

# ECHANGES -4-

This bulletin, in its temporary form, is for a group of comrades sharing similar positions and being in close contact with one another, a means of exchanging news on struggles, discussions and criticism and of publications based essentially on the New Movement, i.e. on all the struggles of all kinds carried out by those directly concerned for their own emancipation. It is, therefore, important that each recipient make his own contribution to this end, in exchange for what he expects from the others. He will of course determine the nature, the importance and the regularity of such a contribution himself.

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## TEXTS AND DISCUSSIONS

International - together, 1st and 2nd November 1975 - Paris - of comrades from Denmark, Belgium, France, Great-Britain, Holland, Italy and Sweden. A final report will be produced the end of January, after corrections and precisions made by participants. In the report is information on present day struggles in each country and the beginnings of a discussion which we hope will be pursued. This report will only be sent to each participant and those who ask for it (say only how many copies required). Write soon, so that we can see how many to produce.

Socialisme ou Barbarie

To complete the interview with Castoriadis (re-printed by the book-shop Librairie des deux Mondes, 10 rue Gay-Lussac, PARIS. 5 ff) the magazine Anti-mythes has just published an interview with Claude Lefort ( 3 ff from Claude Chevalier, 327 Bd des belles portes, 14200 Mérouville). Anti-Mythe has also reprinted the interview with Simon "De la scission de S.B à la rupture avec I.C.O)" (available from ECHANGES, 2 FF), and the pamphlet on populism (15 ff, from Chevalier). Also just out, the new book by Castoriadis "L'institution imaginaire de la société" (50 ff, Le seuil). Who can review this book for us ? (we only have the review by Le Monde 26-II-75 from ECHANGES). The interview with Castoriadis by Anti-Mythes has been translated into English in the American Magazine Telos (Department of sociology - Washington University - St Louis - 63 I30 - U.S.A).

Joseph Dietzgen

This German philosopher of working class origin was highly regarded by German and Dutch councils communists. A new german édition (references in the next ECHANGES) has a long critical preface on the traditional movement in Germany. There is a french translation of "The essence of intellectual work" and "Little philosophical writtings" (Maspéro).

Paul Mattick: " Spontaneität und organisation, vier Versuche über praktische und theoretische probleme der Arbeiterbewegung" ( "Spontaneity and organisation, four essays on the theoretical and practical problems of the workers movement"). Editions Suhrkamp. Frankfurt a/M 1975, 120 pages).

A compilation of texts published in various reviews (English and French) between 1945 and 1957. The first is a re-print of an Essay on Otto Rühle ( published in 1970 by Intitute for the practice and theory of council communism as appendix to Otto Rühle own book on Revolution). It is a historical prelude of the new autonomous movement and speaks of the revolutionary period of German history and of a council communist militant, remarkable by his foresight. One of the founders of the K.A.P.D and L.A.A.U he was the first of this group to recognise the anti - working class nature of bolshevism. Mattick's account is biographical but set against the development of capitalism society. Also among the opening paragraphs is a very good definition of the old, so called workers' movement, which provides the theme for the three following essays: that of the contradictions between a capitalist movement with working class members, on the one hand, and a true workers' movement. On the other Mattick defines the history of the old movement as the history of the capitalism market where the economic laws of exchange must be applied in favour power and says than the old movement limits itself strictly within the framework of capitalist structure.

The second essay on spontaneity and organisation compares the ideas of Lenin, Rosa Luxembourg and Georges Sorel and analyses official organisations as reflecting the structure of bourgeois society. He shows e-g that political end trade union bureaucracy are exactly the same as state bureaucracy, concluding that a renaissance of the old movement is out of the question. Implied from this is that the new movement has a totally different character and content. This essay seems incomplete, but this is only because society as it exists and the struggles as they take place will bring this new perspective which make these reflections all the more pertinent.

The third article is of Karl Korsch the marxist theorician, whose attitude towards Marx was very critical and opens up new vistas and new interpretations completely against the interpretations of the past by looking at the relationship between continuously developing social reality and social theory. For Mattick, this marxist critic of marxism is a guide to help us understand the use of orthodox "marxism" in favor of state capitalist society and the old movement.

The fourth article is on economic theory. Underline the fact that for the proletariat all economic problems must be treated critically. He briefly repeats the marxist perspectives for bourgeois society. As with the other articles he tries to relate economic factures to the failure of the traditional movement.

Propositions of a french comrade, for discussion and analysis of the following question: "What in modern capitalism (western and eastern), at the level of the organisation of work in the company, of the State, of new forms (of autonomous struggles leaving) of exploitation ... causes the fact that workers develop new forms of autonomous struggles leaving no room for traditional forms (and even struggles against these traditional forms ?"

I.e how does the evolution of capitalism lead to a modification of forms of struggles, how does the old movement correspond to old capitalism and the new movement to modern capitalism? Use to made of texts already written on the subject by Korsch, Rühle, Mattick, Pannekoek etc and groups like Socialisma ou Barbarie, Noir et rouge, ICO ...

## INFORMATION

### Israel

Israleft is a bi-weekly news service (P.O.B. 9013 Jerusalem). 71 issues have already been published and it is a good source of news of events in Israel. The last issue tells of a strike at EL AL started BY 500 skilled men in the company's workshops, over a refusal to re-examine the workers professional gradings. The press, government and the Histadut (the official, exclusive Trade Union Federation) condemned the strike. Attempts by the government to break the strike failed. "Emergency orders" had been issued to a number of workers making it a "criminal offense" not to report to work as ordered workers then appeared at work bearing signes that they were ~~afraid~~ "forced labourers". Other workers physically blocked their path. The government were afraid to arrest all the workers or mobilize more workers and back down. Using the phrase "forced labourers" has a particularly stark implication in Israel.

### PORTUGAL

Two articles in Spartacus - November- December 1975 (Lefevre, 5, rue Ste Croix de la Bretonnerie 75004 PARIS): 1/ Translation of an editorial in Combate- n° 27, JULY 1975. 2/ "From doubt to the end of illusion- Notes and documents" by the authors of the book "Portugal, l'autre combat" (see ECHANGES n° 2) (Book and photocopies of articles from ECHANGES).

Two pamphlets in Dutch: 1/ From the group Act and Thought (C. Brendel, 23 A Berlioz Straat, Amersfoort, Holland). 2/ From the group Spartacus (Uitgeverig de Vlam, Reiner Claeszenstr. 40 hs, 16 87 97, Amsterdam).

Four articles about Portugal in Lanterne Noire (N° 4, P. Blachier, BP 14, 92360 Meudon-la Forêt).

JAPAN

There was an almost total strike of nearly one million workers in the Public sector including railways, docks etc lasting at least 5 days, "the most serious and the longest in the history of Japan". We should like to know more about this than the 30 lines article which appeared in a french Newspaper.

ARGENTINE

A sick capitalism ?

"... 14 % inflation in October, after having been 23 % in August, and 37 % in July. Then, debt of public finances with only enough for half public expenditure... the stopping of all foreign investment two years ago because of the murders, kidnapping of company directors, terrorist actions accompanied by extortion of funds; the groups of revolutionary activities and wild strikes in the industrial zone of the capital, because of the wide gap dug between the rank and file and the union leadership compromised by their connection with the government... unemployment, which has risen from 3% to 6% in the Buenos Aires complex..." (Le Monde 25-II-75).

FRANCE

Paris - Rhone (Lyon- équipement for car industry). November 12, 880 workers out of 1200 voted for the strike and 3 production units occupied. A strike committee formed from which the CGT withdrew because it was too "democratic". Demand of 250 ff more per month. A court order for expulsion was followed by an invasion by management staff and scabs 2nd November. The strike (after) ended December 3rd with 22 workers sacked, the most militant in the conflict without any reaction.

Chambery (Savoie). Workers and sales staff of a supermarket on strike over work conditions have opened the shop up themselves, employing themselves supplementary sales staff! The police intervened and the strike after a short while continued in a more traditional form.

Clean linnen: Directors of banks, assurance companies, Union administrators and sociologists, met at Lyon to examine the result of experiments "to enlarge the tasks of white collar workers". These experiments only involve 3 firms: 500 office workers in a small insurance company, 100 in the bills section of ESSO, and 98 in a bank. The directors find these experiments "convincing"; no office workers or even Union delegates of the firms in question attended these "study sessions". (Photocopy of article in Le Monde 9-12-75 from ECHANGES).

POLAND

Rulers seem to be confronted by a situation getting close to that of December 1970, made even more inextricable by the world crisis.

Following on the insurrection of 1970-71 (see the book :Capitalisme et lutte de classes en POLOGNE, from ECHANGES) prices stay frozen but essential products are scarce and there is talk of new price rises. The Gierak government is facing stagnant productivity, growing absenteeism and a wave of fires (sabotage).

For productivity: 1971-1975, industrial productivity was up 70% while investments rose 90% and 3 million young people were added to the active population and real wages have risen about 10% year.

For absenteeism: the average is 7% with a 14% increase during the first quarter of 1975- average confirmed in a BBC radio report: 8,5% for 1975. At wroclaw, the rate of absenteeism rose by 33% in 1975 and 2/3 of those absent are less than 30. Workers can be seen buying vodka at 7 am. instead of going to work.

For sabotage: Explosions and fires much increased since August and September<sup>5</sup> (Department stores, factories, a bridge...).

A big campagne for productivity has been started and a law voted by which 25% can be deducted from wages for one day's absence without motive or inability to work through drunkenness or for fighting...to have 5 years seniority in a firm to get full pay when off sick (a measure obviously against young workers).

The new post 1971 leaders count on slowly and gently consolidating the ruling class by added support from the Russian capitalist block (notably for food products) and through the development of intercapitalist exchange with the west. (going from the sale of coal to the exploitation of manpower in Poland by Western companies). The world economic crisis and the resistance of workers in both the East and West make these efforts illusory. This is why the authorities are trying more repressive measures at the same time as a much greater acceptance of the financial penetration of Western capital, especially American. (we shall say more about this at a later point). (Photocopy of articles in Le Monde on the last congress of the Polish C.P and of article in Der Spiegel 2-9-74 about the strikes in 1974, from ECHANGES).

### U.S.A.

#### Miners strike. The end.

The strike effected 80 000 miners for nearly a month and the 3/4 of the coal industry. It ended the beginning of September without the miners obtaining anything at all, especially the right to question, at a local level, contracts negotiated at national level, by action related to special grievances above all over safety regulations, which the company take months to deal with through long, contractual arbitration procedure. One of the ambiguities of the strike was in the demand of the right to strike for these grievances, while in actual fact they were on strike. One can understand this demand seeing the combined effect of contract clauses (by bosses and Unions) and judgements with fines and prisons (by government and bosses) to smash all wildcat strikes. But the response to this needed no doubt something else than a strike for the right to strike.

The Union U.M.W.A did all it could to stop the strike without success at the beginning. The employers group, The Bituminous coal operators Association ordered the Union to act "promptly and efficiently using all reasonable means in its power to stop illegal strike pickets in work stoppages".

On its side, the directing committee of the UMW decided that in urgent cases, they could take action against members of the Union who "seriously threaten the integrity of the Union". It refused to defend imprisoned miners, imprisoned for picketing mines other than their mines (this was one of the tactics of the strike to try and stop repression) and to pay the fines for striking.

Towards the end of strike the Union leadership voted a resolution in 10 points, 22 for and 2 against to determine how stoppages should be treated in future; in particular they declared null and void the tradition that the 2nd and 3rd day shift struck as soon as the 1st shift walked out, and forbade the use of Union funds to pay fines or other expenses of wildcat strikes.

Miller, leader of the U.M.W.A eliminated his opponents, two years ago with a programme of "democratising the Union". The strike provided the opportunity for between Union leaders and for manipulation by the Mine companies settling accounts.

It seems that the bureaucracy is not just caused by the individuals in power but by the very necessity of the system and that it is quickly re-established. by the action of different social forces, at the same time "new" man try to break out the function is greater than everthing. The strike has started off an "anti-red hysteria" by leaders of the industry and the Union against the "leaders" of the strike. However apart from one or two strikers influenced by Maoists, the militants of the strike committees belonged to non group. More than this, some ~~stri~~ strikers who tried to get across propoganda for their group during the strike would be punched up by the others strikers. (Photocopy of american newspaper articles from ECHANGES).

### ALASKA PIPELINE

A total of 21 600 workers are employed on the pipeline from Valdez to Prudhoe Bay, in 30 construction camps.

On August 24 a teamster bus driver was beaten by three members of pipeline welders local 798 when he intervened in a dispute over a black labourer who was ordered to the back of the bus by the welders. This was the incident that triggered the rank and file reaction. It exposed the violence, racism and terror and the inefficient security system at some of the construction camps, particularly the Tausina camp.

Alijeska and its subcontractor went to court immediately to obtain a temporary restraining order against any more work stoppages and than filed a suit against the teamsters for 1,5 million in damages because the master construct carries a no strike clause that reads "there shall be no strikes, picketing, work stoppage, slow downs or other disruptive activity for any reason by the Union or by any employee".

At the end of the 4 day hearing, the judge rules in favor of the company but as an after thought, he suggested taht Alijeska improve camp site security.

The strike was not exactly a rank and file spontaneous walk-out. The Teamster Union used this incident to try to break the union monopoly of AFL-CIO which has world wide sweetheart labor contracts with the major oil companies. This contract which carries the no-strike clause was signed by the heads of the international Unions meeting in Washington before the local union in Anchorage got a crack at it.

The importance of the strike can be refferred to two facts:

I/ The boom years continue in Alaska and will last for a while. Anchorage is beginning to looklike any other bustling American city of half a million souls the Oil (exploration and production) and the building of pipelines bring a prosperity which can be seen everywhere; the crisis is unknown here. But the reverseis violence of capitalism and its expansion which destroys all the social life of natives Eskimos and eliminates them, and the over exploitation of workers coming here for higher wages.

