

No 63 January-March 1990

# ECHANGES

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ECHANGES ET MOUVEMENT, BM Box 91, London WC 1 N 3XX, United Kingdom

## TAIWAN

After the lifting of martial law, a number of strikes broke out in this country in 1988 and 1989. An Echanges-comrade is trying to collect material on strikes, labour relations, and economic and social conditions in general. Echanges readers which can be of help are asked to write to the address below to tell if they have any ideas or material, or to send the material (which will be returned). (Address: R.H., c/o boks 9340 Valerenga, 0610 Oslo 6, Norway.)

## CHINA/HONG KONG

From Hong Kong we have received a large file (in English) concerning "the repression of democratic rights, police brutality and appeasement of the Hong Kong colonial authority to the Chinese bureaucratic government". Copy at Echanges or direct from "Committee for the concern of 9.29 Incident", B 1 Kwai Chung Centre, 1st floor, Kwai Hing Road, N.T. Hong Kong.

## FRANCE

Communisme - central paper in French of the Groupe Communiste Internationaliste (BP 54 - BXL 31, Bruxelles, Belgium, or GCI, c/o L'Herbe Rouge, 1bis rue d'Alesia, 75014 Paris)  
No 29/Oct 89: Notes on the balance of forces between the classes - Algeria: Proletarian uprising (Oct 88) - Struggles in Burma (1988) - Argentina (May 89): Looting against hunger.

After 28 issues of the GCI paper under the name Le Communiste it has now changed the name to Communisme. From the GCI is also available a summary of the contents of the first 28 issues, and a set of "theses on programmatic orientation".

## Peugeot strike

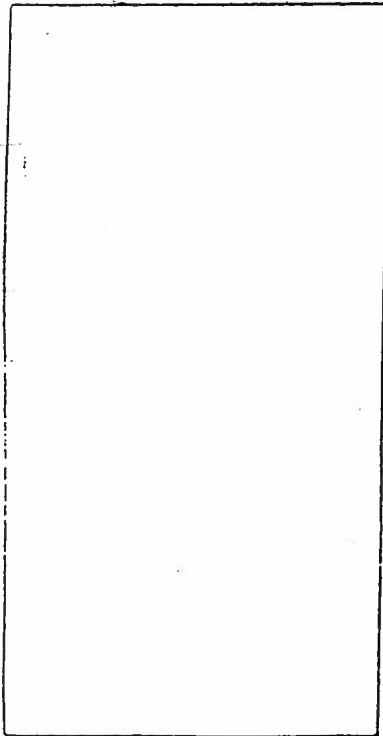
Some supplementary material to the analysis in No 62 is available:

- From Echanges, a detailed chronology of the strike (in French).
- From the Freiburg contact address of the German journal Wildcat, a collection of newspaper cuttings and leaflets (Price DM3, from: Wildcat, Postlagerkarte 11 22 18C, 7800 Freiburg, BRD).

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brochure  
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to



**Radio Tomate** (BP 182, 75623 Paris Cedex 13) **No 1/Nov. 89:** Bulletin of a free radio (106,7 Mhz) giving various information on the activity around their broadcasting and on the organisations and other radios regrouped around them.

**Collectif contre l'armée à l'école** (c/o UPF, 4 rue Lazare Hoche, 92100 Boulogne): "Military people to teach" - leaflet in French from a collective working against the army in the schools.

**Courant Alternatif** - monthly journal of the OCL (Libertarian Communist Organisation) (OCL, Egrevore, BP 1213, 51058 Reims Cedex) **No 88/Summer 89:** Ecology: occupation of the nuclear power station in Golfech (Southwestern France) - Struggle against a dam to be built in the centre of France (Serre de la Fare) - Rufus strike in Caen (Building industry - the reasons for a failure after 132 days - 44 are sacked and the most turbulent workshop is closed) - Towards a new libertarian organisation? (Report of a national meeting) - Third world debt: when generosity means rentability - The democratic claim: Are we in a world as good as possible? - Hungary on the move - Witness of the Queva affair (New Caledonia) - inside Spanish prisons.

**No 89/October 89:** A village in Europe: Golfech (struggle against a nuclear power station) - Nogent sur Seine: checking the radioactivity around a nuclear power station - Serre de la Fare: another struggle against the building of a barrage on the Loire valley - Struggles in the French prisons during the summer - Poland: Solidarnosc or Solidarnaque (cheating Solidarity) - The influence of the catholic church among the publishers.

**No 90/November 89:** Still the same power stations or other struggles mentioned in No 89 - Prisons: a witness of the riot at St Maur in 1987 - Peugeot Mulhouse: the strike back after 17 years - Kanaky: one year after the agreement - The end of alternative rock.

**A contre courant, syndical et politique** (4 rue des Iris, 52100 St. Dizier) **No 5/June 89:** East is red - Toward a new syndicalism (On the expelling from the CFDT union of sections and militants in several industrial branches: health, PTT (post and telegraph), and on the creation of a new union, SUD, which aims to stand for 'a different syndicalism') - Flexibility of work - French book reviews: 'Crise, technique et temps de travail (Ton Thomas); 'Ni Dieu, ni Maitre' (J. Valero) (on the expelling of 20 CFDT postal militants of the union local of Lyon - Gare).

**No 6/July-Aug. 89:** What is new in the Eastern countries? - Poland: which democracy? - On Fessenheim nuclear station.

**Marseille edition of A contre courant** (11 rue St Vincent de Paul, 13004 Marseille): **No 1/June 89:** On the development of the SUD union - On the CNT 'renovados' obliged to take the name CGT (See Echanges No 61). **No 2/Oct. 89:** The SUD union in the Bouches du Rhone is getting stronger - St. Simon foundation: a capitalist club giving ideas to the CFDT union - English dockers: Maggy + TUC = K.O. - Polemics around the Spanish CNT - We don't want to die as socialists.

**L'Intersyndicaliste** - paper of Groupe de Salariés pour l'économie distributive (Workers group for a distributive economy) (11 rue St. Vincent de Paul, 13004 Marseille) **No 28/Oct. 89:** 1789-1989: the revolution still goes ahead - Peugeot suing councils having helped strikers.

**C R H M S S** - Centre de Recherche d'Histoire des Mouvements Sociaux et du Syndicalisme (9 rue Malher, 75004 Paris) **No 12/1989:** Report of an academic seminar on 'Actors and witnesses of the social movement in may 68' - Some university theses summed up or just mentioned in this publication could be of some historical interest; write to the above address to get more information;

## Workers and police clash

RIOT POLICE fought workers in the streets of the South Korean city of Ulsan yesterday.

The workers were protesting at the storming on Saturday morning of the Hyundai Group shipyard to suppress a three-day strike.

The weekend's violence began when an estimated 10,000 riot police raided and quickly gained control of the Hyundai Heavy Industries shipyard in the south-eastern city. Later, there were fights throughout the city between police and thousands of workers from the yard and other subsidiaries of the Hyundai Group, one of Korea's largest conglomerates.

Riot police took control of the shipyard after firing tear-gas and using bulldozers to break through barricades. Most workers inside the yard scattered but others threw fire-bombs and nuts and bolts and set fire to the tents in which they had camped for three nights. More than 100, armed with firebombs and steel pipes, took positions on a giant crane.

In spite of the scale of the operation, no serious injuries were recorded. The police said they arrested about 300 trade unionists although most union leaders were believed to have escaped.

In the nearby factory of Hyundai Motor Corporation, Korea's largest automobile manufacturer, workers set fire to police vehicles and threw petrol bombs at police, who responded with tear gas.

Last week's strike was triggered by the arrest of union officials for organising illegal industrial action at the end of last year.

Union leaders at 13 Hyundai subsidiaries will today decide whether to strike in protest at the police action. A strike seems likely at Hyundai Motor Corporation but unions at the other companies in the group are expected to recommend more limited action.

Yonhap, the official Korean news agency, said an association of labour unions in nearby Masan and Changwon had voted to begin a sympathy strike today. More widespread protests are forecast for tomorrow, which is May Day.

However, workers at the state-run Korea Broadcasting System indicated that they would return to work today,

# Arrests prompt strike at Hyundai Heavy Industries

By John Ridding in Seoul - 24-4-90

HYUNDAI Heavy Industries, South Korea's largest shipbuilder, faces a strike after workers voted for a work stoppage over the arrest of several of trade union leaders.

The strike, which is scheduled to begin tomorrow, will be the largest so far this year, and threatens to disrupt the relative peace of the current wage bargaining round. Over the last three years South Korea's economy has been badly affected by industrial unrest.

Workers' representatives at Hyundai Heavy Industries, which is part of the Hyundai Group, Korea's second largest conglomerate, decided to strike following the arrest on Friday of Mr Woo Ki Hah, the union vice chairman. Mr Woo was standing in for Mr Lee Young Hyun, the union chairman who was himself arrested in February on the charge of organising an illegal work slowdown.

Hyundai's union said yesterday that it will go ahead with the strike unless the charges against the union leaders are dropped and the company apologises for the incident.

A spokesman for the Federa-

tion of Korean Trade Unions said that the arrests reflected the Government's tougher stance on industrial relations. Leaders of several other trade unions have been detained for industrial actions deemed illegal under South Korea's trade union laws.

Hyundai said yesterday that the threatened strike would also be illegal because the union has not given the required 15 days notice to the Labour Ministry. However, the company expressed hope that the strike could be averted.

So far the Government's tougher industrial relations policy has been successful. The number of labour disputes in the first quarter fell by almost 80 per cent over the same period last year and pay increases averaged 7 per cent compared with 15.5 per cent in the first three months of 1989.

An analyst at the Korea Labour Institute said that the industrial peace also reflected a loss of public support for strikes and high wage claims because of a slowdown in Korea's economic growth rate and a fall in exports.

ending a three-week strike over the appointment of a new president.

The strike at Hyundai Heavy Industries was the biggest so far this year and followed a relatively peaceful period in industrial relations. It made the business community increasingly nervous and the South Korean stock market recorded its second biggest daily fall on Saturday, losing almost 4 per cent of its value on fears that industrial unrest could spread, bringing the loss for the year so far to more than 20 per cent.

The swift suppression of the

strike reflects the tougher government line on industrial relations and the poor industrial relations record of the Hyundai Group.

President Roh Tae Woo warned last week that strikes, which have caused severe economic disruption over the last three years, threatened social stability and would not be tolerated in the current spring wage bargaining round.

increased with 25 pct. Workers draw about \$ 185,- monthly, women only \$ 120,- to \$ 160,-. In industry the average hourly wage is \$ 1,55 against \$ 2,33 in Singapore. In 1986 the working-week was mostly 54,3 hours against 47,4 in Taiwan. Not before 1988 a minimum wage of \$ 120,- will be introduced. In the iron- and steel industry in South-Korea the cost of labour of one ton steel is \$ 25,- against \$ 132,- in Japan and \$ 164,- in the USA; in the car-industry the hourly cost of labour in South-Korea is \$ 3,- against \$ 18,- in Japan and \$ 24,- in the USA 14). Sure, in recent years the material position of the workers had become a little bit better, but the class-differencies now are greater.

These are the reasons for the unknown and unsuspected fighting spirit and militancy of the South-Korean workers. Observing that the government would admit some changes, they immediately expressed their feelings and demands. And that was a general demand because of the reality that they worked for many years for hunger wages. In the course of the struggle there obviously was something more than the demand for payrise only. The minds changed as a consequence of their experiences. The South-Korean workers no longer are the small farmers of the past, nor are they any longer the children of those farmers, steeped in capitalist traditions. The process of capitalist production has weakened the links with the past, the recent struggles have definitively destroyed them. One of the most important papers of the Western ruling class clearly understood what was going on in South-Korea, when writing:

"The South-Korean workers are realising themselves that they form a certain force and this is a completely new feeling for them. But the movement is still spontaneous for most of the time, without any real direction and without any control, what involves the danger that things will get out of control" 15)

This can only mean, that in South-Korea just like in any country workers are a potential danger in a society which is their labours fruit. It is one of the clearest marks of the class-conflict in this country. Capitalism doesn't end in Western-Europe, North-America, Japan, Australia or the countries of Eastern-Europe. The so-called Third-World today is marked by the contradiction between capital and labour. Even in countries where the bourgeois revolution didn't yet take place and where none of the bourgeois political rights exist, workers struggle for their own class interests.

14) Le Monde from 25-8-'87.

15) Idem.

- Courtille J.F.: 'Citroën CGT union (Paris XVeme) from 1964 up to 1972'.
- David Bruno: 'The anarchist movement in May-June 1968'.
- Véronique Faburel: 'The JCR from April 66 up to June 68' (trotskyst group).
- P. Bourrinet: 'The Dutch left communist current (1907-1950) - from Tribunism to Councilism'.

Theorie Communiste (C. Charrier, BP 2318, 13213 Marseille Cedex 12) Concerning the analysis of this group, see especially Echanges no 53. Chapters of a recent theoretical work include: The proletariat: the dissolution of the existing conditions as the movement itself of these existing conditions - The class situation of the proletariat define the content of communism - The proletariat as a negation of property, of division of labour, of value and exchange, of classes. (This text might be reviewed later.)

L'Aube Internationaliste (c/o Librairie l'Herbe Rouge, 1 bis rue d'Alesia, 75014 Paris) No 12/Aug-Oct. 89: Social revolution or bourgeois revolution - The soviet China of the 20s (an article from Bilan, journal of Italian bordigists in the 30s). (L'Aube Internationaliste participates with other groups in 'Revue Internationale du Mouvement Communiste', a journal which has not been seen at the Echanges address.)

L'unisme (Le Frondeur, BP 105, 94402 Vitry sur Seine Cedex) No 4/Oct-Dec 89: Chronique of the passing time - Nazism for the 21st century - Towards a common research on the question of money and labour. No 5/Jan-March 90: Principles of a distributive economy - On the Intifada: Delenda est Israel - Nothing new in East Europe - Federalism and synarchy.

Commission Prison-Repression (BP 163, 75463 Paris Cedex 10) Various documents about the Clairvaux mutiny, on the prison El Acebuche (Almeria, Spain - political prisoners), Cavales' letter (Sept 89). Also available a pamphlet on the trial of the Clairvaux mutineers: 'La prison en accusation'.

Interrogations pour la communauté humaine (c/o I.S., BP 243, 75564 Paris Cedex 12) Dec 89: About women struggles and the feminist movement - Discussion about the positions of Interrogations on the class struggle. (People interested can ask for the various texts concerning this discussion. People who don't read French should know that a number of Interrogations texts are available in English.)

Perspective Internationaliste - Journal of the External Fraction of the I.C.C. (Destryker, BP 1181, Centre Monnaie, 1000 Bruxelles, Belgium) No 14/3rd quarter 89: Order reigns in Beijing - Class struggle in the 80s - Theses on Gorbachev - Obituary of G. Munis - A critique of the new journal 'Mouvement Communiste' - Correspondence on 'intervention' - Battaglia Comunista: Internationalist, of course, but not too much. No 15: Poland: Solidarnosc unveil its face - Strikes in Russia: Perestroika going the wrong way - Islamic fundamentalism: religious fanaticism is encouraged by the state - China: where are the workers struggles? - Correspondence: how classes recombine with state capitalism - Report of a meeting with the Communist Bulletin group.

Les Cahiers du Doute (Thirion, BP 117, 75866 Paris Cedex 20) No 3/June 89: An introduction presents this issue and explains that it contains articles which have not been discussed by the group and that one of them brought a polemical discussion in such a way that the existence of the group itself is threatened. The first part is a kind of interview with Paul Mattick junior on the crisis and economic problems of capitalism in 1987; it was put up to date and is a good description of present difficulties

of western capital and of all attempts to escape a total lack of control through day to day measures to avoid wrecking the boat. We could have hoped for a deeper and more theoretical approach but, as it is, 'it is a text looking for stimulating critical thinking and pushing to think more'.

The second text 'Coordinating Committees facing syndicalism' is far more controversial. All along the attempt to analyse the recent struggles in France, there is an underground development of the idea of something 'close to the spirit which pushed the first revolutionary unions', which 'could take the form of a new rise of a radical syndicalism'. This consideration prevents the author to go deeper into the real function of syndicalism, limiting the criticism to its present integration in the system. (Some facts are described as recent phenomenons though they have existed for more than forty years in France and so can't give support to an explanation of the syndicalist decline.) There are some pages attempting to explain the form taken by the recent strikes in France; though tainted with some sociological dyeing, they are a better approach than the developments on the syndicalist spirit. Nevertheless they stop half way because they don't try to bring a relationship with the transformation of the productive structures which could explain as well the decadence of syndicalism.

The text 'Some theses on extreme right, crisis, authoritarianism and fascism' contains a lot of good remarks on the situation of 'foreign workers' presently in France and place the rise of the National Front in its real context. Even if we can discuss some of its assertions, even if we can regret a short cut conclusion, it is a good document as it is far from the black and white discussions we could usually find on these matters.

'Argentina 85' is a short text and interviews on state terrorism in the Argentinian military dictatorship and how 'forgetfulness and self repression are necessary to the strengthening of democracy'.

## EAST GERMANY

### Echanges material

Some material on East Germany can be found in Echanges no 13 and 39. The following material is also available from Echanges:

- 'L'insurrection ouvrière en Allemagne de l'Est juin 1953 - lutte de classe contre le bolchevisme', by Cajo Brendel. This is a slightly altered version of a pamphlet published only a few weeks after the 1953 uprising by the Dutch group Spartacusbond. (Reprint of the English edition is in preparation.) One of the few available texts on this event.

- In French and German, the report from an Echanges meeting in 1983 with material and discussions about East Germany, Poland and China.

- "Des grossen Planes Stimm und Gang". Bildungsplanung als Illusion, a 215 pages book by T. Sander. From a brief presentation of this book in Echanges no 39: 'The book shows how the social system develops in East Germany .. the plan with it's different forms (short, medium and long term) is so absurd that the East German economy would perform better without a plan at all in following it's natural tendencies. Everybody recognises today the existence of a blockage in the Eastern countries but very few try to explain the actual causes and their basis. This work brings out the very core of this problem: the actual development of East German society in it's specific form, a society where class antagonisms prevail. From this point most of the problems become clear, even the fact that the top people sabotage their own plan systematically..'

sation, the "Industrial, Municipal Mission". For years and years, this organisation tried to mobilize and radicalize the workers and usually the workers had become the victims. This protestant organisation was tightly linked with the political opposition 12).

In a quite different way one could observe during the strike-wave that the worker were acting as an autonomous class, namely by the fact that the middle-class democrats were clearly hostile to their action as soon as they realised that they could not get the workers to do the democrat's work for them. One of the most important candidates for the presidency, Kim Young-Sam, declared right at the beginning of the struggles: "Social chaos will give the anti-democratic forces a pretext to prevent democratisation".

Kim wanted to express his fear that the army would intervene and prevent that he would obtain the very good job of a president. When the struggles went on and the workers increased violence, the political opposition more and more dissociated itself. "This time is crucial", a speaker of the opposition said in the first week of September. "The nation is moving towards democratic reforms and violence can be a poor excuse to stop it." The opposition urged on the government to trace the "instigators" of the violence and to punish them 13).

In the opening of this article we pointed to the promise of the South-Korean president for more democratic freedom as the immediate cause of the strike movement, which spread like an oilslick. However the real and essential cause of course were the poor materiale conditions of life of the South-Korean workers.

"Within one generation Korea changed from a rural society of poor peasants into an urban society, producing consumer-goods and with a well developed infra-structure and an important export capacity. The country was able to obtain this, thanks to American military protection, economic support from abroad and a formidable effort of its own. Under protection of different authoritarian governments and backed by practically unlimited state-support, private companies discovered the road to economic growth and export, based on low wages. The koreanians proved to be prepared to make very long working-days - the averige working-week has 54,8 hours, the longest in the world - and to accept the extortion of union rights."

So the leading liberal Dutch daily. We thinks, that Korean workers were not so much prepared to accept low wages and poor union rights, butwere forced to accept very bad conditions.

Figures, especielle when compared with figures from other countries, tell a lot about working-conditions. In South-Korea since 1980 productivity increased with 150 pct, wages however with 40 pct. only. During the last two years profits

12) Le Monde' from 25-8-1987.

13) NRC/Handelsblad from 7-9-'87.

The government feared that the new struggles of the shipyardworkers would inspire workers in other factories. For this reason it decides to intervene in a forceful way. Early in the morning of Thursday September 3 the police stormed the dortories of those workers who were not married, were living in the factorie. About 70 of them were arrested and charged with the responsibility to the choas in the city, the other day. The same morning elsewhere in the city a striker was killed by the lorry of a driver who was probably drunk. The worker who was killed guarded a stade in which 20.000 shipyard-workers attended a meeting during the night. Furious because of his dead and also to reinforce their wage-demands 13.000 workers then occupied the Hyundai-shipyard. Other workers marched through the city with forkliftrucks, breakdownlorries and other heavy materials. The coffin with the corps of their dead fellow-worker was carried by the crowd when the mass went to the company's office. There the windows were smashed, typewriters, photocopy machiner and office furniture was wrecked. They likewise set fire on some busses and cars and blocked a motorway with 6 lanes not far from the yard. "We want higher wages!", they scanned.

About 500 workers also stormed a touristhotel opposite to the shipyard, but they were expelled from it by the police. When the police, in its turn, tried to storm the yard, it was driven back by the workers. Some time after that the yard was vacated voluntarily and then, on Saturday September 5, the management closed it indefinitely to let cool things down. Next Monday about 6.000 workers occupied the Hyundai-yard again.

At last the conflict was solved on September 22 after the management promised a wage increase of about 14 pct. The company promised also to do its best to get free about 30 members of the new formed union who were under arrest. About 4 pct. of the workers refused to go back to work. We have no information about their reasons, nor do we know what happened in detail.

Of course, the above is only a small part of what can be told. We only described the most characteristic events. Anyhow, it's undeniable that the struggles have been on a mass scale and of a clear autonomous character. When on strike, the workers did choose and follow their own way, not influenced by vanguard-groups. One of the only very scare moment that there was a sort of a link between workers and not-workers was during the demonstration of workers and students on the campus of the Koje university on August 24 after the death of the shipyard-worker Lee Suk-K. Any other moment the workers carefully kept a distance towards that sort of people as one can see by the following example.

In the city of Inchon a ball-bearing factory was occupied since August 12. At the gate a banner was hanged with the text: "We refuse any intervention from outside. To explain these words, the workers stated that they didn't want any radical organisation meddling in their struggle. In this case they refered to a protestant organi-

### The early period of East Germany

Probably the best book on this period, and one we can recommend with few reservations, is by Benno Sarel - published many years ago in French and German. The original title is "La classe ouvriere en Allemagne orientale" - the scope of this study and the period it covers is better indicated by the title of the German edition: "Arbeiter gegen den 'Kommunismus'. Zur Geschichte des proletarischen Widerstandes in der DDR (1945-1958)". Sarel does not only, and not even primarily, deal with events like the 1953 uprising or other open struggles. His starting point is the confrontation of the working class with the new production relations in the factories from 1945 onwards. The resistance of the workers starts in the various departments of the factories, against the (capitalist) organisation of production and the Taylorist methods, a struggle against work norms and for higher wages. Giving an account of all kinds of struggle, resistance and conflicts ranging from resistance against demands for increased productivity and discipline to the 1953 uprising, Sarel points to what was haunting all the East European state capitalist countries: a widespread proletarian 'refusal', a non-productivist attitude of the workers, their struggle against the work.

### **AUSTRALIA**

#### 1989 pilots strike

Some relevant background information on Australia can be found in Echanges no 54. The analysis of the strike we publish in this issue is from an Echanges contact in Australia. A chronology of the strike has been provided by an Echanges comrade.

### **INDIA**

In a section on India in Echanges no 55, we noted the appearance of a number of 'revolutionary groups' in India, some of them more or less linked to western groups like ICC (International Communist Current) and CWO/IBRP (Communist Workers Organisation/International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party).

We further pointed out two things:

- The difficulty in getting a right idea of class struggle and social/economic conditions in this country
- information and analysis about this is seldom provided by the above mentioned and similar groups;
- That these new groups and their western contacts appear to engage mainly in the same ideological debates and quarrels that the latter have had going between themselves for more than ten years and that the material relating to India in the journals of these western groups will mainly be about these debates or other ideological/theoretical questions - at the expense of providing information and analysis of social struggles and the social and economic conditions which these struggles are a consequence of.

We are not surprised that since we wrote this, things have turned out just like we guessed. To illustrate our point of view with just one example: whereas no 47 of the CWO paper 'Workers Voice' contains just a few, and not very informative, lines about a strike of dockers in India, a recent issue of the IBRP journal 'Communist Review' contains a long article by the group Lal Pataka on 'Bourgeois barbarity in China: Another face of capitalist decadence'.

The organisational and political affiliations of the new groups in India are more or less settled.

Communist Internationalist has become a 'candidate member' of the ICC. Lal Pataka is a member of the IBRP. Kamunist Kranti participates together with the Mexican group 'Comunismo' and the French groups 'Communisme ou Civilisation', 'L'Aube Internationaliste' and 'L'Union Proletarienne' in a project putting out the journal 'Revue Internationaliste du mouvement Communiste' - a kind of semi-bordigist project occupied with the 'basic, general communist positions' and formation of a 'world communist party'. (This journal is available in French, German and Spanish - the address is: RIMC, BP 11, 75965 Paris Cedex 20, France. Addresses of the groups in India are found in Echanges no 55.)

India was discussed at a recent meeting of comrades actively involved with Echanges. Contrary to the western left communist groups' choice of what kind of India material to fill their pages with and their proclamations about the historical importance of the formation of groups of a handful of persons in a country with a population of around 800 million, we are interested in material about and from India dealing with class struggles and social conditions, and help from readers in this respect will be welcome. India can be seen as almost as important as China, having a large population and some industrial development and with widespread class conflicts - but with an economic development, a class structure and conditions for the class struggle very different from here in the west. Together with neighboring China, India has more than half of the world's population, but hardly anyone on 'the left' is talking about India. An article which can be recommended is found in no 9 of the journal 'Midnight Notes': Resistance to the plan has been heavy. The Class struggle of the Green Revolution in India. (Echanges might make use of this article later on - those interested in the meantime can write to: Midnight Notes, Box 204, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, USA).

Prior to this Echanges meeting, we had received two texts in English from Kamunist Kranti: 'Workers' jam railways' and 'Kamunist Kranti's Theory and Practice'.

We choose to publish the former, which is from the March 1989 issue of the KK paper 'Faridabad Samachar' (Faridabad Workers News). Faridabad, where KK is based, is a city around 60 kilometers from Delhi, with much small and medium scale industry (like soap factories, production of motorcycle parts, etc.) but no large scale industry. 'F.M.S.' is a monthly, 4 page paper in the Hindi language, aimed at the working class and with the subtitle 'a paper of struggle'.

The workers actions described in the article took place in Kanpur, a large city and industrial centre in the north of India. The article says that they hope to publish more about these events in a later issue of 'F.M.S.', but as far as we know, this hasn't been done. Material about the 1977 massacre of Kanpur workers mentioned in the article, can be found in Echanges no 16.

In connection with this article, we also publish a critical comment from a Dutch comrade, in the form of a letter to KK. To understand also the last part of the Dutch comrade's letter, we must mention the text 'Kamunist Kranti's Theory and Practice', which ends with the following formulations:

'While optimistically looking forward to new 'sparks of communist consciousness' that the spontaneous movement of the working class may give rise to, we work for

1.....

2. The formation of a non-hierarchical world communist party to help pool global resources for the overthrow of capitalism.

3. The formation of a revolutionary group in India - ..

4.....

Presently we do not fulfil even the minimum requirements of a group'.

RH 3/90

The funeral of Lee Suk-Kyu presented many problems: the authorities feared violence and fabricated pretexts for a delay. About 1000 fellow-workers locked the Monday after his death the moratorium and so prevented an autopsy, fearing that if so, the government would disguise the real cause of his death. According to several doctors, he died because shell fragments pierced his right lung and his liver 10).

The political opposition tried to make use of the funeral for its own purpose, as means to protest against the government, to show that it didn't want a real democracy. At that moment however it wasn't yet clear if the workers would join in this game. The (political) opposition had called up for a national general strike on Tuesday 25th of August as a protestation against the death of the shipyard-worker on the very day of his funeral.

Around the hospital there were permanently many workers waiting for information about the date of the funeral. There were also police forces in large number. The tension was great. The shipyardworkers were asking for the dismissal of the minister of the Interior, a public apology of the government and a payrise of 30 pct. They refused to hand over the body as long as their demands were not admitted. One moment, the police tried to carry the corps out of the hospital. The workers prevented this. Next day, Thursday 27, they got most of what they were asking for, so they consented the funeral. They got a wage-increase of 23 pct. The minister didn't resign however but he expressed his regret.

The attempts of the political opposition to use the shipyardworker's death for its own purpose failed for the greater part. Partly because the police interfered with the memorial meetings the opposition had organized and at the other hand because the South-Korean workers didn't respond to the strike-call for the day of the funeral 11).

At the end of August 20.000 to 30.000 workers of the Hyundai-shipyard in Ulsan started a go-slow-strike. Previously, on August 20, the conflict there was solved by the mediation of a undersecretary of state. The unions, formed by the workers, had been recognised and the company had promised to consider the wage claims. But now the workers wanted to exercise a pressure again on behalf of a payrise of 25 pct. There were sit-ins and demonstrations in the city. Some windows of the townhall were smashed and some cars were set on fire.

10) International Herald Tribune from 24'8-'87

11) International Herald Tribune from 27-8-'87 and from 29/30-8-'87.

In Ulsan again and again there were demonstrations of thousands of workers who collected in the local stade and then marched through the city, cheered by a large number of spectators. One of these demonstrations had begun after a meeting on the Hyundai shipyard in which 18.000 workers took part. The procession was proceeded by lorries. During the march the number of demonstrators increased up to 40,000. When they run up against a barricade with 2.000 policemen, all the demonstrator sat down jn the ground. During the march there were cries favouring free unions and asking for the retreat of the South-Korean president. On August 17th about 500 workers stormed the of a leader of an official trade-union 6).

The 40.000 workers who took part in the demonstrations on Monday August 17 and Tuesday August 18 went back to work after the reading of a mediation proposal by the undersecretary of Labour Han Jin-Hee in the name of the government. He did so in stade just outside Ulsan, where 20.000 workers were present. The demand for a pay-rise of 25 pct. would be conceded and a union, founded by the workers was recognised as an interlocutor. "Its very important to solve the problems at Hyundai in a peaceful way", a speaker from the Ministry of Trade in Seoul declared 7).

On August 20 the minister of Labour mediated when 18.000 busdrivers in Seoul thretened to go on strike over a wageconflict. A payrise of 11 pct. was granted. A former agreement, with which the official trade-union obtained a pay-rise of 10 pct had been rejected furiously. The official trade-union had asked for 28 pct, the management had offered 4,5 pct. 8).

In the evening of Saturday August 22 the workman Lee Suk-Kyu from the Daewoo shipyard on the isle of Koje, employing 15.000 workers, died on the age of 22, after he had been stuck by a teargas shell of the policeforce. The shipyard was on strike because of wageclaims and the management had answered by closing the yard on August 21. Next day, the workers tried to break a police cordon around a hotel where at that moment some principal executives should be. About 100 workers broke through the cordon and searched the hotelrooms. The just named young worker was deadly struck in the battle. A workers committee declared that he would be buried on a cimetary where more victims of the terror of the authorities were buried, for instance 99 victims of the 1980 upheavels. The monday after his dead there was a common demonstration of workers and students on the campus in Koje. This was the first common action of workers and students. Up to that moment, the workers always firly opposed any attempt of the students to link up with the workers' movement 9).

9) Libération from 24-8-'87.

### Workers jam railways

Thirtyfive thousand workers in Kanpur jammed railways on the 22nd February 1989. Every day after working their shifts in the textile mills, ten thousand workers used to squat on the rail tracks. Only after the arrival of one shift would workers from another shift leave the rail tracks. Only after the government had accepted the workers' demands did they vacate the rail tracks on the 27th february. For five days the workers did not allow any train to pass through Kanpur. During this period the government had to cancel 100 trains that pass through Kanpur every day.

Take a look at a news item in a national daily, 'The Indian Express', on the 27th February:

'The rail roko (stopping of trains) by textile workers is unique in many respects. The workers have become leaders and the leaders of the established trade unions have been playing second fiddle.'

This magnificent movement of the workers in Kanpur has many valuable lessons for us. Here we will discuss some of its aspects and we hope to give some more material about it in the next issue.

Kanpur workers have shown us clearly that the whole of capital's machinery is 'one thing' and at the time of struggle workers should strike at this machinery's vulnerable and important parts. The railway ministry's propaganda was that the textile workers' struggle was against the textile mill management - they should not drag the railways into their conflict. But the workers refused to listen to this capitalist nonsense and the result was a workers' victory. This whole machinery - police, military, courts, parliament, local bodies - is the workers' enemy.

This time Kanpur textile workers also chose a good time for their movement. On the 6th of December 1977, the Janata Party government slaughtered more than 150 workers through indiscriminate police firing on workers inside the Kanpur Swadeshi Cotton Mill - at that time the Janata Party was popular and the slaughter of hundreds of workers didn't create much stir. But this time the government didn't implement its contingency plan to clear the rail tracks. The Congress Party government also has no qualm in shedding workers' blood, but this is election year - bloodshed at this time would cost the ruling party dearly in the voters' game. Instead of becoming cheerboys in the capitalist election circus, the workers should accelerate struggles for their demands. This alone is the workers' correct path at the time of capitalist elections.

The Indian Express news item that said that the workers themselves became leaders and pushed the trade union leaders to the sidelines, also said that the trade unions made repeated appeals to clear the rail tracks and let the trains pass, but the workers did not pay any heed to them. And we repeat: the result is a workers' victory. So workers, lead yourselves in marching forwards, don't follow middlemen.

Struggle, struggle with leadership in their own hands, blows against the enemy's vulnerable parts, and becoming disrupters in capitalist electoral dramas - these lessons of the Kanpur textile workers successful railway jamming workers are lessons for all workers.

The brave textile workers of Kanpur have pushed back one capitalist attack through the jamming of the railways movement. But capitalist attacks on the workers will certainly increase, because they are a product of the capitalist system's crisis, and these crisis will increase. Will the Kanpur workers alone be able to deal with those attacks? Even otherwise, the basic problems of Kanpur's textile workers remain. Proletarian revolution alone can solve these problems of the workers. For the working class unity which is necessary for this, will the brave workers of Kanpur come forward?

(+) The unions had agreed to the constitution of a tribunal and its award; that meant increased workloads and retrenchment of 10-12 thousand workers in the ten textile mills in Kanpur (nine government owned). The workers demand was: Scrap the tribunal award'.

Letter to Kamunist Kranti from a Dutch comrade:

Dear friends,

As one being in close contact with 'Echanges', I've been able to note the contents of the article 'Workers jam railways' .. I was, like all of us, interested in the struggle in question.. What struck me most in the account was the quotation from 'The Indian Express' in which it was told that the textile workers 'have become the leaders, and the leaders of established trade unions have been playing second fiddle'. Further on there is said more on this aspect, informing the reader that the trade union 'made repeated appeals to clear the rail tracks' and that 'the workers did not pay any head to them', resulting in a workers' victory.

To me, and to many others who think like me - the collaborators of 'Echanges' among them - all this is very familiar. For many years the reality of class struggle in modern capitalist society has taught us that workers, defending their interests in opposition to the interests of the ruling class(es), from a certain level of capitalist development onward, are irrevocably forced to fight for themselves and by themselves. The same reality has shown clearly enough that trade unions are an institution of capitalist society as regulators of the labour market. It's for this reason that we ceaselessly point out the meaning and importance of autonomous and spontaneous workers' struggles, i.e. that very sort of struggles in which workers take the lead and the union leadership plays a subordinate role or no role at all.

Seeing things like this, I'm convinced that socially vanguard groups, which in this way or another want to take the lead, want to tell (always as outsiders) what workers should do, who hold themselves ready for 'instruction', are an anachronism, not to say an obstruction to successful struggle. And what counts for vanguard groups, counts for trade unions and political parties, whatever their character and ideology.

The questions I want to ask you rise from the above point of view.

1. Why, twice in the text I'm dealing with, do you emphatically point out what the workers should do, instead of explaining and analysing how their attitude and the very forms of their struggle are directly related to the present form of capitalist conditions and production relations?
2. Why are you working for the 'formation of a world communist party'?

In my (or our) view (be it hierarchical or non-hierarchical) is a form of organisation which is linked to bourgeois society and as such completely unfit for the overthrow of capitalism. Maybe you take the view that such a party is an appropriate tool for stimulating 'class consciousness'. However, we don't think that this so-called 'class consciousness' is the precondition of a revolutionary behaviour or of any action of the working class. Practice has taught us that 'class consciousness' far from being such a precondition, on the contrary always is a consequence of the class struggle. So we would appreciate your answers on these questions and any comment from you on my remarks.

CB 3/90.

PORTUGAL

Extracts from a letter from a Portuguese friend during a visit back to her country early in 1990:  
 ..tell you about the sad conditions of the Portuguese economy. These aren't real news since the same had happened to Ireland and Greece long before. This economy is based here on prices out of control, some already much higher than anything one finds in the US. The minimum salary is never-

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workers were put on the stage by a mass-movement. On August 12th, the Korean Ministry of Labour no longer could tell the neither the number of strikes, nor the number of strikers. At a rough estimate, on the very moment more than 40.000 workers had walked out. But not only the large number of strikers was flagrant, but also the complete autonomous character of their struggle. This was not only due to the fact that the existing unions were dominated by the bosses and by the government, but there were other reasons for it too. We'll deal with them further on.

In the most important coal district on August 12th 24.000 miners were on strike, spread over 18 collieries. In the port town of Pusan on August 11th, 600 to 1000 seaman, making a living as fishermen, broke into a large number of offices. They threw the furniture, computers, telephones, etcetera, through the windows. As the police came into action, they fled to the sea. One week earlier about 150 miners blocked an important throughroad in the industrial town of Changwon with forklifttrucks.

Up to August 12th the strikes had cost a production- and export loss of about 200 million dollar 3). On August 12th there were strikes in at least 226 factories: two days earlier this number was 192, according to the police. Coal output had fallen back to the half. All the five big South-Korean carfactories came to a standstill on Wednesday August 12th, either by a strike in the factory itself, or by lack of components, caused by strikes in supply industries 4).

A reliable information about the extend of the strikewave doesn't exist, for instance because at one moment an agreement was reached and then there was another strike elsewhere.

In several cities the workers stormed the offices of the management and occupied them in spite of violent assault of the police. On August 16th about 700 miners and their families (women and children, very little ones too as could be seen on pictures in the media) broke down the barricades, raised on a railwaybridge as the direction of Tongwon-collerie admitted a bonus increase. These miners and their families had been fighting for three days against 1500 policemen at this bridge and in the district 5).

In the important industrial town of Ulsan mid-August 20.000 workers of the Hyundai-concern gave battle with the police. (Hyunday includes not only a very big shipyard, but also one of the most important carfactories of the country and is producing various other products too). The workers occupied the factories and the shipyards after the downstroke of the steel gates as a protest against the fact that the management refused their admittance to the factory grounds when they threatened to strike if they should not get a pay increase and an independent trade union. Earlier in August workers threatened the big boss of this concern, but he escaped. The day after the battle the under-secretary of Labour went to Ulsan to mediate.

3) NRC/Handelsblad, 12-8-87.

4) International Herald Tribune, 13-8-87.

5) Idem, 17-8-87.



## THE WORKERS' STRUGGLE IN SOUTH-KOREA

In August and September of this year South-Korea has been the scene of violent class conflicts. Most of them had an autonomous character and very often the workers passed the boundaries of traditional forms of struggle. In this article we will pay attention to the course of this struggle. We'll try to give an explanation of its origins, we'll likewise try to explain the fact that such a developed form of workers' struggle occurs in a country like South-Korea, which displays in many respects the marks of a third-world-country.

The immediate cause were big demonstrations in June, mainly of students supported by the middle-classes. At stake in this political movement was 'more democracy'. During many years South-Korea is governed by a soldier who seized power by means of a coup d'état. since, normal liberties of the bourgeois democracy have been repealed. On the other hand, the economic freedom for the ruling class is tremendous, as one can see from the explosive growth of the South-Korean economy in recent years.

The protestdemonstrations of the students had the usual character of mass-demonstrations, ending most of the time in very violent battles with the police in the streets. The students showed to be well disciplined, the police adopted the same rigorous measures as everywhere. In July a group of American doctors examined the effects produced by the abundant use of tear-gas by the Korean policeforce. During the demonstrations against the government from June 10-27 more than 20.000 teargas-shells were fired. Lasting results are known, such as: damage to the eyes and wounds caused by the explosion. One student has been killed as a shell exploded near his head 1).

Under the pressure of these demonstrations and under heavy pressure from the American government, the Korean government entered into negotiations with the opposition in an attempt to stop the protests. The result was that at the end of June the South-Korean president promised that there would be presidential elections, that a new constitution would be drafted and that a large number of political prisoners would be released. The feelings of the middle class could be deduced from the progress of the Stock-Exchange quotations: mid-June they had approximately risen 20% 2).

With these promises the middle-class was partly satisfied. Then, completely unexpected, the workers intimated that they too wanted certain things. In many places they spontaneously went on strike for payrise and for the building of free trade-unions. The strikes spread so quickly that in a few days one could speak of a spontaneous movement of the rank-and-file. After a couple of days there was no longer a strike here and a strike there, but the uncomfortable feelings of the Korean

theless only around \$200. Old people, some are paid pensions of no more than \$120 and others just a bit more. A teacher of the secondary school makes at his or her best month (Christmas) \$1000. Factory workers, their salaries vary but you can guess and even lawyers and doctors, without ties with government and big business, have to work a lot to keep up their status.

### HEALTH SECTOR

In no 59 and 60 Echanges has published material about some struggles in this sector (UK, Holland, Belgium) as well as some remarks concerning the possibility of finding some common factors behind health sector developments and struggles in various countries. More material will follow about Holland, and France as part of a text analysing coordination committees. Other countries with movements in this sector are Germany, Sweden, Australia, USA, Mexico and Canada, but for many countries we have too little material. Echanges is considering a project/pamphlet about the health sector, and any help from readers will be appreciated concerning material about not only strikes and more 'open' struggles, but also about conditions in general.

### BELGIUM

**Comunismo** - Paper in Spanish of Groupe Communiste Internationaliste (BP 54, BXL 31, 1060 Bruxelles) **No 26**: Struggles and proletarian revolts - Argentina - The proletariat in the democratic paradise - Liberation and national socialism equals bourgeois state terrorism. Summary in Spanish of the contents of all published issues.

### CANADA

**Demolition Derby** (CP 1554, Succ B, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3B 3L2) First (and free) issue of a journal of 'revolutionary theory and analysis'. Though feeling no particular attachment to 'society', D.D. continues to affirm community as the negation of capital: - Totality and the Totality - Questioning ecology (translation from the French group Interrogations) - What is society - Libertarian municipalism: gimme a break! - The 'Bufc-ooneries' continue: a response to Chaz Bufé's 'Primitive Thoughts' and to the Misery of Anarcho-Syndicalism (a very long discussion between the different present tendencies in the anarchist movement).

### USA

**Black & Red** (P.O. Box 02374, Detroit, Michigan 48202) We have received a catalogue of books and pamphlets available from this publisher who have issued high quality printed material for almost two decades. A lot of this will be well known to Echanges readers but we find it worth reminding about some of the publications available from Black & Red: Brinton: 'The Bolsheviks and workers control'; Gregoire/Perlman: 'Worker-student action committees. France May 68'; C. Pacosz: 'Some wined, Wild beasts'; Negation: 'Lip and the selfmanaged counterrevolution'; A number of works by Freddy Perlman (one of the founders of Black & Red - for an account of his life and activities see Echanges no 46): 'The strait/The continuing appeal of nationalism/Against His-story, against Leviat-

1) International Herald Tribune from July 24th, 1987.

2) Wall Street Journal from July 22d, 1987.

hanl/incoherence of the intellectual/Reproduction of everyday life/Revolt in socialist Yugoslavia". A number of the B&R titles are or have been distributed by Echanges also. Some of them might not be available from us at the time of writing and readers in the US might anyway find it more convenient to order from B&R. These titles include:

- Anderson: 'Hungary '56'.
- Zerzan: 'Organised labor versus 'the revolt against work' (including the B&R pamphlet Munis/Zerzan: 'Unions against revolution'.
- Simon: 'Poland 1980-82: Class struggle and the crisis of capital'.
- 'WILDCAT! Dodge Truck, June 1974'.

**Labor Notes** (7435 Michigan Avenue, Detroit MI 48210)

**No 126/Sept 89:** Behind the UAW's defeat at Nissan - Despite fines, Pittston strikers resume Civil Disobedience - Eastern Airlines: an SOS few heard or heeded; Lorenzo leases Continental planes and crews to Eastern - Telephone workers strike in four offices of 'Baby Bells'.

**No 128/Nov 89:** Pittston Miners strike - A new struggle arises against International Paper (the situation after the collapsing of two long strikes in two factories of this group) - Chaos at the top of the Teamsters (see previous Echanges issues) - Mexican steel workers occupy plant in challenge to concessions and job loss - Union management study confirms high cancer death rate at G.M./Lords-town.

**No 129/Dec 89:** Pittston strikers' write-in campaign ousts twenty-year incumbent from Virginia State House - Phone workers beat back health cuts at Nynex (Mobile pickets and garden parties kept pressure on scabs - on a 100 days old strike against the regional phone company for New York and New England) - Hospital workers win contract at strike deadline (New York City) - Boeing machinists seek less overtime and more of company's big bucks (given the impact the settlement will have on next year's bargaining in aerospace and auto, the Boeing fight might be viewed as the first big strike of the 90s) - On the new union tendency called 'New Directions' - Teamster reformers back Ron Carey in 1991 election (for General President) - Pressures mount on Canadian workers in wake of Free Trade Agreement. (On Boeing strike, see Echanges no 62)

**Support Report** (Austin United Support Group, 711, 4th Avenue NE, Austin, MN 55912): **7/7/89** and **4/8/89:** Horncel boycott continues. **1/9/89:** Revolt in Appalachia coal fields (on the Pittston miners strike seen from the rank and file problems) - ABC: the growing menace to construction unions.. (The plan urges ABC members to exploit the budget crisis in 'union cities' where officials are under pressure to build new facilities and provide more services. In the cities targeted for expansion, it calls for directing programs at owners who still build with union labour and a campaign to repeal any prevailing wage laws).

**Green Synthesis** (League for Ecological Democracy, PO Box 1858, San Pedro, CA 90733) **No 32/Oct 89:** The youth greens - Discussion: is the Left Green Network really green? - Humanism and ecology: The social ecology/deep ecology schism.

'**The savage Victimisation of a grassroot activist:**' This leaflet in English is an emergency appeal to collect the necessary funds to allow John Perotti, an IWW prison activist, to get an appeal against a sentence which sent him practically in jail for life and presumably to death - R. Slaton, Secy, GCD Local #1, POB 26381, OHIO 45426, or John Perotti, Emergency Appeal, c/o PHCI 11 Forth Street, Edinburgh 1, UK.

spirituously silent about this, not accidentally of course. He mentions "One Step Forward" for pointing to quite different things as Lenin's connection with Robespierre and the 'Montagne'. Blick. I think, is right in saying, that Lenin's view of the Jacobins was almost a romantic idealisation which obscured their social composition and hence contradictory relationship with the major classes of the French Revolution. He is also right, describing how the Jacobins disengaged themselves from their plebeian allies once the moderate republicans had been driven from power. Blick has an eye for the resemblance of the Jacobin attitude and that of the Bolsheviks. The Jacobins paved the way for a new ruling class. The Bolsheviks have been the germ of a new ruling class. This is why they were manipulating the Russian workers and peasants, just as once upon a time the Jacobins did manipulate the French poor. I'm not sure that Blick accounts the fundamental bourgeois character of both sorts of revolution for the reason of this.

If I have my doubts, and they are brought about by his wondering that such a right critic of leninism (i.e. Lenin's conceptions as developed in "What Is To Be Done" and other writings of that period) as Leon Trotsky, made his peace with Lenin in 1917. Blick, quoting from memory, I suppose, commits an error. Trotsky's pamphlet in question is not entitled "Our Political Tasks", but "Our Political Problems" (see his unfinished biography of Stalin, London, 1947 p. 62). Moreover, I don't think that Trotsky in this last work is separating Lenin from the Bolshevik party machine, as Blick's interpretation runs. So, Trotsky's words there are not, what Blick calls "a clue to the mystery". In my view, the latter can be found in the undeniable fact, that both, Lenin and Trotsky have been the spokesmen of that (coming) non-classic bourgeois revolution in Russia, however reflecting and representing different aspects of it. In other words: both, Lenin and Trotsky were Russian 'Jacobins'. Lenin wanted to be one, not Trotsky, being one without being aware.

If Blick takes Trotsky's "Our Political Problems" for "a cool and brainy critique of leninism for a Marxist", I don't! Neither is it fundamental - like Pannekoek's critique in his "Lenin as Philosopher" - nor is Trotsky a Marxist. Everything I've said about Lenin as a typical Russian revolutionarist, counts for Trotsky as well. Consequently what sundry offshoots of leninism have called an "unprincipled fusion", i.e. the collaboration of Lenin and Trotsky during the revolution, has nothing to do with inconsistency, either Lenin's, nor Trotsky's. In this respect, I agree with Blick, though we possibly came to this conclusion along different ways.

Amersfoort (Holland)

GAJO BRENDSEL

ONCE AGAIN: "WHAT IS TO BE DONE?"

The Autumn-issue of 'Solidarity' contains an interesting comment by Robin Blick on the new English edition of Lenin's "What Is To Be Done?" and its introduction by Robert Service. "One major shortcoming" of the latter's contribution, the reviewer says, is "that it fails to situate Lenin's theories, either within the history of manipulative politics, or even within the context of the then prevailing marxist tradition." Whether he should have done so or could have done so or not in an introduction which, in spite of its 66 pages, has its limitations, is questionable. But even if he should be blamed for this omission, in my view it's not his major one.

Blick seems perfectly right to me, when recording that both, Marx and Engels have made clear enough their objections to vanguardism. And of course, manipulative politics have been committed as far back in history as class-division exists. However, the most interesting and most important point is not that Lenin and Marx had different opinions - on this subject and on many others - but why! And likewise, one has to explain where the bolshevik manipulations come from!

Robert Service doesn't face the problem. Nowhere in what could be characterized as a 'short story of the bolshevik party and its internal disputes' he's changing his role as a storyteller for the role of an examiner. At any case, he doesn't examine the interrelationship between social reality and social theories.

What's to be said first of all: the course of the Russian revolution of 1917 was not in whatsoever a form influenced by pre-revolutionary bolshevik ideology or by ideas specified in Lenin's early writings, it has been just the other way round. Lenin's writings before 1917 in general and especially "What Is To Be Done?" foreshadow the things to come, that is to say, they reflect all the essential and very special problems of the future revolution. And that revolution is not a proletarian revolution, but - as Lenin himself anticipated - "a bourgeois revolution, not executed by the bourgeoisie, but by the working-class".

"What Is To Be Done?", Robert Service tells us in his Introduction, "discusses the task of instigating revolution." In fact, it discusses the task of instigating the Russian revolution. And the big difference between industrial and capitalist Britain of the 19th century and primitive and feudal Russia of the beginning of the 20th century explains the difference between Marx - analysing the former - and Lenin, aiming at the overthrow of its Tsarist rule.

Lenin was not a Marxist, as Robert Service is calling him. He is a political forerunner of that special Russian revolution, that by no means could possibly be a mere repetition of the classic bourgeois revolution in France in the late 18th century, but nevertheless unfetters (in another form) capitalist relations of production. Lenin's political and theoretical language is interspersed with Marxist terminology. This doesn't keep him from divergence from Marxist points and from affinity towards the French revolutionists of 1789 and after, though their political and social tasks and problems were not exactly his.

This brings me to those paragraphs of Blick's review in which the French Jacobins come up. Lenin referred to them in his pamphlet "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" and defined "the revolutionary social-democrat" as "a Jacobin who was linked up with the masses". Robert Service is con-

Processed World (41 Sutter Street, #1829, San Francisco, CA 94104) No 24/Summer-Fall 89: Gawking Heads (on the 1989 events) - Readers' answers to the question: 'Do you sell your life to buy your survival? How do you work in an office, with computers or people? Are you doing the processing or are you being processed? Or are you outside of it all?' and a lot of other questions about P.W. - Safe and sorry: The legacy of AIDS (Sexuality has been devalued as a positive social force by left and right) - A lot of other articles, poems and readers' letters (a long one on Brasil).

Left Bank Distribution (4241 Brooklyn NE, #201, Seattle, WA 98105). Complete catalogue, Fall 1989: Long list of available books in English covering the whole leftist spectrum.

Discussion Bulletin (PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501) No 37/Sept 89: Tien Anmen is not so far away (by the French group Interrogations) - The anarchist organisation scare - Debate and material on the usefulness and function of D.B. - Bob Jones: Anti-Parliamentarism and Communism in Britain 1917-21.

News & Letters (59 East Van Buren, room 707, Chicago, IL 60605) No 7/Aug 89: Us miners demand freedom - Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1989-90 - A Chinese feminist speaks. No 9/Nov 89: East European masses hurl new challenges to state capitalism - US company mergers mean more misery - Pittston miners occupy crucial Pittston plant - In memorial of the Hungarian revolution - Letters from Beijing Workers Union.

## SPAIN

La Estiba - bulletin of the Spanish dockers' coordination (c/del Mar, 97, 08003 Barcelona) No 48/June 89: Crisis and popular perspectives in Peru - Informations on ports, mainly the Cantabrian ones (Santander, Gijon and Aviles) - On the support committee to the SOC farm workers union (see letter from Spain in Echanges 61). No 50: International meeting of port workers in Hamburg (report) - Algeiras: 10 months of struggle - The narco capital - A proposal for a collective contract for all European port workers. No 51/Nov 89: The conflict in Algeiras more serious because of the government yielding to multinational interests (Sealand and Maerks) - Hamburg meeting (part 2). No 52: Hamburg meeting (part 3) - Chronique of the Pittston miners strike in the US - General assembly of the dockers' coordination - About a unique market of transport and ports - Solidarity with the ancillary workers of the port of Aviles.

Odio al Capitalismo (Address letter only as follows: A.V.V.N., Apartado 25, 27080 Lugo) No 6/Oct 89: Criticism of anarchism (part 2) - Two examples of workers struggles and of the capitalist answer in France (1886-1981) - Decazeville and Nord-Pas de Calais - Struggle in the supermarkets in Argentina (from Emancipacion Obrera). No 7/Jan 90: Programmatic elaboration: the marxist left in the Second International - Nuclear weapons in the world - Class struggle in the world. (We know nothing of the emergence of this journal, which means 'hatred for capitalism', in 1988 in Lugo in northern Spain. A brief letter from them was published in Echanges no 56. Contrary to what was said in that letter, comrades who want to contact them should know that they can correspond in English (and French?) and have published a little in these languages, for example a pamphlet of 'basic principles' titled 'Hatred for capitalism. Critique. Programme, Struggle. Organisation. International party. For the abolition of waged labour'.)

Eutsi (Apdo 1673, Gasteiz) No 4: Special issue made up only of cartoons on life in Spain.

Cultura Libertaria (publication of the Association Isaac Puente) (Juan Gomez, Apdo de Correos 1687, 01080 Vitoria) No 16/Oct 89: Catalogue of the libertarian publications in Spain (1976-1985) - Documentation collected from all over the world between 10/88 and 2/89 - Biography of José Peirats - Anarchism and anarchists in Brasil - Memoirs of Macario Illera.

Etcetera - Correspondencia de la guerra social (Apartado 1363, 08080 Barcelona) No 14/Dec 89: Editorial appeal for a more organised network of information and discussions (we will return to this in the next Echanges) - China: Tienanmen, the measured repression - Correspondence from Greece, England, USA, West Germany - Reviews of received publications - Short articles reviews of received material on: 'Reflexions on the Neolithic'. 'History of the resistance against work of Spanish workers in Barcelona 1936-38' by M. Seidman. 'For a permanent Utopia' (S. Geutarbert). 'Between perestroika and postmodernism: the RDA 40-years'. 'Strike in the Peugeot factories' (by an Echanges comrade - see Echanges 62).

### UNITED KINGDOM

Class War (PO Box 499, Bristol BS 99) No 36: It is difficult to give a review of this paper which is a collection of very short articles on direct action fights against the police, the yuppies and all kinds of bureaucrats and abuses all over UK, but more centered on the London East End. Very little on workers' struggles. The violence of the invective language somewhat curtains the superficial thinking about these facts. But as it is, it gives a good insight into the daily problems of ordinary people and how they can react against them.

No 37: On struggles: against the poll tax, ambulance workers, against the yuppies (East End, Portobello Road) and the police everywhere - The life in a housing estate in Salford near Manchester. Pamphlet 'This is Class War': gives a history of the group, how it works like a federation of local groups, what they think and what they do, the role of the paper and the addresses for contact. We will review this text later. (About the theoretical organ of this group, 'The Heavy Stuff', see Echanges March-June 89.)

Internationalist Perspective - Journal of the External Fraction of the I.C.C. Published in French and English - English addresses PO Box 395, Montclair, N.J., 07042, USA, or BM Box 8154, London WC1N 3XX, UK. For no 14 and 15, see 'Perspective Internationaliste' in France section in Echanges.

Here and Now (c/o Transmission Gallery, 28 King Street, Glasgow G1 5QP, or PO Box 109, Leeds LS5 3AA) No 9: On muslin mobilisations in the UK against the 'Satanic Verses' - Shroud a fake official (New Times as the Euro-Communists update the 'British Road to Socialism') - We need solidarity: not Charter 88 (a new initiative for community based resistance? Two critics of Charter 88 offer an alternative version) - Assemble or Dissemble (on the new proposals for a Scottish Assembly) - Features: an insomniac's dream? Youth offers a target audience where hip techniques are formulated in television (Commentaries on the manipulation and banal meta-languages of 'Night Network') - Rebellion remodelled (an exhibition on the Situationist International in London) - Nothing to lose but their jobs (Reprint of Workers Info-Rag article - see Echanges no 62, p. 49). - No poll tax rebellion (Will poll tax opposition in UK avoid the stranglehold of Militant tendency

way. But it doesn't have to get illusions about this present function which can be transformed by the use the management will try to get from it (your letter gives an example) and/or through the transformation of the production techniques. There is no room in the capitalist factory for a revolutionary union and even less in the 'modern' capitalist factory. The CNT is a good example of this; the fact that the CNT-renovados have agreed to play the 'legal' game means for them, whatever their intentions, they will sooner or later follow the way of the other unions. It could take time but it does not depend on their honesty, militancy or good will.

H. S. 3/90

### SOUTH KOREA

The recent events in the shipyards Hyundai in South Korea, the occupation of the shipyards after the arrest of local union leaders, the street riots which followed their evacuation by the police have to be linked to the up and down of the class struggle since 1986. The article published p 52 was written in november 1987 by a dutch comrade; the articles p 50 were published recently in the Financial Times (24 and 30 april 1990).

We need a more global analysis of a situation in which class struggle can only become more and more acute and violent. Foreign capital invested in South Korea can stay there only if the 'social peace' i.e. a strongly repressive government can guarantee a low level of exploitation (wages and conditions of work). This possibility to repress class struggle has to be considered not only in this South Korean context but too in the opening of other countries (China and Eastern countries) to the exploitation of capital at 'better' conditions. What can already be said is that the present industrial development of South Korea <sup>comes</sup> at the crucial moment where the level of industrial techniques of exploitation requires the use of unions, then the fight for union recognition, but where wildcat strikes already bring the limit of this recognition.

delegates 'indefensible' and their solution is related to the balance of struggle which eliminates the union function.

It is capital evolution itself which for a large part feeds these conflicts in constantly revolutionising the situations it itself has defined, imposed formerly in its own interest and that it wants now to eliminate always in its own present interest. These conflicts are often linked to:

- the inadaptation of factory structures to technological evolution.

- the constant pressure on wages through a constant interaction from individual through to collective claims.

All that has been deeply transformed with the evolution of the production techniques integrating part of the production rules, of the techniques of control which drastically limit individual scope, of controlled flexibilities which practically eliminate the conflicts resulting from a strict implementation of strict rules, of a more subtle policy which introduces automatism where everybody has to plead for a favour. The 'modern' factory has practically eliminated most of the sources of conflict, diluting them into the compulsory agreement of anonymous collective rules dictated by machines. To give only one example, electronic clocking (sometimes very sophisticated) and the introduction of flexy time everywhere it was possible mean the disappearance of a lot of conflicts with low management about the control of working time. Union sometimes participate in an agreement to the fixation of these rules and methods but at the top level, out of the field of delegate intervention (and of the low management as well).

The possibility for a union like the CNT - Renovados (CGT) to find its place depends not only on its 'militant attitude' but at first on the level of the production techniques. Of course it is usual in the 'revolutionary milieu' to vindicate the union function and its present role is not at all the consequence of the militant attitude of their ideas, of their 'betrayal' but of the relations of production, of what the capital and the workers are extracting from them, of the possibilities left by the techniques of production. What the CGT can become at SEAT is not determined by its 'militantism' but by the techniques working in this factory. This union can effectively, as you point out, have a role to play at rank and file level and in the collective actions if the techniques presently working in the factory allow for it. And consequently the workers need it going this

domination? This article draws lessons from Scottish civil disobedience and cautions against optimistic and exaggerated interpretations. Two observations in the article we think should have been developed further: '26,000 people (at least) have disappeared from the Electoral Register and the personal strategy to evade payment will be repeated in the English cities, especially London. The combination of casual and 'black economy' work, with squatting and sub let housing accentuates this tendency of 'low life' survivalism (far advanced in US cities). The instinct to avoid a public profile may conflict with appeals to engage in long term local agitation.', and 'The generally uncritical perception of media caricature of protest also immunises the great mass against being transformed through political activity..')

The Red Menace (BM WILD, London WC1N 3XX) No 4/Sept 89: More misery now! (On the conditions for people using public transport in the London area and recent rail and underground strikes) - Israel, Palestine: Two states too many. This issue of R.M. also includes two supplements: The first contains reviews of various journals/books/pamphlets, the second (which we will return to in another issue) is a R.M. 'Address to revolutionaries in the USSR'.

Counter Information (Pigeonhole CI, c/o 11 Forth Street, Edinburgh, EH1) No 25/Nov 89: On opposition to the Poll Tax - Women demonstrations in Guatemala - San Francisco police riot - A lot of brief articles on strikes, demonstrations, etc. all over the world.

Solidarity (c/o Lathom Road, London E6 2EA) No 22-3/Winter 89-90: Tiananmen massacre: Uk trading with China is thicker than blood - interview with low-ranking Chinese government official - Military discipline (A review of Putkowski/Sykes: 'Shot at Dawn', a book on the British Army's execution of 350 of its own soldiers in World War I - reviews of two books on British council communism: J.T. Caldwell's 'Come Dungeons Dark. The Life and Times of Guy Aldred' and M. Shipway's 'Anti-Parliamentary Communism'.

Spanner - a new journal for new thinking. We have not received a copy of this new journal, but have seen a presentation leaflet saying that it is 'A forum for discussing the creation of a new society free from domination by the market, and based on the common ownership and democratic control of the vital means of wealth production of the world'. Among the articles in the first issue are: The Green wave - Artificial Intelligence - Japanese Anarchism - The tyranny of economics (Address: BM SPANNER, London WC1N 3XX).

### WEST GERMANY

Die Aktion (Verlag Nautilus, Hassestr. 22, 2050 Hamburg 80) No 55-57/Sept 89: Peking opera - On Gorbachev and perestroika (article published in Echanges no 57) - Order and resistance in the public sphere. No 58-59/Nov 89: Intellectual metamorphosis (on US radical intellectuals) - Order and resistance in the public sphere. (Each issue of Die Aktion contains notes on received books and various literary material.)

## THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE EAST GERMAN ARMY

A few weeks ago, the political magazine "Der Spiegel" commented:

"The DDR army, once the pride of the SED, has broken down within a few months, a lost batallion of rebellious soldiers and intimidated officers."

This is indeed a process for which there seems to be no parallel in German history - except perhaps in the last phase of World War I and the period of upheaval immediately following it. This is also a process which, for all its apparent swiftness, its apparent lack of preparatory phases of decomposition, its apparent non-existence of proper reasons for a mass rebellion and mass defection, like the Russians had in Afghanistan, the Americans in Vietnam, and the Germans in World War I and after, seems difficult to explain and to understand. Some of the easy answers can be quickly discarded without further discussion: the opening of the borders with Hungary by the Hungarian government and later the opening of the borders with West Germany by the East German government, the political transformation in East Germany after the downfall of Erich Honecker and the old Politbureau, the general tendency toward reform in other Eastern bloc countries, the experience of thousands of soldiers of the NVA (Nationale Volksarmee - National People's Army) visiting West Germany, the prospect of a reunified Germany etc. Certainly all these factors cannot simply be regarded as totally unimportant, and yet an army that has always been described as one of the most efficient and most reliable armies in the Warsaw Pact Organisation and whose "class hatred" towards the Western enemy no less than its devotedness to the cause of "socialism", to the orders of the "vanguard of the working class" has never been seriously doubted by anyone in the East and in the West, would hardly be in danger to collapse like that within a few weeks because of any of these factors, not even because of all of them taken together. Evidently we have to look for more convincing explanations, and we are therefore confronted with the same sort of problem which anyone is bound to tackle when explaining the downfall of the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands - Party of Socialist Unity) or the downfall of the East German economy.

transgressing the rules is the common workers law at the place of work; even the most conformist workers do so when their personal interest is at stake. It is one of the bases of class struggle and it has nothing to do with what the groups call 'a militant attitude'. Neither can this attitude give any clue as to the way workers will act in a strike. This permanent transgression is often the origin of individual or collective conflicts with the hierarchy; these conflicts could come to the unions delegates to be solved either by their mediation or by juridical intervention. At a certain level of development of the productive forces and techniques (for instance France 40 years ago) there is a space for this union intervention and for its role as mediator at this rank and file level. It is not true to say in an increasing number of factories. But even in this already remote period, this function of the union delegate could not be filled exactly as the workers wanted it to be filled and there was because of this situation a space for small more 'active' unions.

I want to express some disagreement with what you call 'militant attitude'; as I point it above, class struggle springs up at this rank and file level from this opposition between the individual workers interest and the interest of the management trying to impose the rules of production, the rules of capital. A factory is a dictatorship in which the managers have the absolute right to use as they want the labour force they buy and from which they try to extract the maximum of surplus value. In the opposite way, workers try to give as little as possible in getting as much as possible. Conflicts are unavoidable and are the result of this constant opposition between two contradictory interests; they are solved by the balance of struggle which as far as the system is still on transform themselves into juridical relationships, most of the time not favourable to the workers, but also transgressed when the opportunity occurs. At this rank and file level, the union - via the union base delegate - is exactly in the same position it has to face at any level of society. The delegate has to compromise otherwise he is not 'listened to' either by the management, or by the workers. As his function is to 'oil' the relations of production, he is sliding little by little towards a closer and closer collaboration with the management; whatever be his 'honesty' or his radicalism (if he tries to keep it, he will be sooner or later evicted from this function or /and from the factory). Most of the rank and file conflicts become for the management as well as for the union

believed to possess more than 1,000 millions pesetas (6 million £).

On the industrial side, things are different; they try to impose a narrow range of wages and to reduce its contribution to the NHS with a tripartite agreement (unions, government and CEOE) on the model of a neocorporatist State. Spanish industry has more and more difficulties, even though getting a rise in the rate of profit, to compete with the rest of Europe. The necessary investments for the modernisation of industry are more and more important and most of the new technologies have to be imported (Spain had on this point in 1985 a deficit of 200,000 millions pesetas (more than 1,000 millions £); this situation explains the need for industrialists to reduce the labour costs.

C.V. 2/90

LETTER from a french comrade

I want to come back on a point of your letter (May 7, 89) on the CNT -renovados-CGT (Echanges n° 61, p 13). You observed rightly that this 'minority union' is 'an alternative in a period of relative expansion though always on the band wagon of CCOD and of UGT failures and that their aim is to find a place in Spanish industrial life to overcome 'the syndicalist support from workers formerly supporting CCOD and UGT both now too close to factory management'.

You develop this idea later in explaining that the CNT -Renovados needs to legitimise its role and to assert its survival with claims which are always present for most of the workers but most of the time neglected by the unions. At the beginning of the same letter, you explain that this union 'like other unions is obliged to help its members on small legal problems like contracts, notices, etc... which often need the use of a solicitor. Workers apply more for that kind of help paying monthly dues rather than as militants.'

All that is true but it has to be replaced in the context of the labour-capital relationship which are evolving with with the production techniques in such a way that the whole has to be seen in a complex dialectical interaction.

It is true that the workers pay dues to the unions like a premium for a kind of insurance without any kind of a militant attitude, which means that the membership figures are no help in measuring the workers' combativity. But on the other hand,

Before analyzing the state of the army and its specific role in East German capitalism, I will try to give a short overview of what happened in the army in the past months. Ever since the introduction of the obligatory military service in 1962, the NVA has been an army of draftees. Until recently any attempt of a total refusal of the military service would have been severely punished under the rules of military law. Now, with the next draft being due from March 19th to April 20th, 1990, nobody knows for certain how many of those born in 1972 will in fact still be ready to join the army - in spite of the reduction of the military service to twelve months, against formerly eighteen months, in spite of the opening-up, for the first time in the history of the NVA, of the possibility of an alternative service in the civilian sector, equally with a duration of twelve months, whereas formerly anybody demanding the right to serve in one of the so-called "building brigades" took the risk of being stigmatized for the rest of his life. In past months there have already been reports on young people simply ignoring the draft, and officers have had to admit regretfully that with the present situation of open borders there is no way of forcing them to show up for the draft. When pressurized, young people might easily disappear across the border to take refuge in Western countries, in particular West Germany.

At the same time soldiers of the NVA are defecting to the West in masses before the completion of their eighteen months' service (now twelve months). More than 2000 former officers of the NVA have already contacted the West German administration in order to find out if there is any possibility of a future employment in the Bundeswehr for them. The sheer number of defections has created a situation in which the maintenance of normal operations seems to be clearly in danger in many units. This might already happen if only a single specialist disappears overnight, never to return to his post. The East German government, itself in a state of complete disarray, has reacted to this development in various ways, without being effectively able to halt it: In October 1988, when Erich Honecker was still leader of the SED, 10,000 soldiers were sent home, to help fill posts in production which had

been relinquished by refugees to the West. In December 1989, another group of 20,000 soldiers was discharged before the end of their exercises for which they had been drafted as members of the army reserve. On January 26th 25,000 draftees having completed at least twelve months of service as well as 15,000 NCO's making use of the possibility of demanding to be discharged after 24 months of service were sent home. So within no time at all the once proud NVA which had counted 170,000 to 180,000 men for decades (besides 380,000 Russian soldiers stationed on DDR territory) had shrunk to an army of 100,000 men - and even this figure has no real meaning any more. Whereas formerly 85 per cent of all soldiers had to be on duty at any time, this percentage has now been lowered to only 50 per cent, evidently to allow more soldiers to be dispatched for work in hospitals, in factories, in the transport industry, and in agriculture.

Just like in any army of the world, duties would formerly have been imposed on soldiers by commanding officers, and any kind of refusing a military order would have been severely punished. Nowadays soldiers in many places have begun to discuss the well-foundedness of an order with their superiors. A typical story runs like this: Very recently the commander of a signal battalion ordered his men to go on exercise. Everybody refuses to do so, simply saying "no more enemies, no more shooting". Neither threats nor exhortations have any effect on the men. In the end the commander drops the idea of an exercise - and is fired immediately by the Ministry of Defence, since no officer in the NVA has any job guarantees whatsoever. In the good old days a discharged officer could rely on being given an adequate, well-paid job in the civilian sector and also a lump sum to smoothe the transition, but such privileges simply cannot be granted anymore. Otherwise many divisions of the NVA have seen the formation of soldiers' councils since the beginning of December, demanding more rights for soldiers. The most spectacular case was the soldiers' uprising in the Beelitz garrison. It all started with a few soldiers asking their officers to be allowed to salute the New Year in the army barracks with a glass of champagne. The permission was rigorously refused. Disappointed and infuriated, the soldiers sat down to decide on a catalogue of demands at the top of

### LETTERS from Spain

After the elections in which the PSOE got again the majority, nothing has changed as we have said before. But some of the results are contested by the opposition. The PSOE is still the biggest party in votes but its majority is very reduced. The president of the government has not changed anything in the composition of its government even the minister for social affairs who is the symbol of the intransigence with the unions, a mixture of unshared power and contempt for any criticism. The meaning of this 'stability' is that the policy of tight control on wages, the precariousness of work, etc., all that we have seen in these matters for the last few years will continue. As the government is still going ahead with its policy of refusal of any dialogue with the unions or of imposing the dialogue on its own conditions, unions bureaucrats are trying a tactic towards direct discussions with the CEOE (the business organisation) without the participation of the administration; they are not having any success.

One of the preoccupations of the government and of industry is the events in the Eastern countries. Only on one point: politicians and financiers are anxious about the possibility that European capital, which thought it had found in Spain a special place to make profits, will try to divert investment towards eastern countries.  
C.V. 28/12/89

Unions and government have got an agreement on what the union leaders call 'the social debt' from the socialist government to the workers. The result is a bit more money for all kinds of State benefits, pensions, civil servants wages... But for all other workers, the agreement of the CEOE has yet to come and for the moment it refuses to discuss the unions claims. The agreement with the government (a move from the previous strict positions) can be explained, partly by the decline of the votes for the PSOE in the general October elections. After 5 months it is still not fixed if the PSOE will get the majority in Parliament, some of their seats being considered as obtained 'irregularly'. The 'Guerra affair' could have contributed to this move from the socialist party towards the union to improve its image. A brother of the vice president Guerra (alter ego of Gonzalez) used its situation to make money. Six years ago, the vice-president brother was a redundant andalusian worker and now with the 'name' of the family and his brother position he is



only by the social democrats but by the liberals or the christian democrats or by some kind of conservative like Thatcher or like Heath .In Spain there is no other party able to defend capitalist interests , only social democracy, Spanish capital has no alternative to Gonzales .The spanish Right is an anachronism . All what we have said accords exactly our analysis of the situation in Spain and to its developments.The main political difficulty for spanish capital is currently the fact that the social democracy of Gonzales has already been in government for a long time and that, though representing spanish capitalism of to-morrow,it has left untouched so many aspects of the Spain of yesterday .For instance all the judiciary power is still in the hands of the franquists and extremely conservative.The influence of the catholic church can be felt in a lot of institutions of the State.

Q -Would it not be in the interest of modern capitalism to push aside this influence and to clean the judiciary administration of all these remains from the past .

A-Gonzales is the servant of capital and of the capitalist development primarily in its economical policy .He has to govern in a country placed clearly in a period of transition even considering the fact that this capitalist development is more and more clear .In such a period of transition , everything is in an uncertain balance .Breaking this balance will threaten capitalist development.Gonzales can't openly attack some anachronistic institutions to retain the possibility of going ahead with basic economic transformations .He can't open the windows of the spanish house to wipe away the franquist dust but even so, he is the right representative of the capitalist development . The more this development appears ,the less will these franquist vestiges be able to keep their strength .

We can come to the conclusion when we consider this situation , that the next spanish elections will not bring a major political change.I t is difficult to see in the near future in Spain a government with a political flag other than that of the present Gonzales government .

C.B. 10/89

which they placed the words "Strike Proclamation". Out of cardboard and of pieces of cloth they fabricated their own banners and marched through the gates of the barracks into the street. From Beelitz the movement spread to Rostock, Brandenburg, Schwerin, Erfurt, Cottbus, Basepohl, Neuseddin, Saßnitz and Warin. Everywhere soldiers refused orders, forced officers to stand in attention, formed soldiers councils and took to the streets in masses. Not too long ago such behaviour would have been punished with up to eight years imprisonment under the heading of "mutiny". In this case there was no punishment at all, and on January 2nd the newly appointed head of the Ministry of Defence had to go to Beelitz and discuss with the soldiers who had started the revolt. Only one day later the Ministry reacted to the soldiers' demands: From then on soldiers were immediately to be given back their ID cards and passports which formerly had always been confiscated by their superiors. While on leave, soldiers were permitted to wear civilian clothes. Off duty soldiers were permitted to watch West German TV at any time, while in the old times this was strictly forbidden in the barracks. When communicating with each other, soldiers and officers would no longer be addressed as "Comrade Soldier" or "Comrade Colonel", but as "Mr. Soldier" and "Mr. Colonel". All kinds of political instruction are scrapped (soldiers had formerly received four hours of instruction per week, officers - in separate courses - eight hours of political instruction per month). Former polit-officers who used be deputies of the respective commanders have been downgraded to lower echelons in the military hierarchy, and officers of the omnipresent secret police have simply disappeared from the army.

Refusal of the draft, defection from the armed forces, disobedience, mutiny, the formation of soldiers' councils and the complete breakdown of traditional hierarchies of command - these are the main aspects of the disintegration of the East German armed forces. Recent developments in the political arena may have been a trigger for such movements, but certainly not a cause. So what are the causes of the disintegration of the NVA? I will try to indicate briefly what I think to be the most important factors:

1) The officers and NCOs of the East German armed forces are part of the ruling class (while in West Germany they are definitely not part of it), the servicemen are part of the working class which is the exploited, surplus

value producing class in East Germany (just as in West Germany). This is the most fundamental and at the same time the strangest aspect in the analysis of the NVA, an aspect which can only be understood against the background of the radical transformation of class structures in East Germany after World War II. In its classical form capitalist society would present itself as an ensemble of bourgeois society and the State, but in the DDR such distinctions are clearly impossible. Apart from a rapid process of proletarianizing almost the entire population and integrating almost the entire female population above the age of 16 into the labour force, the production of surplus value and the accumulation of capital has evidently become the preoccupation of the government and of all political parties, thus abolishing traditional divisions of labour and establishing the predominance of accumulation in all spheres of social activity. The formal expression of such transformations has been the nationalization of the means of production and the introduction of central planning. Since the end of the 1950s there is a newly composed and unified ruling class, centering around the problems of exploitation and accumulation and having to safeguard itself in various forms of defence and attack, of integration and control, of punishment and reward against all possible and actual variants of proletarian insubordination. At the same time the State apparatus, while transforming itself into an immediate part of the system of exploitation and thereby completely changing its nature, is split in the middle, with the officers and the NCOs becoming part of the ruling class, the exploiting class.

2) If class antagonism is an essential interior quality of the armed forces in East Germany, relationships within the armed forces are inevitably dominated by this quality in every respect. The class nature of the officers' corps is pretty much evident for the soldiers: The officers' corps (military command) forms an integral part of capitalist command in general, in which the military apparatus has no specific ambitions, no autonomous political project, thus remaining in an entirely subordinate position with respect to the government (this is what distinguishes it clearly from the military apparatus in the U. S. S. R. ). The weakness of its position is further reinforced, or per-

REPORT of a discussion between spanish and dutch comrades (summer 89 )

Recently we discussed eventual political development in Spain as a consequence of the development of spanish capitalism.

Question : Do you agree with us that everywhere in Western Europe, the social democrats are the typical representatives of the managers and of modern capitalism .

Answer : Completely

Q-So you consider that the government of Gonzales came to power because it was considered the only one able to defend capitalist interests and to push development towards modern capitalism

A- Certainly .

Q- Several times in the past, we have seen a social democrat government when the ruling class had serious economical and political difficulties to resolve, i e in critical situations for the bourgeoisie and the managers .As soon as these difficulties and the threat for the system were removed , when the new policy was not so hard on the workers and that the government was no longer obliged to take unpopular decisions , the social democrats were obliged to leave . Do you think that the same could happen in Spain ?

A-I like you think of social democracy effectively as a party performs the most difficult and more or less dangerous tasks for the capital, But I don't think that the Gonzales government will be pushed out like squeezed lemon as soon as it had performed what capital has required from it, Spain is completely different on some points of other countries in Europe .We can use for our explanations the traditional political division between Left and Right which now is useless in most european countries, Outside Spain, Left and Right are similar groups for the defence of certain capitalist interests, Behind the Left we can see the modern managers for to day and for to-morrow .The Right represents either the yesterday's capitalism or certain far less progressive managers, In Spain the Right as we see it in different European countries does not exist at all .

The Spanish Right does not represent some capitalist tendency; it is linked only to either the pure franquist tradition or the political ideas of the period immediately following Franco's death. The consequence of this situation is that the spanish Right cannot be a political alternative to the Gonzales government . In the other west European countries, we also see as that capitalist interests can eventually be taken in charge , not

refusal to pay which amounts to 30 % of people registered. The attempt to seize properties for non payment met strong local oppositions. Aimed partly at breaking indirectly rank and file resistances the implementation of the poll tax have had the opposite effect of giving a national cohesion to local resistances and a new strength to the local unofficial structures. The present conflict, as the previous ones, will be fought at this level, with a lot of attempts of political mediation because presently the size and the character of the resistances prevent the use of direct repression.

On another hand we can consider that the narrow political fight (Labour against Tories, leftists against Left, etc..) is masking the real social fight. The emphasis given to this aspect by the media is not by chance. In this period of hard time for English capital, the system needs to accredit the idea that everything is coming from a nasty government, particularly Thatcher, and that everything will be OK with a Labour Government. Of course, Labour will not solve anything but there is the hope that for a time the old trick will work again even if several times in the past workers were more repressed by Labour than by the Tories. Precisely if the door to government is opened to Labour by English capital it is because it badly needs it. Bad news for the workers but what happened in the winter of discontent is a good example of what Labour could have to face again, in other forms of course.

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NB : Class conflicts in UK have been related in quite a few articles of Echanges. The book in french and never translated in English 'Autonomous class struggle in Great Britain' by C. Brendel was a more general study of the period from 1945 up to 1975. Some more specific texts exist only in french and Spanish (with an English translation by a Canadian group) : 'The winter of discontent : political and social crisis in Great Britain in 78-79' (partly published by Liaisons n° 1) and 'To the bitter end' on the miners strike (84-85) (Acratie - H. Simon). In the short text on the poll tax a lot of peculiar aspects of the autonomous tendencies and of the resistances to their repression have been omitted (acid house parties, prisons, riots, local riots, etc...)

H.S. 2/90

haps in part also explained, by the fact that there is no military-industrial complex of any importance in the DDR (this again distinguishes it from the U.S.S.R.). That seems rather amazing in view of the economic strength of the DDR and of the military strength of the NVA - and it has nothing to do with the fact that the Potsdam Conference 1945 prohibited the production of any military equipment in East and West Germany. None of the victorious powers in World War II really felt obliged to enforce this rule rigidly, in West Germany even less so than in East Germany. There can be no doubt that the military apparatus has even been further weakened by the international talks on disarmament in recent years. But weak as the position of the officers may be in the network of power within the capitalist class, they have nonetheless always enjoyed special privileges even in comparison with their equals in the administration, in the economy or in the educational system: Including supplementary benefits captains and majors could easily earn 2,000 Mark (an engineer 1000 Mark, a doctor and a university professor 1,500 Mark), colonels and generals could even earn from 3,000 to 6,000 Mark per month, in some cases making more money than the Prime Minister. Generals and colonels at the Ministry of Defence had other privileges as well: coupons enabling them to go shopping in special shops for diplomats selling Western products; cars with a chauffeur; representative apartments furnished by the government, guest-houses and holiday homes in the most beautiful regions of the country. Of course everybody knew about these privileges, although it was difficult to talk about them publicly. If there had been nothing else these privileges alone would have created an unbridgeable gap between ordinary soldiers and officers, in particular with growing problems of catering for the everyday needs of the working class. Fundamentally, with all the close integration of the officers into the ruling class and its subordination to the government, any crisis of political leadership was bound to have deep repercussions in the armed forces. Such crises have recurred again and again, in an ever more acute form, at least since 1974.

3) If it was difficult for soldiers not to make the distinction between "them" and "us" in the armed forces and not to see the links with capitalist command

in general, then it must have been equally difficult for officers of the NVA not to make the same distinction and not to see the links with proletarian insubordination. Already the introduction of the draft in 1962 provoked much critical comment in the population and in particular among young people. Ever since the morale and the conduct of draftees has been a matter of constant concern for the government, the SED and the armed forces. It is sufficient to study the public statements of the East German capitalist class in order to get an idea of the unreliability of many working-class youth: A positive attitude towards the "brothers in arms", i.e. the Soviet Russian armed forces and the armed forces of other members of the Warsaw Pact Organisation, insight into the necessity of the defence of "socialism" in the DDR against the capitalist enemy in the West, acceptance of increasing efforts to strengthen the armed forces in the face of ongoing talks on disarmament, readiness for sacrifices for the sake of national security, a conscious discipline of all members of the army, sustained efforts at mastering-military technology, the tendency to maintain a high organisational level of the entire military life, the absolute loyalty of every draftee towards the party etc. - nothing of this seems to have been guaranteed to the necessary extent, in the 80's even less so than in the 70's. If anyone wanted proof for that, then there are at least three aspects to be considered: the repeated exhortations of the army by the party leadership, being voiced at ever shorter intervals and in an increasingly alarmed tone in recent years; the intensification of political instruction in the armed forces; and, above all, the incredible extent of the activities of the Staatssicherheitsdienst (Secret Police), the political officers of the armed forces and the local organisations of the SED in supervising and controlling the soldiers. Notwithstanding the enormous system of political control and repression, the capitalist class has had to register indifference and opposition against the demands of military command and the idea of national defence in general on an increasing scale. In this respect the army has witnessed developments very similar to those at the point of production, and we may safely assume that opposition in the army has always been heavily influenced by class struggle in the sphere of production and distribution.

government against the local prerogatives. Nevertheless it was difficult not to identify the 'poll tax' with the Tories and Thatcher because of its especially iniquitous class character. It is difficult to give here the details of the replacement of the previous tax - the rate - by the 'poll tax'. The rate was based on the estimated value of accommodation and was paid by the occupier (owner or tenant) without taking into consideration the number of people living in this accommodation; the poll tax will be based on the heads living in this accommodation; each adult living there will pay the same as every adult living in this district. For instance, a wealthy couple paying £ 3,000 in rates for a luxurious detached house will pay £ 2 x 500 = 1,000 of poll tax and a couple living in a council estate paying previously £ 500 of rate will pay the same £ 2 x 500 = 1,000 of poll tax. No need for a lot of arguments for or against to persuade people of the character of the new system which topped up the discontent amplifying with the years of attacks on the economic and social life; this discontent was taking the form of a general protest brought to the fringe of individual and collective violence.

During the past months, this specific violence against the poll tax have taken various forms and the recent riot is only one step in the process of resistance against the global pressure of the system. This violence was seen formerly at local levels when the councils had sessions to fix the rate of the poll tax; conservative or Labour councils meetings were disturbed by a lot of fights and demonstrations in which political activists were mixed with non-political local people upset by the situation. This rank and file movement place all parties but especially the Labour, including its leftist wing in a difficult situation politically; they can only play the legal political game and can't follow the campaign of tax refusal; as a Labour leader clearly said: 'we are against all campaign of refusal to pay the tax because we want to be obeyed for the laws we will vote when we come back to power'. Yet, far more important than the violence which again polarised the latent violence of British society, is this movement of civil disobedience; it is taking a new dimension as the poll tax begins to be implemented in England and Wales. Scotland gives precisely the measure of what could be this new dimension; Scotland has had the privilege of being the guinea pig for the poll tax one year ago (certainly because of its Labour domination would not have caused any political damage for the Tories). Refusal to be registered for the next tax is difficult to estimate though some figures brought the rate of refusal to more than 10%; what is more known is the rate of

independently of their political orientation - a permanent threat to the central government.

The attack of the central government against these local organisations was presented as the need to follow a new economical policy - the liberalisation - but in fact it was more dirigiste than ever; it took the form of a political fight of the conservative government Thatcher against the Labour local councils; it was not difficult to bend the central government attempt to tame all local councils towards this political game because most of the Labour councils were in workers districts, the poorest ones where public expenses were more important and where these 'communitarian' structures were more widely spread. It was even more evident with regional councils. It took several years for the government to disband these councils: the fight around the GLC is still in all memories and its disbandment is even now not over. It took years as well to impose on the councils a limit to their expenses with an operation called 'rate capping' which obliged the councils to reduce drastically their expenses by all and any means; the 'cuts' became the explanation for the general degradation of the public services and the gradual shrinking of all support to the 'communitarian' organisations. The social discontent increased at the same measure. Not only were Labour councils obliged to enforce 'rate capping', even if the constituents agreed with the rate level because they wanted good quality public services they were denied this unanimous decision precisely because central government - i.e. capital - could tolerate more than a certain rate of consumption of surplus value at this level.

But councils resistances and some escape routes were possible through manipulations of the basis of the local tax, the rate, its calculation being outside government control. It was actually the aim of the local tax reform to make effective this control; it was quite a new tax, the 'poll tax' which uniformises its basis at national level the rules being completely fixed by the law forbidding any kind of escape for the local authorities and giving to the rate capping all its efficiency. Here as well the conflict became polarised in a political conflict because this reform was the work of a conservative government already with a good record of social repression and because as with the 'rate capping' the Labour councils were more involved than the Tory ones. The more the reform was implemented the more was this aspect of a political Labour - Tory conflict fading away as it appeared that the conservative councils too were victims of this offensive from the central

To sum up the argument: The DDR has clearly endeavoured to build up an efficient and reliable army, and by international standards its endeavours have even been extraordinary ones: Per 10,000 of the population the DDR had 290 members of the armed forces (110 in the NVA, 180 in other armed organisations), while the much richer BRD had only 83 members (80 in the Bundeswehr, the rest border guards). In arms spending the DDR also surpassed the BRD: For military purposes the DDR spent 563 Mark per head of the population in 1975, while the BRD spent 477 Deutsche Mark per head of the population. Nonetheless it has become evident now that the DDR has failed to achieve its aims. However, the rapid disintegration of the East German armed forces in recent months, which comes as a surprise for Western media, has deep roots in the history of class antagonism of four decades. In comparison with Western armed forces the development of the NVA has a special quality, since the relationship between officers and soldiers is defined by its class nature. This is what determines behaviour and attitudes of both sides in the everyday experience of the army. In comparison with capitalist command in the DDR in general the development of the NVA has no special quality at all. Military command is nothing but a variant of capitalist command, and the crisis of capitalist command in the DDR could not possibly leave the armed forces untouched.

Th. S., march 1990

EAST GERMAN CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

Just a few days ago, on March 18th, the East German people were asked to publicly demonstrate their appreciation of "parliamentary democracy" and "free elections" (Western style) by choosing candidates for the DDR parliament from a mass of about twenty parties most of which were probably not even known to them just by their name, not to speak of top candidates and programmes. In this respect the East German elections could even be regarded as having reached a higher degree of "democratic" perfection than those in the West: When electing members of parliament, it makes no sense to demand informations about personalities, programmes, policies, and possible coalitions, and "democracy" does not function any worse if you know absolutely nothing about all this. Therefore the best and most efficient way to run an election seems to be simply to ask people (assuming complete political illiteracy) to make a cross somewhere on a sheet of paper. This is what happened in East Germany last week.

I arrived in East Berlin when the counting of votes had just begun, to spend the major part of the night at a party of the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, formerly SED - Party of Socialist Unity) in what was once the building of the Reichshauptbank (Central Bank of the Deutsches Reich), and after 1945 the seat of the Central Committee of the SED, a building which has been totally sealed off from the public for decades, being the very nerve centre of capitalist strategic planning. As late as October 1989 the SED/PDS still boasted a membership of 2.3 million people, and now it is left stranded with little more than a quarter of that figure, just around 650,000 people, and only in comparison with the membership figures of West German political parties that is still a lot, not in comparison with its own past. Nonetheless an extremely happy mood prevailed among the crowd that night at the Central Committee building, in spite of extremely long queues in front of the tiny canteen requiring people to queue up for about three quarters of an

Labour had a more efficient political function in the workers districts to control such a situation. Apparently there was conflict between the government and local councils, between the central power and the local power, taking most of the time the aspect of a political conflict between Labour and conservatives; the actual conflict was, and still is, a conflict between 'economic imperatives' of capital imposed via the government acting as a central authority and a kind of 'reorganisation' of social life around the multiform resistances more or less canalised through the local authorities - mainly the councils. The conflict was of course political but in what it was expressing an economic and social conflict; it burst up through economic considerations; the financing of the councils. In a time when the State taken in the economic crisis must find new source of financing (oil revenue, privatisations, etc...), it has to reduce even more its income (lower professional taxes to allow the recovery of profits for capital) and to face increased expenses (unemployment benefits, security forces, etc...); the reduction of local expenses became an essential part of the conflict between the central government and local authorities. It was at first a mean to transfer some income from local level to national level, to follow at the local level the policy of lowering the fiscal charges of firms and wealthy people, to oblige the councils to transfer a lot of local public activities to capital, and indirectly to reduce the power of this myriad of 'communitarian' organisms. Of course these consequences were the apparent points which polarised the political fight; but they were only a consequence of the need for capital to operate its imperative of profit at every level of the society.

The councils were a local organisation endowed with important economic and political power which virtually escaped the control of the central government (very far for instance from the highly centralised local administrative organisation in France for instance). The councils had no central supervision and had to manage not only the traditional local services but also considerable estate properties (30% of the accommodations in London for instance), all the education system (primary and secondary schools) except the pedagogical control, partly the police, the firemen, health services, etc... Some regional organisations, the regional councils (the most important the Greater London Council - GLC) had with a kind of delegation from the councils in their resort (the most important urbanised areas) even more power considering the importance of the territory and the population they controlled; they were -

diffusion of discontent , a political indifference and the development of a rank and file multiform resistance. The basic structures of capitalist society aimed at controlling all the activity of the population, either at the place of production or at the local level moved gradually to some kind of resistance structures; from that moment., their manipulation by the central organisations (unions , political parties , government , management ) became more and more difficult .

The most important place of this resistance was the factories , all the places of exploitation of work ; the class resistance used the local unions and the shop stewards to push ahead wildcat strikes, which , in spite of various wide attacks aimed at eradicate them , were never eliminated . The last important attempt came from the Thatcher conservative government; it aimed not to weaken the unions but to compel them to act according to their centralising function for the sake of capital, disciplining the labour force and imposing on it the imperatives of profit. After ten years of constant effort in this direction , capital can only observe as the Financial Times wrote recently (28/2/90 ) that the industrial laws ' had had practically no effect on the economical performances of the UK', which means in other terms that the British working class as a whole has resisted the intensification of exploitation . The strikes, wildcat or not , had only been the intermediary expression of two ends of a same phenomenon : at one end the daily attitudes at work against the exploitation what capital calls by euphemism 'working practices ' have not been eliminated even with the use either of the stick or of the carrot; at the other end , the most important conflicts like the miners strike (84-85 ) or the group New- International (Londres 86-87 ) which polarised the latent global violence towards an open class violence .

At a more local and general level , this movement of resistance against the shrinking of the welfare State brought the development of a lot of local 'communitarian 'very diversified structures. They were more or less autonomous , run by volunteers but got the mitigated support of local councils obliged to deal with them, lending accommodations , giving grants and in a certain way giving life , to keep some kind of a local control , to a no man's land of de facto structures; they actually didn't fix or control either the orientation or the finality of these specific structures. Against these local organisations , a direct attack was impossible considering that the violent attempts to reduce some too independantly autonomous local sectors had provoked riots and that the

hour for a bottle of beer (going by East German standards that is not an unusual and unbearable waiting time), and inspite of early estimates of results and model calculations giving the PDS a total of around 16 per cent of the vote for the republic as a whole and around 32 per cent for the city of East Berlin. Looking at the cheering crowd you might even have had the impression of still being in the good old days when the SED used to get a vote of around 99.98 per cent (together with the other block parties in the National Front). But in fact the good old days are irretrievably gone, the carnival of capitalism with a "socialist" face is over after forty years, and the masks of those who claimed to be the "vanguard" of the working class are down. In a symbolic moment, long before the final results of the election were announced around midnight, the canteen of the Central Committee ran out of beer (where beer has always been one of the very few commodities which were readily available in unlimited quantities in East Germany).

Hopes ran high, in particular among East German and West German politicians, that the "first democratic elections on East German territory since November 1932", as they were labeled, would put an end to the "rule of the mob in the streets" and to social anarchy and chaos. Visiting East Germany in recent months, it would have been hard to get a glimpse of anarchy and chaos, and yet they still prevail. Just as in the past order and obedience were more apparent than real, so nowadays disorder and disobedience are more real than apparent, i.e. class relations have not yet changed profoundly, although there have been a few very spectacular movements, bearing witness of the enormous destructive power of the East German working class. I can only try to indicate briefly what happened in major sectors of society since October 1989:

- 1) One of the most spectacular events was the frontal attack against the SSD or Stasi (abbreviations for Staatssicherheitsdienst, State Security Service) and its various activities. The SSD, certainly the most important instrument of repression against the working class, once employed around 190,000 men and women - more than the East German armed forces - plus 300,000 to 500,000 informers in all spheres of social life. In all major

cities and towns of the DDR angry people stormed the office buildings of the SSD or put such pressure on officials that they were given access to the offices, cross-examined leading officials, safeguarded important documents, sealed rooms and archives, formed citizens' committees taking complete command on the intelligence service's precincts, and began to collect all kind of information on the activities of intelligence men from the public, thus giving the idea of public security a new content. Within weeks the government was forced to dissolve the SSD and to find new employment for its former agents (this led to a large number of strikes in many firms). Attempts to form a new intelligence service under a different name were quickly abandoned in the face of spontaneous strikes flaring up almost everywhere in the republic.

2) No less spectacular was the disintegration of the NVA (Nationale Volksarmee - National People's Army), formerly counting around 170,000 men. Since the draft was introduced in 1962 military service has never been very popular with young people, even less so in recent years when disarmament talks created a sort of ideological void in the legitimization of the military. Now a vast majority of East German youth seems to refuse any kind of military service in the future. Many officers and soldiers have already been discharged from the armed forces, and on paper there are no more than 100,000 men left. But only half this number is required to be on duty at any time, the rest being sent to work in various places outside the armed forces, replacing workers who have moved to the West and trying to keep the staggering East German economy going. There have also been mass defections from the armed forces creating difficult situations in many units. On top of this there have been numerous signs of disobedience as well as mutinies, and many parts of the armed forces have seen the formation of soldiers' councils demanding to be heard on all aspects of military life. The NVA, once the pride of the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei - Party of Socialist Unity), still exists, but in fact it would be more correct to say, it exists on paper, not to be used against whatever enemy there might be anymore.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Some considerations on recent events

The 31st March outburst in London, so called 'riots against the poll tax' filled the mass media with the theme 'revolt against Thatcher'. Of course, this permanent and recurrent violence of British society, this outstanding refusal of a new tax so evidently socially unjust, the political switch to the Labour Party, the inflated existence of a turbulent active trotskyist minority inside it, the political exploitation from all sides of this government blunder against a background of deeper economical problems, are pretty actual; nevertheless this exploitation conceals the basic conflict inside British society, a class conflict which since the end of the last war has wrecked a lot of political attempts - Labour or Tory - to overcome its consequences, a class conflict which spreads its metastasis throughout all parts of the economic and social life in UK.

It will be too long, in a short article, to develop the historical roots of such a situation. We could easily explain how such basic structures of capitalist society, local union branches, shop stewards and councils could consistently have used and enlarged their power inside organisations that English bourgeoisie thought to have in control; the establishment could consider up to recently that its economic and ideological domination was the guarantee of the management of society in its own interest which means the interest of capital.

The economic decline started one century ago, the world war and the loss of the empire, the crisis and various inefficient remedies to raise profits for capital completely transformed the attitude of the British proletariat; the last important attempt was the policy of the Labour Party just after the end of the second world war in order to cheat the workers hopes for a new society; it was a mixture of State capitalism to help British capital to survive mixed with the welfare measures supposed to get the support of the workers for the rebuilding of 'their' capital. The actual effect of this mixture was the development of a class resistance in all sectors of the society mainly when the capitalist system tried gradually to erode all the 'benefits' it had had to concede under the pressure of circumstances.

It was not a direct attack which would have caused a social explosion but a relentless chipping away which caused a growing



# A tough transition

from Financial Times 12/5/90

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THE EXAMPLE of Poland's Solidarity has been beguiling but confusing. It is the exception among trade union movements in the de-communising communist world: nothing like it has happened since, nor is likely to.

Indeed, even in Poland, Solidarity has not replaced the once-official union movement, OPZZ. The latter claims 6m members to Solidarity's 2m. Elsewhere the official unions are finding new leaderships, adopting newly confrontationist attitudes towards the state and enterprise management and employing new rhetoric.

But they are not in any serious way being eroded by "free" union movements. The unions look like one of the instruments of the old regime which can metamorphose into an interest group within the new, in part because they can express, and are already expressing, a working class distrustfulness of the intelligentsia and pro-marketisers who are in the leadership of change.

The Soviet All Union Council of Trade Unions (AUCTU), with 142m members in 32 branch unions, an income of Rbs4bn a year and formally the most powerful union movement in the world, will be part of this scheme of things. It has the organisation, resources and experience to make the transition from a body which transmitted management and party orders and provided social security, holiday and other benefits, to one which will habitually occupy the labour side of a negotiating table.

The shift will not be smooth, and rebellions are already evident. But the AUCTU is unlikely to lose a commanding place within the working class, even if it will increasingly have to adapt its structure and reflexes in order to co-opt those

among the workers who will challenge this or that part of "the system", initially from the outside.

That is the task on which it is now engaged. The miners' strikes of last year threw up a new leadership which managed to wrest from the government huge concessions. Some of these leaders will, later this year, assume the leading posts in the official union of miners.

Yet the miners were not the first. In 1988, the fishermen's union had objected that the conditions of work of their members called for a new approach. The union sacked its old leadership and demanded more autonomy. Now, the baggage handlers want independence from the air workers union.

As the AUCTU's structure moves to accommodate new pressures from below, so it seeks to absorb the new pressures from above. From its Sixth Plenum in 1987, the union has been formally committed to independence from the Soviet state and the Communist Party. Now, as the party strips itself of exclusive power, it begins to look about for bargaining partners other than the Party.

Mr Yegor Yurgens is deputy head of the AUCTU's international department. He is one of the many youngish men you now meet about Moscow, clever, relativist in their views, dispassionate; a little like a policy analyst in New York or Paris, right down to the barbels tucked beneath his desk. This is his view: "We are getting closer and closer to traditional unions of the western type. We must see what these parties offer from the point of view of workers.

"We can go along with much of what perestroika offers. If perestroika is the democratisa-

tion of society, including industrial democracy, and is for more freedoms based on collective freedoms, then we are for it.

"Perestroika also means hard work. But other aspects look threatening - the emphasis on profits, for example, could mean a new Taylorism (disciplined repetitive labour) with no redress or control. We think the co-operatives will sooner or later have to go for profit maximisation, which will mean cuts in the now high salaries and a worsening of conditions. And they are not even taxed properly!"

Already, the unions are fighting on "issues" in a way they have not, or have not had to, before. Last month, a raise in the cost to enterprises of diesel fuel sparked off threats of strike as unions feared that the extra costs to the plants would come out of their members' wages funds.

The Finance Ministry backed down and promised to compensate the enterprises for the price rises one for one. It showed, again, how timorous this government is on challenging workforces - especially so soon before the republican elections. But that is the effect of democracy, on both sides.

Indeed, the unions' emergence as a "conservative" - that is, anti-market - force in society is wholly to be expected. It is not surprising that Soviet unions should, as democracy tries to take root, become like other union movements. They should now take lessons from the British Trade Union Congress and (in the case of the unofficial leaderships) the American AFL-CIO; and they should try to bully governments and enterprises (who must learn to bully back).

John Lloyd

3) In the past the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei - Party of Socialist Unity), formed in 1946 as a result of the unification of the Communist Party and the Social-Democrats, tried to control the entire social system down to the last pissoir (as a West German journalist re-formulated the party's claim to a leading role in society) by establishing almost 90,000 party cells all over the country, the vast majority of them in the factories and offices of East Germany's 150 monopolies, the so-called "Kombinate", a smaller number in the living quarters of town and countryside. A widespread movement of strikes and strike threats has led to the collapse of the party organization in most factories and offices. The party bureaucracy itself, once part of the ruling capitalist class, has had no other choice but to reduce its apparatus in the Bzirke (administrative regions) of the country by 75 to 90 per cent, and at the Central Committee of the SED nearly 60 per cent of all employees lost their job. At the end of last year, just before the hastily convoked party congress and at the congress itself, it seemed for a moment as if the SED delegates would have to decide the complete and final dissolution of the party. In the run-up to the elections the SED has gained renewed confidence only because of the enormous brutality of West German managers and politicians, lending it a sort of new credibility as a radical opposition. Still the hatred of the East German working class for the party bureaucrats is enormous, and in particular the question of privileges still causes a lot of anger. Small groups of workers have <sup>e.g.</sup> demanded access to the homes of former bureaucrats (or gained it by force) in all parts of the country, measuring rod in hand, to gather information for dossiers on the living conditions of party leaders and government members. Activities in the same vein have developed almost everywhere. Popular protest has even prevented former party leader Erich Honecker from finding a home for himself and his wife anywhere in the country, and he had therefore to take refuge in the house of a priest.

4) In most of the 150 "Kombinate", the capitalist monopolies of East Germany, working class struggle has smashed the unholy trinity of capitalist command, formerly uniting management, party bureaucracy and trade union

bureaucracy against the workers. In masses workers gave back their membership books of the SED, and simple strike threats normally sufficed to chase the SED organisation out of the factories and offices. So far the trade unions have not yet lost too many of their more than 9 million members, but they are now far from playing their former role and have not really found a new one, even if already attempting the somersault from participating in capitalist command to mediating in future class conflicts. Many workers have either ceased to pay their union dues or have decided to pay no more than minimum amounts, thus creating a very dangerous financial situation for the unions. The authority of the party and the trade unions is destroyed once and for all, and this is also true for the group of capitalist managers who have tended to distance themselves quickly from the SED, although this has hardly made them less vulnerable. The East German economy, even if ranking before countries like Italy or Spain, even if having a higher average standard of living than Great Britain, is in a pretty bad shape. There can be no doubt about a high rate of absenteeism only as a result of the open borders, about growing problems of supplies for the East German industry because of the abysmal situation of surrounding countries of the Eastern bloc and because of the inevitable closure of a number of factories in the DDR most heavily polluting air, land and water, about a traditionally very low productivity of labour for which there is a whole range of reasons, about the insufficiency of a faltering technological equipment whose modernity is far behind that of West German industry. Under such conditions experts have suggested that up to half of East German industry might have to be scrapped, and the rest would probably have to be handed over to West German business in the manner of "unconditional surrender". Evidently many East German managers do not mind to proceed along such lines, and workers have not been asked so far. Working-class women will probably be hardest hit, with the DDR still holding the world record in female employment.

(to be continued)

Th.S., march 1990

increasing expertise due to experience and consequent career advancement) or because, having escaped schooling as soon as they were able they admire those who have stuck it out longer and taken qualifications. The Age article April 18, 1988 and Frank Castles 'Australia's Inequality Paradox' in Australian Society, November '89, suggests that the mass of the population can accept differentials of income levels of up to 3 to 1. Since it is possible to imagine one person working three times as long or as hard as another this difference seems reasonable.

The 'sleeper' element in the implicit debate about incomes is the income levels of self-employed people at various levels and the salaries of the top executives, managers and company directors. The incomes of the latter have been growing at the same time as ordinary incomes have been stagnating. If discussion of these incomes in relation to pilots' incomes emerges the disillusionment of working people with the Labor Party will become too great for Bob Hawke's security of tenure of the Lodge. The working people of Australia are not yet ready to embrace calmly the shattering of the myth of equality.

The role of the A.C.T.U. will be crucial in the handling of the mass of contradictions that are involved in the Hawke-Keating incomes policy. The A.C.T.U. has more at stake in the survival of moderation than any other party. The officials involved in the A.C.T.U. are worried by the spectacle of the destruction of the Pilots' Federation because from the point of view of union officials the Federation is a union, i.e. a possible source of employment as labour-brokers, of themselves. Employee organisations speak on behalf of their members but their voices are modulated, silenced or amplified sometimes, by their own vested interests as members of a particular fraction of the middle class. Union spokesmen are generally speaking, aspirants to or full members of the managerial caste. This caste or class fraction depends for its existence upon a state of class division and conflict that can be managed and alleviated by experts in industrial relations. Either total suppression or total explosion of the working masses would eliminate the need for this class of functionaries.

The leaders of the A.C.T.U. have suggested that the Federation has brought destruction upon its own head by its determination not to accept wage guidelines. Implicit in this attitude is a recognition that an important function of unions is to restrain the incomes of employed people. The other function that the A.C.T.U. used to proclaim as its own - the protection of the social wage on behalf of both employed and unemployed sections of the working masses - seems to have faded into the background. The survival of the government with which they have formed such close ties has assumed top priority in the outlook of most union officials.

The Hawke government is attempting to convey to the population at large (i.e. outside of ruling and privileged circles) that 'restraint' is necessary to the survival of 'our' economy. The Labor government through its striking breaking stance is attempting to convey a dual message to the working class: if you look for equality of sacrifice you see it in our attitude to the 'greedy' pilots; if their militancy tempts you to 'go outside' the guidelines be careful because we can smash your organisation if we have to.

Public service unions, teachers unions and others under pressure of their rank-and-file seem currently not to be heeding either of these signals. Social strife is on the increase because awareness of income disparities is on the increase but union officials, because of their own interest in the survival of their base of employment will balk at placing their organisations in jeopardy. Legal manoeuvres by employers or government are signals to union officials that their means of existence, i.e. their licence to practice as brokers of labour, will be withdrawn from them if they do not continue to remember that their function in industrial society is to control the level of wage costs to employers and to facilitate readjustments of the workforce to the needs of capitalism.

J.W. Addie.

and its agents in government and infrastructure.

These are the reasons that pilots have for considering themselves to be not mere waged-workers but rather highly crucial or strategic professional workers in the functioning of a capitalist society. Why then does the Hawke government persist in treating them as part of the general working mass of the population and thereby refusing them admission to the 'executive' class? Because it does not wish to draw attention to the remarkable wealth and privilege of the class of 'over \$100,000'. There is also the extra reason for this attitude at the present time that the domestic airline industry is being re-structured by the government in co-operation with the major airline companies and a reduction of the workforce of pilots and intensification of their working lives is an essential part of the plans of both the airlines and the government. The breaking of the federation is essential to this process for employers.

Thus Hawke's two-fold motivation for attempting to incorporate the pilots into the system of controlled incomes that is known as the Accord is to both extend and justify the essential underpinning of his economic policy. The deal between the labor movement led by the A.C.T.U. and the Labor government was always intended to signal a contract between all employees and all employers and there were understandings received about control of non-salary incomes such as profits and fees for professional services. Hawke's hostility towards the quasi-professional pilots is thus to some extent the delivery of a promise to hold down non-waged incomes as well as wages. We have all seen the postponement of their promise to control corporate incomes; attempts to control the incomes of professional workers in the health industry have been implemented indirectly through cut-backs in the outlays on hospitals, pharmacies and Medicare. Further the incomes of academics and higher government officials and parliamentarians have also been restrained to some extent by wage-guidelines. While in fact the clear restraint of wage incomes and the less tightly and publicly restrained incomes of higher income employees is intended to increase the profitability of the so-called private sector and the efficiency of the public sector by shifting income from labour in general to capital in general, the ideological disguise of this program is an incomes policy whose ostensible purpose has been to achieve both a control of inflation and an arresting of the tendency to decline or non-competitiveness in the economy as a whole. Equity of suffering in the experience of this restructuring or adaptation of Australian society to its decline in living standards is the sugar on the bitter pill.

The myth of the equality of suffering or 'restraint' is essential to the political hegemony of the Hawke-Keating line. The weakness of the income control system is that it heightens the awareness of the public of the inequalities in income levels between the different sectors of the population. Hawke calls upon each sector of the working population - even judges, politicians and business executives to accept the percentage increase afforded to the unionised sector of the workers by the Industrial Relations Commission. This tactic enables Hawke to emphasise 'equality of sacrifice' in the service of the nation while obfuscating the real difference of income levels that exist between executive, judicial and other high administrative, managerial or professional incomes and those of the bulk of the population. The public has been revealed as quite ignorant as to the real difference in incomes that exist (see the Age article April 18, 1988 - Income Gap is wider than most Australians believe) and as having a much greater preference for a leveling of incomes than the Hawke government has shown any inclination to implement.

Media treatment of all disputes about income levels supports the government's focus upon percentage adjustments rather than gross incomes. Even in the case of the pilots who are portrayed as highly greedy for attempting to break rank very few indications have been given to the public as to the actual levels of earnings of a 'typical' pilot. The public accepts differences in income either because most people hope to see some improvement in their income over their lifetime (as a reward for their

## A U S T R A L I A

### Pilots strike

The following chronology will help to understand the article written by an Australian comrade .

At first we have to give some details on the industrial relations in this country of 16 million inhabitants. Australia has had a Labour government since 1983 and the prime minister Hawke is the leader of the main union ACTU (Australian Council of Trade Unions). Using their corporate consensus with business and against the social democrats have acted to deregulate and restructure the Australian economy. This policy has to be divided into two periods which could be compared with the two periods of the social democrat government in France from 1981. At first, this policy brought an explosion of spending on imported consumer and capital goods and a quick rise in the current account deficit. Then the government went into reverse with a tight monetary policy. During this policy was to squeeze some economic factors (high interest rate, high borrowing rate, etc.) with a close agreement with the unions to restrain wages growth. But fighting with a strong workers resistance to attempts to remove workers' practices that limited the consequence of the introduction of a new form of bargaining.

The main airlines Australian Airlines (by Hawke's department of privatisation) and Ansett (owned by the former Labor government) were the most important ones and less important ones like Qantas and IPEC (cargo) had been in operation in a protected market. The deregulation was to become effective in November 1988 when there was strong competition from foreign companies and the program was to transform the working conditions for workers using bargaining. This protection. The conflict was in fact more industrial than professional aspect if it was essential for the government to impose a restructuring it was no less important for the government to impose on the pilots, as on any kind of workers, a new policy. It was just the moment when a previous agreement signed with ACTU for the blockage of wages had come to an end and a new agreement had not been signed. To concede something on the blockage of wages to the pilots would mean opening the door to a wave of strikes and putting in question the ability of the Labor government to manage the present interests of the capitalist class in Australia (something similar had happened in a labor process in the UK during the winter 79-80).

20/2/89 :rolling strikes from the pilots for more wages : Ansett and Australian adopt an aggressive attitude to these claims with the support of ACTU and of the government.

6/6/89 :The AFAP (Australian Federation of Air Pilots ), independent union non affiliated to ACTU tells the pilots to be prepared for a long strike .

7/8/89 :AFAP with the support of all pilots unveil a claim for 29,4%.The companies refuse to discuss this and the central organisation of wages regulation : 'Industrial Relation Commission ' (IRC ) - a government body - give 6,5% to the pilots , no more no less than to other workers .

11/8/89 :Melbourn pilots go on strike for 24 hours .

15/8/89:Airlines companies would perhaps open negotiations but the government condemn any attempt to get an agreement out of the centralised system of wage bargaining .AFAP declares it will not open negotiations in the legal bargaining system.The main argument for this position is that this system can be used for ordinary workers but is no use for specific professions like judges , politicians , managers all of them having already got wage increases far beyond the legal limit .

The government threaten to bring any agreement to IRC in such a way that this organisation could decide the cancellation of all previous agreements concerning the pilots so they would be under an obligation to discuss completely new contracts , which was of course all that the companies could dream of .

17/8/89 : 1,650 pilots of the 4 companies ask for direct negotiations through the AFAP and begin to follow a union decision to work only from 9 am up to 5 pm everyday .

18/8/89:IRC allows the companies to cancel all agreements concerning the pilots.Hawke declare 'war ' on the 'greedy'pilots who are ,he says , 'nothing more then bus drivers ' .

19/8/89:IRC orders the pilots to resume work 'normally ' before the 21/8/89.

21/8/89 :All individual contracts are cancelled .AFAP maintains the limitation of working time .

22/8/89 :the government calls the foreign companies for discussions.

24/8/89 :Australian Airlines begins to suspend its pilots and Ansett to sack them .To escape all kind of legal sanctions , all the pilots of the 4 companies give in their notice ; the companies have to ground all their flights .Ansett sues 67 pilots specially chosen for breach of contract claiming indemnities for losses when pilots were working only 8 hours daytime.

The government go ahead to break the strike :

gradations in Australian society just as there are in all civilised societies built upon the principle of the unequal distribution of wealth and power but the precise place of each profession cannot remain fixed in a period of rationalisation of capitalism in its epoch of incipient overproduction relative to a slowdown in the development of new markets. The professions that are built upon possession of a special knowledge that can be dispensed as a commodity have largely formed a strata of relatively small business. The most sensible semantic distinction that can be made between those with specialised knowledge as the result of expensive training who can be called professional, and those who can not, is largely built on the answer to one question: can the owner of the special knowledge or skill set himself up in business? By and large doctors, accountants, lawyers, dentists, pharmacists, engineers and computer programmers can do so given the support, initially, of wealthy or comfortable parents. (So also can most tradespeople but in their case their expertise contributes less to the maintenance of the capitalist system of unequal power and wealth and is more oriented towards the provision of real technical services to the population at large).

Outside the world of the elite the para-professionals revolve. Teachers, nurses, ancillary health workers, sociologists, social workers, criminologists and child menders contribute in a quite expert way to the functioning of the system but their contribution is less specifically oriented to the maintenance of the capitalist order than it is to the mitigation of its effects upon the population at large. Accordingly, these strata are less well rewarded and the system has been able to largely confine them to the wage-earning class, granting them only the status, now largely illusory, of being salaried workers rather than waged-workers. Furthermore, the market to which these sectors can turn for private earning is less affluent than the largely corporate clientele of the professions outside of medicine.

Despite these obvious ranks, the system has to be fluid and cannot hold people rigidly in place at a fixed level of income without shattering the illusion upon which bourgeois society was founded with the French revolution, i.e. la carrière ouverte aux talents, i.e. there are always opportunities for advancement open for those who display talent and work hard. For this reason all credentialed occupations have salary scales. Only the basic trades and manual skills tend to have no, or only minimal, incremental wage levels. Of course, there is a lot of this so-called career-structure around in industry when industry is viable because it pacifies waged workers by dividing them against each other but the effect of unionism in the lower reaches of the income system is to minimise the steps of a worker's 'career path' especially as too many upper levels would greatly increase the cost of labour. Unions seek both to maintain exploitation of labour and to reduce its severity because their function as intermediaries between capital and labour requires that they serve the system while appearing to serve those who underpin it and make it possible by their real productive contribution to the satisfaction of real material needs.

Now airline pilots occupy an ambiguous position in the employment of a capitalist society. Their status is not fully that of self-employed experts like pharmacists or dentists since the system only allows a minimal number to set themselves up in business. The airline pilots are employees and that is the basis of the claim of the A.C.T.U. that they are only workers or employees like all others that the A.C.T.U. claims to represent. On the other hand airline pilots are the holders of licenses to operate highly technically sophisticated and highly expensive equipment. Being the operators of such equipment pilots gain the sort of special status as surgeons, doctors, radiologists, pathologists and computer programmers or system analysts. More importantly they gain the real economic power to deliver or not deliver considerable incomes to the owners of the expensive pieces of equipment that the airline companies are. Pilots also hold another essential strategic advantage in modern capitalist society: they make much of what is essential for corporate administration happen in terms of delivery of goods, delivery of sales and merchandising activity and delivery via travelling businessmen of managerial decisions. In other words, the services they deliver more closely affect the business class itself

In capitalist terms this has been necessary to maintain a satisfactory rate of return on a mass of capital which goes on increasing in all but the very worst of times and which therefore requires to maintain the same rate of return to owners of capital - be they individuals or institutions - an increasing mass of profits even if the revenue base of the industries owned by capital is crumbling due to economic stagnation or shrinkage of the world share due to defeat at the hands of foreign industries or capitalist institutions. As we have all become aware only those industries which deal in the lifeblood of capitalism as a system, i.e. money (or rather at this level, finance) have experienced continuing growth of returns in an impressive way. The financial sector of the Australian economy has continued to experience a virtual geometric progression in its profits because it deals in the most abstract and pure form of capitalist wealth and power and can do so by an accommodation with foreign capital that is largely impossible for industries rooted in the concrete realities of Australian economic conditions. Meanwhile all other industries have had to press heavily down on their workforce in order to continue to extract profits commensurate with the size of their capitals or at least sufficient to protect them from take-over by bigger capitals especially bigger ones more securely based overseas. At the same time however, the agents of this increased exploitation of the workforce, i.e. judges and chief executives have been rewarded by increased remuneration for their excellent work in containing and utilising better a workforce in the process of restructuring and income decline.

The accord therefore has functioned to protect the Australian capitalist class from destruction at the hands of foreign capital. Parts of the capitalist class have been defeated. The rate of takeovers testifies to this shrinking of the number of separate capitals (in the form of companies or blocks of share-holdings in companies) but the commanding heights of Australian capitalism have made various accommodations to foreign capitals which have allowed them to survive in modified form. To some extent there has been transfer of masses of capital into 'foreign' hands, to some extent there has been reinvigoration of sectors that could adapt to changing forms of industry and capitalist production. Restructuring has even involved some amount of development of new industries or forms of capital (which is of course the ultimate purpose of all economic activity under capitalism, i.e. to create capital or socio-economic power). Mostly, however, the adaptation of Australian capitalism has taken the form of a subordination of local interests and activities to external ones.

The meaning of this for the bulk of the Australian population is reducing living standards. The role of the Hawke Labor government has been to bring this about - in the name of the Australian nation but in reality in the service of world capitalism as a whole system - with the least possible social friction and wastage of financial resources or diminution of political stability. The Hawke government has strengthened control by those strata of society who benefit by the perpetuation of capitalism, i.e. those who have seized, by various means, the commanding heights of society. These are of course the billionaires and those who, by serving their interests, are placed in prospect of becoming at least millionaires themselves.

A capitalist system, whether of the western or the eastern variety, always rewards a certain strata who hold key subordinate positions in the control of the system. Those strata have been largely those who occupied lesser places in the operation of the system - directors, chief managers, heads of major institutions - possessors of crucial knowledge and special skills. Some have been by tradition apparent leaders in society - judges, surgeons, specialists, chief engineers and other technocrats crucial to the functioning of society. The income levels of these people are determined by the market for system-operating skills because these people implement capitalist exploitation and maintain the hierarchy necessary to its system of subordination.

Just below these august personages come those whose status is based more on tradition than on crucial expertise: professors, dentists, doctors, pharmacists, conductors, bishops, etc. There are many

-encouraged the hiring of foreign aircrafts and pilots ,  
-relaxed curbs on foreign airlines.

-ordered the Airforce into service to run civil lines ,  
(later it will be discovered that most of these flights have not at all respected the security rules imposed usually to the pilots and aircrafts )

26/8/89;the publication Flight International publishes a call from AFAP asking for the international banishment of all pilots answering the call of the Australian companies for the recruitment of scabs .

29/9/89;the companies claim to have received 300 applications to work as pilots instead of the ex-pilots .

1/9/89 ; the tourist industry to send home 15,000 workers

4/9/89;Hawke offer financial compensations for the losses of the Air companies .

5/7/9/89 ;some secret run of negotiations-but without result.The pilots determination prevents AFAP from conceding anything to the companies or to the government .

9-10/9/89 ;some company aircrafts on some lines with foreign pilots but most of the staff refuses to resume work unless 3,200 sent home are immediately called to work .

15/9/89 ;1,500 air controllers threaten to go on strike for wages .

23/9/89 ;20% of the prestrike flights on with teams rented with the aircraft or foreign recruited pilots in the UK , France , Iceland and Spain.

In october and november , the strike is still as strong as ever.AFAP is trying desperately to get again recognition by IRC to be allowed to discuss for the pilots the individual contracts now offered by the companies ,Gouvernement and the general main union ACTU help them to totally eliminate AFAP (ACTU will even try to get this recognition to represent the pilots though it has no union for them );67 writs against individual pilots are withdrawn but not the writs against AFAP .

In november the Supreme Court allows the companies to claim damages to AFAP for 'having conspired to injure the airlines by directing pilots to work only from 9 am to 5 pm . IRC declare that this sentence is ' a salutary example for those who choose to operate outside the system ' .

In december , all new attempts to get an agreement failed with the pressure of the pilots because the IRC maintain the following conditions for the opening of discussions :

-lift bans on scabs

-accept all decisions of IRC

-abide to the August national wage decision .

On its side AFAP is for a return to work on a seniority basis and the reinstatement of a range of former work conditions. The companies claim to have engaged 147 pilots out of the 1643 having given in their notice.

12/2/90 AFAP is fined for £ 3 millions. As it has no funds it is practically the end of this organisation deprived of its representativity and of all its belongings.

Hawke can declare then that the strike is technically over and the airlines are going ahead with their restructuring; some of them could claim they are running the same flights with half of the prestrike staff. The striking pilots have no other choice than either to go abroad or to agree to work on the conditions of the new contracts approved by IRC: 55 hours of flight a month with wage increase of 6%; beyond these 55 hours overtime will be paid; all the side benefits are practically removed. Even if it will take time for the airlines to get 'back to normal' with a loss of money and profits because of the strike, the new contracts will allow them not only to face the deregulation but too to find an increased profitability.

The strike and the complete elimination of a specific professional union can be compared with the air controller strike in the USA at the beginning of the Reagan presidency, with the difference, not so important in fact, that in Australia it is not the work of a 'reactionary' government but of a Labour government helped by the main union.

If we consider the methods of struggle this strike shows that all the juridical system to prevent such strikes are useless when the workers are strongly determined to go ahead for their own interests: they always can find some answer to the legal barriers raised to prevent them to strike. Another point is that workers are ready to lose their job (even considered a privileged one) rather than to bend to some diktat from managers and politicians (the Eastern airlines strike is another example of this fact). No doubt that the Australian pilots had underestimated the possibility of resistance of the airlines and of the government and were too confident of their position in the balance of struggle with the airlines and in the Australian economy. Nevertheless the fact they have resisted up to the end, almost without any kind of hope, has to be compared with other struggles in which such an attitude express objectively a refusal to be placed inside the legal framework of institutions and to be integrated in it.

## AIRLINE PILOTS DISPUTE

### LESSONS FROM THE AIRLINE PILOTS DISPUTE: EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE ISSUES

Now that it is almost over it may be time to draw conclusions from what the pilot's strike has to teach salaried or waged workers and other lesser mortals than those who chart the skies. The first thing that comes to my mind is that it is wise to pay attention to the titles worn by disputing parties and by other important agencies. There was a tendency during the strike to treat the Pilots Federation as just another union. This was largely wishful thinking just as Bob Hawke's virtual categorisation of the pilot's as the busdrivers of the air was a wish that Australian society had not, in the last forty years or so, allowed a highly skilled section of the workforce to carve out for itself a highly lucrative and strategically very important place for itself in a very important part of Australia's system of transportation. The persons who represent the pilots have been sensitive to the very special position in Australian society of the pilots of large aeroplanes and have built their own careers on successfully pursuing the economic interests of those better paid pilots while claiming to represent pilots of lesser status as well. Highly trained operators of crucial and very sensitive modern equipment such as aeroplanes - or other highly sophisticated equipment such as is found in hospitals computer centres, traffic control centres, central banks and administrative or bureaucratic headquarters - are not in the habit of thinking of themselves as mere workers. That is the reason the agencies which represent their interests to other crucial social agencies such as the government, the major employers and to society in general go under such names as association, guild, institute, society or federation. These terms set aside from the mass of workers those people whose expertise and economically or socially strategically important position allows them to claim and retain a disproportionate share of the national income. The Pilots Federation does not represent workers. If pilots were mere workers then their agency of representation would be known as a union.

The attempt of the government and of the A.C.T.U. throughout the dispute has been to humble the Pilots Federation down to the level of a mere union. The motivation of the government has been twofold. The first reason is the one that the media have made everyone aware of: the need to hold one line against wage push inflation and erosion of profitability. Despite their own view of themselves pilots are, for their employers, part of the workforce and a threat to profitability if their demands for increased levels of remuneration are satisfied beyond a minimal level. The second reason is more complex. The pilots through their federation have asked to be considered as non-waged workers and have drawn parallels between themselves and members of the workforce who have not usually been considered employees in the more mundane sense that applies to public servants. They have asked for parity with chief executives and judges whose claims are assessed and approved by small boards or special tribunals. To allow the pilots to achieve this status would be to open to public scrutiny the fraud that the accord has worked on the population at large. This would endanger the governments attempt to perpetrate the illusion that its policy of income control has been maintained in the interest of the nation as a whole and has been equitable. The accord has been in reality a means of shifting income from workers - the bulk of the population who enjoy only the status of employees - to capital and to its immediate agents, i.e. the class of managers, financiers, lawyers, judges, politicians and administrators at the most senior levels. Business and its most immediate agents or beneficiaries have benefited from the accord in terms of increased income levels while both blue collar and white collar workers have seen a decline in their incomes in real terms.