1967), pp. 214-5.

would take control of and run the factories in the common interest.

Pelloutier's vision of a largely pacific but very effective general strike gained wide-spread support notwithstanding the socialists' objections to its impracticability. In the Paris Bourse, to which Pelloutier was connected, "the cry of the general strike was everywhere. It was the contemporary catch-phrase of the workers. To that end, all the efforts of the movement should be directed."[42] The general strike became the issue around which the syndicalists were able to rally and eventually to drive the Guesdists from the syndicats. Appealing to the strong suspicion of politicians among the workers, it made possible the development of the characteristic "syndicalist" mentality of the CGT. The idea of the general strike, "by its own virtues, accelerated propaganda and strengthened worker solidarity."[43]

Pelloutier's vision of the future society parallels that of Proudhon more than that of the later generation of anarchists. All social and economic activities would be controlled by "free and voluntary associations of producers."[44] He shared Proudhon's optimistic faith in the capacity of all men for self-improvement and self-direction. Pelloutier agreed with Proudhon that the associations must be in inalienable control of the means of production, that property must not be ultimately in the hands of a higher power.[45] The capitalist organization of property and authority must be abolished: "The social revolution must have, as objective, the suppressing of the value of exchange, the capital which it engenders and the institutions

42. Colette Chambelland, op. cit., p. 2.

43. Ibid., p. 7.

44. J. C. Butler, op. cit., p. 211.

45. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des Bourses du Travail, p. 251.

which it creates."[46] All institutions not necessary for production and exchange must be abolished because they are parasitical. As with Proudhon, the production associations and the communes would organize themselves in a federalist and decentralist system. The local Bourse would be the focus of communal exchange of produce and would negotiate matters of exchange with other regional communal Bourses. The role of the Bourse was similar to that of Proudhon's bank. The integrated statistical services of the Bourses would be generalized after the revolution and would be the sole central organization necessary; its purpose would be to predict national consumer needs and to assess how production could be equitably divided among associations.

In struggling against the "bourgeois" state, Pelloutier inherited the critiques and campaigns of the anarchists. Like them, he urged that "force remained the sole arbiter of specualtion"[47] and that the purpose of the state was to defend, by force, the privileges of the capitalists. He thus supported the anti-militarist and anti-patriotic propaganda which developed in the movement in the 1890's.

A strong ally was Paul Delesalle, Pelloutier's assistant as secretary of the Fédération des Bourses. Delesalle was a highly skilled worker in the production of complex machinery in Paris. He became an anarchist and later proselytized his views as a trimardeur. Pelloutier and Delesalle were very concerned to justify their adherence to syndicalism before the sceptical anarchists. Against the argument of "conscious minorities" of the anarchists,

46. Ibid.

47. Fernand and Maurice Pelloutier, La Vie Ouvrière en France (Paris, 1900), p. 339.

Delesalle countered that a revolutionary movement must necessarily be based on the masses; joining a syndicat, moreover, implied a degree of class consciousness. Also, the anarchists, he charged, were concerned only with pure theory and did not relate this with practice.[48] The syndicats already limited themselves to economic non-parliamentary action; now they must consciously espouse the communist-anarchist solution of the social problem.

In his famous letter to the anarchists in 1895, Pelloutier presented the syndicats as already being anarchist in its basic tendencies. The workers had lost all faith in parties and parliamentary reforms and now "renounced appealing to the State and dreamed of directing their own affairs."[49] The parties were also becoming progressively less composed of workers. Halevy comments ironically on the attitude of one worker who said of the socialist deputies, "'They are jokers like all the others. Let's run our own affairs.' And such a man, who was pleased by this statement, delegated a libertarian to his corporative congress after having elected an authoritarian to the Palais-Bourbon."[50] The workers wished to maintain a stake in parliamentarism but had little faith in it; however, they were determined also to assure syndical independence from the parties which could best be guaranteed by delegating an anarchist. In this way, anarchists became disproportionately represented in the CGT and the Bourses.

48. Jean Maitron, Le Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire: Paul Delesalle (Paris, 1952), pp. 84-9.

49. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, 1880-1914 (Paris, 1955), p. 254.

50. Daniel Halévy, op. cit., p. 283.

Pelloutier appealed to the anarchists to enter the syndicats to strengthen this anti-political sentiment and to direct it into libertarian paths. He claimed that the revolutionary workers in the syndicats, as opposed to the conciliatory parties, were "rebels at all times, men truly without god, master or nation, the irreconcilable enemies of all despotism, moral or material, individual or collective, that is, of laws and dictatorships (including those of the proletariat)."[51] This expresses well the truly Proudhonist distrust of all "absolutes". Pouget, in Père Peinard, similarily urged the anarchists to enter the syndicats.[52]

During the 1890's, other anarchists did enter the syndicats and Bourses in large numbers. These included Louis Niel, Georges Yvetot, Leon Jouhaux and Pierre Monatte, all of whom were leaders in the CGT during the tumultuous years between 1900-14. The syndicats provided a basis for a new orientation from the culs-de-sac of sectarian isolation or of terrorism (which most anarchists had never espoused). Now, their purpose was to alienate the working class from the politicians and to urge them to pursue purely economic and syndicalist ends. The result, Jean Maitron argues, was "a veritable renaissance of the French anarchist movement."[53] Other groups such as the Étudiantes socialistes révolutionnaires internationales and the Allemanists who were strongly influenced by anarchism and who espoused the general strike were also significant in this rejuvenation.[54]

The role of the anarchists and their allies who dominated the Fédération

51. Quoted in 1899 in Henri Dubief, Le Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire (Paris, 1969), p. 67.

52. Ibid., pp. 69-74.

53. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, p. 266.

54. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., pp. 86-7.

des Bourses was significant in pressing the syndicalist organizations to assume a stronger apolitical and revolutionary orientation. Other anarchists such as Pouget and Jouhaux worked mainly within the syndicats themselves.

In 1895, the FSN split on the issue of political action with the majority supporting Pouget's motion: "The aim of the syndicates is to make war on the bosses."[55] The new CGT, supposedly committed to purely syndicalist action grew slowly. Pelloutier was disappointed that the new federal organization was again based on trades and not around local Bourses or Unions des Syndicats. The Fédération des Bourses, believing itself to be the repository of proletarian consciousness and militancy, refused to be integrated into the CGT as simply another federation. The Bourses held out for equality on the Comité Fédéral of the CGT. In 1897, the CGT passed a motion supporting political action while a minority within the Fédération des Bourses challenged Pelloutier's "dictatorship" of that body. The reformists opposed the anti-political propaganda because certain syndicalists were pressing for parliamentary social reforms. Pelloutier himself was not averse to expressing rather authoritarian attitudes when he felt his judgment challenged by the suggestion that the Fédération adhere to its federalist charter: "You do not have the right to break down your means of defence when the State is building up its own."[56] The Comité Central of the Fédération in Paris, which was controlled by the anarchists, had indeed gained an overwhelming influence in the spread of ideas among the local Bourses and, derivatively, among the syndicats. This governing committee, which was supposedly representative of all the

55. James Joll, op. cit., p. 199.

56. Fernand Pelloutier, "Le Comité Fédéral des Bourses du Travail", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Nov. 1, 1899, p. 557.

Bourses, made its views known on any new issues by circulars sent ot the individual Bourses; the access of the Paris Bourse to first-hand information made it unchallengeable by any concerted opposition from the provinces.[57] The committee also forwarded pamphlets discouraging political action and urging instead revolutionary syndicalist action and provided useful material on all types of labour problems to provincial militants; typical of such material was Pelloutier's pamphlets on the institution of new Bourses du Travail and the development of useful services.

The ministérialiste crisis provided the lever which threw the balance toward the final pre-war revolutionary syndicalist mentality which came to dominate the CGT. The Fédération des Bourses, led by Pelloutier, immediately began attacking the proposed social reforms as an attempt at co-option. As Proudhon had suggested with regard to the Second Empire, the blandishments of an illegitimate regime must be rejected in favour of an independent proletarian policy. Millerand's difficulty in urging his reforms on the Assembly and the practical failure of the mixed commissions destroyed the illusions of many of the syndicalists. Syndicalism opposed the concept of direct action culminating in the general strike to indirect and unfruitful parliamentary action. This growing ouvrieriste attitude culminated in the final union between Bourses and syndicats at the Montpellier Congress of the CGT in 1902. The Bourses were granted equality with the united trade federations on the central committee; every syndicat was required to belong to both its national federation and to the local Bourse.

The Fédération des Bourses section, headed by Pelloutier's disciples, the anarchists Yvetot and Delesalle, was granted equality with the united

57. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des Bourses du Travail, p. 336.

trade federations headed by Pouget. Pouget had been the editor of the CGT organ, La Voix du Peuple, and later was instigator of the eight-hour day struggle.[58] Elected as secretary-general of the whole CGT was the Blanquist, Victor Griffuelhes, whose ideas had developed within the movement during the 1890's and who cooperated fully with his anarchist comrades in later years. Maitron rightly claims that "the CGT, newly constituted, was really the work of the Fédération des Bourses and was totally impregnated with its libertarian spirit."[59]

Before analyzing the nature of the anarchosyndicalist ideology and the extent to which it was the coming to fruition of Proudhon's ideas, we must determine whether the anarchists inside or outside the syndicats were more in conformity with Proudhonism. The majority of the French anarchists, including Grave, Reclus, Malato and the Italian, Enrico Malatesta, accused the syndicalist anarchists of treason to the cause. Grave viewed the syndicats as purely battle formations in the abolition of bourgeois society;[60] after the revolution, new associations must be formed concerned primarily with filling consumption needs. Pouget and Pelloutier, however, saw the Bourses and syndicats themselves becoming productive associations after the revolution.[61] The latter were closer to Proudhon because he similarly had described the morale and organization of the future as developing in the associations before the revolution. The argument of Grave and Malatesta that the anarchists could not integrate totally in the syndicats because they were corporative and refor-

58. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 93.

59. Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, 1880-1914, p. 294.

60. Ibid., p. 478.

61. Émile Pataud and Émile Pouget, Comment nous ferons la révolution (Paris, 1911), passim.

mist is difficult to maintain because only through working totally within the syndicats did the anarchists eventually succeed in influencing the CGT to officially become both revolutionary and anti-parliamentary. A pure theorist such as Grave or a revolutionary uncommitted to the syndicats such as Malatesta could gain neither the trust nor the influence that the anarchists within the movement enjoyed. Committed to an abstract ideal rather than to a specific movement, the unaffiliated anarchists were acting in a void. The criticism by the syndicalists of these anarchists was not without basis.

In his debate with Malatesta at the international anarchist congress in Amsterdam in 1907, Pierre Monatte voiced the common opinion of the anarchists who had joined the syndicats: The CGT was implicitly anarchist in its organization: "The CGT governs itself from bottom to top; the syndicat has no master but itself....At the base of the Confédération is the syndicat."[62] He openly related syndicalism to the libertarian tradition: "The ideas of autonomy and federation which are so honoured among us....were overtly adopted by the Bakuninists"[63] of the First International. Organized on the principle of one syndicat per trade in each city, political differences were necessarily excluded; what was affirmed by such a basis was working-class unity or ouvrierisme as opposed to parliamentarism as practiced by the socialists or the ivory-tower speculations of the anarchists.[64] As Proudhon had urged, the syndicats were purely economic and class associations centred around certain ideas and specific practices which, hopefully, would bring about fundamental

62. Jean Maitron, Ravachol et les Anarchistes (Paris, 1964), p. 143.

63. Ibid., p. 144.

64. Ibid., pp. 146-8.

change rather than being politically oriented or committed to an abstract social ideal.

Yvetot similarly agreed that the anarchist movement had lost touch with reality. However, he claimed that "true" anarchism was the end pursued by the syndicalists:

> "I am reproached with confusing syndicalism and anarchism. It is not my fault if syndicalism and anarchism have the same ends in view. The former pursues the integral emancipation of the individual, the latter the integral emancipation of the workingman. I find the whole of syndicalism in anarchism."[65]

To conclude, the development of a syndicalist organization was a natural development within the capitalist system. The growing anti-political sentiment within the syndicats derived, in part, from the disillusion with parliamentary action, from the impossibility of developing united economic action if the syndicats were politically affiliated and from the active propaganda of the anarchists. Once inside the movement, the anarchists actively encouraged this anti-political sentiment and urged purely syndical revolutionary action. Their coup was complete with the conquest of the CGT by the Bourses. The syndicalist leaders were more revolutionary than the rank and file but, by virtue of their positions, were able to infuse a stronger militancy among the workers. Previously erratic, strike activity became more concerted and dangerous to the state after 1900 than before. The anarchists, consciously influenced by Proudhon and the libertarian tradition, made the CGT itself a revolutionary anarchist, or rather, anarchosyndicalist, movement. The socialists had become a popular party and few of their leaders were wor-

65. Louis Levine, The Labour Movement in France: A Study in Revolutionary Syndicalism (New York, 1914), p. 200

kers. The anarchists, on the other hand, led a largely revolutionary proletarian movement committed to fundamental change. The CGT, save one or two exceptions, was led by highly-conscious self-educated workers and, by virtue of its federalist structure, was more democratic than the parties. The Movement which Proudhon had urged had materialized.

Chapter 6: The Anarchosyndicalist Ideology

Subsequent to the development of industrialization, certain national proletarian movements have held the attention of and inspired attempts at imitation by other labour movements. The early English trade union movement and the Soviet Revolution seemed to indicate to their international sympathizers, in their respective eras, the means of liberation from capitalism. From 1900-14, the French CGT similarly exercised a singular attraction for the revolutionary workers' movements of the industrialized western world. The French revolutionary syndicalist tactics and goals were lauded and supported by disciples in England, the United States, Italy, Spain and certain other countries. Leaders like Thomas Mann in England, similarly disillusioned by the fruitlessness of a parliamentary action which was becoming increasingly reformist and out of touch with the working class, urged greater concentration in developing the unions into consciously revolutionary bodies.

To analyze the reasons for the singularity of this syndicalist appeal, we must view the movement as a total approach to the problems of industrial society. Syndicalism was more than an organization; it was also an ideology with an astute critique of bourgeois society and a theory of social renewal through the agency of the workers' associations. Finally, it was also concerned with the practical ends of labour struggles and social revolution.

The Syndicalist Critique of Capitalism and the State

The syndicalists were in agreement with Proudhon's critique of capitalism. The first thesis of a model *syndicat* constitution provided by the CGT claimed: "By the effects of modern industry and by the 'logical' support that gives Power to the owners of property and of the means of production, there

is permanent antagonism between Capital and Labour."[1] Like Proudhon, the syndicalists asserted that the institution of property alienated the worker from the just rewards of his labour. "The worker is condemned to labour; he alone creates social wealth. However, he does not profit from it. Only the employers benefit."[2]

However, the capitalist was only a part of the authority structure which lived as a parasite upon the work of the masses. Georges Yvetot, the secretary of the Fédération des Bourses, told the syndicalists: "Your sole enemy is he who exploits, oppresses, commands and misleads you,"[3] that is, both the capitalist and state authority structures. Similarly, Pelloutier asserted, "The revolutionary goal is the liberation of man, not only from all authority but also from all institutions that have no purpose in the development of production."[4]

The syndicalists essentially agreed with Proudhon's critique of the state. Like Proudhon, Édouard Berth claimed, "Power, in passing from the hands of the king to those of Parliament, lost none of its power or concentration; on the contrary....it is more concentrated, more powerful than ever; Democracy calls itself one and indivisible."[5] The syndicalists ridiculed, as had Proudhon, the very efficacy of parliamentary government which, they de-

1. Henri Dubief, Le Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire (Paris, 1969), p. 104.

2. Auguste Pawlowski, La Confédération Générale du Travail (Paris, 1910), p. 54.

3. Henri Dubief, op. cit., p. 161.

4. Jean Maitron, Le Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire: Paul Delesalle (Paris, 1952), p. 24.

5. Sylvain Humbert, Le Mouvement Syndical (Paris, 1912), p. 90.

clared, "is incompetent because it constitutes an abstract personage, detached from the real conditions of life, having to pronounce....on an ensemble of vague questions called the 'general interest' of which it is ignorant."[6] Parliamentary government would remain ieffectual and the syndicalists declared those foolish who expected reforms from it.

Hubert Lagardelle expressed a truly Proudhonist critique of parliamentarism when he said:

> "While economic society knows only groupings of real men: workers, capitalists, landed proprietors, etc., political society knows only an abstract man, an impersonal symbol: the citizen. It dissolves classes in what Proudhon called a social atomism: there are no more groups; there are only individuals."[7]

This was the basis of the syndicalist rebuttal of the assertion that parliamentary action was useful: economic groups, related to real work patterns, should be the basic political structure.

Thus, the state was artificial because it was alienated from the economic base of society. Originating with the power of the monarchy, it should have disappeared with the abolition of that institution. The syndicalists strongly opposed the continued deification of the state by the democrats and socialists.[8]

The syndicalists agreed with Proudhon that government, by its very nature, was composed of a privileged élite and inevitably became a defender of privilege. Even in a parliamentary democracy, there would be "an inevitable

6. Hubert Lagardelle, "Les caractères généraux du syndicalisme", Le Mouvement Socialiste, June, 1908, p. 430.

7. Hubert Lagardelle, "Classe sociale et parti politique", Le Mouve- Socialiste, June, 1909, p. 17.

8. Victor Griffuelhes and Louis Niel, Les Objectifs de nos Luttes de Classe (Paris, date unknown), p. 20.

desertion of power from the popular cause."[9] In a bourgeois society, the state was inevitably committed to defending capitalist interests. In the France of the turn of the century, the syndicalists were readily convinced of this thesis. The first line of defence of the bourgeois state was its law-making role; either the state labelled potentially dangerous movements and activities as illegal or else it attempted to co-opt them. The syndicalist suspicion of all parliamentary reforms was epitomized in Yvetot's terse statement: "All laws are made by the bourgeoisie."[10] Force was the ultimate means by which the bourgeois state enforced its will. Victor Griffuelhes claimed, "Through coercion, the bourgeoisie imposes its will and caprices; by coercion it maintains its exploitation. Society rests solely on the capacity for coercion; it lives on its coercive strength...."[11]

Proudhon had similarly claimed that it was solely through direct force or the capacity for coercion that the state continued to exist and, indirectly, that the privileges of the élite were defended. For the syndicalists, the most ostensible expression of this characteristic of the state was the use of the police and army to suppress strikes. Sorel gave voice to this sentiment when he claimed that the army was "the clearest manifestation and the most tangible and solid connection with its origins that one can have of the State."[12]

The anti-militarist campaigns arose primarily as a reaction against the

9. P.-J. Proudhon, Idée Générale de la Révolution au XIX^{e} Siècle (Paris, 1868), p. 111.

10. Georges Lefranc, Le Mouvement Syndicale sous la Troisième République (Paris, 1967), p. 98.

11. Victor Griffuelhes, "Le Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Jan. 1, 1905, p. 6.

12. Sylvain Humbert, op. cit., p. 91.

use of the army as strike-breaker.[13] The syndicats were called upon to "recall to the proletarian that the army, the nation and war are bourgeois and that only the class struggle is proletarian."[14] But such propaganda became much more alarming to the authorities when the syndicalists urged the soldiers to refuse to obey orders and to openly espouse the workers' cause.[15] Yvetot's Manuel du Soldat, a pamphlet distributed to soldiers, rejected all wars save the social war. It violently attacked all the vices characteristic of the military life. In the barracks, the soldier became brutalized: "The years of service are an apprenticeship in brutality and baseness for every citizen."[16] The CGT also attempted to maintain the loyalty of former syndiqués in uniform through the institution of the "soldier's penny"—token support given to the soldier. The purpose of the anti-militarist propaganda was to gain the support of the lower ranks of the army; it urged soldiers to refuse to obey orders to suppress striking workers.

The anti-militarist campaigns were intimately allied with the anti-statist and anti-patriotic propaganda. Through patriotism, Griffuelhes charged, the bourgeoisie justified the existence of an army whose actual prime social role was the defence of privilege.[17] Patriotism was a bourgeois idea with its specific "tradition, mores and customs"[18] to which the workers were fo-

13. Paul Delesalle, Les Bourses du Travail et la CGT (Paris, date unknown), p. 40.

14. Hubert Lagardelle in Henri Dubief, op. cit., p. 149.

15. Georges Yvetot, "Enquête sur l'Idée de la Patrie et La Classe Ouvrière", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Aug.-Nov., 1905, p. 465.

16. Auguste Pawlowski, op. cit., pp. 85-6.

17. Victor Griffuelhes, L'Action Syndicaliste (Paris, 1908), p. 42.

18. Léon Jouhaux, Le Syndicalisme français (Paris, 1913), p. 37.

reign. The workers lacked the intellectual and material resources of the bourgeoisie and thus did not have a basis on which to build a loyalty to his nation; Griffuelhes claimed, "The moral traditions of our nation and its inheritance are unknown to me.... [also] I do not own the smallest piece of its land."[19] The nation, as it existed, was only an artificial unity created by past wars; the national state was an empty creation which was bound to disappear.[20] Proudhon had similarly rejected the "bourgeois" idea of patriotism and the nation-state and had urged breaking down the state into a new federal decentralized order; only where Justice existed, Proudhon also declared, was his patrie to be found.[21]

The bourgeois idea of the nation was a "mystification"[22] in the Proudhonist sense of the term; its function was to mislead the workers into defending institutions which supposedly represented but actually oppressed them. The bourgeoisie needed the myth of the nation because "its disappearance would put an end to their privileges."[23] But the idea of the nation was doomed to die in the minds of the workers because it "was evident to them solely in the boss, the foreman, the briber, the police, the judge and the jailer."[24] As Proudhon had claimed, international war would give way to class war whose resolution would finally put an end to all wars; Yvetot similarly asserted, "The class struggle leads to the negation of the nation; it substitutes war

19. Victor Griffuelhes, "Enquête sur l'Idée de la Patrie...", p. 443.

20. Ibid., p. 445.

21. Gaëtan Pirou, Proudhonisme et Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire (Paris, 1910), p. 283.

22. See Chapter 3, p. 37.

23. Léon Jouhaux, op. cit., p. 36.

24. Victor Griffuelhes in Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 99.

between classes in place of war between states."[25]

The workers must, therefore, refuse to fight in bourgeois wars between states. Louis Niel said, "The workers must refuse to be patriots by defending property and a nation which do not exist for them; this is their duty and their right."[26] The 1908 Congress of the CGT claimed, "The workers have no nation."[27] The Congress also "declared that, from the international point of view, it is necessary to instruct the workers that, in the case of war between states, the workers reply to the declaration of war by a declaration of the revolutionary general strike."[28] As Proudhon before them had claimed, the only nation that the worker knows is "the place where he labours."[29] This assertion also indicates the role which the syndicalists anticipated for the federalist syndical organization as the basis for the future society.

The revolutionary implications of the anti-militarist and anti-patriotic propaganda horrified the reformists more than all the other elements of the revolutionaries' tactics. Alphonse Merrheim, an opponent of such propaganda, was probably correct when he asserted that these campaigns conflicted strongly with the sentiments of many workers and would eventually weaken the movement after the inevitable failures.[30]

25. Ibid.

26. Louis Niel, Enquête sur l'Idée de la Patrie...., p. 452.

27. Jean Maitron and C. Chambelland, Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme, les archives de Pierre Monatte (Paris, 1968), p. 16.

28. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 189.

29. Victor Griffuelhes, Enquête sur l'Idée de la Patrie...., p. 445.

30. Henri Dubief, op. cit., p. 87.

An issue which was more popular among the reformists was that of non-alignments with the socialist parties; the syndicalists agreed with Émile Pouget's motion at the first CGT congress in 1895 that "the constituent elements of the CGT should stay out of all the political schools."[31] Although many syndicalists actively supported certain parties, such action was divorced from syndical affairs. But the revolutionary syndicalists pressed for an open attack on all parliamentary action which was opposed by the reformists. Griffuelhes claimed,

> "Outside of and opposed to capitalism and the state, the syndicalist movement must develop and act. State socialism can only develop through weakness and apathy; syndicalism, on the contrary, is a doctrine of energy and combat; it denounces the danger and sterility of governmental institutions."[32]

A socialist state would bring the worker no nearer to liberation: Delesalle asserted, "We must avoid the passing of the proletariat from the state of capitalist economic oppression to a state of governmental economic oppression."[33] The strong Proudhonist and anarchist suspicion of the paternalistic state is evident here. Proudhon had also urged electoral abstention and had preached opposition to the Jacobin politicians.

The syndicalists believed that the socialists, in submitting to the bourgeois democratic institutions, were themselves assimilating the bourgeois world-view. Berth attacked the Guesdists, "The attempt to introduce the socialist insight into the bourgeois framework, the political and par-

31. Émile Pouget, "La CGT et le Congrès de Lyons", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Dec. 1, 1901, p. 668.

32. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 98.

33. Paul Delesalle, Les Deux Méthodes du Syndicalisme (Paris, 1905), p. 16.

liamentary framework....is the eternal story of new wine in old bottles."[34] Georges Sorel best expressed the revolutionaries' contempt for parliamentarism as a means of liberation: "Once the worker has accepted as leaders people alien to the corporation of producers, he will never learn the art of governing himself; he will remain subjected to external discipline.... the exploitation of the worker will continue."[35] Parliamentary action, as contrasted with syndicalism, gave the leadership of the workers' movement to "lawyers without clients, doctors without patients or ability, billiards students....and journalists of the small papers who imposed themselves as leaders on the workers' groups and thus found a career and a cause in socialism."[36]

The state, moreover, was powerless to renew society. State socialists were guilty of "according to the coercive power of the State a creative value which it does not have."[37] Hubert Lagardelle, who totally agreed with the syndicalist attitude, asserted, "Governmental action....tends to displace the centre of gravity of socialist action, which is and must remain in the working class, into the more or less influential politicians who are favourable to it."[38] Parliamentary action also inevitably tended to further conciliation rather than conflict with the class enemy. "Democracy, in dominating class conflicts, hopes to conciliate them within the capitalist system. Socialism, [i. e. the syndicalist movement] , in placing itself in the heart

34. Henri Dubief, op. cit., p. 127.

35. James H. Meisel, The Genesis of Georges Sorel (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1951), p. 111.

36. Georges Sorel, L'Avenir Socialiste des Syndicats (Paris, 1901), p. xiii.

37. Hubert Lagardelle in Le Parti Socialiste et la CGT (Paris, date unknown), p. 22.

38. Hubert Lagardelle, "Ministérialisme et Socialisme", Le Mouvement Socialiste, July 15, 1901, p. 70.

of the class conflict, presses it to the extreme and awaits as resolution the end of the bourgeois world."[39]

Like the syndicalists, Proudhon also urged alienation from the democratic political process in favour of total concern with the development of the workers' economic organization as the basis of the future society. Proudhon had harshly attacked the Jacobins who purported to be leaders of the working class during the Second Empire. Like the syndicalists, he was concerned that the workers should not place vain hopes in specific political leaders while neglecting to develop their own organizations.

The reformists and political socialists in the syndicats who hoped to gain reforms through the parliamentary process strongly opposed the anti-political propaganda of the revolutionaries; They wished the syndicats to be neutral and apolitical, to unite workers on the economic level while ignoring their political and religious predilections. However, the reformists agreed with the revolutionaries as to the final outcome of the social struggle; they differed only on the means to attain that end.

The Development of the Counter-Society

Like Proudhon, the syndicalists asserted that the development of a society characterized by a higher standard of justice was the consequence of a moral imperative rather than of a material determinism. Although industrial capitalism tended to intensify the class war, this, in itself, was not sufficient to bring about fundamental social change.[40] What was also required was the development of a new consciousness, a new morale, which would be the

39. Hubert Lagardelle, L'Évolution des syndicats ouvriers en France (Paris, 1901), p. 51.

40. Victor Griffuelhes and Louis Niel, op. cit., p. 61.

basis for social relations in the future society. This new moral sense could develop only within the solidarity of the functional work groups. Syndicalism, based on such an organization, "develops, intensifies and perfects, more and more, the sentiment of justice"[41] in the minds of the workers. Revolutionary syndicalism, in essence, was "the search for the most efficacious means of developing in the minds of the workers those virtues and that disposition necessary for the functioning of the future society."[42] In this process, syndicalism was developing the new values of the future society which would replace bourgeois values.[43]

Like Proudhon, the syndicalists denied the utility of the bourgeois standard of justice by which all citizens were declared to be politically and legally equal. Justice and morality must also penetrate economic life; this could only be accomplished by the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by the new syndicalist methods and values.[44]

The three principal elements of the syndicalist morale prior to the revolution were those of fidelity to the syndicat, solidarity with one's comrades and revolutionary activity to increase the militancy of other workers.[45] The syndicat was the focal point in the life of the revolutionary worker. Based on the "workshop--the free and equal grouping of workers, possessers of their means of production and masters of the collective power which, until now, has been alienated into the hands of Capital and the State

41. Ibid., p. 62.

42. Gaétan Pirou, op. cit., p. 93.

43. Hubert Lagardelle, "Sources du syndicalisme", Plans, Feb., 1932, p. 20.

44. Gaétan Pirou, op. cit., pp. 44-55.

—for syndicalism, this is the centre and the soul of the socialist society."[46] Griffuelhes concurred with this assessment: "If the working class experience is practiced and developed in the work-shop and factory, the syndicalist movement is its expression."[47] The workers' activity in the syndicat gave rise to the new ideas and the new morale of syndicalism: "In the syndicat, the worker becomes conscious of himself; there, he reflects on his condition, attempts to ameliorate it and learns to resolve the problems of his inferiority, ignorance and obedience through reflection and action."[48] Both the ideas of the ideal future society and the means to attain it develop within the milieu of the functional work-grouping, a central thesis of the Proudhonist doctrine. Proudhon had emphasized the central importance of the workers' associations in the development of the morale and methods of the future political and economic organization.[49] The syndicalist assessment also concurred remarkably with a declaration by Tolain, one of the signatories of the Manifeste des Soixante that, in the economic order, "the workers' syndicalist chapter will be....the institution from which all future progress will develop."[50]

Syndicalism, by its point of departure from the work-shop, implicitly agreed with Proudhon's assessment of the bourgeois idea of justice: "Syndicalism no longer considers the individual as citizen; it takes him in his

46. Édouard Berth, Les Nouveaux Aspects du Socialisme (Paris, 1908), p. 17.

47. Victor Griffuelhes, "La Grève Générale et le Socialisme", Le Mouvement Socialiste, June 15, July 15, 1904, p. 156.

48. Maxime Leroy, La Coûtume Ouvrière (Paris, 1913), p. 57.

49. See Chapter 3, pp. 53-6.

50. Maxime Leroy, op. cit., p. 91.

function as producer; the Declaration of the Rights of Man no longer suffices to resolve the problems of contemporary society...."[51] Proudhon had similarly condemned the abstract absolute forms of Justice which France had inherited from the Revolution.[52]

The syndicat must exclude all political debates in order to maximize economic strength. "It is the inequality in misfortune which strikes the worker , which necessitates solidarity on a terrain where political or religious differences do not impede unity."[53] The workers were united only when demanding amelioration of their economic situation. "Syndiqués and non-syndiqués mingle in the work-shop and in daily life; they are distinguished only by their degree of radicalism."[54]

To maximize the efficacy of syndical action, all collaboration with political groups was denounced. Griffuelhes claimed that syndicalism "should escape all outside influences...."[55] To attain "the independent character which we wish to give to worker action, the syndicalist movement should freely develop and act outside of and opposed to both the capitalist class and the government."[56] As Proudhon had done, the syndicalists urged total alienation from illegitimate and dying institutions--the state, the parties and the bourgeoisie--and rejection of their values.[57] To this end, the syndicalists

51. Roger Picard, Le Mouvement Syndical pendant la Guerre (Paris, 1919), p. 34.

52. See Chapter 3, pp. 36-9.

53. Louis Niel, quoted in Henri Dubief, op. cit., p. 81.

54. Hubert Lagardelle, "Les caractères généraux du syndicalisme", Le Mouvement Socialiste, June, 1908, p. 436.

55. Victor Griffuelhes, L'Action Syndicaliste, p. 17.

56. Ibid., p. 14.

57. Robert Goetz-Girey, op. cit., p. 64.

characteristically opposed the registering of the syndicats as professional associations in accordance with the 1884 law. Commenting on the need to rid syndicalism of all outside connections, Delesalle related it with "the desire for independence, liberty and autonomy which have always been strong among the French workers."[58]

The desire for independence manifested itself not only in the distrust of parties but also in the opposition to mixed commissions and in the continued demands that the Bourses rid themselves of municipal controls and subsidies.[59] Lagardelle underlined this need for independence which was constantly asserted by the revolutionaries:

> "The workers' movement only has meaning to the extent that it develops its own institutions, at the expense of capitalist institutions. It becomes a more and more independent force, of autonomous formation, which counts only on itself and becomes, in effect, a State within a State. Its worst enemy is governmental socialism."[60]

Only by becoming totally independent could the syndicalists hope to eventually become "everything", to realize their ideas through action.[61]

Only within the "total institutions"[62] of the syndicats could a revolutionary class consciousness arise among the workers. Solidarity progressed from the functional reciprocity of the work-shop to the reciprocity of ideas, tactics and ends of the syndicat which originated from that work-shop. Moral

58. Paul Delesalle, Les Bourses du Travail et la CGT, p. 54.

59. Louis Niel, "Le VII^{e} Congrès de la CGT", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Jan. 15, Feb. 15, 1903, p. 336.

60. Hubert Lagardelle, "Le Socialisme ouvrier", Le Mouvement Socialiste, #2, 1904, p. 6.

61. Émile Pouget, quoted in Colette Chambelland, Le Syndicalisme Ouvrier Français (Paris, 1956), p. 36.

62. Erving Goffman employs this expression to describe certain types of institutions which strongly dominate the lives of its individual members.

unity was achieved among the workers "by the progressive development of the consciousness of their solidarity."[63] The syndicats, "the primary school of socialism,....were the locales where that great thing, working class consciousness, was born."[64]

In France, this class consciousness was of long standing in the nineteenth century:

> "The working class embodied an old defiant sentiment of an oppressed class, put outside the law, which society fears and which the police keep under surveillance, which the army keeps under control and which the administration pesters. The revolutionary syndicalists have succeeded in giving to this instinct of social opposition all its intensity and have elevated it to the level of consciousness."[65]

However, syndicalist class consciousness was not only negative, in opposition to the oppressors, but also affirmed the dignity of the worker. Griffuelhes contrasted the new morale of the workers with the values of the bourgeoisie:

> "In man, there are two persons: he who does not give himself and he who does. The first is egotistic and individual; the second is sensitive, responsible and sympathetic. The former lives in and for himself, the second lives for the masses, for society."[66]

Within the syndicalist movement developed the proletarian élite which embodied the highest aspirations of the working class and which led the less conscious in acts of war against the class enemy. This élite was the first to grasp the ideas of the ideal future society and, through direct action

63. Henri Dubief, op. cit., p. 124.

64. Daniel Halévy, Essais sur le mouvement ouvrier en France (Paris, 1901), pp. 75, 85; see also Victor Griffuelhes, La Grève générale et le socialisme, pp. 156-7.

65. Hubert Lagardelle, "Le Congrès syndical de Bourges", Le Mouvement Socialiste, 2e2, 1904, p. 31.

66. Victor Griffuelhes, Voyage Révolutionnaire (Paris, date unknown), pp. 58-9.

against the capitalist or the state, inspired a new consciousness among the working masses. Proudhon had similarly lauded the development of a highly conscious working class leadership which worked within proletarian organizations; he had recognized also that this consciousness developed first among only a small élite and that most workers remained apathetic until they were inspired by the activities of this élite. Unlike Bakunin and the anarchists, moreover, the syndicalists were committed totally to the syndicats rather than to a specific ideological party or sect; this was reflected by their support for the Charte d'Amiens which expressed contempt for the unaffiliated anarchists.

The doctrine of "conscious minorities"[67], while also preached by the anarchists, acquired a somewhat different meaning among the syndicalists. These minorities were now the workers within the syndicats rather than a revolutionary élite committed to a specific ideology. But this doctrine nevertheless still implied the same anti-democratic assumptions. Democracy gave power to the unconscious, to those who refused to will and who neglected to work for the ideal society. Syndicalism, as a revolutionary movement, necessarily was led by an élite of the more conscious workers. "Opposed to traditional democracy, which knew only individuals, syndicalism derived from the group and implied an élite. Thus, syndicalism would be different, by nature, from democracy."[68] Political socialism as well as all other democratic parties derived from and engendered apathy and fostered deference to a non-proletarian elite. Syndicalism, on the other hand, implied the develop-

67. Sylvain Humbert, op. cit., p. 90.

68. Hubert Lagardelle, quoted in Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 107.

ment of a group consciousness through direct action from the syndicat base. The syndicalists were also wont to use the argument of conscious minorities against the reformists' demands for proportional representation to the CGT; democratic ideas were declared to be inapplicable in a movement committed to complete destruction of the bourgeois parliamentary state. To that end, leadership had to remain with the more conscious revolutionary élite.

In this attitude, the revolutionary syndicalists were probably at variance with Proudhon. The latter had recognized differences in political consciousness among workers but would have opposed any suggestion of élitism among workers as he did all political and economic authority. He insisted, always, on equality among producers as opposed to the need for intellectual leaders for the workers, even from their own class.

The heart of the new society was already being prepared in the CGT, organized federally around the syndicats, each of which belonged to both its national trade federation and the local Bourse du Travail. After the revolution, this organization would assume the responsibilities of production and distribution while the central state would become superfluous and disappear. The trade-unions (syndicats de métier) and their regional and national federations represented the corporate interests of the workers and pursued their interests with appropriate mass action in the pre-revolutionary society; after the revolution, the federations would be charged with the actual production taking over the functions of management from the entrepreneurs. This principle was enshrined in the Charte d'Amiens: "The trade-union, which is today a fighting organization, will in the future be an organization for

production and distribution, and the basis of social reorganization."[69]

The Bourses du Travail represented the interests of the worker, not as a tradesman, but as a member of a class. Uniting all local syndicats and integrating their services, the Bourses best represented the class solidarity which the revolutionary syndicalists were attempting to foster. Until their decline after 1914, the Bourses continued to reflect the peculiar impress of their first leader, Fernand Pelloutier. The new leaders of the Fédération des Bourses agreed with his estimation of the value of the Bourses which he regarded as "schools of propaganda, of administration and education, capable of suppressing and replacing the contemporary social organization."[70] Yvetot, the secretary of the Fédération after 1901, declared that, after the revolution, "the Bourses du Travail should, by the organization of consumption, regulate scientifically the quantity, social utility, expediency and morale of production."[71]

If the syndical organizations were to be viable counter-organizations, they would necessarily have to be as independent as possible of the institutions which the revolutionaries were committed to destroying. A constant criticism within the Bourses was their dependence on municipal subsidies which supposedly limited their revolutionary potential.[72] Although the institution of independent Unions des Syndicats alongside the Bourses administration camouflaged this dependence, the syndicalists were painfully aware of the contradiction.

69. Val R. Lorwin, The French Labour Movement (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 313.

70. R. Garmy, Histoire du Mouvement Syndicale en France (Paris, 1933), Vol. 1, p. 206.

71. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 97.

72. Sylvain Humbert, op. cit., p. 31.

In their espousal of federalism, the syndicalists were clearly in debt to the inspiration of Proudhon and the anarchist tradition. To replace the moribund state, the syndicalists were committed to the decentralist ideal of "the free syndiqué in the syndicat, the free syndicat in the federation, the free federation in the Confédération...."[73] The syndicalists believed that the CGT was a perfect example of federalism in operation. Émile Pouget, a CGT leader, claimed:

> "The CGT is not an organ of direction but of coordination....Here, there is cohesion and not centralization, impulse and not direction. Federalism is everywhere and, at each level, the diverse organs, individual, syndicat, federation or Bourse du Travail are all autonomous."[74]

As productive organizations, the syndicalist chapters, organized federally, would replace the central government as the sole essential institutions.

Like Proudhon, also, the syndicalists urged self-education as an ideal to which each worker should aspire. Proudhon had claimed that self-education should derive from work-patterns: "The school of arts, trades and manufactures is the work-shop; the school of commerce is the store...."[75] Education must basically be apprenticeship, understood in a broad sense; Delesalle asserted, "By industrial apprenticeship, the city must become, for the artisan, what the country is or was for the peasant: a second nature.... which, in thought and action, develops and redevelops the man in him."[76] This was a global vision of the relation between worker and community to

73. Hubert Lagardelle, quoted in Gaétan Pirou, op. cit., p. 231.

74. Georges Lefranc, op. cit., p. 73.

75. Albert Thierry, Réflexions sur l'Éducation (Blainville sur mer, Manche, 1963), p. 120.

76. Ibid., p. 129.

which capitalism and government were totally foreign. This wide responsibility demanded an understanding which necessarily was broader than the narrow confines of the work-shop itself. Albert Thierry, a sympathizer of the movement, agreed with the syndicalists that education included philosophical and political understanding: "Through history, [the worker] will feel himself to be revolutionary; by critical logic, by metaphysics, he will feel himself capable of understanding the capital problems which the world imposes on man...."[77] The libraries and courses of instruction provided by the Bourses made possible the development of such a self-reliant working class.

But the primary role of the syndicats' apprenticeship programs was the training for work: "Before training the students for revolution, they must be trained for work."[78] The knowledge of one's trade was the first step in the education of the worker; only after this could class-consciousness and a revolutionary mentality develop. Apprenticeship programs were supervised by the syndicats and were indirectly under the leadership of the local Bourse.

The state schools were ill-adapted for the role of educating young workers for their future vocation; the syndicalists agreed fully with Proudhon's criticism that the schools educated "aristocrats" rather than workers.[79] Proudhon had said, "Technical apprenticeship and advancement through all the levels of training—this is what worker emancipation consists of."[80] Certain syndicalists entertained the radical proposal of initiating free schools under syndical control for the children of workers. Their basic concern was "the need to make education more concrete, better adapted to the needs of life and

77. Ibid., pp. 164-5.

78. Ibid., p. 37.

79. Georges Sorel, L'Avenir Socialiste des Syndicats, p. 54.

80. P.-J. Proudhon, De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église (Paris, 1930-35, 4 vols.), II, p. 338.

work, more impartial with regard to political and social conceptions."[81]

This concern for syndical control of the education of young workers concurred with the desire to take over and provide all essential social services. The services of the Bourses, as initiated by Pelloutier, were continued and expanded after his death. The strong opposition to the Millerand reforms and, later, to government pension plans reflected this strong ouvrieriste attitude among the revolutionaries. J. A. Estey pointed out the revolutionary implications of this desire to have nothing to do with the schemes of the class enemy: "If one would seek out the essence of the class struggle, it is to be found in the endeavour of the working class gradually to transfer to their own organization everything that is valuable in the organizations of the bourgeoisie, leaving them but empty husks, devoid of life."[82] The difference with the previous social order was that its core would be the new syndicalist practices and ideas rather than the capitalist and governmental structure; the bourgeois state would be replaced by "the sole justifiable sovereignty: that of work."[83]

From the working patterns of the proletariat developed the consciousness of self as a member of a class, an idea of how one's work could ideally be organized and, finally, overt action to bring about that ideal society.[84] The syndicalist intellectuals consciously espoused the Proudhonist idéo-réaliste conception of reality. "The ideal man, for the socialist, is the

81. M. T. Laurin, "Les Écoles Syndicales", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Jan., 1909, p. 43.

82. J. A. Estey, Revolutionary Syndicalism (London, 1913), p. 93.

83. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des Bourses du Travail (Paris, 1946), p. 170.

84. Hubert Lagardelle, "Les caractères généraux du capitalisme", Le Mouvement Socialiste, June, 1908, pp. 431-2.

'social worker' whose life is a harmonious equilibrium between action and thought."[85] Syndicalist action must never be blind instinctive rebellion as Bakunin had prophesied would occur but must derive from theory in the tradition of Proudhon: "In each man, there is a thinker and a fighter...."[86]

The theories concerning the organization of the post-revolutionary society existed already in the minds of men while the practices and organizations were being developed in the syndicats and Bourses. Syndicalism was "the synthesis of thought and action, of revolutionary ends and actual accomplishments, of the spirit of the present and the soul of the future."[87] Syndicalist gains represented the triumph of the new forms of justice which were evolving in the minds of the workers: "Laws are the consequence of force; the triumphs and progress of revolutionary syndicalism mark the progressive realization of the workers' law."[88] Like the bourgeoisie before 1789, the workers were developing the future legal forms before the proletarian revolution.[89] Like Proudhon, the syndicalists were obsessed with the idea of law (droit). They were very concerned to prove that the new institutional forms which they were developing were more in accord with absolute standards of justice than were the institutions and laws of the bourgeois revolutionaries.

As Proudhon had urged, contract based on mutuality and free exchanges

85. Gaétan Pirou, op. cit., p. 107.

86. Victor Griffuelhes and Louis Niel, op. cit., p. 37.

87. Hubert Lagardelle, "Sources du syndicalisme", p. 21.

88. G. Beaubois, "Le Mouvement des huit heures", Le Mouvement Socialiste, April 15, 1906, p. 438. Le droit ouvrier is difficult to translate into English; droit implies both law and right and thus has both legal and moral overtones.

89. Maxime Leroy, op. cit., p. 26.

would be the central relation binding men to each other. The federal organization and mutual interdependence would ensure that no new authority would develop.[90] Capitalist methods, which rested on different values and which were made possible through the protection of the central state and liberal laissez-faire legal principles, would necessarily disappear after the social revolution.

The Means of Revolution

The syndicalist movement had, prior to its evolution, one hundred years of French revolutionary history which could be examined as to the possibilities of establishing the socialist society. This study of the past led to a scepticism of political revolutionary or electoral methods of achieving change. Like Proudhon and Pelloutier, the syndicalists rejected political methods because they wished to abolish rather than to capture the state. Revolution and electoral politics "were equally utopian conceptions because they accorded to the coercive power of the State a creative value which it does not have."[91]

The long history of unsuccessful or corrupted French revolutions had destroyed any syndicalist faith in according power through revolution to new political elites, no matter how sympathetic such leaders might declare themselves to be to the workers. Clemenceau and Briand, the contemporary traitors, were successors to the Republican governments of June, 1848, and 1871. Like Proudhon and Pelloutier, the syndicalists asserted that political revolution had benefited only the agitators—the élite whose chief interest was

90. J.-L. Puech, La Tradition Socialiste en France (Paris, 1921), pp. 192-9.

91. Hubert Lagardelle, "Le Parti Socialiste", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Aug., Sept., 1907, p. 107.

to gain power and not to effect fundamental social change.

Nor had the experience with the political democracy of the Third Republic convinced the syndicalists that social change would be brought about by the state after electoral victory by the socialists. Bourgeois democracy was foreign to the proletarian world and was committed to defending privilege. Like Proudhon, the syndicalists urged alienation from electoral politics and commitment primarily to their own organizations.

The reformists and revolutionaries were divided in their attitudes toward government; the former opposed the strong anti-governmental and anti-electoral propaganda and wished to cooperate with the Socialist parties although stopping short of affiliation. The revolutionaries strongly opposed any collaboration with government, constantly fearing co-option. For this reason, they were opposed to the "social laws" and to the legal recognition of the syndicats. A typical reaction to the Waldeck-Rousseau bill in 1884 was: "In this law, everything is a trap....that is why we do not want it."[92]

The revolutionaries did yield to the reformists' demand to work for short-range goals but warned, as did Pouget:

> "Revolutionary syndicalism does not reject limited actions and ameliorations of the working class condition; what it rejects is the channeling of the movement into legalistic forms and the system which makes a principle of conciliation with the capitalist class through mixed commissions, arbitrations and regulation of strikes."[93]

But the revolutionaries did not wish to await social change through the

92. Leon A. Dale, Marxism and French Labour (New York, 1956), p. 33.

93. Colette Chambelland, Le Syndicalisme Ouvrier Français, p. 40.

parliamentary action of sympathetic deputies, the method which encouraged apathy, but rather they wished to impose it on government and the capitalist class through "direct action". The model for this type of activity was the agitation which succeeded in forcing the government to abolish private labour exchanges in 1893. Delesalle claimed, "We prefer external action against power, strong propaganda action, which is always revolutionary and which rejects compromise...."[94] Similarly, the revolutionaries did not wish state interference, either through armed force, arbitration or mixed commissions in industrial confrontations.[95] Direct syndical action exposed the naked class struggle which the parliamentary veil attempted to hide.[96] "The class struggle can only be led on the class level, that is, by the actual organs created by the proletariat....Party conflict is different from class struggle.... it is only indirect action."[97]

Direct action engendered militancy and stronger class consciousness among the workers:

> "In the working class organizations, there are no passive citizens... receiving orders and awaiting the call to action from the centre; all are active militants, have the initiative, think and act in their own sphere of action."[98]

As proof, Pouget cited the fact that the May day movement did not collapse at the arrest of the CGT leaders. This point was very important for Delesalle when he tried to convince the anarchists of the revolutionary poten-

94. Paul Delesalle, Les Deux Méthodes du Syndicalisme, p. 6.

95. Ibid., p. 10.

96. Louis Niel, quoted in Henri Dubief, op. cit., p. 81.

97. Hubert Lagardelle, "Révolutionnarisme électoral", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Nov. 1, 15, 1905, p. 384.

98. Émile Pouget, "Les Résultats moraux du mouvement du 1er mai", Le Mouvement Socialiste, July, 1906, p. 275.

tial of syndicalist action which "keeps the individuals constantly prepared and, very significantly, requires neither leaders nor deputies to carry out the common task...."[99] Direct action also prepared the worker for his future role: it was "an educating action which permits each individual to affirm his autonomy and that of his class; it prepares him for his future responsibilities."[100] Direct action was a foretaste of the nature of social interaction in the future: it "implies the action of the workers themselves, that is, action directly exercised by the interested parties. The worker himself carries out his action; he acts personally against the powers which oppress him to obtain what is demanded."[101]

The most obvious form of direct action was the strike. Participation in strikes gave evidence of and encouraged a militant class consciousness:

> "The strike is necessary for us because it strikes the adversary and stimulates and educates the worker....it teaches him the need for solidarity and prepares him for the larger movements which must include all or part of the working class."[102]

The strike was the first stage of the social war and the revolutionary syndicalists strongly argued against arbitration because a war had to be carried through to a successful resolution.[103]

However, the revolutionaries, like Proudhon, were also aware of the essentially reformist nature of the strike action. They attempted to im-

99. Paul Delesalle, Les Deux Méthodes du Syndicalisme, pp. 7-8.

100. Jean-Daniel Reynaud, Les Syndicats en France (Paris, 1966), p. 62.

101. Victor Griffuelhes, Le Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire, p. 14.

102. Victor Griffuelhes and Louis Niel, op. cit., p. 27.

103. Ernest Lafont, "L'Arbitrage Obligatoire", Le Mouvement Socialiste, March 15, 1905, passim.

press on strikers that the limited material ends for which the strike was being waged would bring no ultimate satisfaction. They agreed essentially with the critiques of Proudhon[104] and Pelloutier of the strike weapon. To the anarchists, Delesalle said, "The strike, for what it is, is not an action which the anarchists should urge; instead, because it erupts inevitably in spite of themselves, the strike can be useful in the spreading of their ideal among the workers."[105] For the reformists, the immediate gains achieved through a strike or arbitration were sufficient as immediate ends; for the revolutionaries, these gains were regarded solely as first steps in the social revolution. They valued the growth of militancy as a result of a strike more highly than better wages or shorter working hours.

The strike was essentially a trade-unionist weapon as were other tactics such as propaganda, sabotage, boycotts or the use of the union label. The purpose of the syndicalist propaganda, emanating largely from the central bodies of the CGT federations and the Fédération des Bourses, was to gain new members for the movement from among the unorganized. But individual syndiqués were also committed to attempting to proselytize in the workshop. Indeed, the militancy of the individual worker was indicated by the extent to which he pursued the interests of the workers by activities in the syndicalist chapter.

If the syndicat decided in favour of sabotage rather than striking to attain their ends, the members would be committed to slowing their pace of

104. For Proudhon's attitude toward the strike, see Chapter 3, p. 58.

105. Jean Maitron, op. cit., p. 121.

work or damaging machinery or products; sabotage could injure the employer almost as much as a strike could. The central idea in using the sabotage weapon was that, for poor pay, poor work would be retributed.[106] Proudhon as well as Sorel and some of the syndicalist leaders opposed sabotage because it degraded the self-image of the worker as a skilled artisan.[107]

The boycott was used against employers who refused to pay decent wages or to improve working conditions; all workers would refuse to work for, or buy from, such employers. The union label was used to indicate to consumers that a product had been manufactured in a unionised factory. Such methods also implied a high degree of consciousness of oneself as a member of a class.

A second and more effective level of direct action was the limited general strike or agitation; these were used against the government by the whole syndicalist movement or against a number of employers by workers in a regional industry or in a specific trade federation. The best examples of such action were the 1906 May day movement, the miners' strikes of 1906 and the agitation against private labour exchanges. The purposes of a limited general strike were both material and educational; the 1906 miners' strike arose because of dangerous working conditions but it also developed a more revolutionary mentality among all the workers which inspired great fears in government and among the bourgeoisie that the general strike was imminent in the May day movement. Griffuelhes claimed that a limited general strike was only the preparation for the final general strike, "The mental state of mind must precede the realization of one's purpose—this atmosphere has been

106. Émile Pouget, Le Sabotage (Paris, date unknown), passim.

107. Maxime Leroy, op. cit., p. 17.

created by the eight-hour day campaign."[108]

In the proper situation, the limited general strike would become more: "The CGT awaited only the chance to transform the retributive general strike into the revolutionary general strike...."[109] The rash of violent strikes between 1906-12 indicated the high hopes which many syndicalists entertained about the possibility of bringing about the final revolution.

The general strike was the ultimate means of direct action by which the working class would bring an end to the bourgeois state. We had already discussed the extent to which such an idea had been intimated by Proudhon.[110] However, the syndicalists, after 1900, had lost Pelloutier's optimistic belief that the general strike would be generally peaceful. Griffuelhes exclaimed, "The general strike cannot be pacific. Let us reject the old theory of folded arms."[111] Elsewhere, he said that the strike "will be violent or pacific depending on the resistance to be overcome."[112]

A special committee of the CGT which studied the issue of the revolution reported: "The revolutionary general strike appears to be the unique and only efficacious means for the working class to emancipate itself from the capitalist and governmental yoke."[113] The strike would be led by the

108. Émile Pouget, "Le Congrès syndicaliste d'Amiens", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Oct., 1906—Jan., 1907, p. 385.

109. Jacques Julliard, Clemenceau, Briseur de Grèves (Paris, 1965) p. 23.

110. See conclusion, Chapter 3.

111. R. Garmy, op. cit., p. 283.

112. Victor Griffuelhes, "La Grève générale et le Socialisme", Le Mouvement Socialiste, June 15, July 15, 1904, p. 160.

113. Committee Report, "La Grève générale et le Socialisme", p. 179.

conscious minorities among the workers, the members of the syndicats. The strike would be decentralist and federalist in nature starting with regional victories which would inspire the less militant elements of the proletariat to action. The committee declared that violent revolution would be useless because of the overwhelming repressive capacity of the state.[114]

The general strike also derived from the experience and appealed to the understanding of the worker. It was obvious to him that society, in its contemporary form, could not exist without his work and that the total stoppage of all work would be catastrophic. As Griffuelhes claimed, it was the logical end of direct action by the workers, starting from limited local strikes.[115]

Georges Sorel developed his idea of the social "myth" from his observation of how the syndicalists inspired themselves to action through the belief in the possibility of fundamental change by means of the general strike. The "idea" of the general strike did lead to great excitement in the movement as evidenced by the numerous pamphlets and books which were written on the subject. This "idea" led the syndicalists to ponder deeply as to how the general strike could be brought about and what institutions and social relations would replace the contemporary order. The best of the books related to the general strike, Émile Pataud and Émile Pouget's Comment nous ferons la révolution was an imaginative but highly plausible account of how the general strike might actually come about. In the introduction, they themselves indicate the feverish excitement which must have existed in syndicalist circles

114. Ibid., pp. 184-91.

115. Victor Griffuelhes, L'Action Syndicaliste, p. 32.

during the 1900's: for the syndicalists, "the 'What to do the day after the general strike?' became an obsession, became implanted in the brain and eventually condensed and became clarified."[116] The general strike became the avenue by which the ideal world without authority or oppression could be attained; this ideal inspired the syndicalists to daily action to help bring about the new society.

While Proudhon had nothing very specific to say about the means to be utilized by the workers to overthrow bourgeois society (Marx was of no more help to the workers in this respect), he did consistently assert that these means were to develop from the workers' associations themselves and not from the directives of a workers' vanguard or political leaders. In this faith in the future central role of the syndicats, Proudhon and the syndicalists were in accord.

Proudhon and the syndicalists also shared similar visions of the post-revolutionary socialist society in which the factories would be under the control of workers' associations and communes would be under the control of its citizens; these bodies would be organized federally from below. The sole difference was that Proudhon had still felt the need for the worker to hold the means of production in inalienable control while the syndicalists no longer felt the need for the idea of property. Also, the syndicalists agreed with Kropotkin's ideas on production for need and abolition of the idea of exchange. Proudhon had never shed the idea of production for a market place where a more egalitarian form of exchange should be instituted.

116. Émile Pataud and Émile Pouget, Comment nous ferons la révolution (Paris, 1911), p. xvii.

However, to add qualifications to the thesis that Proudhon was the intellectual parent of anarchosyndicalism does not obviate his central role in introducing the critiques of parliamentarism and capitalism and the ideas for the development of the future society which were passed on to the syndicalist movement via the anarchist movement. The central problems, for Proudhon and the syndicalists, were not property or exchange but individual freedom and justice. Proudhon had attacked the dilemma of authority and injustice in society and had come to the radical conclusion that the only resolution was to abolish authority and government and invest power in the individual in concert with his equals. Only such an organization was "just" as opposed to the system of private property protected by parliamentary government. It was with this spirit and tradition that the syndicalists were fundamentally in accord.

Chapter 7: Theorists of Syndicalism

Before drawing our conclusions, we must first discuss the role of certain intellectuals who were sympathetic to, but remained outside of, the syndicalist movement. Certain authors have, mistakenly, assumed that these intellectuals, including Georges Sorel, Édouard Berth and Hubert Lagardelle, "created" the ideology of revolutionary syndicalism. This impression gained currency because it was largely through the writings of Sorel and his friends that syndicalism was introduced to the world. Besides being erroneous, this belief also often led to false notions of the nature of syndicalism because these intellectuals interpreted the movement in light of their own world-views. In this chapter, we will attempt to delineate the extent to which these intellectuals, and principally Sorel, accurately described the movement. Scrutiny must be focussed on Sorel because Berth and, to a lesser extent, Lagardelle, took their cues from the former.

Georges Sorel was curiously very alienated from the syndicalist organizations to be their spokesman. Sorel was a close friend of only one of the syndical leaders, Paul Delesalle, and was an acquaintance of Pouget and Pelloutier. Sorel wrote an introduction to Pelloutier's Histoire des Bourses du Travail. "Actually, the explanation of Georges Sorel of the actions and statements of the syndicalist movement, contrary to his intentions, was always exterior to the movement; syndicalism could be understood solely from inside the movement."[1] Sorel and Berth themselves admitted that they were

1. Édouard Berth and Gerard Dehove, Histoire du Travail en France (2 Vol., Paris, 1953), I, p. 376. See also Louis Levine, The Labour Movement in France, A Study in Revolutionary Syndicalism (New York, 1912), p. 148. Levine states that Werner Sombart and others had popularized the idea of Sorel having created revolutionary syndicalism. See Werner Sombart, Socialism and the Social Movement, (London, 1909).

only interpreters of syndicalism.[2]

During his intellectually productive years, Sorel was primarily a habitué of the intellectual and radical world of the Left Bank, an intimate of those intellectuals whom he so much despised. Sorel was probably the most representative of that legion of fin de siècle intellectuals who rebelled against the optimistic, mechanistic and rational view-point of the Enlightenment and its contemporary representatives, the Radical and Socialist politicians and intellectuals. Sorel and others, asserting the primacy of the individual, his will and his beliefs, rejected the comfortable rational and utilitarian world created by bourgeois values and institutions. The bourgeois world, they declared, was décadent and doomed to disappear because its representative elements denied the primacy of action or of beliefs which were characteristic of all vital civilizations.

Sorel was cognisant of and sympathetic to the most illustrious leaders of this broad anti-rationalist rebellion against the bourgeois world: to Nietzsche and the theory of the will-to-power, to Bergson and his theory of the primacy of the will, intuition and sensations rather than reason in the life of the individual, and to Péguy and the mythos of Catholicism, nation and socialism. Sorel was an implacable enemy of the bourgeois civilization characterized by mediocrity and materialism; he longed for an age of heroism in which men believed, willed and acted regardless of the consequences; his heroes were the Roman and Italian condotierri, the Greek warrior-heroes, the early Christian believers, the feudal chieftains and the Yankee capitalists, estimations which Sorel shared with Nietzsche.[3] Although Sorel was

2. Louis Levine, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

3. Georges Sorel, Reflections on Violence (New York, 1967), pp. 230-1.

somewhat repelled, morally, by the values and acts of some of these heroes, he was attracted by their vitality, by their commitment to self-determined ends. Such virtues were lacking in decadent bourgeois society.

James Meisel suggests that Sorel himself was not totally opposed to capitalism: "Capitalism as far as it meant production and the proletariat were the twin victims of non-productive interest, of parasitic politics sapping the productive energies by arbitrary economic intervention."[4] Sorel declared that he would be very sympathetic to the development of a new militant class-conscious bourgeoisie which would use all means to defend itself and its interests.[5]

In his anti-rationalism, Sorel must be distinguished from both Proudhon and the syndicalist movement. Proudhon was strictly in the rationalist Enlightenment tradition; similarly, the syndicalists viewed the revolutionary goals as rational ends which could be achieved to the greater material and spiritual welfare of all. Neither was concerned with heroism or social vitality in the irrational Sorelian sense.[6] On the other hand, Sorel's primary commitment was to the irrational goal of human regeneration and purification rather than to the end of the social struggle as envisioned by the syndicalists—the federalist syndical organization.[7] "Victory or failure

4. James H. Meisel, The Genesis of Georges Sorel (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1951), p. 274.

5. Gaétan Pirou, Georges Sorel (Paris, 1927), p. 40.

6. Gaétan Pirou, Proudhonisme et Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire (Paris, 1910), Part 2. Pirou, in contrasting Proudhonism and revolutionary syndicalism, was, in reality, discussing the syndicalist movement from a largely Sorelist point of view. The contrast which he described is between Proudhon's rationalism and Sorel's anti-rationalism, not that of the syndicalist movement.

7. I. L. Horowitz, Radicalism and the Revolt against Reason (London, 1961), p. 147.

meant nothing to Sorel; the entire range of tactical issues never arises; the struggle is everything."[8] From a pragmatic stand-point, Sorel pinned his hopes on syndicalism to regenerate mankind but he was not tied to it, either by participation or emotionally. "The very qualities of analysis and criticism that led him to find in the proletariat the hope of a new spiritual movement for society also prevented him from accepting the beliefs necessary for an active participation in that movement."[9] Also, "while Sorel was concerned with moral culture, the syndicalists were after material results."[10]

However, Sorel is an extremely complex individual and to discuss solely the anti-rational element in his thought is to neglect his moralism and his long struggle with scientism. Like Proudhon, Sorel entertained a highly idealized vision of the labour and role in society of the worker and the peasant. Sorel's defence of the syndicalist aspiration for workers' control in the workshop sprang from his own intellectualized and idealized view of the nobility of skilled and manual labour. In this regard, he embodied the austere standards of the traditional French bourgeoisie and his prescriptions for society implied a return to a strong commitment to one's work and interests and a stern morality: sentiments which he believed to be discernable in syndicalism.[11]

The writings of Proudhon had provided Sorel's first introduction to socialism. Proudhon's moralistic and legalistic view of the development of

8. Ibid.

9. Richard Humphrey, Georges Sorel, Prophet without Honour (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 164.

10. Gaetan Pirou, Georges Sorel, p. 37.

11. Ibid., pp. 37-9.

socialism and his ideas about the "ethics of production" appealed to Sorel.[12] He was also challenged by the scientistic and materialist Marxist description of the inevitable decay of capitalism and its supercession by a new socialist order. However, as with all other intellectuals who influenced him, Sorel chose only those elements from the ideas of Proudhon and Marx which suited his purposes. Sorel eventually rejected the semi-positivist and dialectical world-view of Marx and retained solely his "visionary" insights such as his apocalyptic prophecy of the nature of the proletarian revolution.[13] According to Sorel, official Marxism, because of its implicit rationalism, had inevitably degenerated into reformist socialism and was slowly being co-opted into the bourgeois and parliamentary system.

Sorel shared the revolutionary syndicalists' suspicions of parliamentarism. Sorel's concern that the workers remain morally untainted by the alien bourgeois world and retain their supposedly superior ethics of production and solidarity was, in reality, more in accord with his own intellectualized world-view than with the syndicalists' attitude.[14] Syndicalism, in reality, regarded itself as developing from and going beyond bourgeois values and methods. But the revolutionaries agreed with Sorel that the official socialists who had integrated themselves into the parliamentary system would also

12. James,H. Meisel, op. cit., p. 95.

13. Sorel believed that the Communist Manifesto, with its apocalyptic vision of the imminent proletarian revolution was of much greater significance in the development of a revolutionary workers' movement than all of Marx's weighty theoretical writings.

14. Georges Sorel, op. cit., pp. 182-5. Sorel drew an analogy between the supposed syndicalist attitude and the other-worldliness of the early Christian Church, both of whom considered themselves not to be of the contemporary world.

lose all their functions when the bourgeois world collapsed.[15]

In the development of the syndicalist movement, Sorel perceived the realization of the expectations of the "true" Marx and of Proudhon. Sorel's Marx was the prophet of an independent proletariat movement which believed in an ideal future society and engaged in day-to-day direct action, outside of the bourgeois world, to bring about that society. Sorel rejected certain elements of the Marxist philosophy which he believed to be extraneous; these included the Blanquist vision of violent revolution initiated by a limited intellectual élite and a utopian egalitarianism which regarded the whole working masses as a potentially class-conscious revolutionary agent.[16] The Blanquist revolution, for Marx, closely resembled the brusque change which the latter prophesied in accordance with his Hegelian world-view.[17] Sorel believed that Marx had posited the need for an intellectual élite and had urged parliamentary action because of the backward state of development of the proletarian organizations; the growth to maturity of the workers in the revolutionary syndicalist movement was, for Sorel, what Marx had really awaited as the revolutionary agent. This was the basis of the attempted accommodation between Proudhon and Marx in the Sorelian philosophy.[18] In this process of accommodation between Proudhon and Marx, the latter's amorality was rejected in favour of the former's highly moralistic view of the imperative of social struggle. Proudhon remained, much more than Marx, the source

15. Georges Sorel, L'Avenir Socialiste des Syndicats (Paris, 1901), p. 19.

16. Georges Sorel, La Décomposition du Marxisme (Paris, 1908), pp. 45-7.

17. Ibid., p. 53.

18. Few of the French working class were, as yet, aware of Marxism, notwithstanding the growth of the Guesdist political party; Proudhon was much more widely known. Sorel's tendentious interpretation, needless to say, was harshly rejected by the orthodox Marxists.

of most of Sorel's views on the workers' movement. Like Proudhon, Sorel shared an admiration for the virtues of toil and for the traditional family virtues and morals which seemed to be degenerating through the influence of bourgeois civilization.[19]

Sorel interpreted syndicalist methods and tactics, to a certain extent, as a spcial scientist but also from his own basically irrational premises.

He observed that the "idea" of the general strike as a nostrum for all social evils served to inspire the syndicalists to develop ideas of an ideal future society and to act to bring it about. Sorel called such an "idea" and others: the Christian belief in the second coming of Christ or the French revolutionary ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, "myths". For Sorel, the social scientist, the myth was essentially an irrational belief; its effects were evident in the actions of believers who had little regard for rational arguments or material ends, For Sorel, the prophet of social decadence, the myth was necessary to maintain human vitality and martial virtues. Only believers in the myth of the Marxian apocalyptic social revolution could be inspired to selfless action in pursuit of the socialist ideal. "The myth is stronger than a fact; it is a belief."[20]

In contrast to the Proudhonist "idea" which implied the projection into an ideal future of notions developed in the minds of individuals engaged in concrete action in the present, the myth had manipulative connotations; it was more an illusory belief than an actually realizable ideal. The myth demanded unquestioning faith rather than appealing to human reason; it stood

19. Georges Sorel, Reflections on Violence, pp. 225-9.

20. James H. Meisel, op. cit., p. 135.

above reality and could not be related to it. The "idea" of a Utopia, on the other hand, was a result of intellectual processes and was a projection beyond contemporary social conditions.[21]

Sorel rejected the Proudhonist and Marxist appeal to human reason as an impetus to action. "Galvanizing men into action is neither a product of discourse nor of considered analysis. It is an outcome of an appeal to imagination and intuition....This is what converts ordinary men into extraordinary practitioners of the art of violence and class war."[22] Again, it was human vitality as a consequence of direct action which primarily concerned Sorel. To paraphrase: the end is nothing; the movement is everything.

From Bergson, Sorel took the idea of the will as central in history. Man chose to believe and to act accordingly.[23] The individual hero was the centre of human history; historical progress developed through him and his leadership rather than subject to determinate material laws, as claimed by Marx and the materialists.[24] Entrepreneurial capital, as it existed in America, was admired by Sorelbecause of its ruthless unswerving pursuit of economic empire regardless of the human destruction it caused.[25] The will-to-power was as starkly evident in these entrepreneurs as it was in Nietzsche's aristocratic warrior-heroes. Sorel, like Bergson, claimed that it was only the individual who willed and acted on the spur of unconscious impulses who lived a vital free life, unbound by the limitations of reason which preclude

21. Richard Humphrey, op. cit., pp. 171-5.

22. James H. Meisel, op. cit., p. 130.

23. Ibid., p. 105.

24. I. L. Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 40-1.

25. Georges Sorel, Reflections on Violence, pp. 231-2.

immediate action.[26] To bring about the syndicalist revolution, the leaders must make use of "a body of images which, by intuition alone, and before considered analyses are made, is capable of evoking as an undivided whole the mass of sentiments which correspond to the different manifestations of the war undertaken by socialism against modern society."[27] No statement by Sorel could better show his rejection of a rational appeal to the understanding of the workers in favour of manipulation through myths.

In fin de siècle France, the most obvious agent of social degeneration, for Sorel, was anarchosyndicalism. Inspired by the myth of the general strike, the working class elite engaged in class war to bring about their ideal society. Indirectly, the bourgeoisie must become a more vital ruling class or it would disappear. Violence became a therapeutic to regenerate a decrepit society. "Antagonism....has, as end, the production of a progressively superior order, of an improvement without end."[28] Sorel "looked upon violence as the only means that would protect the proletariat from losing its identity as a distinct class."[29] The Proudhon of La Guerre et la Paix was called upon to justify the glorification of social war.[30] Like Proudhon, Sorel agreed that force was the ultimate determinate of power in the social order: "I see no other struggle than the general strike to decide

26. I. L. Horowitz, op. cit., p. 48.

27. Georges Sorel, Reflections on Violence, pp. 122-3.

28. Édouard Berth, Les Nouveaux Aspects du Socialisme (Paris, 1908), p. 53.

29. James H. Meisel, op. cit., p. 274.

30. Édouard Berth, op. cit., pp. 54-60. Berth's presenting of Proudhon as a war-monger gives a very false picture. For Proudhon. actual physical violence conflicted with the ideal picture of war presented by the lawyers and politicians. Proudhon also prophesied the end of war after the social revolution; war as an agent of social revitalization was totally alien to his pacifistic temperament.

the question of power."[31]

Édouard Berth perceived the manipulations of decadent jurists and intellectuals, longing for social peace, in the passing of laws outlawing violence in strikes; the rationalist intellectuals, he claimed, had denatured war as a force for justice, leaving it only as a form of savagery.[32] The revolutionary workers were the contemporary warrior-heroes who, by no amount of intellectual trickery, would be misled by the socialist politicians; they would continue the struggle, eventually assume control over the economy, and usurp all the functions of the privileged élites.[33]

Sorel and Berth criticized the contemporary state because it was controlled by the bourgeoisie and intellectuals, the vanguard of decadence; they did not reject the state as authority, no matter who was in control, as Proudhon and the syndicalists had done. This is shown by Sorel's admiration for "vital" feudal élites. Berth agreed with the syndicalists that the workers must develop the capacity for self-direction and reject state blandishments: "Statism,....too superb to see in the proletariat other than an inorganic mass, weak by nature, wants to protect it, to assure its happiness, to elevate it to a so-called liberty in the name of an ethical or scientific ideal of which the intellectuals have the revelation."[34] However, the anti-intellectualism implicit in this condemnation of the state was foreign to the syndicalists; they were suspicious of certain intellectuals who were

31. Georges Sorel, L'Avenir Socialiste des Syndicats, p. vi.

32. Édouard Berth, "Révolution sociale ou Évolution juridique", Le Mouvement Socialiste, 2#2, 1904, pp. 123-7.

33. Édouard Berth, Les Méfaits des Intellectuels (Paris, 1914), p. 80.

34. Édouard Berth, "Socialisme ou Étatisme", Le Mouvement Socialiste, Jan. 1, 1903, p. 10.

parliamentary leaders but they themselves affirmed the primacy of worker education in preparation for the future.

This rather frenzied insistence by Sorel and Berth that the martial virtues of the workers must be fanned into blazing heat was the consequence of their belief that society would degenerate into irretrievable decadence if the bourgeois socialist politicians were successful in leading the workers into following a policy of social peace with the bourgeoisie which, itself, was already totally decadent. What was necessary was "to maintain in the minds of the proletariat this idea of cleavage without which Socialism cannot fulfil its historical role."[35] To further this cleavage, Sorel pinned his hopes on syndicalist direct action.

This concern with a supposed social decadence was totally foreign to the syndicalist world-view. The syndicalists were totally oblivious to according to class conflict and violence a socially therapeutic function. Violence would be a necessary evil to be employed against the forces of the enemy when the general strike broke out. This conclusion is equally valid with regard to Proudhon's judgment toward the use of force.

Like Nietzsche's philosophy, Sorelism was essentially an aristocratic world-view. Sorel's heroes were not intellectual leaders; they were leaders "in virtue of how many men they could captivate and galvanize by the projection of a novel myth. The leader is a charismatic myth-manipulator, the mass are myth-believers."[36] On the other hand, intellectual leaders were those who used ideas to legitimize power and indirectly gained a share of

35. Georges Sorel, Reflections on Violence, p. 186.

36. I. L. Horowitz, op. cit., p. 136.

that power. "All clerical or pseudo-clerical regimes are regimes of intellectuals, anti-juridical and anti-warrior, where intelligence, usurping command, and through the use of Law, institutes the reign of the most arbitrary and complete absolutism."[37] The syndicalist leaders were Sorelist heroes while the bourgeois parliamentary leaders represented the intellectuals in power. The Sorelist élite was necessarily very limited because only the most militant and most articulate leaders of the syndicats could qualify as leaders of the broad working masses.

This view differed from that of Proudhon and the syndicalists. The latter downplayed the role of the workers' association leaders and claimed that all workers who joined such associations and worked actively and conscientiously for their ends were the élite which inspired the unorganized to action. The development of an élite within the syndicats was always regarded with great suspicion; the fear of such a development was the source of many internal conflicts. Equality of all members in a syndicat or of all workers in a shop was constantly affirmed. Élitism was expressed only in terms of class consciousness; the working class élite was composed of all those who were in the proletarian organizations.

That Sorel was not basically committed to the ends pursued by anarcho-syndicalism but rather to his concern for social regeneration was indicated by his abandonment of the movement toward the end of the decade. Sorel believed that syndicalism was degenerating into a form of reformist trade-unionism and was not really committed to the overthrow of bourgeois society.[38] Berth lamented the conquest of syndicalism by the bourgeois world-view:

37. Edouard Berth, Les Méfaits des Intellectuels, p. 37.

38. Richard Humphrey, op. cit., pp. 26-31.

"The hearts of the people, dried up by yourselves the bourgeoisie and which no longer gives birth to new ideas, are dead to the ideal and your degradation is without remedy."[39] Sorel gave up on syndicalism because it "took its mission in too literal a sense. It approached socialism as a reality around the corner rather than as a myth which man must continually strive to attain."[40] Clearly, the syndicalists could not regard the general strike as a myth if they actually wished to bring about the social revolution.

The entry of Sorel and Berth into the Action Française, an authoritarian right-wing anarchist movement, in 1910, revealed their lack of commitment to any ideology; Sorel never became a monarchist just as he had never been a syndicalist. Sorel and Berth vainly hoped that this explicitly revolutionary movement would be the vehicle of liberation from bourgeois decadence to a new social regeneration. They still entertained some hope that syndicalism might aid the Right in the destruction of bourgeois democracy. From the left and right, "a double attack must take the citadel and institute an anti-democratic order where authority and liberty, State and civil society balance each other, creating a new social equilibrium and opening a new classical era."[41] To the credit of the syndicalists, neither these sentiments nor Sorel's growing anti-Semitism found any support among them.

Hubert Lagardelle, the editor of a journal sympathetic to syndicalism, Le Mouvement Socialiste, was also influenced by Sorel's interpretation of the

39. Édouard Berth, Les Méfaits des Intellectuels, p. 309.

40. I. L. Horowitz, op. cit., p. 35.

41. Édouard Berth, Les Méfaits des Intellectuels, p. 326.

movement. Like Sorel, he believed that syndicalism represented the coming to fruition of both the Marxist and Proudhonist expectations; he also exaggerated the élitism and anti-democratic sentiments of the syndicalists. Like Sorel, Lagardelle had first, and most strongly, been influenced by Proudhon and he affirmed that syndicalism, as an idea, had first been given expression by the first French anarchist. On the whole, however, Lagardelle, although an outsider, interpreted the syndicalist movement more faithfully than either Sorel of Berth and his journal remained a forum for syndicalist expression until the demise of all left-wing publications during the war. After 1910, the decline of syndicalist militancy was reflected in the decline in quality of Le Mouvement Socialiste.

Another sympathetic intellectual who shared the syndicalists' views on education was the teacher, Albert Thierry. Influenced by the Proudhonist and syndicalist view of education as apprenticeship[42] and as training for individual worker participation in society,[43] Thierry agreed with the suggestions of developing independent syndical schools; on the primary level, basic education and a broad understanding of society would be taught while, on the secondary level, vocational training including the explanation of the role of that trade or industry in society along with practical experience would be given. Other contemporary intellectuals who wrote sympathetic interpretations of syndicalism included Daniel Halévy, Léon de Seilhac, Gaétan Pirou and Félicien Challaye. However, no one stands as closely related, in the popular mind, with syndicalism as Georges Sorel.

42. Albert Thierry, Réflexions sur l'Éducation (Blainville sur mer, Manche, 1963), p. 130.

43. Ibid., p. 52.

The tragedy of this error is that certain pseudo-Sorelian sentiments have become lodged in the popular conception as stereotypes of the nature of syndicalism. The ideas of action for action's sake and the idealizing of violence as an exercise beneficial for social health, already exaggerations of Sorel's own ideas, were inevitably related also to the syndicalist movement. The syndicalist tactics of "direct action" became vulgarized to the extent that they could easily be held up to ridicule and condemned by conservatives and outraged liberals and socialists and by the political elites threatened by such action.[44] For the syndicalists, direct action remained the means to an end--the introduction of the ideal society. Their "ideas" were far more limited, in terms of achieving a better material standard of living and a new freedom and responsibility, than the exalted Sorelian visions, but were perhaps more realistic than their detractors, who took their ammunition from Sorel, were ready to admit.

Although we have emphasized the divergences between Sorel and syndicalism in this chapter, there is also much in Sorel's writings which expressed the syndicalist attitudes more clearly than the syndicalist leaders themselves could.[45] The revolutionary potential and the strong sentiment of ouvrieriste independence on which Sorel pinned so much faith were the characteristic elements which made the French syndicalist movement so unique in

44. See, for example, José Ortega y Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses (New York, 1957), pp. 73-5; J. W. Scott, Syndicalism and Philosophical Realism (London, 1919), passim.

45. The use of quotations from Sorel and Berth in the previous chapters was made only if their expressed views were in harmony with the statements and attitudes of the syndicalists themselves.

comparison with the trade-unions of other countries. Sorel's first book on syndicalism, L'Avenir Socialiste des Syndicats, written in 1898, accurately described these potentialities in the movement. Only in his later writings did his own views intrude strongly into his discussion. To compare syndicalism with the Proudhonist anticipations of an independent working class movement, we must exclude the irrational Sorelist elements which are all too readily related to it.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

How must we conclude on the central problem of this thesis as raised in the introduction? To what extent did syndicalism, as a movement and as an ideology, develop from events and the state of affairs in France? To what extent did it develop from intellectually-committed leaders who traced their inspiration to Proudhon? It is evident that the syndicats which were organized in the first decades of the Third Republic arose, primarily, in the struggle for the interests of their members and that this was accomplished without intellectual leaders. The syndicats came under the influence of the vying political socialist groups whose primary purpose was to gain electoral support. Eventually tiring of the internecine quarrels among the Socialists and disappointed with the lack of concrete results, the syndicalists came to agree more and more with the small anarchist groups that political action was fruitless and that only unified action on the economic level against the capitalist and state powers promised results. Many of the French workers were no longer inclined to trust political leaders after the betrayals of 1848 and 1871; ouvrierisme became the order of the day and the syndicalists rejected cooperation with politicians.

To bring about the revolution, the syndicalists adopted the tactics of direct action and the general strike and the ideas for an ideal society organized around free productive associations which they inherited from the anarchist tradition. These tactics had developed among the libertarian disciples of Proudhon in the First International while the concept of the ideal society had been shared, before the development of syndicalism, by both Proudhon and the libertarian wing of the International. While it is true, as

the "empiricists"[1] asserted, that direct action and the concept of the workers' Utopia were logical extensions of the rudimentary workers' organizations, the syndicats (as the nuclei of the future society), and of the strike (as the first level of direct action), these ideas had been developed prior to the growth of syndicalism and were spread among the unorganized workers by committed anarchists.

A central Proudhonist hypothesis was that politics and the nation-state were archaic pre-occupations and would give way to economic considerations at the forefront of popular concern. This development would imply the decay of the central state and its supercession by a federalist economic organization. The anarchosyndicalists shared this belief and worked actively to bring about the abolition of the state and its replacement by a democratic organization and control of the factory and mutual exchange between producers. The experience of repressive state action against strikes, and World War I, shattered this optimism; the nation-state and wars were not dead but were more terrible forces than ever. At the critical moment in 1914, the CGT backed down and declared that the workers were also French patriots.

However, the fact remains that Proudhon and the syndicalists shared remarkably similar anticipations for the future of the working masses, anticipations which implied the abolition of that alienated institution—the political state. Why was there such a close agreement? The lines of influence which we have traced in previous chapters—via the early workers' movement during the Second Empire, its renaissance during the Third Republic and the anarchist movement—are not sufficient to show why there were such strong parallels between Proudhonism and revolutionary syndicalism.

1. See Chapter 1, p. 4.

The central reason for Proudhon's appeal to the workers was that the latter felt instinctively that he was one of them, that his ideas and hopes for the future had developed from his own background as artisan and peasant. "Proudhon as worker! His contemporaries had sensed this themselves and they declared that this thinker remained, above all, a proletarian, that he owed his best ideas to a profound proletarian instinct which he could never shed."[2] Proudhon himself was a highly conscious worker who developed his "ideas" of the future from the contemporary conditions of the working classes; through his ideas, he himself inspired other workers to action and to reflection. The example of Proudhon's own philosophy itself fitted into his idéo-réaliste view of human history.[3]

That Proudhon mirrored the development of his class is shown by the evolution of his thought from the stage, in 1848, of believing in free credit methods for abolishing capitalism to his affirmation of faith in the workers' associations, exclusively, to bring about change, by 1865. This paralleled the changing attitude of the French proletariat.

Like the French working class throughout the century, Proudhon felt himself alienated from, and unrepresented in, the political system of his country. Parliament and cabinets are bourgeois institutions in which the worker would always be an alien element. Proudhon, on the other hand, gloried in the worker qua worker and not as a politician or deputy. The worker could fulfil himself only in his work in association with his equals and not in the alien bourgeois world.

2. M. Harmel in C. Bouglé, Proudhon et Notre Temps (Paris, 1920), p. 39.

3. See Chapter 3, p. 34-5.

In regarding Proudhon as a worker and not as an isolated intellectual in sympathy with the working class, we may grasp the singularity of the response of the French proletariat to Proudhon. He was not one of that legion of Left Bank journalists or politicians who pandered to working class sentiment in the hope of winning an Assembly seat or of building up a reading clientele. He was not one of those bourgeois Socialists or Radicals who changed horses after gaining political power or influence. That he was committed to the free development by the workers of their own solutions to their social and economic dilemma was shown by his suspicion of Marx's intention of forming an intellectual élite whose ostensible purpose was to lead the workers from their state of subjection and ignorance.[4] Proudhon was committed to the workers as workers; only by affirming themselves in their role as workers and by struggling to bring about the ideal world, from their own perspective, could their own human worth be asserted.

Although only a limited number of workers ever read Proudhon, this does not conflict with the assertion of Proudhon's influence. Proudhon was read by the more articulate and conscious workers who passed on this influence to the broad working masses through participation in the syndicats. The strong Proudhonist flavour of the Manifeste des Soixante is enough evidence of this fact.[5] And continuing on through the century, the leaders of the workers' associations: the anarchists, the Pelloutiers, the Pougets and the Delesalles and many others, were well aware of the Proudhonist philosophy

4. George Woodcock, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (London, 1956), pp. 91-3.

5. M. Harmel, op. cit., p. 37. For the extent to which the signatories of the Manifeste des Soixante were in debt to Proudhon, see Chapter 3, pp. 54-5.

and were instrumental in spreading his ideas among the workers and in attempting to realize the independent workers' movement which he had urged.

Like Proudhon, the more revolutionary workers realized that only a very limited minority from among themselves could aspire to status in the bourgeois world. To realize their own material and spiritual well-being, therefore, implied a commitment to the triumph of their own projected ideal world --the abolition of capitalism and the state and the conquest of their functions by the federated workers' associations. It was from Proudhon that this vision first emanated and, as the nineteenth century wore on, the French workers increasingly came to believe that their salvation lay in its realization. The Manifeste des Soixante still accepted the legitimacy of the parliamentary state but, by the 1890's, the revolutionary syndicalists agreed with Proudhon in calling for its abolition. With the growing dissatisfaction with electoral results and the quarrels between the Socialist groups, many workers became totally disillusioned with political activity. Proudhon was the first ouvrieriste; only with the advent of anarchosyndicalism did this self-sufficient attitude become widespread among the French workers.

To vote in elections was to participate in bourgeois institutions which were illegitimate and alien to the proletarian world. Workers in parliament would inevitably be co-opted by the bourgeois world-view which dominated it. For this reason, Proudhon and the revolutionary syndicalists totally opposed political action. The State and the Assembly were superfluous institutions which dominated and regulated economic life, the source of all social well-being.

The fact that the tactics to be used to bring about the ideal society were left largely indeterminate made Proudhonism a continuously applicable

ideology. Proudhon had asserted that not only the ideas for the future but also the methods of change were to develop from the workers' own practices and organizations rather than from intellectual preconceptions. That Proudhon, like the revolutionaries, was irrevocably committed to the overthrow of capitalism and the state is beyond question. Proudhon's own lack of dogmatism as to the methods to be employed is shown by his change of views between 1848 and 1865. Proudhon opposed the strike for the same reason that the revolutionary syndicalists did: that it could not alter the status quo. In leaving the methods of action to be determined by the future evolution of the workers' movement, Proudhon rejected the role of prophet and concentrated on those of moralist and student of society.

From the syndicats, themselves, developed the tactics of direct action culminating in the emancipatory general strike. In the First International, many followers of Proudhon accepted these tactics. Through the influence of such anarchists as Tortelier and Pelloutier, they became the central methods of the nascent syndicalist movement.

Intellectuals such as Bakunin, Kropotkin and the anarchists were instrumental in keeping alive the Proudhonist inspiration between 1865-90 and especially during the repressive years of the early Third Republic. The Bakuninists, like the syndicalists later, called for the abolition of property, at variance with the Proudhonist belief in the need to maintain the institution of property to ensure individual liberty. In the First International, the anarchists defended themselves against the statists to ensure that democratic or revolutionary socialism would not gain control over the international proletarian movement. Kropotkin entered the movement at a crucial time when the Jura Federation was decaying; he instilled new life into the small

French anarchist circles. From these anarchist groups, the idea of an independent revolutionary workers' movement committed to the overthrow of capitalism and the state spread to the developing syndicats. By propaganda through the press and the spoken word and by direct action, the anarchists were successful in instilling in the minds of the organized workers the ideas of a federalist economic organization to be achieved by the general strike. The hostility of the Third Republic to any workers' initiatives and the workers' distrust of politicians and leaders facilitated this process.

In this transition from sect to mass movement, from the anarchist circles to syndicalism, only a minority of the libertarians ever became wholly committed to the workers' movement. The origin of this difficulty may already be discerned with Bakunin's International Social-Democratic Alliance of 1868.[6] The role of this tightly-knit group of intellectually-committed revolutionaries was to incite the workers to acts of war against the class enemy. A dichotomy was created between an élite and the masses, between the ideologically-committed and the workers. This dichotomy was perpetuated in the ideas of Kropotkin and the anarchists; these leaders were committed to a specific philosophical ideal, anarchism, and not to the workers' associations, proper. Only with the advent of syndicalism were such élitist attitudes banished. The anarchists who participated in the syndicats were, in effect, declaring themselves to be fully in accord with the aspirations of the more revolutionary workers rather than with a philosophical ideal. However, it is also evident that these anarchists carried, with themselves, their former ideas about the abolition of the bourgeois state through direct action and

6. James Joll, The Anarchists (London, 1964), p. 101.

that they strengthened these tendencies in syndicalism. The entry of the anarchists into the syndicats was, in effect, a "return to Proudhon" because he also had urged total commitment to the workers associations; Proudhon similarly had opposed intellectuals such as Marx, the Blanquists and the Jacobins because of their prior commitment to their own ideas rather than to the workers' movement as it then existed.

The anarchists found a sympathetic audience among the working class because they, likewise, distrusted politicians. Anarchists were more likely to be chosen as delegates or officers in the movement because they could be trusted not to defect to the enemy. As a result, the anarchists were able to influence the syndicalists to follow the "anarchosyndicalist" path. The work of a Tortelier or of a Pelloutier in popularizing the idea of the general strike, and of Pelloutier in developing the Bourses from simple labour exchanges into the locales which attempted to realize the ideal of proletarian self-sufficiency, are apt illustrations of this influence. All of the services, tactics and ideas were developed in the syndicats by leaders who had been strongly influenced by the anarchists and, directly or indirectly, by Proudhon. Pelloutier initiated the courses, libraries, services and special funds of the Bourses because he shared Proudhon's vision of a conscious, articulate, self-educated and independent working class which, spurning the proferred charities of the bourgeois state, would strive forward to realize their ideal society. Proudhon had provided an idea of the future in which workers, qua workers, would remake society in their own image, in which organization would be based on work patterns rather than on the alienated state

structure which reflected bourgeois values, and in which the profits of the work of an individual would revert fully to him rather than to the owner of the means of production. In such a society, all workers would be free and equal members of their associations and would have equal voice in the affairs of their workshop and community.

That Proudhon's memory was reverenced among the syndicalists is indicated by the frequency with which reference was made to him at congresses and in their publications. We quote, in conclusion, an exchange between syndicalist leaders at the Congress of Lyons in 1919 before the movement was finally swallowed up by the political Socialists:

> "M. Jouhaux said;
> 'Remember Proudhon. What has not been said of Proudhon? Reactionary, royalist, anarchist, petit-bourgeois, all the epithets that one can apply to a man....'
> 'Not by us,' interrupted the principal speaker of the opposition.
> 'No, not by us,' replied the secretary general of the CGT."[7]

7. M. Harmel, op. cit., pp. 33-4.

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