

MEMBERS



ECHANGES ET MOUVEMENT  
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## échanges

For information about Echanges, subscriptions and also pamphlets, write to the following address, which is the only one dealing with centralizing correspondence.

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

### BELGIUM

A contre courant (for the formation of the world communist party - BP 1666 - Centre Monnaie - 1000 Bruxelles - in French)

N° 1/May '88: Presentation. On crisis and its present concrete forms. After the Krach: some elements of the crisis and its prospects. Origins and function of the tiny 'revolutionary milieu'. Organisation and communist discipline (Bordiga 1924). Some texts in Spanish from Apartado de correos 592 - Barcelona 08080 - Spain.

Le Communiste (BP 54 - BXL 31 - Bruxelles - Belgium - Central paper in French of the Groupe Communiste Internationaliste) N° 26/Febr. '88: Editorial. On alleged split in the GCI. Against the State terrorism of all the existing States - Cijordan - Against the CGI on the cops side against the revolutionaries.

A Contre Courant (Central review in English of the Internationalist Communist Group) N° 4/Winter '87-'88: Towards a synthesis of our propositions. International proposition. Invariance of our international activity. Communism against democracy. Working class report 1917-1921: generalised revolutionary struggle in Patagonia.

Barcelone - May 37 - Facism and anti-facism against proletariat. A pamphlet (in French) of the GCI (BP 54 - 1060 Bruxelles 31 - Belgique) and of RAIA (BP 1724 - Place du Monnaie 1000 - Bruxelles 1) and a Note Critique on this pamphlet by the GCI, because it was written by a GCI-member who was expelled from this group before the publishing and so deserves the usual shame linked to such a position and a sever criticism of what he wrote when he was still a member (see previous Echanges).

## PORTUGAL

Les Temps Modernes - C. Reeve - Chroniques portugaises (in French) June '87: a

Portuguese man comes back in his country left 25 years ago.

He does not find the revolution he saw in Lisboa in 1974, but a country where the main problem seems: how to make money as quickly as possible. He describes the contrasts between this modern petty business and a wide range of either poor or backwards or unemployed workers: the 1974 actors are either subdued by the invasion of civilisation gadgets or exposed to the vindictiveness of all those who had to loose from a new society (copy at Echanges).

## ARGENTINA

Revolutionary Unionism in Latin America. The FORA in Argentina - P. Yerril and L. Rosser (BM Hurricane, London WC 1N3XX or

PO-box 96, Doncaster, DN40QU) Pamphlet of 50 pages on the whole history of the FORA which sometimes played an important role in the workers' movement in Argentina. To compare with a short study on the FORA (see Echanges N° 52)

## GREAT BRITAIN

Counter Information (8/H - C.I. - 11 Forth Street - Edinburgh - in English) N° 19/May June '88: Stamford Hill held for 2 days

(squatters resisting eviction North London). Union bypassed (on the Cobas in Italy). Steel struggle spreads. Struggle at Lothian hospitals against privatisation undefeated. Fighting the law (on the P&O strike and support committees).

Solidarity (A Journal of Libertarian Socialism - c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E 6 - in English) N° 17/Summer '88: On Israel: spilling the blood to save the sperm. Marx today: the tragi-comical paradox (this is the translation of an interview of Castoriadis by the French paper Lutter - organ of the UCTL, an anarcho syndicalist group.

Internationalist Perspective (External fraction of the International Communist Current. International Perspective is published: in English, USA- PO Box 1748, Mont-clair, NJ 07042; UK - BM Box 8154, London WC 1 N 3 XX) N° 9/Spring '88: Stockmarket - turmoil, recession, unemployment: one more step towards collapse. Workers' struggles internationally: the response to the critics. Roumania: the same fight against capital. Manoeuvres in the Gulf: to discipline Iran and counter Russian advances. Accident and necessity (on the French elections). The decline of the ICC (the roots of degeneration). The ICC: what's at stake in a platform change.

a weapon against Capital. The old labour movement reveals itself - in the words of Gorter - as a toy sword against a steel armor."

## ARGENTINA

Emancipation Obrera

This group together with a group in Uruguay produced in 1986 an International Proposal sent to groups all over the world. It was published by the ICC and GCI and these groups have sent their answers to the proposal and other groups such as Communist Bulletin Group and EFICC has also answered, and material by and about EO has also been published by CWQ and Wildcat. The interest is not in all these answers to EO but more in EO itself and the fact that such groups arise. It appears that the group has slowly moved away from traditional leftism towards 'revolutionary positions' and they opposed the Falklands war for example. What is interesting is that their development has taken place without any knowledge of the left communist tradition (KAPD, bordigism, etc...). In their answers, ICC, etc... immediately starts to point out to these comrades that they need to know and acknowledge their tradition, and the EO gives a straight and very honest answer; this is not possible for us because we don't know this tradition. There are some other interesting things also about EO when contrasted with the ICC etc... but I know too little about the group for the time being.

Revolutionary unionism in Latin America. The FORA in Argentina by P. Yerril /L. Rosser (1,50 pound from BM Hurricane, London, WC 1 N 3 XX or PO Box 96, Doncaster DN4 0 QU) This 50 pages pamphlet covers the whole history of FORA which in periods was a considerable force in the Argentina workers movement. A useful addition to the brief account of FORA in the series 'Syndicalism in practice' (see Echanges n° 52)

clearly during a struggle. I want to add, once more, that we have not to mix class interest with ideological ideas. Back to what I said at the beginning of this letter I will add too that the struggle is unity and that unity is not the precondition for the struggle. Back now to your doubts about the transformation of the 'objective unity' into a practical unity. I prefer not to speak of 'objective unity' but of 'potential unity' caused by the workers condition (not broken up by the technology as you think), by exploitation of capital, by the common experience in the factory, by the general alienation, etc. As I just said every time a struggle is coming, practical unity rises up. If you answer; yes but is it spreading to other categories of workers? I will answer, it depends on the balance of struggle; so practical unity is not something settled once for all or something very precise. It is a very moving thing, floating if you want. To give an example: in the miners strike we can see that behind the appearance of the official strike of the NUM something else was developing: the rank and file activity. Discussing the role of the lorry drivers (p 83 of the book) it is written 'in most of the cases, they followed what they thought their own interest. Had the miners activity been more clear for everybody, the lorry drivers certainly would have considered their own interest in a different manner. I am not discussing in writing this in a theoretical and abstract manner, but my opinion is based on real and historical experiences ...

from a norwegian comrade (26-5-88)

In Echanges n° 52 you review the BM Combustion pamphlet "Rebel violence versus ..." I agree with this review (and all other reviews published on BM Combustion /Blob material) On p.8 you give a quotation from the pamphlet which you say you don't agree with, which starts like this: "The proletariat ... is divided because it is weak ..." I don't quote the rest of and probably it is the implications of the rest of, or the whole of, the quotation you don't agree with. I think what I quoted here is correct if contrasting it with the opposite assertion, that the proletariat is weak because it is divided, and this reminded me of the opening paragraph of one of the classic texts of Dutch council communism, Henk Canne Meijer's "The rise of a new labour movement" ("Das Werden einer neuen Arbeiterbewegung" from 'Rätekorrespondenz -1934'): "The labour movement presents a picture of the greatest confusion. Numerous organisations and tendencies combat each other, while ever anew the hunger whip of the owning classes scourges the broad masses. And after each blow of the whip, the confusion in the ranks of the workers increases. Apostles of unity entreat the workers to end the internecine conflict and take up jointly the struggle against the owning classes. They have not the slightest inkling of the whole situation. They think that the working class is powerless because of its disunity, while in reality the still increasing fragmentation arises from the ever more manifest impotence. With each new lash of the whip the owning class demonstrates to the working masses that the labour movement built up in the last fifty years in the course of painful and selfsacrificing struggles has no value whatever as

According to an ILO (International Labour Organisation) report, 65,3 million working days were lost due to strikes in the 52 countries covered; 3/4 of this in the five countries Finland, India, Italy, Canada and USA. The number of strikes fell from 15.500 to 14.200, and the average duration of the strikes rose from 5 to 5½ days.

Paris: May 1968 A reprint of the eye-witness account published in 68 by Solidarity, by Dark Star Press and Rebel Press, London £1.50.

The Anti-Climax - by Alexander Berkman. A reprint of the final chapter of 'The Bolshevich Myth', Berkman's 1920-21 diary giving an eye-witness account of the defeat of the Russian revolution. 45p from Anarcho-Communist Federation, c/o Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

God and the State - by M. Bakunin. An inexpensive reprint (80p) of this classic text by Pirate Press, c/o Blackberry Anarchists, The Peace Shop, 5-7 Exchange Place, Sheffield, UK.

Communist Review (UK: BMCWO - London WC1N 3XX; France: c/o L'Herbe Rouge - Ibis Rue d'Alesia - 75014 Paris) Organ of the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party. Behind this 'bureau' is the 'bordigist' organisation Battaglia Comunista (Italy) and the tiny groups CWO (UK) and Lal Pataka (India). Notwithstanding this, the journal contains a number of readable articles. N° 5: Paul Mattick: 'The permanent Crisis' (1934). Gramsci: Myth and reality. The ICC and the 'Historic course' - a mistaken method. N° 6: Gorbachev's Russia: The reconstruction of State capitalism. Russian women exploited on the shop floor. The new technologies of capitalist exploitation. Gramsci: Myth and reality, Part 2.

Communist Bulletin (Box CBG - Boomtown Books - 167 King Street - Aberdeen-UK) Journal of Communist Bulletin Group.

This group and bulletin started in 1982 and originates from the convulsions in the ICC (International Communist Current) in 1981, which led to a large number of members leaving the organisation (a whole section in France, almost half the English group, and others), some entering or setting up new groups, others leaving politics completely. The nasty details of the ICC methods in these splits, for example public denunciations of militants as police agents and sending of hit squads to England breaking into the homes of ex-members, are documented in the first bulletins and worth reading as a documentation - and so are also the CBG-critique of the various ICC and CWO theories.

Two main concerns of the CBG we can agree with, although we would end up with quite different conclusions and perspectives:

- that the above mentioned groups and others of the 'left communist milieu'

are completely isolated from the working class and contains only a few hundred individuals all over the world;

- that these groups have an utterly sectarian attitude towards each other. Concerning the latter, the bulletins are packed with material documenting this petty sectarianism. It is to document this that some comrades might find this useful reading, and not because these groups' debates and accusations are of any relevance to the workers' struggle. Although the bulletin has contained material on the class struggle and other material of interest, the CBG is - despite its characterisations of the 'left communist groups' - trapped in the concerns of these 'isolated' and 'sectarian' groups. This is shown not only in the amount of material regularly published about them, but also by the fact that the CBG considers the groups' petty quarrels, never-ending debates and political platforms as something of great importance for the revolution and therefore for the CBG to comment upon. Our attitude is the opposite: although not uninterested in debate between political groups, our starting point is that reality, and the class struggle, is elsewhere than in these inter-group polemics, and this leads to quite different concerns and priorities than the CBG.

N° 13/Spring '88 contains the following material. Articles and leaflets on the recent strikes in England (health workers, motor industry, seamen). The health workers-article contains information about the background of the crisis in the health sector and the struggle of the workers, but also the following proclamation so typical of these groups:

'Workers in every single nationalised industry know that nationalisation is simply another weapon aimed at their throats. Miners, shipyard workers, rail workers and health workers know the reality. "Nationalisation" or "privatisation" is a false alternative.. Workers' interest do not lie in defending the state provision of health, the NHS against privatisation as such..'

Here the CBG substitutes its own analysis for that of the workers. If things were that simple, that workers in general 'know' all this, the CBG wouldn't even need to point it out. That reality is a bit more complex, however, is shown by the CBG itself in the pictures of striking workers they feature in this issue, carrying slogans about 'keep contractors out', 'have a heart-support your NHS', 'see the reality-save the NHS', etc.

N° 13 also contains the following: Once more - the crisis. Confrontation and crisis - The Reagan years (interimperialist struggle and military buildup). The Revolutionary movement today (For those not familiar with the particular language used by these groups, it must be said that 'the revolutionary movement' is not at all a movement, but these small, sectarian, isolated groups the CBG is so concerned with) - This section contains material about the history of 'the revolutionary movement' after 1968, and correspondence and articles concerning 'important' (CBG's words) events like an article written by the 'External Fraction of the ICC', criticising 'the programmatic

I want to criticise another point of view. When you consider the unemployed as a category which breaks the struggle unity because of unemployed people staying aside, I think you forget the simple fact that the struggle unity can only be the unity of working people and nothing else, people working either in the production process, or in the distribution process or in the public services in such a way that their action can disturb or block the 'normal' functioning of the society. If it is true that the technical development can bring unemployment, this fact is without influence on the 'unity of struggle'.

There is something else in your letter, I want to discuss, but I don't know if I have understood very well what you try to explain; so my criticism can be raised on misunderstandings. I feel that in certain passages of your letter you express a kind of disappointment, a kind of impatience if you want, as a consequence of the fact that rank and file struggles always end in struggles of another character allowing the union bureaucracy or any kind of leader to grasp them and have them under control; as you wrote it, because 'the rank and file struggle has failed to go further ahead'. I have the feeling that you are generalising without reason. Even more you think that this situation would be a weakening of the workers position due to a kind of 'short-sightedness' preventing the workers to see further than their immediate environment (than their individual interest). If you think so, I disagree with you. I don't know if you can understand when I say I always am very suspicious when somebody is despising what we can define as 'worker egoism' generally opposed to any kind of ideology or class solidarity, or general understanding, all things too often the thinking privilege of the professional politicians or union ideologists. I prefer this 'egoism' (based on the material conditions of life) and want to get rid of all kind of ideologies because precisely, from this egoism, the proletarian claims are coming up. It is true that this egoism is the direct workers interests, no more, no less. But we have to consider that the interest are moving during a struggle and the claims as well. It is not the weakness of the direct interest that allows the bureaucrats to get the control of the struggle. They can succeed or not doing so only because of the industrial relations, of the power developed by the workers and of the power their opponent can oppose them.

This is the reason I criticise your generalisation because this balance of struggle is never the same. It has to be related to the technical level, to the vulnerability of the society or of the factory or of the firm, etc.... The evolution of a struggle can't be the consequence of only one thing and certainly not of a "lack" of conscience or of the "low level" of it. The worker conscience is not something constant as well. It is transformed during the struggle and through the struggle as fast as what we can call for the workers 'their own interest'.

It is the specific character of this interest (called 'egoism') which makes that the individual interest of a worker, only because of what simply represents the working class, is exactly class interest. We can see that very

Discussion on the miners strike ( following the publication in french of the book 'To the bitter end -1984-1985 ' available at Echanges ) - answer to the letter published in n° 54 , p 6  
from a dutch comrade -june 88

At first ,I want to discuss this part of the letter where some doubts are expressed on how what is called 'objective unity ' can move to 'subjective practical unity of the struggle only because of its objectivity '.These doubts sprang from the opinion that "the recomposition of the working class and of the proletarian society in general is generating a very deep ditch between the different 'objective ' conditions of the workers ".This situation would be caused by 'an evolving technology ' which ' recompose the working class in a very hierarchical way 'To illustrate this opinion , you give the example of the difference ( a big one ) between a very specialised computer worker or of a professional in automatised process (relatively well paid ) on one side and a 'precarious ' worker (unskilled one I think) or an unemployed on the other side .I propose quite a different analysis .

To begin with , I don't see the technical evolution as it is presently creating such a ditch between the different categories inside the working class .On the contrary,as the new technics are spreading everywhere the alienation is growing and the various proletarian categories have more and more similar conditions of exploitation .Of course ,I will agree with the fact that for instance most of the computer workers (programmers for instance ) think themselves above other workers .What I am talking of is a general tendency and the exceptions are there to confirm the rule .When I was young , women behind the bank counters had a level of education higher than the level of education of most of the workers - women or men .To-day,such a level of education is no longer needed.They work with electronic machines exactly like the the supermarket cashiers and what they have to know is only how to use these machines.We find the same situation with all office workers .Electronic machines and computers transform their condition into a proletarian one.It is the reason why we can see strikes in these sectors for tens of years ;in the past , such a thing would have been inconceivable

It is only one example, but it is sufficient to illustrate my opinion .The technical developpment generally wipes out the divisions inside the working class and to a certain level proletarianises the 'privileged strata'.What we have to understand too , is that more the technics is developing ,more the society is becoming fragile; the result is that the eventual lack of unity will be balanced by the fact that unity is less essential because a small fraction of workers can stop the whole process of production in a factory . So if such a unity is not appearing in the struggle there is nevertheless a practical unity and against the will of the workers and because of the technical conditions .The technical development is so solving this problem of unity in two different ways.

degeneration of the ICC', and a letter from the CWO announcing another 'turn' in its political perspective.

Wildcat (England - all texts in English) We have mentioned Wildcat in the past issues and reviewed some of the texts published by this former group. We recieved two letters, one protesting because our misunderstanding of Wildcat's position (see Echanges) and another one telling of the disbanding of the group.

Two years ago some Wildcat members based in London split from the group (explaining why in a short document). The Wildcat text 'Capitalism and its revolutionary destruction' (reviewed in Echanges) was reviewed as well by the Socialist Standard (Dec. '87), with the title 'Futility of Wildcat-Rebellion is not enough'. This review was followed by a debate (3 letters in Socialist Standard, April '88) initiated by 'a member of the Wildcat Group' (already disbanded). Since then two publications have been issued on the Wildcat wavelength:

- Wildcat, N° 11/Spring-Summer '88 (BM Cat - London WC 1N 3XX) (apparently having some connections with the Belgian Bordigist group GCI)
- Subversion, N° 1 (Box W - c/o Raven Press - 75 Piccadily - Manchester-England - M12BU; Box W c/o 180 Mansfield Road - Nottingham)
- The London groups' address is: BM Wild - London WC1 N3XX

A more complete review of these publications and an attempt to bring some light in this 'Who is who?' will be published in a next issue.

Here & Now (P/H2 c/o 340, West Prince Str, Glasgow G4 9 HF, UK - in English) N° 6: Contents. Editorial. Reports (Sado-porno Soup), Liberation Sexology. Resistance in Scotland (at breakdown point; blowing hot and cold). Features (Notes on Eastern Europe, Eclipse and re-emergence of the Economic Movement). New Ideas: the New Liberals. Reviews (Beware the barmaid's smile; Clear sighted minority; Deep ecology; Short reviews and listings). Correspondence (Third assault debate; Liberation of learning; letters).

Sparking a conflagration (Independent 24/5/1988 - in English) The crisis is shaking presently the TUC about disciplining the electrician union. EETPU is actually on the role of a union in modern capitalism. The fact that EETPU is pushed at the forefront of this transformation and takes such a stance against the Trade Union movement can find its roots in the history of this union for the past fifty years. The article is going into every detail of a long bureaucratic battle initiated by dissidents from the Communist Party: the sequels of a long provocative conflict still dominate the present forms of an evidently deeper problem (copy at Echanges).



## INDIA

It is very difficult to get a right idea of what is class struggle in India. There is far more news on China, though India has a population of about 800 millions (agriculture 60%, in industry and transport 15%, trading, services and administration 25% of the active population). This structure is the important background of all social struggles, but we don't find much about it in the discussions in the microcosm of tiny Indian and West European political groups.

Kommunist Kranti (Bhupender Singh - 679 - Jawahar Colony N.I.T. Faridabad-121001 - India) presents itself as 'an attempt to participate in the constitution of world communist party'. N° 1/July '86 contains Theses and long discussions with some West european groups, mainly ICC. N° 2 contains other theses (On Basis) and a lot of answers to various groups.

The material around these discussions is the following:

- Internationalist Perspective nr. 5 containing extracts from KK and an answer from IP;

- Interrogations' text, which comments what was published in IP (Interrogations - c/o I.S. - BP 243 - 75564 Paris Cedex 12 - France);

- 'The development of a revolutionary milieu in India' from International Review n°. 45. It is a report from an ICC delegation to India (see KK n° 1). It does not comment KK's positions, but it does comment the position of 'Communist Internationalist' (which is close to the ICC), 'Lal Pataka' (which is close to the CWO/IBRP) and another group 'Workers Emancipation'. There is a few remarks of interest concerning political work in India and about how 'Communist Internationalist' evolved away from radical trade-unionism as a consequence of ICC material.

- 'The communist precense in India' from CWO's 'Workers' Voice' (BM CWO-London WC1 N3XX - UK). It is the CWO's side of the story. As one could expect, the eternal competitors ICC and CWO ends up with supporting different groups. What to think of all this? We can find it interesting that left communist groups emerge in India. But our interest is in the class struggles of workers in this huge country, which we know too little about (think only about organizing a national strike; for example - a real one - railways workers talking 15 or more different languages). For that reason we can be somewhat sceptical about the ICC and CWO having quarellled incessantly for more than ten years, continuing that quarrel in India, a quarrel that is as far removed from the working class as it can be.

Addresses:

- Communist Internationalist - Post Box nr. 25 NIT, Faridabad 121001 Haryana, India.

- Lal Pataka - CPO Box 2594, Calcutta 700-001 West Bengal, India.

- Another group and paper (a kind of maoïst tendency): Revolutionary Proletarian Platform

Nothing new in the on the new wage scale, which was as well a central part in the workers claim. The flexibility was only the companies interest and when Rosen-Müller pretends that the intensification of work is the workers interest, he knows perfectly well he is lying. In the industrial world everywhere work and workers flexibility is a general claim from the bosses. The declarations of the companies after the conflict were not at all ambiguous on this point: 'It was very important to get this flexibility. If we had pushed this claim openly with the claim for redundancies, the workers reaction would have been so violent that we would have had to push aside the flexibility'. The creation of a kind of early retirement allowed the companies to pretend that they don't need redundancies and to bring at the forefront this matter of flexibility. The companies have got what they wanted to get. They did not get the right to get rid of the extra workers but they have now the possibility to do so through the back door (early retirement) so why losing time to try to get the same thing through the front gate. For near bankrupt port companies the choice was quickly decided.

Rosen-Müller got the applause of 300 workers of the Quick Dispatch C° when he explained the conditions for the agreement: these applause means nothing even if after months of uncertainty about redundancies everybody could be pleased to find there will be no compulsory ones. It will be a total illusion to think that the port of Rotterdam will be quiet until 1991. Especially, the flexibility will introduce new and deeper contradictions. What will be the new wages scales? Which functions will be merged in the flexibility? What will happen if a docker will not agree to see his job mixed with another one? What about young people to be engaged by the companies? Everything is vague and full of uncertainty?

To end this article we will write some lines on the companies specialised in the transfer of corn. In the first article we wrote that the christian union had got an agreement with the companies, rejected as insufficient by the social democrat union. This union went ahead organising token strikes but stopped to do so on the 22d of april pretending that the contradictions between workers of both unions were now too tense. Not a very good reason when we consider that in any strike we can find such a situation when only part of the workers follow the strike. The real reason was elsewhere: the social democrat union wanted to end the conflict; the christian union had no problem because it had already given its agreement. The companies refused to open new negotiations and the social democrat union was waiting. A new situation came when the christian union asked the companies to follow the agreement. One week after, the social democrat union declared that the agreement signed by the christian union was the 'maximum of what could be got from the companies' and advised its members to agree with. This agreement was more or less the same as the general cargo agreement rejected by the union some months ago as 'unacceptable'. The struggle in the port of Rotterdam was ended by a result more profitable to the companies than to the workers. We can say that for a large part, such a poor result was the consequence of the union waverings, having to be seen as the expression of their double dealing.

the dockers had to agree with the redundancies and the companies must know that the government was not always behind them ,

There was other dangers; the threat of a big industrial crisis, the possibility of a bankruptcy of the port companies and the destruction of the capital linked to them; this situation opened the door to what was strictly impossible one month ago. The attempt from a top journalist of a social democrat daily regional paper could so meet some success. Earlier it would have been useless. Now the pressure on the companies was very strong and on the other side the unions could oblige the dockers to take an agreement because they have now openly a new opponent, the government. However the unions had to work that way very carefully because as said later Rosen-Müller to journalists: 'the rank and file dockers would have been furious had they known the existence of informal secret negotiations'. The above journalist had had effectively secret meetings with two unions representatives and two bosses ones; an agreement was quickly on the way because, once again, it could be seen that the positions on both sides were practically the same. Everything was settled and presented by the journalist on the TV on the 2d of July; he stressed the fact that there would be no compulsory redundancies and he added: 'This must help Rosen-Müller who has to present the agreement to-night to the union delegates'. When we know the content of the agreement we can understand why these delegates were afraid of the dockers reactions;

-no redundancies till 1991 but more than 850 dockers over 56 would have to go, not made redundant but 'agreeing' to leave.

-when they leave, they will receive 85% of their wages; we could think it was rather interesting; if we consider it is 85% of the basic wage far from the real wages (almost doubled with overtime) this sounds far less interesting; even less if we consider they will receive that till the retirement age.

-The general cargo companies are now allowed to fix unilaterally 11,5 days during which the dockers could be sent home when there is not enough work. For Rosen-Müller it was one of the concessions he had to give up to get the agreement; he could effectively talk about 'concessions' because it was one of the important cause of the strike.

- the remaining dockers would have to agree with a lowering of their wages of 1%; it is what the unions called 'solidarity contribution', called so to sugar the pill. Unions told as well of this vague term 'solidarity' to get the workers agreement for the new social contract. How to use such a word when part of the workers will have their wages cut by a kind of tax with which the companies will pay the redundant workers and so will have no charge of their own.

-the remaining dockers will have to agree with the flexibility, which means to work any job the companies will ask them to do. Rosen-Müller said that it was 'the workers' interest', they will earn more and their work would be more diversified and then less boring. Certainly he was considering it is more comfortable to work on the docks than to speak to the workers as his function requires.

- Proletarian Emancipation - N.K. Karunakaran, 21 Hari Building, Dr. Ambedkar Marg Parel, Bombay-12, India.

(Most of the quoted texts and publications are in English)

## FRANCE

Chausson - Pour les 1000F. pour tous - cinq semaines de grève chez Chausson, Février-Mars 1988 Pamphlet published by the

trotskyist group Lutte Ouvrière (in French). A couple of reports of this strike was published in the French edition of Echanges, N° 55, Avril-Mars '88.

When we read this pamphlet we can discover the systematic strategy of Lutte Ouvrière to spread the struggle from one workshop to the whole plant and from the whole plant to other factories. These recipes to bring about a general strike has of course to be implemented by the L.O. militants, acting as union militants.

It is very difficult to get a right idea of the strike: we don't know which workers are designated sometimes by 'they', sometimes by 'we', even if we can understand that, according to the writer's intents it has to be either the militants only, or the militants assimilated to the workers, or the workers only, the militants not included. It is the same thing with the number of workers involved in the strike (out of 2.100 working at Gennevilliers), in the attempts to spread the strike (20, 30, 50, .. 200?). It is the same thing as well with the failed attempt to build a strike committee and the defiance of the strikers with what appears - of evidence - as a competition between unions (the CGT and the CFDT where the L.O. militants are). Actually we don't know much about the strike. What is evident nevertheless is the failure of the militants to put on the strike the model of organisation which would of course bring a victory.

La grève à la SNECMA - Mars/Avril/Mai 1988 - in French Pamphlet published by Lutte Ouvrière. This long strike in an aircraft engine factory in France will be studied in another issue. Documents and texts by Liaisons available at Echanges.

Les Cahiers du Doute (Thirion - BP 117 - 75966 Paris Cedex 20; in French) N° 2/April '88: Ecology and Politics Contents: Why ecology?. Considerations on ecology, capitalism and crisis. A novel: Tchernobyl on Seine. On the use of the anatomist method for the clouds. How to read Basle. Ecologist movements: a kind of history. Die Grünen, a new old institution. The whistling of the Cobas.

We will give a more complete review of this text, which has to be discussed

with the study on deep ecology published in Fifth Estate-Fall '87 (see Echanges n° 53)

L'Intersyndicaliste (Groupes de Salariés pour l'economy<sup>ie</sup> distributive - 11 rue St. Vincent de Paul - 13004 Marseille - France - in French) N° 25/Jan-March '88: Elections? Domination. Sharing work, sharing income. Correspondence on the elections. On South Korea.

Cahiers Communistes (c/o L'Herbe Rouge - 1 bis rue d'Alesia - 75014 Paris - in French) N° 1/March '88: In the presentation of this new publication it is said that CC are the 'expression of a small group of proletarians organised as a communist vector with the aim to reform the Communist Party worldwide. Contents: Revolutionary praxis, communist party. This text mentions numerous quotations of Lenin and Bordiga.

Théorie Communiste (C. Charrier, BP 2318, 13213 Marseille Cedex 02 - France - in French) N° 8/Nov. '87: The notion of cycle of struggles. The meeting of November '86. Correspondence (exchange of letters with 'Guerre Social' on the questions raised by the issues n° 7 and 8 of TC).

L'Aube Internationaliste (M. Duchemin - Librairie l'Herbe Rouge - 1bis rue d'Alesia - 75014 Paris - in French) N° 9/April-May '88: The right to strike against the strike. Class struggles: U.K. and France. Proletarians have no country. The materialist concept of history: determinism and praxis.

Interrogations pour la communauté humaine (c/o IS - BP 243 - 75564 Paris Cedex 12 - in French) Questioning ecology. New conception. Against progress.

Cash (53 Avenue des Gobelins - 75013 Paris - in French. A paper for the unemployed and precarious workers) N° 10/May-June '88: Political insecurity. Suppress poverty. For a real citizenship. Minimal guaranteed income. Recomposing productive work. Social minimum and guaranteed income. Temporary worker: a productive subject.

Illico (ACP/Cash - 53 Avenue des Gobelins - 75013 Paris - in French) calls for subscribers to help the paper not to disappear (the paper is fighting for a guaranteed income for all people without income).

Courant Alternatif (OCL/Egégore - BP 1213 - 51058 Cedex - Reims) N° 76/May '88: Why the retraining?. Italy: the rising of the Cobas. Unimetal: Longwy (steel industry). The trial of Bandhuin Simon. USSR. The explosion of the nationalist resistance.

companies to get other jobs for the threatened workers and he thought that they will get this new job within the six months delay.

Openly Rosen-Müller was imploring the companies as a beggar. All the original claims have been dropped. Only one thing was important to him; not to lose his face; he thought that the boss organisation would have to understand him. He was not lucky; the companies kept their hard line, they wanted a complete victory. We can see that in the first days of May. The days before, Lammers having thought about his experience as a mediator went to meet the top level bureaucrats of the unions and of the national boss organisation. He presented an arbitration for the conflict; the union gave at once its agreement; the companies as well but on the condition that this arbitration brings productivity improving and a solution for the extra dockers. The union wanted that this arbitration gives a definition of what would be considered as "extra dockers." Just at his moment a lot of papers were offering jobs in the port and all the "free" days were cancelled because there was too much work in the port. There was not enough dockers and they must work overtime; employment offices in the port were looking for temporary dockers.

On the 6th of May, the daily Volkkrant wrote that the mediator proposals were discussed by workers and boss unions and by the department of industrial relations. Proposals and discussions were more an attempt to clarify the situation that to try to get an agreement. All this gave credit to the opinion that an arbitration would be the best way to get a solution; what the companies wanted essentially was an agreement giving them the right to do freely what they want with redundancies. On the 7th of May the judge pronounced his sentence: no redundancies, no transfer of dockers to another job. On the next day, the companies declared they did not want an arbitration and had decided to come with new proposals starting again the legal negotiating process from scratch. On the 12th of May, Lammers declared that there was no issue and that he left definitely. On the 20th of May the ministry for social affairs try again to open a door to a new arbitration. In February the minister had sent a letter to the Christian and social democrat unions and to the boss organisation threatening to stop the State grant to the fund providing benefits to the temporary unemployed dockers if a solution was not quickly settled. This threat had not been taken seriously, but this time it had to be considered. The board of the fund asked the minister to delay the measure till the number of redundant workers would be known; the minister refused. This time there was a kind of panic inside workers and bosses unions because such a decision would raise important serious problems. The dockers would strongly disagree with the payment stoppage as well as with the redundancies. In such a situation, Rosen-Müller would lose completely the control over the dockers. For the minister, everything had lasted too long; he had been very patient with what happened in the Rotterdam port. The industrial peace in the port was very important for the Dutch bourgeoisie. Sometimes in the past this kind of things had gone too far; it was crucial to bring down the tension;



THE STRIKE IN THE DOCKS OF ROTTERDAM

(end of the article published in Echanges n°51 p 7 , amrch-may 1987 )

In the first article we predicted that the result could not profit the strikers .The agreement was signed and we can see that we were right.The judge forbade the general cargo companies to publish the list of the workers to be made redundant ;it was on the 12th of march 1987 and for a time nothing happened.The new period was to open on the 7th of may when the judge had to give his definite decision .Rosen-Müller , a union bureaucrat , referring to a soccer match , said it was 1-0 for the workers at the first half .Strikes stopped in march and after some weeks, a State official came as a mediator pretending to give "equal chances " to workers and bosses . Then the companies took the hard line and said they will come to the mediator with very different propositions from those taken by the judge in his first statement and supposed to be the basis of the decision to come on the 7th of may .The companies pushed aside the judge's solution and at the same time the risks of such a procedure .It was far less favourable for the workers .In the new proposals ,the extra workers who could not find a new job after six months would be made redundant .Everybody understood that the companies would use this possibility to sack the 'undesirable ' workers in trying to move them to other companies .If not successful after six months they will be sacked.The first proposals did not fix a delay for the finding of another job ; the workers would have been sacked only if they had refused two times an offer .Lammers considered then it was impossible for him to act as a mediator .The companies answered they would wait for the 7th of may with these new proposals .New negotiations were supposed to come and the union declared that it was no longer opposed to extra workers being made redundant .Again a new important concession; Rosen-Müller said only he disagreed with the figure of 350 given by the employers organisation .Lammers left as an arbitrator on the 30th of april blocked by the employers hard line .Unions have yet agreed with the workers being obliged to move to another job, but the agreement must avoid the word "redundancies " because with such a word no agreement could be imposed on the workers . A Rotterdam paper wrote that the companies strategy could be summed up : "When we discuss , there is no strike " .For the companies , the main objective was to gain time and after the 7th of may to follow another way . The differences were now very clear ;

- one was about the flexibility in the work; the companies wanted to fix unilaterally the "free" days when there was no work and overtime every time they need it . On this point both positions were not very far because the unions had already more or less agreed on it .
- on the redundancies ; the union had found the solution in avoiding to tell or write the word , Rosen Müller praise the common effort of the union and of the

L'Unisme (Le Frondeur - BP 105 - 94402 Vitry sur Seine Cedex - France - in French) N° 1/Apr-May-June '88: Everything must disappear. Editorial. N°2/ July-Aug.-Sept. '88: Editorial. May '68, 20 years after. On the problem of nationalities in the USSR. Chronicle on the passing time.

Librairie La Gryffe (5 rue Sébastien Gryffe - 69007 Lyon) informs of a 'college Français Partant - 'Impasse de la Croissance, impasse du développement, quelle alternative?': 15/16-October '88 in Lyon, à la Librairie (tel. 78610225)

Mai 68 - mai '88 - No nostalgia The bad days will end. Unemployed, students, peasants, workers, forwards. Try to build another social anti-capitalist relationship. Leaflet and pamphlet 'Forwards, divorce from the bourgeoisie (in French - PH - 47 rue St. Honoré, 75001 Paris).

## MEXICO

History out of chaos - a review (NY Times Book Review 13/3/'88) of a book: 'Revolutionary Mexico. The Coming and Progress of the Mexican Revolution' by Mason Hart - in English. The review in itself is already a good comment and a lot of information on the Mexican history in modern time (copy at Echanges).

## SPAIN

La Estiba - Voz de los puertos (Boletín de la Coordinadora Estatal de los Estibadores portuarios - in Spanish) N° 36/April '88: The government wants to impose serious reduction of wages to reduce unemployment. The firm 'Estiba et Desestiba' in the port of Bilbao: a PSOE ghetto. Paper article from La Coruna (La Voz de Galicia). Accident at work in the port.

La Estiba - Analisis y documentacion (Centro de Estudios de Coordinadora-same address as La Estiba) N° 1: The capitalist strategy and the workers' resistance in the West Mediteranean ports.

May Days in Barcelone 1937 - Anthology published by Freedom Press - 84b Whitechapel High Street - London E1.7QX - in English) with texts of José Peirats, Augustín Souchy, B. Bolloten, Emma Goldman and a bibliography by Verona Richardo.

Spain 1937: pictures of the social revolution A well printed text with a lot of photos on the anarchist movement in Spain ('36-'39) in five languages (French, English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese), published by the French

group 'Sacco and Vanzetti' in the Anarchist Federation. Available in all anarchist bookshops.

## ITALY

Basic ideas from the councils' communism-  
a text from T. Galante (Via Valgrande 38-

35040 Sant' Urbano Padova - Italy - in English and Italian).

## EASTERN COUNTRIES

IZTOK (Libertarian review on Eastern countries - BP 70 - 75563 Paris Cedex 12 - in French) Nw 15/March '88: USSR file: the Gorbatchevtchina. The perestroïka in texts. Rock against nomenklatura. Gorbatchevchina: varia. 90 Years birthday of a revolutionary: Anton Ciligu. El Moudjahid between the lines. Hungary: the birth of a libertarian tendency. Bibliography on Eastern countries.

Spartacus (5 rue St Croix de la Bretonnerie, 75004 Paris) Nestor Makhno-Struggle against the State and other writings (1925-1932). In French.

A survey of the Soviet Economy (Economist 9/4/88 - in English) This small pamphlet studies all the aspects of the Soviet economy. It's interest is more in the information and data it contains rather than in the commentaries or the historical references (copy at Echanges).

VOLYA 'which covered and campaigned for support for the struggles of the oppressed people of the Eastern Bloc countries for democratic rights and freedom' has had to cease publication. Subscribers are called to support Ukrainian Peace News (168/10 King Street - London W6 0QU - U.K. - in English), 'a quarterly paper publishing information on workers' struggle, anti-militarism, ecological issues, etc. The vol. 1, n° 3/4 of UPN contains material on workers' strikes and unrest in the USSR, mixing class struggle, nationalist or religious resistance which actually are sometimes mixed up in a complex situation.

## USA

Fifth Estate (4632 Second Avenue - Detroit - Mich. 48201 - USA - in English) Vol. 23-  
N° 1/Spring '88: Palestine: Legacy of

Conquest. Delving deeper into deep ecology (correspondance answering to the FE-special/Fall '87 issue on deep ecology). A reply to the syndicalists:

that Labour Department supervised elections would be a 'democratic alternative' to corruption.

In Labor News n° 107 -february 1988 ( one of the papers of the movement for a 'democratic reform inside the unions ') Amy Newell , the secretary of United Electricity Workers (UEW) ,gave his opinion in the polemic raging in the unions about the Teamsters reintegration and the threat of a trusteeship .He compared the attempt to a direct control of the State inside a union to a similar attempt in the 50's ( the charge was then not of 'corruption' but of 'communism' ).On one side , he is right; a court appointed trustee would not bring more democracy inside the unions and could open the door for an anti-union administration to take over the largest union in the US .But on the other side the present situation inside the union (and in any country as well )contradicts completely his claim that a state supervised 'democratic ' election could bring any kind of 'reform' .Paradoxally ( not so much if we think more closely about it ) the union reformist ( like TDU ) and union defenders bureaucrats are going the same way.As wrote V.Kamber , president of a Labor consulting firm linked closely to the unions : 'Labour Solidarity is more important than Purity' .They all agree to fight against 'a violation of the constitutional guarantee of the freedom of speech and association' though with different arguments .The arguments of the TDU are that the government would have to guarantee 'free democratic elections 'inside the unions and to fight racketeering using the courts to help reform the unions .Such a naive view is as well a dangerous illusion.

All these discussions about the 'independence of the unions', the 'union democracy', etc... either from bureaucrats or from rank and file militants claiming their illusions curtailed what was actually at stake with the Teamsters reintegration and the attempt to bring a federal control on them.The structural transformation of capital and of exploitation methods in the US(and elsewhere) has completely transformed the function of the unions.Formerley the unions had to keep a balance between the interest of capital and the workers interests ;they have to pretend to be the defenders of the workers ; it was only when they were recognised as so that they could play their function when were discussed the conditions of the labour exploitation.Now the unions have to be the direct auxiliary of the interest of capital; if the workers can see some interest to be unionised it is not at all because they have some "belief " in the possibility to change something through the union .On the other side , if one union tries to maintain the old order it is quickly pushed aside by both employers and workers .This new relationship is developing at all levels especially in the relations between the big unions or federations with the State ; the attempts of a trusteeship in the 50's and now can be seen beyond their specificity as the expression of such a tendency.We can see it everywhere in all countries (western er eastern branch of capitalism )even if it takes specific forms linked to the historical national peculiarities .

(2) The typos will keep 95 jobs against 500, 20 or 30 years ago; the mailers will be 24.

(3) Figures can be very different according to the sources and the periods. We have to consider them very carefully mainly if these publications belong to a chain. According to the Columbia Journalism Review, the losses of the Detroit Free Press brought 41m of tax credit for Knight-Ridder, 400 m, deficit of US Today were reduced to 233m, for the Gannett chain, ...; certainly Murdoch used this possibility as well.

### THE TEAMSTERS AGAIN IN THE AFL-CIO

In 1957, the Teamsters were expelled from the AFL-CIO for 'being dominated by corrupt influences' as part of an anti corruption move in the union.

In 1987, the Teamsters (IBT) is no less corrupt or more 'democratic' than before but it is reintegrated in the AFL-CIO; there is claims that the level of corruption inside AFL-CIO is the same as inside the Teamsters so there is no reason for them being separated now.

Some union militants fighting for a "democratic rank and file movement" inside the unions see in this reintegration "a right wing victory". The bureaucracy of both union and federation claim it is a move to reinforcing the union movement. Things, as usual, are far more complex; they have at first to be considered according to the function of unions as intermediary in the constant bargaining about the conditions of the use of labour force; presently their position is weakening and the effects are less members (and then less financial means) and looser links with the political organisations. The Teamsters reintegration is only one of the means to cope with such a situation.

This reintegration was introduced by an AFL-CIO campaign to whitewashing the Teamsters. Soon after he took over from Meany, Kirkland, the new president of AFL-CIO announced that the IBT (Teamsters) was "free of corrupt domination". In these times, even Reagan protection can't prevent IBT to be investigated by the Justice Department using the 'Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisation (RICO) Act'; Jack Presser (IBT President) was to be called for his evident connection with Organised Crime. A case was being prepared by the Justice Department against the Teamsters seeking the removal of Presser and his entire 17 executive board, IBT would be placed under trusteeship to bring some order in the house.

Such a decision could be as well a threat to other corrupt union including the AFL-CIO; the reintegration of IBT just coming in this time was bringing to the union the protection of the 'big family' certainly paid by the support from the new comers for the usual bureaucratic manoeuvres inside the federation. Money poured to a campaign "Americans against Government Control" dressed with the cloth of the 'Independence of the Union'. Even the left movement 'Teamsters for a democratic union' inside the Teamsters was supporting this campaign thinking

anarchy and the sacred. Book review: 'Reproductive rights and wrongs (Betsey Hartmann). May Days 1937 (Barcelona). Correspondence and bookstore.

Workers Vanguard (Box 1377 GPO - New York, NY 10116 - USA - in English)  
 N° 453 (20/5/88): What's behind Polish strikes. N° 454 (3/6/88): For central planning through Soviet Democracy. N° 455 (17/6/88): Three million black workers strike against Apartheid. West German mine disaster: 'It was murder, not an industrial accident'. The Bukharin dossier. Air Disaster Sues Unions. N° 450 (8/4/88): Mordechai Vanunu sentenced to 18 years. If you want a short story of trotskyism all over the world (past 40 years) read: 'Revolutionary regroupment in France'. Nationalist violence flares in Gorbachev's Russia (Behind the Armenian Crisis).

News and Letters (59 East Van Buren, room 707, Chicago, Ill. 60.605 - in English) N° 3/88: Crisis in black reality-black thought. Workers battle Reaganism, companies, union bureaucrats. N° 4/88: Fram crisis: everyone's battle. Dunayevskaja-Marcuse dialogue with dialectics. Armenians challenge Russian control. N° 6/88: Labor struggles in Poland and in USA. Polish strike poses new questions.

Processed World (55 Sutter Street, Apt 1829, San Francisco, Ca. 94104, USA) calls for subscribers, money, etc. to escape collapsing.

Industrial Worker (Industrial Workers of the World - 3435 N. Sheffield Avenue - Chicago - IL 60657) March '88: Spanish ports shut down (about a strike in December 87 and a brief history of the dockers' coordination). Nurses fight cutbacks (UK and US). Wobblies against war. IWW in Nevada mining industry 1907. April '88: Special historical issue on 'Radical labour in the South' (of USA). Seamen. IWW in Georgia. Southern Tenant Farmers Union (history of the first racially integrated agricultural workers union). IWW history in Louisiana. Also material about IWW in Australia, a recent Louisiana teachers' strike, and the situation of female workers. May '88: Special issue on 'Radical Environmentalism' and the organisation 'Earth First!', advocating direct action and giving examples from IWW history. Also material about current IWW organising efforts, a campaign against McDonalds, and surrealism.

Discussion Bulletin (PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, Mi 49501) N° 29/May '88: Continued discussion between and about various US anarchosyndicalist organisations, about a transition period between capitalism and socialism and labour time vouchers and the Wildcat pamphlet Class was on the homefront.

Black Crime, White Racism (Andrew Hacker) New York Times Review - in English. It is a good study, not only on the condition of black people in

the USA, but of the conditions of the poorest blacks, being more doomed to be among the poorest. We give the list of book reviewed in this article and the conclusion (copy at Echanges).

Angry workers bulletin (A.W.B. - 2140 Shattuck Avenue - Box 2200 - Berkeley - Ca 94704 - in English) N° 2: The Watsonville Cannery strike. Mexico: a land of volcanoes ... Yuppies in Moscow?. The class challenge: struggles in the Soviet Union. Social unrest in 'socialist' Spain. Meanwhile in Yougoslavia. John Olday - artist and fighter for the Social revolution. On the railway workers strike in France.

Workers Info -ray (PM c/O Zamisdat Press, GPO Box 1255, Gracie Station - New York - NY 10028 - USA) Aspects of everyday life in America. N° 4/May '88: This issue reproduces articles on the poverty in US, women, how people spend their day, waging war on the homeless, children in Welfare Hotels, jails, attack on Indian Treaties, computer system under siege, cloning, mouse patent, self-destructing video-tapes, etc.

#### AIR TRAFFIC

(see Echanges n°13 p 1 , n°16 p 4 , n°20 p 6 , n°28 p1 )

In August 1987 , the Northwest flight 255 crashed with almost no warning during take off at Detroit metropolitan airport ;154 people were killed .Some days later , a local US paper ( The Oregonian ) published a short article on the "problems " of Northwest Airlines .At the time of the crash Northwest was moving to overcome an employee work slowdown and a spate of minor vandalism to its ground equipment : "Northwest officials ...had gone on the offensive against what the airline called nuisance vandalism by offering 25,000 dollars reward for any information leading to the cause of the trouble...The vandalism , which the airline said has been increasing, has included keys lost for aircraft parked in hangars , disconnected wires and tyres found slashed or with the air out of them- problems that delay aircraft but do not affect safety ...Northwest also reported that it was battling what it considered a work slowdown by its mechanics by contracting out some of its maintenance to other airlines...Some of the passengers ...wonder whether they had been victims of luggage tampering..passengers luggages that had come through the baggage claim area had been badly damaged ..."

In Echanges n° 49/50 ( january-march 1987 )we mentioned a book on the Air Controllers'strike in August 1981 in the USA : "The Air Controllers'Controversy ; Lessons from the PATCO Strike " by Shotsak and Shaik reviewed in "In These Times "n°37 (1-10-86 ) ; we have received a letter from a comrade well informed on these problems :

"Thank you for the review of the air -controllers book .I have the book but are interested in reviews to see if there is any critical remarks .I also have very much material about the PATCO strike but never had the opportunity to do anything with it.It is my impression that after the defeat of this strike there has been a much tougher attitude towards the workers from the public and private employers and not only in the airline industry itself ( pilots and stewardesses) and that ,

published separately with distinct independant redactional staff . This system (Joint Operative Agreement ) has been used in a lot of towns and is particularly interesting ; on one side the costs of producing and distributing the papers are drastically cut ,on the other side it allows a monopoly on publicity .... The two Detroit dailies belong to very profitable chains .The Detroit News (Gannett chain ) has a daily distribution of 680,000 and 840,000 on sunday . The Detroit Free Press (Knight-Ridder chain ) has a distribution of 648,000 and 736,000 . It is very important ( 9th and 10th in the US ) ;from this position we could expect a good profit for both papers but both claim 172m of deficit in 8 years , 2/3 of it for the Free Press which asked for the benefit of the "technical merging " with the News of course ,for several years and threatened to close if this merging is refused ( 2 )

- Another well appreciated publication the Columbia Journalism Review (january - february 88)reveals what is behind these deficits . Both papers were profitable till 1980 ; then they went to war on publicity offering between 22 to 39% discount on the tariff of other papers while the sale price was maintained at respectively 15 and 20 cents per copy, less than 95% of the dailies.Apparently fierce competition but , at the same time, from the very beginning of this "big fight " discrete meetings to pave the way to this "technical merging " , which could bring 25m.profits a year for each paper according some estimates .The review think that " the losses caused by this strategy towards a monopoly are not real losses but investments ." ( 3 )

A federal judge , in a preliminary inquiry ,recommanded that the merging to be refused .The Detroit Free Press could not be considered as a paper in danger ...The 'Detroit News is a bit bigger and both papers have agreed to share equally their profits if they can merge.The judge said in his advice that the two papers have faced important losses only because of their struggle for the domination of the publicity market and that all their tariff and prices have been maintained artificially low .

Everything can take a long time because the papers can appeal if the ministerial decision against them .The Detroit Free Press is still threatening to close its business and claim that plans already are drawn to move the machinery to other papers if the JOA1 is refused .Difficult to know if it is bluff or serious threat ,but the paper has succeed in getting the support of an opinion at first hostile to these operations; the mayor , the ex-president Ford , all the elected people of the district , an even the unions are now supporting the Free Press ; only the Newspaperer Guild ( journalists and clerks ) threatened by 500 redundancies is still opposed to the merging .

The Columbia Journalism Review can see a sad future if the Free Press is successful ; the dailies of the few towns where a real competition still exists will know that the road to monopoly profits goes first through the creation of a deficit ....

(1) The other papers in New York are the New York Times and the Daily News . USA Today (Gannett chain ) is a national daily with various regional editions .

U S A

UNIONS AND CONCENTRATION IN THE MEDIAS

The president of the division 'typo- mailers ' of Communications Workers of America (CWA) has published his annual report in CWA News, april ,Except some recruitment in Canada , the organisation tried mainly to maintain its present positions .After years of inside struggles , the "Teamsters raids "and the merging with the CWA ,we can understand this rest .But stagnation in an industry in constant evolution means regression because membership is declining even without disastrous conflicts . To give some examples , have a look on the situation in New York and in Detroit .

In 1976 ,Rupert Murdoch, now famous in Europe , bought the New York Post for 30m,dollars .Spending a lot and using all the professional tricks,he manages to increase the distribution of a prestigious but somewhat declining paper , nevertheless advertisers did not answer..Some experts think that the publicity market in New York can only support three big daily papers ( 1 ),150m dollars deficit for the Post seem to give ground for this opinion .

Among other publications un US , Murdoch owns the Boston Herald and some TV channels in this town too and in New York .A federal law tries to prevent information monopoly by prohibiting the possession of several communication media in one town .It is a complicated piece of legislation and political influences are determinant when it is to be implemented .For an easy understanding we can say that Murdoch obliged to sell some of his possessions choose to get rid of the Post .Somebody bought it for 37,5 m. dollars if Murdoch could get 24m cuts on spending from the unions ,

An ultimatum was sent to the unions; Murdoch threatened to liquidate the paper if these conditions were not agreed on the 19 of february .It was so 12 hours before the short delay expired but , to get the agreement , Murdoch had to put 3m. in the deal to maintain the wages at their present level .The new boss agreed to go ahead with the publication for one year minimum and to pay all the redundancy money if it has to be stopped , The contract gives Murdoch an option to buy back the paper .Some thinks that it is only another trick and that Murdoch, having got the concessions from the unions , is presently waiting for a change in the legislation to get back his paper .The actual résultat for the unions means 130 jobs lost and wages blocked for two years ,

In Detroit unions have a gun at their head too .The anti-trust law ( Newspaper Preservation Act , 1970 ) allows a derogation in order to rescue two papers threatened to disappear .Two papers can merge all their industrial activities and decide freely the financial approach of this merging.Only two conditions : one paper has to prove it is unable to cope with its present problems and , after being allowed to this "technical merging " the two titles have to be

in that sense their defeat signified something .After all , the sacking of virtually a whole group of employees is not something that happens everyday.The PATCO members obviously had too much hope in president Reagan(I believe that only the Teamsters , PATCO , and possibly one other union supported his candidacy ), in their own industrial strength as "special "group of "workers " being indispensable and able to have an immediate effect with their actions (thus 'going for it alone ' without having any tradition of or seeing the necessity of solidarity with and from others ) , and in their union apparatus .The conflict had obviously been very well planned by the government.They were able to keep the air 'open' with the help of these controllers not striking , with using previously operational controllers normally working as shift supervisors or in other managerial functions , with the transfer of military controllers to civilian air traffic control units , and closing a number of control towers at smaller airports and transfer the controllers working there to other places .With such measures being taken , the controllers'lack of preparations and their overestimation of their own strength , the dispute could only be won by the solidarity of other airline and airport workers.This only happened a few places . An aspect of this dispute is also the attempts by foreign controllers to support the PATCO strikers .This posed the question of an Atlantic air blockade , although it did not materialise.Such a blockade would have been quite unique.At any time from the time an aircraft leaves its parking place on an airport in Europe until it enters US airspace, it is required to be in communication with an air traffic controller whose responsibility is to keep the aircraft away from other aircraft ( 'separated ' , in the aviation language ).Foreign controllers therefore had the possibility of refusing to issue any kind of 'air control clearance ' to flights bound for the US , simply to refuse to talk with them, thus actually making it illegal for those flights to depart .

However , in connection with a possible blockade of flights to the US a number of points must be observed :

1) In all countries concerned , such an action would be illegal .No labour legislation authorise a sympathy action like this .Since the air traffic controller profession is about safety , controllers tried to justify the action being taken by saying that in addition to showing solidarity with US colleagues on strike , US skies were unsafe .However , both my own management and aviation authorities in other countries said that neither they and certainly not we could overrule the US Federal Aviation Authority . To refuse to handle flights bound for the US would therefore put a big pressure on the individuals controllers and also on the unions (economic liability for example ) if they should support this .The media , at least in this country , also focus extremely much on anything that has to do with air traffic.Being a controller myself , I know well how that pressure is also from other industrial action we have had .

2)The controllers'professionnal'view of themselves , and the 'professional 'nature of the unions ,



Controllers often see themselves as a very 'special' group, as having an 'important' and 'demanding' job with a 'large responsibility'. It is true that air traffic control is a serious matter, if I may put it that way. You are directly responsible for keeping aircraft during rush hours a great number of aircraft at the same time, safely separated from each other, something which often can be a demanding task. I will not go into details about this, because even if the controllers' view of themselves in this respect largely is correct, what is interesting here is what this view has led to as far as (union) organisation is concerned.

Everything a controller does, even the words he uses when giving instructions to the aircraft, is governed by large volumes of detailed rules and regulations. These are being continually changed and developed, and for the controllers, and controllers' unions, there is a lot to 'engage in' from a purely professional point of view as distinct from activity and engagement concerning wages, working conditions, etc. .... Controllers' unions are therefore often not only unions in the 'normal' sense, but often just as much 'professional associations' concerned with rules and regulations facilitating air safety and not with showing industrial solidarity with other controllers. This applies even more to the organisation which, given the conditions, would have had to play an important role in a blockade: the IFATCA (International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations).

Despite this, a number of attempts were made to stop flights to the US, by national controllers' unions or individual groups of controllers. An effective blockade would have to involve controllers in countries like Britain, Iceland, France, Spain, Portugal and Canada responsible for oceanic flights and airspace. IFATCA neither could nor would effectively coordinate simultaneous action in all these countries. What happened was that for a day or two the oceanic airspace controlled by Canadian controllers was closed for the US flights and the airlines had to reroute outside that airspace, and the next days for example the Portuguese controllers refused to handle US flights. But the whole Atlantic airspace was never closed simultaneously. In Europe there was controllers seriously trying to organise a simultaneous European-wide refusal to handle all flights bound for the US, but this came up against what I have described above: the illegality of such action, the pressure it would lead to the nature of controllers organisation, etc. ....

The air controllers strike in the US was only one of the consequence of a new politics initiated not by Reagan but by Carter for the air traffic under the name of "deregulation"; from 1979 the air companies were allowed without restriction to organise any flight inside the US at any price. Then a fierce competition, a total chaos and attempts to impose on all the workers harder conditions of work. The PATCO strike and the sacking of all the strikers was part of measures concerning as well the pilots as all kinds of employees. To face competition, the airlines had to cut on the pilots training, on wages and to implement a lot of measures to increase productivity. The unions as usual agreed with the employers

to maintain their position, on cuts about pensions, on benefits, on wages (introduction of the two-tier system), on redundancies. The result is more insecurity in the air traffic because all workers are more tired by too much work at the limit of their nervous resistance, because of inexperience or of pilots taking inconsiderate risks to keep to the scheduled flight. Some resistances have grown up; the above article shows clearly that facing the impossibility to move on strike, class struggle is moving to other forms of struggle, less apparent, in the day to day work. The quoted examples are the ones dealing directly with the customers and important for the reputation of the airlines but, of course, they are only the continuation of a lot of rank and file never mentioned actions. The deregulation landed in Europe in two ways: directly (more flights to Europe), indirectly with the pressure to break the national barriers to bring a 'free' European market. The consequences are already (even if it is only the beginning of this new politics) the same as in the US: air controllers strikes, pilots strikes, all forms of action from all other air employees. A quite new kind of articles has appeared in the papers: near midairs, runway incursions, delays, 'every indicator in the system says that we are hanging by our fingernails' said a pilot (though most of these 'incidents' are not at all mentioned publicly because considered as 'minor').

The same comrade made some additional remarks to his above letter:

"The problem of too much traffic in the London area, you also find it for example in Germany. In the Frankfurt and Munich area, the busiest ones, every day large number of aircraft have to circle in the air to wait to land because there are too many coming at the same time. The same applies to Spain's tourist islands in the summer. Lufthansa is losing large amounts of money due to these delays, and the same is the case in Spain for the companies flying to these islands. One of the articles mentioned that a measure adopted by the UK aviation authorities to reduce too much traffic at the same time was "flow management". What this means is that aircraft departing from airports outside the London area must receive permission to enter British airspace at a certain time, prior to taking off. This is a permanent measure in the London area, as well as in Brussel and Spain. In many cases it leads to hours of delay, but from the air traffic control point of view it is better that the aircraft stay on the ground for some time than that there are too many aircraft in an area at the same time. For Spain, these flow management measures has in some cases led to 10 hours delay for aircraft departing from UK. The problems in Spain is that at major airports, for example Palma, there is only one runway serving both arrivals and departures, and the controllers' radar and communication equipment is not good enough. You of course have the same problems in Greece during the summer."