

échanges

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ECHANGES ET MOUVEMENT, BM Box 91, London WC1 N3 XX United Kingdom

## ITALY

FIAT AUTO: A RETURN TO NORMAL?

With the return to work in September, Fiat Auto announced that the remaining laid-off workers from 1980 would be taken back by mid-1987, well ahead of even quite recent forecasts. This, coupled with requests on the management's part for Saturday and three shift working, may lead one to think that after years, Fiat has returned to normal. A more attentive observer would observe that the people taken back only cover jobs lost through wastage (about 16% in Fiat Auto in 1983-5), but could also note the massive increase in investment, output and profit since the early 80s. What preoccupies management, however, is the unions, or, to be rather more precise, the lack of them.

Already at the time of the 1979 sacking<sup>1</sup> Agnelli (majority Fiat owner) in an interview informed a reporter from La Repubblica when taxed about having placed the unions in a very tight corner, 'I know, and I'm not at all happy about that. The truth is that things often go wrong here in Italy because the unions are weak and divided'. He added: 'At Fiat the unionized workers are 41%, well below the national average for metal-workers of over 60%'. (La Repubblica 20-10-79)

Since then the unions have become weaker (decimated in the 1980 strike and in subsequent attempts to reform - no one wanted to be a union delegate at elections, the wage scale referendum attracted little real support) and the Fiat management more worried. In certain cases this union weakness has been attributed to the history of the 50s (crack down on the CP and its union), with a subsequent lack of union consciousness during the boom in employment in the 60s, for example the marxist-leninist Renzo del Carria in his Proletari senza rivoluzione describes the smashing up of the UIL union by immigrant Fiat workers in 1962 and the total absence of the other unions and parties, the struggle being in the hands of the new mass-worker (Vol. V, p. 3-37).

Now, of course, the mass-worker is considered to be a historical figure, but

1) In 1979 Fiat sacked several workers as a response to terrorist attacks

the unions are far from recuperating ground. In fact it is the Fiat management which is setting the pace for unionization: no longer the yellow unions destroyed in 1962, but the American style industrial workers unions, like the UAW car workers' union. In 1983, at the turning point of Fiat's renaissance, Agnelli had this to say: 'Dealing with the Italian unions, moreover with the mediations of what we regard as untrustworthy ministers, is now meaningless. What we want is a car workers' union that deals directly with us here in Turin, with a clear cut bargaining logic. In this case, we could in exchange for lay-offs and mobility concede pay rises, if not a readjustment in the working week' (Panorama 8-8-83). Then the main resistance came not from the trade unions, but the big bosses union, the Federmeccanica.

Apart from the usual seeking of novelties from the USA, this demand does however seek to fill the cultural gap left by the decay of the unions and the so-called 'Japanization' of factory life.

In an interesting series of articles 'In search of new production systems' (La Repubblica 27-6-86; 1+3+5-7-86), the Fiat Auto manager, Chidella, was interviewed and moaned that while today the worker-conductor (i.e. the worker on the automated line) had to think of managing his machine 'The unions have old ways of thinking about this and provide very little help'. Not surprisingly the CGIL union conducted a survey at Fiat and discovered that most workers went to see the foreman and not the union representative in cases of disputes. Returning for a moment to the 70s Ghidelli stated: 'I do not believe in the inevitability of conflict ... (In the 70s) I managed the RIV and despite a strong and paleo-marxist union there was no hysterical conflict like at Fiat'.

One could hardly define better the function of unions in present society! But returning to the present, let us return to the problem: almost non-existent union, death of the mass-worker and birth of the worker-conductor, 'Japanization' of the factory.

In a recent study of Fiat (A. Becchi-Collida and S. Negrelli: La Transizione nell'Industria e nelle Relazioni Industriali, Milan 1986) however, the old schemes are laid out again. Chapter headings such as 'Fiat 1969: inventing the trade union' (p. 155) and others, and statements like: 'At Fiat, the accelerated robotization is in line with getting round the roadblocks imposed in the past by trade union agreements and the social pressures deriving from previous systems of industrial relations. The complete mechanization of the productive cycle, as in the case of Robogate ... were publicized as managerial challenges to the old trade union strength (sic.) and its future role' (p. 257-8), lead us to believe that Fiat, the alter ego of Toyota, wants to take on and destroy, yet again, the unions.

The real transition, however, can only be grasped through the examination of

2) In the 1970s the RIV belonged to Fiat (now it belongs to the Swedish SKF), but was sold off because of financial difficulties. It was based in and around the Agnelli home town of Villar Perosa near Turin

the links between the types of worker struggles at Fiat in the past, the type of technology selected to avert future dangers (and also the types of technology developed and not applied because industrial relations changed) and the type of union that will emerge in the centre of this, as a natural partner of the management. The quotes provided above would suggest that Fiat suffers from the 'syndrome of unilateral government of the firm' (ibid. p. 229) precisely because of the need for worker participation as 'worker-conductors'.

## CHINA

### How Factory Managers fought and won a battle. Anatomy of a reform (Far Eastern

Economic Review 9-10-86). Several articles giving a perfect report of the long (and not yet over) battle between the managers and the party bureaucrats. Managers are 'fervent in their belief that the state-owned enterprises can become efficient and profitable provided thorough reforms are carried out'. It is not a matter of believing, it's a matter of practice. New managers not only rationalize equipment, restructure the workforce, but they try to introduce 'a system linking wages, bonuses and other benefits'. So, productivity rocketed. Real power moved from the previous union or party men to the new managers. As the People's Daily noted, 'the difficulty is that the dispute is really a question of property, and there is no way to distinguish who is right or wrong'.

The former bureaucrats tried to use what remains of their political links to retain their power; they could succeed for a time, but the managers could get the support of the top leaders of the party and were reinstated. As said the first secretary of the Hunan province party committee (since 1985): 'The factory director responsibility under the leadership of the party committee is no longer possible... Expanding enterprise autonomy is appropriate to developing the socialist commodity economy'. (copy at Echanges)

## USA

### Processed World (41 Sutter Street, Apt. 1829, San Francisco, Cal. 94104 - USA)

N° 18 - Another sex issue - Hot under the collar: succesful bankworker strike in Toronto.

In These Times (Institute for Public Affairs - 1300 Belmont Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60657 - USA)

N° 32/2-9-86 - Hightech workplace is laced with toxics and tort cases (nearly 100 hightech workers are suing GTE over illnesses they say stem from exposure to chemicals in a New Mexico plant: did toxics damage their immunity?)

N° 37/1-10-86 - mentioned a book on the Air Controllers' strike in August 1981: 'The Air Controllers' Controversy: Lessons from the PATCO strike' by Arthur B. Shostak and David Skaik (copy at Echanges).

5-11-86 - Black Maycrs (since 1967 in 4 major cities and 270 small ones)- Haiti - El Salvador, Nicaragua.

Internationalist Perspective (External fraction of the International Communist Current. International Perspective is published: in English, USA - PO Box 1748, Mont-clair, NJ 07047; UK - BM Box 8154, London WC 1 N 3 XX; in French: Belgium - Destryker - BP 1181, Centre Monnaie, 1000 Bruxelles)

N° 3/Summer 86 - The future belongs to the working class - The example of struggles in Belgium - The fall of oil prices - A further decline in the standard of living on the horizon - Chernobyl: technology in the service of the war economy - The revolutionary milieu and I.P., why do we call ourselves a fraction? - Centrism and the ICC.

N° 4/Autumn 86 - Perspective for the class struggle - International situation: after a limited recovery a generalised recession looms - The growth of interimperialist conflicts - France: an experiment in the left government-Class consciousness in the proletarian revolution: 1 - The nature of class consciousness and its ideological deformations - What kind of intervention in the unemployed committees - A critique of the I.C.C.

Labor Notes (PO Box 20001, Detroit, Mich. 48220 - USA) September 86 - Wage freeze was not enough - Steelworkers locked out at USX - North American Meat Packers' Union will try to oust UFCW at Hormel Plant (what happened to Local P9 in the Hormel strike): short report of a panel discussion on the P9 experience between Joe Hansen, director of UFCW Region 18, and the Hormel's vice-president for labor relations. Both agreed that the P9 strike was an aberration in an otherwise good relationship between the company and unions. Hansen said the International let the strike go on to let the local 'get out of their system' - Detroit: years of concessions yield Public Workers' strike.

October 86 - Is Greyhound looking for another showdown? - UFCW signs pact with Hormel - UAW gives up workrules at Chrysler - Independent Steelworkers' Union wins 5-day strike (Amco - Ohio)

November 86 - State Department Plan urges AFL-CIO to push Business unionism in SA - Needed: a new kind of unionism - A new vision for a new direction.

December 86 - Watsonville Cannery near collapse as 15 month strike continues - Here's who the AFL-CIO is funding in SA - Steel stand-off continues at USX.

January 87 - Labor Cooperative Experiment collapses at Eastern Airlines - Hormel strike (Felony charges against P9 dropped) - 1199 rebuilds in rank & file union (Hospital workers) - USX strike - Greyhound workers reject new concessions.

February 87 - Steelworkers give up jobs, workrules, money, benefits, holidays to USX - Canadian Meatpackers' strike ends in partial victory - Japanese Postal Workers' Union belies the docile image, fights job loss - California Health Workers end strike: accept 'geographic two-tiers wage' - Asbestos victims lose right to sue Manville - Concessions Parade decelerates as Greyhound lines gets new owners.

News and Letters (59 East V. Buren, room 707, Chicago, Ill. 60.605) N° 8/October 86 - USA strikes - Oakland Hospital, California winery, Atlantic City Hotel-casinos, Visiting Nurses Association (Chicago) - US Steelworkers

(Gary, Indiana)

What givebacks can get you (Fortune 24-11-86) The trend in US labor relations today is companies winning concessions from unions and workers on wages and work rules. Givebacks started in the early 80s and continue to pile up. The last ones: 2300 striking workers in 11 California wineries threatened by sacking returned to the job, swallowing a 50 cent hourly wage cut and reduction of benefits. A six week strike by 7500 timber workers in the Northwest ended with unions giving up wage & benefits. 15,000 Alcoa workers walked back after 5 weeks strike with wage freeze, cuts in benefits and changes in work rules. USX Corp. is patiently sitting out a three month old strike by 22,000 steelworkers against the same kind of management's demands. The employers got cost savings but disgruntled workers are fighting other ways. In a cement factory where cuts were imposed most employees refused to work overtime, some resorted to acts of sabotage or adhered to the letter of the company settlement, doing only what they are asked. Some other companies are confronted with similar situations, the consequence is workers leaving the unions and sometimes the rise of new unions (e.g. Teamsters for Democratic Unions). Some companies - where they can do so - try to escape these consequences and to build with the union - what they call - cooperation with the workers. (copy at Echanges)

Unions absent on Sunday are dead on Monday (New York Times 1-11-86) Since 1973 workers have been suffering plant closings and lay-offs, speeded up assembly lines and a 14% decline in average weekly earnings. Union membership has declined to 19% of the workforce. Some union activists are looking for more substantial and strategic proposals: stop all talk on 'non-adversarial labor relations, organize entire conglomerates, defend the public against corporate abuse, organize immigrant workers, stop the suppression of union dissenters'. According to the journals there is no chance to see union leaders to take such a way, so the unions will continue to decline: something else can be rebuilt.

Worker Raises Averaging 4.5% US - in 1985 highest wages are in mining, industry, oil & gas extraction; lowest to retail trade. The largest increases were among employees of bank and other financial business and insurance and real estate companies; the smallest in construction.

Harper's Magazine Index for 1985. Combined debt of Iowa farmers = \$ 16.300 million, compared with the National Debt of Peru = \$ 14.300 million.

Discussion Bulletin (PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, Mi 49501) N° 19/Sept.86 - The 'right of recall' - We can do better than this worn out SJU concept. The third camp movement of the 1950's - From the future.

N° 20/Nov. 86 - Discussion on the article 'New Utopianism as a flight from responsibility' (on unions) - Labor vouchers neither desirable nor viable (extracts from Communism and Measurement by Labor Time - La Guerre Social n° 1, 1977).

N° 21/Jan. 87 - My journey to the Independent Socialist Republic of New Bologna - Anti-Utopianism - Letters - The SLP revisited (continued).  
The Hormel Strike - Turning point for a third force Labor Movement (Peter Rackleffe) - Chronology of the strike - Rank and file characters of P9-Support for P9 - Rank and file to rank and file - The opponents of the rank and file movement.

'The Hormel strike has brought as close to that day of reckoning, a day when the Labor movement may be as profoundly transformed as it was by the emergence of independent unionism in the 30's. Though the bureaucrats still have the upperhand, it is loosening'. (copy of the complete article at Echanges)

Synthesis (A newsletter & journal for social ecology, deep ecology and bioregionalism - PO Box 1858, San Pedro, Ca 90733, USA) N° 23/Aug. 86 - The Green movement in British Columbia (Canada) - Interregional meeting of committees of correspondence - Animal rights and deep ecology movements - Getting red and green together.

Fifth Estate (PO Box 02548, Detroit, Mich. 48202) Fall 1986 - Kids say no to drugs - Book reviews on revolution and violence - The Free McGillsland-Hooligan press - Rebel violence versus hierarchical violence - A chronology of anti-state violence on the UK mainland, July 1985-May 1986. Critique of FE: are we losing it - The decline of (anti) Western civilization - A critique of Fifth Estate by Dan Todd - The Case against art.

Workers Info -rag (8/0 Zamisdat Press, GPO Box 1255, Gracie Studier. NY 10028) Three and a half days in the lives of some American longshoremen (Oct. 86) on a strike that disrupts docks in New York - This new paper presents itself: 'We will be an occasional information bulletin relating to anti-capitalist and anti-state struggles. The idea is to provide as much useful information (rank & file activities, effects of the new technology, ways and means to fight back) as possible' - It is not affiliated with any political party or leftist group, nor it seeks any such affiliation. Letters, requests, donations, info to be published should be sent to.

Bigarro Processed World (Stephanie Klein - PO Box 7353, Menlo Park, Cal. 94025, USA) A critical view of Processed World, from one past member (Gidget). We will come back on this pamphlet, which deals mainly with relationships (personal & political being mixed together inside this group).

**UNITED KINGDOM** The Scum: The paper that supports the pickets - Barbed wires lies - The truth about class war against Murdoch's empire - Catalyst, c/o 70 High Street, Leicester, UK.

Counter Information (Box 81, c/o 43 Candlemakers Row Edinburgh) Okt-Nov 86 & supplement Oct. 86 - Barricades in Denmark (matters); Miners resist

(local strikes) - Riots Go West (Plymouth, Bristol, Cardiff) - Silentnight (second year of strike action, in two bedding factories; contacts: Ann King, 10 Ramhill Crescend, Barnoleswick, Colne, Lancs ) - Oppositions in the workers' state (some facts already known on class struggle in USSR)  
Febr.-March 87 - Dole wars - Winter of discontent (French rail strike) - A lesson in democracy (French students strike) - Unofficial strikes at seven J&J Fashions (Tyne on Wear) - Rooftop protest at Barlinniss, Saughton and Peterhead (Scottish prisons)

Here & Now (Box 2340, West Princess Str, Glasgow G4) N° 3/Spring 86 - Hard-going for the left - we made it our party - Riots and their respondents - Animal liberation - The fireside narcotic - The nomenklaturist state - Selfhood Community and Capital. N° 4 - Letters: riots cross fire - The invasion of Exchange - The demise of the class object - Animal liberation: a loss of clarity - Libertarian Municipalism (Murray Bookchin) - Eco Politics (West Germany) - Politics and Chernobyl - Age of hyperreality (Baudrillard and Politics today).

Solidarity (A Journal of Libertarian Socialism - c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E 6) Issue n° 13/Winter 86-87 - That inevitable crisis. Will socialism collapse before capitalism? - Reason and Treason (disaffection amongst Cromwell's model troops 1647-1649; book review - Woodhouse - Puritanism & Liberty. Being the Army Debates) Better Dead than Read (interview Class War). Solidarity and Class War meet uptown. What really are Class War's political ideas, interviews of three veteran members of the London Group. One of them:

'I think that all the working class needs is a shove in the right direction and we've just got to put our shoulders to the wheel wherever working class struggle is most intense and try and push it further. We ourselves can't conjure things out of nothing, we can't go and cause riots, we can't act as a vanguard and go round and lead this, that, and the other struggles'.  
 (...) 'What we have got to offer is concrete solutions to people's problems now..'

Book review - Freedom: A hundred Years 1886-1986 - The Politics of World Economy (I. Wallerstein) - Short & curley (J. Slates, on management psychology)

New Socialist/October 1986. Doing Dirt on the miners The article is adapted from the preface of a book to be published on the miners' strike, 'The Enemy within: Pitvillages during the 1984-85 Miners' strike, a History Workshop collection of correspondence, diaries and document'. It contains reviews of different books and articles on the miners' strike, but it deals essentially with the effect of the miners' strike on the left and mainly on the left of the Labour Party. The political approach distorts completely the real meaning of the miners' strike as it tries to persuade Labour and the left that 'the miners fought for Labour's cause' and to find something to replace 'the ideological collapse of both social-democracy & communism'.

(copy at Echanges)

Tell us lies about the miners D. Douglass (DAM-IWA, PO Box 96, Doncaster) This pamphlet deals with 'The role of the media in the great coal strike of 1984-85'. The author is a NUM Branch delegate at Hatfield main branch, Doncaster. The choice of the subject and the function of the author can both explain this focus on a lot of facts as if they were essential to class struggle. These facts on the distortion of events through the media are well known, impressive and accurate: a lot more could have been quoted. For what use? Class struggle does not rise and develop from removing such obstacles that are inherent to capitalism: it is rising from exploitation at rank and file level where the truth is immediately perceived in the daily conditions of work. The spreading of conflicts is not a matter of propaganda but of workers knowing from their own conditions what is actually the fight of other workers. Nothing can prevent the spreading of a strike when it is going to spread; nothing can impulse this spreading when it has stopped for a lot of specific elements. The importance given so to this role of the media has to be linked to the general concept of social democracy on the control of means of domination.

Picket is still published, leaflets available at: c/o Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N 1 9 DX, UK. Full set of Picket in binder to address above -

- n° 1: 24-1-86 to 31-3-86 (1 to 4)
- n° 2: 1-4-86 to 18-5-86 (5 to 12)
- n° 3: 18-5-86 to 27-7-86 (13 to 21)
- n° 4: 28-7-86 to 7-10-86 (22 to 28)
- n° 5: 8-10-86 to 21-11-86 (29 to 35)

We think to publish a complete report on the Murdoch's strike and the Wapping fights.

Movement for Workers' Councils (for details or information write to: Secretary, 21 East Lake Rd, London SE 5, UK) This attempt is to build a group around the council communist ideas is going on. Regular and open meetings are held every week. Some pamphlets have been published in a limited number (reprint of out of print texts):

- Workers' Councils by Anton Pannekoek (first published in the theoretical journal of the American Council Communists, Living Marxism, in 1938). Introduction by John Holloway.
- The Wilhelmshaven Revolt - Ernst Schneider A chapter of the revolutionary movement in the German navy 1918-1919 (see review in this Echanges issue)
- The Launching of the I.W.W. - by Paul F. Brissenden

SPAIN

The dockers' movement (see previous issues of Echanges). Letter from a comrade in Barcelona 31.1.87.

"I shall come immediately to the point of the most recent events in the dockers' conflict which has spread more or less throughout Spain, but is particularly in Barcelona.

The situation basically remains the same as when I last wrote. That is, general strike against the Contenemar company in all the ports where it operates. The occupation of the dockside and police intervention to protect the blacklegs leading to periodical clashes and scuffles. Apparently we have reached an impasse, but this hides the fact that the company in question is suffering heavy losses. Contenemar and the government wished by their action to produce a certain image that all was running normally despite the strike, as the blacklegs were working. It is hard to estimate the losses, but they must amount to billions of pesetas. In fact the company would not have been able to continue without state aid because it is the government that has to pay out a lot of money to deal with the strike.

Besides, the dockers can stay out as long as they want. Seeing that the strike is selective, dealing with a given enterprise, while dockers continue to work for the others, there is no problem of money as solidarity is working. A solidarity fund collected from all the ports guarantees all the strikers the same pay as if they were at work. Moreover, if things don't go well, they can always start a kind of revolving strike taking in all the firms in turn: for example, while A is out on strike, B is working normally, while just the opposite will happen the day after. In other words, the tactical advantage still lies in the dockers' hands without them being threatened with poverty because in this case only their weekly pay is a little less. On the other hand, the losses made by the companies will continue to grow and the chaos in the ports will overcome their ability to reply. This was the tactic adopted in 1980 with very positive results which the dockers have well learnt.

During November, Contenemar closed its Bilbao office and tried to set up at Vigo in Galicia where the UGT ('socialist' trade union - trans.) is in the majority. Moreover, Contenemar sent a 'confidential letter' to captains asking them to put pressure on their sailors to provide "collaboration" against the dockers, which is already the case with the UGT (cf. La Estiba no. 23). Naturally the sailors and employees did not follow this advice and supported the dockers and were then sacked.

At the end of December, the Barcelona Industrial Tribunal decided against Contenemar and declared that its hiring of blacklegs was illegal - certainly the sentence was not in these terms, but it did recognize that the company has taken an illegal position. The consequence is that Contenemar must accept the sentence and sack the blacklegs. But it refused to do so. From January 2nd, pickets were set up by the dockers to stop lorries coming in and out and thus stopping almost all work. The police, the upholder of the law, this time had to defend illegality in Contenemar's position, which ran quite contrary to the court's decision. Democracy often leads to such funny things. It was the police too that was charged with driving the lorries to get them through the picket lines. This led to a clash in which 25 dockers were arrested. Immediately a general strike hit the port. Equally fast the dockers were set free with police "excuses" that they had not been arrested but only taken in. Nobody believes that Spain is not a democracy.

to a generalization of the conflict. Trying to gain time by this tactic would not seem to be particularly favourable to the government: it had been its tactic right from the start and had not had the anticipated result.

The dockers were prepared to go back to the talks fully conscious of the fact that sooner or later they would have to accept some modifications to their relations at work as had existed up to that time. But they also knew that the what was at stake was the power that they still had over relations at work. And in this they did not seem likely to give in easily to the bosses.

The first round of talks were in early February (undoubtedly they will last a long time). On the first day Contenemar came out with a draft agreement which the dockers took to be a joke. The firms representatives were not even allowed to finish reading it because the first words made clear that it would be totally unacceptable to the dockers. It was then agreed to start from scratch with a mixed committee that would try to come up with a project. After a few days the firm accepted back all those who had been sacked. They also accepted the dockers' proposal on the division of work etc.. But this only dealt with the conflict with Contenemar. Behind this remained the government's plan for port reorganization. The government's representative to this effect for Barcelona had also been called to the Contenemar negotiations. It seems that the instructions he received could be used to negotiate the decree itself, which is rather surprising given the firmness of the government in all restructuring so far. It would be the first time that it has given way, but the dockers do not want to be too optimistic for the moment.

But the corner stone to all the negotiations between the dockers and Contenemar was the question of the firm's workers in Bilbao. They are not dockers but from the start of the strike they stood alongside them, taking part in the strike. They were the only ones to act in this way because the Contenemar employees in other ports either remained inactive in the strike or were black-legs. This situation explains the lock out at Bilbao and moving the offices to Vigo. The Bilbao workers throughout the strike undertook many acts which led to a spirit of struggle very much against the managers. They kidnapped a manager for a while, shutting him up in one of the port buildings. Contenemar refused point blank to return to Bilbao because the managers were afraid of the workers and not one of them was prepared to risk falling into the hands of some hot heads for a little more money. In any case, the most important question was that of repression which used as its stalking horse restructuring. Even if the company accepted a return to Bilbao it would only be on condition that the workforce was slimmed down, i.e. by sacking the more militant workers. Until now Contenemar does not seem to want to budge on this point. But the dockers cannot abandon their defence of the most courageous strikers because they are all together in the same struggle. Now the dockers see clearly what a return to work without resolving this problem would mean. This is why there has been no ratification of the agreement with Contenemar which dealt with almost all the problems pending. If this were also to end, a battle would have been won, but one would have to see what happens with the negotiations on the decree, this time without a mediator because the dockers would be face to face with the government.

Et Cetera - Correspondencia de la guerra social - Apartado de Correos

1363 - Barcelona

No. 10 Dec. 1986: Reconversion and struggles in the ports 1936-39 - a stolen memory - The function of a paper - Reflections on ends and means in a movement of social transformation - On the Murdoch conflict in the UK - On the restructuring of the railways in Italy - On the memoirs of a Portuguese anarcho-syndicalist militant.

On January 9th, Contenemar tried a spectacular action by blocking the port entrance of Barcelona with a ship. The media made out that this "act" was due to the workers in the enterprise (that is, the non-dockers making up the permanent workforce of the firm) in solidarity with their boss against the dockers. Normally such an act is considered as a mutiny by the ship's captain, and he should have been hauled up before a military court as the law requires. But the whole event was with government blessing.

For its part the Coordinadora called an assembly of port representatives from all over Spain for January 15-16th, at Taragona, also calling for an unlimited and total strike against Contenemar. Here they also decided to stage a one hour strike each Friday for all ports and firms. This sharp response was seen as a means to put pressure on the other firms so that they in turn would be forced to press the government to find a way out of the conflict.

So we come to the last week in January. The Coordinadora came out of the union elections in the ports with an even larger majority. It gained 231 delegates, the UGT 23, the CCOO (Workers' commissions) 14 and the ELA-STV 2.

Officially the setting up of mixed companies foreseen by the decree was already underway. The government gazette published the names of the chairman and leading managers chosen by the state for the company established to run the port of Barcelona. But the firms already working there found themselves cut out and refused to accept the new company, they refused to pay the 49% capital allotted to them (the remaining 51% remained in state hands). This meant that when the decree was to be applied to the ports, the government was sandwiched between the dockers' opposition and the obstructionism by the firms. The firms feared that by joining in the scheme they would unleash even further conflict which would cause them great losses.

Doubtlessly this led the government to ask Contenemar to negotiate and so go-betweens were called on. One thing is clear: from the beginning of the struggle, that is for months on end, the government had mistaken the dockers' ability to resist. The Madrid technocrats thought that it was merely a question of time. The tactic was to let time do its work, as was the case with the restructuring of other sectors, in weakening the workers' resistance. But this time the government was unable to break the unity and resistance of the dockers. Far from weakening the dockers, time led to an increased ability to reply. Besides, as the assembly elections and especially the whole of the actions made during the period, this experience strengthened the movement. All this made the government change tactics and to try to negotiate.

If one looks back on the past months one can see that despite clashes with the police, the sabotage of blackleg lorries by pickets sometimes far from the port (leading up to cases of arson), the struggle was not very spectacular, but very effective. From the beginning there were ups and downs without any particular outcome, but each time the initiative remained in the dockers' hands. It was this tactic of attack and withdrawal which finally solidified the strength and coherence of their position. One cannot tell if the government instruction to begin negotiations was a tactical manoeuvre to stop the struggle spreading to other Contenemar firms. It seemed a reply to the dockers' decision to hold a one hour strike each Friday which could lead on

n° 11- May 87 - Labour conflicts and union control - Discussion about the revolution - On the student movement in Spain - Railways strike in France ( winter 1986-87 ) - Un Clara Thalmann who died on the 28/1/87 and extracts of the book "Struggle for Freedom " written with Pavel Thalmann ( May 1937 in Catalonia )

Culture Libertaire - June 1987 - Boletín de la Asociación I. Puente - Vitoria - Apdo 1687 - D1000 Vitoria - Malatesta - Anarchists in Vitoria - Books and publications

Culture Libertaire Boletín de la Asociación Issac Puente, Apdo 1687 Vitoria 01080 Espana (in Spanish)

No. 10 Jan. 1987. Last romantics (Jose Peirats) - Contribution to the history of the clandestine CNT regional committees - The thought of the JJLL during post-franquism 1976-1983.

La Estiba - Voz de los Puertos - Boletín de la Coordinadora estatal de los estibadores portuarios - 19 Sept 1986, General Assembly of the Coordinadora - Chronicle of the struggle in the Andalusian ports of Almeira, Huelva and Seville.

April 1987 - Labour conflicts in Spain - Struggle in the ports - Strikes in Genoa , San Francisco , Rotterdam .

juin -juillet 1987 - Mexico : El Frente Autentico del Trabajo ( F A T ) , independant and democratic worker movement - India : coal miners and the new social relationship - USA : Hormel strike .

## FRANCE

Noir et Rouge - Chez Felix, 65 Rue Bichat, 75010 Paris (in French)

No. 2 Nov.-Dec. 1986. Latin America: emergence of movements of a self-managed character - Argentina: the alternative groups - are they an alternative - Peru: women in movement - Brazil: Sao Bernardo: the building of the workers' movement - Bolivia: the workers' movement at the cross-roads - Rural migrations in Latin America.

No. 3 Jan.-Feb. 1987. Students: on with the struggle, it was only a beginning - The ideological counter-revolution, from myths to myths - Advertizing, an agent of social integration - The Humanist Party: the Orange sect - Astrology and chirology: the latest avatars deciphering the unconscious all the rage in companies - The reformist or evolutionist deflection - Critique of We so loved the revolution (interview of Cohn-Bendit by the Spanish paper Liberacion) - The great leap forward of the educated young - Ideological counter-revolution or farewell to the revolution - Antimilitarisme: no future?

Courant Alternatif OCL Monthly - OCL/Egregore - BP 1213 - 51058 Reims Cedex (in French). No. 59 Oct. 1986. Immigration (reactions to the new law on entry and residence conditions for foreigners in France) - Trade unionism: reformism and consciousness - debate with Voie Proletarienne (BP 5 St Ouen Cedex) - Fast Food: what's in your hamburger - Health: article on AIDS - Health and work (-on the book by Dominique Huez The risks of work) - Social Security: towards a double system for a double health system - Kanaky: for independence.

No. 60 Nov. 1986. School: liberal lifting - The revolution in question by C. Orsoni (extracted from La revolution, Atelier de Creation Libertaire, 13 Rue Paul Blanc, 69001 Lyon) - Anarcho-syndicalism and communism - St Etienne 1920-25 (critique of the book by D. Colson) - Atomic essays: SOS Tahiti-Kanaky: a statute a year.

No. 61 Dec. 1986. Young people and contraception (interviews) - Works on energy - When emigration takes things into its own hands, from the Nord to Barbes or the self-organization of the associated immigrant movement - A movement at RVI - Elainville sur Orne - The Cric: an example of indian struggles in South America - The evolution of land reform in Nicaragua - The revolution in question (C. Orsoni) - Butt.  
No. 62 Jan. 1987. Restructuring on the French railways - Paris's burning - The City of Paris versus the homeless - Immigration: the laws of hospitality - University and school student movements - Nationality or a new citizenship - The Hungarian insurrection 1956.  
No. 63 Feb. 1987. Can youth employment be solved by reducing employers contributions? - Trade unions reunite in the civil service sector - Railways dossier - Student chronicles - After Chernobyl: Eastern Europe - Red and Green - The dossier on the railways contains interviews with drivers and a member of the inter-category coordination - Etat des lieux et la politique bordel - a 320 page book written by the OCL containing analyses of economic, social and political situations, social movements and the revolutionary movement and different sectors in struggle (80 FF from the address of Courant Alternatif).

Le Trimardeur c/o CRICO BP 32, 76001 Rouen Cedex (in French)

"the fruit of animated discussion among a small group of postmen (-women) from sorting offices and post offices". Labour time - They've got long hair - HM: the automatic sorting machine - Six months of struggle and mini-mini battles - Overtime? No thanks!

Cash ACP 53 Avenue des Gobelins, 75013 Paris (in French)

A paper for the unemployed mainly distributed through the 250 unemployed groups in France. CASH seeks to stimulate self-organization among the unemployed and those with no fixed job, to provide information on local attempts at prganization, to help and spread the struggles, to reappropriate social knowledge: these are all essential moments in the constitution of workers and those without fixed jobs in a social force. By recognizing common interests and forming a collective identity, a unitary movement, one can create a dynamic of deep change in society. The paper accepts contributions from individuals, groups and associations: agitation, information, reports or analyses are all welcome.

No. 4 Set.-Oct. 1986. Working without a contract or how to become a goat - Attention: revolts in the future - On food and work (on the actions undertaken by groups of unemployed) - Ireland - On unemployment in France.

Resistance Paper of the SLT (Syndical de lutte des travailleurs) (in French) (see also Echanges nos. 19, 28, 33 & 43). Nos. 9-10 Set.-Dec. 1986.

Contains a dossier on what it really means to be in a large company that is being restructured. The 'conversion conferences' imposed through an agreement in the company with the trade unions CFDT, CFTC and FO. It also provides an idea of the effect of the new law on dismissals. Pamphlets distributed by the SLT indicate the daily exploitation and the rank and file resistance as well as the problems in undertaking any action when faced with CGT manoeuvres. This last union has, however, managed to maintain its position. Correspondence and support to SLT - Usinor Dunkerque - Centre Social - Place d'Europe - 59760 Grande Scynthe - France).

Cavales Bi-monthly against repression, CDR MP 771 - 75123 Paris Cedex 13)  
No. 2/3. Repression: the government's policy on repression - Struggles: accounts of struggles in prison - Dossier: Health and Prison: destroy to heal, on the destructive effects of imprisonment, the repressive effect of prison medicine, the pretence to "correction" of the prison - Debates: study of successive prison policies over the last 40 years - Forien news. A Prison-Repression commission holds meetings on the first and third Wednesday of each month at Maison Verte, 127 Rue Marcadet, Paris 18eme. Telephone contact 42 46 49 30.

#### L'Intersyndicaliste

No. 19 Set.-Oct. 1986. From pyramids to networks: to disaggregate the market economy.

Essais A Journal of critique and proletarian communication - Jimmy Lallemand)  
BP 1013, 49015 Angers Cedex.

No. 45 special edition so "that no one should remain ignorant" detailing a thorough house search suffered by the publisher of the journal. An idea of what is to be expected if you don't stick to the straight and narrow, and in forms that are even more restrictive than before.

Encyclopedie des Nuisances BP 188, 75665 Paris Cedex 14

Preface to the fourth Italian edition of The Society of the Spectacle (Librairie Rome, 1 Rue de Cras, 63000 Clermont Ferrand).

Du Terroisme et l'etat (Sanguinetti) "Le fin mot de l'Histoire" BP 274, 75866 Paris Cedex 18. Both works are available from the addresses above. C'est L'Etat qui commet le terrorisme - Chernobyl radioactivite: le cauchemar a deja commence (copies from Echanges)

Mouvement Etudiant et Greve des Cheminots - texts on these recent events in France will be published separately and announced in Echanges.

Librairie LA GRYFFE 5 Rue Sebastien Gryfe, 69007 Lyon

This libertarian bookshop has issued the first part of its catalogue containing 840 book and pamphlet titles covering:

- the anarchist movement past and present
  - the workers' and the social movement past and present
- The catalogue will be sent for 3 2.20 FF postage stamps.

CIRA - International Centre on Anarchist Research BP 40, Marseille Cedex 13382 13

The CIRA at Marseille is one of the largest independent archives on anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism and the workers' movement. It has a worldwide network of correspondents. It stores documents, books and periodicals in many languages. It is financed entirely by subscriptions but is threatened by rising rental and running costs. CIRA's members appeal to all anarchists and all those who sympathize with libertairian ideas to help maintain the memory of the anarchist movement and to testify to its centrality in the social movement. So that the wealth of the CIRA archives is kept alive we ask all sympathisers, whether groups or isolated individuals, to become supporters. For this they will receive the CIRA bulletin and the conference programme. The annual subscription is 150 FF, the supporters subscription is 250FF minimum. Make cheques out to Jean Claude Sempere, ccp 463571 W Marseille.

Le Frondeur BP 105, 94402 Vitry Cedex, France proposes to send past issues of 'Le Frondeur' and of 'Chroniques des strategies presentes' (in french) - one copy: FF.5.00, all issues: FF.60.00.

La Lézarde (chez Felix, 65 rue Bichat, 75010 Paris (in french) - mars 1987  
What we don't learn at school - The return of the boomerang (against the capital use of labour) - Some informations on the student movement in France (november - december 1986) - A declaration about this movement and the railway strike: 'Our tempest will be more beautiful.'

n° 25 - march 1987 - The union elections: the crisis of a comedy - Mobilisation against the economical politics of the government - The student movement -

#### Columbia

Mano Quintin Lame - Indian guerilla in Columbia - Olga Sanchez - Acratie  
BP 23 - 64130 Mauleon - France - (in french).

This small pamphlet deals with the fight of indian people in a district of Columbia (Cauca). Reading these documents, we can understand that their fight for survival means trying to occupy the lands stolen by white land-owners, how this fight can't escape to become illegal and violent though distinct from political guerillas which tries to manipulate the peasants interests. It is a very hard and confuse fight against a multiform repression in which all those by chance or by choice at the forefront are fiercely eliminated.

#### BELGIUM

Le Communiste

No. 25 Nov. 1986. The Europe of Versailles - International proposal:

1. Complete Text of the "Propuesta" approved by the meeting in Uruguay in February 1986. To groups and militants struggling for the world proletarian revolution.
  2. Invariance of our international work - some practical elements to make the proposal concrete.
  3. Note of clarification.
  4. Remarks on the note of clarification.
- Exile: revolution and counter-revolution - Major massacre of prisoners in ru - For the critique of political economy: theories of decadence and decadence of the theory.

#### EASTERN EUROPE

Iztok BP 161-09-75422 Paris Cedex 09 (in French)

Dossier on Cuba: Cuba and tricking dupes - Cuba, anarchists and freedom - Who's afraid of literature - Chernobyl dossier - Poland: youth unleashed.

Iztok Bulgaria (in Bulgarian)

No. 26. Stefan Stambolov: a controversial Bulgarian revolutionary.  
(c/o Amities franco bulgares, 26 Rue Piat, 75020 Paris).

#### FRANCE

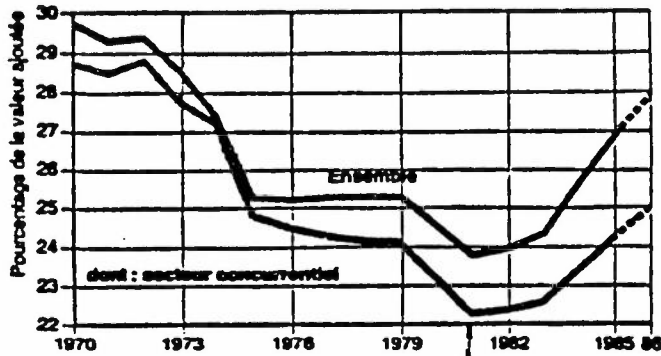
Improvement of the situation of the french firms.  
The following diagrams give a clear picture of the role played by the social democrat government to stop the decline of the rate of profit. This new sharing of the surplus value refers to lower wages, restructuring of the industries



with a jump of unemployed workers, a tighter management; all these elements dealing with the political climate of a 'left' government.

Graphique 1 gives the rate of profit as a percentage of added value  
 Graphique 3 gives the profitability as a percentage of net capital  
 The last diagram compares this profitability in different countries.

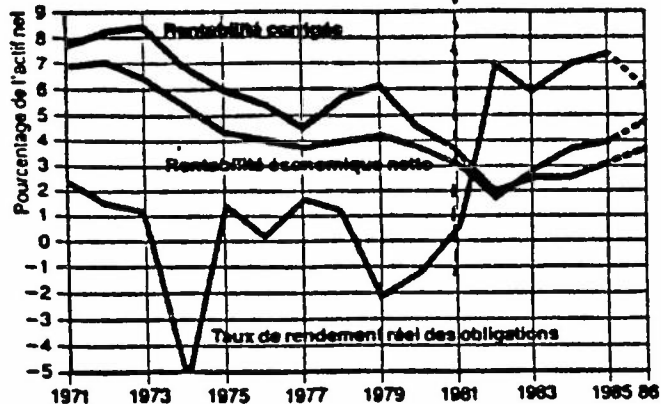
GRAPHIQUE 1. — TAUX DE MARGE  
 DES SOCIÉTÉS FRANÇAISES



Source : INSEE, estim. 1986 SG.

Social-Démocrates  
 au pouvoir

GRAPHIQUE 3. — RENTABILITÉ NETTE  
 CORRIGÉE DE L'INFLATION



Source : INSEE, estim. 1986 SG.

DONNÉES COMPARATIVES SUR LA RENTABILITÉ EN 1986  
 (Industries manufacturières)

(en % du capital investi)	USA	Japon	RFA	Italie	France
Taux de rendement économique (brut)	19,6	20,2	15,8	16,6	13,4
Taux d'intérêt à long terme	6,7	5,2	6,4	4,8	6,1
"Profitabilité"	12,9	15,0	9,4	11,8	7,3

Wildcat Karlsruher Stadtzeitung  
 No. 40, Nov. 1986 (in German)

Frankfurt Part II: Militantism, armed struggle, reformism, repression -  
 "This is the second part of an article which attempts to recall the history of extreme left groups in Frankfurt in the 70s: a chronology running from 1974-84 based of facts: the armed struggle, the greens, squatting. From 1976 the group around the paper Pflasterstrand "reorganized in a tendency that would form a political current left of the socialist party. The thesis held is that the RAF and armed struggle were born where the movement was weak. The Raf could not gain a foothold in Frankfurt because the movement was strong there." Bankbusters: from Counter Information on a bank strike in Canada. A thousand and one nights... it's a boom: draws together several articles: - an introduction: class struggle and revolt, the breaking of the world of work, how capital restructuring has both created unemployment and the formation of a marginal stratum using unemployment to live differently. Another text on Germany: a critique of the theory of the death of traditional industry, unemployment and flexibility: from 1980 to 82 there was an increase moonlighting which became flexible with the relaunching of capital from 1983. The 1985 law (Beschäftigungsförderungsgesetz) legalized what was already fact - temporary contracts. This should be seen in the light of the agreements with the unions over a 38½ hour week paid for by flexibility (metal working, wood, printing). The chemical industry already has a 36 hour week with work teams. Article on Italy: changes in the labour market with the growth of unemployment. Moonlighting has increased because high unemployment is not matched with struggles by the unemployed. There is no separation between those with a job and those without, they are the same, in turn. Traditional industry has made progress, but the divergence between North and South remains. New struggles are possible, like that last summer among hospital workers in Rome. Every new type of restructuring is met with struggles as for example that against a tax on housing in Sicily, struggles in the schools, high schools etc.. Female labour: the role of women in the work market. S against the christian democrat propaganda that wants women to stay at home, the rate of female unemployment has risen less than that of male unemployment. Women take the worse paid and least secure jobs. Criticism of trade union and leftist propaganda which states that female unemployment is rising and that women require qualifications for work. The problem is not this, but that the qualifications they have are useless. They take on badly paid jobs because they have to compensate the general decline in wages: to be independent of their husbands they have to earn a living. Some struggles in small factories using female labour were quickly 'recuperated' by the unions. Work conditions for women in the electronics industry in Silicon Valley (from Processed World). The atrocious conditions have led to the development of new illnesses. Critique of an Italian book on the Red Brigades Walter Alasia: this book covers the struggles in the 70s in Milan: squats, non-payment of bills. It shows the horrible lives led by the inhabitants of the outskirts of the town. One of them recalls struggles at Alfa Romeo. Printers strike in the U.K. - autonomy in the union struggle (Wapping). General situation in printing: conditions, restructuring, role of the unions. Strike organization: the unions did not really support the strike because they did not call for it. But the numbers picketing grew with confrontations with the police. A third of the strikers found other work, but still came back to picket.

Grande Bretagne  
A letter ( 18/11/85 )

As you know, I work for one of the regions of British Gas, which is now to be sold off as part of the government's "privatisation" of nationalised industries. Last week there was a union-led 'Day of Action' which 6 out of 850 in our office building supported. All six are Labour supporters on the branch executive committee. Only the staff union NALGO (National and Local Government Officers Association) took part; the manual workers' unions appear to be doing nothing. The reality is that, apart from a few Labourites, the gas workers are not very interested either way: it's almost as if it has nothing to do with us, which in some ways it hasn't. The old argument of nationalisation v. privatisation is seen as a swindle all round. We've all seen what's happened to the national miners on the one hand and the privatised telephone workers on the other. The way the unions acted in those two issues has been noted: the conclusion is that it is no use following them.

NALGO's behaviour over the past few years has been particularly demoralising for gas staffs. In 1983 it spent £1 million on a campaign called "Put People First" to persuade the general public to support greater spending on the public services and local government in particular. Coming as it did around the time of the last General Election, it was a thinly veiled 'Vote Labour' campaign. All the leaflets, pamphlets, lobbying, videos and free stickers achieved precisely nothing other than Labour's lowest vote for decades, and the re-election of a government committed to the exact opposite of the campaign's aims.

Last summer, staffs in some of the regions, , voted in a secret ballot for an overtime ban in an attempt to force the employers to stop their program of voluntary redundancies and to take on more people: they were urged to take this action by NALGO. In our office in the Computer Department, we voted overwhelmingly for it: most of the other departments have been 'reorganised' and we know it will be our turn one day. Within six weeks the action was completely undermined by the branch secretary issuing 'dispensations' to managers so they could get their staff to work overtime. Despite being in every other respect an exemplary bureaucrat, the branch secretary even ignored specific instructions from the union district gas committee. This committee having frightened itself with its own half-hearted militancy then called off the whole thing. Naturally we were not involved in this decision. The sickening thing for us in the computer section was that we had our management on their knees. We were allowed to hold three lengthy

meetings in work time to discuss our 'attitude' to the overtime ban and the effect it was having on the work of the department. No other department was allowed this privilege and it was unheard of in Wales Gas before and since! Our managers were under a lot of pressure, and the union kindly let them all off the hook. It's a problem when people embark on an 'official' action: because it is only partly (and sometimes not at all) self-willed, when the officials call it off, it is hard then to transform it into an unofficial action. The impetus, the necessary anger and conviction, are not there. The only positive aspect is an unwillingness to be led by the nose by the union next time, although cynicism about all the rubbish spouted by union leaders nationally and locally doesn't always lead to self-determined activity, but rather no activity at all. Then again, that depends on the issue at stake.

At the same time last year, the union put in a claim for improved conditions of service, such as a 35 hour week. This was in addition to a pay claim. The employers, who know full well what a pathetic union NALGO is, simply said they wouldn't discuss conditions: staff were well paid and looked after, and if they didn't like it, there were thousands of job-seekers who would jump at the chance. A national ballot then called on gas staffs to implement a ban on the introduction of any new technology. This was voted for by a large majority. Again, this 'escalation' by the union was taken up far too enthusiastically by the staff for the union's liking. When the employers said they wouldn't even discuss the separate pay claim until all 'industrial action', that is, the new technology ban and the overtime bans which were also in force, were called off, the union got worried. On the notice boards at work appeared a circular from NALGO stating that the National Gas Committee had rejected calls to abandon the action. What they didn't say, and what only emerged some 6 months later was that the day that appeared, members of the National Gas Committee had already been in secret negotiations with British Gas to find a way out. Meanwhile management locally were getting increasingly frustrated as their new technology plans were held up more and more. In some regions there were suspensions and walk-outs. Then right out of the blue came the order to abandon the action "in order to make progress with the pay claim". All the big talk about improved conditions and a 35 hour week was dropped. For the first time in over a decade, this year's pay and conditions claim made no mention of a shorter working week: obviously too embarrassing for the union.

The branch chairman at headquarters is on the National Gas Committee, so we thought we would have the chance to get at him. A packed and very angry meeting of the branch (about 130 out of 850, usually it was 30 - 40!) then heard that the chairman was on holiday: this news was greeted with jeers because he is known as someone never to miss any meeting connected with the union. In true

democratic style, we all vented our feelings but to no avail - we might as well bang our heads on the walls. The decisions were all taken elsewhere. A lot of people though had made themselves unpopular with management for the hard line they took in the action, the blacking of equipment and so on, all for nothing, and without any real fight at all.

All this bears on some crucial questions about unions for workers. How is it that the union exercises this hold over workers, so that when an action is 'officially' over, all we do is rage impotently? In the gas industry, the union had a deal with management. In effect the union keeps the workers in line with management backings: no union card, no job. The employers have now scrapped this arrangement to stay in line with the 'Tebbit laws', which is how I have managed to get out of the union. Management feels confident enough now to do without the union's mediation.

A second point: although gas staffs are members of this union, and have the right to elect representatives and so on, the union is seen as external. In fact as another external power, like management; and the union is more of a problem, it causes us more aggravation. We don't expect charity from management, we know more or less explicitly that they are there to screw more out of us, just as we (or most of us not counting those who intend becoming managers themselves) try to give no more than we can get away with. But there's an uneasy feeling that somehow the 'union' should be an expression of exactly what we want. The attitude that's developed over the past few years is a mixture of disinterest in and contempt for 'union affairs'. The apathy extends to not getting out, even though we now can. Only three of us have left in my office, although as a result most newcomers don't bother to join, when they see the most 'active' people in the office not in the union.

This brings up a third point closely connected to the second one. I think a lot of my colleagues are just a little worried about not being in a union, just in case there is some kind of strike next year (extremely unlikely), or in the event of redundancies after privatisation. Union membership is thus some kind of insurance policy!

Some of us applied to join another union, ASIMS, for just those reasons, but it looks as though we won't be able to join anyway. It would have been quite useful because we would have been free agents, able to use the fact of union membership as and when we pleased: also we'd have been a real irritant to the existing NALCO branch leaders, a childish motivation perhaps, but a real one. As it is, we have decided just to stick together whatever happens - an informal union, you could say!

# The Polish Shipyards Are Bustling

## —With Everyone but Poles

### The rise of Solidarity led to the death of an industry

By Jackson Diehl

Washington Post Foreign Service

**G**DYNIA, Poland—The towering shell of an abandoned ferry looms out of Dry Dock 2 in the Paris Commune shipyard here, its failed construction manifest in a rusting shroud of scaffolding. Alongside the wreck, the freshly painted hull of another, handsomely finished ferry is undergoing final work before its delivery to Sweden's Stena Line.

The stark contrast between the two boats illustrates the legacy of upheaval in the Baltic shipyards where the independent Solidarity trade union was born. Six years ago, even as the communist world's first independent labor movement was inaugurated here and at the nearby Lenin shipyards of Gdansk, work began at the two sites on four huge passenger ferries for Sweden that, at about \$60 million each, were to be one of Poland's most ambitious western ship contracts.

Now, nearly five years after Solidarity's suppression by the Polish army, two of the ferries have been abandoned less than half finished. The shipyards, short of workers and evidently overwhelmed by problems of poor workmanship, have had to pay tens of millions of dollars in scarce hard currency to foreign contractors to finish the other two boats.

These ferries, the prestige jobs of the shipyards, lie in the hands of foreign guest workers, including more than 300 from the Phil-

ippines, brought in to do the exacting work that Poles, in the aftermath of Solidarity, cannot be paid or persuaded to do.

"I think it's a social problem," says Anders Grondahl, the project manager for the Swedish firm Skanska, which is finishing the first ferry. "And, of course, it's because of the system."

Government officials have recently avoided comment on the ferry project or its costs. But articles published in the state media make clear that the fiasco is only the most obvious signal of the decline of one of Poland's key heavy industries.

According to official figures, employment of Poles in the three major shipyards on the Baltic coast dropped more than 20 percent between 1980 and 1985, to about 54,000, despite the offer of wages nearly 40 percent higher in 1985 than the national average.

"The wages are no longer an incentive. Some workers put a higher value on lighter and more relaxed work," said the Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy* in an article last year. "On the whole, the yards are short of some 8,000 workers and they are nowhere to be found."

The production of the shipyards increasingly has been shifted from potentially lucrative western orders to those from the Soviet Union. Forty-three of 59 vessels completed last year were turned over to the Soviets, and Moscow's demand, *Zycie Warszawy* says, "is actually much bigger than the Polish shipyard's capacity."

This combination of a declining work force, lower worker productivity and the crush of Soviet orders has destroyed the dream Polish planners cherished in the 1970s of making shipbuilding a high-prestige western money-earner. In the latter part of that decade, hun-

dreds of millions of borrowed dollars were invested here and in Gdansk and Szczecin to update the Polish dry docks and supply them with the most modern equipment.

At the Paris Commune shipyard here, the Skanska firm was hired to build what is the largest dry dock of its kind on the Baltic.

The ferry contract, signed in 1979, was meant to demonstrate the ability of the revamped yards to build ships of the highest quality. The four huge ferries, each with 11 decks and capable of holding 700 cars and accommodating, feeding and entertaining 2,500 passengers, were to be built in two years each. The price the Poles accepted for each ferry, reportedly about \$60 million, was well below that of western shipyards even at the time and compares with a typical price today of \$200 million to \$250 million for such vessels, experts say.

Soon after construction began in Gdynia, the strikes that led to the creation of Solidarity and its turbulent 16-month legal existence began. Then came martial law, severe economic hardship, chronic shortages of materials and the even more crippling demoralization of workers.

"It was ill-considered, to say the least, to embark upon construction of passenger ferries of international standard when Poland has to use foreign constructors to erect even moderately luxurious hotels," the weekly *Polityka* commented. "The so-called 'Polish norm' is being invoked, which makes it impossible to expect decent quality bathroom mirrors for passenger cabins from domestic producers, not to mention such subtle equipment as bathroom fittings."

**A** year later, the first of the four ferries, already three years overdue, was only about 50 percent complete, and the Stena Line was threatening the Polish ship trading firm Centromor with lawsuits and international arbitration. To satisfy Stena, Polish authorities were obliged to recognize that the shipyards were incapable of finishing the ferries.

Instead, Skanska was hired to finish the first ferry at Gdynia in 18 months, while another Swedish contractor, Gothenburg Construction, was given control of a second ferry in the Gdansk shipyard with a commitment to finish it by the end of 1987. Stena, meanwhile, canceled its order for the final two ships.

The costs of the failure appear enormous for Poland. Skanska, which signed a three-way contract with Centromor and Stena, is reportedly earning about \$40 million for its work, or two-thirds of the original contract price, even though the Poles are still responsible for supplying all materials. The second ferry in Gdansk, reportedly only 40 percent complete, will cost at least an equal amount of hard currency to finish, even as Warsaw struggles with payments on its \$31 billion foreign debt.

Meanwhile, managers and workers of the Gdynia and Gdansk yards must watch as Filipino, Hungarian, Czech and Swedish workers finish—and to a substantial extent redo—their job for them.

"A lot of what we found had to be redone," says Grondahl, the Skanska manager. "For example, it has been necessary for us to tear out a lot of pipes, tubes and electric cables and install them again. . . . We've had to take apart ceilings to put in insulation that was left out. We had to sandblast and repaint walls that were rusting."

About 650 foreign workers, including 250 Filipinos, are working 56-hour weeks on the first ferry. Another 90 Filipinos are now working in the Lenin shipyards of Gdynia, where Solidarity leader Lech Walesa is still nominally employed as an electrician.

The foreigners are doing more in 18 months than the Poles completed in five years. But they are also making an average of \$400 a month in hard currency in excess of room, clothing and board, or more than 10 times the worth of the average Polish shipyard salary.

"We are coming here and giving people our salaries and also our way of working, and everyone agreed it would be best to use foreign-

ers rather than Polish workers," Grondahl says. "Because there's a complete difference between employing people in Western Europe and doing it here." ■

The Washington Post  
National Weekly Edition  
22/12/1986

#### The Wilhelmshaven Revolt (in English)

The Wilhelmshaven Revolt deals with the revolutionary events in this German naval base in 1918-1919, linking them with the revolution of this period. The pamphlet was first published in 1944. It was written by a German who took part in the revolt and who managed to collect much material on it, before having to flee to Britain. The English text provides an introduction on the author and a preface to furnish readers today with historical facts and clarifies the prologue, i.e. the course of the First World War which led up to the German revolution.

The author, who originally used a pseudonym, was Ernst Schneider, and lived in Britain for many years. Before and during the First War he was a member of the social-democrat party, later he supported its left and was close to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. He deals not only with the history of the revolt in the German Imperial Navy but also with the development of capitalism in Germany and the consequences for the growth of the working class. He also informs the reader of the various tendencies in the German workers' movement, of the fate of the 1918 revolution and was required to conclude it. Highly recommended.

#### Pannekoek on Organization

This is a reprint of an article by the theoretician of council communism written for Living Marxism in 1938. The text, introduced by John Holloway, deals with the forms that workers' organizations would have to adopt to overcome capitalism. The author is most clear on the difference between bourgeois democracy and that of the workers.

Various problems delayed the publication of this issue n° 49-50. Issue n° 51 will be published very soon. It will be followed before the end of the year by a N° 52: french and english edition should then have the same content.

We have some difficulties to cash in England any cheque or postal order made in pounds to Echanges order. Please - take notice that all cheques or postal orders in pounds have to be payable to H. Simon without any other mention - and sent to the Echanges address.

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