

BI-MONTHLY THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL



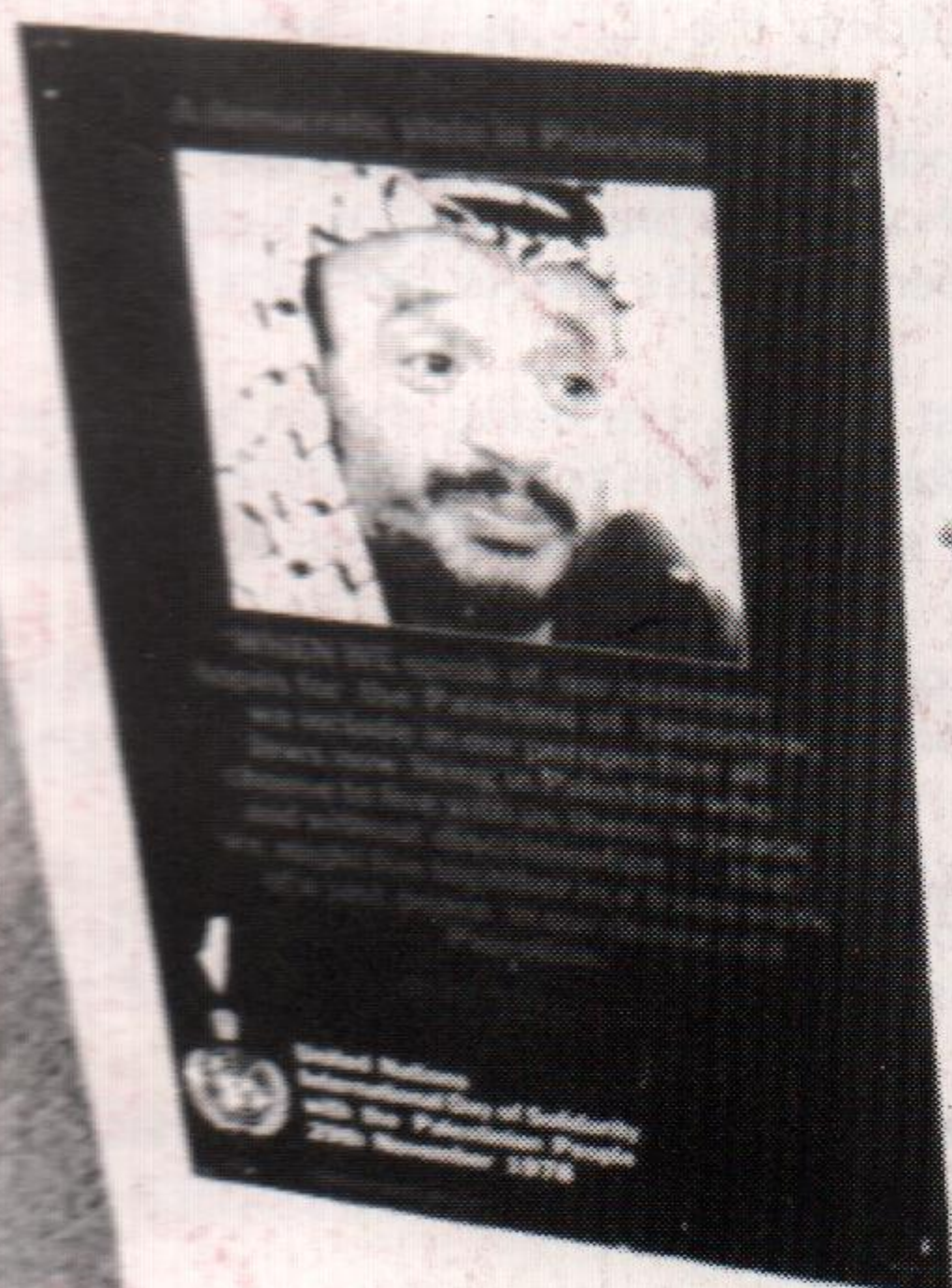
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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**INSIDE: Build The World Party of Socialist
Revolution in 1988; Gramsci: 50 years on;
Dialectical materialism and the 'Big Bang';
Trotsky on the USA and Europe**

Statement by the Editorial Board of Fourth International

The Editorial Board is proud to introduce the first edition of 'Fourth International', bi-monthly magazine of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

'Fourth International' continues the struggle of 'Marxist Review' from April 1986 to December 1987. It also develops the work of 'Labour Review' and 'Fourth International' prior to October 1985.

The decision to transform 'Marxist Review' into 'Fourth International' has been taken as a result of the decisions of the Eleventh Congress of the ICFI in November 1987. We intend to make 'Fourth International' the weapon for building the ICFI as the revolutionary leadership of the international working class.

The conditions for launching 'Fourth International' are the most favourable for the revolutionary movement. The crash on the stock exchange has precipitated an explosion in the international class struggle, as the desperate imperialist class tries to make the masses the world over pay for their crisis.

The Stalinists under Gorbachev, and the reformist leaders, are being shown to be the most abject capitulators to the requirements of imperialism. The revolutionary Trotskyist leadership of the ICFI has an untarnished record of struggle against all those who try to keep the working class tied to the capitalist system.

We call for the working class in the advanced capitalist countries to unite with the masses fighting imperialism in the colonial, semi-colonial and ex-colonial countries. We are pledged to build the leadership to achieve this.

Since the split with all those who tried to smash the ICFI in October 1985, we have fought successfully to maintain and build the Workers Revolutionary Party, its daily paper 'News Line', and its youth movement, the Young Socialists. We are in the fight to build the revolutionary movement all over the world.

We welcome all contributions to 'Fourth International', as an essential development in building the ICFI as the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

EDITOR: Martin Booth **EDITORIAL BOARD:** Nick Axarlis, Rynagh O'Grady, Ray Athow, Mike Driver, Steve Colling, Paddy O'Regan, Geoff Williams



FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Bi-Monthly Theoretical Journal of the International Committee of the Fourth International

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CONTENTS

BUILD THE WORLD PARTY OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN 1988 – Editorial	2
View on the World: UPRISING IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE – Steve Colling	4
View on Britain: THE REVOLUTIONARY WAY TO DEFEND THE NHS – Martin Booth	6
1988 THE YEAR FOR WORLD REVOLUTION – News Line Editorial Board statement	8
GRAMSCI: 50 YEARS ON – Geoff Williams	10
DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM AND THE 'BIG BANG' – William Westwell	14
Picture Spread: FIGHT TO DEFEND THE HEALTH SERVICE	16
From the Archives: TROTSKY ON THE USA AND EUROPE	23
Book Review: CHILDREN OF THE SIEGE, by Pauline Cutting	30

Front cover: Palestinian children on London PLO
demonstration, January 1988.

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Editorial:

BUILD THE WORLD PARTY OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN 1988

1987 has ended amidst scenes which clearly show the course of the coming year: share prices tumbling, the dollar collapsing, oil prices falling, uprisings of youth in Occupied Palestine, South Africa, Tamil Eelam, South Korea, a growing military confrontation in the Gulf, struggles of German steel-workers, British health workers and many other workers in the main capitalist countries, strikes and demonstrations against the Stalinist bureaucracies in Eastern Europe, desperate attempts at collaboration between Reagan and Thatcher, the world's leading imperialists, and Gorbachev, the head of world Stalinism. What is clearly underway is the world revolution, and 1988 is going to be the most decisive year so far in this revolution.

The crash of the stock markets on October 19 1987 brought to an end the period of attempting to avert the crisis of world capitalism through an artificial 'boom'. With the ending of the link between the dollar and gold in 1971, the world's currencies were reduced to a mass of fictitious capital – paper money. The only way to restore real value to this paper money was to drastically increase the rate of exploitation of the working

class in every country, and to forcibly undo everything that had been achieved by the working class and the masses the world over since 1945.

This meant smashing the living standards and services like education, health and housing of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries, and smashing the fight for liberation from imperialist control of the masses of Africa, South America, India, the Middle and Far East. Ultimately, it meant having to go back to where Hitler left off, to impose fascist dictatorships all over the world, and to destroy the greatest gain of the working class – the Soviet Union, achieved by revolution seventy years ago and never overthrown.

But it hasn't worked out that way! The 1970's were a decade of major defeats for world imperialism. The struggle of the Palestinians led to the Yom Kippur war of 1973, and the decision of the Arab oil-producing states to greatly increase the price of oil – something that a floating dollar exchange rate enabled them to do easily.

The overthrow of fascist rule in Spain and Portugal coincided with the victory of the national liberation forces in Portuguese colonies such as Mozambique and

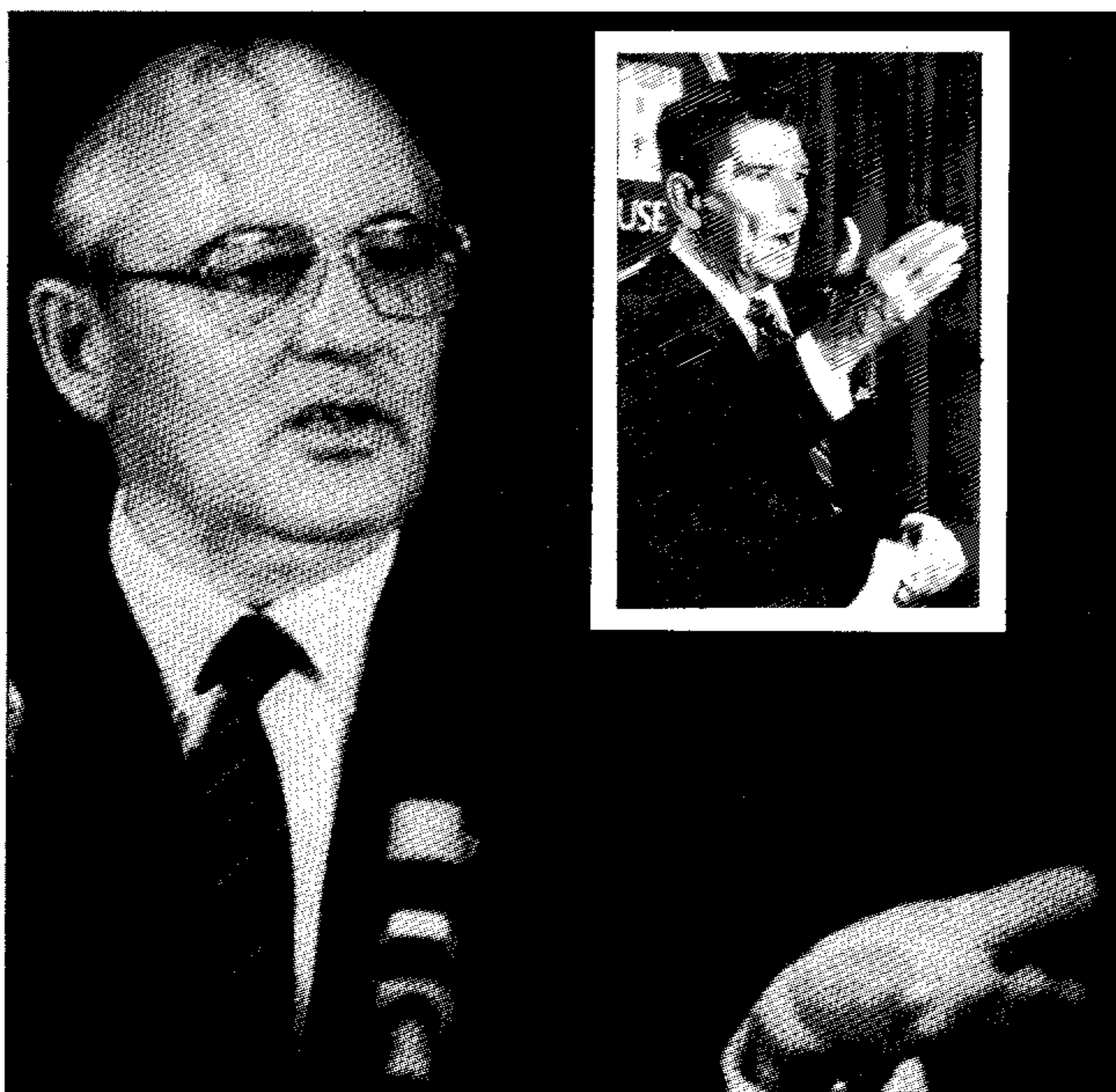
Angola, as well as the former British colony Zimbabwe. The Greek military junta was overthrown. The United States was humiliated by having to withdraw its military might from Vietnam and Cambodia, leading to the victory of the liberation forces there. The corrupt and brutal, US-backed dictatorship of Somoza was overthrown in Nicaragua. The decade reached its climax with the Iranian revolution of 1979 which smashed one of the most 'stable' regimes in the world: that of the pro-western Pahlavi dynasty.

None of these victories has been reversed in the 1980's. On the contrary, the overthrow of Marcos in the Philippines, Duvalier in Haiti and of military dictatorships in Peru and Argentina, as well as the huge upsurge of struggle against the racist Botha regime in South Africa, has continued to develop the world revolution.

But what have been the consequences of all this for world imperialism? In the 1970's the oil-producing countries invested large sums of money, through the banks, in 'developing' countries in South America in particular. But the slump in world trade, and the growth of mass unemployment in the west, meant that



Iraqi prisoners of war celebrate the liberation of Faw peninsula by the Iranians



Gorbachev: Reagan's right-hand man

these 'developing' countries could not develop very far. In fact, the poorest ones became increasingly reliant on loans from the capitalist banks, and even that hasn't stopped outbreaks of mass starvation in the extreme, and dire, and worsening, poverty in general.

From the early 1980's onwards, it has become increasingly clear that the bulk of these loans are unrepayable, without annihilating most of the population of the 'Third World' countries. From 1982, we have seen constant 'rescheduling' of debt repayments, and other fancy names for putting off the evil day of reckoning for the world's banking system. And even right-wing regimes such as that of Sarney in Brazil were forced, out of fear of their own working class, to threaten to default on their debts in 1987.

The political impotence of the Reagan presidency is more than anything else due to his inability to confront this question. The impending presidential elections will undoubtedly bring forward extreme right-wingers like Haig who will be calling for no more loans to the 'Third World', starvation or no starvation. The scene is obviously set for colossal confrontation between the masses of these countries and the imperialist leaders.

The only other way out for imperialism is to get value back into money by smashing the rights of the working class in their own countries. This they have obviously failed to do. Despite higher unemployment, wages are at higher real levels than before in most Western countries.

The initial attempts by, for instance, Thatcher in Britain to destroy public health and education services have already been met by an enormous outcry, not only from the working class but also from whole layers of middle class professionals. The attempts to smash powerful unions like the miners and printers in Britain, railwaymen in France and steel-workers in Germany, have totally failed, despite the betrayal of these struggles by the reformist leaders of the TUC in Britain and their counterparts elsewhere.

This brings us to the crucial point. The best allies of Thatcher, Kohl, Reagan and all the imperialist leaders are the reformist and Stalinist leaderships of the working class. The biggest of them all is Gorbachev. This man and his supporters have been hailed by some, including ex-Trotskyist leaders Gerry Healy and Mike Banda, as leading the 'political revolution' in the Soviet Union. The only political revolution in the USSR today is the one that is being prepared by the struggles of the working class against the bureaucracy's attempts to impose speed-up, unemployment and forced movement of labour onto them. Gorbachev's 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' are open moves in the direction of restoring capitalism in the USSR. Joint stock companies, private landlords, private hospitals, an end to the monopoly of foreign trade – these are some of the products of the 'Gorbachev revolution'. Alongside this, he has had three summit meetings with Reagan, discussing not

only 'disarmament', but also 'regional questions': i.e. how to stop the world revolution spreading out of control.

The results can be seen in the Stalinists' backing for the slaughter of the Palestinians in the Beirut camps, their opening of a consulate in Jerusalem, their attempts to get the African National Congress to do a deal with leading white capitalists in South Africa, their withdrawal of economic support for Nicaragua, and their collaboration against Iran, calling for an arms embargo and a joint US-Soviet fleet patrolling the Gulf under a UN flag.

What is driving the Stalinists is mortal fear of the world revolution, which will sweep them aside as an agency of imperialism in the working class movement. The same goes for the reformist trade union and Labour leaders in Britain, whose spinelessness led to a third Thatcher victory in June and who have since moved to the right with breathtaking speed.

The International Committee of the Fourth International and its British section, the Workers Revolutionary Party and the Young Socialists, have stood out for revolutionary leadership in the working class, not in words but in practice. We intervened with ten candidates in the British general election, recruiting hundreds of new members on a revolutionary programme; we organised the March to Defend Youth from State Attacks, from the TUC in Blackpool to London in September; we organised a major celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution; we held our Young Socialists AGM and Conference and a Trotsky memorial rally. We have maintained daily production of *News Line*, weekly production of *Young Socialist*, and monthly production of *Marxist Review*.

In doing these things, we have had to part company with some who are not prepared to stand out in front, but are pushed across class lines by the mounting crisis and its demands on the revolutionary party. We held the 11th Congress of the ICFI, despite the attempts of our enemies to prevent it.

In 1988, the struggle will rapidly intensify. In Britain alone, the moves to force youth onto cheap labour schemes, to privatise the health service and education, to introduce the hated poll tax and to further remove basic rights will create the most favourable conditions for building revolutionary Marxist leadership. On the international arena the same applies. The editorial board of *Marxist Review* pledges to carry out the essential task of developing our journal for training a whole new layer of class fighters as revolutionary Marxists.

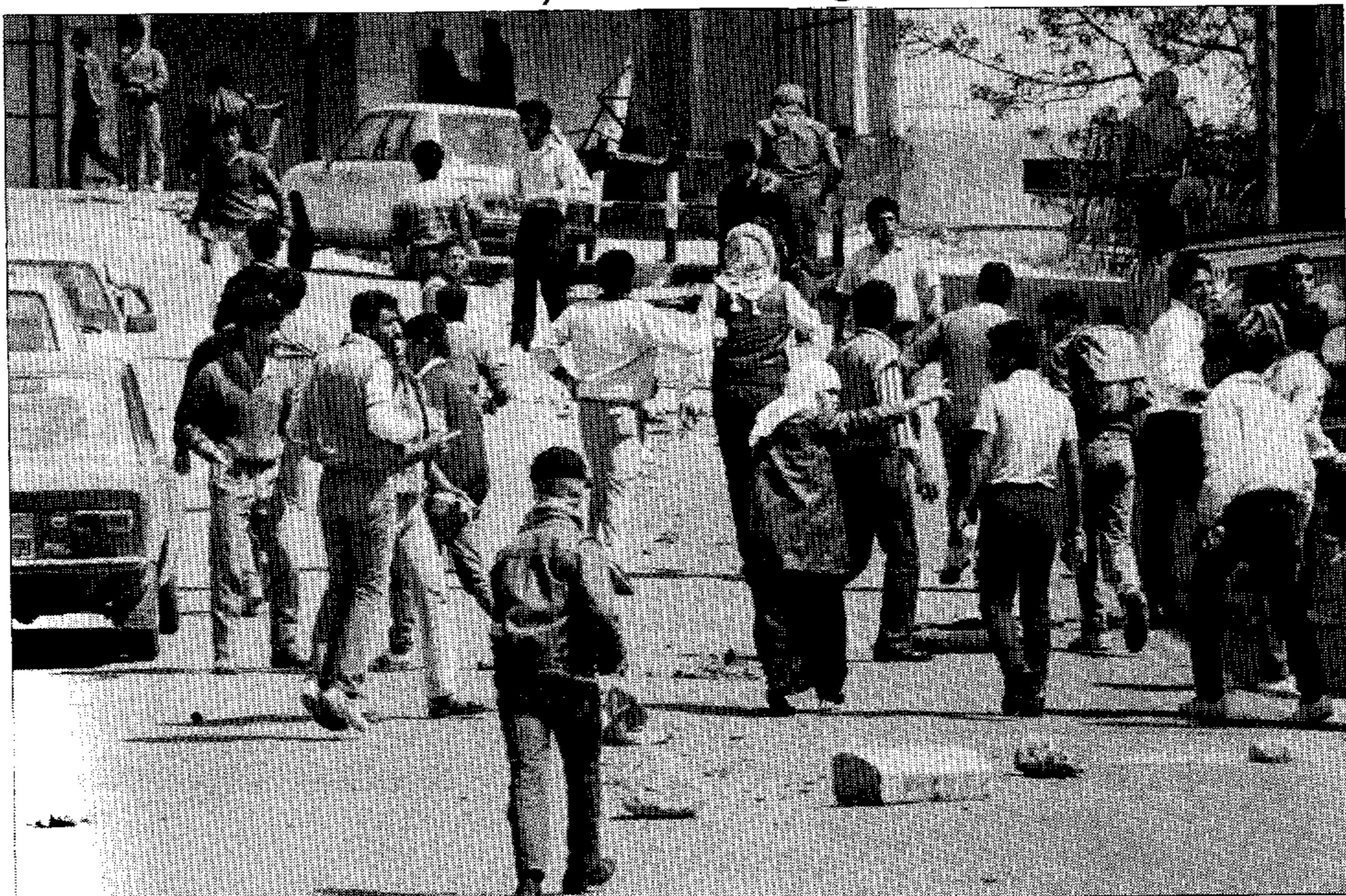
Forward to the World Revolution in 1988!

Build the International Committee of the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution!

VIEW ON THE WORLD:

Uprising in Occupied Palestine

By Steve Colling



Palestinian youth fight Israeli forces with bricks and stones

All the repressive measures of the Israeli defence forces have failed to crush the uprising of the Palestinian youth on the West Bank of the Jordan, in Gaza and inside the state of Israel itself.

At least 66 killed, hundreds wounded and beaten, approximately 2,000 detained in new special detention camps and even a blockade of the 'refugee' camp at Jabaliya (something the Israelis picked up from their Lebanese fascist allies no doubt) fails to deter the uprising and only reveals the revolutionary courage, self sacrifice and determination of the Palestinian revolution.

The present struggle erupted following the accidental death of four Palestinians by an Israeli military vehicle in Gaza.

Such 'accidents' are of course inevitable living under military occupation for twenty years. The following day, December 9, as youth demonstrated their anger over these deaths, two more, one a 17 years old schoolboy, were killed by the Israeli defence forces.

The following day, December 10th, demonstrations spread from Gaza to the West Bank, with confrontations between protestors and security forces in Khan Younis and Balata 'camp' near Nablus.

A traditional stronghold of Palestinian nationalism, the corrugated and breeze block camp is the home of some 30,000 people made homeless by the Israeli state. That same day, Radwan Abu Ayyash, a Palestinian jour-

nalist and leader of the journalists' federation was detained and later given six month's detention for suspected contact with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). He had been the guide to a delegation of British liberals who had just returned to England and warned of a human catastrophe in the occupied territories if something was not done. Meanwhile, that same day in Downing Street, Margaret Thatcher and Geoffrey Howe were entertaining Chaim Herzog, the president of the Zionist state itself.

As 1,000 people left the mosque on Friday 11th December, in the camp of Balata, IDF and Druze border police opened fire on the crowd killing at least three, including a young girl. The

crowd defended themselves with stones and iron bars. Over the following days the uprising continued to spread and to deepen its roots in the masses, stirring ever new layers into activity. On December 14, a youth was dragged from his home by six or seven Israeli soldiers and beaten unconscious, whilst another was shot and killed.

The defiance of the youth was shown the next day; as they buried a fallen martyr they chanted: 'We will redeem you with our blood O Palestine'. That day, Ariel Sharon, the ultra right wing ex-defence minister, and responsible for the 1987 Lebanon blood bath, moved into his new home in East Jerusalem, the Moslem part of the city, along with 34 permanently heavily armed

security guards, to protect him from his neighbours.

On the Thursday, a civilian appeared on local TV carefully aiming and firing a Uzi machine gun at a group of demonstrators. The man was later identified as a member of Shin Bet, the Israeli secret service. Disciplinary action is being considered by his superiors.

The entire Arab population of Israel came out on general strike on December 21 in support of the uprising and against the oppression of the security forces. Over the weekend of the 19th, mass arrests began. The government opened its special detention centre and rounded up hundreds. The demonstrations and attacks against the Israeli military continued unabated, creating huge divisions within the Jewish community as to how to deal with the situation and with the government becoming increasingly isolated.

Palestinian lawyers and even some Israeli lawyers have refused to cooperate with the courts trying those arrested and condemn such courts as a farce. One youth from Nablus was given an eight month's prison sentence for throwing a stone at a car, and over the weekend a blockade of the 60,000 inhabitants of the Jabaliya camp in Gaza began.

Defence minister Yitzhak Rabin is going over to the position of the neo-fascist American born member of the Knesset, Meir Kahane, who advocates 'population transfer', which means expelling every Arab from the areas under Israeli control, ie 3/4 million inside Palestine occupied since 1948, and 1.3 million in Gaza and the West Bank. Rabin told the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) there would be 'no limitation on the use of expulsions and detention' as long as they followed the due process of the law (Zionist law).

The extremes to which the leaders of the state of Israel are being driven is an indication of their weakness, not of their strength. A state which has to keep 25 per cent of its population under arms, is financially dependent on the USA receiving over 50 per cent of the entire foreign aid of the USA, not to mention the huge private funds of the



Zionist troops harrass Palestinians daily

American and British Jewish lobbies, is a state which has no future. It has to beat physically into submission thousands of 13 and 14-year-olds who are turning on the soldiers and daring them to shoot them.

The barbarity of the racist state has never been more exposed, to sustain the sick dream of a 'pure Jewish nation' it is becoming increasingly necessary to eliminate an Arab presence within the borders of 'Greater Israel', to expand the existing state and to seize more and more land i.e. plunder.

But the tool in this exercise is becoming increasingly restless. The Israeli soldiers are becoming war weary, while the resistance of the Palestinian revolution only grows. Despite years of attempted genocide, the siege of Beirut, Moscow-inspired conspiracies to li-

quidate the leadership of the PLO implemented by Syria, the prestige of the PLO grows and the determination to destroy the Israeli state increases.

The Zionist state founded 40 years ago has proved to be a bloody nightmare for those who have emigrated there, as well as for the Palestinians who lived there in the first place. A creation of British and American imperialism, the Israeli state came into existence not as a solution to the Jewish problem but to serve the interests of the imperialist pay master. While the stock markets of the capitalist crash around their ears and the dollar with it, the possibilities of financing client states such as Israel grows more and more impossible.

As the Palestinian revolution takes new strides forward, the counter-revolutionary role of the Gor-

batchev leadership of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow becomes clearer, as they try to open up diplomatic relations with the Zionist state, and continue with their secret meetings together after supposedly severing all relations after the 1967 war.

The December uprising of the Palestinian youth, marks the beginning of the end of the Israeli state. There can be no peace in the Middle East, until that state is destroyed and replaced with a secular, non-religious state based on socialised property relations. The generations of youth that have grown up under Israeli occupation have nothing to live for under this state of affairs and everything to fight for. They all owe their allegiance to the PLO. 1988 is certain to see a huge escalation of revolutionary struggles inside and outside occupied Palestine.

VIEW ON BRITAIN:

The revolutionary way to defend the NHS

By Martin Booth

Of all the issues which have come to a head at the end of 1987, one of the most significant is the state of the National Health Service.

During December, hardly a day went by without revelations of some fresh scandal or crisis somewhere in the country. There was the case of David Barber, the baby in the West Midlands with a hole in the heart whose operation was cancelled five times because of a lack of intensive care nurses. He got his operation eventually because his parents took the health authority to court, although it did not save his life.

There was the case of a baby who died in Reading because of pressure of space in the maternity unit: this case was accompanied by a statement by the leading obstetrician there that he 'despaired for the state of the health service'.

There was the press conference given by the consultant orthopaedic surgeon in Maidstone in the middle of a closed operating theatre,

whilst patients needing operations waited in pain outside his clinic.

There was the announcement that supplies of Factor 8 would run out at St Thomas' Hospital, London, on Christmas Eve, threatening the lives of hundreds of haemophiliacs treated there. St Thomas' has suffered some of the worst cuts of any hospital in the country.

Possibly the most embarrassing of all for Thatcher was the statement by Paddington consultant Nigel Harris, who had been an ardent public supporter of hers during the election campaign. Harris now declares that he will no longer be Thatcher's 'stooge', and is demanding urgent measures to put the necessary resources into the NHS.

His statement coincided with the presenting of a petition calling for a major increase in NHS funding being presented to Thatcher, signed by over 1,000 leading

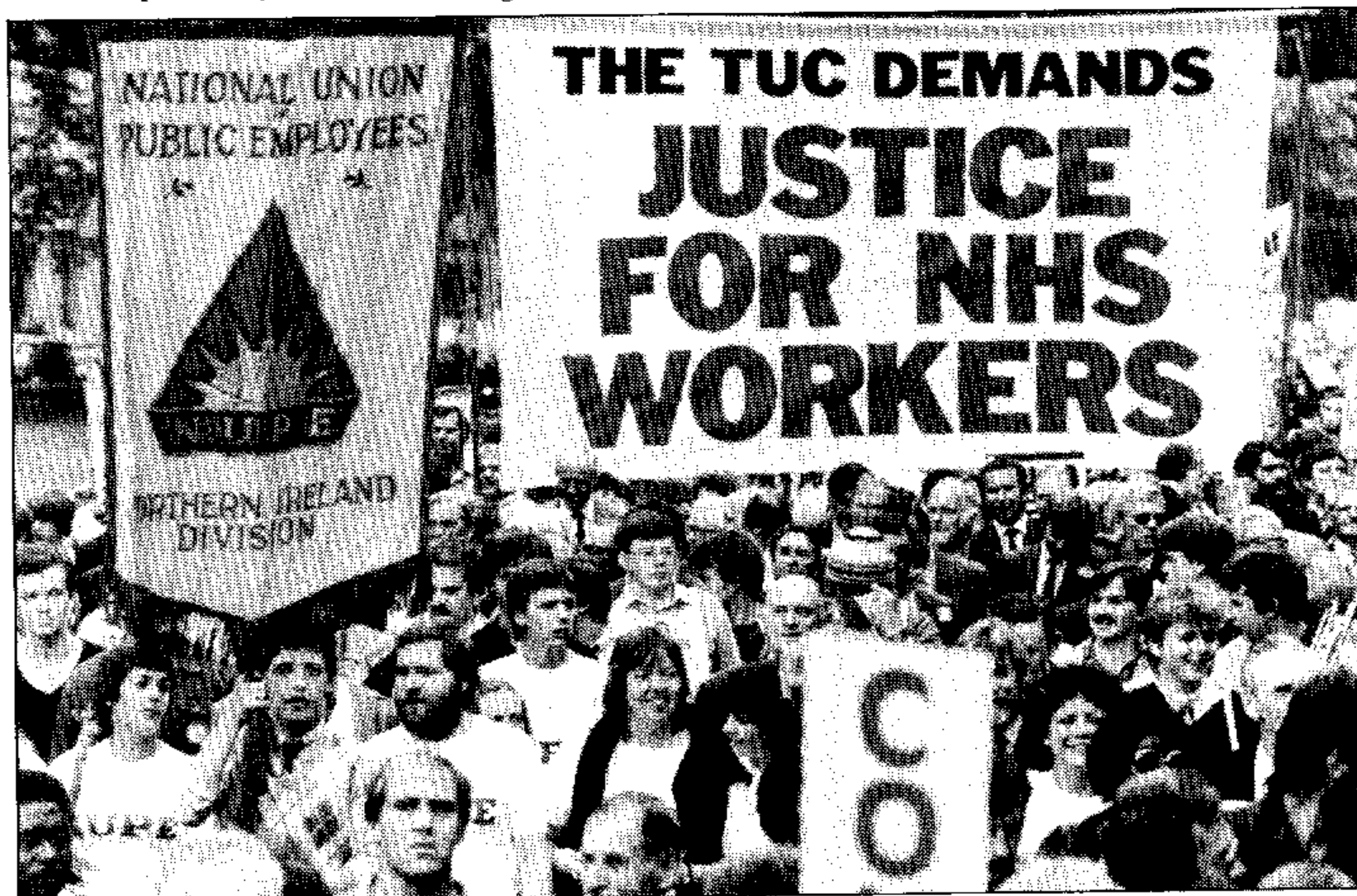
doctors. The delegation was led by Tory MP Nicholas Winterton. Also, the presidents of the three Royal Colleges (of Surgery, Physicians and Obstetrics and Gynaecology) took the unprecedented step of issuing a joint statement deploring the state of the NHS and demanding an urgent boost in finance to enable health authorities to meet their statutory requirements. This was followed by a similar call by the Association of Community Health Councils, declaring that the NHS would 'fall apart' if urgent measures were not taken.

Whilst these much publicised protests were going on, health workers were taking action in a number of areas: particularly nurses, who have not traditionally been the most politically active of health service staff. At St Thomas', West Middlesex and a number of other hospitals, pickets, marches and protests have been organised

against cuts and closures. At the same time the issue of the insultingly low pay of nurses and other hospital workers has been emphasised by workers taking action.

What is clear is that this struggle has only just started. What is driving the Thatcher regime to try to smash the NHS is the crisis of the British capitalist economy. After the stock market crash, with the prospect of trade war, a run on major currencies and an international banking collapse, the need for all capitalist countries to reduce their public spending to nothing is increasingly urgent. That is why there can be no room for illusions that the wave of protests is going to force the Tories to provide the resources needed to save the NHS from disaster. The £100 million 'emergency funding' is a drop in the ocean, and in any case comes with strings attached - in Cambridge, for instance, money was only made available to cut waiting lists on condition that a deal was done between the NHS and a local private hospital. The same story can be told all over the country.

Alongside the stories of 'crisis in the NHS' in the Tory press, much prominence has been given to statements by private contractors saying that they have got 'beds going begging'. Clearly the Tories are pushing the issue of 'deals' between the NHS and private health organisations to 'take the load off the NHS', supposedly. In fact, this means simply that private companies will move into the NHS lock, stock and barrel, and impose their own conditions for running the service. Since private medical groups exist for the purpose of making money, then they will allow only those medical procedures which are profitable.



TUC must be forced to lead fight to defend the NHS

In other words, if you can't pay, you won't get treated.

At the same time, the 'Price Waterhouse' report on the use of Youth Training Schemes in the NHS is calling for cheap labour YTS schemes to be made the basis for all 'support workers' in the health service, as a substitute for nurses or as ancillary workers. To impose this, the Tories will have to take on the most organised sections of workers in hospitals all over the country. Clearly the scene is being set for massive confrontations in every city and town over the basic issue of the right to a decent health service.

But it is at this time that health workers and all workers need to be clear about what has to be done. There have already been a string of fine statements from the trade union and Labour leaders, condemning Thatcher over the state of the NHS. But what these reformists don't want at any price is to mobilise the strength of the trade unions and working class movement to take on the Thatcher regime in a general strike and bring it down. We will see all sorts of attempts to patch up 'popular fronts' with Tory 'wets', Liberals and other reactionaries in the name of 'broad unity'. The Workers Revolutionary Party is for the broadest unity against Thatcher, particularly over the NHS issue, but we say that can only be achieved by a principled struggle starting from the working class. The middle class have always historically followed the strongest lead, and when the working class give that lead, there will be no problem about unity.

That is why we call for an immediate recall congress of the TUC to discuss the crisis in the NHS. At the centre of that congress must be the demand for the organisation of the general strike to bring down the Tories, and pave the way for a Workers Revolutionary Government, which will nationalise all the banks and industries, including the drugs, medical supplies and private medical companies under workers control and without compensation. We urge all health workers to join the WRP in 1988.



St Thomas' Hospital nurses in vigil against health cuts

1988 The year for world revolution

News Line editorial board statement. January 1, 1988.

1988 will be the year of the greatest revolutionary convulsions particularly in the metropolitan capitalist countries. It will bring enormous opportunities for building the World Trotskyist movement, the International Committee of the Fourth international and its British section the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Since the Second World War, revolutionary change has centred on the great movements for national liberation that swept throughout Africa and Asia. These were movements of the oppressed nations, the Vietnamese, Iranian, Palestinian, Libyan and Southern African revolutions.

Now this movement has been qualitatively deepened by the definitive end of the world capitalist post war boom, the longest boom in the history of capitalism. This process began with US President Nixon's decision to remove the gold backing from the dollar in August 1971 and was crowned by the devastating 'Black Monday' Wall Street crash of October 19, 1987.

This disaster wiped out 31 per cent of the total volume of share prices on Wall Street, 41 percent on Frankfurt, 36 per cent on London, and 19 per cent on the Tokyo stock exchange. It has produced a major collapse of the dollar, and has seen the price of the Yen and Deutchmark almost double in the last 18 months.

The United States of America is now the greatest debtor nation in the world. It has feet of clay, summed up in its \$148 billion trade deficit. At the centre of this crisis has been the failure of imperialism to restore value back into its mountain of fictitious capital by driving back and defeating the working class and pushing up its rate of exploitation.

In the United States after the breaking of the Air Traffic Controllers union, PATCO, and the assault on the copper miners at Phelps Dodge, the US ruling class retreated from an all-out conflict with the AFL/CIO trades unions. Instead it allowed a gigantic balance of payments deficit to develop.

In Britain the ruling class has been waging a war to break the power of the trades unions since the Heath Tory government of 1970. In 17 years, almost everything has been used against the working class from Heath's Industrial Relations Courts and the jailing of the five Pentonville dockers, to Thatcher's planned battles against the miners and printers, using the full force of an increasingly militarised capitalist state.

In the course of this, all of the North Sea oil wealth has gone leaving the British capitalist economy to face, some-

thing like, a £3 billion balance of trade debt for 1987. The trade union movement remains intact and undefeated. What Thatcher has succeeded in creating is a battle-hardened working class and youth more than ready to face her in the New Year.

On continental Europe, the working class is undefeated, and in capitalist Germany, its ruling class faces an enormously strong working class, which it has been unable to push back in 1987. The scope of its problem can be seen in the Ruhr industrial heartland, the centre of the great steel and coal industries. The German government pays gigantic subsidies so that power stations can buy German coal at 290 Marks a tonne. They complain that the same coal can be bought on the world market for under 100 Marks a tonne. The strength of the German working class forces them to pay the difference.

This acute crisis and weakness of world imperialism has also undermined the Stalinist bureaucracy, particularly in the Soviet Union. It arose out of the pressure of imperialism on a backward and isolated worker state, and as Leon Trotsky proved, operates in the last analysis as an agency of imperialism on the workers state and on the workers' movement.

Stalinism feels its role as a privileged, parasitic bureaucracy, being undermined by the rising tide of world revolution, and the developing political revolution in the Soviet Union and is conse-

quently making a major new turn towards imperialism. In the Soviet Union, they have practically abolished the monopoly of foreign trade. Imperialism is being asked to set up joint stock companies which will be able to compete with Soviet state owned industries. The latter are being told that they now come under new bankruptcy laws, and those that cannot make a profit will be closed.

The bureaucracy has announced that 49 billion roubles of food subsidies will be abolished in the period ahead and that the productivity of labour of the Soviet working class will be driven up to the levels of the capitalist countries. At the same time a mass of petty capitalists are emerging and the nationalisation of the land is being undermined by the leasing of the collective farm lands to farmers.

This right turn internally has become the basis of a swing to the right internationally. The main world problem is now said to be survival and that this means the recognition of imperialist interests and a common effort for world security to build a new world order.

The illusion is being peddled that you can have peace under imperialism providing you disarm and offer to police the world with it. Disarmament is being combined with agreements for arms embargoes against the Iranian revolution, and discussions about a joint US/Soviet police operation in the Gulf under a UN flag.

While there has been an insurrectionary movement of the Palestinian masses



United States: State police block gates to Phelps Dodge copper mine

on the West Bank, the USSR has been discussing consular facilities with Israel, and discussing with the USA about selling out the Palestinian revolution.

Already Gorbachev has made a public declaration that the national liberation movements are in decline and that the USSR will deal with more established bodies such as the Arab League. The Stalinist bureaucracy has made a point of denouncing the Tamil peoples' struggle for an independent state of Tamil Eelam and has definitively aligned itself with Rajiv Gandhi and his supporter Margaret Thatcher.

The crisis of imperialism has established a worldwide battleground. World imperialism and its Stalinist agency stands against the working class and the masses of the world. The working class of the metropolitan countries will not allow their jobs, living standards, trade unions and basic rights to be smashed by the imperialist crisis.

Workers in the USSR, Eastern Europe and China will not allow the bureaucracy to create the conditions for the restoration of capitalism. The masses of Occupied Palestine, South Africa and Iran will not rest until they occupy their own countries free from the threat of imperialist domination.

The world crisis has created an objective unity of these forces for the overthrow of world imperialism and its Stalinist agency. 1988 is the year for building the International Committee of the Fourth International into the world leadership of these forces for the successful world socialist revolution!

It will be a year of massive explosions as the collapsing dollar leads to a new Wall Street crash, which will bring down the banks and the world economy. It will bring a major slump and trade war between the US, Japan and the EEC and lead to rearmament not disarmament.

Already the Thatcher government has brought forward its crisis programme for privatising the NHS, abolishing council housing, and crippling the trades unions with new anti-union laws. It is extending the compulsory cheap labour schemes to all the unemployed, privatising education and speeding up the introduction of the poll tax.

This counter-revolutionary programme means a head on clash with the trades unions and a general strike in Britain in 1988. Such an action will raise immediately before the working class the question of taking the power. If the speed of the developing economic catastrophe completely undermines Thatcher, Kinnock and the right-wing Labourites will cross the floor of the Commons and set up a National Government to save the nation with a whole series of anti-working class measures.

In either of these eventualities, the main issue will be the struggle for working class power. The Workers Revolutionary Party will not fail in its duty to lead such a struggle to victory.

In Europe, 1988 will bring major class explosions especially in Germany where the ruling class will be forced to make a savage onslaught on the working class, particularly in the great heavy industries. Opportunities will open up for the development of the Trotskyist movement throughout Europe and for a united struggle of the European working class for the Socialist United States of Europe to replace the EEC.

In the Far East, Japan will seek to defend its economy and drive US imperialism out of SE Asia. It will redouble its efforts to penetrate into China and Siberia. It is not accidental that it has decided to increase its military expenditure from its usual 1 per cent of its gross national product to 5.2 per cent in 1988.

In the USSR and Eastern Europe

major struggles will take place between the working class and the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the conditions are being created for rapidly building sections of the ICFI.

In the Gulf and in the Middle East great changes are taking place. Last Wednesday, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia announced that, because of the oil price crash, his kingdom's revenues had fallen to a fifth of what they were a few years ago. He authorised his government to borrow up to 30 billion riyals, and said that the 1988 budget would be 17 per cent less than 1987. This is the Government that finances the Iraqi war effort, and is leading the desperate struggle against the Iranian revolution. It is weakening by the hour.

In the face of renewed imperialist provocations against Iran in 1988 the WRP will be for the defeat of any British or US military adventure in the Persian Gulf.

Likewise we support the Palestinian insurrection and urge them to seek united action with anti-Zionist Jewish workers to put an end to the state of Israel and replace it with a secular democratic state of Palestine.

In 1988 we will redouble our campaign to raise money for arms for the workers of South Africa. Every trade union and section of the workers movement must adopt the only policy that will lead to the smashing of the racist state and prepare the way for a black South African workers' republic.

1988 will be the year of an enormous leap in the world socialist revolution. The decisive question is the building of the world party of the socialist revolution, the International Committee of the Fourth International to lead this struggle to victory.

We urge you to take the decision to join the Workers Revolutionary Party today.



Phelps Dodge picket shows the determination of US workers to defend unions

GRAMSCI: 50 YEARS ON

By Geoff Williams

1987 was the 50th anniversary of the death of Antonio Gramsci, founder member and one-time leader of the Italian Communist Party, of which he was its most distinguished 'theoretician'.

When he died at the age of 46, in 1937, he had just been released after 10 years in Mussolini's jails.

He was first incarcerated late in 1926. From the time of his death until after the Second World War, Gramsci was virtually a forgotten figure.

In their determination to distance themselves from the Soviet bureaucracy and to snuggle up to the Italian bourgeoisie and the capitalist state, the Italian Stalinists, led by Palmiro Togliatti, one-time comrade of Gramsci, revived his memory and inaugurated a Gramsci cult.

According to Togliatti and his political heirs, as well as the Euro-Stalinists, Gramsci stood behind the notion of the popular front, the 'two-stage' theory and the idea that socialism can be won through the gradual permeation of the instruments of bourgeois rule.

Gramsci is held responsible, therefore, for the souped-up fabianism that is passed off as Marxism in Stalinist circles today.

After Togliatti's death in 1964, however, the archives of the Italian Communist Party, which hitherto had been sealed with seven seals as far as the ordinary membership of the party was concerned, were made accessible to bourgeois scholars in a gesture that anticipated 'glasnost' by some 20 years.

As a result of this and splits within the Italian Communist Party an alternative reading of Gramsci's writings and those of his comrades in the young Communist Party has resulted in his being treated as a consistent revolutionary.

Two apparently opposed versions of Gramsci's political career and writings are proposed therefore.

The one presents him as the father of the 'Italian Road to Socialism', with its emphasis on the peculiarities of Italian social and political development and denies the international character of the socialist revolution.

The other seeks to show that his writings have been distorted, sometimes deliberately, and that his essentially revolutionary *profession de foi* suppressed.

In Britain today those points of view are exemplified by, respectively, the Communist Party of Great Britain and the misnamed Socialist Workers Party.

Both tendencies consciously distort the fight for Marxism waged by Lenin and the Bolsheviks and deny the revolutionary perspectives of Trotsky and the Fourth International.



Antonio Gramsci, leader of the Italian Communist Party

In this article I shall attempt to examine Gramsci's political development and theories from the point of view of Trotsky's fight to come to grips with Stalinism and to build the Fourth International, and to examine Gramsci's much-vaunted anti-Stalinism.

Writing in 1918 in the article 'Class Intransigence and Italian History', the young Gramsci has this to say of the development of Italian political and social life:

'In discussions and polemics, words are too frequently superimposed on historical reality.

'When speaking of Italy we use words like capitalists, proletarians, states, parties as if they represented social entities which had reached the peak of their historical development, or a level of maturity comparable to that achieved in the economically advanced countries.

'But in Italy, capitalism is in its infancy and the law is in no way adapted to the real situation. The law is a modern excrecence on an ancient edifice. It is not the product of economic evolution, but of international political mimicry of the intellectual evolution of jurisprudence, not of the instruments of labour.'

Gramsci was to develop his interest in Italian history until his death and he

analysed it not from an academic point of view but from the point of view of the dynamics of the class struggle and the relationship between the economic dominance of a class and its claims to political leadership.

His studies of Italy's bourgeois history from the renaissance to fascism, and particularly of the period following 1848, stressed the fact that the capitalist class both in its infancy and later was unable to convince other sections of Italian society of its historic mission.

It always appeared to the oppressed classes as their enemy and thus was unable to lead a truly popular bourgeois revolution.

Gramsci was to discuss at some length, in his prison notebooks, the political consequences of this failure, and also the failure of the petty-bourgeois radical party of 1848 and its aftermath to effectively counterpose itself to the northern bourgeois and landlords.

These studies were connected with his struggle to force the Communist Party to appeal to other classes in Italian society besides the industrial proletariat and the poorest sections of the agricultural population.

Gramsci's analysis of Italian history is significant too, in that it helps explain the hard battle that had to be waged to establish Marxism as the scientific and

revolutionary outlook of the Italian working class.

Italy's meagre capitalist development in the 19th century meant that whilst the proletariat in England especially, but also later on the Continent, had long since been disciplined to factory labour and conditions and organised in trade unions, the Italian working class was still working in workshops and retained to no small measure the outlook of the artisan and the petty producer.

Throughout the 19th century, until its last decade in fact, it was petty-bourgeois socialism, particularly that of Proudhon and Bakunin, that dominated the class.

It was not until the 1890s, that Marxism began to make headway in Italy and it was a Marxism characteristic of the parties of the Second International.

It drew a sharp distinction therefore between the maximum programme of socialism and the minimum programme of demands realisable under capitalism.

There was no organic link between the fight for reforms on the one hand and the struggle to put an end to capitalist exploitation on the other.

For a time, however, this mechanical Marxism, which saw the outcome of the class struggle as inevitable and contained both a reformist practice and an apocalyptic vision of capitalism's ultimate downfall, had an appeal among Italian bourgeois intellectuals.

In truth, most of the intellectuals who were attracted to Marxism were more anti-bourgeois than socialist and Benedetto Croce, a leading Italian philosopher who at one time embraced Marxism, wrote later that after 1900:

'The socialist ideal . . . no longer attracted the youth of the day, nor even those who had been young at the period of its ascendancy. This was partly due to the criticism which had undermined the Marxian apocalyptic, partly due to the gradual absorption of socialism into liberalism, partly to the reforms which were bringing into effect the "minimum programme" in its entirety.'

We need not take too seriously the claims for the effectiveness of the bourgeois critique of Marxism, but Croce's analysis does indicate the dominating philosophical tendencies amongst the intellectual youth at the time that Gramsci came to some sort of political consciousness.

Gramsci's earlier reading included besides Croce, Giovanni Papini and Gaetano Salvemini, all of whom contributed to 'La Voce' and all of whom were southern intellectuals and reflected the turn to philosophical idealism.

Gramsci himself was to characterise his thought at this period as 'rather Crocean in tendency' and the direct influence of Croce lasted until the First World War.

Indeed, it can be said that much of the philosophical argument in Gramsci's 'Prison Notebooks' is inspired by the

need to take up Croce again from a 'marxist' viewpoint.

Gramsci's early writing, particularly 'Socialism and Culture', which appeared in January 1916, shows traces of Crocean influence, particularly in the assertion that man is 'above all spirit' and an historical creature who appropriates his personality through 'intelligent reflection'.



Proudhon



Bakunin

Whilst the philosophical influence of the idealists on Gramsci's thought was deep-going and lasting, Gramsci, despite his early 'southern nationalism', never subscribed to Croce's rather anaemic liberalism.

Gramsci became a socialist when he was a student in Turin, the 'red capital of Italy', and home of its most advanced industry and above all of FIAT.

By the end of the First World War, FIAT was to be the biggest producer of tractors in Europe; its workers were to increase from 4,000 in 1913 to 20,000 in 1918.

By 1915 it was exporting armoured cars and aeroplanes to the entente countries in great quantities.

The population of Turin rose from approximately 400,000 in 1911 to over 500,000 in 1918. The numbers of industrial workers rose from 80,000 to some 170,000 in the same period.

As Quintin Hoare points out in his introduction to the English edition of Gramsci's 'Prison Notebooks', the proletariat of Turin was the most advanced and combative of Italy.

As early as 1904-6 it had demonstrated a high degree of solidarity and a readiness to take to the streets and, despite huge defeats in 1907 followed by years which saw a period of 'industrial peace', the metalworkers in 1912 staged a struggle 'to the end'.

The Turin working class engaged in many bitter battles in the first two decades of this century, yet the dominant influence amongst the militants was anarcho-syndicalism, rather than Marxism, which in the 'red years' after the First World War and the Russian Revolution would come into conflict with its spontaneous combativity.

The trade unions were dominated too by a reformist bureaucracy that was to tie the working class to the capitalist state.

The Socialist Party of Italy, which Gramsci joined in 1913, was a heterogeneous party that, whilst not able to impose its discipline on the labour movement as a whole, contained several broad tendencies and shades within tendencies.

The old party leadership of Turati, Treves and d'Aragona, who had the support of the trade union leaders was openly reformist. More important was the development of a large and official left-wing around Serrati, that reflected the pressure of the working class on the party during the war years and immediately afterwards, but proved unable to provide the revolutionary leadership required.

The Serrati tendency was known as 'maximalist' and indeed it recognised the revolutionary tasks in words, but, trapped in the formal thinking that passed for Marxism, refused to acknowledge that the developments for which they had been preparing through their agitation and propaganda, necessitated a revolutionising of their practice.

This was not the personal fault of Serrati, nor even a purely Italian phenomenon, but was the reflection within the Marxist movement of the crisis of imperialism that had brought to an end forty years of relatively peaceful development as far as Europe was concerned and with that the end of a way of being.

The most well-known representative of this international tendency was, of course, Kautsky and it is called 'centrism'. Within this tendency, Serrati indeed occupied a 'left' position - he welcomed the Russian Revolution, answered the call to build a new International and sat on the presidium of Lenin's Third International at its first congresses,



Workers gather for a mass demonstration in Turin, the 'red capital of Italy'

accepting verbally the conditions of affiliation embodied in the 21 points.

The revolutionary developments unleashed by the war were testing indeed. Hoare chronicles some of them: the general strike of June 1914 in the wake of an anti-war demonstration in Alcona; the huge anti-war demonstrations and general strike of May 1915; and, above all, the insurrection of August 1917.

The strikes show a marked political character, not only objectively but in the intent – and even they were to be thrust into the shade by the factory occupations of 1918/1920, which posed the question – 'who runs society?'

These events bring out not only the international outlook of the advanced sections of the Italian working class but also the fact that the Russian Revolution represents a gain for the working class internationally in the struggle to smash capitalism and can only be understood in that way. Although October 1917 marked the highpoint, it was axiomatic for Marxists that the Russian proletariat would hold the frontline for a short interval only. Gramsci, as well as Serrati and Bordiga, recognised this – that was the *raison d'être* of the Third International.

Gramsci grasped this although his Marxist education had hardly begun in 1917. His short articles for party journals such as 'Avanti!' and 'Il Grido del Popolo', although short on knowledge of the parties, politicians and other important aspects of the revolution in Russia, reveal an insight into its universal character.

It was precisely during this period that the crisis in the Italian socialist party led to splits – and to the formation of the Communist Party of Italy.

The revolutionary wing of the socialist party comprised two distinct groups – the Turin group of Gramsci, Tasca, Togliatti and Terracini, who had founded the

journal 'Ordine Nuovo' and were to exert great influence in the occupation of the factories both upon the rank and file and the local leadership of the unions; and Bordiga's group of 'intransigents' based in Naples.

These two groups, different in their political history, basis of support and perspectives united under the leadership of Bordiga, who had led the fight against the reformists and the centrists, insofar as they acted as a cover for the right-wing, since 1912. It was Bordiga who took the fight within the socialist party as a fight to form a communist party.

This fight was waged against Serrati, who wanted to remain within the Socialist Party and who refused to expel the reformists, and to a certain extent against the doubts of Gramsci.

The other side to Bordiga's intransigence was his sectarianism and formalism.

Gramsci's prison notebooks.

The now famous Prison Notebooks of Gramsci represent an attempt to confront the theory and practice of Marxism and the Italian Communist Party as a section of the Third International.

Many claims have been made both for Gramsci and for the notes.

For 'lefts' like Bucci-Glucksmann, for example, Gramsci is Lenin's true continuator, upholding his concept of hegemony against, amongst others, Trotsky, Stalin and Bukharin, his one-time mentor. His analysis of the capitalist state, she claims, applies to the conditions of 'advanced capitalism' Lenin's theory of 1917. For 'Euro-Stalinists' generally, indeed, Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the analysis that flows from it mark an advance beyond Lenin.

For the likes of Althusser, Gramsci was the only Marxist 'who has really attempted to follow up the explorations of Marx and Engels'.

For the revisionist, Carl Boggs, Gramsci was the 'first Marxist to insist upon the role of consciousness in shaping revolutionary change'.

All wish to credit Gramsci with a theoretical import that would render the study of the work of Lenin to build a revolutionary party on the basis of the most meticulous concern for revolutionary theory to guide revolutionary practice at best redundant, at worst harmful. If, for the Euros, Gramsci is the Lenin for today on the grounds that we must adapt to the new 'democratic' reality, then it is true that their 'Lenin' must be distorted.

We must look briefly at some of the analyses of Gramsci's work.

In this respect Boggs' remark is very revealing. A few pages after the above claim he writes of 'the mechanistic theories of orthodox Marxists, who carried materialism to its objectivist extreme . . .'

Boggs wishes to say that the 'Marxism' of Kautsky and others of the Second International and, after them, the Stalinists, omitted the subjective factor decisive in bringing about revolutionary change; in other words, forgot that man is not a mere passive object but changes the world and in changing it changes himself. Why the Kautskyan position should be thought more 'materialist' than that of Marx can only be explained by the fact that the 'Marxist' Boggs is a subjective idealist who separates man from nature and in the separation makes consciousness primary over matter. Only consciousness is granted the right to move. Thus Boggs, explaining revolutionary change:

'As the oppressed strata reach awareness of limitations imposed by class society, and struggle to redefine and transcend those limitations, they take the initiative and begin to move towards emancipation precisely as their needs, demands, perceptions ex-

pand and then explode beyond the old structural boundaries that have contained them for so long.'

It is not the dream, however noble, that produces revolutionary upheavals, but the material fact that it is not possible to live in the old way. Revolutionary situations are created by attacks on past gains, now considered as rights, that create the revolutionary situation.

Moreover, Boggs presents the matter in such a way that the process seems automatic; this gives the lie to his view of the importance of consciousness. The materialist Lenin devoted a large pamphlet, 'What is to be Done', to the question of the fight for revolutionary – and today that means socialist – consciousness, and hammered home the point that it did not arise spontaneously or develop automatically but had to be brought into the working class from the outside in opposition to their, necessarily, bourgeois consciousness. This fight is expressed in the battle for leadership.

Gramsci took up the question in his essay 'The Modern Prince', where in the section titled 'Spontaneity and Conscious Leadership' he poses the problem as to whether Marxism ('modern theory') can be in opposition to the 'spontaneous' feelings of the masses. Gramsci argued that it could not be in opposition to them: 'Between the two there is a "quantitative" difference of degree, not one of quality'. Such a formulation blunts the contradiction between bourgeois consciousness and socialist consciousness and thereby reduces the significance of the Marxist party.

Gramsci's attempt to justify his assertion by reference to a category of 'common sense', neither bourgeois nor socialist, amenable to Marxism, posits a 'popular' culture relatively free from bourgeois influence.

But Gramsci is surely right when he insists, in the same section, that in analysing mass movements Marxists do not start from the participants' views.

Boggs states that: 'Gramsci's analysis went much further than any previous Marxist theory to provide an understanding of why the European working class had on the whole failed to develop revolutionary consciousness and had instead moved towards reformism. Whereas the commonplace explanations had stressed the mechanical or fortuitous aspects of this crucial predicament – leadership 'betrayal', organisation degeneration, or the absence of a sufficient crisis in capitalism – Gramsci looked for an answer in the subjective conditions of proletarian existence itself'.

This is the formula for laying the blame for revolutionary defeats upon the working class and misses out the struggle to wrest the leadership of the workers' movement from the reformists that Lenin and Trotsky waged together through the Third International. Gramsci was a party to this fight, which, whilst it recognised that the masses must be



Fascists burn the Rome office of Socialist Paper *Avanti!* after the March on Rome, 1922

won to revolution before the revolution can be won for the masses, stressed that given the crisis-ridden nature of imperialism and the fact that the traditional leadership of the working class is drawing closer every day to the capitalist state, a crisis of leadership exists, which must be resolved. Starting from what the working class is as opposed to what it might think at any given period Lenin fought for what is necessary – parties of the Bolshevik type.

The same cynicism is shown by the British SWP's tame 'graduated flunkey of capitalism', Mr A. Callinicos.

In his book 'Marxism and Philosophy' he correctly enough links Gramsci's name to those of Lukacs and Korsch as 'Marxists' who, in one way or another, recognised the primacy of consciousness.

To this is counterposed the Marxism of the German Social Democracy, the besetting sin of which in Callinicos' eyes is to have applied dialectical materialism to the study of Nature. The blame for this attaches to Engels, who most consistently took the dialectic beyond the history of

man and society. But Callinicos cannot exonerate Marx.

Having attacked Kautsky for, of all things, having an inordinate interest in dialectical materialism, Callinicos maintains that Trotsky fell back into the evolutionism of the Germans in the 1930s. The evidence? Why, Trotsky, in discussing the tasks of the Fourth International in 1938, insisted that the social being of the working class, the only revolutionary class in capitalism, must prove stronger than the bureaucratic agencies of capital that were trying to prevent it fulfilling its historic task.

Trotsky knew the importance of consciousness. But as a materialist he also knew that it was subordinate to being and determined by it. The working class cannot but arrive at a consciousness of its historic task through the revolutionary party.

All the promoters of Gramsci denigrate Trotsky's fight against the petty bourgeois agencies of imperialism and his fight to take the working class forward through the building of the Fourth International.

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM AND THE 'BIG BANG'

A review and analysis of John Gribben's book 'In Search of the Big Bang'.

BY WILLIAM WESTWELL

This is an outstanding book, making available to the general reader with some background in the physical sciences all those aspects of the development of cosmology and quantum physics in the twentieth century which are essential for an understanding of modern materialism. The book has to be read cumulatively, since the argument at any point depends on the reader's understanding of what he has learnt so far.

There are three sections, dealing with i) the emergence of modern astronomy and our knowledge of the scale of the universe; ii) the dawning of the Big Bang model of the origin of the universe and the way in which this model accounts for the distribution and kinds of matter in it; and finally iii) a description of creation itself at vanishingly small lengths of time after the point when time itself has meaning.

Even allowing for the hypothetical and controversial nature of the subject matter, this must be regarded as one of the highest achievements of human culture: to have explained its own existence completely in terms of scientific knowledge without the necessity for invoking God.

The most complete statement of this atheistic account of 'First Things' was made in 1981, and, with a pungent irony in which life transcended art, took place in the Vatican before the Pope John Paul II! (He told the assembled physicists and mathematicians to leave off!)

John Gribben is greatly to be congratulated for his enthusiastic advocacy of the story of modern cosmology and the clarity of his writing. After reading this book, the reader's ideas of the universe can never be the same, and there is a power of disturbance which echoes the process by which the universe in itself becomes a thing for us through its impression on human consciousness. A number of matters arise which I will try to deal with:

1. The development of astronomical measurement and its relationship to technical advances in other fields.
2. The contradiction between scientific method and the methods of scientists leading to scientific knowledge.
3. Idealist versus Materialist arguments about the nature of reality.
4. The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle as a watershed in quantum understanding.

5. The proposition that forms of matter encountered in a study of cosmology and quantum theory are relative and 'the absolute which constitutes their unity is the universal motion of matter itself' [G.Healy, 'Studies in Dialectical Materialism', 1982]

1 THE SCALE OF THE UNIVERSE

The ancient Arab and Greek civilisations, using the unaided eye and the developments in geometry were able to estimate distances relating to the curvature of the earth (Phoenician merchant ships proved for themselves that the

horizon is not the limit of navigation corresponding to the edge of the earth) and the distance to the moon. It was not until the development of telescopes and lenses in the seventeenth century that an adequate understanding of the Solar System began to emerge, principally through the work of Galileo and Kepler. Their conclusions overturned the dominant view of the church at that time, that the earth was at the centre of creation, and began a process by which scientific method would eventually expel God from the Universe entirely.

The next hundred and fifty years saw



This armillary sphere from the sixteenth century enabled the accurate measurement of angles for use in calculations of distances to heavenly bodies.

an accumulation of observational data which distinguished planets (Uranus was discovered in 1781 by Herschel), stars, and patches of light whose nature was to remain speculative until the 1920's, called nebulae. Occasional visitors to our Solar System, the comets, brought great kudos to their discoverers, and amateur and professional astronomers maintained a keen eye on the heavens for their arrival and the doom-laden superstition which accompanied them.

In the early stages of their appearance, both comets and nebulae are indistinguishable. It became necessary to have accurate maps of the sky. The name associated with this period of quantification of data is that of Halley. It was he who, in comparing the Ptolemaic star maps of 200BC with the present day ones, noticed the discrepancies in the positions of three particularly bright stars including Sirius, the brightest of them all. This could only be explained by the actual movement of the stars themselves and destroyed the old idea of the fixed nature of the heavens. By this time,

refinements in the accuracy of instruments for measuring small angles (in minutes and seconds) was enabling observers to calculate the distance from the earth to the moon by the parallax method (observations of the moon simultaneously from two points on the earth of known distance apart, against a background of distant stars) to a degree of precision undreamt of in classical times. The invention of the astronomical telescope even enabled distances to the planets to be measured in the same way, even though the angles subtended on the earth by the planets are incredibly small.

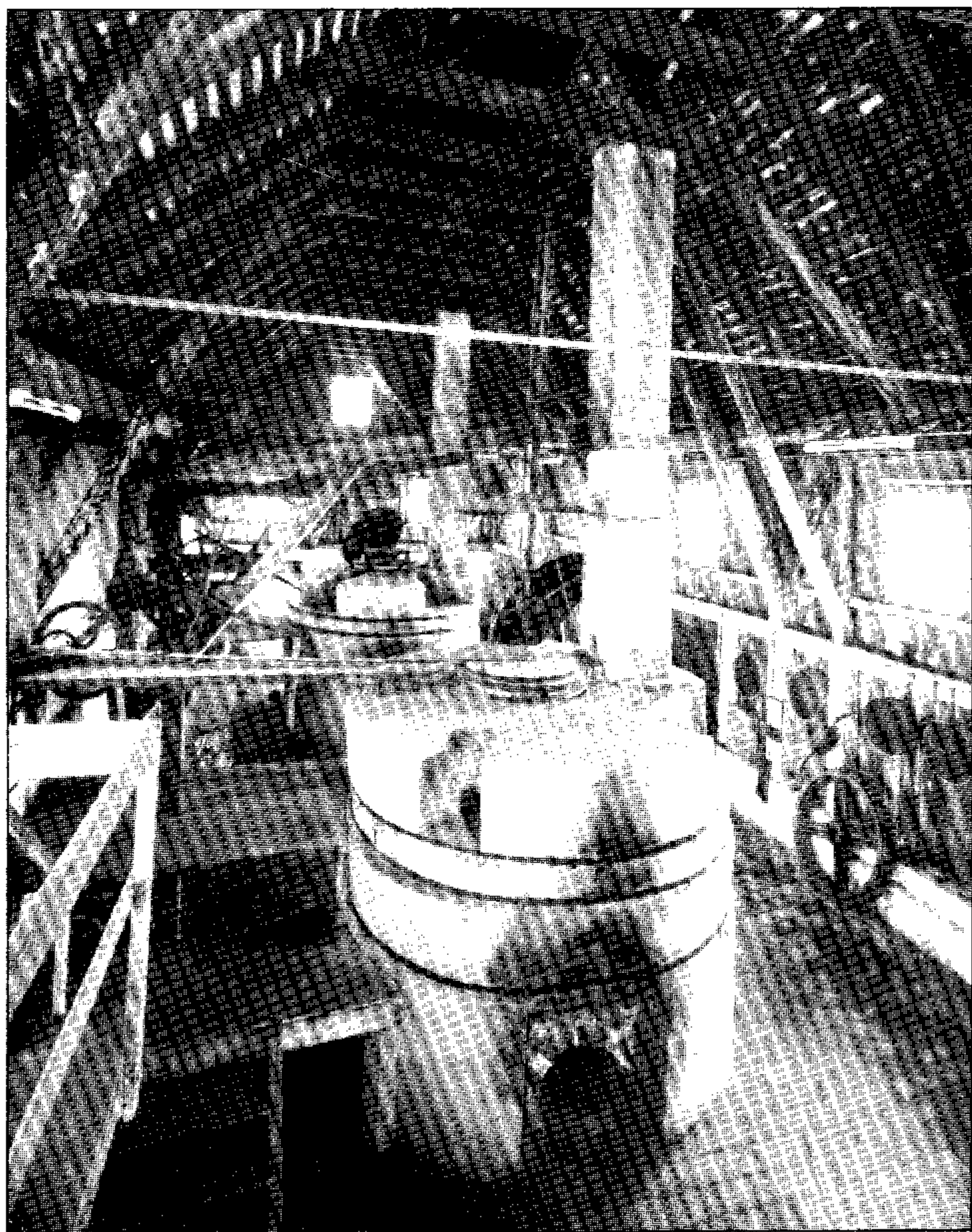
Halley's contribution to astronomical mensuration was the measurement of the distance to the sun, known as the Astronomical Unit, AU. His triangulation method, involving transits of Mercury and Venus across the disc of the sun, was prepared so that when these events occurred after his death the AU could be calculated and at a stroke provide a base line for a triangle large enough to measure distances to the nearest stars. This proved easier said than done, and the first attempts to

measure the appropriate angles by parallax failed: the nearest stars are so far away that the fractions of a second involved were lost in errors. Not until 1830 were instrumental accuracies sharp enough, combined with the necessary corrections for the phenomenon of aberration, an apparent displacement of a star from its expected position due to the movement of the earth through space, for the distances to the nearest stars to be measured. The measured parallax of the star 61 Cygni was found to be 0.3136 second of arc, for example, corresponding to a distance of 11.1 light years (or 3.42 parsecs, the measurement of the day and still in use).

Throughout this period, the human eye was the receiver of information from the stars. The major technical developments which transcended the limitations of the eye arose from photography and spectroscopy. Photographic emulsions respond to light by depositing fine grains of silver. The finer the grains the greater the resolving power of the film and the more information it can carry. This aspect of film and its sensitivity to light were of an adequate standard, by the beginning of this century, so that photographic telescopes could be used to advance the accuracy of parallax measurements and also to detect, by prolonged exposures, stars undetectable to the eye. Also for the first time it became possible to compare photographs of stars taken over periods of time to see if their brightness changed and what patterns emerged from this behaviour. Although for some variable stars, a pattern had been observed in ancient times, this was the first time the tendency could be analysed systematically. In this way, examination of the relationship between brightness and periodicity for a particular type of variable star known as a Cepheid was to lead to a method of measuring not just distances to stars within our own Galaxy, but, in 1923, to the first intergalactic distances, measured by Hubble.

Spectroscopy is a method of analysing light by passing it through a prism. The rainbows we see reflected from the edges of mirrors in the sunlight are a demonstration of the principle: a prism separates a mixture of light of different wavelengths into its components, each colour corresponding to a particular wavelength. If the light entering the prism is passed through a slit the spectrum produced shows fine detail corresponding to the energy transitions carried out by electrons in atoms, in which the light originated. If light from stars or galaxies is collected telescopically it can be analysed by a combination of spectroscopy and photography and the structure of the spectrum examined.

When this work was done, it was noticed that details of the spectrum such as the D-lines of sodium (which give street lights their intense yellow colour) might appear closer to the red end of the spectrum than expected. The



Major advances in the technology of glass smelting were essential in the development of lenses for telescopes.



FIGHT TO DEFEND T



Clockwise, from

London nurses
march in November

St Thomas' Hos
workers confront
Kinnoch;

Student nurses
conference about
Mary's Hospital

Hammersmith
workers rally;

Hill End Hospi
members take
against the vic
of their branch



THE HEALTH SERVICE

a top left:
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 ut cuts, St
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The Andromeda galaxy was the first to be assigned a distance from the earth. This distance, though incorrect, overthrew for all time the idea that nebulae were part of our own galaxy and enormously enlarged our awareness of the vastness of the universe.

wavelengths of the yellow light has been 'stretched' and the only way to explain this is that the star or galaxy is moving away from the earth; the 'stretching' of the wavelength being the counterpart for the light waves of the Doppler effect which makes sounds of rapidly approaching police sirens, say, seem higher pitched than when they are speeding away. It was the same Hubble who, in 1923, calculated the distance to the Andromeda Galaxy, who also discovered for galaxies what is now known as Hubble's Law, that the red shift effect is proportional to the distance away of that galaxy. By 1950, with the advent of larger telescopes, using mirrors rather than lenses, and advanced photographic techniques, objects in space billions of light years away and travelling at speeds of one third that of light itself had been discovered. A modern view of the universe had emerged, the product of thousands of years of cumulative effort in which technical advances contributed to deeper understanding, were pushed to their limits and their limits overcome by further advances.

Stated like this, progress sounds effortless. Only when we consider the historical context of each discovery do the problems emerge concerning preconceived religious ideas; the generally held belief until the twentieth century that the Universe was no bigger than our Galaxy and essentially unchanging

and eternal; the mistakes and guesswork that failed to take into account essential factors and sent a generation of astronomers on the wrong path, and so on. The point is that by submitting themselves to the discipline of the Universe and its contents, the chance events of talented individuals combined with material developments in instrumentation to produce the necessity of a deepening of understanding. The material world was the final arbiter of what was correct or incorrect and out of the contradiction between ill-founded beliefs and the insistent Universe-in-itself under investigation new knowledge emerged.

I will discuss some of these contradictions in the next section, but before then the reader should have a mental picture of the Universe as we know it at present.

Our Earth is a planet orbiting the Sun, which is a typical star in an outer limb of a spiral galaxy made up of billions of stars arranged in a wheel with a diameter of about 100,000 light years. By far the larger part of this typical galaxy is empty space. Our Galaxy itself is but one of millions whose shapes show some variation but which are distributed in space in such a way that any volume of space big enough to contain, say, a hundred thousand galaxies is pretty much like any other: the Universe is uniform; all parts are typical. Lastly, the whole of the Universe is expanding: all the galaxies in it are rushing away from

each other; more abstractly, the void between galaxies is itself expanding.

2. SCIENTIFIC METHOD.

Scientists are not trained in scientific method. Those disposed to philosophy in the twentieth century are often in the thrall of Karl Popper and his criterion of falsifiability: a scientific proposition is one which is intrinsically falsifiable in practice; the best knowledge we have is that which has not yet been disproved; the formulation of scientific propositions is creative afflation beyond analysis: a Muse descends. This method is empiricism. Certainly, arguments with scientists often end up with their dogged personal convictions, gut feelings, childhood enthusiasms and subjective factors in general. As a result, a school of philosophy arises which maintains that scientists are social beings whose work reflects social values and nothing more. We part company at the phrase 'and nothing more'. In working with Nature, scientists submit their practice to arbitration by the material world. The more their conclusions reflect social values alone, the more they come into contradiction with Nature. Under pre-socialist forms of society, the more they accord with Nature, the more likely they are to come into conflict with society, Galileo's rejection of the geocentric Universe, for example.

Olber's Paradox of 1823 is a reformulation of an idea of Thomas Digges in 1576 to explain why the sky at night is dark. In an infinite Universe, filled with stars, we should be able to see a blaze of light made up of the pinpoints of light from stars both near and infinitely far away. There are cultural assumptions lying behind this apparently reasonable question, namely that the Universe is infinite, unchanging and at equilibrium with itself, a vision of the permanence of institutions in fact, which revolutionaries reject. Rather than leave Olber's Paradox as an unresolved mystery, the modern view would be that the Universe had a definite moment of creation and has not only not had time to reach the point of even distribution of energy (thermodynamic equilibrium) but does not, in fact, contain enough energy to make the sky blaze throughout. It must have created itself a long way indeed from thermodynamic equilibrium.

If there remains a paradox, it is that natural philosophers of Newton's day and after contained within their minds the ideas that God created the Universe in 4004 B.C. and that Olber's Paradox was a genuine puzzle. This dissolves in a class analysis, however.

When Kant published his 'General History of Nature and Theory of the Heavens' in 1755 he was some 200 years ahead of his time. As Engels points out in 'Dialectics of Nature':

(Natural scientists) would have been compelled from this single brilliant discovery of Kant's to draw conclusions that would have spared them endless deviations and immeasurable amounts of time and labour wasted in false directions. (Instead) all that was saved from the remnants of classical philosophy was a certain neo-Kantianism, whose last word was the eternally unknowable thing-in-itself,

that is, that bit of Kant that least merited preservation.'

His contribution, largely ignored by seekers of comets and personal fortune, was nothing less than a modern understanding of the unexceptional character of our tiny part of the Universe as a more or less planar galaxy of similar general character to those patches of light called nebulae whose great distance from our own galaxy conceals from us the fact that they, too, are made up of billions of stars. To be sure, the time for the idea of 'island universes' had come (other authors produced schemes similar to Kant's at the same time) and yet the practical programme for proving these speculations was not to emerge for centuries, primarily because the parochial mind had difficulty in shedding the idea that the nebulae were anything more than minor appendages to the Galaxy: the geocentrism of the old church died hard.

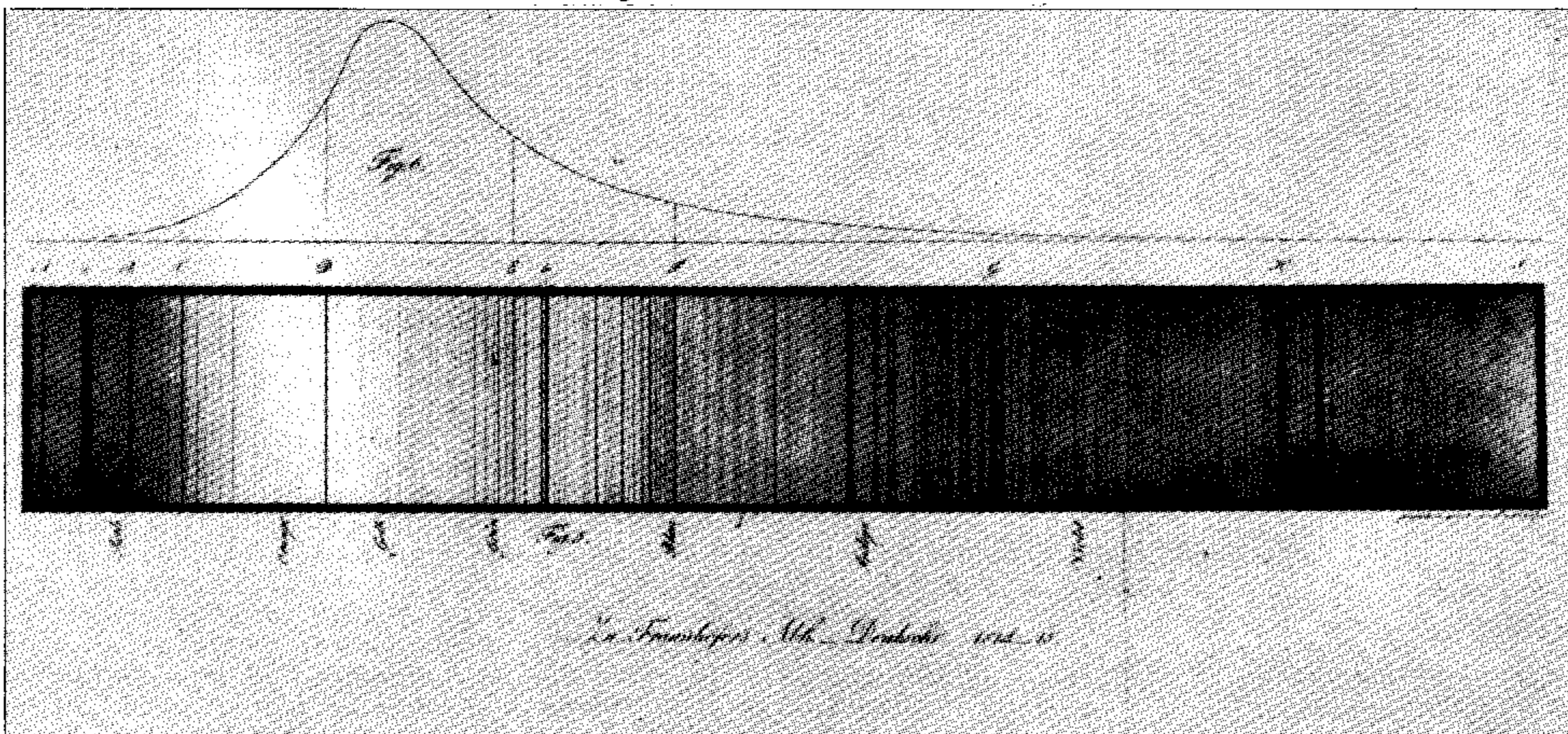
When in 1917 Einstein produced his paper on General Relativity, relating to the interaction between gravitational fields and space-time, the Milky Way was in general held to be the basically unchanging form of the Universe. As a mathematical physicist, he was attempting to produce a mathematical description of a universe, not necessarily *the* Universe, which would be free of problems about 'edges' (boundary conditions) and infinities. The equations he arrived at did indeed solve those problems, but in the simplest kind of universe imaginable, one containing evenly distributed matter, the equations insisted that such a universe could constantly expand. Since such a conclusion ran contrary to received ideas about the unchanging Universe, Einstein reacted by making 'the biggest blunder of my life' and tacked onto the equation a 'cosmical constant' whose effect was to put the Universe in a straitjacket and stop it moving.

Less well known, Willem de Sitter, a Dutch astronomer, had used Einstein's approach to produce a model universe containing no matter. It was soon discovered theoretically that if particles of matter were to be introduced into such a universe, they would in fact rush apart. The contradiction between the two models was eventually resolved when the Universe itself intervened in the form of Hubble's discovery of the relationship between red-shift and distance: the Universe is expanding; the cosmical constant could be dispensed with. From a static appearance, the Universe had been revealed as essentially in motion.

From what has gone before, it follows that if the Universe is expanding now, if we go back in history, it must have been smaller and ultimately all the empty space squeezed out, at a point where imaginations dared not proceed in the 1930s. The 'primeval atom' of that period, it was proposed, must have exploded in a Big Bang (the term appears to have been coined by Fred Hoyle, the astronomer who perhaps above all epitomises contradiction) giving rise to the expanding Universe of today with a definite age, currently estimated at between 13 and 20 billion years.

George Gamow, one of the century's outstanding cosmologists, and his team of workers took up the theme of the Big Bang in the 1940's and using an elaborated version of Einstein's equations arrived at a definite prediction: if the Universe had been born in a hot Big Bang then traces of radiation remaining today would give space a temperature due to microwave radiation of about 5K (-268c). By this time, the theoretical side of cosmology was spawning models of universes at a pace, and even those who produced them regarded them as abstract to the point where they could not seriously apply to the real Universe.

In consequence, nobody took up the



The spectrum produced when light passes through a prism contains detailed information about the composition of stars and galaxies and also about their motion relative to the earth.

challenge to discover this background radiation and Gamow's team disbanded to pursue other projects. It was not until the advent of radioastronomy and satellite communications that this background, giving a temperature of 2.7K, was measured and identified as the echo of the Big Bang and perhaps the single most significant piece of evidence for that event. Its discoverers, Penzias and Wilson, were awarded Nobel Prizes, but again not immediately, because the Nobel committee was not able to take cosmology seriously until 1978.

The tale does not end here. In 1940 W.S Adams reported spectral lines for cyanogen in interstellar clouds at a temperature of 2.3K. The connection between this information, known to Gamow, and the 'temperature of the Universe' was not made. Worse, Robert Dicke in 1946 built a microwave detector and pointing it at the sky concluded that there was a radiation background of less than 20K, the limit of the instrument. This result was published in the same volume of the *Physical Review* as work by Gamow on the formation of elements in the Big Bang, but again the connection was not made and Dicke apparently forgot about it and the Gamow team's work, until he repeated it, by chance, in the early 1960's. By this time, the engineer E.A.Ohm, working on noise from Echo satellites, had reported that after removing all known sources of noise in radio signals from space, there remained a background of about 3K. Again, the connection was unrecognised, this time because the engineers could live with the noise and saw it as a minor technical problem rather than a major discovery. It was only as a result of a chance conversation that the radioastronomy team who were measuring this background finally were put in touch with Dicke and this major discovery revealed.

At the same moment, this confirmation of the Big Bang necessarily marked the death of its rival, the Steady State Universe, a variant on the eternal universe. For Wilson, this was a regretful parting so that when the prizewinning team's paper was published it was done in a self-effacing way under the title 'A Measurement of Excess Antenna Temperature at 4,080Mc/s'. Hardly throat-grabbing!

This is certainly a sorry tale of human error and forgetfulness. No wonder scientists set so much store by 'serendipity', the happy accident. Yet we would have to insist that what lies behind this apparently chaotic endeavour is the material world itself, insisting independently of human understanding and misunderstanding on its own reality. If the background temperature was there, then it was eventually going to be discovered and the result is scientific knowledge of the Universe, not a culturally determined artefact. In this way, we distinguish scientific method, which is our method, from the methods of scientists under capitalism. The dialectical

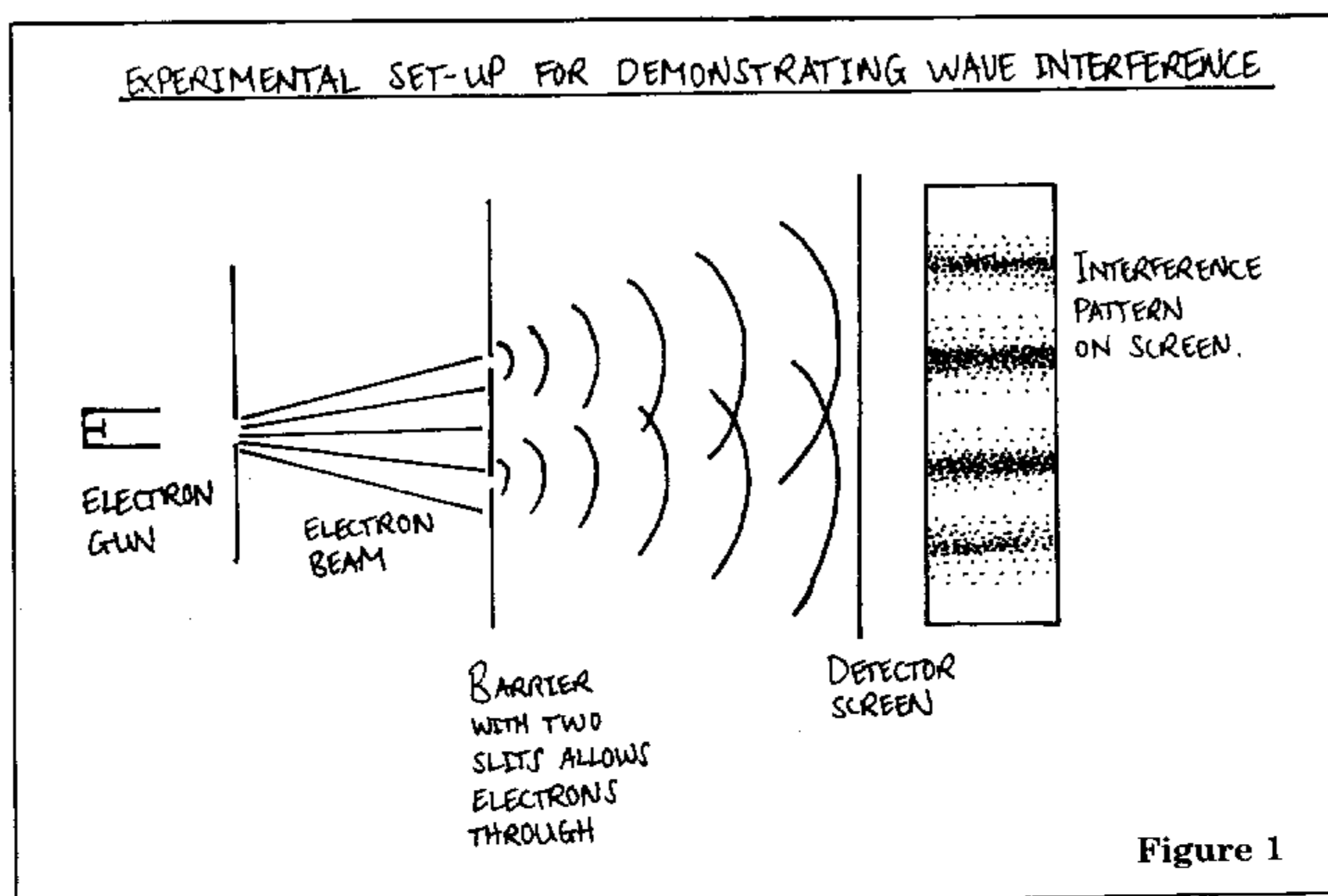


Figure 1

relationship between theory and practice insists that practice is primary in the discovery of new knowledge and that this constantly challenges and exposes assumptions. For practising scientists, the dialectic they submit to primarily is that of Chance and Necessity. Theory and Practice are given lip service, but on the basis of the foregoing come a poor second to empiricism.

3. THE NATURE OF REALITY.

Gribbin quotes Ernst Mach on his idealist position concerning the nature of atoms:

'Atoms cannot be perceived by the senses; like all substances they are things of the thought...a mathematical model for facilitating the mental reproduction of the facts.'

In other words, thought makes atoms. This is not our position, nor of course that of Lenin in 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism'. On the contrary, thought arises out of atoms. The argument that begins by saying that all we know are sense impressions is, in general, ignoring the source of those impressions in the material world.

Since Lenin wrote, the problem created by particle physics in respect of their reality has been compounded by the huge numbers of sub-atomic particles, the so-called particle zoo, and the uncertainty which governs much of their behaviour.

One experiment in particular demonstrates the need to show flexibility in dealing with the interpretation of material events on the micro scale. The experimental set-up involves demonstrating the wave nature of the electron. Waves show interference: when two waves interact, where a peak and trough coincide the effect is destructive. If this happens to light waves the visible result is a series of light and dark bands on screen. To demonstrate interference by electrons we need to substitute a detector like a television screen so that we can

see what is happening. To supply waves which will interfere with another, we simply fire an electron gun (much like the cathode ray source in a television tube) at a barrier with two adjacent slits in it. The waves spread out from the slits, interfering with each other as they do so until they arrive at the detector where the expected bands appear.

The experiment is carried out in three ways (fig.1):

(i) A stream of many electrons is fired at the slits. As expected, the electron waves interfere and produce a series of light and dark bands.

(ii) Single electrons are fired at intervals and the resulting pattern on the screen is added together over the total of electrons fired. Each electron singly makes one 'flash' on the screen, which we would expect from its particle aspect. However, when the overall pattern is summed up it is in fact a typical interference pattern of bands. This can be explained in one of two ways: either each electron in some sense 'knows' where the previous one went and guides itself to the appropriate place on the screen, as it were, interfering with the memory of the previous wave (implausible), or each electron passes simultaneously through both slits and interferes with itself (the best explanation).

Whilst this conclusion may well seem paradoxical to us in the macro world, especially if we think of subatomic particles as billiard balls negotiating obstacles, the micro world is governed by laws of probability which reflect an essential duality in its nature: that which enables a moving electron to be both a particle and a wave at the same time. Its position in space is described mathematically by a 'wave function', worked out by a pioneer of quantum physics, Erwin Schrodinger. The description is a probabilistic one, spread out in principle through the Universe and assigning a definite likelihood of finding the electron in a particular place. And yet, at the same time, it is in all those places. In that way, the

HEISENBERG'S UNCERTAINTY PRINCIPLE

This can be expressed in two equivalent ways:

$$\Delta x \Delta p > \frac{h}{2\pi}$$

or

$$\Delta E \Delta t > \frac{h}{2\pi}$$

stands for the range of possible value of x, p, E or t

x is position

p is momentum (mass x velocity, a vector quantity)

E is energy

t is time

h is Planck's constant, the value of a quantum of action

$\frac{h}{2\pi}$ is the ratio of circumference to diameter for a circle.

To be able to localise a wave/particle we have to combine many waves of different wavelength into a synthetic 'wave packet'. Since each wave will have a definite momentum of its own, the synthesis of a wave packet means a spread of momenta for the packet. The more precisely confined the packet is in space, the greater the number of waves needed to describe it and the greater the range of uncertainty in its momentum. This is the theoretical starting point for the Uncertainty Principle.

Figure 2

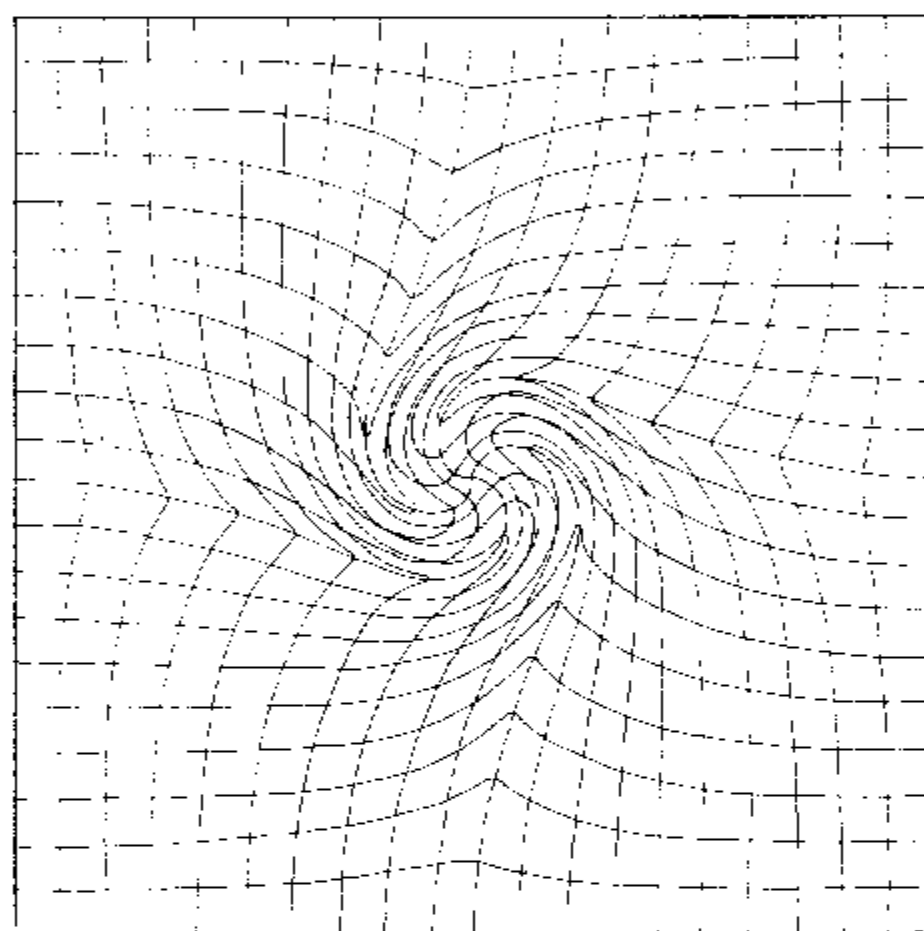
apparently curious result of the experiment above is to describe the ability of the single electron to pass through two slits and still remain a unity: its wave function permits such behaviour.

(iii) The following experiment is the one from which idealist conclusions are drawn. If the basic apparatus for the interference experiment is modified so that each slit is rigged to tell us which one an electron has passed through, then the experiment in which single electrons are fired is repeated, the result detected at the screen is different: there is no interference pattern and the detectors tell us that each electron goes through one slit or the other but not both.

As John Gribbin summarises the result: 'Whenever we try to detect an electron, it responds like a particle. But when we are not looking at it, it behaves like a wave . . . the behaviour of particles depends on whether or not we are looking . . . what (the observer) chooses to watch plays a crucial role in deciding what happens.' (pp.230/1)

Such an interpretation has driven some physicists all the way to mysticism. The position is that this third experiment represents, in introducing detectors at the slits, a material intervention in the whole system, in such a way that the probabilities given by the wave function collapse into a singular outcome: we move from both/and to either/or. It is not merely a question of 'looking' which changes reality but of making a material intervention i.e. *doing*. In a situation with several outcomes, it is not what the observer watches, but what he does, which plays the crucial role in deciding what happens. This applies with particular force to the revolutionary party. The source of the confusion here is that the mechanistic mind cannot grasp that this basic duality, or contradiction, in matter in fact constitutes its unity, a universal motion.

Such experiments go back to the 1920s and the resistance of even great minds to the answers given is shown in Einstein's



The drawing suggests a way of conceptualising the idea of a particle as a product of a field (represented by a grid). It also incorporates the wave nature of such a particle.

famous remark, 'I cannot believe that God plays dice with the Universe' and the thought experiment known as 'Schroedinger's Cat', which sets out to confound us with a cat in a box, which according to Schroedinger's own equations is best described as both dead and alive in equal probabilities after the experiment. So what do we see when the lid of the box is opened...?

4. HEISENBERG'S UNCERTAINTY PRINCIPLE.

This mathematical abstraction (fig.2) follows from a description of the particle/wave duality for subatomic particles in terms of wave functions. It corresponds to the real behaviour of real particles and tells us precisely how much we can know about their momentum (direction of movement) and position, or their energy and time (duration). The more we know about the one the less we can say about the other; the more we know about the direction of movement of an electron, the less certain we can be of where it is.

Even more to the point, since the Uncertainty Principle is true independently of our knowledge, the subatomic

particles themselves show this uncertainty in their actual behaviour: they can be in more than one place at the same time at a finite probability. This is how Gamow was able to explain the expulsion of alpha particles (two protons and two neutrons) from radioactive nuclei. Normally, such particles are integrated into the nucleus of the atom and held there by the 'strong force', but uncertainty allows particles to borrow energy from the surroundings for the time allowed and then 'give' it back. In that time the alpha particle can tunnel out of the nucleus, which has a positive electric charge, and be repelled electrically right out of the atom.

If we understand the material actuality of the Uncertainty Principle, then some truly staggering consequences follow. An electric field is the area around a charged particle in which it exerts a force on other charged particles. They need not be subatomic: a comb when rubbed will pick up pieces of paper, say. Similarly, a magnetic field surrounds a magnet. When electricity made of negatively charged electrons passes through a wire, the movement of electrons creates a magnetic field. Similarly, a moving magnet placed next to a wire will induce an electric current in it. These effects are used practically in motors and generators.

The relationship between electricity and magnetism, electromagnetism, is a source of electromagnetic radiation; e.g. radio waves from unsuppressed motors interfere with radio signals or television pictures. We know that electromagnetic radiation consists of waves of varying properties depending in their interactions with matter: radiowaves have long wavelengths; microwaves have shorter ones used in broadcasting and cookers where they excite water molecules; infra-red waves are warm; light rays are coloured and so on. But these waves occur in discrete packets, equivalent to particles, called photons.

When we consider the field nature of electromagnetism in the producing of waves and particles, we can extend the principle to matter by invoking 'matter fields' of several kinds corresponding to the various particles discovered by physicists in the twentieth century. When two electrons interact and repel each other, field theory would now explain this in terms of an exchange of photons between the two. The photons borrow energy from the field over a period allowed by the Uncertainty Principle, do their work, and then disappear. In other words, such photons create themselves out of nothing and disappear again, having broken no fundamental laws. Further, whilst they 'exist' they can in principle generate electron-positron pairs which in turn generate further photons and so on ad infinitum, provided the Uncertainty Principle is not violated. The existence of such particles is described as 'virtual' in the same way as a reflection as a reflec-

tion in a mirror is described as a virtual object. They are not real in the way that their existence adds anything to the ordinary matter of the Universe, but current ideas about the origin of the Universe require an extension of our understanding of the behaviour of virtual particles (and their corresponding anti-particles) to account for the origin of matter itself.

It is difficult to avoid the connection between this mathematical-physical way of thinking and Hegel's starting point, quoted on page 105 of Volume 38 of Lenin's Collected Works: Pure Being and Pure Nothing are . . . the same. Indeed, some cosmologists maintain literally that the universe did come into being as a quantum fluctuation in a vacuum: 'Beginning contains both "nichts" and "sein", it is their unity.' (p.104, vol. 38). Both approaches represent a high degree of abstraction, mathematical or philosophical, about the objective process of making a beginning without incorporating assumptions.

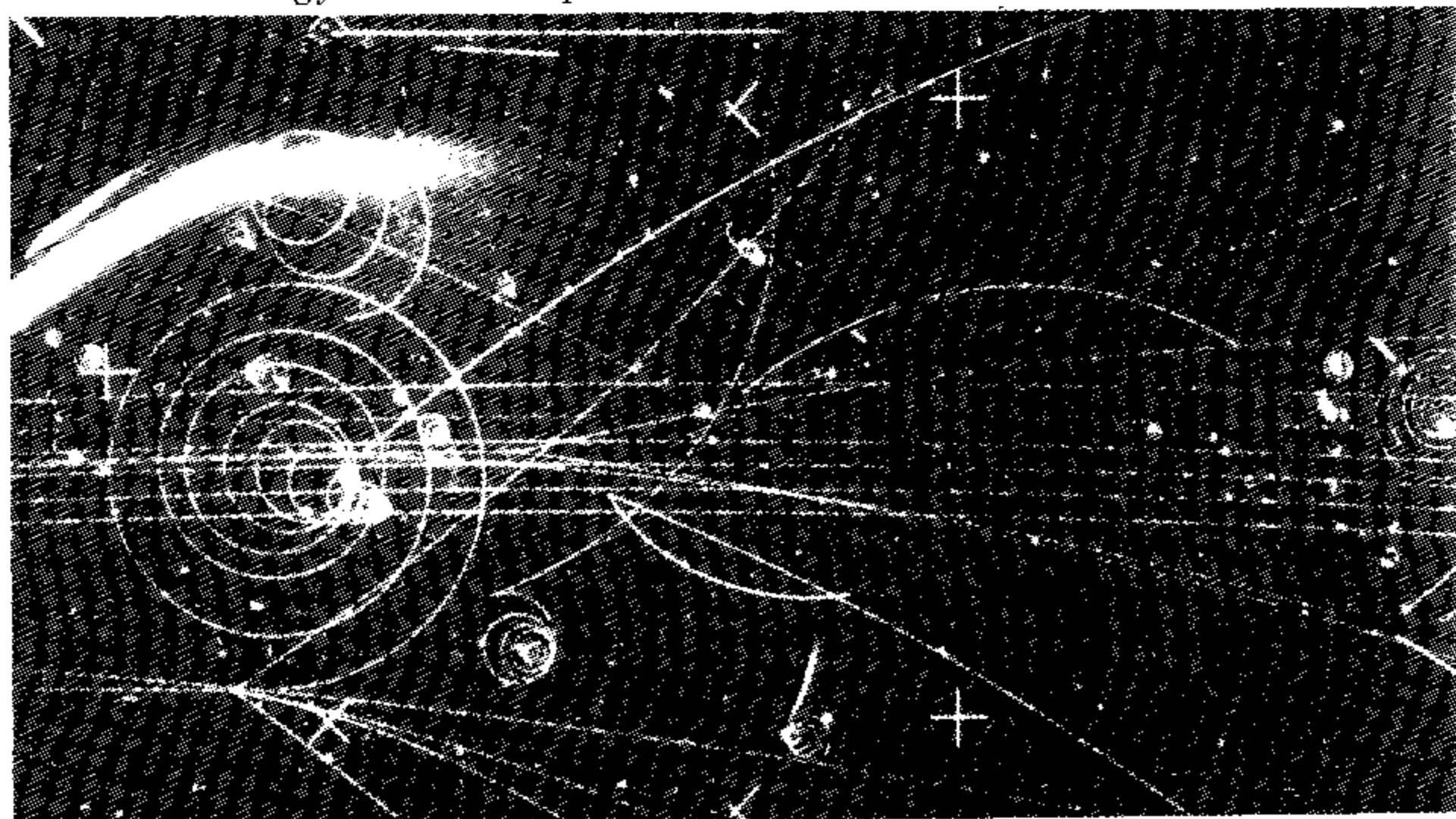
UNIVERSAL MOTION IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE

What we know about the early universe comes from two sources. The first is the direct observation of the universe itself and what we know of its composition in terms of atoms (99 per cent is hydrogen or helium) and radiation (spectra at all wavelengths). The second comes from experiments involving particle accelerators such as the one at CERN near Geneva in Switzerland. These are not merely atom smashers, as is popularly thought. In accelerating subatomic particles and causing them to collide, they are gaining energy. At speeds approaching large fractions of the speed of light, the energy density of the particles begins to mimic that of the early universe and the kinds of events discovered parallel those in which the various kinds of matter evolved. We could say that the energy fed into particle

accelerators reappears in the form of particles and their interactions.

Analysis of the patterns made by particles leads us to conclusions about the forces and forms of matter in the Universe now. Gravity is the least well understood force, much weaker than the other three but operating over much greater distances; electromagnetism dominates the attraction and repulsion between objects carrying a charge, for example protons and electrons; the 'weak' force is a twentieth-century discovery, of the 1930's, arising out of the decay of isolated neutrons into an electron and what was then a quite new particle, the neutrino (or, more correctly, the anti-neutrino); the 'strong' force is the very short-range force which holds all the positive charges on protons in an atomic nucleus together. In the same way that electromagnetic fields give rise to particles (photons), so these other force fields are believed to give rise to corresponding particles as carriers of the force. It is these which physicists working with particle accelerators are searching for, and which correspond to the 'particle zoo' I mentioned earlier.

Grand Unification Theories, or GUTS, are the attempts by mathematicians to discover the underlying simplicity behind all the surface variety within forces and particles. According to Stephen Hawking, such a description is within reach, possibly within the next twenty years. The essential point is that models of the universe over its whole history are emerging, warts and all, using no more than known scientific laws. They are completely atheistic and throughout show a continuous development of matter to its present day from forms vastly different from now. The reader should now refer to the timescale (fig.3) to see the kinds of events considered critical for understanding the origin and evolution of the universe. Whilst much remains controversial, the theory pushes back what is knowable to the very first instant.



Collision events between subatomic particles can be detected in 'bubble chambers'. The white lines are tiny bubbles left behind as tracks of moving particles. Analysis of the patterns gives us information about the lifetime, charge, mass and other qualities of such particles. In the early Universe such collisions were the rule rather than the exception.

TIMESCALE FOR PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSE

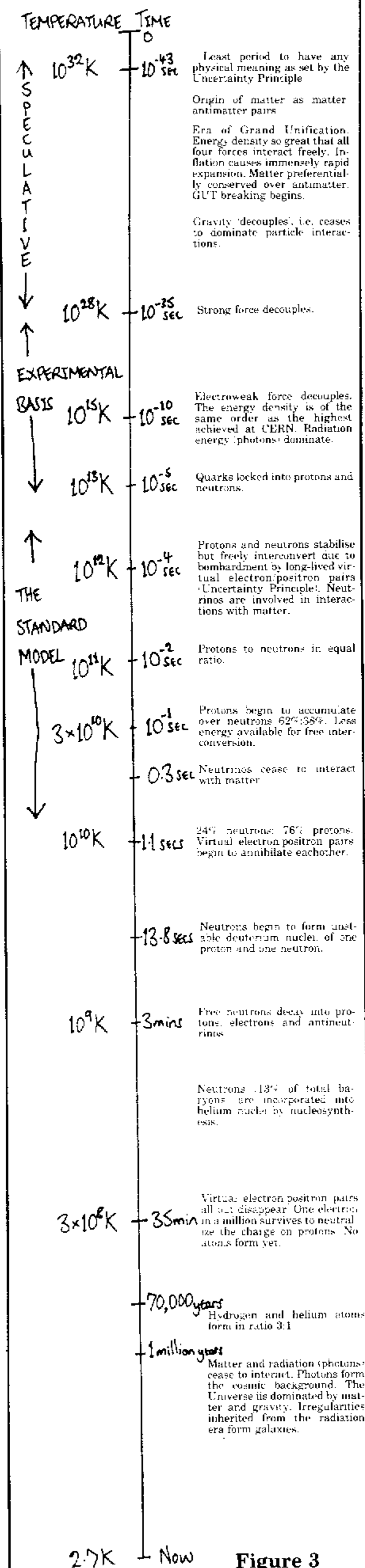


Figure 3

From the archives

TROTSKY ON THE USA AND EUROPE

In this issue of *Marxist Review* we are reproducing articles written by Leon Trotsky about the relation of the United States to European capitalism. We are doing so because of the most recent developments in the world crisis of capitalism.

The crash of the world's stock markets, and the run on the dollar, mean that the antagonisms within world capitalism must burst through, and that a vicious trade war, which contains the prospect of armed conflict, is underway. This is creating the conditions for the socialist revolution to be carried out in Europe and in the USA as well.

The articles reproduced here were written by Trotsky in the late 1920's and early 1930's. This was a period when the USA had established its position in the forefront of world imperialism, whilst the 'old' European imperialist powers, battered by the First World War, were in enormous crisis and turmoil. Trotsky shows the interdependence of the USA and the European capitalist countries, and how contained within this interdependence was ferocious competition. He shows how this dialectical relationship, rather than emphasising the 'strength' of the United States, must

accelerate the development of the world, and US, imperialism.

Since the time when Trotsky wrote this material, the whole situation has become transformed. The ending of the second imperialist world war in 1945 required the establishment of an international credit system based on the dollar to revive the European (and Japanese) capitalist economies, and attempt to hold in check a revolutionary working class, and hold back the national liberation movements in the colonial countries. But with the credit system going completely out of control, the USA has become the 'sick man of the world' with the largest debt of any country. The US economy is heading for disaster, and with it the economy of the whole world. That is what is behind the crisis on the share and currency markets, and that is what is making today's situation so profoundly revolutionary.

An understanding of the fundamental historical relations between US and European imperialism is essential for an understanding of what is happening in the world crisis today.

The first piece is an extract from Trotsky's article 'Europe and America', written in 1924.



Theodore Roosevelt addressing US troops imported into Panama

America's full and complete entry into active world imperialist policy does not date back to yesterday. If we try to fix the date, we might say that the decisive breaking point in the policy of the US coincides approximately with the turn of the century. The Spanish American war occurred in 1898 when America seized Cuba, thereby assuring herself of the key to Panama, and consequently the entry to the Pacific Ocean, China, and the continent of Asia. In 1900, the last year of the nineteenth century, the export of American manufactured goods for the first time in US history exceeded the import of manufactured articles. This already made America, so to speak book-keepingly, a country with an active world policy. In 1901 or 1902 America secured for herself the province of Panama in the Republic of Columbia. In these matters America had a policy of her own which was applied in the Hawaiian Islands and, I think, in Samoa, but in any case, it was applied to Panama and is now being applied in Mexico. Whenever the transatlantic republic finds it necessary to seize foreign territory, to subjugate it, or to conclude some slave treaty, it stages a small native revolution and then appears on the scene in order to pacify and quell it – precisely in the manner in which General Dawes has now appeared to tranquillize and pacify Europe, which has been ruined by a war waged with the assistance of this very same America. (Editor's note: The Dawes Plan was an international scheme announced on April 9, 1924, designed to revise German war reparations payments,

stabilise the German economy, and end French occupation of the Ruhr. The plan was named after General Charles G. Dawes, who headed the commission of 'experts' from the United States, Britain, France, Italy and Belgium that drafted the arrangements. Accepted by the German government, it went into effect the following month). In this manner the US seized Panama in 1902 and proceeded (in 1904) to dig the canal. By 1914 they had dug it in the rough; while in 1920 the already fully completed Panama Canal opened up what is truly the greatest chapter in the history of America and the whole terrestrial globe. The United States has introduced a drastic correction into geography in the interests and aims of American imperialism....As you know the industry of the US is concentrated in the Eastern part, on the Atlantic side. The country's west is predominantly agricultural. The entire pull of the US, more correctly its main pull, is in the direction of China with the latter's population of 400,000,000 and the country's countless, uncharted and limitless resources. Through the Panama Canal, American industry has opened up a waterway for itself from the east to the west, shortening the distance by several thousand miles. These dates – 1898, 1900, 1914 and 1920 – are the dates marking the open entry of the US into the highroad of world brigandage, i.e. the road of imperialism. The decisive signpost along this road was the First World War. As you will recall, the US intervened in the war towards the very end. For three years the US did no fighting. More than that, two years before intervening in the war, President Wilson announced that there could be no talk of American participation in the bloody dogfight among the madmen of Europe. Up to a certain moment the US remained content with rationally coining into dollars the blood of European 'madmen'. But in that hour when fear arose lest the war conclude with victory for Germany, the most dangerous future rival, the United States intervened actively. This decided the outcome of the struggle.

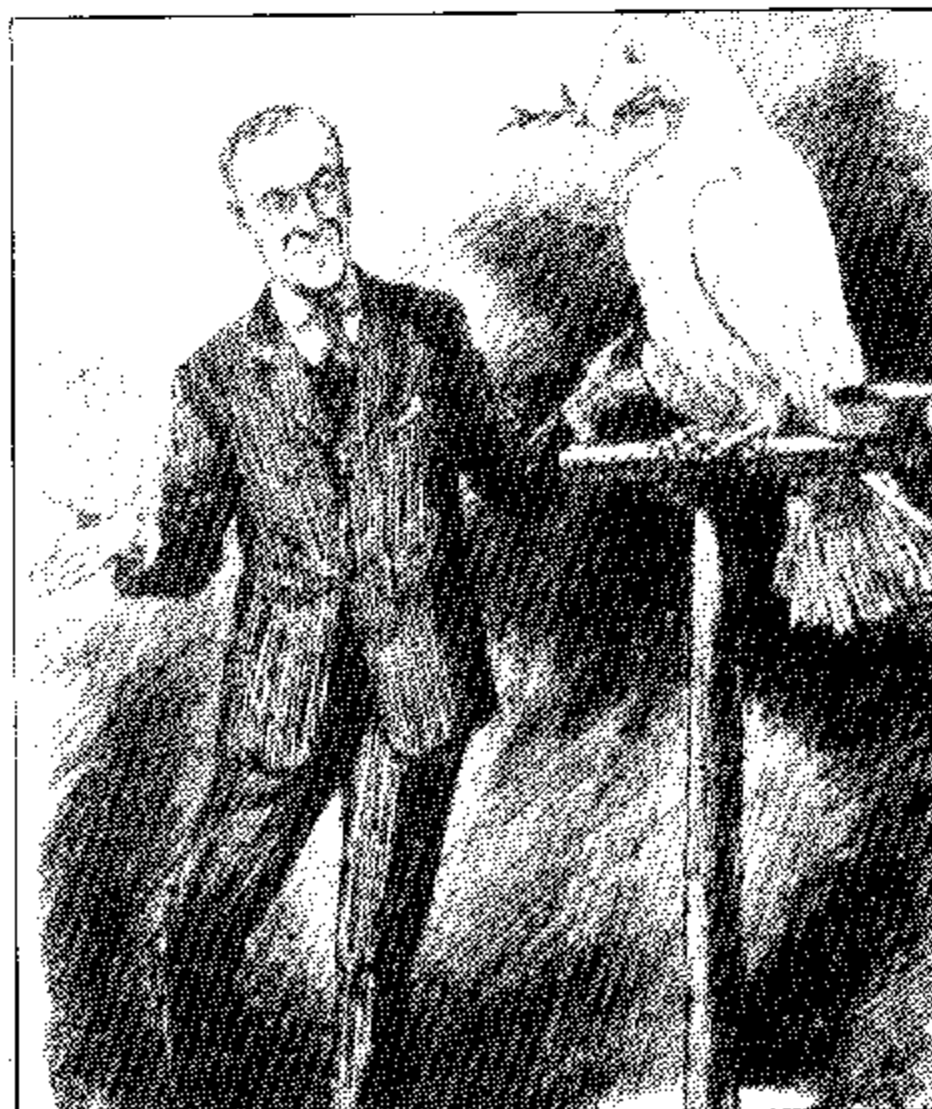
And the noteworthy thing is this, that while America avariciously fed the war with her industry and avariciously intervened in order to help crush a likely and dangerous competitor, she has nevertheless retained a reputation for pacifism. This is one of the most interesting paradoxes, one of the most curious jokes of history – jokes from which we did not and do not derive much merriment. American imperialism is in essence ruthlessly rude, predatory, in the full sense of the word, and criminal. But owing to the special conditions of American development, it has the possibility of draping itself in the toga of pacifism. This is not at all done in the manner of the imperialist parvenues of the old world where everything remains transparent. In the case of the US, however, its bourgeoisie



Dawes.



Mexican cartoon of 1912 showing Mexican leaders pawning chunks of Mexico to US imperialism



Cartoon of Woodrow Wilson: US imperialism developed behind the guise of 'pacifism'

and government, thanks to the special conditions of America's development, this same pacifist mask seems to have become so glued on the imperialist visage that it cannot be torn off. Why? Because the US is so hard to reach. On the right there is the Atlantic Ocean and on the left, the Pacific (even the ocean is pacifist!) – how can it be reached? England is an island and that is one of the basic reasons for its peculiarities and at the same time it is one of England's basic advantages. The United States likewise represents a gigantic island in relation to the Old World grouping on the planet. England barricades herself with her fleet. But should the line of the English fleet be broken, the British Isles lie defenceless, they can be cut in two by a cavalry sabre, so narrow is this strip of land. But try to cut across America, the United States! This island possesses the advantages of Russia – her vast spaces. Thanks to its colossal distances, the United States, even without a fleet, would be almost invulnerable to Europe or Japan. Here is the basic geographic reason for the pacifist mask which has become a second face. Actually America, unlike Europe, unlike all the others, does not create an army....And if America does undertake to create an army, it is only because it is under the compulsion to do so. Who compelled it? Barbarians did, the Kaiser, the German imperialists, people who were not educated in Presbyterian or Quaker virtues. Another reason for pacifist virtue must be sought, as I said, in history. The US entered the world arena late, after the whole world had already been seized and divided by the old imperialist powers. The imperialist progress of the US therefore proceeds under the banner of the 'freedom of the seas', 'open doors' and so on. Thus when America is compelled to engage in acts of open military criminality, the responsibility – in the eyes of the US population and to a certain degree in the eyes of mankind as a whole – falls upon all the other citizens of the planet but not on the US itself.

Wilson helped finish off Germany and then appeared, as you will recall, in Europe accoutred from head to toe in his Fourteen points, which promised universal well-being and the reign of peace, the right of nations to self-determination, punishment for such criminals as the Kaiser, and rewards to all virtuous people etc. The gospel according to Wilson! We all still remember it. And the whole of middle-class Europe, and workers too, by and large – the whole of worker-middle-class Europe i.e. worker-Menshevik Europe subsisted for many long months on the gospel according to Wilson. This provincial professor, summoned to represent American capitalism and dripping from blood up to his knees and elbows – for after all he incited the European slaughter – appeared in Europe as the apostle of pacifism and pacification. And everybody said: Wilson will restore Europe. However, Wilson did

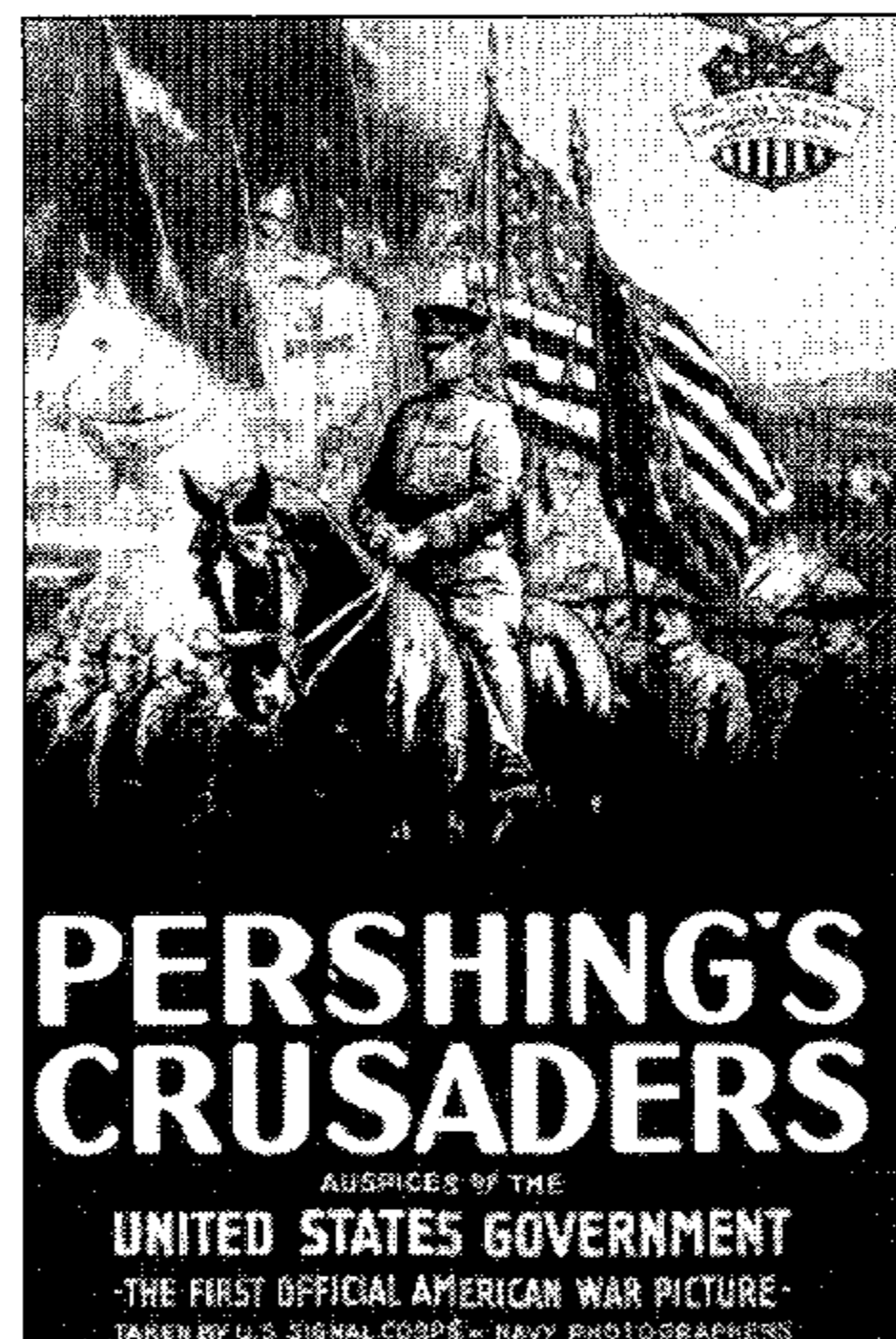
not succeed in accomplishing what Dawes, accompanied by a suite of bankers, now arrives to accomplish; and Wilson petulantly turned his back on Europe and returned to America. And great were the democratic-pacifist and social-democratic wailings and complaints about the insanity of the European bourgeoisie who refused to come to an agreement with Wilson and prevented him from attaining peace in European affairs.

Wilson was replaced by Warren G. Harding. The Republican Party came to power. There ensued in America a commercial-industrial boom based almost exclusively on the internal market i.e. on a temporary equilibrium between industry and agriculture, between the East and the West. This boom did not last long, approximately two years. Last year the boom tapered off and an unstable condition resulted, but in the spring of this year many obvious signs became manifest of a commercial-industrial crisis, which hit the agricultural sections of the US savagely. And, as always, the crisis gave a new quickening impulse to imperialism. As a result, US finance capital sent its representatives to Europe to finish the business which began so solidly with the imperialist war and was continued by the Versailles Peace i.e. the business of degrading and enslaving Europe economically.

What does American capitalism want? What is it seeking? It is seeking, we are told, stability; it wants to restore the European market; it wants to make Europe solvent. How? By what measures? And to what extent? After all, American capitalism is compelled not to render Europe capable of competition; it cannot allow England, and even more so Germany and France, particularly Germany, to regain the world markets inasmuch as American capitalism finds itself hemmed in, because it is now an exporting capitalism – exporting both commodities and capital. American capitalism is seeking world domination; it wants to establish an American imperialist autocracy all over our planet. This is what it wants. What will it do with Europe? It must, they say, pacify Europe. How? Under its leadership. And what does this mean? This means that Europe will be permitted to rise again, but within limits set in advance, with certain restricted sections of the world market allotted to it. American capitalism is now issuing commands, giving instructions to its diplomats. In exactly the same way it is preparing and is ready to issue instructions to European banks and trusts, to the European bourgeoisie as a whole....This is its aim. It will slice up the markets; it will regulate the activity of the European financiers and industrialists. If we wish to give a clear and precise answer to the question of what American imperialism wants, we must say: It wants to put capitalist Europe on rations....



US President Wilson



Behind Wilson's 'peace-loving' speeches lay the rise of US militarism

At the time when Trotsky wrote the above piece, he was engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the emerging Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR. By 1928, this struggle had come out into the open. Many of Trotsky's comrades in the Left Opposition had been exiled, expelled from the Communist Party or even driven to death. Trotsky himself was expelled from the Communist Party the previous year, had been exiled to Siberia, and was expelled from the USSR the year after.

In 1928 the Communist International (Comintern) held its Sixth Congress. The Comintern had been established after the October Revolution of 1917 to build revolutionary parties throughout the world to lead the struggle for power internationally. However, with the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy, it became, from 1925 onwards, an instrument for the counter-revolutionary policies of this bureaucracy. These policies could be summed up in the phrase 'socialism in one country' (the USSR), and, flowing from that, 'peaceful coexistence with imperialism'. With such a policy the Comintern had been responsible for the betrayal of the General Strike in Britain in 1926, by imposing a policy of 'All power to the General Council of the TUC' onto the young British Communist Party; and for the defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1927, by insisting on the capitulation of the Chinese Communist Party to the nationalist Kuomintang, resulting in the massacre of thousands of Chinese communists. Trotsky issued a merciless criticism of the 'Draft Programme of the Comintern', which appears in the book, *The Third International after Lenin*. We reproduce here the second part of this critique, entitled 'The United States of America and Europe'.

To characterize the first, fortunately discarded draft, it suffices to say that, so far as we recall, the name of the United States of America was not even mentioned in it. The essential problems of the imperialist epoch – which, because of the very character of this epoch, must be examined not only in their abstract and theoretical but also in their concrete and historical cross-section – were dissolved in the first draft into a lifeless schema of a capitalist country 'in general'. However, the new draft – and this, of course, is a serious step forward – now speaks of 'the shift of the economic centre of the world to the United States of America'; and of 'the transformation of the "Dollar Republic" into a world exploiter'; and finally, that the rivalry (the draft loosely says 'conflict') between North American and European capitalism, primarily British capitalism, 'is becoming the axis of the world conflicts'. It is already quite obvious today that a programme which did not contain a clear and precise definition of these basic facts and factors of the world situation would have nothing in common with the programme of the international revolutionary party.

Unfortunately, the essential facts and

tendencies of world development in the modern epoch which we have just indicated are merely mentioned by name in the text of the draft, grafted onto it, as it were, by way of theoretical back-writing, without having any internal connection with its entire structure and without leading to any conclusions about perspective or strategy.

America's *new* role in Europe since the capitulation of the German Communist Party, and the defeat of the German proletariat in 1923, has been left absolutely unevaluated. No attempt at all has been made to explain that the period of the 'stabilisation', 'normalisation', and 'pacification' of Europe as well as the 'regeneration' of the social democracy, has proceeded in close material and ideological connection with the first steps of American intervention in European affairs.

Moreover, it has not been shown that the inevitable further development of American expansion, the contraction of the markets of European capital, including the European market itself, entail the greatest military, economic and revolutionary convulsions, beside which all those of the past fade into the background.

Again, neither has it been made clear that the further inexorable pressure of the United States will reduce capitalist Europe to constantly more limited rations in a world economy; and this, of course, implies not a mitigation, but on the contrary, a monstrous sharpening of inter-state relations in Europe accompanied by furious paroxysms of military conflict, for states as well as classes fight even more fiercely for a meagre and a diminishing ration than for a lavish and growing one.

The draft does not explain that the internal chaos of the state antagonisms in Europe renders hopeless any sort of serious and successful resistance to the constantly more centralised North American republic; and that the resolution of the European chaos through the Soviet United States of Europe is one of the first tasks of the proletarian revolution. The latter (precisely because of the existence of barriers) is immeasurably closer in Europe than in America and will, therefore, most likely have to defend itself from the North American bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, no mention at all has been made of the fact (and this is just as important a phase of the same world problem) that it is precisely the international strength of the United States and her irresistible expansion arising from it, that compels her to include the powder magazines of the whole world into the foundations of her structure, i.e. all the antagonisms between the East and the West, the class struggle in Old Europe, the uprisings of the colonial masses, and all wars and revolutions. On the one hand, this transforms North American capitalism into the basic counter-revolutionary force of the modern



American imperialist forces landing in France, 1944

epoch, constantly more interested in the maintenance of 'order' in every corner of the terrestrial globe; and on the other hand, this prepares the ground for a gigantic revolutionary explosion in this already dominant and still expanding world imperialist power. The logic of world relations indicates that the time of this explosion cannot lag very far behind that of the proletarian revolution in Europe.

Our elucidation of the dialectics of the interrelations between America and Europe have made us the target in recent years of the most diversified accusations, charging us with the pacifist denial of the existence of European contradictions, with the acceptance of Kautsky's theory of ultra-imperialism, and many other sins. There is no need to dwell here upon these 'accusations', which are at best due to a complete ignorance of the real processes and of our attitude towards them. We cannot refrain from observing, however, that it would be hard to waste more effort in confusing and muddling up this most vital world problem than was wasted (incidentally, by the authors of the draft programme) in their petty struggle against our formulation of the problem. Our formulation has, however, been entirely confirmed by the course of events.

Even recently, efforts have been made in leading communist organs to minimize – on paper – the significance of American hegemony by alluding to the impending commercial and industrial crisis in the United States. We cannot here enter into an examination of the special problem of the duration of the American crisis and its possible depth.

This is a question of conjecture and not of programme.

It goes without saying that in our opinion the inevitability of a crisis is entirely beyond doubt; nor, considering the present world scope of American capitalism, do we think it is out of the question that the very next crisis will attain extremely great depth and sharpness. But there is no justification whatsoever for the attempt to conclude from this that the hegemony of North America will be restricted or weakened. Such a conclusion can lead only to the grossest strategical errors.

Just the contrary is the case. *In the period of crisis the hegemony of the United States will operate more completely, more openly and more ruthlessly than in the period of boom.* The United States will seek to overcome and extricate herself from her difficulties and maladies primarily at the expense of Europe, regardless of whether this occurs in Asia, Canada, South America, Australia, or Europe itself, or whether this takes place peacefully or through war.

We must clearly understand that if the first period of American intervention had the effect of stabilisation and pacification in Europe, which to a considerable extent still remains in force today, and may even recur episodically and become stronger (particularly in the event of new defeats of the proletariat), the general line of American policy, particularly in time of its own economic difficulties and crisis, will engender the deepest convulsions in Europe as well as over the entire world.

From this we draw the not unimpor-

tant conclusion that there will be no more lack of revolutionary situations in the next decade than in the past decade. That is why it is of utmost importance to understand correctly the mainsprings of development so that we may not be caught unawares by their action. If in the past decade the main source of revolutionary situations lay in the direct consequences of the imperialist war, in the second post-war decade the most important source of revolutionary upheavals will be the interrelations of Europe and America. A major crisis in the United States will strike the tocsin for new wars and revolutions. We repeat: there will be no lack of revolutionary situations. The entire question hinges upon the international party of the proletariat, the maturity and fighting ability of the Comintern, and the correctness

of its strategic position and tactical methods.

In the draft programme of the Comintern absolutely no expression is to be found of this trend of thought. A fact of such great importance, it would seem, as 'the shifting of the world economic centre to the United States', is glossed over by a casual journalistic remark. It is, of course, utterly impossible to justify this on the ground of lack of space, for what should be allowed space in a programme if not the fundamental questions? Besides, it should be added that too much space is devoted in the programme to questions of secondary and tertiary importance, to say nothing of the general literary looseness and innumerable repetitions by elimination of which the programme could be reduced at least one-third.



Leon Trotsky

Trotsky was exiled to Prinkipo in Turkey in 1929. By 1933 the treacherous 'ultra-left turn' of the Stalinists, under which they refused to unite the working class in Germany against the Nazis, resulted in Hitler coming to power without opposition. As a consequence of this historic betrayal, Trotsky called for the building of a new, Fourth International, which was founded in 1938. During that year, Trotsky was visited by an American Trotskyist, Arne Swabeck, to discuss the perspectives of the young Communist League of America (later to become the Socialist Workers Party). We reproduce below an extract from that discussion, entitled 'Uneven and Combined Development and the Role of American Imperialism'. Here Trotsky discusses the consequences for America of the development of the struggle of American and world imperialism.

Comrade Trotsky: I find this material excellent. It contains certain formulations which are not entirely clear to me or which appear to me not to be entirely exact. But they are of little consequence. In connection with the main thoughts presented I only want to touch on the following questions:

The document is built upon the law of uneven development. This unevenness during certain periods offered advantages to the United States; but it has now commenced to become unfavourable for the US.

I believe it will be to our interest to define this law a little, especially because the Stalinists have treated it scandalously and still do so today. As a law it is rather vague; it is more of a historical reality. It represents the idea that not all countries simultaneously pass through the same development but that they pass through this development in different forms and tempo etc. The law can have a thousand different interpretations.

One of the most important interpretations which leads to misunderstandings is the following: up until the imperialist epoch England had hegemony (Stalin says that the law did not exist then and that Marx and Engels did not know it!). During this epoch the unevenness was much greater than today; we need only remember the contrast England-India of that time. The differences were then ten times as great as today. The development of India was an entirely different one from England, America etc. But through uneven and different forms of development the capitalist world has become more uniform. We do not need to deny the existence of the law but we must explain it. In one case I have attempted to do so by the formula of 'combined development'. Uneven development consists in the main in the fact that the different countries pass through different epochs. Advanced and backward countries - that is the most elementary expression of the law. Evolution, however, has also shown that the

backward countries supplement their backwardness with the latest advances. From this emerges the combined development which I have proved for Russia as an example in the *History of the Russian Revolution*.

In America we have another kind of combined development. We have the most advanced industrial development together with the most backward – for all classes – ideology.

The internal colonisation, which is not developed in the draft material, was the basis on which the retarded consciousness of the workers existed. When we develop our theses attentively we will proceed from the law of uneven development and also arrive at the law of combined development.

It seems to me that the agrarian question does not come fully to its right in this draft, particularly in its connection with the aims and methods of American imperialism. Let us suppose that there will not be a revolution in Europe, that is, that the Social Democracy with the aid of the Stalinists so demoralises the proletariat that fascism becomes the ruling power. It is not written anywhere that Europe must develop further forward; it can also decay. We believe that the possibilities for revolution are great. Taken abstractly, Hitler of course will not overcome the crisis. Nevertheless the decay can last for decades.

The United States displaces Europe on the world market, it becomes dominant in China and in India: as a historical perspective, as a variant, and especially as a theoretical analysis, this can be accepted just as well as other variants. China and India still offer great exploitation and expansion possibilities and represent almost half of humanity. But what will happen when capital commences its work there? These countries immediately become exporters of agricultural products. They will completely displace the American farmer. When American capital develops China and India economically, it simultaneously condemns the American farmer to death. It will produce a revolution in the agricultural world market. The cheapening of raw materials and foodstuffs will immediately increase – thanks to the great labour power within the Asiatic continent which can remain satisfied on a much lower standard of living.

England sacrificed her farmers in the interest of her capitalist development. Why should not America do the same? It cannot afford to do that. We have the example of Germany: agriculture is the barrier to finance capital. If the German bourgeoisie had left the doors wide open for the agricultural products of the world market, it would have very much increased the competitive ability of German industry and offered German capitalism immeasurable possibilities for profits. But the social balance in the country could not have been maintained. Hence the German capitalists need the farmers, not because of their products,



Homeless US farmer: agriculture was devastated by policies of US capitalism

but because of their rural idiocy.

That is also the case in America. When the revolution begins, American capitalism will be compelled to hang on to maintaining the farmers. But in order to broaden and deepen its development America will have to sacrifice its farmers. That is the great contradiction.

Must America pass through an epoch of social reformism? This question is touched on in the draft and answered in the sense that it cannot yet be definitely decided but that it to a large extent depends upon the Communist Party. By and large that is correct but it is not sufficient. Here we come once more to the laws of uneven and combined development. In Russia the fact that the proletariat had not yet gone through the democratic school which could finally lead to the seizure of power was advanced in rebuttal to the permanent revolution and the proletarian seizure of power. But the Russian proletariat passed through the democratic period in the course of eight months; if we count from the time of the Duma, in a period of eleven to twelve years. In England it is centuries and in America also the dirty mess lasts quite long. The unevenness expresses itself also in the fact that different stages are not just jumped over but are experienced in very rapid tempo,

as the democratic stage in Russia.

We can assume that when fascism in Italy expires, the first wave to follow will be a democratic one. But that condition could only last months; it will not remain for years.

Since the American proletariat as a proletariat has not made any great democratic struggles, since it has not gained or fought for social legislation, and as it remains under growing economic and political pressure, it is to be assumed that the democratic phase of the struggle will require a certain period of time. But it will not be as it was in Europe, an epoch of decades; rather, perhaps, a period only of years or, by feverish developments, of months. The question of tempo must be clarified, and we must also admit that the democratic stage is not inevitable. We cannot predict that the new working-class stage will begin next year, within three years, five years, or perhaps not until after ten years. But we can say with certainty that the moment the American proletariat constitutes itself as an independent party, even if at first under a democratic-reformist banner, it will pass quite rapidly through this stage.

About the Communist Party: one can assert that the contradiction between the technical-economic base and the poli-



German unemployed in 1931: the Communist Party missed the revolutionary situation eight years earlier

tical superstructure finds its expression in the fact that we have in this country the smallest, the most foolish and the most backward Communist Party. That is the crowning height of this contradiction. And while capitalism in America united all the advantages of world capitalism up until the very recent period, the Socialist Party has united within itself all the negative sides of reformism without having any of its advantages (they are scoundrels without a mass base). The American Communist Party has taken over the worst traits of Stalinism. That means that the Communist Party belongs more to the past than to the future and that the Left Opposition steps on the scene as the herald of the future. It is not precluded that the Left Opposition in America will be the first to be compelled to assume the function of the second party. We do not need to proclaim that today positively, but as a perspective we must take it into consideration.

Comrade Swabeck: The criticism will help us very much. It is not our opinion that a possibility will exist for a special development of reformism and particularly not in view of the tempo of present general developments. The perspective of European decay appears to me rather improbable, especially when we take into

account that the revolution will develop in America and have its effect upon Europe simultaneously.

Comrade Otto: In Germany we have discussed this question several times in connection with the formula: advance to socialism or degenerate into barbarism. This question is still being discussed with great interest.

Comrade Trotsky: It is a question of whether we pose this perspective for centuries or for decades. If for centuries, it passes beyond historical comprehension. But if posed for decades, arguments can be found – if we assume that capitalism remains; if we assume that fascism becomes victorious, the working class is beheaded, is demoralised, and its vanguard bleeds to death in some unsuccessful putsches; the Soviet Union falls because of economic contradictions, the crimes of the bureaucracy, and the moral effect of the victory of the German counter-revolution. We can hardly grasp what impression the breakdown of the Soviet Union would have on the proletariat. It would become frightfully demoralised. Disillusionment would possess the working class for whole generations. Anarchist putsches and terrorist acts would flare up, but the planned, organised struggles of the working class would be suppressed and disappear for

decades. Large sections would famish and perish, the standard of living would be brought down to a frightfully low level. It is a decaying capitalism. We do not know how far the process can go. In this decaying capitalism there will be found forms of advancing capitalism, but reappearing in crippled fashion. The farmers become half-barbaric and masses of the unemployed are thrown on the land as agricultural labourers. However, production as a whole continues on a capitalist basis; enlarged reproduction remains, only the coefficients will not be 2, 3 or 4, but merely $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ etc. In other words, negative enlarged reproduction, that is, diminished reproduction on a capitalist basis. Capitalism can return to a precapitalist basis. How long a time that would require one can, of course, not say. When Europe is thrown backward to become the continent of decay, that would naturally not mean the impossibility of socialism in America. A socialist victory in America would again have a returning effect on Europe. Combined development would, so to speak, begin a new historical chapter.

Look at Germany. In 1923 the possibility for a seizure of power existed. Since the October defeat ten years have passed by; the capitalist system experiences a terrific crisis, unemployment, agrarianisation of the proletariat, pauperisation of the farmers. And at the end of these ten years stands the emergence of the fascist power. That is how, so to speak, the rebound of an aborted revolutionary development appears.

Later additional remarks: 'The growing contradictions and difficulties of American imperialism within the world arena will not tend to weaken its power, its domination, and its economic weight as against the other rival powers. On the contrary. As in the period of growing capitalism the other nations were in a large measure dependent upon England, more so in the stage of decay will the other powers be dependent upon America.'

When Trotsky made the analysis above, Stalinism was leading the working class internationally into the greatest defeats it had ever known. It was on this basis that the Fourth International was founded, fifty years ago this year, to prepare for the tide to turn the other way. Today the situation is completely transformed. The working class is a historic force that has suffered no major defeats in any of the major capitalist countries, including the USA, since the Second World War. And alongside this there has erupted the most powerful movement against imperialism in the colonial countries that has ever been seen. Stalinism is more desperate, reactionary and discredited than ever before. Now is the period for completing Trotsky's work of building the Fourth International in every country, to lead the working class to victory over imperialism once and for all.

Book review:

A brave woman's contribution to the Palestinian struggle

CHILDREN OF THE SIEGE, by Pauline Cutting, Pan Books. Price £3.50.

THIS book is a testimony to Pauline Cutting's courage and the sacrifice and heroism of the Palestinian people. She spent 18 months in a Palestinian hospital in the Lebanon. Her account is based on her diary and is well and simply written.

In describing the daily struggle to care for casualties in the emergency room, in the 'intensive care unit' and on ward rounds, and to carry out operations, a picture of the bombardment and slaughter heaped on the Palestinian refugees in Bourg al Barajneh in Beirut emerges.

The tremendous resistance and resourcefulness of the

men, women and children in the camps comes through. She flew to Beirut on December 6, 1985 in answer to a Medical Aid for Palestinians advertisement.

She was immediately asked to work in Haifa Hospital, a converted convalescent home, as chief surgeon. Gaza hospital the main surgical hospital in Sabra camp was burnt down in 1982 by Amal at the time of the Israeli invasion.

At first the casualties were not heavy. Cutting learnt much about the history of Lebanon from her Dutch friend Ben who had been there since 1982.

She was invited to peoples' homes in the camp. One old man who spoke fluent English he had learnt in Palestine under British rule, explained how he and his fami-

ly had been forced to flee from Tashiha in northern Palestine in 1948.

"We don't hate the Jews", he said, "We lived in peace with the Palestinian Jews before the Zionists came. We hate what the Zionists have done to us"

"...We felt betrayed by the British... They handed over their weapons to the Israelis after the partition of Palestine in 1947, then left us at their mercy." Cutting replied: 'I am sorry that my government has treated you so badly'.

On May 26, 1986 the situation hotted up and casualties flowed in. In 3 days they coped with 50 wounded, many seriously, and received four dead. That day the nurses cleared out a 4 metre square stockroom and sarcastically called it the "inten-

sive care unit". They had only one qualified nurse for each 12 hour shift.

Thereafter 10 wounded a day came to the hospital. On May 31, there was a direct hit on the hospital, and all the patients were moved downstairs. On one Saturday morning 1500 bombs rained down on the camp in 3 hours.

'We tried to save cases that seemed hopeless, partly through naivety and partly because occasionally we had an unexpected triumph when a wounded man survived despite our predictions.

'I later heard that this was a great boost to the morale of the camp. The people of Bourg al Barajneh did not expect miracles from Haifa Hospital but they trusted us to do our utmost for our patients.'



Haifa hospital after bombing



Pauline Cutting and her team fight to save the life of a shot Palestinian woman

In October, the fighting started again and they had to operate nearly every day. By November, there was no electricity in the camp and the hospital was running for four hours a day on diesel generators.

Bourj al Barajneh had been under siege for one month. People were dying at the rate of one a day. The hospital went on saving lives daily. The stretcher bearers were very courageous and would run up the rough paths in the camp despite fear of bombs and sniper's bullets to get the wounded in quickly.

The people were very generous in giving fresh blood. Time and again multiply wounded and shocked casualties were rescued with early operation and blood transfusion. The winter was cold and wet and illness such as flu, pneumonia and dysentery spread in the camps. By the end of December, to escape from the bombing, people were hiding in

underground shelters which were full of garbage and rats. Scabies and lice were rife.

By January 19, 1987 everyone was slowly starving. People were reduced to eating dog and catmeat. Cutting was so upset when she saw a crowd of women and children at the hospital begging for food that she cried. Her friend Souad said: 'Please don't cry. This is our life.'

She wrote: 'But what had they done to deserve it, I thought, exiled from their country, unwanted, kicked around by host nations? The misery that I was experiencing for the first time was the daily lot of these people.'

'They had endured it over and over again in the last 40 years. And it was not of their making. It was grossly unjust.' Friday February 13 was another terrible day, with six dead, and 18 wounded, including five bilateral amputees.

On January 23, Pauline

Cutting and her colleagues had issued a declaration to the world's media over the radio from the foreign health workers in Bourj al Barajneh camp detailing the dire situation. They later issued two further declarations.

Not till February 18 did Amal allow the first few women to venture out of the camp to get food. And it was not till April 8 that the Syrian forces eventually arrived and the shooting stopped for the first time in five and a half months.

In the six weeks they took to come, 18 women died and 50 women had been wounded travelling across 'death passage' to get food. Cutting noted that many blamed the Syrians for their role. She pointed out earlier: 'Although some Arab governments had condemned the camp war, the only ones really making serious efforts to find a solution to the conflict were the Iranians...'

'But I think the Iranians

also felt a genuine sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians beleaguered in the camps.'

Cutting and her colleagues stayed till the siege was over in April. On February 13, Jim Muir of the BBC, had asked her whether she wanted to be rescued. She writes: 'The thought had not crossed my mind but, now it had been put to us, the idea of abandoning our patients and our colleagues and friends was so preposterous, I said, "No I'm not coming out until it's finished".'

She told her friend Ben 'We may die here you know.' She realised the importance of their work. 'Haifa Hospital remained a symbol of resistance in the camp and we were determined not to stop working, but everyone knew we were still desperately short of fuel, medicines and gauze.' This is a clear account of a brave woman's contribution to the Palestinian people and of their struggle.

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VOLUME 2, ISSUE No. 4, APRIL 1987

- Views: Yugoslav Workers Take Action; Defending the Right to education; Kinnock and the Arts
- April 1917 – Lenin and the 'April Thesis'. By Martin Booth
- Ninth Congress of the WRP: International Perspectives
Perspectives on the Soviet Union and the Political Revolution
Document from M. Blakey
- Occupied Palestine. Picture Spread

VOLUME 2, ISSUE No. 5, MAY 1987

- Views: After the Palestine National Council; Broadwater Farm: Show Trials; Fast Breeding Nuclear Danger
- May Day Manifesto
- In Defence of Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution.
By Mike Driver
- Ninth Congress of the WRP: British Perspectives;
Perspectives on Youth
- Statement of the Central Committee of the WRP, 6.12.1986
- Theses on the Eastern Question. Fourth Congress of the Third International, 5.12.1922

VOLUME 2, ISSUE No. 6, JUNE 1987

- Workers Revolutionary Party Election Manifesto
- Views: Election '87 – Where They Stand; Wanted a Policy for the Arts.
- In Defence of the Iranian Revolution
- Pacifist Warmongers
- International Committee Correspondence
- Once Again the ILP by Leon Trotsky

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- Views: The Korean Revolution; Kinnock's Apologists; The Big Theorem; Blueprint for Destruction
- The July Days. By Keith Garnham
- Reply to Savas Michael from the Central Committee of the WRP
- Miners Defiant. Picture Spread
- Book Reviews: Science, War and the Nation State; 'Philosophy' Reaches a New Low

VOLUME 2, ISSUE No. 8, AUGUST 1987

- Views: Iran Makes Renegades Run; Miners Expose Defeatists; Selling off the Nation's Treasures
- Special Feature on Trotsky in Denmark
- A Radio Message to the United States by Leon Trotsky
- Questions for Communists by Leon Trotsky
- Forward to the the 11th Congress of the ICFI!
Ninth Congress of the WRP: International Correspondence

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- Views: Struggle for Power in the Philippines;
General Council Isolated at TUC; Discovering Eisentstein
- Interview with James Mndaweni, President of NACTU
Address to the TUC by James Mndaweni
Statement on the Meeting Between NACTU and PAC
- The Anti-Communism of the British SWP. By Geoff Williams
- On the Mathematical Manuscripts of Karl Marx. By Oliver Woolnough
- Lenin and Trotsky on Organisations of Workers' Power (Soviets)
- Picture Spread: Defend Youth from State Attacks

VOLUME 2, ISSUE No. 10, NOVEMBER 1987

- Editorial: Build the International Committee of the Fourth International! Forward to the World October!
- Lenin and the Theory and Practice of Revolution. By Ray Athrow
- The Co-leader of the Russian Revolution – Leon Trotsky.
By Geoff Williams
- The Bolshevik Party in the October Revolution. By Martin Booth
- Gorbachev's 'Trotskyists' – Statement of the CC of the WRP
- Picture Spread: Posters of the Russian Revolution

VOLUME 2, ISSUE No. 11, DECEMBER 1987

- Editorial: After the 1987 Crash
- Views: Gorbachev, the Soviet Union and Bonapartism; Build Community Councils to Defend Public Services
- Statement of the 11th Congress of the ICFI, November 14-15, 1987
- The Conquest of Power. By Dave Hyde
- The Bolsheviks' Policy on the National Question. By Steve Colling
- In Defence of Dialectical Materialism. By Mike Driver
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THE
News
Line●

Israelis reject EEC

THE Israeli cabinet has today rejected the recommendations and demands of the twelve European Economic Community foreign ministers.

The ministers had met with King Hussein of Jordan to discuss the prospects for an international Middle East peace conference.

The Foreign Ministers said that they simply dis-

played "basic" system, "unrealistic and demanding" steps to the traditional international law and so on.

The EEC had already made two protests about Israeli tactics through the UN, but Israel, it already called for an international conference UN.

Rebels Hamas supporters to discuss the crisis in occupied territories.

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