

socialist

REVIEW

Monthly Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

20 February - 13 March



1987 £ 2.00

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Shock waves from Poland

**INSIDE: Zionism, Rail
strike, Rape, and
more....**

A second year of falling wages.

Last summer the government and the CBI launched a campaign to persuade workers to accept pay increases of less than five per cent through this winter and the rest of 1982. The cabinet added its weight to the offensive by declaring a cash limit policy for the public services of four per cent. So far most workers have had pay increases of five per cent or more, but very few have got as much as ten per cent. So, as inflation is running at 12 per cent, just about everyone has been forced to accept a cut in real take-home pay -- and this is for the second year running.

The Tories will not be unhappy with this level of settlements and the extent to which expectations have fallen without an incomes policy.

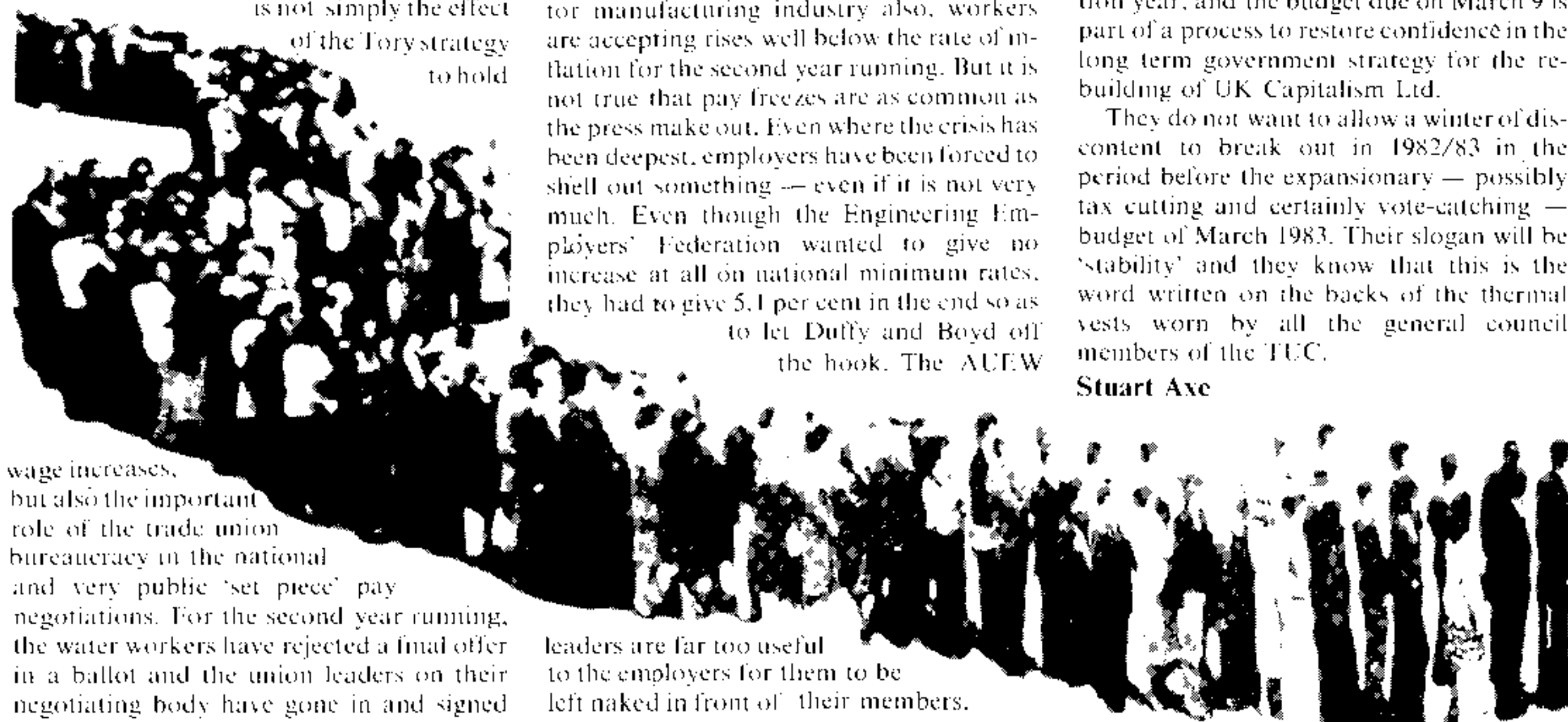
Three million unemployed

A series of key statistics released in January reveal the extent of the problems that workers face. The official unemployment figure went past three million. The Department of Employment also published figures showing that the number of days lost through strikes in 1981 was only a third of the average for the last ten years. And the number of strikes was less than in any year since 1941.

The provisional total of days lost last year was almost 4.2 million. This compares with 12 million in 1980 and a yearly average over the last decade of nearly 13 million. About a quarter of the days lost in 1981 were due to the civil servants' dispute, while the February 1981 miners' strike and four stoppages in the car industry accounted for another 15 per cent.

This is the background to the current state of pay bargaining in the country. In the foreground are the recent deals for the miners, at Ford, in the water industry and for council workers, and the bitter dispute on the railways.

What we have seen in recent weeks is not simply the effect of the Tory strategy to hold



wage increases, but also the important role of the trade union bureaucracy in the national and very public 'set piece' pay negotiations. For the second year running, the water workers have rejected a final offer in a ballot and the union leaders on their negotiating body have gone in and signed the deal -- this year at 9.1 per cent.

At Ford, the voting on the final offer was made into a complete farce by the way in which Ron Todd of the TGWU had already guaranteed the settlement to the company. He wasn't going to let his members get in his way so the deal was done at 7.4 per cent and with a bunch of productivity proposals as the sting in the tail.

It is widely reported that the council workers had 'breached' the government's cash limit of four per cent with flat-rate £4.60 settlement worth an average of seven per cent. This is what the local authority employers and the union negotiators want us to believe, but it is not true. The cash limits are placed by central government on local authority expenditure. The limits are therefore placed on total expenditure and consequently on increases on the *total* pay bill, not basic rates.

In fact, last time round when the council workers' unions negotiated for November 1980, the basic rates went up by around eight per cent. But later -- in April 1981 -- it turned out that the total pay bill for the local government employers had only risen by two per cent. This was because a lot of jobs were cut, overtime was reduced and bonuses cut back. So as job loss continues among council workers, this year's deal will be comfortably inside the cash limited increases on the total pay bill.

This has lessons for all workers in the public services. It means that union leaders in the health service, and for teachers, civil servants and council white-collar workers -- all of whom have negotiations coming up shortly -- there will be continued acquiescence to further demanding in return for deals that apparently 'break' four per cent, but are still five or six per cent adrift from the rate of inflation.

Private sector manufacturing

In engineering and the rest of private sector manufacturing industry also, workers are accepting rises well below the rate of inflation for the second year running. But it is not true that pay freezes are as common as the press make out. Even where the crisis has been deepest, employers have been forced to shell out something -- even if it is not very much. Even though the Engineering Employers' Federation wanted to give no increase at all on national minimum rates, they had to give 5.1 per cent in the end so as to let Duffy and Boyd off the hook. The AUEW

leaders are far too useful to the employers for them to be left naked in front of their members.

But while five per cent has now become a

common settlement level throughout engineering, there are wide variations depending on the uneven impact of the recession and, in some cases, the willingness by some workers to 'have a go' despite the prevailing winds. Engineering workers at Sulzer in Leeds won 9.5 per cent increases after a four week strike. Refinery workers at Tate and Lyle got 9.2 per cent. Engineering workers at Fenner in Hull got seven per cent after a short strike. It has been reported that 1,000 workers at Angelsey Aluminium have signed a two-year deal giving nine per cent from November 1981 and nine per cent from November 1982.

Such increases have to be compared however with proposed pay freezes at Hoover, British Airways, British Steel, and a pay freeze settlement at Crane Fruehauf. But even pay freezes can deceive the eye. Figures released in the Department of Employment's *New Earnings Survey* for 1981 show that average earnings rose by nearly ten per cent in British Steel during the period of their six month pay freeze last year. This was because the corporation increased bonus earnings by a considerable amount while basic rates were held back and yet more jobs cut.

Fear of the future

Employers are still very uncertain about how far the Thatcher government has shifted the balance of power in the workplaces. Many don't think the shift is permanent and some think that the gains made by employers in the last two years might be reversed if there is a period of sustained economic recovery. The more intelligent employers are frightened that 'macho' managers might provoke fight-backs and that 'macho' ministers -- like Tebbit -- might make the mistake of pushing the trade union bureaucracy onto the side of the workers.

While this doesn't appear likely at the moment on any significant scale, the CBI and the Tory leadership are still nervous about the next eighteen months. They are now laying their plans for 1983, the probable election year, and the budget due on March 9 is part of a process to restore confidence in the long term government strategy for the rebuilding of UK Capitalism Ltd.

They do not want to allow a winter of discontent to break out in 1982/83 in the period before the expansionary -- possibly tax cutting and certainly vote-catching -- budget of March 1983. Their slogan will be 'stability' and they know that this is the word written on the backs of the thermal vests worn by all the general council members of the TUC.

Stuart Axe



Two months of military rule.

Eight weeks after the imposition of the Polish military dictatorship, Jaruzelski still faces immense problems. He has successfully dismantled the national and regional structures of Solidarity. He has inflicted a *defeat* on the working class. But he still has not found a way of guaranteeing *long term* stability for the regime.

The events of 1 February show both the strengths and weaknesses of the military regime. On that day massive price increases came into effect — between 200 and 400 per cent for meat, sugar, fish, salt, milk, butter, margarine, cheese, household fuels, heating and lighting.

The regime managed to get away with the increases — but not without a riot involving thousands of youths in Gdansk and strikes in parts of Silesia. And in order to keep the protests down to the this level, the military had to keep in force measures of blanket repression that can only make more difficult its goal of restoring industrial production — such as the continued severance of phone links between major cities.

Jaruzelski faces two central, inter-related problems. The first is his very restricted social base of support. Very few people outside the upper reaches of the bureaucracy welcomed the coup. As the head of the now banned Polish Journalists Union, Bratkowski, has written in an open letter distributed in defiance of the authorities, 'the military has declared war on the Polish people to protect a ruling class that represents barely one per cent of the population.' The judgement is particularly severe, given

that Bratkowski was a leading figure in the 'Experience and Futures' group of intellectuals that repeatedly urged compromise between Solidarity and the regime.

This lack of a real social base will make it extremely difficult for the regime to engage in effective repression on a long term basis. It means it has problems not faced, for instance, by the military regimes that took power in Chile, Uruguay and Argentina in the 1970s.

Hence the regime's desperate search for 'moderate' Solidarity representatives who will negotiate with it while it continues to keep the 'radicals' in jail. Reports suggest that on the day of the coup it deliberately left at large some Solidarity officials who it thought might negotiate. Several times it has circulated rumours to the Western press to the effect that Walesa was prepared to come to an agreement. Yet so unpopular is the military that no Solidarity figure of any standing has yet been prepared to renege on the interned leaders and discuss compromise.

Jaruzelski's second problem, aggravating the first, is the worsening economic crisis. The regime's 'liberal' apologist, the deputy premier Rakowski, warned that it will take a minimum of five years to cure this.

The immediate problem is repayment of the Western debt. The regime did cough up \$300m for various European banks at the beginning of January. But at the end of the month the US banks were close to declaring it in 'default' (ie bankrupt). More than 80 per cent of its normal export earnings will

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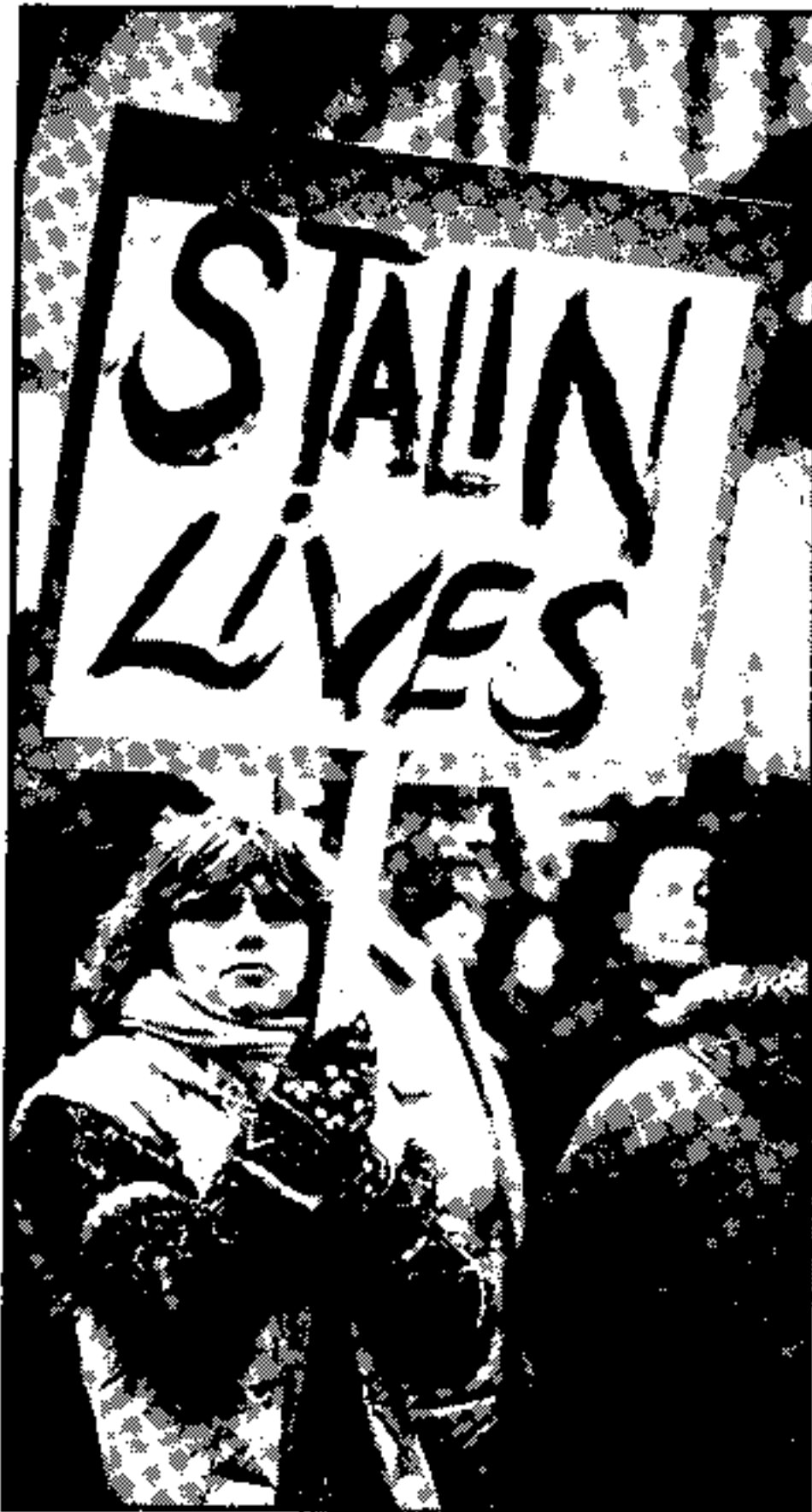
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Correspondance and subscriptions to Socialist Review, PO Box 82, London E2. Please make cheques and postal order payable to SWD. Socialist Review is sent free to all prisoners on request.
ISSN 0141-2442
Printed by East End (Offset) Ltd,

(1 U All Depts) London E2



need to go on interest payments this year if it is to avoid such a fate. That leaves very little to pay for imports. But Poland's export industries are dependent upon a continuing supply of imported raw materials and components to keep going.

Hence Jaruzelski finds himself in a near-complete double bind: he either pays off his immediate debts and then finds that he cannot get the imports needed to export and pay off later debts, or he defers paying immediate debts and risks bankruptcy.

In this situation, it will be very difficult for the military to inspire confidence that it can see a way out of the crisis, even within the one per cent of top bureaucrats. Already the different cliques within the ruling class are sniping at each other in the columns of the regime's papers. We can expect this

bickering to increase over time and to infect the generals themselves. Under such circumstances it will be more difficult than ever for them to maintain an effective clampdown on the mass of the population.

That does not mean that we are going to see an immediate regrowth of the mass workers' movement that existed until 13 December. Workers are still frightened of the tanks and bayonets, and the internments, arrests and mass sackings have dealt a very harsh blow to the core of activists within the class. But the indications are that Solidarity has begun to rebuild some sort of underground organisation, and over the months we can expect this to re-establish its links with the factories.

Solidarity in Britain

Solidarity from Western labour movements can provide important aid for those who are trying to rebuild the workers' organisations in Poland. It can help to keep the underground organisation of Solidarity alive and in the process, help underground activists who for decades have been cut off by Stalinism from the wider international traditions of working class struggle to widen their horizons. Four sorts of activity are important in the short term:

(1) Organising public protests against the repression in Poland, based on platforms that oppose military dictatorships and anti-union measures, East and West.

The experience of the last few weeks has been of two sorts of demonstrations. Where the left has been slow in acting, the right wing inside the trade union movement has taken the initiative, seeing the Polish issue as an easy one on which to take popular actions. The result has been mobilisations with platforms made up of Cold Warriors from the Labour right, the Liberals, the Social Democrats and the Tories. In one instance (a demonstration in Nottingham) even Nazis have marched in these 'protests'.

The tactics of the right have been aided by the attitude of a considerable chunk of the left bureaucracy. This does not only mean the pro-Russian wing of the Communist Party, but also a whole layer of closet Stalinists inside the Labour Party who instinctively see any workers' protest in Eastern Europe as part of a 'reactionary Catholic nationalist movement'.

How else can we explain sad spectacles like Arthur Scargill trying to shrug off the Polish issue (arguing 'There are difficulties in the situation. It is clear that Solidarity is not a trade union in our accepted sense of the word. It is, I suspect, a political organisation) the Scottish TUC refusing to support a labour movement demonstration of support for Solidarity in Glasgow because of the technicality of the wording of a leaflet, Colin Barnett of the North West TUC refusing to meet a former Solidarity senior steward from Ursus.

All these reactions create a vacuum which the right wing are only too eager to fill.

Yet the examples of Manchester and Glasgow show that it is possible to organise Solidarity activities on a principled basis that effectively squeeze the right wing out. In both cases there were demonstrations several hundred strong, with speakers as

opposed to what the US has done in El Salvador or Turkey as to what Jaruzelski has done in Poland.

(2) Money raised in Britain can now be got back to Poland via the organisation of Solidarity members stranded in Britain — the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group in the UK. This money is used in Poland to sustain underground union activists, to provide for the families of those who are interned and imprisoned and to aid those victimised for union activities.

There is a danger at the moment that some right wing union leaders will divert funds that could go to Solidarity to general charitable activities instead. Thus the GMWU apparently has raised £100,000 which it intends to hand over to the Church for general distribution among poor and hungry people in Poland. Socialists should be arguing that such poverty and hunger is not a result of a natural catastrophe, but of an anti-working class system and that the way to deal with it is not charity, but finance for those Polish trade unionists fighting back against the system.

This message will really begin to strike home if the issue of donations to Solidarity is raised independently of the union leaders at branch meetings and stewards' committees. The Solidarity Trade Union Working Group is also willing to provide Solidarnosc speakers for union meetings.

(3) Union bodies should agree to 'adopt' individual interned and imprisoned members of Solidarity, continually bombarding the Polish embassy with demands for their release and for news of them, sending messages of support to them and their families. This is a very important way of countering the attempt of the Polish authorities to make people forget the fate of the mass of the internees, while the Western press devotes attention to a few prominent names only. Lists of names are being prepared by the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group.

(4) Finally, the underground Solidarity organisation inside Poland is calling for blacking by Western trade unionists — especially of food imports from Poland. The difficulty here is for socialists to raise this issue without in any way giving support to Reagan's call for blanket sanctions against the whole Eastern bloc — a measure, as we show in our feature article, *Shock waves from Poland* not designed to aid Solidarity but rather to weaken the ability of the Western European capitalisms to follow policies anywhere in the world — over El Salvador or Turkey, for instance — that are in any way at odds with US policy.

We have to argue for workers' actions with a specific goal in view — the freeing of our imprisoned fellow workers — and against state-imposed blanket sanctions. Thus, for instance, in the docks people should be arguing for the blacking of goods that have come through Polish ports until the elected dockers representatives in those ports have been freed and reinstated in their jobs.

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Reagan and Schmidt fall out

One of the most amazing episodes of last month was the abortive failure of the Reagan propaganda bonanza 'Let Poland be Poland'. Conceived as a way of mobilising 300 million viewers behind the New Cold War drive' thus undermining the peace movements in Europe, it ended up being screened in only two European countries, Norway and Luxembourg.

The failure was not merely a result of the peculiar mix of politics and entertainment so hammered in the press (even the *Daily Mail* complained of 'bad taste'). Nor was it just due to the blatant hypocrisy involved including a representative to the Turkish military regime among the 'free world' leaders who condemned military rule in Poland. Much more fundamentally the programme was a casualty of the growing antagonism between the US and Western Europe — especially Western Germany.

The European governments are extremely distrustful of American motives in calling for economic sanctions against Russia. As one *Financial Times* commentator recently put it:

'In December, President Reagan announced unilateral measures, whose central measure — a ban on high technology equipment relevant to the planned Soviet pipeline — seemed designed to punish the European allies as much as the Russians...'

Since then the Americans have been doing their utmost to whip up feeling against everything Russian, while the West Germans have been deliberately down-

playing the significance of the Polish events.

The divergent reactions to Poland are an expression of much wider differences. They follow on from disagreements over Central America and the Middle East — as former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger made clear in a statement lambasting Reagan's government for being too *soft* over Poland.

In each case, the US wants to press for a military solution to the conflicts that exist while the Europeans preach conciliation.

The different strategies follow from the different circumstances in which they find themselves.

The US has long been losing the overall economic superiority it used to enjoy compared to the other Western powers. But it continues to be by far the most powerful military power. And so it feels that if it can force the Europeans to accept its military emphasis on dealing with problems, then it can restore its pre-eminence. It can force West Germany and Japan to increase their own arms expenditure and thus reduce their ability to out-compete US industries like steel, autos or micro-electronics.

If the US can do this, it can also put the squeeze upon a Russian bloc that is suffering growing economic problems—most recently revealed by the poor Russian harvest, the low level of the USSR's economic growth last year, food price increases in Czechoslovakia and 10 per cent cutbacks in Russian oil deliveries to Eastern Europe.

The West Europeans (with the partial exception of Britain) feel that their economic strength means that they do not need such a massive resort to military methods. There is no need to threaten the 'radical' Arab regimes, since these readily trade with them; whoever wins in El Salvador, they feel, will look to Europe and Japan for investment and loans; the weakness of the Russian bloc will mean more profitable contracts for West European firms that are operating at far below full capacity.

Hence the refusal of the Europeans to do anything serious in the way of implementing sanctions.

None of this should imply any illusion as to the motivations of the European powers. When it suits them they can be just as murderous as the Americans — witness the repeated use of French paratroops to intervene in the states of Central Africa. And, of course, they are quite prepared to go along with those nuclear moves by the Americans that fit into their schemes, even endorsing Cruise.

The European hypocrisy over Poland was most clearly shown when the EEC powers replied to the US request for sanctions by upping the interest rates charged on credits to the Russian bloc. Effectively they were using the destruction of Solidarity as an excuse to increase the profits of their own banks.

But it remains the case that Reagan's plans for a new militancy drive by the US are encountering increased resistance from his European allies. This has had the effect of creating deep divisions within the US government itself — divisions between those prepared to go ahead regardless of European reactions and those who feel they have to give some ground to their allies.



Hence Kissinger's attack on Reagan for being 'soft'. Hence claims that Haig is a 'dove' resisting pressures from Weinberger for a more militaristic stance (*Financial Times* 1 February). Hence other reports that over El Salvador Haig is the 'hawk' demanding increased US intervention while it is Weinberger who wants to hold off (*Guardian* 5 February).

These divisions show that rather than being all-powerful, the US is really engaged in acts of bravado designed to hide its weakness.

The most vivid illustration of this came at the beginning of this month. The Polish government failed to pay the US banks interest it owed them, and they were on the verge of declaring it bankrupt. After more than a month of demanding of the Europeans that they take a hard line on Poland, the US government in fact took the softest option going. It stepped in and paid the interest to the banks, so keeping Poland afloat. As the *International Herald Tribune* reported (4 February):

'As a symbol of toughness, officials say, there is nothing more they would like to have done than to have declared Poland in default. But from a practical standpoint, they say, there are too many risks and uncertainties for the Western Alliance and economic system.'

From a state as well armed as the US, acts of bravado can be horrific. But the underlying weakness of the US position means that the fight back against them — whether against an escalation of the war in El Salvador or the deployment of Cruise in Europe, is by no means condemned to fail.

The Polish events have demonstrated how weak *both* the great powers are in reality. That is something that should hearten everyone committed to the fight against imperialism East and West.

Playing it both ways in Ghana

For the second time Jerry Rawlings has taken over in Ghana pledged to a 'holy war' against corruption.

Bippin Patel looks at the problems facing the radical military regime of

THE situation in Ghana is as exciting today as it must have been during the fight for independence from Britain more than 30 years ago. Then Kwame Nkrumah, influenced by the thinking of the West Indian Marxist CLR James, organised a civil disobedience campaign involving trade unionists, ex-servicemen and other popular organisations. There followed a general strike in 1950, an election victory a year later and independence in 1957.

Nkrumah followed a policy of militant Pan Africanism internally, externally a vague populism which he misleadingly called African Socialism at home. In 1966, while on a visit to Peking, he was overthrown by right-wing officers. Then followed two more coups culminating in Jerry Rawlings' first coup in June 1979. Three months later Rawlings handed over power to the newly-elected President Limann, only to stage a comeback with a coup at the beginning of this year.

The New Year Coup is immensely popular. It is easy to see why. Inflation ran at more than 100 per cent and the black market currency value was 16 times greater than the official rate.

Foodstuffs

Earnings from cocoa, Ghana's major foreign exchange earner, have declined dramatically due to the fall in world market price and declining production. Black marketeering and the terrible state of the transport system have encouraged the farmers to smuggle cocoa into neighbouring Togo and the Ivory Coast. The resulting foreign exchange shortage meant that basic foodstuffs could not be imported. Spare parts were unavailable, leading to a decline in industrial production.

Strikes, some in vital sectors such as the huge Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation and the Black Star Shipping Line have met with sackings or threats of sackings. Hospitals have been unable to cope due to lack of drugs and equipment and an acute housing shortage developed.

At the same time a tiny minority were suffering an unprecedented bout of affluence. The black market fostered corruption and smuggling on a massive scale. The politicians, almost all businessmen, were making a mint.

Jerry Rawlings — popularly known as JJ — represents a movement of workers,

peasants and the rank and file of the armed forces; the very people whose fortunes have remained the same since independence. His organised support is among trade unionists, students and radical soldiers.

The civilians in his cabinet include a radical priest, who was criticised by Limann for his outspoken views on the exploitation of Ghanaians by the ruling elite, union leader Joachim Kwei who was sacked for organising a wildcat strike, and a student leader.

On January 8 workers in Accra started a massive demonstration in support of the 'holy war' declared by the new regime. Rawlings told cheering workers 'to take the initiative of revolution into your own hands'. He told them they had to decide for themselves whether union members should continue to obey officials of the Ghanaian TUC.



Gerry Rawlings

Earlier, unionists had called for the dismissal of the entire leadership of the TUC and had chased the TUC secretary-general from the platform when he tried to speak. The TUC was accused of weakening and disorganising the labour movement since Ghana's independence. (The leaders are the same trade unionists who had led the strikes for independence and were later educated and trained in conducting proper union business by our own TUC).

However, almost all the goods for sale in Ghana's markets and streets have been brought in by trading women: the famed market mammies, who could change money on the black market and buy goods from abroad or from shop managers and who illegally sold their supplies for four or five times the controlled price. The last time Rawlings was in power in 1979, he tried to reduce the market prices by threatening the women with his soldiers, and in fact some were severely beaten up.

As a result, the traders chose to disappear for a while, hoarded their goods and created shortages. They reappeared when Limann took over. The traders will do the same again. And whilst the anti-corruption drive worked for a while, Rawlings' actions barely touched the problem. He left the underlying structures intact.

Most of the measures taken to rehabilitate the economy only affected the manner of distribution and retail of goods rather than their actual production. Scarce goods are mainly produced abroad and their availability is regulated by the nation's foreign exchange reserves and the dictates of the multi-nationals.

This time around the market traders have been under the same pressures; one report said troops were burning market places in Kumasi. But Rawlings hasn't yet declared his policy on the multinationals or the IMF.

The IMF had been negotiating with Limann for loans and extra funding. The conditions were simple enough. In return for extra credit, the government was to reduce public spending, devalue the currency and abandon price controls in the markets. Ironically, Limann had refused to sign in case it led to a coup.

Technocrats

Sooner or later Rawlings will have to address himself to the question of the IMF. Right now he is playing it both ways. For along with the radicals in his cabinet, he has appointed what the papers call 'technocrats' — euphemism for management science graduates. These technocrats, supporters of the former right wing opposition, are unanimous in their advice that the IMF medicine should be swallowed.

So while Rawlings tells workers to have the courage to challenge their seniors when they go wrong, his fellow cabinet members call on them to work harder, increase productivity and to discard their legitimate demands. As the *Financial Times* said:

'His (Rawlings) known opposition to corruption and nepotism is popular, and he could force through austerity measures on the back of it.'

This might work in the short term but the regime will have to face the might of the organised trade unions who are disinclined to give up the gains they have made. Nor will the rank and file soldiers easily acquiesce to a return to the same status quo.

Rawlings' progress will be keenly watched in the rest of Africa. For Ghana's political crisis is typical of the problems that African states are having to face in the present international crisis.

Albanian Roulette

Nearly all the news about Eastern Europe in the last few weeks has come from Poland. But strange things have been happening in Albania. Curtis McNally looks at them.

The Polish *coup* has largely distracted attention from another political crisis in Eastern Europe. On December 17th it was announced that the Prime Minister of Albania, Mehmet Shehu, had killed himself 'in a moment of nervous depression'. Shehu had been Prime Minister uninterruptedly since 1954, and before that he had established his reputation in leading the purges and executions of pro-Tito elements after the Tito-Stalin split in 1948. Not the sort of person that one would at first sight expect to be prone to fits of suicidal melancholia.

Hence it is hardly surprising that within a few days of his death there were widespread rumours that in fact Shehu had been killed. Some reports even suggested that there had been a shoot-out at a dinner-party between Shehu and the regime's leader, Enver Hoxha, and that possibly Hoxha himself had been killed or injured as well.

It was also reported that portraits of Hoxha had been removed from public buildings. However, these reports mainly emanated from official Yugoslav sources, which scarcely have a vested interest in ensuring political stability in Albania. And it is now clear that Enver Hoxha is alive and well and living in Tirana, the only member of the original central committee of the Albanian Communist Party to have survived all the purges of the last forty years.

However, a certain degree of mystery still surrounds the affair. There has been no official mourning or public funeral for the late Prime Minister, and Peicol Shehu, Mehmet Shehu's nephew, has been removed without any explanation from his position as Minister of the Interior in the new government formed on January 15th.

The political reasons behind the events are even harder to decipher. *Le Monde* (16.1.82), relying on Yugoslav sources, suggests one factor may have been



Enver Hoxha: 'alive and well and living in Tirana'

divergences on the question of agricultural policy. Apparently at the Party Congress last November, Hoxha insisted on 'ideological purity' and on the 'eradication of the remnants of capitalism in the country', proposing the confiscation of the last remaining individual plots of land. Shehu, however, stressed 'economic difficulties' and 'emphasised the necessity of improving social relations in the countryside.'

Another factor in the tortuous situation may have been Albania's international situation, especially its relations to Russia. Albania has always been fiercely loyal to the memory of JV Stalin, although Stalin does not seem to have returned the compliment. Albania, for example, was the only East European Communist country not to be represented in the Communist Information Bureau set up in 1947. At the same time, Albania, trapped between Greece and Yugoslavia, had to pursue a cautious foreign policy sometimes at odds with its own rhetoric, as in 1949, when Hoxha interned Greek Communist partisans seeking refuge—in order to avoid a clash

with Greece.

From the time of the Sino-Soviet split Albania became loyally Maoist, but by the mid-seventies that friendship too was cooling. In 1977 the Albanians attacked the Chinese theory of the 'three worlds', alleging that the logic of this was that Russia was worse than the USA, something amply borne out by Chinese foreign policy. In 1978 China withdrew all economic and technical support from Albania, and Albania has subsequently backed Vietnam against Cambodia and China.

With no political allies in the world, Albania had to aim at agricultural and industrial self-sufficiency. The economic difficulties which were concerning Shehu before his sudden death may have led some sections of the Party to consider a *rapprochement* with Russia. There had been rumours of such a move for some time, and *Izvestia* recently published a friendly article about Albania, a distinctly unusual move.

However, such moves have probably been stopped for the time being. The new Prime Minister, Adil Carcani, announced on coming to power that Albania will 'never have relations with the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR'. But 'never' is not always a long time in Stalinist rhetoric, and when Hoxha, one of the last survivors of the political generation of 1945, departs this life things may well change.

Events in Albania may have some small repercussions on the international left. In the sixties and early seventies Albania was for most Maoists a beacon of socialism in Europe. When Mao died and the 'gang of four' were ousted, many of the more radical Maoists jumped off the Chinese bandwagon and went over to support for Albania alone. If Albania were to enter into serious political crisis or to patch up things with Russia, it would mean the final death agony for Maoism as a political tendency. The recent uncritical support for the Polish military government and the Russian attitude to it by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) may be a straw in the wind.

Mitterrand's moderation

Ian Birchall examines the record of Mitterrand's France so far.

The latest issue of the *New Socialist* carries a euphoric article about France under Mitterrand by Denis MacShane. In it he states that the Mitterrand government offers 'one of the finest opportunities ever offered to the leadership of the labour movement ... to examine in detail the attempt to apply a sophisticated socialist programme, aimed at irreversible change based on democratic consent, to a modern industrialised capitalist society.'

There are indeed lessons to be learned from the French experience, but they are scarcely such as likely to bring comfort and joy to Messrs Foot and Benn. Already there are a number of signs that the initial reforming impetus of the new government, which undoubtedly set out with the goodwill of

very many French men and women, is beginning to run out of steam.

A number of employers' representatives have recently made clear that they can quite happily live with a Socialist government. Thus on January 6th, *Les Echos*, an employers' journal, wrote: 'Over the last few weeks the tone has changed. The government is assuring us that it will keep the newly nationalised firms within the competitive sector.' And Yvon Chotard, Vice-President of the CNPF, the main employers' organisation, has commented on the government's incomes policy: 'In fact, Delors' system is like a twin brother to the one Raymond Barre wanted to establish. The advantage that the former has is that he has more support from the trade unions than the latter.'

But popularity among employers does not necessarily mean popularity with the voters. In four by-elections held in January the Socialists did badly, losing all four seats



on the first round. The anti-government swing varied between 4.6% and 9.3%. While these results scarcely affect the massive Socialist majority in the National Assembly, they are a clear indication that the honeymoon is over. The Communist Party did not stand in any of the elections, but indications are that it has lost support on a substantial scale since its dismal results last summer. If this is the case, there will certainly be pressure on the CP leadership to reconsider its line of participating as a very junior partner in the Mitterrand administration. A CP departure could be a further blow to Mitterrand, and would increase the tendency towards a rightward move.

In addition to this Mitterrand has met his Lord Denning in the shape of the Constitutional Council. This body of ageing politicians nominated by previous right-wing governments (eight out of nine are Gaullists or Giscardians, and the average age is 74) have rejected seven out of the fifty-one clauses in the government's nationalisation bill. The government have responded by rapidly reworking the measures to conform to the ruling. This means a massive increase in the amount of compensation to be paid to shareholders—in some cases it will be up to fifty per cent more. The total cost of the nationalisation programme will now be twenty-five per cent higher than planned. Even *The Economist* (January 23rd) has commented that 'the generosity of the new offer has surprised many.'

The ruling, and Mitterrand's response, make it clear that the French ruling class is not afraid of nationalisation in itself—it has lived with it for a long time. But it is quite happy to use constitutional pretexts to squeeze more compensation out of Mitterrand and to give him a warning to stay on a moderate path. Committed as he is to the politics of parliamentarism and not of mass mobilisation, Mitterrand has no alternative but to conform. The government has recently made it clear that employees of nationalised companies will have no greater security of employment than those in private firms.

Meanwhile the government's policies

are having little visible effect in stemming inflation or the rise of unemployment. The government's latest plans for price controls will have little more than cosmetic value.

Mrs Gandhi fends off a strike

Barry Pavier provides a provisional balance sheet of last month's one day strike by millions of Indian workers against the latest batch of vicious measures from Indira Gandhi's government.

The one-day general strike in India on January 19th was an expression of the political bankruptcy of the opposition parties. Both the measures that were the target of the protest had been in operation for ages. The anti-strike law, the Essential Services Maintenance Act, was brought in in July 1981, while the National Security Act — the lock 'em up without trial law — was first introduced just after Indira Gandhi regained power in January 1980.

The opposition parties orchestrated the operation through their trade unions (there are five major trade union federations, each attached to a political party). This constellation ranged from that unique example of militant Stalinism, the Communist Party (Marxist) CP (M) on the left, to the neo-fascists of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on the right.

The strike itself had mixed success. In CP (M) run West Bengal, the stoppage was almost total. In Kerala, where the CP (M)-led state government was recently toppled by minor party defections, there was considerable but not total support. There were substantial stoppages in the northern state of Bihar, but only limited support in the southern states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh,

Another area where the government's promises are turning out rather thin is its immigration policy. The government has ruled that immigrant workers without papers can regularise their situation; but to do so they have to produce contracts of employment. But in many cases the employers, who have been using their 'illegal' status to exploit them cruelly, will not provide such contracts. There have been a whole number of fierce struggles over this issue, with a number of large demonstrations and several factory occupations by immigrant workers designed to get the employers to concede.

In the absence of any lead from the left, the stage seems set for a drift to the right over the coming months. The Communist Party and the CGT are deeply divided by the Polish events and seem unlikely to offer a fighting lead. There were no revolutionary candidates in the recent by-elections, and neither the centrist PSU nor the ecologists registered any gains. As the fervour of the first few months of power evaporates, Mitterrand is beginning to walk the road trodden by Wilson and Callaghan before him.

Ian Birchall

though, the important Singareni coal mines, where there have been serious disputes in the last year, did come out on strike.

Around New Delhi, some of the industrial areas stopped, and students from the three universities in the city supported the strike.

The uneven response from workers was matched by a patchy response that the parties of the right got from the petty bourgeoisie.

The strike spotlighted the whole problem of socialists and the working class. It was essentially a wheeling out of the stage army, in an attempt to get two responses. The main criticism that the left has had of Indira Gandhi is her 'authoritarianism'. This is a version of the 'strong state' theory fashionable in certain sections of the British left a few years ago. Like that theory, all it boils down to is that police chiefs are getting more guns and electronic toys, and are grabbing more independent power for themselves.

Be that as it may, the left hoped that the general strike would propel Indira Gandhi into the kind of repressive measures that she used against the rail workers in 1974, and so 'expose' her authoritarianism before the whole working class, who would then obligingly fall into the laps of the left.

The right hoped to spark off the same sort of petit-bourgeois mass movement that had been led by the Gandhian politician J P Narayan in 1974-75 in the states of Gujarat and Bihar, which had rocked the previous Congress regime and had in a way prepared the ground for the electoral victory of the right-wing Janata coalition in 1977.

What they both overlooked was that all those movements failed, and in doing so had prepared the ground for the constitutional dictatorship of the Emergency regime of

1975-77. The Emergency was not brought down by assault from outside—it paralysed the political opposition — but by factionalism inside the regime.

The political calibre of the opposition has not improved since then. Recently they fell into a huge trap prepared by the regime over a massive IMF loan, to which the usual conditions have been attached, like clamping down on the working class and boosting export production as against domestic consumption. The opposition went off at full steam ahead, condemning the government for giving in to the evil Americans, while the ministers just sat there laughing at them. In fact, as some people pointed out, the regime did not need the loan, but it served as a useful cover to do a lot of things that they wanted to do anyway, in the sure knowledge that the kneejerk response of the parliamentary left would be to lay into the IMF imperialists. The result is that this fiasco has disipated opposition to the new economic measures.

Indira Gandhi proved that she has also learnt a thing or two in dealing with one-day strikes. She defused the whole affair by ignoring the political challenge. No leaders of the opposition parties were picked up, as is usual on occasions like this. The only people to suffer were the activists on the streets, who were carted off in their tens of thousands for a day or so, and the dozen or so who were shot by police, usual in Indian demonstrations, where the natural level of violence displayed by the ruling class is a bit greater than that which we have to face here.

Leading with the right

This worked. It showed that the opposition parties were playing a bluff with a weak hand. The truth is that although Indira Gandhi's regime and party are in a shambles, with rampant factionalism all over the place, the opposition are politically bankrupt, with the partial exceptions of the BJP and CP(M).

For Indian workers this is very dangerous. Indira Gandhi's party is now a personal apparatus, once she goes it will disintegrate into a mess of squabbling crooks. Practically the only viable alternative for the ruling class will be the BJP, in alliance with the rich farmers party, the Lok Dal. The CP(M), the main left party, is hopelessly sunk in parliamentarianism. It views all its actions, like the one day strike, as steps on the road to electoral success, and as a way of saving its governments in the states of West Bengal and Tripura.

The danger is that an old script is going to be played again, and a 'socialist' party will lead the most advanced section of the working class up the parliamentary blind alley, where they can be crushed by a decisive right-wing offensive. Hitherto revolutionary socialists in India, who have been working with many of the independent union groups which have sprung up since 1977, have held back from the formation of a party, daunted by the magnitude of the task. But without a party, the advanced workers will have no-one else to follow apart from the CP(M) which could well have fatal consequences in the near future.

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Ray Buckton's tightrope

The dispute between British Rail and the train drivers union, ASLEF, has developed into the most important confrontation so far this year. Gareth Jenkins explains why

The struggle between ASLEF and British Rail has settled down into trench warfare as we go to press. The three official days of strike a week by ASLEF are not closing city centre offices or seriously interfering with freight traffic. On the other hand, BR has not yet been prepared to follow up its early threats of disciplining drivers.

This stalemate cannot last for ever. The longer BR can keep things under control, the better chance it has of isolating the ASLEF members from supporters in the NUR, and indeed of isolating the militants in ASLEF itself from the ordinary member fed up with the futility of a phoney war.

The background to the dispute is a long term BR offensive over jobs and productivity. The last decade has seen a loss of around 57,000 jobs, with all grades except for management losing staff. Union officials have mounted little resistance to this destruction of jobs. In 1980, for example, four per cent of the wage settlement was tied to productivity, with the ASLEF leadership agreeing to proposals including the closure of marshalling yards, a reduction in freight services and a withdrawal of the Collecton and Delivery of Parcels Service. This deal cost over 1000 drivers' jobs.

Direct cuts in services, for example the reduction in through services to Cleethorpes and the closure of the Manchester/Sheffield/Wath transpennine route have met little opposition, and that entirely unofficial.

So the management confidently entered last year's pay negotiations with the hope of

extracting more job losses in return for a pitiful deal. In fact, the deal finally agreed between BR and the unions, and reworked by ACAS, make no mention of productivity. It merely postponed the payment of the final three per cent of the rise to January 1982 in order to bail BR out of a cash flow crisis. Negotiations at ACAS also produced a separate understanding for talks on flexible rostering. BR deliberately tied the two issues together in an attempt to blackmail the unions into further concessions.

With the NUR, they succeeded, but the ASLEF leadership was under considerable pressure from its membership to stand and fight. The ASLEF leadership, as it constantly repeats, is not averse to more productivity negotiations, but the rank and file will not let the eight hour day go, so they have little option but to refuse BR's threats.

Flexible rostering and the eight hour day are incompatible. The details are very complex, but in essence current BR proposals would mean the loss of 4000 jobs among ASLEF grades, an end to control over the length of the working week, rest days, shift patterns, overtime payments etc.

Rostering

That control is embodied in the 'roster', a programme of work negotiated between management and local union representatives and which ensures a mutually agreed pattern of working over a period of time. The existing agreement allows management to vary the roster by two hours either side of the proper signing on time to suit operations. The new deal, giving management the power to demand a four hour variation, would effectively mean that people worked when it suited management.

This deal would only be the thin edge of the wedge. BR already has plans to cut footplate staff even further — what they quaintly term 'easement of conditions to single manning.' In May 1982 they plan to

run the Bedford to St Pancras service with no drivers' assistants or guards. This will mean that the jobs of 50 guards and 20 drivers' assistants simply disappear. Again, they want to introduce the 'continental week', with Sunday counting as an ordinary working day.

The ASLEF leadership are caught between their own commitment to increasing productivity and the militancy of their members. Branch resolutions have poured into headquarters by the score since the start of the dispute. The demand for an escalation of the action is a common theme. Half a dozen mass meetings in Scotland, the Midlands and London have called for all out stoppages. Some branches have stated they will not have flexible rostering: Crewe, for instance, the second largest branch in the country, have said they will not work it whatever the national agreement says. And, of course, there has been support from NUR members defying their own union leadership.

Just how hard it is to shift the leadership of ASLEF has been illustrated time and again. A lobby of the executive in January, co-ordinated by members in London and Scotland, saw 60 or so drivers going in the front door while Buxton and Co sneaked out the back. The blacking of *The Sun* after it printed lurid stories attacking drivers, received no executive backing or legal support. And Bill Ronskley, CP member, and ex-president of ASLEF, tried to have the Kings Cross Branch thrown out of the union 'in order to protect union funds.'

This careful balancing act cannot go on for ever. Limited strikes might keep the militants happy for the time being and let the bureaucrats off the hook, but they will not win the struggle. Worse than that, in the long term they demoralise even the best fighters. A good example was the Civil Service dispute last year: limited action only gave way to a call for an all-out strike after a long period in which most people had only a passive role. When the demoralised membership did not respond, the leaders, who had resisted the call for all-out strike action from the beginning, were able to blame their sell-out on the membership.

Any attempt to win the dispute must involve an immediate escalation to all-out strike. This scares the daylights out of the ASLEF leadership. For a start, it would be fought over the issue of the defence of jobs, not on the current ASLEF pretext that it objects only to BR's bad sportsmanship in refusing to honour its commitments, and that fight would have to spill over to the rank and file of other rail unions whose leaders have already agreed to sell jobs. It would have to involve widespread picketing to stop the transfer of goods to road freight and would run up against Tebbit's union law: last August the ASLEF leadership instructed its members that in disputes they could only have six pickets, must cooperate with the police, and use no secondary picketing. And shutting down the whole system would also mean stopping London transport and other urban services.

None of that is to the liking of the ASLEF leadership, or of their current allies like Len Murray. It is pretty clear that the official leadership has no stomach for a fight to the



finish. As we have seen, the mood of the rank and file is determined, but the longer that the current manoeuvres continue the more that is in danger from isolation. And to escalate a strike needs some sort of co-ordination. There are signs that a rank and file leadership might be emerging: in London the unofficial Liaison Committee is

being revived to link depots around resistance to victimisations. On a wider scale, the leftwing militants, at least, have been able to work together. Whether these forces can turn the tide remains to be seen, but the stakes, not just in the railways but for other groups of workers too, are very high.

Socialist Worker

**SUPPORT
INVERGORDON
SMELTER
OCCUPATION**

Lessons from Lee Jeans

To many it must have seemed that January 1982 saw the start of a real fight back north of the border against the jobs slaughter. Scotland awoke from its New Year hang-over to the news that 890 workers at the British Aluminium Smelter in Invergordon had taken over the plant to prevent its closure. Two days later women at Lovable Bras followed their lead when the company went bankrupt. Then came two occupations within 48 hours in Bathgate, BL occupying against the loss of 1500 jobs and the obvious run-down of the plant, and at Plessey's against final closure. Yet things are not so simple, reports **Chris Bambury**.

Anyone visiting all four plants would have been struck by a certain absence of fighting spirit. The feeling was more: 'Something's got to be done'. Jimmy Swann, convenor at BL Bathgate summed it up when he said: 'We're not militants.'

And so just seven days after occupying the plant, British Leyland shop stewards at Bathgate led the workforce out of the factory in the face of an injunction brought by management. That an injunction could even be brought against an occupation involving over 2000 workers would have seemed unthinkable not only at the time of UCS in 1971, but even over Lee Jeans last year. That it should be simply accepted without opposition is a serious set-back.

The shop stewards at Bathgate were, of course, faced with the usual pleas from the full-timers not to take on the law and endanger union funds, and the advice from the local Labour MP, Tam Dayall, that 'the law must be respected.'

But the meek acceptance of the court's ruling also reflected a deep lack of confidence. Within 24 hours of occupying, nearly a thousand workers rushed to take redundancy. Some would have sold their granny for cash, but most felt redundancies just couldn't be fought. The shop stewards couldn't see the possibility of mobilising in the unions to defy the court.

At Invergordon an action committee of senior stewards and Labour councillors who worked in the smelter announced that the occupation of 890 workers had voted for unanimously was a 'work-in'. They moved into vacated management offices, overseeing the

workforce who busily maintained the plant.

Far from trying to win trade union support, the action committee began a round of talks with the government, the Highlands & Islands Development Board, and any possible buyers. The local Tory MP, Hamish Gray, a junior energy minister who'd clearly known of the closure but kept mum, was welcomed back into the factory having previously been greeted with snowballs. Even worse, British Aluminium was allowed use of the deep water facilities to bring ore into Britain, and ore in the plant was allowed out to other smelters.

In all this the action committee said they were following the example of Lee Jeans. But the version they were talking of was the bowdlerised one peddled by the Scottish TUC, containing no mention of the unofficial blacking by dockers that brought success, or of the shipyard workers who said they'd re-occupy the factory if the women were evicted.

Instead the STUC claimed broad support in the community had achieved results, citing support from the odd Tory, the Scottish National Party and the press as proof — failing to point out that they all jumped on the bandwagon only when success neared. The *Glasgow Herald* going as far as to suggest convenor Ellen Monaghan as 'Scot of the Year.' As Ellen Monaghan herself was drawn into the STUC, and Inverwear, the new company which took the plant over, insisted on a 13-week trial period dependent on good results, the message was: 'Lee Jeans won because the girls showed they wanted to work.'

Publicity

At a shop stewards' conference in support of the Bathgate occupations all the emphasis was in financial support which would allow the workers to sit it out. And that was the point. In all four 'occupations' taking over the plant was seen as a means of pressurising the government or management. If they just

kept it up something would turn up.

At Invergordon the whole thing was seen as purely a way to get publicity and get public support. At Lovable too, the women kept working for the Receiver, sitting-in to prevent machinery being moved. Neither sent out delegations or tried to spread the dispute. At Bathgate things were different, but even there the workforce were passive participants, the stewards taking the decisions and doing the talking.

Each closure threatens real catastrophe to the whole surrounding area. All four firms were lured north by regional grants under the MacMillan and Wilson Governments. In Bathgate, unemployment already stood at 20 per cent; the closure of Lovable was just the last in a long line of closures in the new town of Cumbernauld, originally built to provide good homes and secure jobs for former Glasgow slum-dwellers; while in Invergordon most of the workforce had moved north to get jobs and knew that with another 3000 jobs dependent on the smelter, its closure was tantamount to a second highland clearance.

The take-over by the workers was in many ways an act of despair, not confrontation. Even at BL Bathgate stewards tried for a work-in on the doomed tractor lines until management began suspending workers. With four 'occupations' in Scotland, one might have expected a feeling on other factory floors that the jobs fight was on. Instead, there was little excitement. With few delegations, few other workers knew what was happening.

The message must be clear. Simply sitting in won't get you anywhere. You've got to build support, and not just financially, but by spreading blacking. Sympathy and kind words mean nothing unless you turn the only power we have, our industrial power, onto the bosses. That's the real lesson of Lee Jeans.

UBOs Resist Dole Test

Last month saw a one day strike in a number of Department of Employment offices in London. Sally Bild explains the important new government measure that provoked it.

The government are launching their severest attack to date on the unemployed. Very little publicity has been given to the new 'availability test' which stems from the recommendations of the Rayner Report. For the uninitiated Sir Derek Rayner is the ex-Marks and Spencer boss who was appointed by the government to drastically reduce the cost of running the civil service. Not surprisingly he has singled out for attention the highest spending departments, the

Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) and the Department of Employment.

One of the recommendations that has been accepted by the government is the introduction of voluntary registration in job centres. This means that from this October the unemployed will no longer have to register for work. The consequences will be serious for both civil servants and claimants.

Initially an estimated 2,000 jobs will be lost in the Employment Services Division, but in the long term it will inevitably lead to the complete elimination of Job Centres.

Employers will be discouraged from notifying their vacancies to the Job Centres, and private agencies will increasingly cater for the 'up-market' end of the dole queue. Consequently the public service will be run down to such an extent that it will either be hived off to private industry or disappear completely.

Because of the introduction of voluntary registration the responsibility for ascertaining a claimant's availability for work will lie within the Unemployment Benefit Offices (UBOs).

Claimants

The new 'availability test' consists of a new question which will be added to the initial form that claimants are asked to complete. The question is 'Are you prepared to accept any work you can do?'

If the claimant answers no, they are given a further form to complete. This asks such questions as 'Are you willing to accept a job for less than £120 a week?' 'Are you willing to accept a job like your last one?' 'Do you have children? If so, what arrangements have you made to have them looked after?' (This is asked whether or not the claimant has any reasonable chance of getting a job.)

Claimants are also asked whether they are prepared to travel to other parts of the country or to do shift work. If they answer no to any of these questions, they can be refused benefit.

All this is obviously designed to remove thousands of claimants from the register and to depress wage levels by forcing the unemployed into any job, regardless of their training, previous experience and potential earning capacity.

It will create the artificial impression that unemployment is on the decrease — which will provide a valuable election boost for the Tories.

For civil servants the test will increase the already intolerable conditions in dole offices caused by severe overcrowding, delapidated accommodation and poor training.

The provisions for extra staff to cope with the increased workload are inadequate and there is nowhere to put them anyway.

An initial pilot scheme to try out the test began in 20 offices throughout Britain on January 11. The offices were picked for the ~~fact~~ they are amongst the most badly organised in the country, with little or no trade union involvement and a very low membership in the clerical union, the CPSA. Most of them are in fairly inaccessible places.

The response of the Broad Left

dominated Section Executive Committee — the body responsible for CPSA members in the Department of Employment — was to ask the National Disputes Committee of the union for authority for members to black the work. The Disputes Committee, a right-wing body controlled by the National Executive Committee, and senior full-time officials, including Alistair Graham, the newly elected general secretary, decided to hold a consultation exercise in the offices concerned to 'test the feeling of the membership.'

Pressure

The exercise was a failure, as the Disputes' Committee knew it would be, providing them with a valuable excuse for refusing official blacking because there was 'little support' for it. Succumbing to pressure from the Section Executive, the Disputes Committee have agreed to hold another consultation. In the meantime the Section Executive have been frantically trying to hold meetings in the offices affected to increase union membership and instill the will to fight.

This initiative is rather late, and Section Executive members are being refused admission to these offices by management.

But CPSA members in the Department of Employment offices have shown a willingness to fight. In London, there was an encouraging response to the day of action called on 26 January. Members in more than 30 offices took the day off to go and picket

Waltham Cross, one of the offices where the test is in operation. This is to be followed by a national day of action either on March 1 or March 8th.

The only other form of action being taken is the leafletting of claimants at these offices telling them not to answer the question. But in some places this has fallen by the wayside as the Section Executive become increasingly demoralised, having pinned all their hopes on official blacking.

Throughout the dispute *Redder Tape*, the rank and file grouping for the civil service, and the SWP have stressed the need for united action between civil servants and the unemployed. It gives us the opportunity to raise arguments about the widespread nature of the Tories' attacks and the need for a generalised fightback.

The Right to Work Campaign has a presence at the Waltham Cross picket and are producing local leaflets jointly with civil servants.

The only way that Rayner can be defeated, however, is with an all out strike in the Unemployment Benefit Service. We should be working towards a strike in October, and it should be aimed not just at availability testing but also against ethnic monitoring and increased fraud drives, both part and parcel of the sinister Rayner package, and against the intolerable conditions in the Benefit Service.

Otherwise, we will see an increasing drift towards the policing of the unemployed and the complete collapse of a public service.

Sally Bild CPSA

Staffa reassessed

Last month we carried an article on the outcome of the Staffa's fight against closure. Barry Blinko believes it was far too optimistic in its conclusions. Barry was one of those sacked when Ansell workers in Birmingham went down to defeat after a long struggle last year.

The analysis of the Staffa dispute in the January issue of *Socialist Review* gave the impression that Staffa was not a complete defeat but a partial victory.

The writers said that the management had to back down and give increased payments and guarantee six months work. This showed that by fighting against redundancies increased offers can be achieved, so it is worth fighting because you can, at worst, gain extra money, if not your job.

First of all, in analysing the outcome we need to determine what the Staffa management required. They wanted to move the production to Plymouth, making its present workforce redundant. This they have achieved. Obviously, they wanted to make the move at as little cost as possible and the Staffa workers fight increased this cost. Nevertheless the move will be

completed.

In the present period with few industrial struggles and even fewer victories, it is easy to fall into the trap of believing that any deviation away from management's final offer is a victory. That means we continually compromise ourselves. We must prevent this, despite the period, because it is a reformist attitude to take.

For revolutionary socialists, jobs are of prime importance — not the amount of money that they can be sold for. Therefore we are deluding ourselves if we think that Staffa was even the tiniest of victories. It is analogous to trade union officials coming out with a bad deal and saying that it was a victory because it was better than the management were prepared to first offer. 'It was the best we could do', they always say.

Looking on an increased payment as a partial victory is a sign of the period. Let us not fall for it.

Secondly, it is not true that by fighting you can increase redundancy payments and that therefore it is worth starting off by fighting for jobs. This argument has only one outcome as Staffa demonstrates — '... the money militants won out over the job militants ...' as the *Socialist Review* article puts it.

Eventually those that want redundancy money always win, because the longer the strike, the more attractive the money becomes and saving jobs becomes more a vision than a realistic alternative.



If the Staffa workers were really within two weeks of keeping the company in Leyton, as the article states, then the militants would have smelt victory.

The strike at Laurence Scotts has probably lasted so long because their redundancy money was paid without their agreement to call off the dispute, so that the jobs are now the only possible aim. You might as well be able to spend time fighting for a job than a fruitless search of job centres. With three million on the dole beating Snipe is still a more attractive prospect.

At Ansells we were clear at the beginning that the jobs were the subject of the strike and the pay off was thrown out unanimously. After five months, although it was obvious that we had taken too long about escalating the dispute and numbers picketing had decreased, what finally finished it was a branch decision to go for increased payments.

The dispute was effectively over, for the company were then able to destroy unity, something that had not been possible in the previous five months. The final settlement was virtually the company's original offer.

The difference in the money offers between Staffa and Ansells lies not in the length of dispute but in the respective industries. Ansells was part of a multinational, that had sufficient profits to be determined to smash the union. Staffa was an engineering company interested in increasing its profits by a move to Plymouth.

So it has to be made absolutely clear that in a fight against redundancies you must fight only for the jobs *not* increased payments. For otherwise those supporting increased payments will eventually be the majority.

We as revolutionary socialists can only see saving jobs as victory, not the paying of an increased price for them.

Staffa management got what they wanted, not as smoothly as they would have

liked but still a victory for them. The workers have lost their jobs — maybe in six months' time, but still out of work — a defeat. Let us not pretend it was anything else.

Flabby campaign allows Coal Board victory

The National Union of Miners ballot result that decided to accept the Coal Board's offer of 9.3 per cent was not only a blow to the left in that union. Other militants were looking to the miners, in a time-honoured style, to raise their barricades. Andy Smith explains what was, to many people, an unexpected result.

The miners have proved susceptible to the same barrage from the media and the same pressures as other workers. The Coal Board has, over the last ten years, managed to regain control over the union. That is not, of course, to say that miners cannot go on strike. Last year's partial victory over pit closures shows that where the work is done, miners still have the will to fight.

There is another reason for the ballot result, and for the Coal Board's supremacy in propaganda.

That is the separation from the rank and file of the 'left' officials. A campaign for Arthur Scargill's presidency is run as it should be. A campaign for a decent wage rise goes by the board.

It is well worth looking back a decade or so to see how the NUM broad left used to operate to see what we mean. *The Militancy of British Miners* (Moor Press, £5.00) by Vic Allen contains a section on the unofficial strike in 1969; it reads:

'Yorkshire, in comparison with the other areas, was a model of organisation. The four panels in North and South Yorkshire, Doncaster and Barnsley, came together in an exceptional display of solidarity. They formed a strike committee and through it maintained cohesion throughout the coalfield. The militant core was provided by the Doncaster panel, supported by the small Barnsley

group comprising Arthur Scargill, George Wilkinson, Don Baines and Ron Rigby. The president, vice-president and general secretary of the Yorkshire area were opposed to the strike and were excluded from its organisation. The strike ended when eight members of the Yorkshire strike committee got an assurance from Vic Feather, the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, that he would try to get an independent inquiry to investigate the issue of surface workers hours.' (Page 158).

It is worth remembering that at this time, Scargill had organised a *Barnsley Miners' Forum* which brought together militants and branch officials to organise education and activity. As these same left-wingers came to control the Yorkshire area, together with the Doncaster officials, the forum did not need to be as it was and if it still meets, it meets in secret.

Passivity

The NUM branch officials in the Yorkshire pits now rely so much for decisions from 'Barnsley', that apart from a few independent militant branches, the general picture is one of passivity, lack of initiative and the subsequent flabbiness of the miners' organisation.

Anyone involved in the Laurence Scotts attempts to win decisive blacking of Mining Supplies in the important Yorkshire area will testify to the all-powerful leadership, and the reluctance to go ahead against that power from the NUM branches.

The organisation that existed in 1972 must be rebuilt. It cannot be done by Arthur Scargill. It has to come from below. If the left in the NUM is to recover it has to start organising now, around the small struggles that *are* taking place, around the political issues of Poland, CND, Right to Work campaign etc and by getting back amongst the rank and file, out of the committee rooms and council chambers.

Andy Smith



Keynesianism: What does it mean?

In the next few weeks, in the run-up to the budget, the words 'Keynesianism' and 'monetarism' will be thrown about in the press and on TV. The great majority of people will be bewildered by both. Here Pete Green tries to provide a plain person's guide to the first of them.

For twenty-five years after the Second World War, the ideas of John Maynard Keynes were questioned only by right-wing cranks and left-wing extremists. He had argued that government action could secure full employment and sustained economic growth. The unprecedented long boom of the post-war years seemed to show that he was right.

Then came the 1970s and the cracks in the capitalist system began to gape open. For a while Keynesian policies were tried in many countries. They proved decreasingly effective. At best they slowed down the rise in unemployment, while all the other expressions of crisis — inflation, productivity, balance of payments problems, and profitability — got steadily worse.

By 1975 the world was again in the throes of chronic slump. The economists were bewildered. Governments of all political complexions unceremoniously dumped the objective of full employment. Cuts in wages, in 'overmanning', in the welfare state, all in the cause of boosting profits, were once again the order of the day. The cranks of the 1960s such as Milton Friedman became the Nobel prize-winners of the 1970s.

In Britain as elsewhere, only the reformist left, the advocates of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy', held out as committed Keynesians. Only they still seriously believed that governments could restore full employment if they wanted to, without getting rid of capitalism altogether.

Who was Keynes?

Keynes was certainly no socialist. He was an Eton-educated, wealthy Cambridge academic who glided easily around the corridors of power, and won a peerage for a life time of service to the British ruling class. In the 1920s he made a reputation as a bit of a radical with vigorous attacks on the more ludicrous follies of the establishment. In the 1930s he provided a theoretical justification for something that was already happening — growing state intervention in the economy in response to the great slump. His purpose was to save capitalism from itself.

But the first people to take hold of Keynes's ideas and assist him in that cause were the intellectuals of the Labour Party. For people like John Strachey and Anthony Crosland in the 1950s, it provided an alternative to Marx. It proved capitalism

was not doomed, but could easily be reformed.

The real significance of Keynesianism has always been more a matter of ideology than of practical impact on government policy. It provided the framework of ideas through which the left and the unions could be drawn into helping to restore capitalism to health. It underpinned the desiccated and complacent political consensus which meant that Tory and Labour were virtually indistinguishable in the fifties and sixties.

Even today Keynesianism pervades the arguments for the Alternative Economic Strategy: the superficial analysis of the crisis which puts most of the blame on the rejection of Keynes by Labour and Tory governments alike; the emphasis on a reflation of demand which lies at the core of the strategy; the focus on revitalising the national economy; the idea that there are good and bad capitalists, and that you can attack the second (like the bankers) while not upsetting the former; the whole thrust of the strategy, that capitalism can be simultaneously reformed and restored, and that a programme for this can unite people of good will and common sense from all classes.

Keynes' theory

Keynes's major work *'The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money'* was published in 1936 and is supposed to have revolutionised the economics profession. In fact it's a rather muddled book and most of the interesting bits in it can be found in Marx, although Keynes claimed to have found *Capital* unreadable. For the bourgeois economists of the period, however, the ideas were shocking.

The prevailing orthodoxy, at a time of the greatest slump capitalism had ever seen was that if the market system worked properly slumps could not happen. The system, it was argued, had an automatic tendency towards full employment.

If unemployment was running at around 15-20 per cent of the labour force in most countries this was solely because wages were too high, pricing workers out of jobs. Governments should balance their budgets and leave the economy to right itself. Social security benefits should, however, be cut, and the unions kept firmly in their place, to

encourage workers to accept lower wages.

All that might sound rather familiar. Keynes thought it was mostly nonsense.

Like Marx he argued that an economy based on money and the anarchy of buying and selling was always liable to break down. The market economists thought (following what was called 'Say's Law' after a 19th century economist whom Marx had savaged long before) that if money was not spent on one thing it would be spent on something else. There could be overproduction in one industry but not in all industries.

But as Keynes pointed out, a cutback in one industry if it is not *immediately* offset by an increase somewhere else, will start to snowball.

To use a topical example:

If the major car firms stop investing, cut back on their labour force and put their money in the bank until times improve, times will actually get worse. Workers on the dole will have less money to spend in the shops, components producers will also start cutting back, sales of steel, rubber and glass will all fall, and the effects will reverberate throughout the whole economy.

Cutting wages would only make things worse argued Keynes. It would lower demand even more, even if it raised profits. And this would discourage the firms receiving extra profit from spending them on investment.

Keynes was not in favour of increasing wages, although some of his more naive leftwing devotees saw that as the solution. He dimly recognised that contradiction which Marx had pinpointed — if cutting wages lowers demand and hits profits from that side, increasing wages cuts into profits directly.

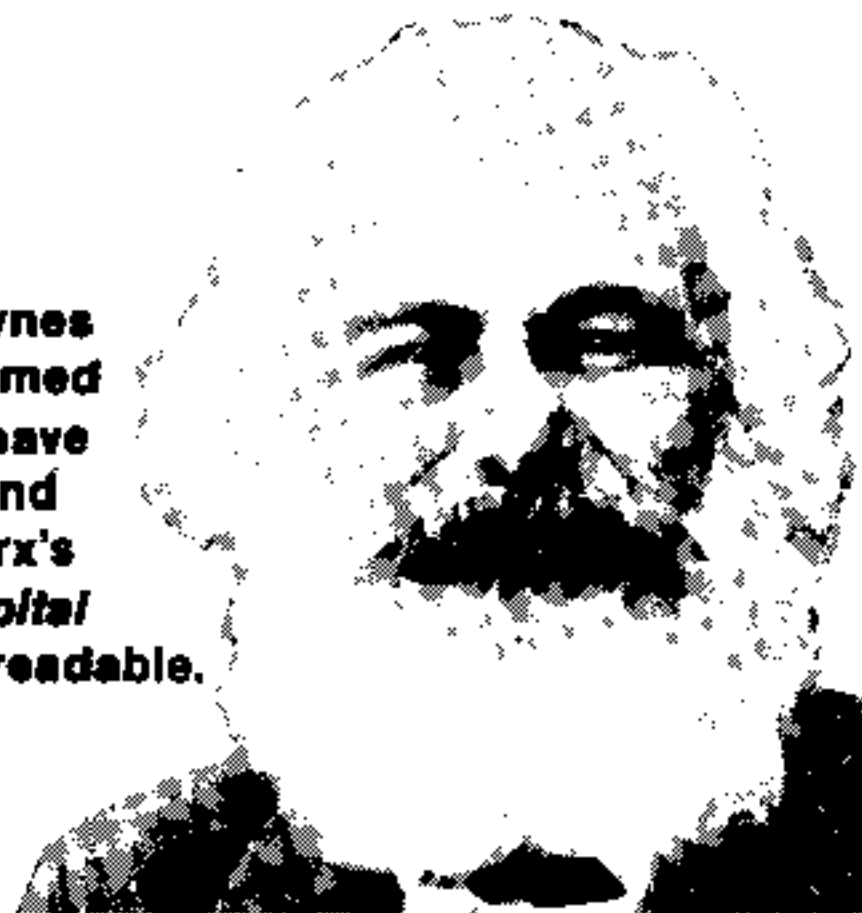
The faults in his theory

Keynes, like Marx, understood that it was the fluctuations in the level of investment which was the key to the ups and downs of the economy. However, he wasn't at all clear as to why those fluctuations happened. He could show how once a slump starts it spreads and perpetuates itself in a downward spiral, but he had no satisfactory answer to the most basic questions of all. How does the boom turn into a slump? Why do capitalists stop investing?

At one point Keynes blames the operations of the financial markets, the bankers and speculators, for pushing up the rate of interest or the cost of borrowing. But as Keynes had to acknowledge, falling interest rates in the 1930s made little difference to the slump. Firms would not borrow to invest regardless of how cheap the money was, if they were faced with stagnant markets and no prospects of making a profit on their extra investment.

Elsewhere Keynes talks about waves of pessimism and optimism on the part of the captains of industry. But that sort of psychological explanation is little better than talking about accidents or acts of god. Nor does it fit with the history of capitalism with

Keynes claimed to have found Marx's *Capital* unreadable.





John Maynard Keynes

its regular periodic phases of boom and slump.

Keynes never gets to grips with the way the *rate of profit* governs what capitalists do. He fails to see that profitability depends ultimately on what happens in production. It is in production that one class works for another.

In Marx's account the drive for profit, governed by the competition between capitalists, leads capitalism to revolutionise the conditions of production. Each capitalist must invest in the most up to date and efficient equipment or go under.

This process of accumulation generates the boom — but it also tends to undermine itself. More and more money gets put back into production in the form of expensive capital equipment. The ratio of capital to labour increases. Prices fail to keep up with the rising costs of investment in machinery, raw materials and workers. To summarise a complex situation, the rate of profit falls as the boom reaches its height.

Keynesians cannot grasp the underlying dynamic of the system anymore than the other bourgeois economists. They fail to see that crises are actually necessary if the profitability of capitalism is to be restored. Crises are need to clear out the system — to eliminate the old, weak and inefficient bits of the system, so freeing resources for the capitalists who survive; to force down the cost of raw materials and capital goods; and, of course, through massive unemployment

to hammer the working class.

But if all these things are necessary to restore the rate of profit then state intervention in the economy will have contradictory effects.

On the one hand it may be able to prop up the system, keeping down the level of unemployment supporting the weaker sections of capital, like British Leyland, ICL or Massey Ferguson today. On the other hand by preventing or limiting the scale of the slump it also stops the crisis clearing out the system.

Keynes' proposals

Keynes' actual policies seem simple enough. The idea is that the state should intervene to push up the overall level of demand. It should pump money into the economy by what Keynes termed '*deficit financing*'. This meant that governments should spend more than they took out of the economy in taxes. As far as Keynes was concerned it didn't really matter what the money was spent on, whether it be roads, arms or pyramids, as long as it boosted demand when the economy was in slump.

The extra spending would be '*reflationary*' — to use another piece of jargon. It would not only cut unemployment directly, but feed through to the rest of the economy. The rise in demand would encourage a wave of optimism amongst firms in the private sector. They too would start to invest more, take on extra workers, and so on, this time in a virtuous spiral upwards. The economy would return to boom.

Critics worried about where the money would come from and whether it would cause inflation. As far as Keynes was concerned, governments could borrow it from the banks or just print it. As long as there was spare capacity and large numbers of unemployed the extra money would lead to extra output rather than price increases. In the 1930s, with prices falling steadily, to worry about a bit of inflation seemed absurd.

Now all that seems quite plausible until one comes to the stagflation of the 1970s with its combination of chronic inflation and massive unemployment. Only then would the basic flaws in Keynesian theory be exposed in practice.

Keynesian practice

In contemporary capitalism spending by the state does make a substantial difference to what happens to a country's economy. With government budgets directly absorbing around 22 per cent of the goods and services produced in Britain obviously changes in that total will have a substantial effect on what happens in the rest of the economy.

That does not mean that states are free agents, capable of manipulating the economy at will as many Keynesians seem to believe.

In the West, Governments are constrained by the fact that most of the economy remains in private hands. They can prod and cajole, threaten and bribe, but they cannot force capitalists to invest if they don't want to. On the contrary, the large corporations, the multinationals and the bankers are

usually able to dictate what the state does.

But even in the state capitalist countries of the East, governments are still subject to the pressures of international competition and the fortunes of the world economy as a whole. As the example of Poland surely shows, every country is dependent upon its ability to export, and its credit-rating with the international bankers.

A weak economy such as Britain has always run into chronic balance of payments problems at a time of rising demand, with the expansion sucking in imports from more competitive capitalists abroad. Now in the face of the world crisis, with the competition for foreign markets intensifying, every attempt at Keynesian style expansion faces that problem. These two constraints only become really serious when the world is in crisis. But how did that happen? Why did the long boom come to an end?

Keynesianism and the long boom

In reality the boom owed very little to Keynesian demand management techniques as such. The system was expanding and governments did not need budget deficits to pull their economies out of slump.

The boom did, however, depend on high levels of state spending — and on arms expenditure in particular.

Unlike Keynes, the ruling-class has always found some forms of state spending more acceptable than others. Spending on the welfare state for example is really only the equivalent of giving workers higher wages, and capitalists never like doing that.

But arms spending protects the interests of the ruling class as a whole and directly benefits some of the most powerful sections of private capital.

Arms boosted demand but they didn't re-enter into production like machines or other forms of productive investment. By diverting resources away from accumulation they slowed down the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. The system propped itself up on a mountain of waste.

But by the end of the 1960s the contradictions of the Permanent Arms Economy became acute. Countries like the USA and Britain bore the brunt of that spending, while West German and Japanese capitalists benefitted from it. They gained in competitiveness because more of their profits were devoted to productive investment than to arms.

Hence a basic contradiction — the German and Japanese economy could expand on the basis of exporting abroad, and did not need to engage in Keynesian deficit financing or high levels of government spending; other economies such as Britain, Italy and by the 1970s the USA did try to expand with Keynesian measures, but the increase in demand only sucked in imports and led rapidly to chronic balance of payments problems.

At the same time arms spending could no longer keep up the rate of profit. The overwhelming evidence is that rates of profit in most countries fell by around a half between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s.



Today Keynes no longer seems the magical solution to the dole queues that plagued the 30s.

A decade of crisis

The first serious recession since the war hit most Western countries in 1970—71. Governments turned to the Keynesian techniques of pumping money into the economy. The effect was to provoke a highly inflationary and speculative boom in 1972-3. That triggered off oil and other price rises, so that inflation topped the 20 per cent level in Britain and Italy, and was getting out of control everywhere else. By 1974 the collective balance of payments deficit of the major Western countries was running at an annual rate of 20 billion dollars.

Governments promptly cut back. Keynesian programmes of expansion were put into reverse. Industrial production in the West fell by about 13 per cent.

And so it has gone on. Short inflationary booms in which unemployment falls slightly and investment stagnates — followed by deeper and more protracted slumps, with inflation dropping only marginally and unemployment hitting yet another postwar high.

In this age of stagflation, the crisis has yet to go as deep as that of the 1930s in most countries. High levels of state spending, especially on arms, have propped the system up. But the crisis also looks likely to last a lot longer than that of the 1930s. State intervention has been quite unable to effect a return to sustained recovery.

The failure of Keynesianism

That Keynesian policies of reflation run into difficulties is now acknowledged by the most diehard of Keynesians. As the best-selling textbook author, the man who for years taught every economics student that slumps couldn't happen any more, Samuelson, put it:

'Whatever government does to handle the 'flation part of our stagflation inevitably worsens in the short term the stagnation part of the problem ... Likewise whatever government policy does to help the 'stag' part of stagflation will ineluctably worsen the inflation part of stagflation'

But Samuelson cannot get to grips with why all this has happened. The failure of Keynesianism is rooted in two fundamental characteristics of capitalism — its dependence upon the rate of profit and the division of the world economy into competing national chunks, with the absence of a world state which could regulate the system as a whole.

Take the inflation problem for example. Expanding demand leads to inflation because firms respond by pushing up prices rather than investing in extra capacity and increasing output. That happens now more than in the thirties because most industries are dominated by just a few large monopolies which won't try to undercut each other. It is rooted in the fear firms have that expanding their capacity will further cut their rate of profit.

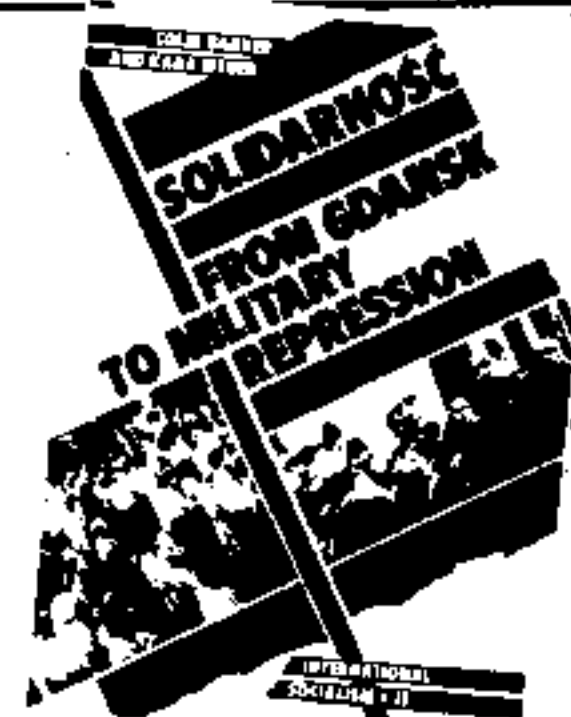
The Alternative Economic Strategy talks about price controls but if they are effective they will just cut into profits and make the underlying situation for the capitalists worse. Planning agreements won't help much either. Nor will nationalising the banks if firms don't want to borrow. As for selective nationalisation, British Leyland and British Steel haven't been able to escape from the pressures of the crisis and the demands of profitability.

Take the other main problem, the balance of payments. Without getting into all the arguments, import controls cannot work in a world in which national economies are increasingly interdependent. Even Keynes, who supported import controls in the thirties, because everybody else was doing it, saw how unsatisfactory they were. The spread of protectionism then did, after all, cause world trade to drop by almost half, deepen the world recession, and intensify the pressures leading to war.

The labour left want a Keynesianism with teeth, to add to the armoury at the disposal of the nation-state. But most of the economy will be left in private hands, profitability will remain the criteria of economic success, and the logic of international competition will not go away. The national interest will continue to demand sacrifices in the cause of

increasing investment. The pressures as can be seen in Mitterrand's France today, at home and abroad, will lead to vacillation and compromise. Incomes policy will be used to hold down wages. Public spending will be restrained to retain the confidence of the foreign exchange markets.

The Keynesian programme of reforming a capitalism in crisis just will not work.



SOLIDARNOŚĆ: FROM GDANSK TO MILITARY REPRESSION

On December 13 1981 Jaruzelski's army moved in to crush Solidarność. The most powerful workers' movement in Europe since the war was halted in its tracks.

How did it happen?

In this first full length analysis written since the military take-over Colin Barker and Kara Weber trace the unfolding crisis and the debates it provoked in Solidarność. Drawing on a variety of original Polish material they argue that real revolutionary possibilities existed but were only realised by the radical wing of Solidarność too late.

160 pages. £1.95 from all good bookshops or (plus 30p post) from International Socialism, (Ref: 15) PO Box 82, London E2.

Shock waves from Poland

Each of the great upheavals in the Russian bloc over the last 25 years has caused turmoil in the West European Communist Parties. The military takeover in Poland is no exception. It seems about to lead some of them to break completely with the whole notion of a 'world Communist movement' and shatter the already fragile unity of others.

In 1956 Khrushchev's secret speech denouncing Stalin and then the Hungarian revolution led to many activists leaving the Western CPs (a third of the membership in the British case), the first real flourishing of a non-Stalinist 'new left' and a certain assertion of independence from Moscow by the biggest of the Western CPs, the Italian led by Togliatti.

But in the years that followed the scars seemed to heal, the parties began to put on members again, and it was still possible for there to be the pretence of a united world Communist movement.

The split between Russia and China in the early 1960s threatened to do much more damage. But although it shook the morale and the sense of ideological certainty of many party members, the splits it produced in Europe were rarely more than small, fragmented sects.



Much more serious was the impact of the events of 1968. The sight of Russian tanks being used to invade a 'Communist country', Czechoslovakia, with the kidnapping of its party leader, Dubcek, threw the major Western CPs into turmoil. It was particularly embarrassing for leaders and activists who were treading a path of unity with the traditional reformist left on the basis of acceptance of the 'parliamentary road'.

The Italian, Spanish and French CPs formed a block of what became known as 'Eurocommunist' parties. The Russians encouraged the formation of pro-Moscow splits to compete with the established parties in Greece (successfully) and Spain (unsuccessfully).

Delegations attend each other's congresses,

and no Western conference document was complete without its ritual incantation of the 'successes of socialist construction'.

The real extent of the break with Moscow was so limited in one case—that of the French Party—that its leadership was able to do a complete about turn and return to a pro-Russian path, supporting the invasion of Afghanistan.

Now the Polish events are producing new ructions.

Italy

The Italian party responded to the military takeover in Poland by denouncing it in no uncertain terms. Not only did it call for the release of all the interned and imprisoned Solidarity members, it promised aid for the underground Solidarity organisation. And it went on to say that the repression showed that the Soviet Union had 'exhausted its possibilities' as a force for progress in the world.

Only one member of the party's Central Committee, Amando Cossutto, refused to go along with this judgement. Other members spoke in the harshest terms.

Thus Pietro Ingrao declared that the 'absolute satisfaction of the means of production, their extremely centralised form, the monopoly of state control through a single, authoritarian party ... not only does not produce a progressive socialisation of power, but also produces forms of new bureaucratisation, a despotism of the apparatus, a new alienation and subordination of the workers ...'

From such analyses the Italian CP leaders drew the conclusion that there had to be a new strategy for socialism in Europe based upon a 'third way', independent of both the US and the USSR.

This was not a revolutionary strategy, in the sense of calling for smashing of the state in Eastern Europe. Just as in Italy the Communist Party has preached a 'historic compromise' with the main government party, the Christian Democrats, so it urges in Poland an agreement between the regime Solidarity and the Church.

Nevertheless, it breaks with the old pro-Russian conception enough to earn it virtual ex-communication from Moscow.

A long article in *Pravda* has denounced the Italian CP Central Committee for 'a truly sacrilegious attempt to "demonstrate" that the foreign policy of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact is indistinguishable from that of the US and NATO'. This constitutes 'a serious blow against the struggle for peace'.

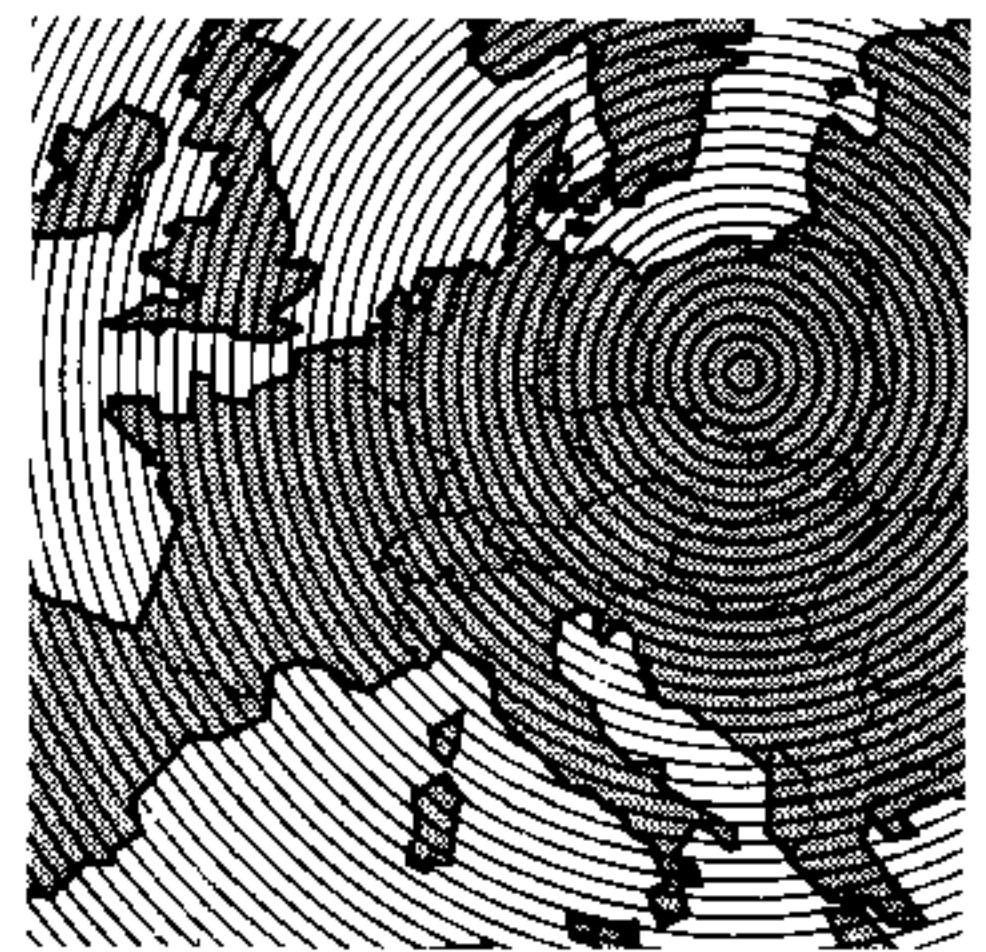
What is more the various positions taken by the Italian CP in recent years amount to 'the gradual abandonment of the platform of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism'. It gives 'direct aid to imperialism, anti-Communism and all the forces hostile to social progress'. In this way the leaders of the party are 'striking a blow against the Italian Communist Party itself'.

The *Pravda* article thus amounts to an open call for pro-Russian CP members in Italy to organise against the party's leaders, if necessary splitting the party.

What will be the impact of this call?

In *Italy* itself the effect will probably be minimal. The CP is the country's largest workers' party and controls the largest trade union organisation. It gets a third of the vote in elections, it has a massive parliamentary presence and thousands of local councillors, controlling many major cities. Thus its leaders can boast enough successes in their own reformist terms to shrug off the Russian attack. Even if many of their older rank and file activists feel uneasy about the break with Russia, very few will want to leave a successful mass party for a small pro-Russian sect.

The real impact of the row with Russia will be elsewhere.



Spain

The Spanish CP takes a fairly similar line to the Italian Party — although one that leaves it unclear whether Russia still plays a 'progressive' role internationally. Its resolution argues, in words that could almost come straight from Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*:

'The October revolution created a type of state and property relations that played a revolutionary role in the world. But although under Stalin this state may have ceased to be a bourgeois state, structured to defend private property, it did not become what in Marxist terms one



Carrillo: facing splits in both directions

considers the working class organised as the dominant class to be, an authentic workers' democracy. It was a state that had arisen above society, a state institutionalised by a bureaucracy that decides everything ...'

However, the Spanish CP is in a much weaker state when it comes to facing up to the Russian ideological onslaught than the Italian party.

Five years ago, just after the death of Franco, it was by far the most powerful workers' organisation in the country. But its policy of collaborating both with the government and with the initially weak right wing Socialist Party in opposing strikes through the Pact of Moncloa, lost it its predominant position. Today the Socialist Party gets many more votes, and the CP-led union, the Workers Commission, is hardly stronger than the Socialist Party's UGT.

The result over the last year has been growing disillusionment with the party leadership, leading to splits in opposite directions.

The general secretary, Santiago Carrillo, has reacted to criticism from any direction by wholesale expulsions. Thus almost the entire Basque section of the party was expelled last year when they voted to merge with the 'moderate' left nationalists of Euskadiko Ezkerra. Half the party's city councillors in Madrid were expelled last summer for supporting the Basques and opposing 'Stalinism' in the party. The Catalan section of the party — the allegedly independent PSUC — voted at its last Congress to repudiate 'Eurocommunism' and more than three quarters of the Catalan party aligned themselves either with an 'Afghan' current which was openly pro-Russian, or with a larger 'Leninist' current that demanded a more militant strategy in Spain and repudiated the Pact of Moncloa, while not supporting Russia.

Since Catalonia is the only part of the country where the CP has had anything like the mass support it has in France and Italy, this was an especially strong blow to Carrillo.

Now the events in Poland have split the dominant 'Leninist' group in Catalonia, with some of them joining Carrillo's supporters to drive the 'Afghans' out of the party. There are reports that pro-Russian elements are setting up their own party, the PSUC(C), which they claim will get the support of half the old party.

How far this split-off will get off the

ground is uncertain. But it will certainly diminish greatly the strength of the already weakening Carrillo party, threatening to reduce it to little more than a dwindling rump with a highly authoritarian internal regime.

France

But if Eurocommunism faces seemingly insuperable problems in Spain so do the attempts of the French leader Marchais to steer his party back in the Russian direction.

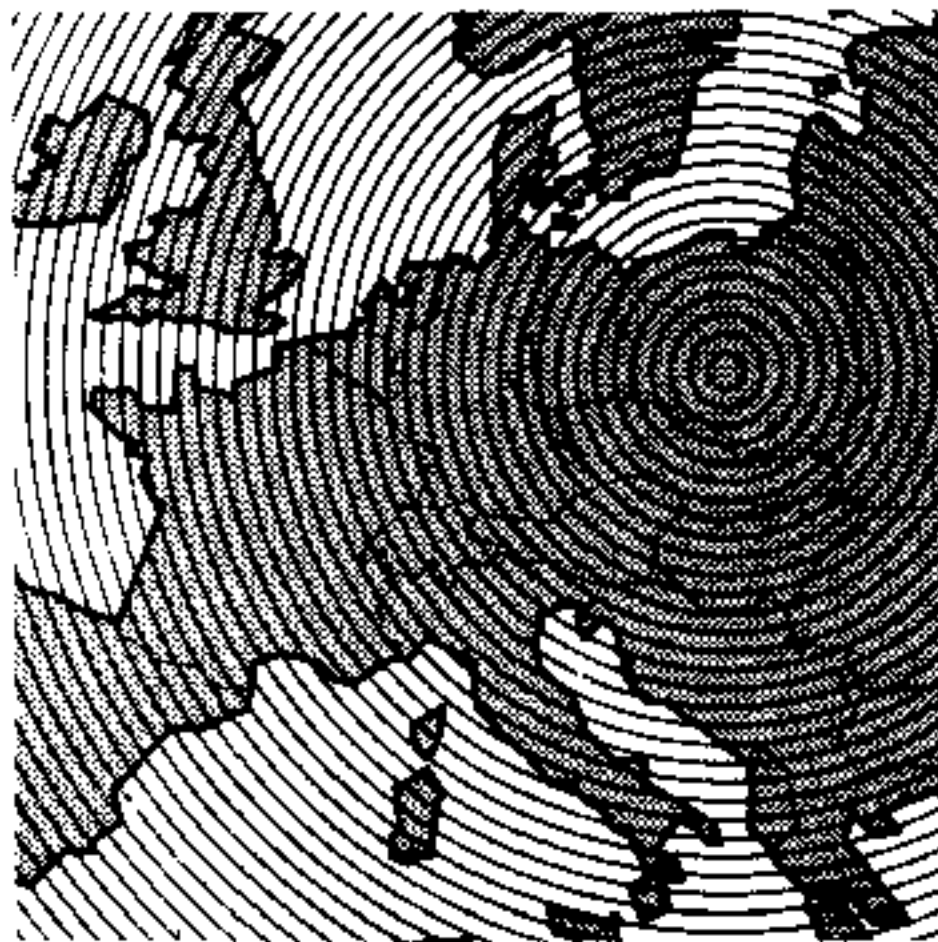
Statements by the French CP leadership have admitted that there have been serious mistakes by the leaders of the Polish Party in the past, but have then gone on to line up with Jaruzelski by blaming the coup on the 'excesses of Solidarity'. The CP-controlled union, the CGT, has opposed any participation in protests at the coup called by the other unions.

This attitude has produced considerable opposition within the ranks of the CGT. Some 355 bodies belonging to it have formed a 'coordination' in support of Solidarity, and the official CGT fortnightly magazine has carried an editorial more critical of the coup than the official union line.

The CP's embarrassment is heightened by the fact that it has two members in Mitterand's government — a government whose attitude is summed up by reports that it is 'worried about pacifist and neutralist trends in West Germany' (*Financial Times* 14 January).

The party leadership has hardly enjoyed great successes in recent years. After un-critical collaboration with the Socialist Party for a number of years, it broke off relations in the middle of one set of elections — only to resume them in the middle of the next one. As a result it has not been in a position either to claim credit for the election of the socialist government or to criticise that government's failures. It is a diminishing force, with the leadership only able to maintain its control — in exactly the same way as the Eurocommunist Carrillo — by the expulsion of critics like the former head of the party's Paris organisation, Fizbin.

The party will survive the Polish argument, because it is stronger and better rooted than the Spanish Party. But it will, no doubt, be further weakened.



Marchais: backing Mitterrand and the Kremlin

Britain

The British CP has always been one of the minnows of West European Communism. And it looks as if the row over Poland could be more devastating for it than for the much larger parties abroad.

Four years ago it seemed that Eurocommunism had won complete control of the party, and a small grouping of members left to form a minuscule pro-Russian breakaway, the New Communist Party. But then the leadership did a switch, and while keeping clear of outright pro-Russian statements, directed their fire against those members whose line was closest to the Italian Party.

Many of the Eurocommunists dropped out of the party, attracted by the lush pastures of the Labour Left. The result was to be seen at last November's congress.

In a smaller CP, the residual pro-Russian elements were of growing importance. The party leadership had to line up once again with the Italian-style Eurocommunists to get a bare majority of 60-40 to condemn the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. It seemed clear to us even then that more Eurocommunists would drop out, until the pro-Russian element were in the majority.

The Polish events will hasten that process considerably. On an issue which many of them find very difficult to duck, party activists have been taking diametrically opposed positions.

The official line of the party leadership has been criticism of the military takeover in Poland, but in terms far more mild than those of the Italian CP. It has called for 'the immediate release of trade union representatives detained in Poland, the restoration of all democratic rights and the return of civilian rule ... Rule by the military is no substitute for the complex, difficult and lengthy process of re-establishing trust between the Polish people, the Polish United Workers Party and the government' even if 'some of the statements and calls by Solidarity made the establishment of such a partnership more difficult ...'

'We recognise the right of sovereign states to take emergency powers in special circumstances. But these powers must remain subject to civilian control and confirmation by parliament.'

Such formulations (which, apart from anything else would have justified the British Emergency Powers Act under which hundreds of Communists were arrested in 1926) could satisfy neither those who supported the Russians nor those who sided with Solidarity. They could not be happy either with the policy the *Morning Star* followed of printing both the statements of Poland's military rulers and of the resistance to them.

The *Morning Star* since has contained many letters bitterly critical of the party's line and the paper's coverage. Thus Tom Durkin from London could go so far as to claim that the paper had become 'a mouthpiece for various rumour mongers and speculators ... doing no service to the British working class movement.' Solidarity itself he described — in terms reminiscent of the Moscow trials of the 30s — as containing 'powerful forces backed internationally by a motley of reactionary forces including fascists, Trotskyists, right wing Labour and trade union leaders, church bodies and such champions of "free trade unions" as Thatcher, Reagan and Pinochet ...' (4 January).

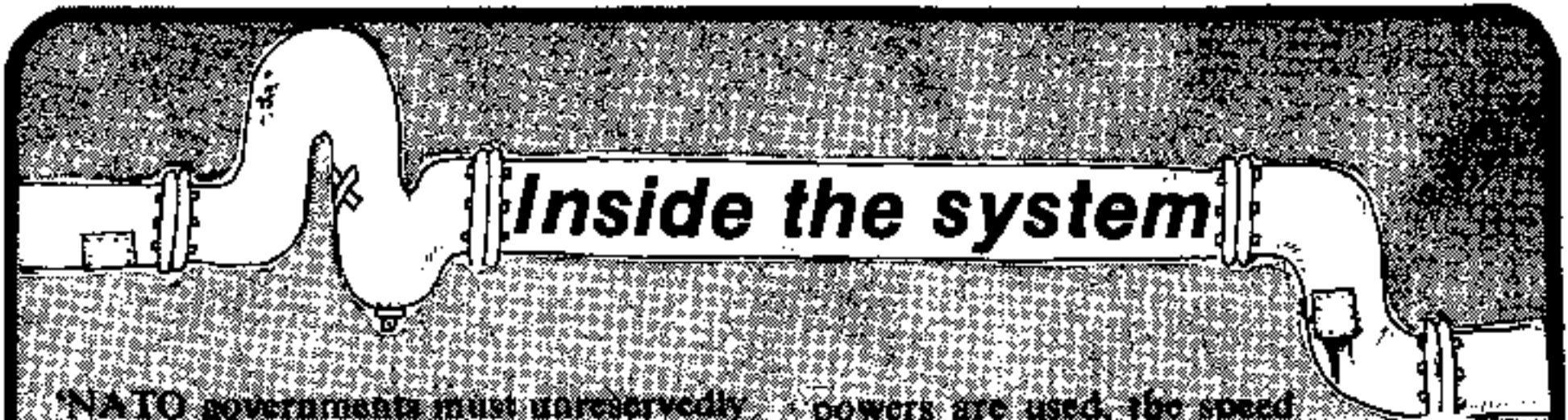
Other letters expressed 'shame' at discovering that three London branches went on a pro-Solidarity demonstration on 20 December along with "what even a Tory MP has aptly termed the fascist left" (Silvia Bolgar) on 'an anti-socialist, anti-Communist exercise' (Paul Foley). For May Adossides (13 January) 'the *Morning Star* has joined the same bandwagon as Reagan, Thatcher and the Pope', while for Dorothy Friedman (the same day) 'the old dogma the party is always right has been replaced by the dogma the party is always wrong (in the socialist countries)'.

The offensive by the pro-Russian elements has forced some at least of those critical of military rule to probe deeper than ever before into the real character of Eastern Europe. Thus one letter of 28 December says that 'there is no way Gerry Pocock (of the party's international department) can have both his excellent statement on Poland and his declaration of solidarity with the Polish Communist Party ... It is not a question of their road being different to ours. They are going somewhere else ...'

Cliff Rowe of London suggests on 4 January 'the Polish situation must surely make us all rethink accepted attitudes towards building socialism and socialist countries ... We are compelled to wonder which socialist country or party will next face a disastrous internal upheaval or loss of mass support ...'

The disarray in the columns of the *Morning Star* is matched by disarray in the party. Thus while three London branches did support the 20 December demonstration, on 23 January 400 members at a London conference of the party voted three to one to criticise the leadership's line from a pro-Russian position.

In Glasgow when support for a Labour movement pro-Solidarity demonstration was raised at the trades council, CP members used a verbal quibble to defer a decision. Yet the demonstration itself was attended by CP and YCL branches and by



'NATO governments must unreservedly condemn another brutal attempt to crush the efforts of the people of a Soviet satellite country to achieve a modicum of freedom', wrote the *Daily Telegraph* (14.12.81). It continued a few days later (29.12.81), 'Anyone whose Christmas holiday was not overshadowed by the numbing tragedy of Poland is surely lacking not only in the basic Christian qualities and a due sense of outrage, but also in an essential instinct for collective self-preservation.'

The tone was very different after the Turkish coup of September 1980. 'The military takeover will come as an enormous relief to the whole Western community. At last there will be someone in Turkey, a staunch and invaluable NATO ally with whom it will be possible for the West to talk business — political and military business — with some hope of agreement.' (13.9.80).

'The only solution for Polish workers was a western-style free market system.' (17.12.81). 'The total bankruptcy of the Soviet ideological, political and economic system has been devastatingly demonstrated.' (14.12.81).

But what of 'western-style' parliamentary democracy in Turkey? 'Terrorism grew and flourished like a bush fire mainly because the politicians were not only incapable of governing the country, let alone ordering their own affairs, but were also unable to alleviate mass poverty and deprivation coupled with an inflation rate of 130 per cent.'

Yet even the *Telegraph* could not avoid pointing out (15.12.81) that 'there was an almost uncanny resemblance between the terms of his (Jaruzelski's) proclamation on Sunday and that made by the Generals who recently took power in Turkey.' (1)

Moderation

Given the 'strategic importance' of Turkey, *The Times* also showed understanding towards the General's dilemma. 'Unlike the Greek Colonels the Turkish generals had good reason for acting as they did. They took power reluctantly, as a last resort, to save Turkey from the far worse fate of open civil war' (16.12.81). 'What's more, in their first year in office General Evren and his colleagues have achieved more than many people thought possible' (14.9.81).

However *The Times* is somewhat more consistent when it comes to the Polish coup. 'The fact that General Jaruzelski grasped for emergency powers is not on its own, sufficient cause for condemnation. Most states would do the same in similar circumstances. What is of vital concern — to the West as well as to the Polish people — is the way in which these

powers are used, the speed with which they are relinquished and the conditions which their emergence' (13.12.81).

In a situation of socioeconomic collapse a nice moderate military dictatorship does seem unavoidable. 'NATO can only live at ease with an unelected, non-democratic military government (in Turkey) in its midst as long as that government avoids repressive courses and is seen to be moving towards a restoration of civilian rule as quickly as possible.' (15.9.80).

And while urging resistance to the Polish generals, moderation is the key. 'The ideal outcome of the present showdown would therefore be a deal by which Solidarity would offer its all-out support for economic recovery in return for structural changes in the political and economic systems which would guarantee future freedoms.' (16.12.81).

Inevitable

The inevitability of both coups was stressed by the *Guardian*. 'There was an inevitability about yesterday's unled, orderly and bloodless coup' in Turkey. (13.9.80). 'There can be no doubt that General Jaruzelski, a man of patriotic and moderate reputation who has often repeated his refusal to turn his guns on restive workers, acted out of sheer desperation' (14.12.81).

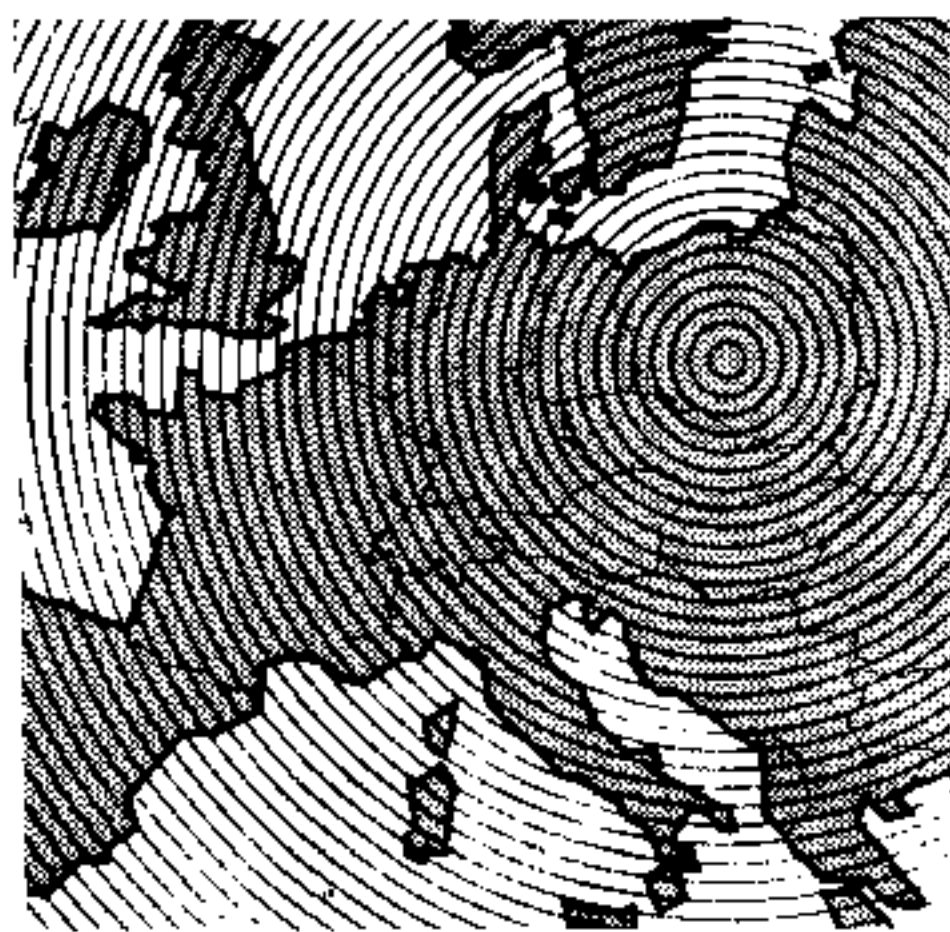
However the Turkish coup seemed to the *Guardian* somewhat more inevitable. 'If the generals fail to their declared objectives (to deal with political corruption, right wing extremists in the police and administration, Marxist and Islamic militants, a better aid deal with the West, rampant regionalism ...) then the next stage for Turkey will be infinitely worse than anything that nation has suffered.' (13.9.81).

By contrast, 'President Reagan was right to insist that destruction of the Polish experiment from within would be as intolerable as destruction from without by "fraternal allies".' (14.12.81).

Stability

The last word, however, should remain with that cold warrior and defender of Western civilisation, par excellence, the *Daily Mail*:

'No tears have been shed for the demise of Turkish democracy. Few inside that country and hardly anybody outside have had a bad word to say about the generals who have now taken over ... It is vital to the NATO alliance that stability, civil and economic, be restored in this member state, which is of such strategic importance to the containment of Soviet imperialism.' (16.9.80).



the CP trades council secretary with the trades council banner.

In Manchester, several CP members voted against an initial call from the North Manchester AUEW district committee to support a labour movement demonstration, resulting in a drawn 5-5 vote, with the chair casting his vote against the demonstration. Yet when a Solidarity member from URSUS turned up to the next meeting, they agreed to listen to him — amending a pro-Solidarity resolution so as to invite someone from the Polish embassy to put the military regime's case as well.

It is difficult from the outside to tell either what the national balance of forces inside the CP over the issue is, or how bitter the arguments taking place at meetings are.

However, a few things are clear:

(1) The impact of Poland will be to further accelerate the CP's decline. More Eurocommunists will drift away from the party while the *Morning Star's* circulation must surely suffer as the pro-Russian elements see it as a propandist for 'counter-revolution'.

(2) In the declining party, the weight of the pro-Russian faction will grow. For while a few of their members may drift off to join the Stalinist grouping inside the Labour Party around *Straight Left* this will much more be the case with the Eurocommunists. The party leadership can no longer rely on the automatic votes of party loyalists—and the row between the Italians and the Russians is going to make its attempts to balance between the supporters of the two increasingly precarious.

(3) The split is in no way a 'left-right' split. It is true that the Eurocommunists have taken their adaption to reformism to its logical conclusion, with a willingness to swear blindly on the the British Constitution, and that in some localities the pro-Russian element show a greater preparedness to consider militant tactics. But where the pro-Russian element are well placed — as in the London district or in the party's 'peace work', they show the same willingness to kowtow to trade union bureaucrats, bishops or even Tories as the Eurocommunists.

The main significance of the argument is that it reduces the ability of old Stalinist notions to block the path of rank and file activists towards revolutionary socialism. In 99 per cent of cases these are not CP members — but they are the people who 20 years ago would have been drawn into its orbit.

Rape: no easy answers

Sue Cockerill, Jane Ure Smith and Marta Wohrle look at the issues involved in the controversy over the jailing of rapists.

The present row about the sentencing of rapists and the victim's right to prosecute has raised a lot of thorny problems for the revolutionary socialist. The main questions centre around the role of the state and the general issues of crime and punishment in a capitalist society. And few of the answers are clear cut.

On the one hand, MPs, judges, police chiefs, and on the other feminists, have tended to make a big distinction between rape and other crimes, even other sorts of violent crime. But their reasons for doing so are quite different.

Politicians and the police base their position on the old and reactionary ideas that 'respectable' women should live in protected circumstances, and that means protected by men against other men—rapists. The feminists quite rightly are insisting that as women we have the right to lead our lives free from molestation of any sort, and that means our right to dress as we wish and to be out on the streets when and where we choose.

But when it comes to how the right is to be made a practical reality, there is a disturbing concurrence of views in favour of the 'castrate them' sort of argument. The problem is that demands of that sort are placed on the state machine, on the police and the judges. In short, on those people to whom

women's liberation is anathema.

Rarely can we argue that the state machine will work in our favour; rarely do we get any political mileage from using the courts. We argue against taking trade union disputes through the courts since it takes the emphasis away from building a mass campaign and in the long run means almost certain defeat. In the prosecution of a rapist the victim will be put 'on trial'. Long sentences won't change the attitudes that perpetuate vile crimes like rape. To side with the 'law and order' brigade isn't just naive, it's a dangerous political trap.

There is also an age-old tradition of using rape charges to terrorise oppressed racial minorities—in the South of the USA, for example, where one of the main stated aims of the Ku Klux Klan has always been to protect white women against black men. The lynchings which took place on that basis are very well known.

Imperialist powers have also used rape charges in this way, as well as their soldiers using rape to terrorise women. In Britain today, if you report a rape to the police it is extremely likely that they will go out and arrest the first black youth they can lay their hands on (if they believe you, that is.)

So is rape different from other kinds of crime? In one important respect it is. There isn't a conscious conspiracy among men to terrorise women with the weapon of rape, but the possibility of being raped adds a dimension of fear to women's lives which isn't present in men's.

From an early age, girls learn that walking around the streets alone at night isn't safe for them. From then on it is something which is at the back of our minds whenever we are in that situation. It makes us dependent on other people, especially on



men, who are more likely to have cars than women.

To a certain extent we have to plan our social lives around the problems of getting home at night. Most women can't afford taxis so they are dependent on a public transport system which usually stops early and is getting worse all the time. The single woman particularly is always having to worry about this kind of problem, whether she has been raped or not. It is unlikely that the fear of violent robbery plays that kind of role in men's minds. The possibility of attack, then, is a limiting factor on women's freedom of a very substantial kind.

But it is not this sort of consideration which has prompted the utterings of Thatcher, Jardine and so on. They are following in the tradition of making us more dependent on men for our protection, not less. Thatcher's comment was that women have the right to feel that they are protected by the law, not that women have the right to be free to do what they want without fear of attack. It is an important distinction.

Arguments that connect rape with other phenomena are not unproblematic either. For example there is the pornography-rape theory and the cuts-rape theory. To start with it is difficult to cite any real evidence that supports or disproves either. Rape statistics are extremely unreliable and based only on those rapes that are reported to the police and rape within marriage is ignored. Only 25 per cent of the women that contact 'rape crisis' centres actually go to the police.

It is doubtful if there is any tangible correlation between rape and pornography or the cuts. But there is a relationship in that they are both part and parcel of the same social system.

In capitalist society, rape is the product of women being seen as objects which can be bought or sold. This is the only value that pornography gives women and the only value that some men give them. At the same time the education system and jobs that gave women the opportunity to challenge those roles are fast disappearing.

Where we as revolutionary socialists have to part company with the feminists is on the basis of our analysis of why rape (and other crimes) happen, and what can be done about it. We believe that rape arises out of the distorted lives which people lead under capitalism, not out of some inherent desire of men to exercise power over women. In present society the desire to humiliate someone who is 'inferior' to you lies behind rape, racism and gay bashing alike. Sexual frustration is probably not the main reason for rape. It is the need to humiliate someone, and because of the role of women in society, that need frequently takes the form of rape. Rape, and crime generally, arise out of particular social circumstances — that is the reality of class society — not out of immutable sexual reality.

For us, that reality of class society can be changed by the action of the working class, men and women together. That is the only way to real freedom from fear.

Admittedly that does not help women very much in the here and now. Capitalism is very definitely still with us, and in some situations we will have no choice but to resort to the forces of the state to protect us



Illustration: Tim Sanders

as individuals.

In the here and now our main concern must be with helping to ensure that any woman who is raped goes through the least possible mental and physical suffering. In most cases going to the police is going to mean more rather than less suffering. As the Thames Valley police documentary showed, the woman may be subjected to a gruelling ordeal in which she is forced to establish her credentials as an 'innocent' rape victim on the basis of how many men she has slept with in the past.

On the other hand, real assistance does come from 'rape crisis' centres. If we are to make any demand on the state at all, it should be that, in the same way as we demand a better abortion service, we demand free 'rape crisis' centres under the NHS.

Presumably, however, women who do go to the police do not go for reassurance. They go because they believe the rapist should not go unpunished and should be prevented from raping again. But the Yorkshire Ripper case calls in question any assumptions women might have about a competent and efficient police force capable of bringing criminals to justice. It was only when 'respectable' women rather than prostitutes were raped and murdered that any serious attempt to catch Sutcliffe began. And then, what of the bungling and delay?

It is unlikely that the incompetence revealed in the Ripper case is a problem localised to the Yorkshire police. And rather than genuine incompetence it is more likely to be a question of priorities and resources being channelled in other directions such as fitting out the police with riot gear and

teaching them how to bust picket lines and pick up young blacks on dope charges. A system operating on this basis can hardly be expected to provide any kind of justice for ordinary working class women whether they are raped or assaulted, mugged or murdered.

As far as preventing more rapes happening, collective action on the part of women — and men — seems a more positive step to take than going to the police. This is not necessarily to advocate marauding bands of feminists vigilantes. It is rather to suggest a whole range of things that can be done by women and men fighting back together. That range extends from a group of people getting together to frighten off a known rapist to the campaigns for better lighting and transport that are most effectively raised as trade union issues. The latter suggestions might seem vague and long term, but it is unlikely that going to the police will mean any more immediate or effective action.

We should be very clear that the state is not on our side, and never can be. That it is not in our interest to have more police patrolling the streets, to give judges more power to hand out tougher sentences, to applaud 'law and order' speeches by the likes of Thatcher and Whitelaw. The police and the prisons and the courts exist ultimately to protect them against us, to make certain the ruling class can carry on ruling. What that will mean is a society which breeds even more rapists. It will be a society with prisons even more crowded than they are today, but it won't be any safer for women to walk the streets.

Steve Cushion shows how those who claim to be the most ardent defenders of Jewish people have often worked with their bitterest enemies.

Zionism and anti-semitism

Over the past couple of years the deepening of the world economic crisis has started to put anti-semitism back on the political map in Western Europe and America.

After the War, and the general public horror as the details of the holocaust were revealed, Western anti-semitism became the political philosophy of a few despised fanatics.

This happy state of affairs is rapidly coming to an end as is witnessed by the growth of the American Nazi Party, the British Movement and similar National Socialist organisations. Repeated references to 'Yids' are joining the wall daubings attacking black people and the Synagogue bombings have started again.

White people are now less politically capable of defending themselves than at any time in their history, for in the past thirty years Zionism has come to utterly dominate Jewish political life outside the ranks of the revolutionary left. And Zionism is the handmaiden of anti-semitism.

I can almost hear the cries of 'That's a bit strong', but for nearly a hundred years now the Zionists have been betraying the Jews into the hands of our enemies. Sometimes consciously, sometimes unwittingly, but always feeding the fires and disarming the resistance. For Zionism is defeatism, Zionism says that anti-semitism is a genetic disorder in all gentiles, eternal and inevitable, a form of racial hatred that can only be eliminated by the reorganisation of the Jews into a land of their own, separate from the rest of mankind. Of course such a philosophy fits neatly in with the ideas of those who hate the Jews, who would wish to separate them from their own pure Aryan, Slavic, Polish or English stock. And from the beginning the Zionists have always shown a preference for 'honest anti-semites' against those who would seek to confront

racism as a class question.

Zionism is absolutely dependant on imperialism for the creation and maintenance of 'Der Judenstaat', the State of the Jews, and in the early days of the movement they spent a great deal of time scouring around for a likely benefactor. One Theodor Herzl, now thought of as the founding father of modern Zionism, sought audiences with every imperialist ragamuffin from the pope to Kaiser Wilhelm¹.

Pogroms

Russia at the turn of the century was notorious for its officially orchestrated Jew baiting, yet Herzl travelled to Russia to try to do a deal with Plehve, the Czarist minister of Pogroms and founder of the 'Black Hundreds', the man personally responsible for the massacre at Kishinev which left hundreds dead². After all, Herzl and Plehve had one thing in common, they both wanted the Jews out of Russia, and Herzl was convinced that it was possible to come to an understanding with one's fiercest adversaries when their interests coincided with your own. The other thing they both hated was the socialists. The Bund and the Social Democrats (both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks) were organising Jews and Gentiles to fight the pogroms as part of the fight for socialism, and the last thing that either Herzl or Plehve wanted to see was Jews and Gentiles fighting alongside one another. Herzl was always very keen to point out in his dealings with the authorities that Zionism provided a splendid diversion

for any Jew contemplating a bit of militant action against the oppressor.³

But we have to wait till after the Great War for the Zionists to find the real depths of collaboration which they could reach. For official Zionism, despite some of their rhetoric today, never lifted a finger to fight the growth of Fascism between the wars. This is not to say that there were not rank and file Zionist workers who defied their leaders and fought it out with the Nazis in the streets, but the leadership did all it could to prevent such involvement. For under the surface the Nazis and the Zionists agreed, they both wanted to rid Germany of the Jews and this became the basis for some disgraceful collaboration. (All the way through the Nazis took a very lenient attitude towards the German Zionists).⁴

Right from the beginning of the Nazi regime in Germany, the call went out for a world-wide boycott of German goods.

In order to break this boycott the Nazi State made the so-called Haavara (transfer) Agreement with the Zionists which allowed for the transfer of a certain amount of German Jewish capital to Palestine⁵. This served the double purpose of flooding Palestine with German goods as Jewish companies were persuaded by the transfer of capital to place their orders in Germany and also provided excellent camouflage as it could be made to appear that the Nazis were merely aiding the orderly departure of the Jews. To help this illusion Eichman went so far as to set up training camps for the Chalutzim, the pioneers heading for Palestine⁶. As a result of this clever piece of wool-pulling the 1933 Zionist Congress in Prague voted to oppose the boycott.⁷

While National Socialism and Zionism of all shades may have elements of a common ideological position, there is one faction of Zionists, the Revisionists, who are effectively Jewish Fascists themselves. Their leader, Jabotinski, in the period 1919-21 negotiated with the pogromist General Petlyura to form an anti-Soviet Jewish military force to fight in the Ukraine, alongside the White soldiers who were busy murdering every Jewish civilian they could lay hands on⁸. His disciple, Georg Kareski, however, excelled his master when he was appointed by the Gestapo to be director of the 'Jewish Cultural Leagues' which controlled all Jewish activity in Nazi Germany⁹.

At one point this Kareski, President of the German Revisionist State Zionists, gave a full page interview in Goebbels' paper 'Angriff' under the heading 'The Nuremberg Laws'¹¹. At this point it is demanded¹⁰. However the rest of the Zionists were not pleased to see sole Nazi recognition going to the Revisionists— so when Herr Kareski received his appointment, the 'Zionist Federation of Germany' replied by the demand 'that we be given full jurisdiction on the adaptation of German Jewry to the conditions created by the Nuremberg Laws'¹¹. At this point it is probably necessary to pinch oneself and remember that these people are indeed Jews collaborating in their own destruction. It is also worth remembering the next time you hear Menachem Begin sounding off about



Zionism never had the support of all Jews. Even today it is rejected by some orthodox Jews as well as by socialists.

anti-semitism that this is the political tradition to which he belongs, having been the head of the Revisionist militia-Irgun Zvai Leumi.

Such collaboration went all the way to the mouth of the gas chamber. Dr Rudolf Kastner was the leader of the Hungarian Zionists and he reached agreement with Adolf Eichman that in return for a few thousand Jews (only the best biological specimens) begin shipped to Palestine, his party would work for peace and tranquility in the transit camps to Auschwitz¹². Mercifully he was by no means entirely successful and there was considerable resistance in the camps.

Why then after such a history has Zionism become so dominant, not only among Jews, but also seen by the overwhelming number of Gentiles as the only answer to the Jewish question?

We are now given the impression that the victorious march forward of the Allies swept anti-semitism before it into the dustbin of history. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Polish Government-in-exile in London refused to even make the propaganda exercise of repealing Poland's pre-war anti-semitic legislation. Anti-semitic literature circulated quite freely in the barracks of the Free Polish Army¹³. Bomber command refused to bomb the railway lines to Auschwitz claiming it was too difficult, yet they made a very good job of demolishing nearby oil pipelines. The list goes on¹⁴.

The truth of the matter is that the majority of the allied authorities had no great love of the Jews themselves and while they made what propaganda mileage they could out of the Nazi persecutions, most of them would not have been heartbroken if Hitler's final solution had been successful.

At the end of the war, the victorious allies merely placed the inmates of the concentration camps in 'Displaced Person Camps', fed and clothed them and thought that they had done their Christian duty. The nearest the allies got to helping these unfortunates to create a future for themselves was to tell them to go back home and build¹⁵. Back to a home that was devastated by 6 years of war, to a home

where anti-semitism had been rife before even the coming of the Nazis. And then the reports started to filter back to the camps of anti-Jewish agitation starting up again, the fears this caused becoming horrible reality by the start of 1946 when pogroms started again in Poland.¹⁶ Small wonder then that in the absence of any other hope the agitation of the Zionists fell on such fertile ground. Zionism always grows from despair and misery.

Homeland

But while Zionism is a by-product of anti-semitism, its growth and development is a direct consequence of the failure to achieve socialism. To most people, regretfully, when you speak of socialism it means one of two things—Stalinism or Labourism. From the start of the 1917 revolution the Bolsheviks worked hard towards eradicating anti-Jewish prejudice, but as the Party degenerated, their efforts became more ham-fisted. As part of the Stalinisation of their attitude on the Nationality question, the Party decided to set up a Jewish homeland. While it was probably conceived with the best of intentions (give them the benefit of the doubt anyway), to send 40,000 mainly urban Jews into a completely barren mosquito infested swamp at the far end of the Siberian Railway showed a basic lack of understanding of how things work in real life. The Jewish Republic of Birobidztan was no great success.¹⁷

If the Birobidztan experiment was a failure, it set the scene for what was to follow. As Stalin consolidated his control on the party, Greater Russian Chauvinism became the order of the day and the high proportion of Jews in the Opposition gave him the excuse he needed to start the officially orchestrated Jew-baiting again, which by 1937-38 had turned into active repression—Jewish schools were closed, Yiddish newspapers suppressed and the leaders of Birobidztan were shot in 1939, the leaders of the Bund who had joined the CP were put to death not long after.¹⁸

While the position improved during the war (Russia was in such desperate straits that they even needed the Jews) as soon as it

was over the purges restarted and matters went from bad to worse. It started with attacks on 'rootless cosmopolitans' went through the suppression of the Yiddish language in 1948 and reached its grisly climax in the 'Moscow Doctors Plot' and the Slansky trial in 1952-3¹⁹. It's all a bit more low key these days, but you try and get a job when you've put down Yiddish as your first language on the application form and see what happens.

Faced with this appalling state of affairs, to say to a Jew that socialism is the answer to all their problems must seem a sick joke.

The other side of the coin, the Socialist International, the Labour Parties, have always been riddled with Zionism and Labour-Zionism has always been a strong component, at times completely dominant, of Zionism. We can expect no socialist opposition to Zionism from the parties of the Socialist International if for no other reason than that they have sold their souls as deeply to imperialism as have the Zionists.

Yet it is equally true that the only hope for the long term future for the Jewish people lies with the workers' state. All other paths lead back to a second holocaust more terrible even than the last.

1. Nathan Weinstock *Zionism: False Messiah* 1969 p.40.
2. Baruch Hagani *Theodore Herzl* 1918 p.170.
3. Leonard Stein *The Balfour Declaration* 1963 p.325.
4. Weinstock op. cit. p.149.
5. David Yisraek 'The Third Reich and the Transfer Agreement'—*Journal of Contemporary History* vol 6 no.2 pp. 129-148.
6. Hannah Arendt *Eichmann in Jerusalem* 1963
7. Yisraek op. cit.
8. Walter Laquer *A History of Zionism* p.377
9. American Jewish Congress bulletin Jan. 24 1936
10. *Angriff* 23.12.35 quoted in the Prague Jewish Weekly *Selbstwekz.* 3.1.36.
11. Weinstock op. cit. pp135-6.
12. Arendt op. cit.
13. Zvi Arital—*The Polish Government in Exile and the Jewish Question* Winer Library Bulletin Vol XXVII new series, Nos. 33 and 34, 1975.
14. *Appeal from the Doomed* Observer 4.6.61.
15. R.H.S. Crossman *Palestine Mission* London 1947 p.87-88.
16. Weinstock op. cit. p.229 and Jan Regier *Vrij Nederland* 10.9.66.
17. *ibid* p.18.
18. *ibid* p.19 and S.M. Schwartz *Jews in the Soviet Union* 1951 p.183
19. M. Ben Reuben 'Gagarin and the Jewish Problem' *Socialist Review* Feb. 1962.
20. *Le Monde* 13.1.66.

Strike against Apartheid!

Next month Anti-Apartheid will be organising a national demonstration in London. Neil Faulkner worked for 18 months in the organisation. He urges support for the demonstration — but with a quite different perspective to that of its leadership.

On 13 March the Anti-Apartheid Movement will take to the streets in its first national demonstration for well over two years. This will be the culmination of the 'Isolate Apartheid. South Africa — Sanctions Now!' Campaign launched a year ago.

Recognising that 'despite twenty years of campaigning ... the key issue which led to the AAM's formation has yet to become a major political issue', the leadership hoped 'to secure from organisations at a national and local level and from the public as a whole support for ... a policy of isolating apartheid in South Africa'.

But the AAM leadership has been trying to do this since 1959. It has sought to 'end all forms of collaboration with the apartheid regime' by means of action at a governmental level under the pressure of 'public opinion'. Its failure has been total.

The recent sanctions campaign has been no different from any of the others. Its centre-piece is a petition addressed to Margaret Thatcher. At the time of writing, with only three months to go, it has still

attracted less than 20,000 signatures out of an original target of 100,000!

The campaign has made no impact on mass consciousness. It has evoked no reaction from the Tories. It has produced no sanctions. Not even the faint possibility of them at some distant date. The campaign is a complete flop.

Right at the outset its planners took no account of the weakness of AAM organisation. This was mistake number one: not making the least attempt to relate campaign objectives to what the organisation might feasibly attempt. Instead, the membership has been subjected to a stream of hectoring demands that it achieve levels of activity beyond the bounds of possibility in support of objectives which are totally ludicrous.

Leverage

Yet a wave of strikes has been sweeping across Southern Africa for two years now. Whereas the South African state had been strong enough to smash the old black unions in the sixties, this time round it has faced a challenge of a different order. The bosses now confront a substantial semi-skilled black proletariat, employed to operate the new manufacturing technology introduced during the boom years before 1973.

These workers have leverage on the system. Primitive union-busting is too expensive now. So even though the class struggle has sometimes ebbed — the mid-seventies recession produced a downturn in the strike rate — on each occasion it has surged up again later. Botha has had to deal with a five-fold increase in strike activity

since the beginning of 1980. Union membership has more than trebled. And there has been no let-up so far. The Anti-Apartheid leadership has failed to respond to this.

The whole orientation is on state action. The main demand of the AAM is that the British government should impose 'comprehensive and mandatory UN sanctions on South Africa'.

This is pure pie-in-the-sky. It would involve the British state in a fullscale offensive against the profitability of British capitalism. With just about every British-based firm of any appreciable size doing business with South Africa, it is inconceivable that a British government would disrupt this process.

The only thing that might come of all this is that there could be some attempt to link 'the call for sanctions' with import controls—a position advanced by a TGWU research officer in a recent book *Sanctions against South Africa: exploding the myths*. Britain's 'contribution' to southern African 'solidarity' would be determined entirely by the needs of British capitalism in crisis. Sectors of British industry 'threatened' by South African imports would be 'protected'. Unemployment would be exported from Doncaster to Durban. For all the rest it would be business as usual.

Let us assume it happened and sanctions of one sort or another were imposed. What would be the effect of the implementation of this demand on the struggle in Southern Africa? The answer is quite simple: the destruction of the only class with the social power to smash the apartheid state. The demand for 'disinvestment' and 'isolation' — that the whole process of imperialist capital accumulation in southern Africa be reversed — is at the same time a demand for the deproletarianisation of the black workers.

The blanket boycott is an absurdity. It



means breaking up the black industrial working class, leaving it with no means of livelihood and no leverage over the system.

A resolution put to the last AAM AGM concerned the long-running dispute at the Wilson-Rowntree factory in East London. It called on British unions at Rowntree-Mackintosh to campaign for the reinstatement of sacked strikers, the recognition of the South African Allied Workers Union and the release of detained union organisers. The AAM Executive agreed with the substance of this resolution but chose to add the following amendment: 'Recognising that the ultimate aim of such a campaign should be the withdrawal of Rowntree-Mackintosh from South Africa in the context of the repeated calls of the black workers of South Africa for sanctions.'

We have no way of knowing what black production-line workers at Wilson-Rowntree think about sanctions, but it seems quite reasonable to suppose that they would, to say the least, be rather bewildered by a demand that meant their factory be closed down!

We should all go to the 14 March demonstration but under the slogan 'Strike Against Apartheid; For Black Workers' Power'. We should be arguing for a thoroughgoing re-orientation of anti-apartheid work away from cuddling up to celebrities and whispering in ministerial ears, and towards the rank and file of workers organised at the point of production.

It is commonsense that if there are low wages and weak organisation in South Africa the multinational bosses can cut the ground from under the feet of well paid and highly organised workers here. Production will be shifted to where costs are lower.

Education

Good solid educational work in and around key workplaces should therefore be the core of AAM's work. That means building up local shopfloor contacts; arranging meetings with trade union branches; ensuring regular leafletting at the factory gates; organising AA collections; encouraging the formation of direct links with black trade unionists in South Africa; and so on. And the rest of us should endeavour to integrate the question of solidarity with southern Africa into our general political work.

Let us take just one example of how this might be done. The South African Sigma Motor Corporation is recruiting unemployed car workers in the Midlands. We need to stop that. Botha and Co are trying to avoid promoting black workers to skilled jobs — they know that this would increase the bargaining strength of the black unions. They are also on the lookout for recruits to their white racist army. That is why they are rooting about on the Midlands dole queues.

But it is no use at all for the AAM to go around issuing holier-than-thou condemnations of workers who choose to go. That does not stop anyone going. Emigration to South Africa doubled in 1981. Why? Unemployment. And we can only oppose emigration to South Africa on the basis of a practical recognition of this as the cause by

linking our campaign around this issue with the general fightback on jobs here in Britain.

The point is that South Africa is not a special case. It is part of world capitalism. Its black workers are part of the international proletariat. Apartheid is not to be set aside from the rest of the world on the grounds that 'it's the only place that in-

stitutionalises racism'. Such notions fail to locate white racism in the context of South African class relations.

Apartheid is simply the form taken by capitalism in South Africa. Our task as socialists is to fight it in the same way as we fight it here: by the militant and united action of rank and file workers.

Beyond Euro-Bennism

A new organisation, the Socialist Society, was launched last month. Pete Goodwin reports on the founding conference.

In two recent issues of *Socialist Review* we have reported on the project of a number of socialist intellectuals to set up a Socialist Society.

'The proposed Socialist Society is a new venture prompted by the sense of urgency felt within all sections of the left in the current crisis. It aims to set up a framework for the development of educational, polemical and research work within the labour movement and other radical movements, and to reach and win over a much wider audience for socialist ideas within the country at large.'

That was how one of the introductory handouts from the organisers described it.

Our attitude was one of sceptical support. Sceptical because such projects have nose-dived before, because we think that there is no substitute for socialist intellectuals being militants of a revolutionary party and because we sensed tendencies towards another Tony Benn fan club. Support, because we are for joint activity and debate on the left — including the intellectual left.

On the weekend of January 23/24, at a conference attended by 1200 people, the Society was launched. The size of the gathering was, on the face of it, impressive. And so, in academic terms was the spread. Just about every left intellectual name you could think of was there. And the fact that the society actually adopted a constitution and elected a committee in one chaotic afternoon, was an achievement in itself.

Having said that though, I'm if anything even more sceptical about the project after the conference than before.

Firstly, the conference did not clarify at all what the Society was actually going to do. Just about everyone thought that it was a 'good idea'. But scarcely anyone could muster any precise notion of what the 'good idea' was. I got the overwhelming impression of left wing intellectuals wanting a special home for themselves from which they could make an impact on the world, but too tired and stuck in their own particular ruts to be willing to do much to find it.

More important, though, was the politics of the whole occasion. I found it genuinely

depressing just how right wing it was. Not that this emerged quite along the expected lines. Direct appeals to fall in behind the Labour Party got a rather stony reception from an audience which contained at least a large minority of Labour Party members. Indeed, the best received contributions from Labour figures like Tony Benn and James Curran (of the *New Socialist*) made plain that they did not think the Society should affiliate to the Labour Party. The original plans to investigate the possibility of affiliation were dropped.

But doubts about too formal a tie with the Labour Party were not an indication of any significant revolutionary or semi-revolutionary minority. Virtually everyone accepted some sort of parliamentary road. Trade union struggles were very low down the interest scale. Leninist parties were quite outside the framework of debate.

Sorethumbs

It was not simply that we found the overwhelming bulk of the conference participants disagreeing with the arguments for revolutionary politics that we were putting forward. That was in no way unexpected. But this conference was a representative cross section of the 'Marxist' intellectual world as it has developed over the last twenty years. To find revolutionary arguments viewed by almost everyone at it as embarrassing eccentricities shows just how much that milieu has moved to the right. The conventional wisdom throughout the conference was a mixture of Beyond the Fragments, right wing Eurocommunism and Bennism. We dozen or so SWPers there stuck out like sore thumbs.

Despite the fact that the Society has shelved any formal links with the Labour Party, I find it difficult to see that it will not be in practice a staging post for the 'Marxist' intelligentsia into the Labour Party. And in many cases, sadly it will not even be as very left wing Labour recruits.

And, despite the fact the Society actually got launched, it is difficult to see that this milieu is in a state to provide much dynamism to sustain it.

In as much as the Society does manage to do or debate anything the SWP will, however, still keep a finger in. If only for the very negative reason, that the right-ward drifting left intelligentsia does have some influence in the labour movement. And, however unfashionable our revolutionary arguments may be there, we should not simply let them be ignored.

Engels: Socialism Utopian and Scientific

Most works of Marxist theory have their origin in a polemic within the movement. Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* is no exception, though for many years it has been published and read as a simple introduction to Marxism.

The pamphlet, in fact, consists of three chapters from Engels' *Anti-Dühring* (1878). In 1875 a unity congress had established a single socialist party in Germany—a party that two years later was able to get close on half a million votes. There were real possibilities of big advances for the socialist movement. But just at this time a Berlin intellectual, Dr Dühring, presented an alternative socialist 'system', spun out of the back of his head. Engels felt nothing but contempt for such system-building; in the long term, he believed, it offered no threat:

'This is an infantile disease which marks, and is inseparable from, the incipient conversion of the German student to Social-Democracy, but which our workers with their remarkably healthy nature will undoubtedly overcome.' (Preface to 1878 edition).

But in the short term Engels recognised that Dühring's influence, even if only on a small circle, could lead to 'sectarian splitting and confusion'. It had to be answered.

Under pressure from Marx, Engels set out to compose a reply. It was without enthusiasm; as he wrote to Marx: 'You can lie warm in bed and study ground rent in general and Russian agrarian conditions in particular with nothing to disturb you—but I am to sit on a hard bench, swill cold wine, suddenly interrupt everything again and get after the scalp of the boring Dühring.'

Anti-Dühring immortalised Dr Dühring, who would otherwise have been totally forgotten by history. But the aim of the work was to deal a deathblow to any future Dührings who might see fit to offer a system to the movement. Hence the central problem which runs through the work—*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*—is the relation of people and ideas. Blueprints for socialism, such as had existed since the eighteenth century, were mere futility without people who could put them into practice. But without socialist ideas all the heroism and determination of workingclass

struggle was condemned to frustration. As Marx had written as early as 1843: 'It is clear that the arm of criticism cannot replace the criticism of arms. Material force can only be overthrown by material force; but theory itself becomes a material force when it has seized the masses.'

Socialism: Utopian and Scientific begins with an analysis of the French thinkers of the eighteenth century who paved the way for the revolution of 1789. Engels is careful to give a rounded account, unlike one-sided interpretations which stress only the progressive features or only the limitations. These were revolutionaries in the true sense of the word; they did challenge every existing idea and institution. As EP Thompson has shown in *The Making of the English Working Class* (chapter IV), their ideas had a vital role in the formative years of the English labour movement. And the French bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century were quick to distance themselves from those who had made the revolution which brought them to power.

But Engels also shows the limitations. Even before the bourgeoisie had overthrown the old order they faced the challenge of a new exploited group, the embryonic working class. Two years before the French revolutionaries outraged the world by the sacrilege of executing a King, they had introduced the first anti-trade-union legislation. When the bourgeoisie talked of liberty and equality, they were

AND WHEN WE'RE
ALL FREE IT'LL
WORK LIKE THIS:



Sophie

talking, not of eternal principles, but of their own class interests. Religious beliefs (such as the prohibition of interest), antiquated legislation, based on heredity and serfdom, were obstacles to the creation of a world where the free market was the highest good.'

The Utopian Socialists of the early nineteenth century—Robert Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon, etc—are the true heirs of the French revolutionary thinkers of the eighteenth, and, as Engels shows, they suffer from the same ambiguities. Their theories are 'crude', and yet, as Engels points out, they contain 'stupendously grand thoughts and germs of thoughts'.

Charles Fourier (1772-1837) is perhaps the most colourful of the Utopians; and his work retains value on account of its poetic qualities. (Indeed, André Breton, surrealist poet and friend of Trotsky, wrote a long ode in admiration of him). Fourier's blueprint envisages a society free from conflict because everyone will do the work they want to do. The problem of how to dispose of dirty jobs is solved by turning them over to hordes of little boys who actually like dirt. Everyone will rise at 3.00am out of sheer enthusiasm for work and such will be humanity's power over nature that the ocean itself will be turned to lemonade.

The missing link for Fourier is the question of agency—how do we get from where we are now to where we dream of being. The gap is expressed in the tragedy of

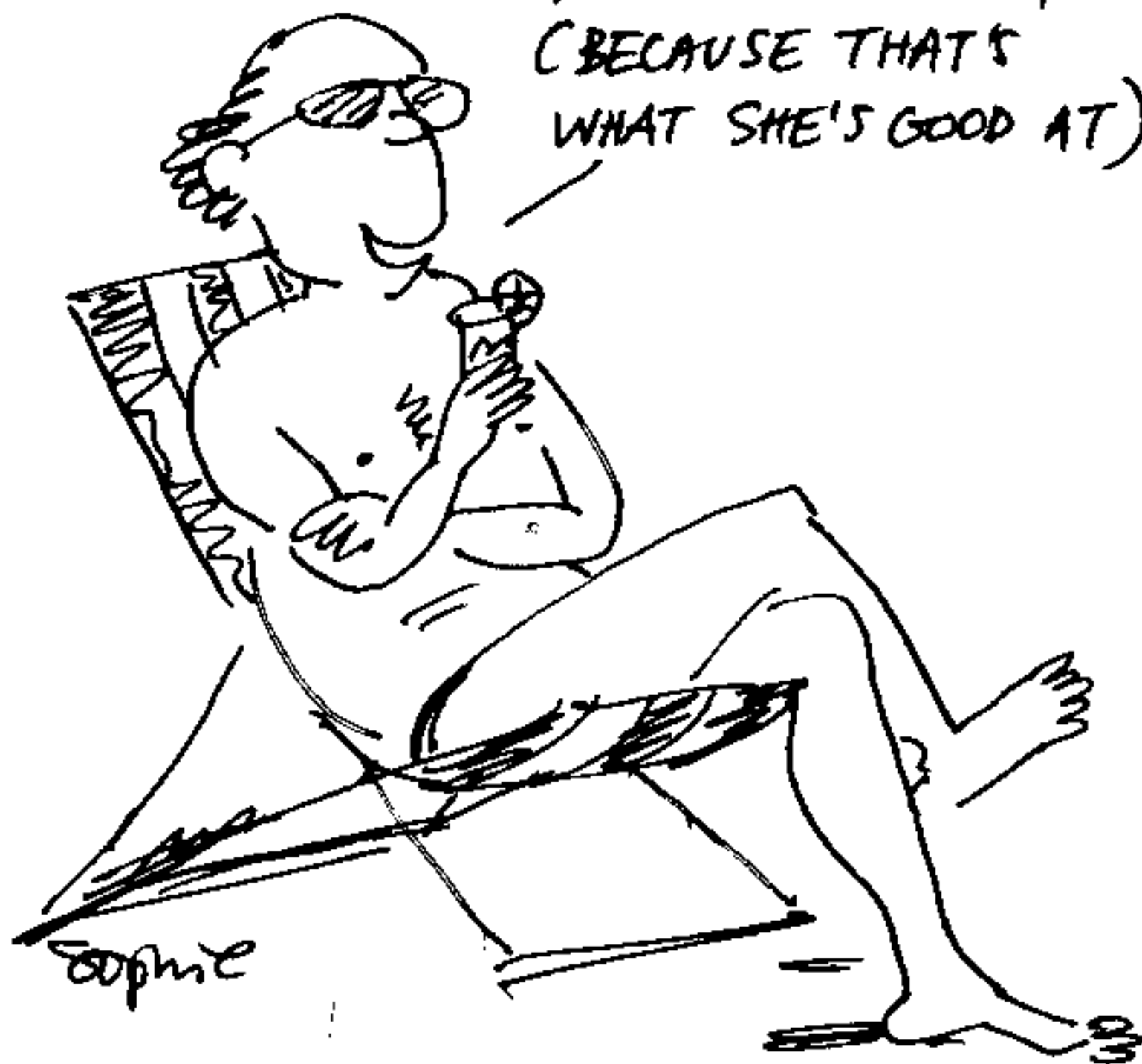
Fourier's own life; for twenty years he returned home every day at noon hoping to meet a millionaire who would finance the creation of the new society; he never came.

In retrospect we can observe that the emergence of Utopian socialism (in widely separated parts of Europe) in the early years of the nineteenth century was not a historical accident; it was a response to a new phase in the development of society. But the Utopians themselves did not recognise this. Their mistake was to begin, not with the economics of the period, but with its philosophy.

As a result, Engels argues, they missed the heart of the problem. This was the 'contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation'. On the one hand the great achievement of capitalism as a historical force had been the development of socialised production. Instead of individual craftsmen producing particular goods, people were organised together, with an ever more intense division of labour, to produce collectively in factories. No one worker could look at a finished article and claim that he or she had made it; they could only see themselves as part of a collective.

Yet at the same time the society is ever more anarchic. Because property is in the hands of a few who compete among

IN A UTOPIA SITUATION,
I'D BE A TRAVEL WRITER
AND MY WIFE WOULD BE
A CLEANING LADY
(BECAUSE THAT'S
WHAT SHE'S GOOD AT)



Cartoons: Sophie Grillet

I'VE JUST HAD A
STUPENDOUSLY GRAND
THOUGHT. I MUST
INFORM THE TOILING MASSES



themselves, society is governed by laws which are independent of any conscious decision. Indeed, things come to dominate over people—'The product governs the producers.'

So, just as Engels had shown the two-sidedness of bourgeois thought, now he shows that capitalism itself is two-sided. Capitalism, by its soulless regimentation of men and women in the interests of profit, its irrational cycle of crises leading to mass unemployment, makes socialism *desirable*. But it is also capitalism, by its development of technology and its social organisation of production, that makes socialism *possible*.

This puts the whole question of agency into a new light. For the Utopians all that was necessary was an 'individual man of genius'; if he had been born five hundred years ago, then the world would have been saved so much suffering and error. But if socialism becomes realisable because of the development of capitalism, then the agency that can create socialism is not something that comes from outside history, but a product of the capitalist system: the proletariat.

Because the proletariat, by its very nature and situation within capitalism, engages in socialised production, then the solutions it will propose to the problems of society will be collective. Peasants may aspire to divide up the land so that each may have his own piece; for assembly line workers to aim at a distribution of the production line to individual owners would be simply absurd.

For the rationalists of the eighteenth century history had been merely an absurdity; a long account of the irrationality

and barbarity of mankind measured against the unchanging yardstick of bourgeois values. But the understanding of the different ages of history as part of the process by which human beings, even though they are not fully conscious of what they are doing, create the preconditions for their own emancipation, makes it possible to see some kind of logical movement in history.

As a result Engels is able to conclude his outline of the Marxist view of history with a brief sketch of the main phases of historical development from feudalism to the proletarian revolution. This has to be seen in the context of the previous account of the materialist conception of history, which, as Engels tells us, insists:

'In every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged.'

The stages listed represent different relationships between people, in which different possibilities are open. To see them as a sort of preordained channel along which the river of history will inevitably flow is precisely to abandon the central theme of the whole book, that of the agency of historical change.

Such is the basis on which Engels claims to have established a 'scientific' socialism. The term has caused confusion, and it is important to see what it means. Marxism is scientific because it starts, not with the desires and dreams of an individual, but with the objective social forces present in a

given situation, seen from the point of view of the potential of these forces and not merely their immediate appearance.

Marxism has nothing in common with the so-called 'social sciences', which seek to reduce human relations to a mathematical form. On the contrary, such 'sciences' represent the logical outcome of a social system which dehumanises people and reduces them to the level of commodities to be bought and sold.

Marxism does not claim to look at human society as a scientist looks at nature. As Marx pointed out, quoting the Italian thinker Vico, 'human history differs from natural history in this, that we have made the former, but not the latter.' Indeed, the claim that Marxism is of the same nature as the physical sciences has been used, especially in the Stalinist tradition, to give a spurious legitimacy to theoretical pronouncements.

What, then, is the relevance of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* today? Dr Dühring's 'system' was already the tired tail-end of Utopianism, and Marxism as a doctrine has clearly conquered—conquered so well, indeed, that the most widely diverse tendencies lay claim to it.

But Utopianism was not so easily buried as Engels had believed. For Engels Utopianism was the product of the earliest stage of the evolution of the working-class movement, when the real possibility of social transformation was not yet present. As the working-class movements grew in strength and organisation, Utopianism would wither away, helped on its way with a few biting polemics.

But things were more complicated. The working-class defeats of the nineteenth-century, and the rise of Stalinism, saw a new period of working-class passivity, when for many in the movement the agency of the

working class came into question again. Every search for a short-cut or an alternative agent of socialist transformation has meant the revival of a form of Utopianism. Few socialists today would wait twenty years for a millionaire, as

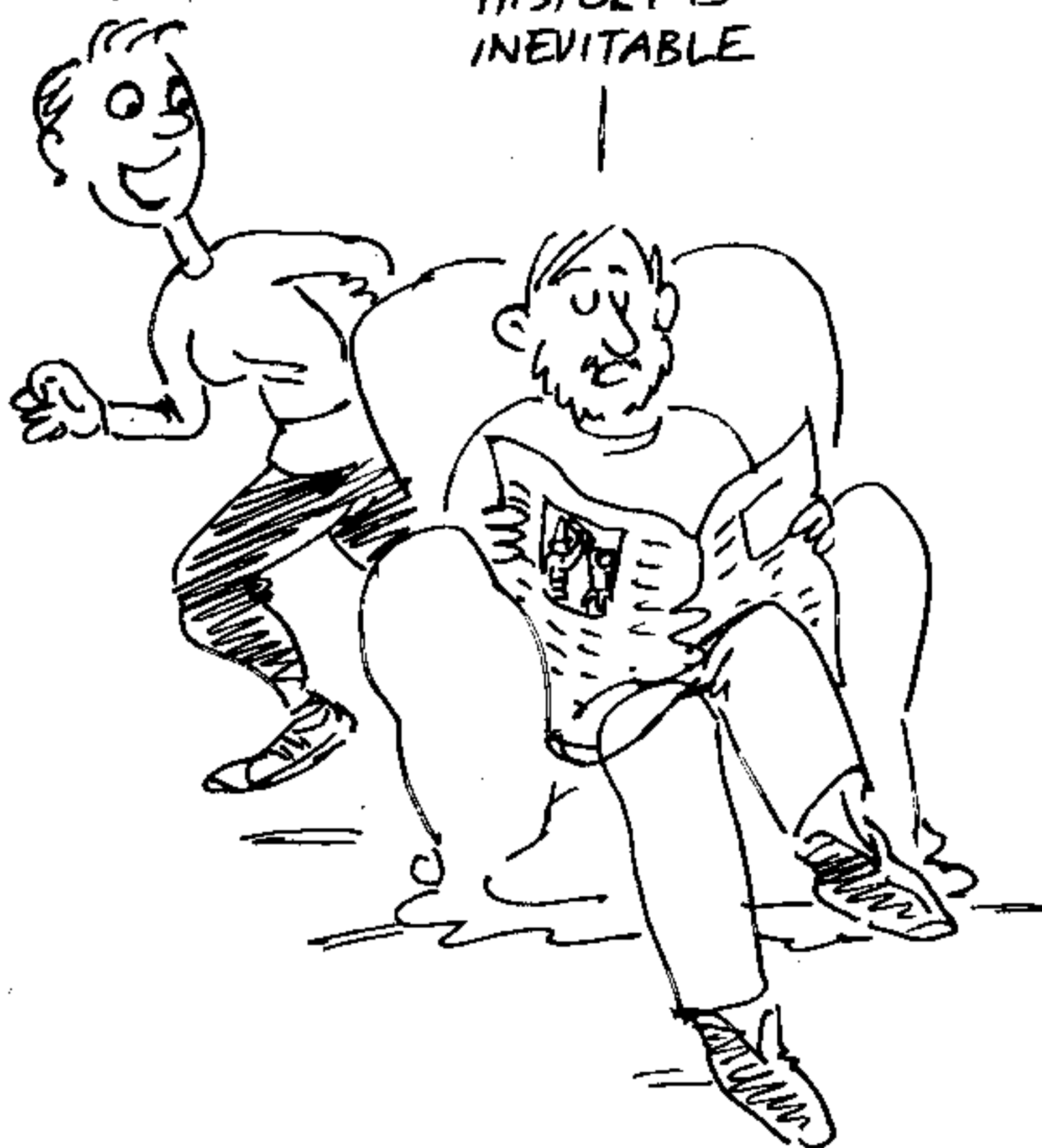
Fourier did. But a millionaire is a more plausible agent of socialist revolution than some of the alternatives proposed—student vanguards, African statesmen, Bolivian guerrillas and University lecturers drawing blueprints for workers control in a specific industry, to name only a few.

There is a large element of Utopianism, too, in the whole ideology of Stalinism. Trotsky aptly described the theory of 'socialism in one country' as a 'reactionary, national-socialist utopia.' Reactionary in its actual results, it was indeed Utopian in its pretensions, for it sought to disregard the objective reality of the surrounding world.

In short, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* remains, not simply a readable introduction to Marxist theory, but a pertinent guide to revolutionary practice.

COME ON!
THE BARRICADES
ARE UP!

NAH.
THE COURSE OF
HISTORY IS
INEVITABLE



UNTIL I GOT THIS
JOB, I DIDN'T NOTICE
I WAS BEING TREATED
LIKE A MACHINE



IF KARL WERE
HERE TODAY, HE'D
SOON PUT PAID TO
THOSE UTOPIANS...



Sometimes it seems as if Britain is obsessed with the last war. The stereotypes of German or Japanese soldiers are still there—in comics, books, films, TV documentaries. Almost as if the dominant culture demands we constantly remember the last time 'Britain was really Great'.

In France it is different. Not only were the French twice invaded and once ruled by a foreign power this century—after the last war France remained deeply involved in armed conflict. The war in Vietnam culminated, for the French, with the disaster of Dien-Bien-Phu, in 1954. Then there was the war in Algeria—and in 1961 the threat of civil war in France over the issue of Algerian independence.

Even in the relative peace of the 1968 general strike and rebellion there was the real threat of an army coup—and the 'old combatants' of General Leclerc were wheeled out a year later to threaten the left with violence after De Gaulle was forced to resign.

To be an anti-militarist in France—especially in the 1950s—thus required a little more bravery than it did on this side of the channel. Boris Vian was an anti-militarist.

He was not a pacifist. He wrote a great song *The Deserter* in 1954, at the height of the French Vietnam hysteria. Right-wing senators, deputies and Paris councillors joined in a witch-hunt demanding it be banned (Vian was already a public enemy for publishing satirical erotic novels).

In an open letter to one Paris councillor Vian wrote:

'Those who, like me, were 20 in 1940 had a pretty funny birthday present. I was one of those who couldn't understand because to understand, someone has to explain. Today I'm 34; and if it's a question of defending those I love I'll fight right now. But if it's a question of dying by chance in a vile battle under a rain of napalm, an obscure pawn in

Boris Vian

'I'll desert, I'll go underground. I'll fight my own war.'

a squabble controlled by politicians—then I'll desert, I'll go underground. I'll fight my own war.'

Vian was deeply hated by the right. He was not a revolutionary—he was a rebel. His books were suppressed or buried, except for a book called *I Shall Spit On Your Graves*—which he published under the pseudonym Vernon Sullivan—pretending it had been translated from the English. This did not stop it from being banned in France in 1949, and Vian being found guilty of 'outrage to morals'.

Vian was a magnificent novelist. But so far only *Froth on the Daydreams* has appeared in English.

This is a deceptive book. It begins like tale of young love. The characters are young adults who behave like adolescents. Their world is rich and innocent; they don't have to work. The world has its own laws of motion which make sense—in the way a surrealist picture makes sense if you think yourself into it.

The early pages are a comedy: including a

brilliant satire on existentialism (the characters in the book all read a fashionable philosopher called Jean Sol-Partre—Vian met 'Partre' after he completed the book and they became friends).

After this initial phase, the lovers find things begin to change. The strange world they inhabit seems to turn against them. Money doesn't make the world go round. The characters begin to die. As with their pleasures, their plight also makes sense in terms of the world in which they live: for example, early on flowers grow up out of the pavements; later a girl is slowly annihilated by a flower devouring her breasts.

The book is above all atmosphere. It is not supposed to be a moral tale about innocence destroyed by a seemingly beautiful but actually hostile world—though this might be part of the author's idea. Rather, Vian sets out to describe a totally bizarre world which the reader, despite everything, eventually accepts as real. He does this by outrageous puns, the creation of non-existent words, the use of jazz metaphors to describe the way things look ...above all a refusal to be tied down by the conventional meaning of things. Like the finest abstract art, the book sucks you into a completely new way of seeing.

Apart from the novel, one Vian play is translated. Called *The Generals' Tea Party* it is a satire on war which he wrote after doing a hack translation of General Omar Bradley's memoirs in 1951. It ends with the generals playing Russian roulette and thinking they've won when they shoot themselves.

'I will die before I'm 40,' said Vian. He died of a heart attack at the age of 39. At his death in 1959, he was virtually unknown as a writer. He was known as a satirical poet, as a cabaret artiste, as a jazz trumpeter, as an oppositionist, his attitude summed up by a verse on being a 'poet': 'It's all been said a hundred times. And much better than by me. So when I write my rhyme it's because it's fun it's because it's fun it's because it's fun and I piss in your pocket.'

It can't be said there's anything terribly important politically(!) about Vian himself. He wrote protest songs and defied the establishment when it was difficult. He was a jazz musician in occupied France, when the Nazis made it a crime to listen to jazz ('American-Jewish-Gaullist music'). What was, and is, significant about him is that like other French writers and artists his role was to puncture the arrogant, the pompous, the chauvinist. There weren't very many people who dared take on this role in the 1940s and 50s, which is perhaps why Vian's songs, poems and books became so important for the generation of '68 in France.

Dave Beecham

Vian in English

Despite their colossal sales in France Vian's books have hardly been noticed in England (or the United States, where he wrote several of them). *The Generals' Tea Party* (described as 'tasteless' by the critics when it was performed in London in 1965) was published in *Theatre of War* by Penguin. *Froth on the Day Dreams* was published by Penguin in 1970. Finally, Penguin is preparing to publish the excellent *The Heart Snatcher*.



Futurist poet, communist militant

People in several parts of the country have the chance in the next few months to see the work of one of the great artists of the Russian Revolution.

An exhibition of the posters and poetry of Mayakovsky, together with documents and documentaries on his life, and early Soviet films by Eisenstein, Slaavinky and Vortov, is currently on at the Haymarket Gallery in Edinburgh. It moves to Oxford (6 March to 20 April), Sheffield (8 May to 20 June) and finally to London (Riverside Studios 26 June to 8 August).

Blair Davison saw it in Edinburgh and provides an account of Mayakovsky's life and work.

In 1930 Vladimir Mayakovsky, Futurist poet and Communist militant unveiled an exhibition of his work in Moscow. Entitled 'Twenty Years of Work' it included poetry, posters, manuscripts, books, drawings, journals etc. It was a flop — ignored by a literary establishment, grouped into the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP) who decided that the art-form he used, Futurism, was unsuitable to serve what had become the ruling bureaucracy.

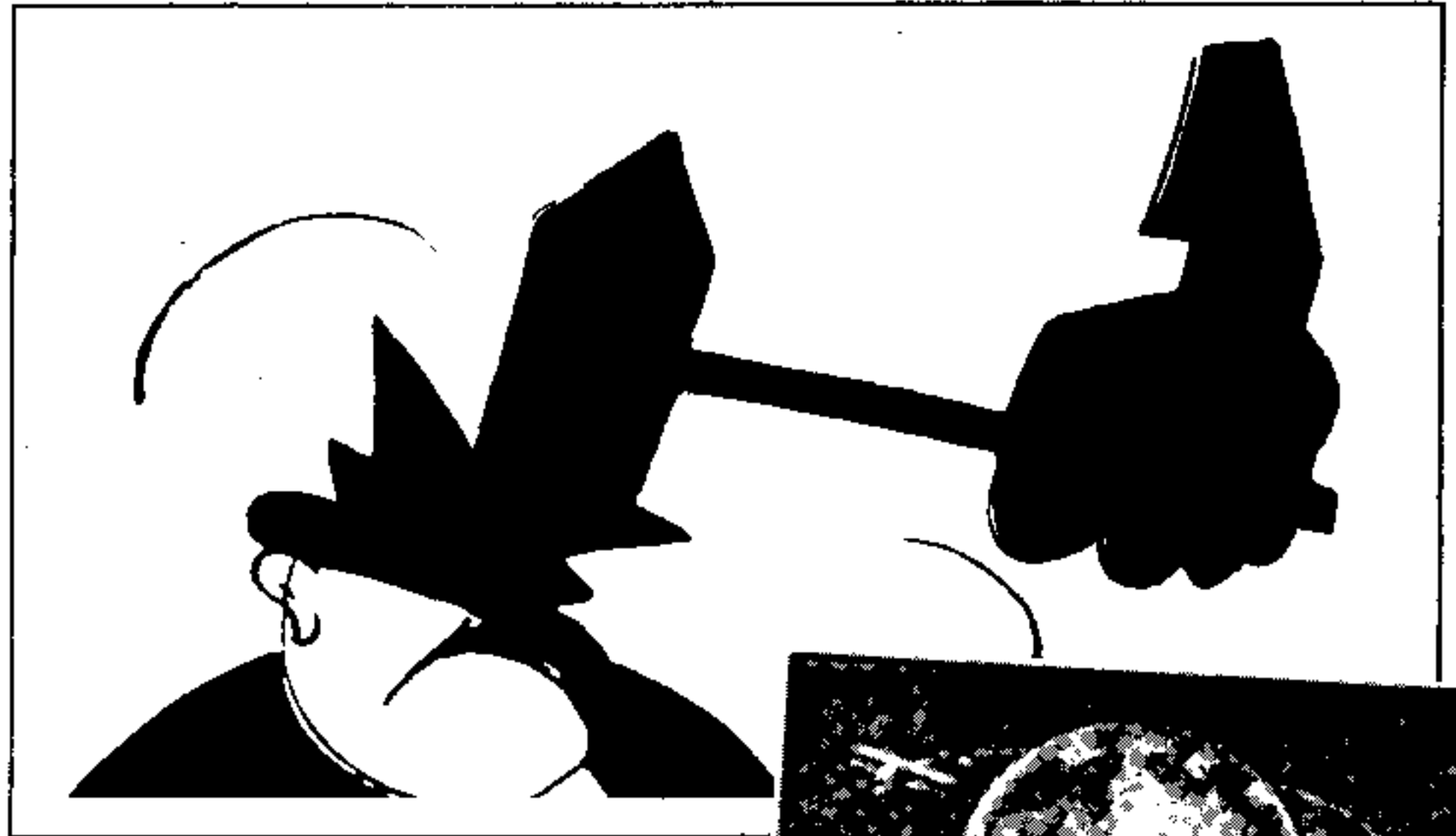
Shortly afterwards he shot himself in despair at what had become of the promise of the October Revolution. His last poem was found in his pocket:

As they say, that's the end of the story,
The boat of love has smashed against life's reefs.

150,000 people attended his funeral, most of them ordinary workers and amongst them many old Bolsheviks and Oppositionists. His work was largely ignored until 1935 when a chance remark of Stalin's resurrected him. The canonisation process that followed ensured he would become a tool of the bureaucracy. As Boris Pasternak, the novelist and poet, put it,

'Mayakovsky began to be compulsorily propagated. That was his second death. For that he is not to blame.'

Born the son of a forester in Georgia, Mayakovsky's family moved to Moscow when his father died in 1906. The turmoil of the 1905 revolution was still evident though waning. It was in the atmosphere of increasing state repression and the rearguard struggle of the socialist parties that he discovered politics. He avidly read Marx and Engels, and in 1908 at the age of 14 he joined the then illegal Bolshevik Party. A year later



he was arrested for helping to organise the escape of political prisoners from jail and he himself was put in Novinsky Prison. Cell 103 was to have a lasting effect on his political and artistic development.

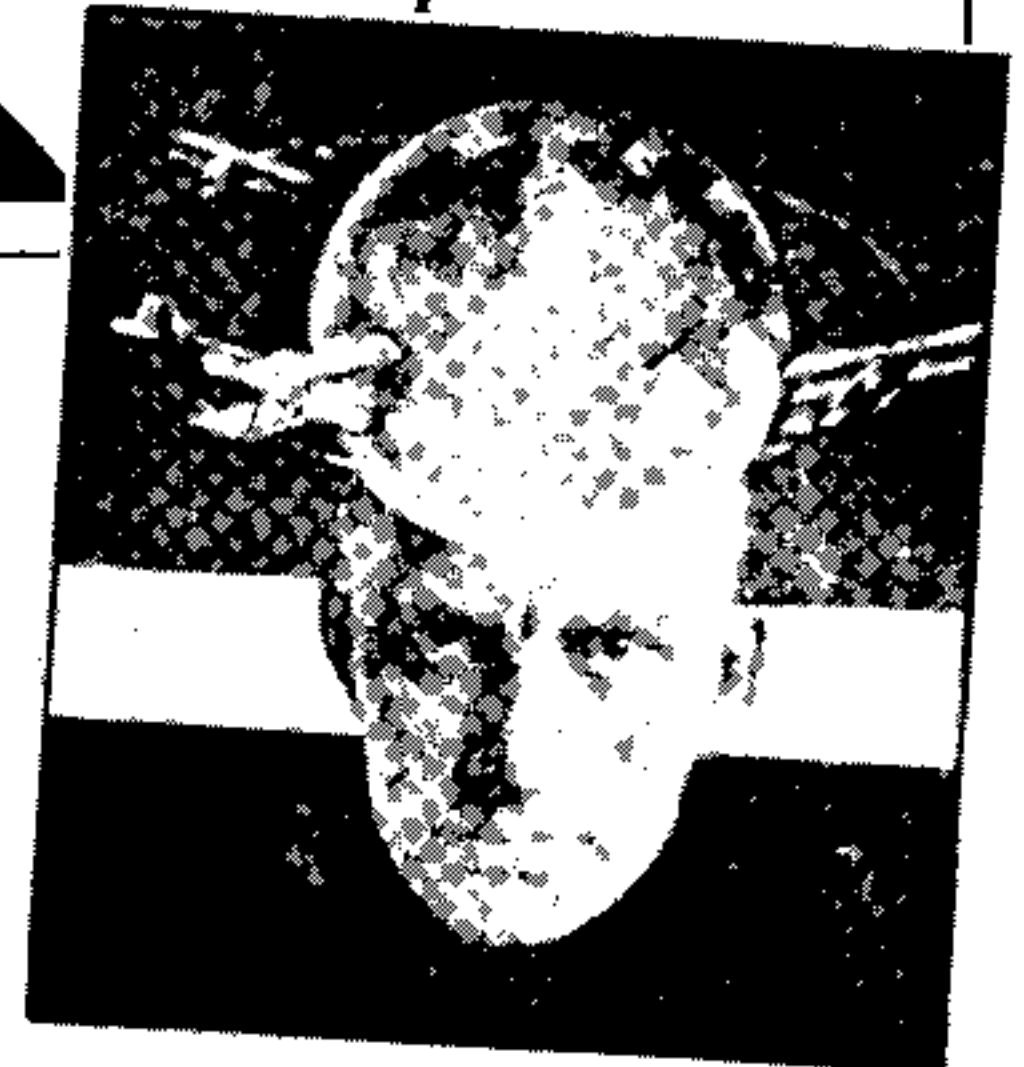
On his release he dropped out of active politics to concentrate on painting and later poetry. It was at this time that he discovered Futurism. This was a school of art that had looked at the technological developments of society, the combustion engine, electricity, new means of telecommunications and so on. The machine age meant the dawn of a new type of society for the Futurists. There was a need for a new type, a new form of art — an art where the old structures would give way to the new — Futurism.

Mayakovsky rejected the approach of Marxists like Plekhanov, instinctively conservative on art. For him art should not be a mirror to society, it should be a hammer. Even if he did not fully grasp the way that hammer was to be used, he came to expose bourgeois society ruthlessly.

The 1912 Futurist manifesto, titled *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*, tore the assumptions and attitudes of the Russian intelligentsia to pieces. Publishers refused to even see them, sensing perhaps that they much clearer than anyone else represented that repressed feeling of alienation that was about to explode into revolution.

Soon they were totally ostracised from the literary establishment. Rejected by and rejecting the bourgeoisie, but not yet aligned with the proletariat, they came to reflect rather than influence the events leading to revolution. In this period Mayakovsky produced poetry which mirrored the turmoil around him — poems about love and poems to shock.

When the Russian Revolution broke out in February 1917 the Futurists and especially Mayakovsky fully supported it, throwing their lot in with the Bolsheviks rather than the liberal government of Kerensky. For them the Revolution was the means to sweep away the old order in art as well as in society, producing a culture based on the future not the past. Mayakovsky welcomed the October Revolution without



hesitation and devoted all his energy and ability to designing posters (over 6000 in all), writing slogans and advertisements, drawing cartoons, producing film scripts and books as well as writing undoubtedly the best poetry of the period.

That is not to say that he produced crude propaganda (although some of the posters certainly are) but he realised his own need to side with the proletariat. His poem '150 Million' published in 1921 symbolised this move:

We will smash this old world
wildly
we will thunder
a new myth over the world.
We will trample the fence
of time beneath our feet
We will make a musical scale of the
rainbow.

It was a poem Lenin hated — 'Can no-one find me some reliable anti-Futurists?', he asked. Trotsky also, while recognising the genius of Mayakovsky denounced him as a 'Bohemian nihilist'.

Yet all of this stands in stark contrast to artists under Stalin where such a remark from a party leader means a visit from the secret police. For under the early Soviet state the arts flourished in a way not seen since in Russia. Formalists, Futurists, Constructivists, artists, writers, poets, filmmakers, architects — all benefitted from the emancipation the Revolution brought. By

the end of the decade this freedom of discussion, debate and action that Mayakovksy had found so exciting and invigorating had disappeared.

Throughout the decade Mayakovksy remained loyal to the Revolution and sought to serve it in whatever way he could. IN 1923 he began publishing a magazine called LEF (Left Front for the Arts).

But again the turmoil of Russian society was finding its echo in the poems of Mayakovksy. He recognised the dangers inherent in the New Economic Policy and the imminent rise of the new bureaucracy. But he could only feel instinctively the problems these developments would bring — he could not analyse it fully as Trotsky could. His poems spoke of bureaucrats, NEPmen, kulaks (rich peasants).

Kulaks
bureaucrats
and red tapists
Sectarians
drunkards
and toadies —
Chests sticking out
they arrogantly strut;
pocketfuls of pens
breastfuls of Orders.

Again he did not want to identify himself with the rising bureaucracy whilst at the same time being unable to break fully with them and join the Oppositionists.

LEF stopped publication in 1925 after increasing criticism from the new 'Marxist' literary establishment that it was not following the 'proletarian' line. Although replaced by the short-lived New LEF a few years later, Mayakovksy was being ostracised by an establishment that considered all art outside its immediate control dangerous and subversive.

Ironically this was how Mayakovksy had been treated before the Revolution. Those who recanted their previous views were tolerated, but the others could find no-one who would publish their works, show their paintings etc. Experimentation was out, to be replaced by the stagnant 'throwback to 19th century naturalism, Socialist Realism.

Despite this his faith in the Revolution never wavered. In 1924 he wrote his long poem, *Vladimir Illych Lenin*, a eulogy to Lenin:

Even if I were
A Negro of advanced years,
yet
without discouragement or laziness
I would have learned Russian
just because
Lenin spoke it
and
I am cleaning myself under Lenin
In order to sail
further into the Revolution

His work was criticised and finally boycotted. His poetry and plays were slated by the official critics. Safer channels were being sought, art that could serve 'Socialism in one country' rather than art which served human fulfilment and liberation. Art found its way back into the theatres and galleries to once again become the property of the few, of the new elite rather than the art of the



A Mayakovksy cartoon for one of the first Soviet satirical magazines (far left), and two Rodchenko montages for Mayakovksy poems (left and above).

masses that had so predominated after October.

As if sensing what was to come Mayakovksy took a revolver he had used as a film prop twelve years previously and shot himself. His last two plays, *The Bedbug* and *The Bathhouse*, both satirical, and then his exhibition, *Twenty Years*, were either savagely criticised or ignored. He saw no way out except suicide.

As Trotsky put it is his obituary:

'Mayakovksy was first of all a poet, an artist, who rejected the old world without breaking with it. Only after the Revolution did he seek to find support for himself in the Revolution — But he did not merge with it totally.'

Mayakovksy was a complex figure—versatile artist, Bolshevik rebel, and above all a revolutionary poet in the finest sense of the word. He lived through a period of an old society in decay, the birth of a new form of society and its descent into bureaucracy. A society where the impossible became possible and the improbable became probable. His poetry reflected those changes without ever really understanding the dynamic behind them.

His work stands as more than just a historic document of that period. It is timeless in that it sees the contradictions in class society clearly and reflects them in his poetry. In that sense it is the most revolutionary of art.

The relevance of a revolutionary

Leon Trotsky's Theory of Revolution
John Molyneux
 Harvester £18.95

This is a really splendid book. It demonstrates the *relevance* of Trotsky's ideas for revolutionaries of today and, at the same time, their limitations in the world that has emerged since Trotsky's death in 1940.

The relevance is much more important than the limitations. Trotsky was a giant. If lesser men and women can make valid criticisms of some of his ideas, and they can, that in no way detracts from Trotsky's stature as a revolutionary or from our need to learn from him.

John Molyneux has produced a most serious, substantial and (Molyneux himself may balk at the term), *scientific* exposition and critique of Trotsky's thought and work.

The two were always inextricably linked for Trotsky himself, and not the least merit of Molyneux's book is that it brings this out in a vivid and at the same time scrupulous fashion.

A synopsis of the book may be useful here. There are three sections.

The first (two chapters) deals with the theory of 'Permanent Revolution (a phrase and, in part, an idea taken from Marx) and with the vital problem of the revolutionary party.

The second (three chapters) is concerned with the outcome of the Russian revolution, with the rise of Stalinism and with Trotsky's pioneer analysis of it—virtually the *only* substantial Marxian analysis made at the time—and with the limitations and weaknesses of that analysis.

It covers too, and perhaps less than adequately, the effect of the rise of Stalinism on the revolutionary workers movement internationally, on the Communist International.

The third section (two chapters) deals with the heritage, 'Trotsky's Legacy', as Molyneux calls it.

I have left out of this summary an important item—the introduction. I do not do so merely because I disagree with it in some important particulars. Quite the reverse. The introduction merits extended discussion but, whether or not its arguments stand, the *body* of Molyneux's work is quite the best exposition of Trotsky's thought available in English.

What are the most important things we can learn from Trotsky today? Surely the analyses of the dynamics of the revolutionary process. Not merely the superb account of the Russian revolution, a text-book in itself, but also (and especially) the polemics about Communist Party policy in Britain (1925-27), China (1926-27), Germany (1929-33) and Spain (1931-39).

These, notwithstanding whatever errors in detail they may contain, are the essence of Trotsky's Marxism, a restatement, and at the time, a development of the thought of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Not in every respect of course. Trotsky was a creative Marxist. Never content with the mere repetition of formulae, he worked out radically new ideas in his time. Never afraid to change his mind in the light of changing circumstances, he reversed his attitude to the USSR in 1933, arguing that only a revolution could restore worker's power.

Unfortunately this reversal was accompanied by an unhappy innovation; the notion of a degenerated workers state in which the working class is not only without political power but is completely atomised and deprived even of elementary trade union organisation.

A quite disproportionate amount of ink has been spilt over this issue. To state the obvious: Trotsky's position on the question simply will not do. Molyneux's discussion of the matter, however, surveys all the relevant ideas very thoroughly and could scarcely be bettered.

He concludes that:

'Trotsky's methodology has serious defects. Most serious was his failure to appreciate the central significance for Marxist analysis of the relations of production and his conflation of these with property



relations. This was directly linked with his ignorance of Marx's theory of alienated labour and to a tendency to a purely productionist attitude to the labour processes.'

I am doubtful if Trotsky could be said to be *ignorant* of the concept of alienated labour, but it certainly did not feature prominently in his work and the *general* proposition Molyneux advances here is certainly correct.

However, in the introduction and in the final chapter, he goes further.

Trotsky's philosophical position he argues, was basically deterministic 'with traces of the teleological view of history. This in turn produced an overestimation of the possibilities of historical prediction and an assimilation of Marxism to the socially neutral, objectivity of natural science.'

This is both dubious in itself and quite unnecessary for Molyneux's position.

Was Trotsky really a determinist? At the very end of his life he wrote of the possibility of capitalism being succeeded, not by socialism, but by 'the declining society of totalitarian bureaucracy.' Thus he envisaged at

least two possible future societies.

Unless this is dismissed as a mere debating trick to confound his opponents in the American SWP, it is scarcely compatible with historical determinism' except in the weak sense ('the future is determined but we do not know what it will be').

Certainly, Trotsky was reckless in prediction, but it is as least as plausible to assume that this was a personal trait rather than an inheritance 'from the Kautsky-Plekhanov interpretation of Marxism he absorbed in his youth' as Molyneux puts it.

After all, the young Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution itself was a sharp break with that tradition.

These matters could be pursued much further, for they do raise fundamental problems about Marxism as such, but this is not the place.

To repeat, this is a splendid book. Harvester Press should be pressed from all sides to produce a cheaper paperback version because it should be widely read and studied.

Duncan Hallas

Oppressive fantasies

Pornography; Men possessing Women

Andrea Dworkin

Pornography and Silence

Susan Griffin

Women's Press

£4.75 each

Both these books are very different attempts to describe and explain the existence of pornography in our society.

Andrea Dworkin's book has attracted quite a lot of publicity lately and has been selling widely. It is a very angry, bitter, manhating book, sparked off by her own experience of male violence.

She describes in graphic detail excerpts from a range of pornographic material and attempts to analyse them. Porn, sexism, male domination, the violation of women, are all described as horrible realities and she suggests that they are here to stay with hardly the vaguest implication of being challenged.

Her book is very illuminating and thought provoking, and often disturbing. She has a powerful descriptive style which makes it very readable. However hers is a very simplistic and pessimistic view.

To her the enemy is simply the 'male system of sexual domination'. But she never states what exactly this is or how it relates to, the rest of society. It is often not clear whether she is talking specifically about pornography or about society as a whole. Clearly society is wrong but she never once suggests fighting against it or attempting to change it, she completely lacks the politics to do this.

Susan Griffin speaks in a clearer voice, attempting to explain what she calls the 'pornographic mind'.

Her book includes a fascinating study of the relationships between pornography, religion, and racism. She discusses the fantasies these create and explores how they are kept intact and accepted by masses of people, in spite of the contradictions seen around them. Unfortunately she does not include capitalism in this analysis.

Susan Griffin also talks about how the stereotypes of race and sex affect those who are labelled. She says that because the 'racist minds' of the slave owners imagined that all blacks were stupid and slow, he required his slaves to appear stupid and slow. She says that women too learn to adopt the attitudes expected of them by those who are more powerful in order to survive. What she does not do is generalise this argument to include all oppressed groups.

The subtitle of Susan Griffin's book is 'Culture's revenge against Nature', the theme of 'nature' being something true and pure, fouled up and destroyed by 'culture' (which she does not define) runs through the book. Her style is very sociological and her language calm and distant. This takes some of the fire out of her words, but it is refreshing to read after Andrea Dworkin's sometimes disturbingly violent style.

However both writers bang their fists against the world we live in, but neither ever suggests fighting to change it.

Nicki Sellers

Hidden from art history

Old Mistresses

Women, Art and Ideology
Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock
 Routledge & Kegan Paul £5.95 pbk

It is curious, as the authors point out, that in the 20th century we are even more ignorant of women artists than ever before.

Maintaining this obscurity have been the art historians and critics. This book furnishes several hair-raising examples of critics' striving to contain the threat of female achievement by alternately characterising women painters as charming but minor, or exceptional and atypical—the performing poodle school of thought.

Parker laments that crafts, often the work of women, have been progressively devalued through the centuries. The maker's identity and circumstances are more important than the finished product in assigning value. She points to prejudice against the sex of the artist as the determining factor.

But she omits that it is not simply that what women do is termed 'craft' and thus devalued. The value of craftwork still bears some relation to the labour and materials involved. Women are expected to donate their domestic labour free, reducing the value to little more than the cost of materials.

Fine Art, on the other hand, sells at a price dictated by the status of the artist according to the investment market. Dadaists failed to subvert the system and merely reinforced the notion of the artist, not the work, as the decisive factor on the price tag.

Unfortunately the section on modern art doesn't probe the central issue of money. It is as though the authors are blinded by the 'Art for Art's sake' image of the creative intellectual genius which they condemn for its exclusive masculinity. Like Germaine Greer they stand in awe of this elite status' although its used to accentuate the divide between ordinary peasants (craftworkers) and The Artist as cult figure. The authors document well the way women have been excluded from the 'creative genius' image but the reason given is only male jealousy.

However, if women were credited with intellectual creativity a vast source of free servicing for the male workforce would be at risk. In fact to keep the pyramid intact, we are all robbed of our intellectual creativity. Although marred by an acceptance of one of Freud's sillier theories, the book is a valid part of the study of women's struggles to be active contributors.

Sophie Grumble

The same old brew

Labour at the Crossroads

Geoff Hodgson
Martin Robertson £4.95 pbk
 £12.50hb

Socialists versus the Extended State
Alan Whitehead
 Clause 4 70p

The cover of Geoff Hodgson's book has a cartoon of Benn and Healey tied together but trying to walk in opposite directions. Behind them stands a sign-post with 'mixed economy' pointing in Healey's direction, and 'abolition of Lords', 'Labour's programme', and 'import controls' pointing in Benn's. All of which seems a bit ironic in view of the events of the past few months.

Since Benn's narrow defeat in the deputy leadership elections, the Labour left has been pulled sharply into line by the union bureaucracy and the parliamentary leadership.

Frightened by the success of the SDP and the unpopular impact of some left policies, Labour right, left and centre, seem to have their eyes fixed firmly on one thing: the general election in two years time.

They believe they can still win the election, but only if the cracks within the party are papered over, and only if right wing policies predominate. So at every stage the left is pulling back. Far from fighting to

abolish the House of Lords, the left GLC leadership have proved incapable of mobilising to fight just one of its decisions. What will happen when the Lords decide they don't want to be abolished by a left Labour government?

The agreement of Bishops Stortford between Labour and trade union leaders may fray at the edges, but it does mean that Benn, rather than struggling to march in an opposite direction from Healey, is likely to be led back into the fold.

Hodgson is someone who is clearly on the left rather than the right and wants to see far reaching changes. He obviously wrote this book before the left's star went into descent. This fact may account for some of the glib certainties about the advance the Labour left and the 'irrelevance' of organisations outside the Labour Party.

Hodgson's thesis is simple: he wants a 'dual approach' (which) rejects the false alternatives of the past: reform *or* revolution, socialism from above *or* socialism from below, parliament *or* workers councils. Such alternatives are not exclusive, as is often supposed.... Insurrection has failed and narrow reformism has failed. The need therefore is for another approach: a

'third road' to socialism. The essence of this third road to socialism is an interaction between parliamentary and extraparliamentary action.'

He believes that only the Labour Party can bring about this change:

'This is the only progressive and democratic political party that will be able to capture the required popular support in the available period of time. The Party itself is on the threshold of change, and it cannot be simply assumed that another Labour government will be on the same pattern as those in the past'.

But surely now we can assume that a 1983-84 Labour government (should it be elected) will be on the same pattern as the past.

Many Labour lefts are already postponing their hopes in a 1989 Labour government—they have already conceded the next election.

Hodgson himself is slightly obsessed with not offending potential support. He seems to favour individual membership rather than union affiliation, pushing Labour towards a more traditional social democratic party structure. He is against total nationalisation. 'There is no example to point to of a genuinely democratic socialist society where more than 50 per cent nationalisation actually works'. He thinks workers participation will increase productivity. Perhaps his most stunning concession is in his view of the economy:

'In some quarters it is difficult to say this, but it must be said: in certain sectors of the economy there is no substitute for *competition* and a *market*. Heresy indeed; but heresy that is backed up by decades of experience from the centrally planned industrial economies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union'.

What Hodgson and large sections of the Labour Party are arguing for comes out very clearly; not a transformation of capitalist society, but one which is run more efficiently and less wastefully (by them and their co-thinkers) in the interests of the working class.

In such a situation, incomes

policy (conditional on certain things such as wealth tax) and worker participation are completely acceptable, even desirable. As Hodgson notes 'the way to socialism is not through a wages free-for-all'.

The reason for all this is that Labour party supporters cannot confront the nature of the state. This is even clearer in Alan Whitehead's pamphlet.

He too talks about 'third road' politics. Neither he nor Hodgson believe that the state is neutral. He borrows from Gramsci and more especially from the latter's Euro-communist distorters the idea of challenging the state for cultural and political hegemony—using, surprise, surprise, the instrument of the Labour Party. In the process he misinterprets Marx's view that 'the class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production' to mean that you can have a separate ideological struggle against the state, rather than seeing that capitalist ideology arises from capitalist social relations of production.



Both writers want to have their cake and eat it. They want to *take over* the existing structure using the Labour Party. They also recognise that this may not be the most popular idea in some quarters so that extra-parliamentary forces may be needed. In the process they fudge the whole nature of the state.

Whitehead claims 'Marx placed several caveats upon an interpretation of the state as a straight forward 'body of armed men'. One wonders what he thinks *The Civil War in France* was all about. The experience of the Paris Commune made Marx understand exactly how the capitalist state was evolving and how the ruling class would fight to the death to retain state power.

Hodgson adopts the same sort of argument.

'First, a socialist majority in parliament is *necessary* to legitimate and support socialist activity elsewhere. And second, if an insurrection is attempted

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without a majority in parliament, then the right would use repressive forces with the full backing and legitimation provided by parliament.

'The existence of a socialist majority in parliament does not, of course, prevent the right attempting repressive action, but it puts them in a much weaker position because their action would become extra-legal and lose the support of a large section of the population'.

This argument is both dangerous and stupid. It assumes that power lies in parliament. It does not, it lies in the City boardrooms where the decisions to move currency, or not to invest, or to strip assets are made. It lies in the House of Lords, where democratically elected councils can have some of their most popular policies overturned. It lies with the army generals who command a monopoly of armed force and who

have shown what side they are on in every confrontation from the Curragh Mutiny to Rhodesian UDI.

Power has to be confronted where those people can be fought: in the workplaces, in the barracks, not in an empty talking shop at Westminster.

Hodgson and Whitehead pretend they have new ideas, new theories, a new Labour Party. In fact they have old wine in pretty dirty bottles. Their third way is the old way of parliamentary reform backed up by a few outside activities—something the Communist Party, for example, has favoured since the 1940s. Because they don't see the state as an instrument of class rule they want to build a party which can take over the existing structures. That is what these books are a justification for—and that is why they don't break from the old mould which their authors claim to reject—that of reform.

BOOKSHORTS

Two recent titles relate to the miners. A rather dry account is Tony Hall *King Coal* (Penguin £2.25). This is overshadowed by Vic Allen *The Militancy of British Miners* (Moor Press £5.00) a recommended and timely history of the miners and their struggles. Another worthy contribution to British labour history is Mick Jenkins *The General Strike of 1842* (Lawrence and Wishart £4.50).

David Kogan and Maurice Kogan *The Battle for the Labour Party* (Fontana £1.75) is a 'how the moles have taken over the Labour Party' pot boiler which was proved wrong even before it was published. Its basis in interviews with leading Labour left activists does not manage to hide its superficiality or

its right wing bias.

Of recent feminist best sellers Ann Oosthuizen *Loneliness and other Lovers* (Sheba £2.75) is a lovely title—what a disappointment to find that the book is peopled by ludicrously unreal characters, stereotyped into 'middle-aged-women finding her way to feminism though giving up men', 'male-chauvinist pig member of the revolutionary left', 'peace and harmony through shoe making ex-hippie and so on and so on.

Much better to read the delightful *Any Women's Blues* (Virago £3.50) by Mary Helen Washington, a collection of short stories by black American women about real people and real life told with warmth and humour.

Also worth reading is *The London Journal of Flora Tristan* (Virago £3.95) the early nineteenth century utopian socialist and feminist, which is reviewed in this month's *Women's Voice*.

Stephen Eric Bronner *A Revolutionary For Our Time, Rosa Luxemburg* (Pluto £2.95) is a thoroughly dishonest, in many places factually inaccurate, and pitiful attempt to claim Rosa Luxemburg for the 'fragments'. If you want to know about her work and her Marxism read Paul Frolich *Rosa Luxemburg* (Pluto £4.95) or Tony Cliff *Rosa Luxemburg* (Bookmarks £1.90).

Michel Lowy *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development* (Verso £4.50) is a study of the theory of permanent revolution. The first part is an interesting exposition of its seeds in Marx and its unfolding by Trotsky. The second part goes totally haywire by trying to prove that the Yugoslav, Chinese, Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions were somehow 'proletarian'. A full length critique will be appearing in *International Socialism*.

Three books for specialists from Pathfinder. Leon Trotsky *The Challenge of the Left Opposition (1928-29)* (£4.95) gives us Trotsky in internal exile in Alma Ata, fighting for his political life against the Stalinist reaction, and desperately trying to halt the trend towards capitulation amongst his own supporters.

James P Cannon *The Left Opposition in the US 1928-31* (£4.95) may look obscure but although Cannon was no great theorist he was a fine revolutionary and we can learn from his honest, straightforward, proletarian and deeply serious approach to the problems of revolutionary policy.

CLR James *Fighting Racism in World War Two* (£3.75), although a somewhat scrappy book, being mainly composed of old newspaper articles, it is certainly invaluable for anyone interested in US politics.

A run down of the oil industry and how it effects its workers is WG Carson *The Other Price of Britain's Oil* (Martin Robertson £5.95).

A guide to the African carve-up

Crisis in Africa — Battleground of East and West
Arthur Gavshon
Penguin, £3.95

Arthur Gavshon does not pretend to be anything else than a liberal-minded journalist who has secured interview access to most of the key actors on the recent African-related stage. But this book is immensely useful to any European socialist trying to understand the constraints put upon the development of an African working class movement. The focus is on the cynical bungs of the American, French and British post World War Two Africa policies and how these have interacted with the forays of Russia, China and Cuba into Africa.

The most partisan passage centres on a demolition point-by-point of Kissinger's attempt to argue that it was the Russians who escalated the Angolan civil war at the end of 1975. Gavshon proves conclusively that the Americans made every pos-

sible attempt to prevent the MPLA from taking power in Angola. He demonstrates that it was America's desperate support for a South African invasion which led the MPLA to call in Cuban aid. He points out the evidence which shows that the Russians were reluctantly dragged in by the Cubans.

Hidden historical facts and figures about other Western and Eastern interventions in Africa which Gavshon insistently unearths to explain less-publicised or forgotten events make just as essential reading.

America for instance, first stained itself with African blood after World War Two by backing the French in Algeria because 40 per cent of US military aid to NATO went to France's 80,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen there. Again the Biafran secessionists were sustained in 1967 by American and French oil interests eager to wrest control of Nigeria's oil industry from a British Petroleum monopoly. Earlier in

1961 the CIA had murdered President Lumumba of newly-independent Congo (later Zaire), installing the present Mobutu to gain control over the Zairean half of the central African copperbelt. Gavshon expertly reminds us of the economic details involved in these happenings, and he teases out the uranium realities involved in Giscard's diamond affair with Bokassa of the Central African Empire and exposes Giscard's 1980 deal to hand over Chad to Libya in return for French oil exploration rights in Libya.

The lack of altruism is also evidenced in the history of Eastern intervention. Despite the notoriety of the brutalities and murder in Equatorial Guinea, Uganda and the Central African Empire during the 1970s, Russia sent military advisors, trainers and weapons to prop these regimes up. Cuba steered clear of Uganda and the Empire but sent advisors and trainers into Guinea where a quarter of the population were driven into exile. The Chinese have done likewise in Zaire, because they are short of copper. For the same reason Zambia pays its debt to the Chinese for building the Tanzania-Zambia railway in copper. Morocco is Moscow's first African trading partner and Russia is unwilling to support Polisario's war to liberate phosphate rich Western Sahara from King Hassan of Morocco because Russia signed a 30 year contract in 1978 with Hassan to develop and import the phosphate.

Gavshon shows that events that rarely conformed to the neat world conspiracy theories with which Moscow, Peking, Washington, London and Paris have attempted to justify their role in Africa. The material on Cuba's role is especially important because it is rare for it to be so objectively handled.

John Rogers



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TONE DEAF ALBERT

Elvis

Albert Goldman
Allen Lane, 1995.

Elvis Presley was not a lovable man. He was reactionary, sexist, brutal and self-indulgent; he could, however, sing rather well. Albert Goldman, author of the 'ultimate biography' of Elvis, also reveals himself as distinctly unlovable. Maybe Albert is good at something, but it certainly isn't writing books about rock and roll.

The whole book is written in breathless slang that drips with inauthenticity. Albert delights in the risqué pleasure of retelling other people's racist remarks (and inventing his own sexist comments): just enough to show he's a real swinger, while keeping safely within the limits that show he's a liberal as well.

And if that wasn't bad enough, Albert is also an academic—Adjunct Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. So, mixed in with the lurid details of Elvis's tastes in sex and drugs, we get Rilke and Proust, not to mention Lord Raglan on history and myth. Because someone once called Elvis 'The King', we get a whole chapter on American democracy's 'deep yearning for royalty'. (This approach could work wonders for Duke Ellington and Major Lance.) As a young performer Elvis used to hang the cardboard cylinder from a roll of toilet paper on a string inside the front of his trousers. Albert seems to be doing something similar for his brain.

A monstrous array of cross-cultural references is mobilised to demonstrate a commonplace of orthodox literary criticism, namely, that things don't really change. Elvis used to break his guitar strings. But, a hundred years ago, Paganini broke violin strings. Conservatives can be consoled, there is nothing new under the sun.

Moreover, despite its pretentiousness, the book is sloppy and inaccurate. Albert confuses Meredith Hunter (killed at the Altamont Festival) with James Meredith (the first black to enter the University of Mississippi). He refers repeatedly to a song called 'I'm All Shook Up'. If, in his three years of research, he had got round to looking at record labels, he might have discovered that track is called 'All Shook Up'.

The last point is not accidental. Albert is plainly not interested in music. He tells us down to the last milligram what drugs were in Elvis's possession, but the few short pieces of analysis of Elvis's songs radiate boredom.

That isn't to say there is nothing we can learn from this book. Albert shows just how right Marx was when he says that 'capitalist production is hostile to certain aspects



of intellectual production, such as art and poetry.' The whole history of popular music is one of fine performers with their roots in the oppressed layers of society being taken over by capitalism and turned into stars who aren't worth listening to. (This is a universal truth, despite

the view of some benighted elements in the Rock Against Racism milieu that the Beatles were not going downhill all the way after 'Love Me Do'.

Albert reveals many of the squalid details of how Elvis was destroyed as a singer and an actor by

commercial pressure. He was, for instance, never allowed to meet his song-writers, in case they did a deal behind Colonel Parker's back. His films were budgeted so that all the other performers should come as cheap as possible.

But if capitalism destroys it does not always destroy in the same way. I have known for a long time that Colonel Parker ruined Elvis. What Albert brings out is the fact that, even in his own terms, Colonel Parker was a pretty poor manager.

He lacked imagination, and seemed positively afraid of Elvis doing anything original or controversial. He failed to organise really big concerts of the sort that were to be so successful for the Beatles. It was Colonel Parker, not the military authorities, who decided that Elvis should make no records for two whole years while he was in the Army, a time when he was at the peak of his powers.

Above all, Colonel Parker was responsible for structuring Elvis's whole career around a series of mediocre films. It may be true that 'the public gets what the public wants', but it is unlikely that the public wanted, let alone deserved, such monstrosities as *Frankie and Johnny*.

Albert is also quite interesting on the circumstances in which Elvis's type of music was able to emerge.

He documents vividly the racism which characterised the society in which Elvis grew up, and lists the varying musical influences that Elvis drew together. As well as making the fairly standard point about how Elvis combined the traditions of black and white song, he notes the important influence of Dean Martin—a connection I for one had never previously made.

But when it comes to the real historical significance of rock and roll, Albert is way out of his depth.

For a hundred years or more there had been songs which expressed working-class oppression. But rock and roll was the first music to express working class aggression. Arising out of the self-confidence engendered by the post-war boom, it was thus to become potentially one of the key art forms of the socialist revolution.

Because Albert cannot understand this, he cannot understand the importance—and the limits—of Elvis. He notes that Elvis was bypassed by the music of the late sixties—but fails to see how deeply that music was rooted in the experience of the Vietnam War. And, with his literary critic's view that nothing ever changes, he can even suggest that Elvis Costello is an 'Elvis epigone'. No-one could say that who had actually listened to 'Oliver's Army'. But then Albert hadn't—just as he never really listened to Elvis Presley.

Ian Birchall



In February 1937, the US working class won one of its decisive victories. The United Automobile Workers (UAW) forced the mighty General Motors to surrender and grant union recognition. The defeat of the biggest company in the massive motor industry was a breakthrough for trade union organisation amongst US workers.

Up to the 1930's, the history of US unions was appalling. Despite the traditions of the IWW, the major unions were concerned only to organise skilled workers.

Manufacturing plants, and indeed whole company towns, were run on the lines of police states. The bosses employed hordes of spies. They had their own private armies. The local and state governments were theirs, bought and paid for. The penalty for organising was the sack and the blacklist — if you were lucky. If you weren't you could be beaten up or even murdered by the company goons.

But all of these terror methods proved useless in the face of the new mood of anger and militancy which grew in the Great Depression. In industry after industry workers fought back and organised. The UAW was one of the new general unions which recruited all workers and which formed a new organisation — the Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO).

There were no easy victories. Despite the pro-labour claims of the Roosevelt government, bosses and state machine went all out to stop the organising drive. Nowhere was the issue harder fought than at the heart of the General Motors empire, in the car plants in and around Detroit.

On January 3 1937, two hundred delegates from all over GM met in Flint, near Detroit, to co-ordinate a campaign which had already got under way with a wave of sit-ins and disputes in Atlanta, Cleveland, Toledo, St Louis, Kansas City and Jamesville. They elected a 'board of strategy', including many left-wing militants, among them Kermit Johnson, a leading militant at Flint. Their first action was to call a company-wide strike and issue a series of demands, including union recognition, a signed contract, abolition of piece work, a thirty hour week, time and a half for overtime, the re-employment of victimised trade unionists, and control of the speed of the track.

The company was ready for them.

The centre of the battle developed in Flint, around the Fisher plants of GM. The



rank and file workers were not content merely with striking. From the very start they struck and occupied the plants. The bosses responded by organising a vigilante force, the 'Flint Alliance', which was open to 'all citizens and employees who wish to return to work and are against the strike.'

The vigilantes, the police, and the company thugs dressed up as 'deputies' were quickly in action.

On January 12, the heat was turned off in Fisher Body No 2 plant and the cops attacked the pickets outside. They announced that no more food would be allowed in to the plant. The intention was to let hunger and the bitter cold of the winter force the occupiers out. The workers responded by counter-attacking against the police and, in 12 hours of running battles, forced their way through with supplies of coffee and fresh bread. Casualties were high, with 14 strikers injured from gunshot wounds. But the Sheriff lost his car and three police cruisers, and his men were finally driven off when high pressure fire hoses from inside the plant were turned on them.



The response to this great victory was a familiar one. The government acted quickly to bring together the employers and the union bureaucrats to hammer out a compromise.

The workers saw victory in their grasp. At the Fleetwood plant they marched out with bands playing and banners flying; at Fisher 1 and 2 they were half-way out of the plant. Then came the news that GM was also negotiating with the scab Flint Alliance. The victory demonstrations turned round and marched back into the plants, and rebuilt the barricades for a long fight.

By this time it was clear to the rank and file militants that they could not rely on the government or the bureaucrats to win the

fight. They needed to go on the offensive and close down more GM plants. But they had a problem: they knew by this time that the company had a spy in the local leadership and would thus be forewarned of any new move and deploy the cops to try to stop it. As a last resort, they organised a secret meeting to give the impression they were telling 'most trusted' militants what their plans were.

The meeting took place by candlelight in the darkness of an occupied plant. Kermit Johnson recorded the scene.

'I laughed to myself and felt like a conspirator when I considered all the pretence we had gone through to organise a meeting for one despicable man, a stool pigeon. It seemed like a real dirty trick to dupe so many good men, but to make the big fish swallow the bait we had to have a lot of little fish nibbling. I was sure we had convinced the stool-pigeon that at 3.30pm the workers of No 9 plant would stage a sit-in.'

By the early afternoon of February 1, Johnson knew the fish had bitten. The No 9 plant had been surrounded by police and deputies and several thousand workers were marching on the plant.

But it was all a diversion. The real plan was for other men to break into the unorganised Fisher No 4 plant, which was still working, link up with the hard core of union activists, stop the plant and occupy it. This the men inside the decoy plant did not know, and seeing thousands of workers fighting the cops outside, decided to try for an occupation anyway. The diversion grew in scale, with police firing tear gas into the plant and the workers outside smashing windows to let in fresh air.

With the cops and the bosses fully occupied, the real fight started at Fisher No 4 plant. Johnson takes up the story:

'The door burst open and there was Ed! Great big Ed, his hairy chest bare to the belly, carrying a little American flag, and leading the most ferocious band of twenty men I have ever seen. He looked so funny with that tiny flag in comparison to his men who were armed to the teeth with lead pipes, metal bars and chunks of steel three foot long. It didn't take a mastermind to know that trying to strike a roaring plant of three thousand men and machines with just twenty men was impossible. We huddled together and decided to send back for ... reinforcements, and if that failed, to get the hell out of Chevrolet in a hurry. Luckily we were back with several hundred men in a short time.'

The battle was not over: there would be two more weeks of confrontation and threats, but the heart of GM was stopped. With their major plants occupied and their workers in open revolt, they had to give way. And give way they did: on 11 February, GM capitulated and signed a contract with the UAW. The victory echoed through the USA. In the next month, 193,000 workers were involved in sit-in strikes. By the end of 1937 one and a half million workers had struck for the right to organise. US unions were on their way.

Jim Scott