

1982:9 Oct13-Nov10 50p
(Issue 47)

socialist

REVIEW

Monthly Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

Socialism in Europe



INSIDE: Solidarnosc
today / Zionism the
road to Beirut / The politics
of pornography / Tarzan the racist ape

Denationalising Buzby

The privatisation of British Telecom is imminent. **Marta Wohrle** explores the wider implications for British workers and shows why moves like this should be resisted and fought by all socialists.

Unlike almost everyone else on the left, from Michael Foot to Militant or the CP, the SWP has never subscribed to the myth that nationalised industries are islands of socialist enterprise in a sea of capitalism. But with the Tories' attempts to hive off profitable sections of nationalised industries such as British Airways and British Telecom — as part of a general attack on those and other nationalised industries — it is worth looking more closely at why we should oppose their plans for privatisation.

A good example is British Telecom — a highly unionised industry with relatively good pay and conditions. Already the government has told BT that it should cut its workforce by 45,000 by 1987. Over 15,000 of them will have to go by the time the industry is privatised — in 1984, BT's own plans to cut 15,000 jobs over the next five years will not even meet the government's starting point. The breaking of BT's monopoly, and the selling off of its shares — 1.275 billion in the first year — will not only damage the quality of the service provided to domestic and commercial consumers, but will also have serious consequences for the workers and their organisation.

The Tories' plans to open up telecommunications to private competition does not even have the benefit of sound economic sense to back it up. In Europe the trend has been in the opposite direction, with increased nationalisation and the tightening up of monopolies. In America, where the government has forced the two big monopolies, Bell and ITT, to open up competition, there has not been the large scale increase in business they hoped for. Bell has had to weather Federal rate-fixing and various anti-trust laws in order to maintain business, and there has still been notable increase. Telecommunications is a high risk, high investment industry, and capitalists have shown a marked reluctance to put money into it.

The Telecommunications Act was pushed through by the Tories in 1981 and effectively set up the confrontation between British Telecom (itself only just severed from the Post Office) and 'Project Mercury'. The act intends to leave BT with pride of place in telecommunications, chiefly by reserving its right to install the first telephone in every customer's premises.

But, once a subscriber has bought the first telephone from BT they can then order any other equipment from private contractors.

It is estimated that this could cost BT control over eight million telephones. The private contractors would also be allowed to maintain the equipment. So, work previously being done by BT staff would now be done by workers employed by private companies on far lower wages and with much weaker union organisation.

Mercury is a private consortium of Barclays, BP and Cable & Wireless. In theory it is only the first of BT's competitors which will convey voice or video signals, travelling at the speed of light along fibre-optic cables. In other words the profitable cream of BT's monopoly, which is essential to subsidise facilities such as Directory Enquiries and call boxes in the Outer Hebrides, will be hived off to other companies.

But there has not been the expected rush of investors. Possibly because of the high levels of investment needed to get into the field and because profits are difficult to make without access to the international market. The government has the legal power to tell BT to give private companies access to its network — but it has not done so as yet.

British TELECOM

The Tories' desire to privatise telecommunications seems to be based on ideological rather than economic grounds. Although they would get to retain the proceeds of the billions of shares sold there seems to be little direct economic advantage. With the asset value of BT currently around £15 billion, BT is extremely profitable without it going into competition with other companies. Privatisation would also mean that BT would be forced to sever its cosy relations with other private companies central to the interests of British capitalism.

The single, most important achievement of the Tories' plans is a rapid downgrading in the pay and conditions of the workers in the industry. BT engineers are currently at the top of the pay scale, earning around £200 a week basic. After 40 years they receive an index linked pension. The reasons are fairly clear cut. They are a highly skilled workforce in an advanced technical industry. But most of all, BT's monopoly gives them enormous potential strength.

Painfully aware of this, management usually give in to demands before strike action is taken. During a dispute in 1978, the POEU called out the engineers in the City of London. It was the big banks that forced the government to settle when they found they couldn't move their money. Even a one day strike by the POEU can cost the City dearly.

If private companies were allowed in this power will be greatly weakened. Business

subscribers could simply switch from one company to another. Up until now the threat of scabbing did not really exist, but as more people can do their skilled work the POEU is finding itself seriously threatened.

Workers in private companies, such as Mercury, do longer hours for less pay, and the semi-skilled workers are employed on a hire and fire basis. And it is hardly surprising that Michael Edwardes, fully equipped with his repertoire of strike-breaking techniques, has been appointed chairman-designate of Mercury. When privatisation goes ahead BT workers will be forced to compete with badly organised and low paid workers in order to preserve their own jobs.

One of the by-products of micro-chip technology is the de-skilling and de-manning of the industry. New exchanges are being introduced which can be operated by only a fifth of the present staff. The trend is towards replacing equipment rather than repairing it if it breaks down. This requires fewer workers with less skills. This factor will also seriously undermine one of the keys to BT's workers strength. If BT are to reap the benefits of technological change they will have to attack the unions inside the industry.

The objective conditions for such an attack are there. Privatisation would divide the workforce and make it very much harder to fight back.

As the profitable part of BT is in servicing big business, denationalisation would lead to a worse service for the domestic consumer. The profits in modern telecommunications are made in transmitting computer data, rather than voice transmission. So, most investment will go towards expanding and prioritising the technology to service this market — at the expense of consumers wanting voice transmissions.

The leadership of the POEU has responded to the attacks on BT with a touching belief in the power of reason but very little else. Their arguments put workers' jobs as secondary to keeping a healthy and profitable nationalised industry. For a long time all they did was bombard MPs with arguments about the necessity of a nationalised BT to the continued efficiency of British capitalism.

At the moment around 60% of BT's income is provided by just 100 subscribers. A private company, such as Mercury, can only survive if it can win a substantial slice of this market. BT will have to fight to hold on to these top 100 customers — and it will do so at the expense of the workforce.

Under pressure from the rank and file militants, the leadership of the POEU have since broadened their campaign. Yet strike action is seen as the last resort. It is only now that most members realise that denationalisation is already happening. Already the equipment is being installed by workers outside BT. Already thousands of jobs are being seriously threatened. If action is not taken immediately — and that looks extremely unlikely — then the workforce's position will be even weaker by the time the next round of job losses is imposed in a couple of years. □



Ted Grant and Peter Taffe at Blackpool

Picture John Sturrock (Network)

socialist
REVIEW

PO Box 82, London E2 01 729 2986

Contents

- 2 **British Telecom**
- 3 **Labour party—whistling in the dark**
- 5 **22 September**
- 7 **Poland**
- 10 **International monetary fund**
- 13 **Socialism in Europe: France, Greece, Spain, Italy**
- 20 **What's in a word: Zionism**
- 22 **Writers reviewed: Edgar Rice Burroughs**
- 24 **Books are weapons: Reform or revolution**
- 26 **Politics of pornography**
- 29 **Pluto press: Arguments for reformism**
- 30 **Review article: The lost revolution**
- 33 **Books: Friedan, Harvey, Percy**
- 35 **Music: The message of rap**
- 36 **The revolutionary calendar: Hungary October 1956**

Edited by Colin Sparks
Assisted by Stuart Ash, Dave Beecham, Norah Carlin, Sue Cockerill, Peter Court, Andy Durgan, Pete Goodwin, Noel Halifax, Gareth Jenkins, Christine Kenny, John Lindsay, Ann Rogers, Joanna Rollo, Jim Scott, Marta Wohrle, Andy Wright
Production Andy Durgan, John Lindsay
Books Andy Durgan

Subscription rates for one year (11 issues): Britain and Ireland £7, Overseas Surface £8, Europe Air £10, Elsewhere Air £13.50 (institutions add £5)
Cheques and postal orders payable to Socialist Review
Socialist Review is sent free to all prisoners on request
ISSN 0141-2442
Printed by East End (Offset) Ltd, (TU All Depts) London E2

Whistling in the dark

The Labour left were brought up short last month at the Party conference in Blackpool. Not only did Foot get a free hand to witch-hunt *Militant* but the NEC elections gave the right wing a majority. Many of the 'great gains' the Bennites and their camp-followers have been trumpeting over the last three years have been shown to be hollow.

The reason for the defeat is obvious to most people. The pressure of an approaching election caused a number of trade union leaders, most notably Moss Evans of the TGWU, to shift to uncritical support for Michael Foot. A few arms were twisted here and there, a

few union executives and conferences had their wishes disregarded. Some middle-level bureaucrats and senior lay officials are disgruntled but by and large it all went quite smoothly.

It is important to stress how easily the

right and the 'soft left' of the Labour Party were able to stitch things up because it demonstrates just how decisive their victory is. There is no doubt that Healey and Foot today control the Labour Party and it is likely that tomorrow it will be Hattersley and Kinnock.

Only two sorts of people today deny this. The political commentators and editorial writers of the capitalist press are still hunting for the red menace that they need to find lurking just a step away from power. They point to the continuing left-wing hold on the constituency parties and to the policies passed by the conference.

The other group is the Labour left. They use exactly the same evidence to argue that the defeat is not total and that, sooner or later, they will win control.

They have different motives but they are both deluding themselves. These two arguments will not bear examination.

There is no doubt that the constituency parties remain on the left. They are not that far to the left, as the meagre results of the mandatory re-selection process show. So far none of the key figures of the Labour right, with the exception of Roy Mason, have had any serious trouble with their local parties. A left shift which cannot even organise to try to unseat the likes of Merlyn Rees is hardly a major threat to the right.

The fact is that even at its high point the new left in the Labour Party was already tacitly making an agreement with the right. Whatever the conference speeches the resolution for a serious fight was never there.

There is a good reason for this. One of the attractions of Labour Party membership is that you are joining what can be represented as a mass party with working class support. The Labour Party has a possibility, however remote, of being the next government. That theme of the possibility of real social power has been a constant argument for the left. It has been a seductive one for many who five years ago stood well to the left.

Behind the rhetoric lies a difficult fact: the active working class base of the Labour Party has continued to decline. The young professionals who joined the Labour Party six months ago and are today Labour councillors have very little real base. Their election by workers' votes depends on the



Foot victorious

memory of the old right wing Labour Party, not on its new left-wing constituency membership.

In order to keep that up, a compromise with the right was always necessary. The left could never afford to do anything which threatened a serious split in the Party. The price was the continuation of the old gang of reactionary leaders at the top. The defection of the SDP simply increased that pressure.

Resolutions

The same weakness is obvious with the stress on conference resolutions. Faced with the argument that the Labour conference could pass anything it liked without any hope that it would be implemented, the left used to agree. They would say that this time round, with the election of the leader from conference, the re-selection of MP's, and all the other changes, conference policies would matter. The next Labour government would actually implement them.

Today they are left simply with the policies. All of the changes which were supposed to guarantee their implementation

are forgotten. It does not take very much political acumen to realise that a Labour government in which Healey and Hattersley are powerful figures will behave in exactly the same way as have previous Labour governments.

Take their most favourable case; the overwhelming vote for unilateral nuclear disarmament. This was passed by roughly a seventy per cent majority. Leave aside the minor fact that the vote was immediately followed by an almost equally overwhelming vote to remain in NATO, which makes a nonsense of the aim of nuclear disarmament. What does this great vote actually mean?

It means that unilateral nuclear disarmament will be in the next Labour Programme. This is hardly a step forward since it is already in *Labour's Programme 1982*. It does not mean that it will be in the manifesto for the next election. The right-dominated NEC and the right-dominated Shadow Cabinet control the manifesto. It does not mean that the next government will do anything about it. The 1972 vote for nuclear disarmament resulted in the modernising of the Polaris system by the 1974 Labour government.

Michael Foot has already given the game away. He told the ITV programme *Weekend World*:

'I agree with the programme we have presented to the conference for trying to get a non-nuclear defence programme for this country as speedily as we possibly can.'

Not: 'On the first day that I walk into Downing Street'. Not: 'In the first year of the Labour government.' Not: 'Within the lifetime of one Parliament.' Just as speedily as they possibly can, which could well be at exactly the same pace as previous Labour governments have transformed Britain into a socialist society.

The more clear-sighted of the Labour left know that these arguments are true. They accept that they have lost this time round. Their sights are on a longer fight. They, like the characters in *A very British coup*, think that 1989 will be the decisive date. They reason that if Labour win the next election the new government will be the same old mixture and the fight will have to be postponed to the next election but one. If Labour lose the next election then they will have another five years of burrowing.

The first thing that strikes you about such plans is how long term they are. If it takes ten years to get anywhere in the Labour Party, why join it? If you are a serious reformist why not start again from scratch? If you are an entrant, why not come out and build a revolutionary party? On either count, staying in the Labour Party is simply to create another obstacle in your own way.

The things they intend to do in the bleak years are equally improbable. One of the catch-phrases you hear today is: 'building a mass campaigning party'. Another is the need to 'do something about the block vote'. Both of these show at least some sense of the realities of the weakness of the Labour left. When you look at what they might mean in practice, their unreality as strategies stands out.

The Labour Party has never been a mass campaigning party. It was and is an electoral

Picture: John Sturrock (Network)



Has the Labour Left got the answer?

Find out with these three Socialist Worker pamphlets:

THREE LETTERS TO A BENNITE

by Paul Foot

50p plus 20p postage/ten for £4 post free

THE LABOUR PARTY: MYTH AND REALITY

by Duncan Hallas

35p plus 20p postage/ten for £3 post free

WHY IMPORT CONTROLS WON'T SAVE JOBS:

The socialist case

by Nigel Harris and Duncan Hallas

25p plus 20p postage/ten for £2 post free

■ All from Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Rd, London N4 2DE

machine. It is organised for getting votes, not leading struggles. It is also quite a successful electoral machine, which means it runs the councils in a large number of places. Sooner or later the left will have to choose between leading struggles and leading the local council. The prospect of Bennite militants leading mass campaigns against a Bennite council is hardly one which will build a party.

It is the same with the block vote. The reason why Moss Evans has more influence in the Labour Party than some Bennite Polytechnic lecturer in Media Studies is because he has more social weight. The block vote, with all its substantial faults, is a secondary factor.

To fight to 'democratise the block vote', as some on the left are now arguing, will probably not succeed unless it is the spin-off from the hard slog of rebuilding the confidence and political organisation of the rank and file trade unionist. Even if it did succeed by some procedural trick, it would be a meaningless victory unless the left win the support of the rank and file. The AUEW is actually quite a democratic union: it is on the right because the members voted that way.

To take either of the two new ideas of the Labour left is to break entirely from the tradition of the Labour Party. It means breaking with electoralism and building a party that sees the struggles of workers as the decisive question. It means breaking from a dependence on the trade union machines and organising around the issues that affect the daily lives of the ordinary members. The logic in practice is to behave in exactly the same way as a revolutionary party.

Benn's end

It is not likely that the mass of Labour leftists will have the consistency to carry through the logic of their own position, at least in the near future. The mood today is one of desperate optimism. The reality of the defeat has not yet sunk in.

A large section of the Labour left are people who are moving from the extreme left to the right. They will succeed in killing their consciences and turning their conference ovations for Foot and Kinnock into loyalty to centre-right orthodoxy.

The *Militant* group are currently revelling in the witch-hunt. They know they can survive it and probably grow a little out of the publicity. But in the course of their fight they will become even more cautious, routinised, incapable of taking initiatives than they are now. The experience of being witch-hunted as revolutionaries will not transform them from the reformism which they proclaim from every platform.

But if there is no sign of any substantial split from the Labour left, there are still individuals amongst them, and more amongst the people they influence, who can be won by revolutionary socialist arguments. In the future they may become more numerous.

Such people will only be won by firm and patient argument. They will only be won to the still-tiny revolutionary alternative if they are convinced of the correctness of all our politics. The starting point is that Blackpool marked the end of the road for Bennism. □



Picture: John Sturrock (Network)

One day's strike

22 September was a success. John Lindsay looks at the strengths and weaknesses of the day of action and draws some of the lessons.

There is no doubt that the day was a big step forward. We only have to compare it to the halfcock 'Day of Action' on 14 May 1981 to see that rank and file workers took supporting the hospitals a great deal more seriously than they have done many of the TUC's other little schemes.

With the *Financial Times* saying that more than two million were on strike and the *Daily Mirror* calling it 'a great day' it might be thought that this was the end of the downturn. At last, after a string of defeats, the working class seems to be discovering some of the old lessons of solidarity again.

A closer look at what went on last month shows that there is no grounds for over-optimism. The dispute was very patchy. Some areas like Glasgow and Aberdeen were very good indeed. Others, like Birmingham, were not so hot.

Even where groups of workers took strike action we need to be careful about what it really represents for the confidence and self-organisation of the class.

If we make the comparison with the strike action which freed the Pentonville dockers back in 1972, two things stand out. Then, although fewer workers were involved, those who struck came out to *win*. The decision to stop Fleet Street was not an easy one but when they stopped the printers knew they were coming out for more than just a gesture. This time round the struggle was a definite and limited one-day affair. Everybody knew that they would be back at work the next day.

In 1972, it was the activity of the dockers themselves which pulled other groups out. They sent out mass pickets which carried the arguments with other groups of workers.

When the TUC finally moved, it was as a result of mass pressure. They had to move quickly to make sure that things did not get beyond their control.

In 1982 the situation is different. Although the TUC leaders certainly responded to pressure this time round, that pressure was far smaller. The 22 September was organised by the officials. They set the day and they set the limit.

In the present situation this lead from the TUC was very useful. Because the movement is so much weaker now the official call matters much more than it did ten years ago. It meant that it was possible to win the argument for action in places which would not otherwise have come out. Elsewhere it laid the groundwork for extending the action from a miserable one hour affair into 24 hours.

Official instruction

In Fleet Street there can be no doubt that the strike action by clerical workers — as opposed to the better organised manual sections — took place because of, and only because of, the official instruction from the unions. There were many bitter arguments about the action.

Having called and controlled the strike, the TUC leaders are in a position to determine what happens next. All the evidence is that they have no intention of calling for all out action in the hospitals and want to limit action as much as possible.

They have used the success of the 22nd, as a bargaining tool. It has allowed them to beat the Labour Party drum for the next election and to impress the Tories that they are not having it all their own way.

While the mass law-breaking, which the sympathy strikes all involved, helps to discredit anti-union legislation, there is every prospect that it will be back. Next time the employers will try to use the law on grounds which are much more favourable to them.

There is no doubt that the trade union

leaders wanted a good show on the day. Their overall position is not good. They are menaced by falling membership and engaged in bitter wars with each other over the recruitment of people still in work. But the events leading up to the 22nd showed how far they still are from having any clear idea of what to do.

In Swansea, the initial idea of the local bureaucrats was to build for the demonstration in London. They then found out that it was possible that the trains might be on strike. They then started to build for a local demonstration. When it became clear that the trains would be running there was total confusion. Local militants were running around not knowing what was going on. There were, after all, only fifty tickets to London.

Very often action was taken only as a result of the initiatives of rank and file workers. At Ford Halewood the idea of a one day stoppage originated from one stewards' committee and led to a mass meeting of 9000 workers on a Sunday which voted 70 per cent in favour of action. Part at least of the victory was due to the fact that hospital workers turned up at the meeting and a shop steward addressed it. A *Socialist Worker* bulletin explaining the need for solidarity was also important.

An even more spectacular example of what could be achieved with some initiative was at the Fairclough building site in

Glasgow. Some electricians visited a nearby hospital and asked for assistance. The hospital workers put a picket line on the site on the 22nd and managed to stop the job.

Glasgow in general was very good, with even unorganised city centre stores stopping work for the first time in anyone's memory. This was not an accident. Two of the best organised hospitals in the city, the Victoria and the Southern General, spent a week before the 22nd on intense delegation work. The Southern General in particular went to a large number of places where the stoppage was not automatic, like the Fire Stations and the Post Office, and managed to win action.

Rank and file

Some very unusual places, like the Royal Ordnance Factory at Bishopton, were pulled out on the day by hospital workers themselves. There were also setbacks. None of the British Steel plants took action. At Ravenscraig, threatened with closure, the stewards were told that any action would be met by lockouts and refused even to call a mass meeting.

Hospital workers addressing a mass meeting, and working hard to get their case across was not only vital to winning action in many places, it also meant that the turnout for the demonstrations was bigger than normal. 200 people from the Albion British Leyland plant went on the march — a

marked difference from the normal 'staying-at-home-and-digging-the-garden' response to one day actions.

In general the officials, while wanting action, were a lot less clear about how to win support. A London ambulance driver was told by an official: 'If you want to come out we will back you all the way.' When asked if he would make it official the reply was: 'Er no.'

The response of hospital workers to the support they got was ecstatic, but there are longer term problems with the dispute. Although the unity so far has been very impressive there are a number of strains. Ancillary workers take home about £50 a week. Nurses take home about £75. So calling out ancillaries while nurses are working can prove unpopular. Laundry workers can make up money lost through strikes with bonuses and overtime. Cleaners do not have this option.

Short strikes do not encourage active involvement. In many cases, the pickets' numbers have been made up by supporters, often from public sector white collar unions. Picketing tends to be soft. This is partly due to inexperience but is also a result of an understandable feeling that it is not worthwhile taking the chance of arrest if a delivery turned away today will be welcomed in tomorrow morning.

Another feature of the dispute has been the extent to which individual hospitals have been isolated from each other. In a number of places the management have gone on the offensive and picked fights. At the London Hospital they victimised a steward called Phil McEntree and precipitated a fortnight's strike. There have been other such incidents, many of them much less severe. What has generally happened is that workers at the hospital in question have walked out for a couple of days but been unable to spread the action and have drifted back to work.

Inexperience

A large part of the problem is again inexperience. Organisation in the hospitals took quite a beating in the 1979 'Winter of Discontent.' There is virtually no inter-hospital organisation, and it is often the case that joint shop stewards' committees *within* hospitals are fragile.

A consequence of the weakness of organisation is that while the dispute has thrown up a new layer of militants, who in some places have replaced more right-wing stewards, they are often isolated from their members. Thus meetings of stewards called by the officials are often very keen for all out strike action, but also very worried that they cannot carry their members.

The central lesson of the 22 September is a simple one. Even in the depths of the downturn effective intervention is possible. The basic lessons of organisation — the need for mass meetings, the need to visit other factories, the need for determined picketing, the need for the widest possible organisation — are all elementary ones. Because they fit so well with the situation it is possible to win an audience for them amongst hospital workers and to help to rebuild some of the links which have been lost in the last few years.



Liverpool, 4 October



Is Solidarnosc dead?

Trade unions have been banned in Poland. Riots, demonstrations and strikes continue. **Henry Brandler** looks at the continuing failure of the Jaruzelski régime to crush *Solidarnosc*.

Mass demonstrations on 31 August to mark the second anniversary of the Gdansk agreements which gave birth to *Solidarnosc* were turned into bloody riots by the Zomos (riot police). At least five workers were shot dead and hundreds of others injured. More than 4000 people were arrested in demonstrations which took place in most of Poland's major cities.

After 10 months of martial law, Jaruzelski and the rest of the Polish bureaucracy are still far from secure in their power. They remain divided and isolated and are not yet in a position to 'normalise' Poland.

The Polish economy remains in a very shaky state. Although Western governments led by Reagan are exerting pressure on the Polish economy, the private bankers have been a great deal more understanding. Jerzy Urban, chief government propagandist, announced a new agreement on Poland's massive debts at the same time as he reported the mid-September rioting.

Poland was due to repay around £2bn in interest and capital repayments this year. There was never any prospect that this would take place. The 500 Western banks with money tied up there are all keen to make sure

that they get something back.

Marian Krzak, Polish Finance Minister, has been eager to help them. According to him the negotiations are not difficult since 'We speak a common language ... We never talk about politics when negotiating with the Western bankers. This is good.'

It looks as though this approach will pay off. Poland will now only have to repay five per cent of the principal due this year. The remaining ninety-five per cent will be repaid over an eight year period starting in 1986. In addition, only two-thirds of the interest due this year will be paid over and half of that will be immediately re-loaned to Poland for the next three years.

Even these modest terms will need a lot of hard currency and that can only come from Polish exports. That in turn depends on how far Jaruzelski can force Polish workers to produce more and consume less, and how much of that surplus can be sold in a contracting world market.

There are contradictory reports of what is happening in the mines and factories and farms of Poland. According to PAP (the official Polish news agency) the first six months of the year saw a substantial fall in real wages and a fall in production. For example, meat production declined by 6.8 per cent. Poultry production, badly hit by the Reagan administration's refusal to sell feed grains, fell by a staggering 59.3 per cent.

On the other hand, the government claims that industrial production rose by 3.2 per cent in August. Coal production, a vital Polish export, is also up. In the first six

months of 1981 Polish miners produced 96m tonnes. In the same period of 1982 the figure was 111m tonnes. Productivity seems to have increased too, with a rise in the Slask mine from 2.4 tonnes per shift last year to 2.7 tonnes now.

A vast proportion of this increased production is being exported. Total exports for 1981 were 15.2m tonnes. This year 14.2m tonnes had already been exported by July, and the target is 30m tonnes.

A closer look at coal mining reveals some parts of Jaruzelski's internal strategy. The imposition of martial law meant the militarisation of the mines. Military officers were placed in charge of pits. Miners are now forced to work Saturdays and are forbidden to leave their jobs.

On the other hand, the military authorities have left intact the 50 per cent pay rise won by union militancy last September and the compulsory Saturday working continues to earn the bonus negotiated by *Solidarnosc*. The mines have been provided with special shops which provide miners with a 15½ pound per month meat ration as compared with the normal 11 pounds.

These tactics are familiar ones to Poland's rulers. The strategy is to buy off key groups of workers by providing them with 'privileges' not available to the ordinary worker. The material benefits are traded for political passivity.

The central internal problem for Poland's rulers remains that of securing a respectable social base. The development of *Solidarnosc* meant that vast sections of Polish society, well outside the traditional working class, moved into opposition to the régime. Martial law smashed their organisations and cowed many, but sullen terror is not the same thing as positive support. Until Jaruzelski can be sure of that, he is forced to look to the Zomos to handle any problems.

The initial base towards which Jaruzelski

looked was all of those who benefitted directly in terms of privileges and authority from 'socialism' in Poland. This layer is quite broad and does not coincide simply with the top leaders of the Communist Party. According to the official Polish paper *Zycie Warszawy* there are 1,300,000 people in 'leading posts' in the state sector of the Polish economy. One employee in every ten is some sort of department head.

The way many of them felt about *Solidarnosc* was well expressed by a mining supervisor:

'I've been a member of the Communist Party for 23 years and I'm not ashamed of it. But at the start of the *Solidarnosc* period people came around to my house and threw stones in the windows. Of course I'm glad they've gone.'

What he can say openly now is what thousands of others felt secretly a year ago. Their wealth and their privileges were threatened by the developing workers' movement.

Winning the loyalty of such people is hardly a problem for Jaruzelski. It is more difficult to give them back the confidence that was shaken by the prospects of change. That is one of the reasons for continuation of terror. The shootings, the arrests and the torture are not simply there to frighten the opponents of the regime. They also serve to reassure its supporters.

The split inside the ruling class partly reflects this. The 'hard' wing of the bureaucracy like the anti-Semites of the 'Grunwald Patriotic Association' are not simply the creatures of the very real Russian pressure on the Polish state. They also reflect the entirely justified fears of what might happen to the bureaucracy if there was another upsurge of working class militancy.

On the other hand a section of the bureaucracy wants to carry out a reorganisation of the Polish economy along Hungarian lines and seeks a compromise with *Solidarnosc*.

On the side of *Solidarnosc*, there is no sign of capitulation. The leadership of *Solidarnosc*, still functioning underground apparently very effectively, continues to reject compromise proposals. It calls for an ending of martial law, the release of all internees, economic reforms and 'the possible reactivation of NSZZ Solidarity.' Its leaders have rejected offers of their personal freedom bought at the price of their silence.

How much damage *Solidarnosc* has suffered from ten months of bitter persecution is difficult to tell. According to the Warsaw underground paper *Tygodnik Mazowsze* there are at least 250 illegal publications throughout Poland and there are 16 *Solidarnosc* illegal radio transmitters. They say that active groups exist in most industrial plants and that some of the best organised collect membership fees from 60 per cent of the workers.

On the other hand *Solidarnosc* no longer calls for strike action against the authorities. Previous strikes resulted in mass victimisations. After a 4-day strike in the Krasnik ball-bearing factory, 367 trade union activists out of a work force of 8000 were sacked. Those who could be found were arrested by the Zomos.

Terror seems to have worked to the extent of intimidating the mass of the workers from using the strike weapon. There seem to have been no strikes on 31 August. Although perhaps 150,000 people took part in the demonstrations, it looks as though *Solidarnosc* today is a large organisation of activists rather than a mass trade union.

In fact, whatever may be the feelings of the mass of Polish workers, and they are almost certainly still pro-*Solidarnosc*, the level of passivity is high. The events of 31 August in the copper-mining town of Lubin ended with the Zomos shooting dead two workers and three days of rioting. There are no reports of strike action in support of the street fighters.

An organisation of activists, even a mass organisation, has rather a different dynamic from a mass trade union existing in conditions of legality. In particular, issues of strategy which can be fudged in day-to-day negotiations invariably become much more important in an activist organisation.

Discussions inside *Solidarnosc* reflect this new reality. While the clandestine leadership remains firm on ending internment, legalisation of *Solidarnosc* and the ending of martial law, they continue to argue their case in terms of the existing system. The lesson of 13 December — that either the workers smash the Polish ruling class or they will in turn be smashed — is not one that the leadership is ready to accept.

No lead

One of the pressures to which the leadership must respond is that of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The Church continues to aid persecuted workers. The Church remains the only organisation able to work legally independently of the state and thus forms the focus for much political debate. But it has not changed its spots: it continues to manoeuvre between the regime and the masses looking for its own advantage.

In the days before the 31 August the Polish hierarchy repeated again and again the need for 'wisdom' and 'dialogue'. The pastoral letter read out in all churches on 26 August called for the anniversary to be celebrated 'in the spirit of national seriousness and calm.'

Apparently under pressure from below following the police riots of 31 August, the hierarchy took a firmer stand on 17 September. They condemned the regime for its activities against demonstrators.

The conciliatory attitude of the Church and the continual attempts at an agreement by the leadership of *Solidarnosc* have produced rumblings from below.

While the regime had only managed to arrest one of the underground national

leaders, the 'old leadership' of *Solidarnosc* throughout the country has been heavily hit. The internment camps are full of such people. Around 20 per week are being sent into exile in the West. The authorities are planning a show trial of leading KOR members. The trial will focus on the internationally known names like Kuron and on those members of KOR like Henryk Wujec who were key figures in developing *Robotnik* in the period before 1980.

In their place a new layer of activists are developing. They tend to be young and overwhelmingly working class. Arrests on demonstrations show that conclusively. Less certainly, it appears that skilled workers form the core of activists.

Numerous debates rage among these activists. Even within the ranks of committed believers, there is criticism of the Church. Thus 'Christian' wrote:

'Why ... are people so often bitter and disappointed by the Church's attitude? Why do the pronouncements of the Church, so eagerly awaited, somehow fail to match our own thoughts, and emotional turmoil? ... Why does the Church, which adopts such authoritative positions on problems as complex as divorce and abortion, fail to provide a positive lead in this situation where it is so so needed?'

The article produced a series of replies. For example, the internee Marek Widawski managed to smuggle an article entitled 'My Kingdom is not of this World' out of prison. It argued:

'Revolutionaries and insurrectionists often believed that God was on their side ... As a direct consequence the modern heresy termed "the theology of liberation" was born. Priests, particularly in South America, have joined underground movements ... Basically Christian is proposing to attempt to bring the "theology of liberation" into Poland.'

These obscure debates reflect the pressures of martial law on *Solidarnosc* activists who face the daily round of police terror. They also represent a distorted reflection of deeper divisions as to the future of the movement.

One response to the situation has been talk of the development of terrorist organisations. Some of this is put around by the regime looking for means of framing young militants. But the idea has sufficient attraction to some people for the Krakow *Solidarnosc* leadership to issue a special appeal calling on young people to: 'forget about armed resistance and put any known organisers of such movements under observation.'

The matter is not entirely one of police



Food queue in Szezecln. Martial law hasn't changed this.

provocation. The weekly *Wola* carried an interview with an unnamed *Solidarnosc* activist who argued:

'There is only one form of defence — armed resistance. War. That and the threat to them that we too will start shooting if necessary ... We are becoming wiser. We are accumulating our experiences and losing our misapprehensions. More and more of us are becoming convinced that the only way we can talk to a commie is if you hold a gun to his head.'

The *Solidarnosc* leadership are undoubtedly right to warn against the formation of terrorist groups. They can only cut the activists off from the masses and could lead to propaganda gains for the authorities. But the mood of desperation and frustration which breeds them can only be resolved by a better political perspective.

The basic aim of *Solidarnosc* at present is the creation of what they call 'The Underground Society'. This will consist of groups at every level of society organised with the aim of helping the victims of martial law, organising the flow of uncensored material, organising independent education, undertaking 'actions to manifest the existence of the resistance movement' undertaking economic activity 'in the form of cooperatives and workshops', and continuing the boycott of official media.

The opposed view to this is the idea of a 'General Uprising'. The holders of this view argue that the regime is heading towards catastrophe and that another mass rising is inevitable. The task of the underground is therefore to prepare itself for a confrontation with the authorities — to prepare for taking power.

The attempt to build an 'alternative society' within Poland which can simply turn its back on the authorities and so isolate them that they are forced to make concessions has had some successes. Many leading cultural figures continue to boycott the regime and the mass boycott of official publications seems to work very well.

As a long term strategy, however, it cannot work. The mass of Polish workers are forced every day to 'collaborate' with the regime by selling their labour power in order to live. Hardship and the lure of special privileges have a major effect on people. Even under the conditions described above, 20,000 people have entered the coal mines in the last year. So long as it can solve its economic problems, the regime can put up with any amount of passive resistance.

The key to making the 'General Uprising' strategy at all feasible is rebuilding the organisation of *Solidarnosc* in the factories.

The debate about whether to call for work in the factories or for street demonstrations showed this clearly. Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, Wroclaw regional chairman, argued that the rebuilding of the organisation in the factories was the first priority. In reply Piotr Kminkiewicz of the paper *Fighting Solidarity* argued:

'Strikes and isolated gestures pass unnoticed in the outside world, although they cost a lot. In a mass demonstration the situation is largely reversed ... Who within the factory has the courage to sing



Picket line in Szezcin, the day before martial law

"God save Poland" or shout "Free Walesa"? In the streets our ideas and demands resound loud and clear for all the world to hear.'

Both sides seem to agree that the workers at work have lost the organisation and self-confidence they had a year ago. That, so far, is the major victory of the regime.

If that is the case, then the 'General Uprising' strategy is not one which fits the current situation. What it boils down to in practice is another version of the building of a conspiratorial armed organisation, only on a slightly larger scale than the open proponents of terrorism.

Before the military coup of 13 December we argued that the basic problem facing the workers in Poland was that there was no Marxist organisation capable of giving direction to the mass movement.

The period of martial law has made that problem even more acute. A 'suspended' *Solidarnosc* has to face political problems even more sharply than it did a year ago. In practice it is forced to behave more and more like a political party.

A Marxist party inside *Solidarnosc* could build substantial support by being able to give a clear lead in the mess of confused debates.

No squadism

Take for example the question of armed struggle. The increasing recognition of the need to overthrow the state is a great step forward inside a movement which is still proud of its 'pacifist' principle. That insight needs to be encouraged and propagated. But it has to be a strategic aim rather than an immediate tactical objective.

To launch an armed struggle at the present moment would cut the militants off from the mass of the workers who are still reeling from the shock of repression. It would lay them open to savage repression from the state.

Such repression would actually aid the ruling class since it would be directed against a definite group rather than at the mass of the population as it is at present. It would lend credibility to Jaruzelski's claim to be the representative of law and order. It would enable him to appear as the *defender* of ordinary people.

Just as important, because the militants would at best be isolated from the mass of the workers and at worst slaughtered, it would hand over the direction of the mass movement to the 'pacifists' who would continue to try to build a Polish reformism. When the workers' struggle develops again, the leadership would be in the hands of just those people whose whole political energy

had been dedicated to opposing the overthrow of the state and to seeking a compromise with it.

The road to a successful armed insurrection in Poland today lies through rebuilding the organisation and confidence of the mass of the workers. It means the daily slog to keep an organisation alive in factories which are under the constant watch of the Zomos and their informers. It means the unglamorous work of clandestine union organisation.

The objective of rebuilding that movement would also cast the argument about the role of strikes in a new light. The refusal to call for political stoppages on, for example, 31 August, is undoubtedly correct. There is no point in the most class-conscious workers rushing against the state if the known result will be isolation of the militants, their arrest and imprisonment, and mass sackings.

On the other hand, the strike weapon is the only one which can rebuild the confidence of workers. The question of whether to strike or not is always a tactical one. There is no doubt that *Solidarnosc* can be rebuilt as a mass organisation around the needs of the workers.

In a situation where the management are desperate for production, and at the same time trying to force through an overall reduction of living standards, the mass of workers in this or that factory will be willing to strike. They will also be able to win. Even a little victory on bonuses in a factory desperate to meet an export order will go a long way to giving workers back their confidence.

If a Marxist party can develop, even as a small organisation, inside the Polish working class in the present period, then the outcome of the next mass confrontation with the bureaucracy could be very different from 13 December 1981.

On both sides of the class divide in Poland there is division and confusion. The military tacks between extreme repression and gestures of goodwill. Externally they try to satisfy the bankers and the Russians. Internally there is no sign that they are winning the propaganda battle against *Solidarnosc*. On the other side there are thousands of brave activists prepared to fight military rule. But for many, perhaps most, there is no clear way ahead.

Neither side has won yet. The victories of the Zomos are bought at the price of further hatred and alienation. *Solidarnosc* is on the retreat but it is not yet smashed. □

Some of the information in this article was taken from the bulletins of the 'Information Centre for Polish Affairs' and 'The Solidarity Trade Union Working Group in the UK.'

Money, money, money

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been in the news lately. Sue Cockerill explains what it is and what it does.

'The IMF has been the Trojan Horse for the international banks. It now plays the game of imposing austerity programmes to collect its repayments... even if that means inviting civil strife, revolutions, terrorism, and authoritarian takeovers of one kind or another.'

So said the *Wall Street Journal*, paper of America's finance capitalists, last year. Now the collapse of Mexico and the threat of default by other debt-laden countries in Latin America and Eastern Europe has brought the International Monetary Fund and that other mysterious organisation, the World Bank, onto our TV screens.

But what exactly is the IMF? Is it independent of national governments? Whose interests does it further?

The IMF was set up so that when member countries got into difficulties because they were importing more than they were exporting, they could borrow money from the Fund. The Fund holds amounts of members' currencies, and can also create money by allocating something called Special Drawing Rights (SDR's) to members. SDRs are a kind of international currency, but they have never become really important in world trade. Members can borrow a certain amount unconditionally, according to how large their contribution (called their 'quota') is to the Fund. The quotas of the rich countries are obviously much higher than those of the poor countries.

Originally the Fund was a club of mainly industrial countries, but now nearly every country belongs. Russia and East Germany are the only really major exceptions. Each country is represented at the annual meetings, usually by the Finance Minister of the

government, and the countries which make the largest contributions will have an individual director casting their votes all the time. In the case of smaller economies several will be represented by one director.

The Fund was never meant to make very large or very long-term loans to members. The idea was that short-term difficulties should not be allowed to create general trade problems, and it was assumed that individual countries could take effective measures to cut imports, boost exports and repay their loans.

Both the Fund and the World Bank were formally founded at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944, but not before a lot of conflicts between the allies, especially Britain and the US, whose leaders were particularly anxious to have such institutions.

The main concern of the Americans throughout most of the war was to secure certain economic aims. They were worried about the American economy lapsing back into slump after the war. They were also very aware that their economy was the only one which was in a position to dominate the world economy and they were determined to break down barriers to the export of American goods and American capital. One such barrier was the British Empire, with its special arrangements between Britain and its then huge colonies.

America rules

The Fund was to be controlled in proportion to the contributions made to it, which gave the US a vote five times larger than the next largest country. It can still block loans from the Fund, and sometimes does. Loans would be 'restricted in regard to the place of expenditure' - in other words, if American money was being lent, it would have to be spent in buying American goods and services. In 1945, nobody else had much money to lend, nor were they producing many manufactured goods.

Loans would only be made available if it

was clear that the receiving country could repay them. That meant building up a favourable trade balance quickly, rather than being able to use the loans for real development.

The World Bank had a somewhat different role, but it still served the same function for the Americans. This body makes longer-term loans, for specific capital projects, mainly to the 'developing' countries. The importance of the loans are that they build up the unprofitable infrastructure which make profitable private investment possible.

In effect the American plan said: 'We will lend you money to buy American goods, to repay the loans you must provide us with raw materials.'

The institutions which came out of Bretton Woods bore a close resemblance to the American plans. Both have their headquarters in Washington. In case this should be interpreted as nationalism, it must be said that the British plan (drawn up by Keynes) provided for British control of the Fund, since votes would be in proportion to pre-war trade. Britain, with its huge Empire, merely wanted to preserve some of its 'special arrangements' with its colonies.

After severe difficulties in the late forties, the capitalist system experienced an unprecedented boom, cushioned from the reappearance of crisis by massive arms spending. Many people, even on the left, thought that Keynesian policies and bodies like the IMF and World Bank, were responsible for this. Hence the idea that the breakdown of fixed exchange rates in 1971 was the signal for crisis to return, rather than a symptom of the contradictions which had been there all along. It was the long boom which allowed relatively unfettered trade and fairly stable financial arrangements to work for so long, not the other way round.

The benefits of the boom were not evenly spread. Many people still starved, many economies stayed very poor. The industrialised countries tended to trade and invest more and more with each other and with a growing number of Third World 'miracle' economies, like Brazil, South Korea, the Philippines, Mexico and so on.

East-West trade also grew at an astonishing rate, especially in the seventies. Much of this growth was paid for with enormous loans from the commercial banks, both to Comecon countries - Hungary, Romania, Poland - and to the Third World, especially South America. The loans were so profitable that the banks were literally falling over themselves to get a slice of them.

The crisis of the seventies and eighties has changed the role of the Fund. From traditionally lending more to advanced countries than to developing ones, the situation has been reversed. In the late sixties, two-thirds of the Fund's outstanding loans were to industrial countries, one third to non-oil LDCs (Less Developed Countries). By April this year, less than five per cent of credit is to industrial countries and 95% to non-oil LDCs, who have been hit hardest by the



RUSSIA: HOW THE REVOLUTION WAS LOST

by Alan Gibbons

How the workers' revolution of 1917 was murdered by Stalin's new class.

50p plus 20p

postage/ten for £4 post free

'GO BACK TO RUSSIA!'

It's a comment socialists still keep getting. Arm yourself to reply with....

STATE CAPITALISM IN RUSSIA

by Tony Clift

The classic Marxist account of Russian society

£1.00 plus 50p postage (originally £2.95)

THE GREAT LIE

by Abbie Bakan

Why the so called 'socialist' countries are not socialist.

75p plus 20p

postage/five for £3.25 post free

■All from Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Rd, London N4 2DE



Mike Abrahams (Network)

The money market, London 1982

world crisis.

During the seventies the Fund started a number of schemes to increase credit to developing countries. These are longer-term and with more strings than traditional lending. IMF lending reached record levels last year, and three quarters of it is conditional lending. All its 1981 new commitments were to non-oil LDC. India agreed the largest ever IMF loan (\$5.7 billion) and China is also in the queue.

The IMF's actual resources are very small, and they have not been growing in proportion to world trade. Its reserves were 12% of world exports in 1960; in 1980 they made up only four per cent. Its power lies not in the amount of money it can lend – although the amount a country can borrow relative to its quota has gone up, it still represents a drop in the ocean to most debtor countries – but in two other, interconnected ways.

A country's acceptance of an IMF package – loan and conditions – often resulted in much larger funds becoming available from commercial banks, investors, and the World Bank. The IMF is the 'lender of last resort'. Countries turn to the Fund when banks won't lend.

For example, one US banker recently said of Bolivia 'I wouldn't lend them a wooden nickel, even if it wasn't mine.' The bankers simply refused to lend any more until Bolivia reached an accommodation with the Fund.

The problem is that while the first situat-

ion – banks lending in the wake of Fund deals – was common in the seventies, now the second situation is becoming very frequent. The banks are still prepared to lend to sovereign borrowers (countries), but they are becoming very choosy about which ones. Even now, they are pleased at the prospect of the Indian market opening up, but more and more, the countries which the IMF lends to are pariahs for the commercial banks. So IMF loans are not evenly distributed around the LDCs any more. In the last five years, loans to African countries have gone up from 15% to 26% of the total. Since the end of 1979, Fund lending to the poorest LDCs (those with a per head income in 1978 of less than \$300 per year) has tripled. Half of total IMF commitments are to the poorest countries.

Conditions

This situation leaves the IMF holding the baby of the commercial banks' previous lending sprees. It also explains clearly the fears expressed in the quote that opened this article: the IMF did give the seal of approval to countries for banks to lend, but it cannot replace the banks as a major source of finance now these countries can't repay. All it does is to impose stringent conditions on the countries in the hope that the banks will resume their funding.

It is quite clear that the IMF's solutions won't actually work. While the Fund is demanding tough domestic measures in Latin American countries, the conditions

which have precipitated crisis internationally are worsening. For example, it makes little sense to speak of the area's exports becoming more competitive, since the customers in the West are increasing import duties on its goods.

The US is charging duties of 25% on textiles, 42% on wool and 58% on rum. The EEC put up duties of 20% on meat, 25% on fish and 50% on grapes. Japan leads the field with duties of 355% on tobacco, and 712% on wines. A report by the Economic Commission for Latin America showed that 20 groups of measures affected 50% of Latin America's non-oil exports to the EEC, Japan and the US.

The conditions attached to IMF loans have a predictable monotony: cuts in public spending; ending of subsidies on food and other basics; 'liberalisation' of trade; exchange and investment controls. More often than not they include devaluation. This is supposed to make exports more competitive, but definitely makes imports more expensive and adds to the attacks on living standards.

Loans are usually made in instalments: if the conditions aren't carried out to the Fund's satisfaction the later instalments can be withheld. Recently a number have been.

Conditions can be made harsher or softer, depending on the nature of the government. In Jamaica, for instance, the IMF made very stringent demands on Manley's government, and actually held talks with Seaga while he was opposition leader. When he got into power he announced 'deregulation'

of the Jamaican economy, and got softer conditions from the Fund.

As a direct result of the IMF credit, Seaga secured loans worth \$£50m from the Caribbean Group for Economic Co-operation in Development (US, Britain, France, Japan), \$50m from the US government direct, \$70m from a consortium of commercial banks, and other amounts from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Sometimes the contradiction between the loan strings and maintaining a sympathetic government in power do emerge. The demands of the IMF on Morocco caused riots in Casablanca in 1981, after food subsidies were withdrawn. The price of staple foods rose by 40 per cent in a country where the majority of the population spends two-thirds of their income on food. The World Bank estimates that a third of the population live below the absolute poverty line.

Yet King Hassan's government is surely one that the West wants to see preserved. Kaunda's government in Zambia is another which has seen mass strikes and riots in response to food subsidy cuts. Hence the *Wall Street Journal's* anxieties about the consequences of the Fund's austerity programmes. The banks want their money back, but they also want to keep their friends in power.

Eastern Europe presents a particular problem for the Western banks. Events in Poland led to a drastic run on foreign deposits in Hungary. In the first quarter of 1982, \$1.1 billion was taken out of the country. Hungary, regarded as the most efficient and market-oriented of the Comecon countries, was in danger of failing on its loan commitments because of the banks' flight from Eastern Europe.

The central banks' bank, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), set up a temporary loan to rescue Hungary, whose IMF membership did not come through until May. The BIS now says that it is much more appropriate for the Fund to take on such lending, since the BIS can't impose conditions, or monitor the economy of the borrower.

Even if some bankers are sceptical about the viability of IMF adjustment programmes in the Comecon countries, most want to see the Fund involved – to try to get accurate information out of the countries about their economies at the very least.

The comments made by the *Financial Times* in an editorial last October show quite concisely the extent, and limitations, of the IMF's role and the interests it re-

presents. The editorial concerns the loan to India by the Fund, and is titled 'India to taste the market medicine':

'India's wish to borrow \$5.7 bn from the Fund brings into the open a significant change in the country's economic policy... it is a move towards a more open trading and industrial policy, with more resort to foreign borrowing, and greater, though still limited, opportunities for foreign capital. In the negotiations with the IMF, the representatives from Delhi agreed to allow private companies to operate more easily. Another demand from the IMF which has been partly anticipated is the reduction of subsidies, the prices of oil, fertiliser and steel, all supplied by the public sector have already gone up, and there is more to come... Another measure, though not precisely a liberal one, has been to ban strikes in a number of key areas... That points to the determination of the Government to make more reliable the infrastructure on which a stronger industrial performance can be based.'

The *Financial Times* points out, quite correctly, that the IMF terms are only reinforcing a tendency already there, forced on the Indian economy by events in the heartland of the system. The same could be said of all the countries which have suffered IMF "adjustment" programmes, including Britain during the last Labour Government.

Heaven helps

The example of Britain is an important one for us, because great stress has been laid on it by the Labour left. For them the IMF, along with the gnomes of Zurich and the multinationals, are demons external to Britain which prevented the Labour government from carrying out its policies. This interpretation of events allows them to believe that a new Labour government, with left wing MPs, could neutralise these external forces and succeed where its predecessors failed.

It conveniently ignores the fact that the interests of British capital as a whole lie in cutting public spending, forcing down living standards and rationalising production by throwing millions on the dole.

The sterling crisis which brought the IMF in was a dramatic display of the power of finance capital, but the government's strategy was based on holding down wages and pushing up productivity from the beginning, in the cause of regenerating British capital.

The truth is that the world is littered with



Heart of capital

examples of the failure of strategies of national development. India and China are the most important ones, though the fact that even Cuba is now looking around for foreign investment must be an even bigger blow to its devotees.

The debate about the role of the IMF at the moment embodies the contradictions of the system. There is an international crisis in which events in Poland or Mexico can shake banks in America and West Germany.

The bankers are looking to some supposedly supranational body – the IMF – to solve their problems. But the governments which make up the Fund, the ones with the clout – USA, West Germany, Japan, and in this case, Britain – are each concerned with the competitiveness of their own national patch.

The governments of the debtor countries want the IMF to give them money, or at least loan much more for longer periods, at low interest rates and without strings. The governments of the advanced countries are certainly afraid that a chain of defaults could severely damage the banks and push the system further into slump. But these same rulers are engaged in bitter competition. Each ruling class wants the others to bear the cost of pulling the world economy out of recession.

Every measure which they take to improve their competitiveness or protect their national markets – cutting wages, boosting productivity, imposing trade restrictions, raising interest rates – can only make the debt problem and the crisis in general worse.

In the end, the IMF reflects the contradictions of the system. It cannot solve them. □

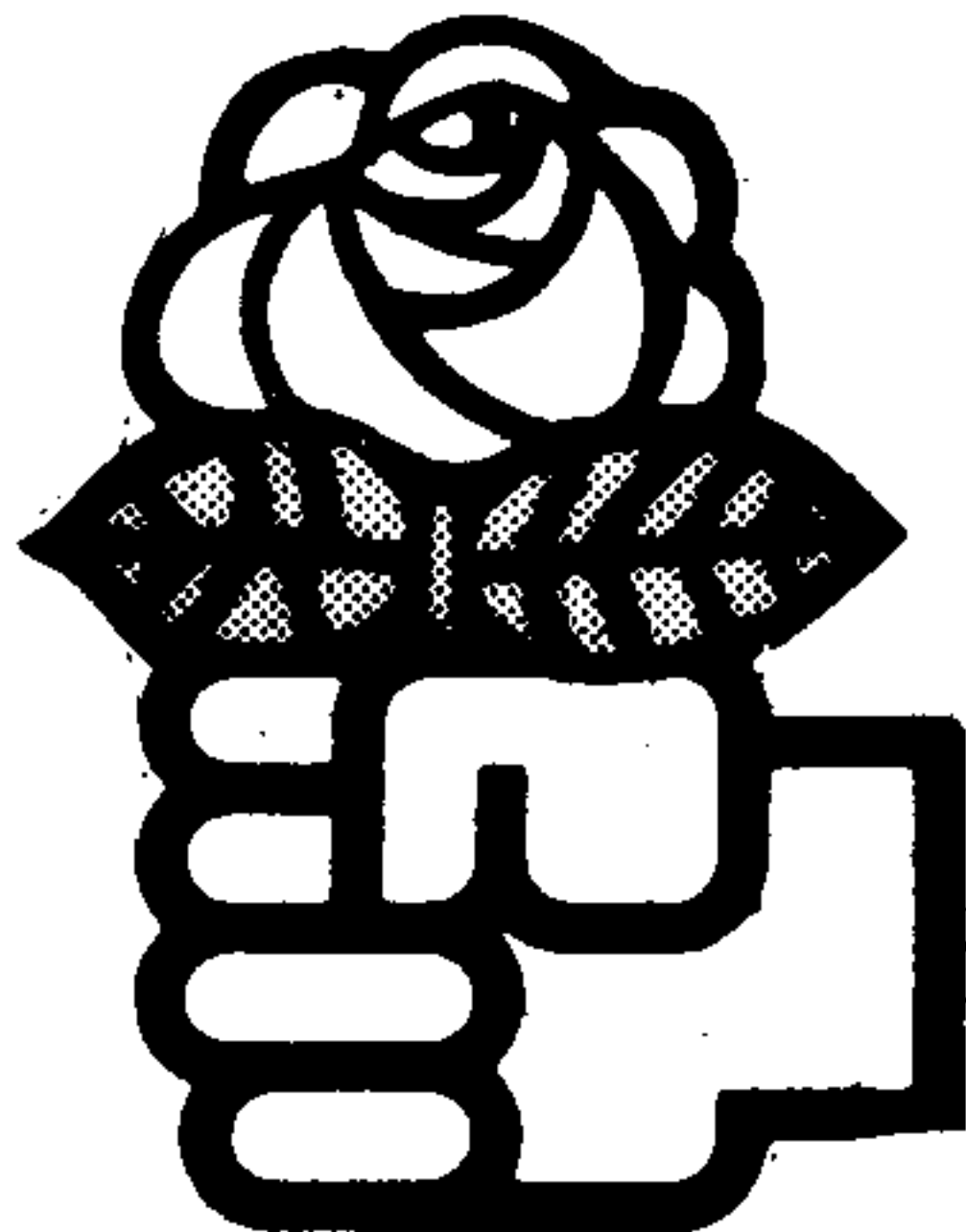
Days of Hope

THE GENERAL STRIKE OF 1926

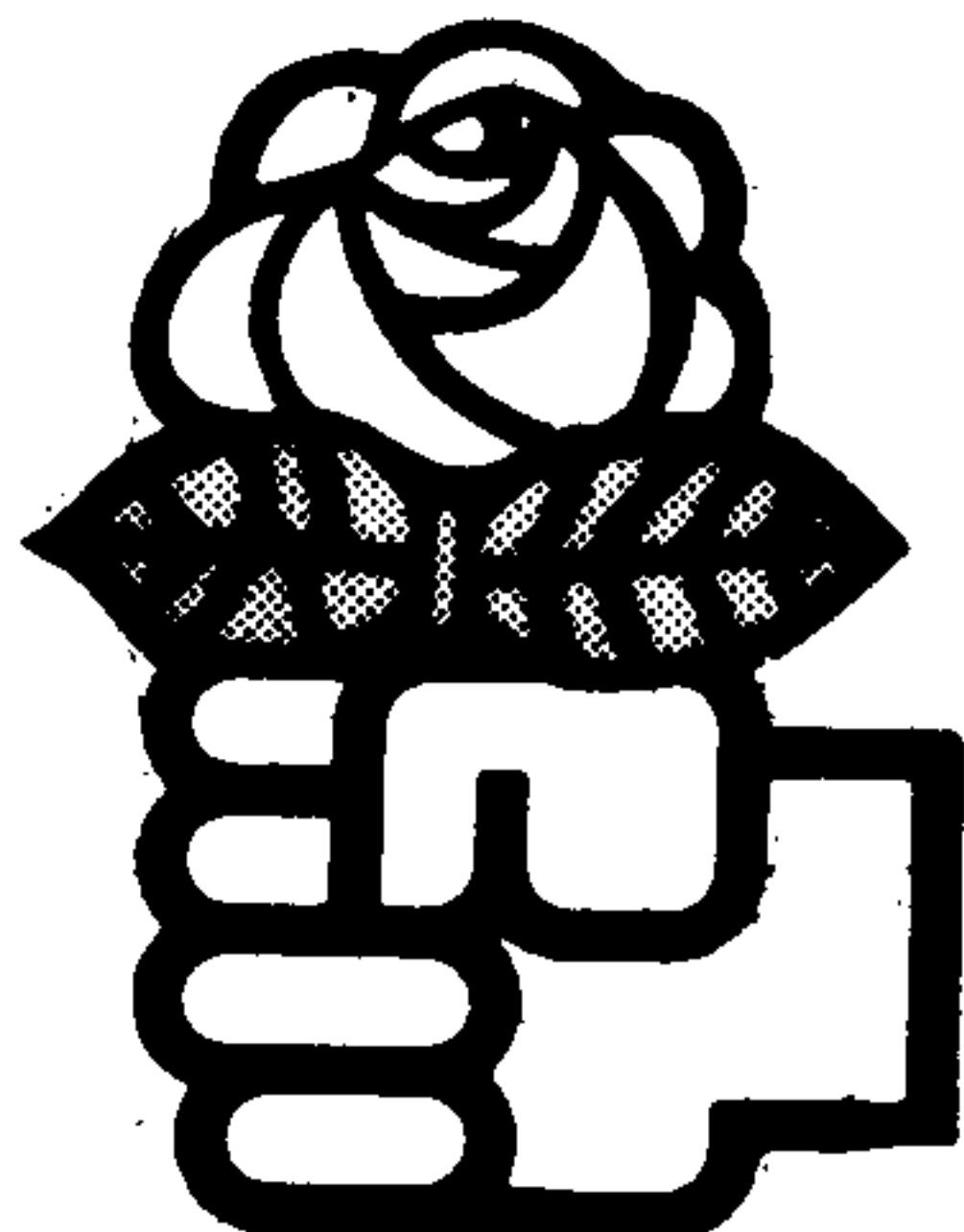
A Socialist Workers Party pamphlet by Chris Harman and Duncan Hallas. Single copy: 65p plus 20p postage/ten for £5.50 post free. Available from Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 2DE



Socialism in Europe



It's not just the British Labour Party that has been in the news lately. The ups and downs of other European socialists have been prominent too. We look here at their background and record. **Ian H. Birchall** and **Jane Bernstein** look at the French and Greek Socialist Parties in power. **Andy Durgan** examines what can be expected from the likely victory of the Spanish party and **Tim Potter** considers what chances the tiny Italian socialists have for emulating their big brothers.



Reformist socialist parties are usually built around very national prejudices, but they do maintain some international links. Inside the British Labour Party, the examples of Austria, Germany and Scandinavia have long been used by right-wingers like Dennis Healey to back up their arguments for more moderation. The left, on the other hand, has recently got very excited about developments in southern Europe.

The election success of Mitterrand in France and Papandreou in Greece were greeted by Labour left publications like *New Socialist* with great enthusiasm. It will be the same if Felipe Gonzalez pulls off his likely victory in Spain.

The socialist parties of Northern Europe are old, traditional 'social Democratic' parties which trace their roots back to before the First World War. They command the electoral support of manual workers and are firmly wedded to the bureaucracies of powerful trade union movements.

Both Germany and Sweden have seen important elections recently. In Sweden an 'unreconstructed' old type socialist party under the perennial Olof Palme has been able to use its years in unaccustomed opposition to win back support that it has lost in its long years of office.

Germany is slightly different. Here the Social Democrats (SPD) have been in office for more than a decade. They have presided over a relatively successful and very repressive capitalist state without making any noticeable reforms. One consequence is that both they and the unions have trouble today recruiting younger workers.

Another result has been that middle class radicals have looked outside of the SPD, lately towards the 'Greens'. One of the major debates inside the SPD today is between those like the party 'elder statesman' Willi Brandt who want to move a little to the left to win over the Greens and those who want to

follow the same old course of just propping up German capitalism. The recent electoral successes of the Greens in Hesse make that all the more urgent.

The Green party contains both a right and a left. To win the left would not require a major shift by the SPD. The ideas and composition of the left of the Greens are quite familiar to anyone who knows the new British Labour left. Even the most left-wing of the Greens see themselves as building a new socialist party to the left of the SPD. There is no doubt that many could be seduced by a little socialist rhetoric from the SPD leaders.

The southern European parties are very different. Although they have long histories, all four that we look at here are really products of the 1970's. This growth of reformist parties in opposition to strong Communist Parties with a powerful base in the working class is one of the major political developments of the last decade.

The impact of the world crisis in the late 1960's, and the rise in workers' struggles that accompanied it, meant a radicalisation of new layers. For a time in the early seventies many on the left believed that this provided the opportunity for the growth of mass revolutionary parties to the left of the CP's.

The mid-seventies proved otherwise. Many even of the militants of the revolutionary left became demoralised and drifted to the right. In part at least the reformist parties have grown out of this generation of people.

That explains some of the enthusiasm of the new Labour left for these parties. The same sort of people and many of the same ideas are to be found both in Britain and elsewhere. The victory of a 'new' socialist party in France or Greece or Spain gives hope in the grim retreat of the British Labour left.

The test of this hope is, of course, what these parties *do* once they win elections and have a chance to put their ideas into practice.

France

'President Mitterrand... is now taking a line that, price-and-incomes control apart, even Mrs Thatcher might appreciate.'

(*The Economist*, 19 June)

In a recent article in *The Guardian* Eric Hobsbawm enthused over the achievements of President Mitterrand of France.

'... This very able politician recognised the logic of his enterprise with unusual clarity... Victory depended on mobilising all possible support against a reactionary and anti-democratic regime which was unpopular as such, and not only because it also seemed in its last years to be unable to cope with its economic troubles. It depended on mobilising the forces of progress against reaction and corruption.'

Professor Hobsbawm does not seem to have grown any more perceptive since the days, thirty years ago, when he was writing sycophantic defences of Hungarian Stalinism. For what he identifies as the strength of Mitterrand's achievement is precisely the weakness that has now led it into a deep crisis.

In order to come to power Mitterrand had to do two things. He had to convince the majority of French workers that he would go at least some of the way towards meeting their demands for a better society. At the same time he had to persuade at least a section of the French ruling class, together with their hangers-on and ideological representatives, that he could offer some way of escape from France's economic crisis.

It always was intrinsically implausible that he could satisfy both groups of supporters. The U-turn he was forced to make in June of



Mitterrand's economic measures have been paralleled by an increase in repression

this year showed that he was satisfying neither.

Mitterrand's attempt to be the only country in Europe to solve the problem of unemployment by reflation fell flat on its face. Reflation produced a consumer-led import boom. In July for the first time France imported more cars than it exported; its deficit on trade with West Germany worsened by 80% in the first quarter of this year. Just about the only success story was a rise in arms sales. In the first half of 1982 the trade gap was twice as wide as the previous year, and the budget deficit is likely to double. French inflation is 10%, double West Germany's.

The new economic orientation adopted in June showed clearly that Mitterrand had now recognised that he must stop trying to balance between capital and labour and openly serve the interests of the French bosses. The new policy was geared to the defence of the franc, the improvement of

foreign trade, and the struggle against inflation. Inflation, not unemployment, was to be the number one enemy. The short-term solution adopted was a four-month wage and price freeze, announced on 13 June.

The wage-freeze seems to have been largely successful, even though it nullified rises already agreed by the employers (for example, phased increases negotiated at the time of the introduction of the 39-hour week).

But the freeze is only the opening shot in what will be a long-term struggle to hold down wage-levels. The government intends to use the public sector to hold down wages over the coming year. There is to be a maximum of 8% for wage rises in 1983 (for civil servants the figure of 6.1% has been proposed). The 8% figure is based on the predicted figure for inflation next year; just in case the prediction is wrong, there are to be no agreements linked to the cost of living. *Le Monde* has suggested that the loss of pur-

chasing power over the next three years could be as much as 20%.

The price-freeze, needless to say, has been rather less effective. Despite the freeze prices rose by 0.7% in July (a rate of over 8% a year). One consumer organisation did a survey in the first week of the freeze checks on 1400 supermarket prices which showed that 10% had been increased—by up to 19%. Many prices were increased on the very day the freeze was announced.

Moreover, the government allowed many loopholes in the freeze. Postal charges rose by 13% only days before the freeze began; petrol and electricity prices were not covered by the freeze, nor were prices of fresh food covered by EEC decisions.

Debating on television with Giscard d'Estaing the week before his election Mitterrand declared that 'the main axis of policy must rotate around solutions to unemployment'. If Mitterrand ever had such a policy, it is now in ruins. The jobless total passed the two million mark in May. Mitterrand promised to create 210,000 public sector jobs in his first eighteen months; the first year saw only 55,000, and there seems little likelihood of many more. A charitable estimate is that unemployment is 100,000 less than it might have been if Mitterrand's policies had not been applied.



The government has made much of its so-called 'solidarity contracts', agreements signed between companies and the government giving the firms financial benefits in return for guarantees on jobs. Nearly 2,000 such contracts have been signed, yet only 2,600 new jobs have been created; the usual pattern is for firms to give early retirement to older workers, replace them by young workers on lower wages, and boast that em-



INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM ★ 17

Mike Gonzalez: Nicaragua, the Sandinista Revolution

Peter Binns: Marxism and Philosophy

Alex Callinicos: The Rank and File Movement Today

£1.50 (plus 25p postage), bulk orders £1.20 each post free, annual subscription £6
From IS Journal PO Box 82, London E2.

ployment levels are being maintained.

Meanwhile the 35-hour week, much vaunted by the Socialists before they came to power, has been lost without trace. Prime Minister Mauroy has said there will be no further reduction in the 39-hour week before 1984, and perhaps not even then.

Other social measures fit into the same picture. The new wealth tax has got even more loopholes than had been expected. Increases in VAT will hit the least well-off workers most severely. And the new legislation on workers' rights in the factories has been so watered down that it adds virtually nothing to existing legislation.

Social services are also under attack. A proposal is now being put forward that hospital patients should have to pay towards their food and accommodation; a figure of £3 a day has been suggested. And the government's encouragement of experimentation with new patterns of education in schools seems to be based not so much on enthusiasm for local participation as on a desire to find ways of cutting costs.

One of the worst retreats has been the government's abandonment of its promise to introduce measures refunding 75% of the cost of abortions. While this fits into the pattern of social service cuts, it is not simply an economic matter. The Minister for Social Affairs has said that it is not a matter of money, but that it is necessary to have the broadest consensus of French society. In other words, now that the government's support is flagging, it cannot afford to offend the anti-abortion lobby. Mitterrand did his best to improve the government's image in this respect when, on the day after Mother's Day, he presented medals to mothers of large families. However, he does not seem to have made a good impression on irate feminists who threw leaflets from the gallery of the National Assembly in protest at the government's betrayal.

No cuts, however, are planned in defence spending. Mitterrand has ordered a seventh nuclear submarine, something Giscard was reluctant to do, and research is continuing towards the manufacture of the neutron bomb. The traditional Bastille Day military parade was this year deliberately extravagant, at twice the usual cost, in order to reassure the Army leaders of Mitterrand's good-will.

The economic measures have been paralleled by an increase in repression. The immediate excuse was an attack on a Jewish restaurant in Paris in August, when six people were killed. Mitterrand followed this with a special television broadcast, promising a range of 'anti-terrorist' measures—extra border squads, tougher visa controls, a new arms-traffic unit and closer scrutiny of diplomats. Gaston Deferre, the minister of the Interior, has called for a tightening up of the right to political asylum—a singularly irrelevant demand, since it is scarcely likely that 'international terrorists' would go through the formalities of officially registering.

The chosen scapegoat for the government's new tough line has been a small, politically erratic ultra-left grouping called Action Directe. This has at most 200 members, and while it has certainly planted the

odd bomb, it almost certainly did not have either the capacity or the political will to organise the murderous assault on the Jewish restaurant. That was far more likely to be the work of home-grown anti-Semites (of which France has many), of PLO dissidents, or even of the Israeli secret services.

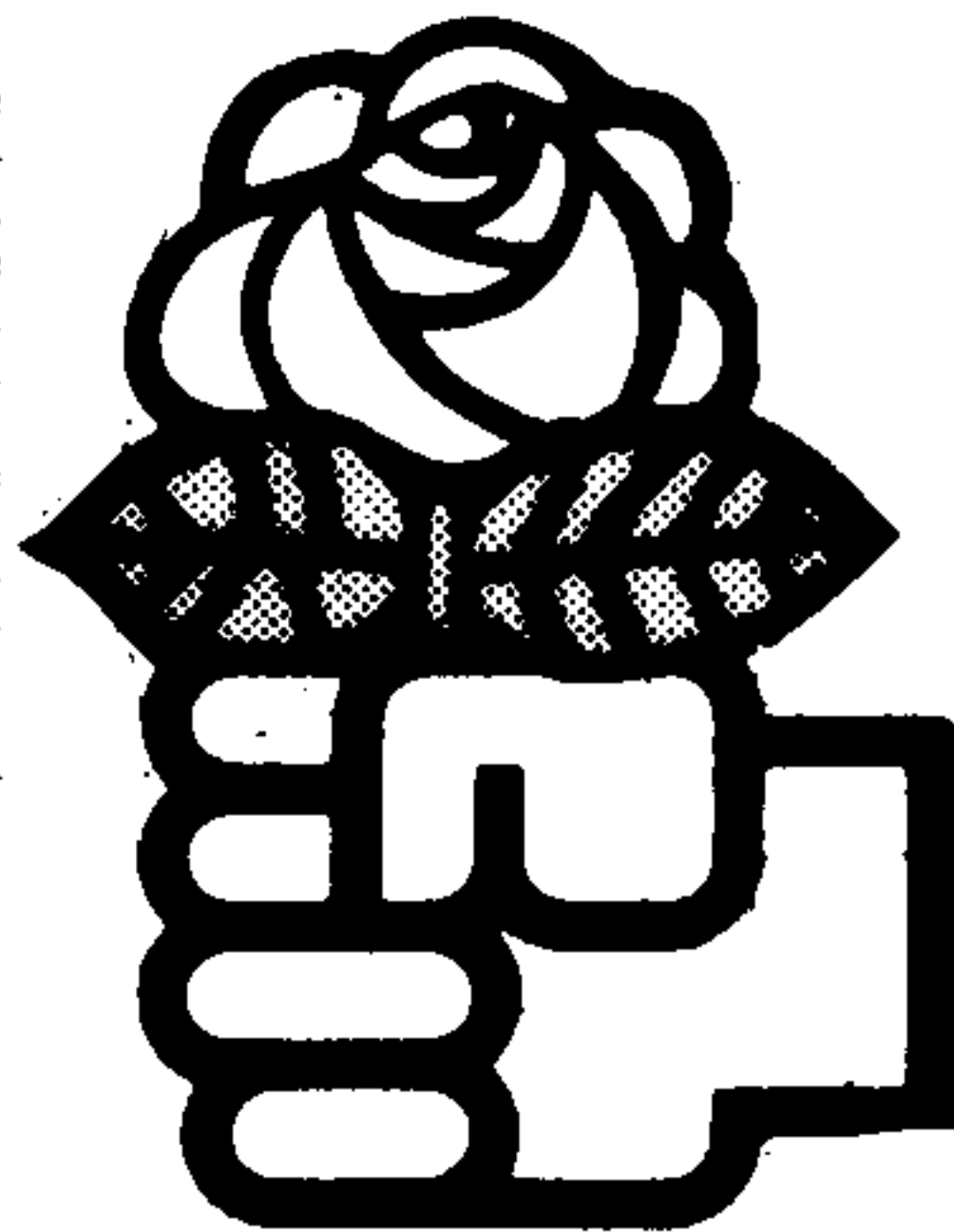
The effect of the repression should not be overestimated. It will certainly contribute to the general drift to the right. But far more serious is the absence of any serious labour movement response to the government's new economic policy. No union has proposed a united response to the freeze, in the form of strikes or even a national demonstration. The main complaint of the unions seems to be not so much the measures themselves, as the fact that their right to negotiate was removed. In future they will doubtless get ample opportunity for consultation in return for acquiescence in government policy.

The pro-Socialist CFDT had made no direct criticism of the wage-freeze. The Communist-led CGT had made strong verbal opposition, but has limited itself to a call for local action rather than coordinating a centralised response. It has supported the price-freeze and offered to set up workers' committees to make it more effective; a proposal which can only sow illusions in the price-freeze and divert energies away from the need to defend wages. At its recent Congress the CGT (which lost 12% of its membership between 1978 and 1980) declared itself part of the 'governmental alliance' and maintained that the government was going 'in the right direction' and was 'no longer our enemy'.



The CGT's acquiescence in the freeze is of course linked to the presence of Communist ministers in Mitterrand's government. The Communist Party is putting its main emphasis on calling for higher production to solve France's economic difficulties. At the same time it tries to cover its left flank. CP leader Marchais announced that CP deputies would vote for the freeze, but that 'a vote doesn't mean approval'.

Unfortunately, the revolutionary left does not yet seem ready to fill the vacuum on the left. *Lutte Ouvrière* has called on French workers to 'build another left, other workers' organisations worthy of the name'. This is a laudable sentiment but it is hard to see how it will be concretised. *Lutte Ouvrière* and *Rouge* (paper of the LCR, French section of the Fourth International) are now publishing a monthly common supplement to their papers. Once again a positive gesture of unity, but it is likely that little will come of it except perhaps a joint revolutionary slate for the municipal elections next Spring. Since new electoral rules mean any party getting over 5% will get council seats, the municipal elections will be an even greater attraction to the revolutionary left than in the past. Meanwhile no one on the left is offering an effective focus to the discontent and disillusion that is now gaining ground among many who voted for Mitterrand. □



Greece

The sweeping victory of the Greek Socialist Party (PASOK) last October brought reformists into power after 45 years of almost uninterrupted right-wing rule, including of course, the years of military dictatorship from 1967 to 1974.

It is hardly surprising that great hopes were placed in PASOK to bring about fundamental changes in Greek society. The election of Papandreou was hailed by other social democrats in Europe, especially by the Labour left in Britain. They saw it, along with Mitterrand's win in France, as a sign of a general transformation of European politics.

There certainly seemed to be good reasons for believing this, particularly in the case of Greece. Papandreou himself was hounded by the Colonels, who took power to forestall a victory of his father's party. Half of his first cabinet had been political prisoners, one-third had suffered torture. His election campaign was full of radical rhetoric, directed especially against NATO and America, laying great stress on Greece's interests lying more with the Third World than with the club of rich nations in the EEC and NATO.

The idea that Greece was engaged in a 'national liberation struggle' was particularly appealing to the Labour left, who are fond of the same sort of 'theory' about Britain.

In fact, PASOK's promises even underwent changes in the course of the election campaign. From promising to pull Greece out of the EEC, the party moved to promising a referendum instead. Uncompromising utterances about withdrawal from NATO and getting rid of American bases in Greece were replaced by much vaguer assurances, which led the press in Western Europe to predict that Papandreou would preside over Greece's reintegration into the NATO alliance after some haggling.

PASOK's campaign was fought on the slogan of 'Allaghi'—'Change'. Before going on to look at what has changed in Greece in



Andreas Papandreou victorious on Election night Oct 1981

the last year, it is worth pointing out that PASOK itself resembles much more the new Socialist Party in Portugal and Mitterrand's party in France than anything like the British Labour Party. It was formed in 1974, won 12 per cent of the vote in that year, and more than doubled its vote in 1977.

Its voting base is much more among peasants than manual workers. Although it clearly has many young activists, it is a purely electoral party. The activists are there to win votes, not to formulate policy. The party has never even called a full Congress.

Although it was Papandreou's foreign policy declarations which won the most space in the Western press, it was the promise of radical change within Greece itself which brought him victory. No wonder, in a country where radical change is so obviously necessary. The rapid growth in the economy in the last two decades was bought at great cost. The social, and health services are rudimentary, with doctors' bills a nightmare. Trade unions were bound hand and foot by repressive laws. The church still had a monopoly of marriage and adultery was a criminal offence. In terms of censorship, repression and corruption, the Greece of the Colonels and the Greece of 1974-81 were hardly distinguishable.

The economy has been showing signs of crisis for the past three years, with slowing growth, rapidly rising inflation and falls in real wages. Unemployment is officially quite low, but the figure is almost meaningless in a country with a very large agricultural sector, where underemployment is widespread. Greece is still comparatively poor, with a GDP per capita of less than half the EEC average.

So what has been achieved by PASOK in the last year? In reality, very little. The death penalty has been abolished, the voting age reduced to eighteen, there has been a language reform (important especially to young people, who were forced to learn the formal, rather than the spoken language, at school). Out of the sweeping reforms to liberate women, only civil marriage has been persisted with, not legislation on divorce, abortion and women's rights.

The press and TV is certainly freer than it was, and attempts are going on to reform the civil service and local government. The minimum wage has been raised, and wages index-linked, but only for the lowest-paid workers.

This is part of an incomes policy which is designed to hold wages down and link them to productivity. For the lowest paid (under £320 per month), there is full indexation, for the next highest, increases of half the inflation rate will be paid, and for those earning about £700 a month, there will be rises of a quarter of the inflation rate.

At the same time, people are now having to pay more for petrol, heating, water and telephones.

The trade union law, which does away with the legal machinery which was always used in disputes, and so establishes a right to strike, has not pleased employers, and is certainly a gain. But it seems clear that it is part of PASOK's strategy to undermine the Moscow-oriented Greek Communist Party's base in the unions. The CP did much worse than expected in the elections, and now relies on its industrial base to influence the

government. PASOK has already got rid of the old right-wing leaders of the Greek TUC by juridical methods, and packed it with its own members to keep out the CP (as reported in SR 1982:4).

The packing of PASOK members into the bureaucracy of the state has predictably aroused the ire of the ousted right-wing, and there is no doubt that any reforming government would have wished to purge the Greek bureaucracy. But one of the government's own members, who resigned in July, Panagoulis, not only attacked its failure to carry out its election promises, but also accused Papandreou of 'favouritism and nepotism.'

A more telling criticism is the government's failure to do anything to reform the army. PASOK in fact went out of its way to make friendly contacts with senior officers during the election campaign and to keep the army happy with its foreign policy and raising of defence spending since it has been in government.

The increasingly vague policy statements in the election campaign on the subject of NATO and the EEC have been fully borne out by the experience of the last year.

Already by May this year, Papandreou on a visit to Yugoslavia, was assuring Yugoslav leaders that Greece would not pull out of NATO (Yugoslavia sees Greece as a military lifeline against Russia). In line with the U-turn on policy, Greece ratified Spain's membership of NATO, without securing any of the conditions it had threatened to place on that ratification. It had been intended to delay Spanish membership until assurances about Greek rights in the Aegean had been made. By late June, plans for a nuclear-free Balkan zone had been officially 'shelved'.

The demand for the immediate removal of nuclear stockpiles in Greece has been dropped. They are still there, and likely to remain.



The affair of the American bases has been the same story. At first, PASOK promised that the US would be kicked out. Then they tried to use renewing the lease on the bases as a way of getting concessions. They demanded US guarantees of their eastern frontier against Turkey. Finally, even that demand was dropped, and Papandreou went so far as to claim that he had never sought frontier guarantees. No deadline for the end of US bases has been set, and relations with Washington are now good. Greek ships are joining a Mediterranean NATO exercise.

Most importantly, after all the tub-thumping anti-Turkish rhetoric, the promise of 'no dialogue' with the Turks, Greek officials have been meeting Turkish officials to discuss 'a framework for talks'. The government denies that this constitutes negotiation. Socialists certainly wouldn't endorse the kind of rabid nationalism preached by both PASOK and the Greek CP over Turkey, but PASOK has not even publicly condemned the Turkish junta. It has merely quietly got on friendly terms.

As far as EEC membership is concerned, it

has already been seen how withdrawal was replaced by referendum. It didn't take long before even that went out of the window, officially scotched by the President, Karamanlis, who must approve any referendum. In fact it seems clear that Papandreou only intended to beef up demands for 'special status' within the EEC by threats. In the words of the *Financial Times* 'a partial cosmetic operation like Wilson's renegotiation of Britain's entry'. The EEC is now full of special arrangements, and the other members can certainly bargain quite happily with Papandreou, just as they did with Thatcher. Whether he will secure much is more doubtful.

Underlying PASOK's about-turn on NATO and the EEC are two factors: one, the need to keep the armed forces happy. Greece buys nearly all its weapons from EEC countries or the USA. Any withdrawal from NATO would result in a pumping of more arms into Turkey as the only NATO member on the southern flank, to the detriment of Greece's armed strength. Two, with a worsening trade balance, Greece has had to borrow from the European banks who are more likely to lend to a Greece which is in the EEC and which also is following the 'right' sort of economic policies at home.

Looking at these domestic economic policies gives a British socialist a depressing feeling of *deja vu*.

We are back in the familiar world of getting the economy right before reforms can be carried out. The world where businessmen 'lack confidence' and have to be appeased by ever greater dilution of policies which were mild in the first place.

One of the first casualties of 'economic reality' was the proposed programme for the massive building of schools and hospitals. When it assumed power the government described its two main priorities as 'education and health'. But of course, the public sector borrowing requirement (which we've heard such a lot about in Britain) was already too high—in the eyes of Greek capitalists that is. So defence spending goes up, but schools and hospitals are something which can't be afforded.

The promises of 'socialisation' of important sectors of the economy, which frightened capitalists in the election campaign, turn out to be nothing more radical than worker members on the boards of companies. As one Greek businessman from a leading textile company put it 'Why should we complain at being asked to do in Greece what we already accept for our subsidiary in West Germany?'

The managing director of Europe's largest cement exporter Merades General Cement, went further in his praise of the government 'I think they have good intentions. They are new in power, but a lot of indicators show that their goals are in the right direction.'

In a way which is familiar to us from our experiences with Labour governments, 'efficiency' and 'economic revival' have tended to replace 'democratisation' and 'socialisation' in the speeches of PASOK leaders. A key man in the government is Arsenis, Governor of the Bank of Greece and now also Minister of National Economy. He described the government's

first duty as 'to restore business confidence and investment activity.'

Some of this shift has not been without internal opponents, but Papandreou's cabinet reshuffle signalled the clear victory of those who see productivity as much more important than equality.

The new investment incentives legislation, passed in July, was a victory for capitalists. Clauses in the original Bill which would have excluded offshore businesses from Athens were dropped after business groups and embassies approached the government. The proposal to end shipping loans by banks was also written out after representations from business. Despite the warm welcome given to these hand-outs by business, there is every prospect that investment will continue to fall, for reasons of profitability.

The proposed property tax has met the fate of impotence as well. The government had intended to demand that all taxpayers declare the value of their property, whether or not it exceeded £250,000—the level at which the tax is payable. There was so much opposition (no prizes for guessing from where) that five days before the deadline for declaration Papandreou suddenly announced that taxpayers need not after all comply. The finance minister who hadn't been told, promptly resigned.



In an interview with the *Financial Times* in February, Papandreou spelt out his policies. Asked why a foreign investor should come to Greece, he replied:

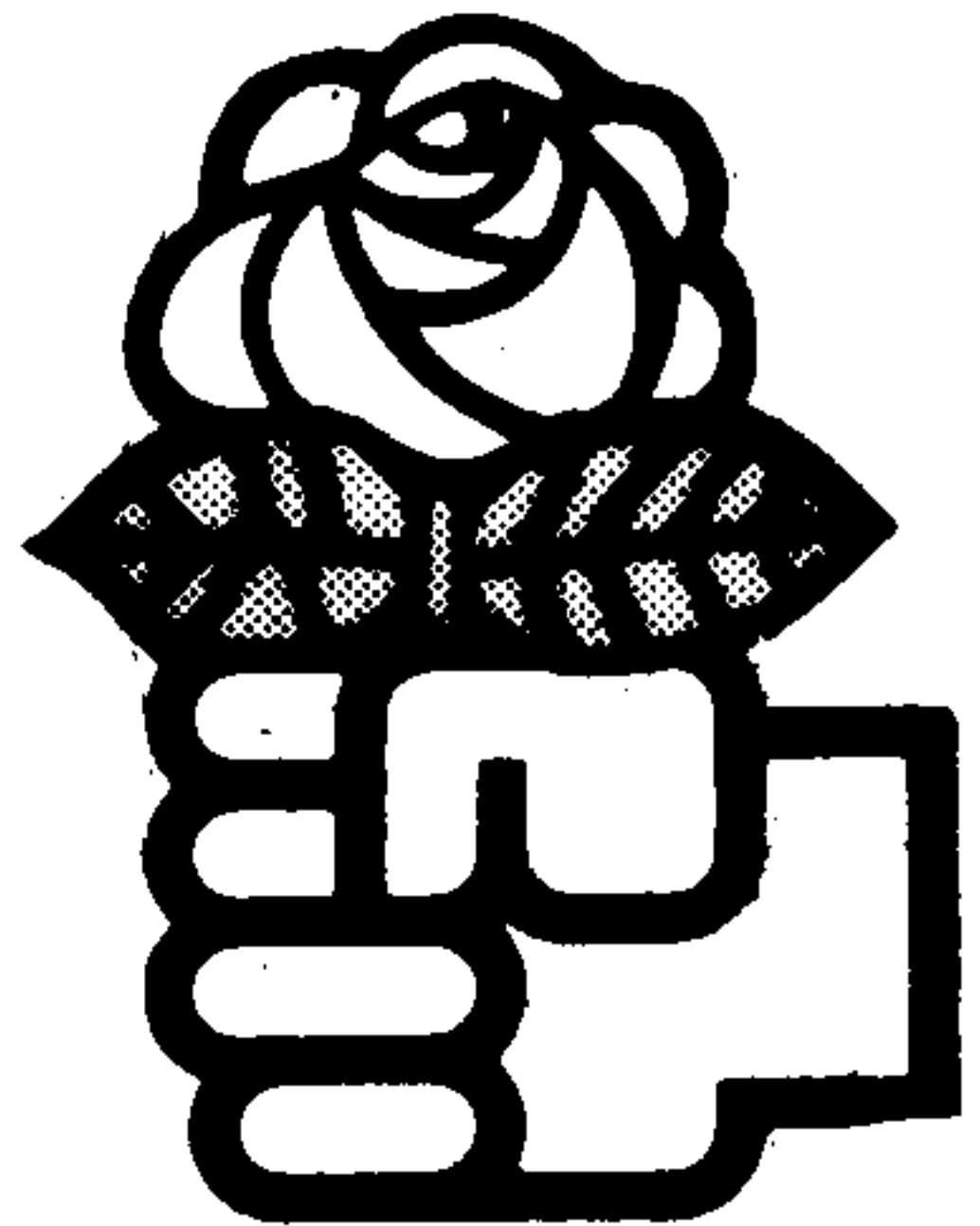
'We believe that after the collapse and mismanagement of the past few years, there is finally a government here which is in the process of setting a clear and consistent policy. The last government allowed the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement to rise to over 12% of GDP. We have to reverse that and give Greece the modern structures and efficient government it has lacked.'

The interviewer then asked, very pertinently, 'Is this Socialism?' Papandreou:

"Given the 'scorched earth' which we inherited, what we are doing at this phase is democratising and modernising the country. We are setting the stage for the progressive policies we intend to follow and the further development of Greece in the direction of Socialism.'

PASOK's election promises have boiled down in practice to trying to run Greek capitalism better than the right-wing can. Its progressive foreign policy has ended up consisting of giving the PLO an embassy in Athens and inviting Gaddafi on a state visit (which President Karamanlis cancelled just before it happened). Socialism has, as usual, retreated somewhere over the horizon. It is a goal to be pursued at some later date, when capitalism has been set back on its feet.

If Greece is to move in the direction of socialism, it will be the working class, through its own activity, which takes it there, and certainly that will require a party totally different from PASOK. □



Spain

The Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) will soon form the first left government in Spain for forty-three years. They are widely expected to win the country's general elections on October 28. But the Spanish ruling class have little to fear. The PSOE do not even pay lip-service to the sort of verbal leftism associated with some other southern European Socialist parties.

During the thirties the PSOE reached the peak of its influence. It also became dominated by a militant left wing. The war and revolution left the party shattered.

Lost in the labyrinthal struggles of exile politics the party, now bitterly divided, effectively ceased to exist. Only the communists maintained both their organisation and activity inside Spain during the Franco years. Worst of all for the PSOE they lost their massive youth section wholesale to the CP during the civil war.

Some semblance of a modern social democratic party was established in the early seventies with the rise of Felipe Gonzalez the new dynamic young general secretary. This was only after sharp internal struggles which led to a number of splits, especially amongst those now trying to re-organise in Spain itself.

Although more or less devoid of any meaningful local organisation the PSOE under Gonzalez rapidly became an electoral force in the first months of re-legalisation in late 1976. They were aided in this by the post-Franco regime which tried to use the PSOE to give the 'reform process' credibility. The same sort of official encouragement was not, of course, extended to the Community Party or any other left wing organisations.

In the first general elections after the dictator's death, in June 1977, they emerged as the second largest party in the new parliament. Like their Portuguese counterparts, who experienced a similar dramatic rise in 1974-5, they were well supported financially by European social democracy, in particular the Germans.

Their trade union federation, the UGT, for example, grew from 10,000 to a claimed 2 million within two years. This equalled the long established communist union – the Workers Commissions.

For the last five years the PSOE has always been a pillar of the 'reform process' which followed the end of Francoism. They have not only accepted the strange hybrid of Spanish democracy, which essentially keeps intact the old Francoist state machine, but actively opposed any decisive break with these structures.

Following the 1977 elections, along with the Communists and the far-right Alianza Popular (AP), they supported the politics of 'consensus' that have maintained the conservative UCD (Centre Democratic Union) in power for the last five years.

The new elections have been called because of the collapse of the UCD. A coalition of everything from social democrats and liberals through to ex-Francoists, they finally fragmented to the left and right under the impact of economic and political pressures. The regional elections last May in Andalusia, in the south, were decisive in undermining the government.

The socialists won a landslide victory – winning 55% of the vote. The UCD were pushed in to third place by the AP. The enthusiasm shown in these elections for a change in government and the disarray on the right will probably guarantee the PSOE victory on October 28.

A new PSOE government will include some of the more liberal ex-UCD leaders as well as other 'personalities'. Any sort of agreement with the Communist Party has been completely ruled out because of the Spanish establishment's phobia about the party. Inside the PSOE itself, the small left wing was firmly stamped on at last year's congress.

On economic issues the PSOE have made it clear that they oppose 'conflict' in favour of 'collaboration' in order to overcome Spain's lack of investment. They also promise *not* to nationalise a single section of the economy.

During the last five years the PSOE has consistently supported joint agreements between the government and the employers, from the Pact of Moncloa in 1977 through to the National Economic Agreement in 1980.

This has helped keep wages down while inflation has rocketed.

In the workplaces the UGT has continually opposed strikes and favoured collaboration, only supporting the most token forms of action. This has had an adverse effect on UGT membership which has probably halved during the last two years. The communists have also lost union members, despite some resistance to the employers on a local level.

Unlike the CP the Socialists' moderation has enabled them to appear as the only real electoral alternative to the discredited UCD. Therefore they can expect to benefit from a crucial swing in urban middle class votes.



One thing the PSOE won't do is touch Spain's not-so-democratic state institutions. The army, police and judiciary will continue to be dominated by those put there in Franco's time. The church's pernicious influence over education won't be challenged, nor will there be any advance on the much neglected area of women's rights.

Since their legislation six years ago the PSOE has remained faithful to the regime. They enthusiastically supported the new constitution in December 1978, though not without some absurd claims such as it would 'open the road towards socialism'. They have always backed the various repressive measures instigated by the UCD to deal with 'terrorism'.

These measures, modelled on Britain's PTA, have been used to harass any supporters of Basque independence. In common with both the right and the CP they have consistently identified the Basque separatist guerrillas of ETA as the principal danger to democracy, rather than the numerous fascists who riddle the upper reaches of the army and the police.

Such has been their bitter opposition to ETA that during the 1979 elections the PSOE actually lost 70,000 votes in the Basque Country while generally gaining elsewhere. Equally they have been less than enthusiastic over the popular demands for

regional and national autonomy.

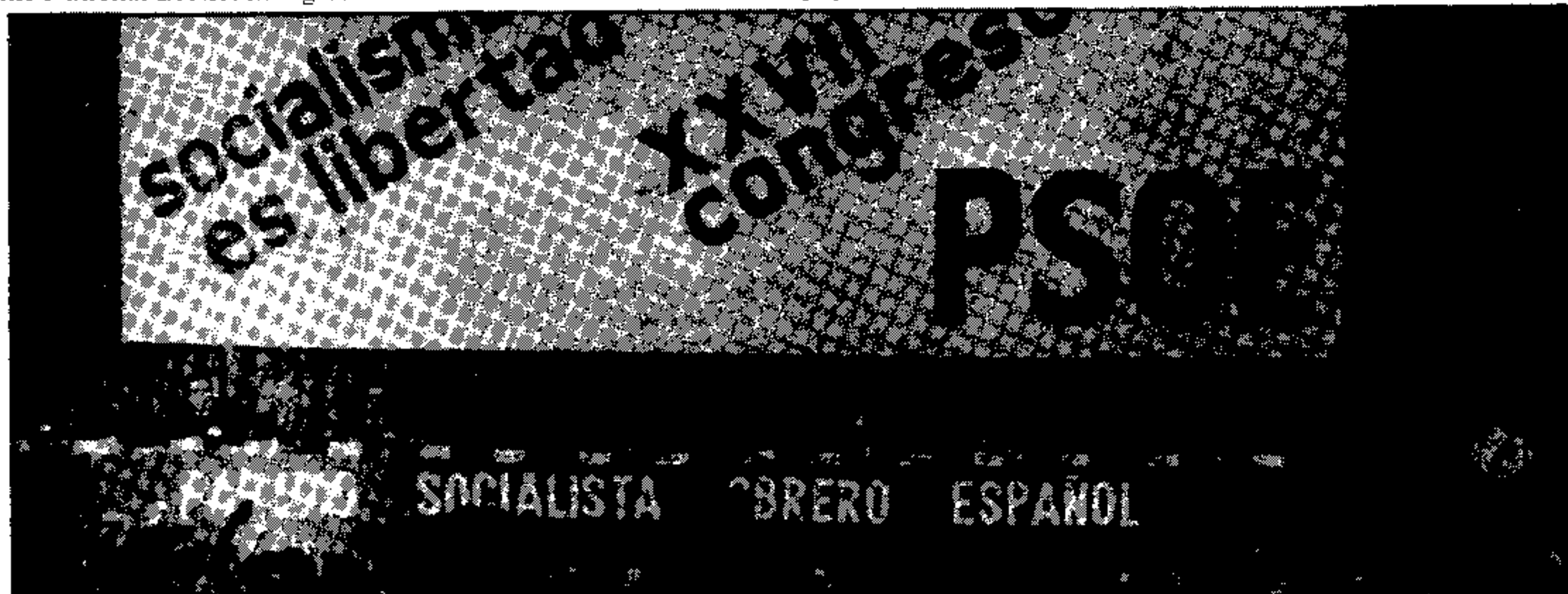
During the attempted coup of February 1981, the PSOE called for calm and opposed any strikes or demos against the military. What's more, when those responsible were brought to trial, earlier this year, they supported the notorious 'Pact of Silence' with the UCD and AP. This effectively meant that during the trial there would be no criticism of either the army or the somewhat farcical goings-on in the military courtroom.

The only controversial point about the PSOE's expected victory is its pledge to hold a referendum over Spain's entry into NATO. If such a referendum took place it seems very likely that the population would reject entering the alliance.

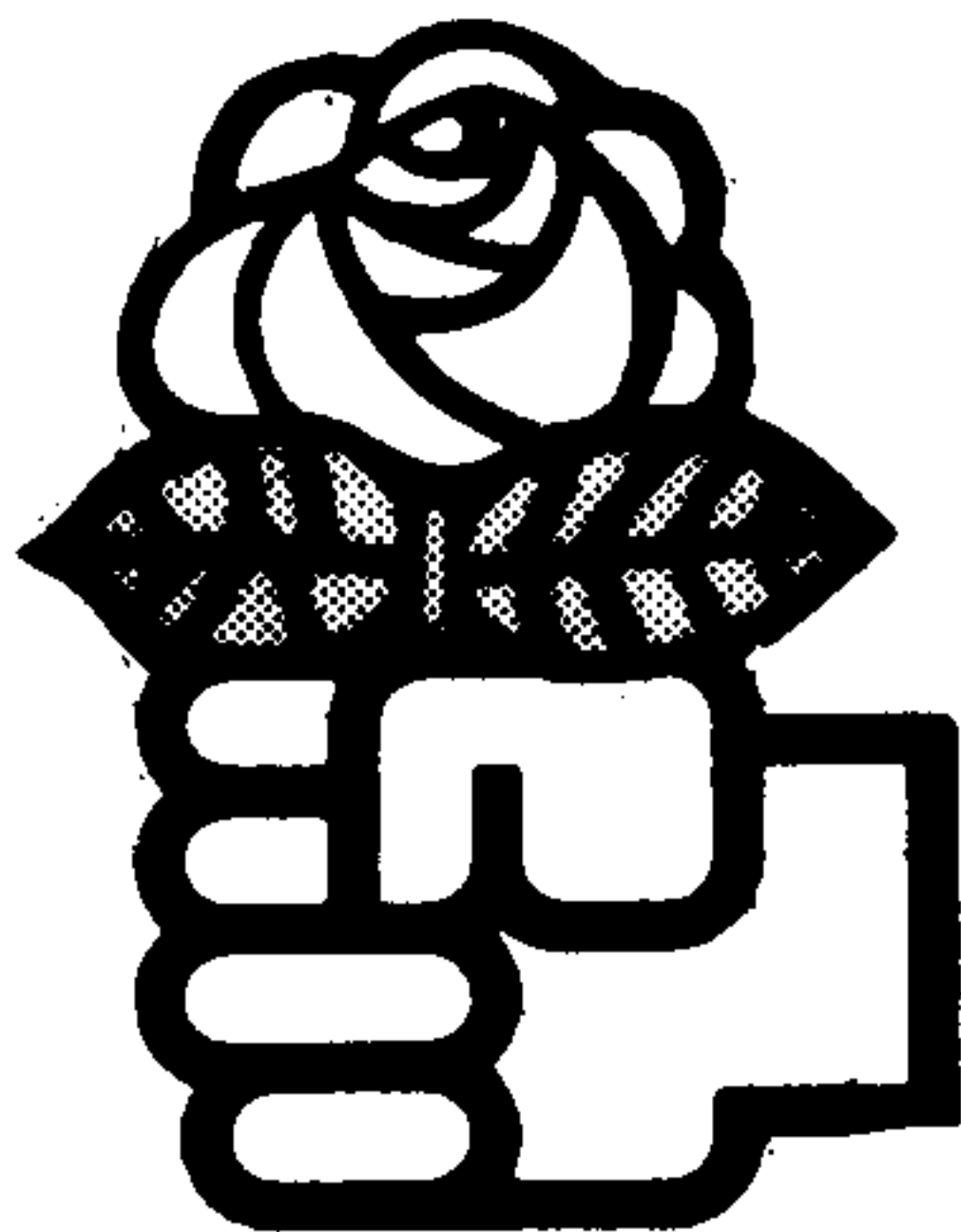
However the PSOE's record on this question is hardly impressive. During the anti-NATO campaign last year they refused to collaborate with the rest of the left. The only major demonstration they did call was for 'peace' rather than specifically against NATO. Neither have they ever seriously challenged the continuing presence of US bases on Spanish soil.

The superficiality of their opposition was reflected by the remark of party leader Luis Solano who stated that they would accept entrance into NATO if Spain was 'given back Gibraltar'. What's more, when the Greek socialists offered to use their veto to prevent Spain's entrance Gonzalez rejected this as an 'interference into Spain's internal affairs'! No doubt, like their more radical Greek co-thinkers, the PSOE when in power will find some way round this sticky problem.

Despite a certain amount of panic among Spanish employers, in practical terms they can rest easy in their beds. The army still remains fundamentally anti-democratic. The recent coup plot was only sabre-rattling over the prospect of a socialist government. What remains to be seen is the reaction of workers to a PSOE victory. Certainly in Andalusia the socialists' triumph last May took place in an atmosphere of considerable polarisation and enthusiasm for change. Whatever the outcome it would be unreasonable to expect the PSOE to deal, even partially, with Spain's manifold economic and political problems. □



The 1978 congress of the Spanish Socialist Party, the first since 1936



Italy

For the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) to follow the example of its French, Greek, and (it seems) Spanish cousins into parliamentary power would be a remarkable transformation. For thirty years, the PSI seemed to be set in a slow but certain decline. By the late seventies, it was a shadow of its former self, gaining less than 10% of the votes. Squeezed between the much larger Communist and Christian Democrat parties, its only role appeared to be that of a parliamentary clique to be used and discarded at will by the two great parties to make up parliamentary majorities.

Yet today it has reemerged as the arbiter of Italian politics, able to break governments and seemingly set to play an increasingly central role in government.

In the period after the Second World War, the PSI did have real weight inside the Italian working class. This base was gradually whittled away by the pressures of the Cold War and the inexorable growth of the Communist Party.

At the same time as being prevented from becoming the major party of the working class it was also excluded from being a party of government throughout the 1950s by the monopoly the Christian Democrats held over the state. When it was finally brought into the government in the early sixties, the experience only speeded up the PSI's decline. The Party was incapable of changing the Christian Democrats, the state, or the economy and as the hopes of reform disappeared, so the PSI's relevance declined once more.

By the 1970s the PSI was becoming increasingly irrelevant as the Communist Party attempted to link up with the Christian Democrats in government with the strategy of the 'Historic Compromise'. The PSI seemed set to join the parasitic group of centre parties which are so characteristic of Italian parliamentary manoeuvrings: full of self importance, utterly devoid of ideas and whose only role is to fill some minor ministry and to prop up a government run by others.

Over the last four years this story of

decline has been put into reverse. The Party's image has been radically revamped, its votes are increasing and it is now seen as the key force within Italian politics.

Symptomatic of this transformation was the dropping of the PSI's emblem. Ever since the days of the Russian Revolution, the Party's symbol was the hammer and sickle. This was unceremoniously dropped and the ubiquitous (but meaningless) carnation took its place. The change was symbolic for it was a sign that the PSI was prepared to drop all the remnants of its old traditions. It was no longer to be seen as a class party, however weak, timid or reformist.

Its left wing was comprehensively excluded from the leadership. Any talk of alliance with the Communist Party to form a united left front and remove the Christian Democrats was silenced.

In the place of these themes which had been the mainstay of the Socialist Party's politics for thirty years, the new leader of the Socialists, Bettino Craxi, proposed some radically new ones. The key phrase was the necessity of making Italy 'governable', of overcoming the crisis both in Italian political and economic life. The PSI promised a series of reforms in parliament and in the factories which would 'normalise' Italy and force it to become more stable through the strengthening of the state.

A key element of its programme was to exclude the centre parties by proposing a quorum which parties had to gain before they could be represented. Complicated plans were drawn up to strengthen the power of the government and prime minister against parliament and the back room deals of party secretaries.

In foreign policy there was a courting of the Reagan administration, in an attempt to prove that the PSI could be entrusted with the running of the Italian state. Inside the factories the theme of governability was just as relevant. In this case, it meant the control of the unions through the use of secret strike ballots and the adoption of an attitude of 'responsibility' and flexibility' in the face of the economic crisis.



As the PSI changed its image so its votes increased. In Milan, for instance, its vote has all but doubled in the last few years. Opinion polls now predict that the PSI is sure to increase its vote by three or four per cent, a small shift by British standards, but a major change in the immobile structures of Italian politics.

The change in the fortunes of the PSI did not result merely from the revamping of the Party's image. Rather it is a product of the chronic crisis of the two major Italian parties, the Communists and the Christian Democrats.

The crisis is especially acute within the CP. The failure of the 'Historic Compromise' left them without any strategy for gaining power. Since then the Communist Party has been in a state of paralysis. It was two years before they came up with the new

slogan of the 'Democratic Alternative' to the Christian Democrats and it has remained a mere slogan with the CP unable to put it into effect.

The problem for the CP is that to construct an alternative to the Christian Democrats they need to link up with the PSI. But in France such a strategy merely led Mitterrand into power and the French Communists into the wilderness. The Italian Party are determined not to go the same way. But without such an alliance the Communist strategy is an impossibility.

The crisis in the Christian Democrats is not one of policy: that remains the same – the grim determination to hang on to power at all costs. The problem is what to do with that power. In the absence of any strategy the party is split into a series of parliamentary cliques and interest groups, riddled through with corruption, and racked by scandal.

In order to survive in power it has had to make a series of major concessions to its allies in government. It has even had to give up the post of Prime Minister for the first time since the war in order to retain its alliances.

The crisis of the two major Italian parties has given the Socialists a degree of freedom of action which they are using to the full. Both the major parties need the PSI more than it needs them. So strong is the parliamentary position of the PSI that it could even grab the post of Prime Minister in one of the innumerable governmental crises.

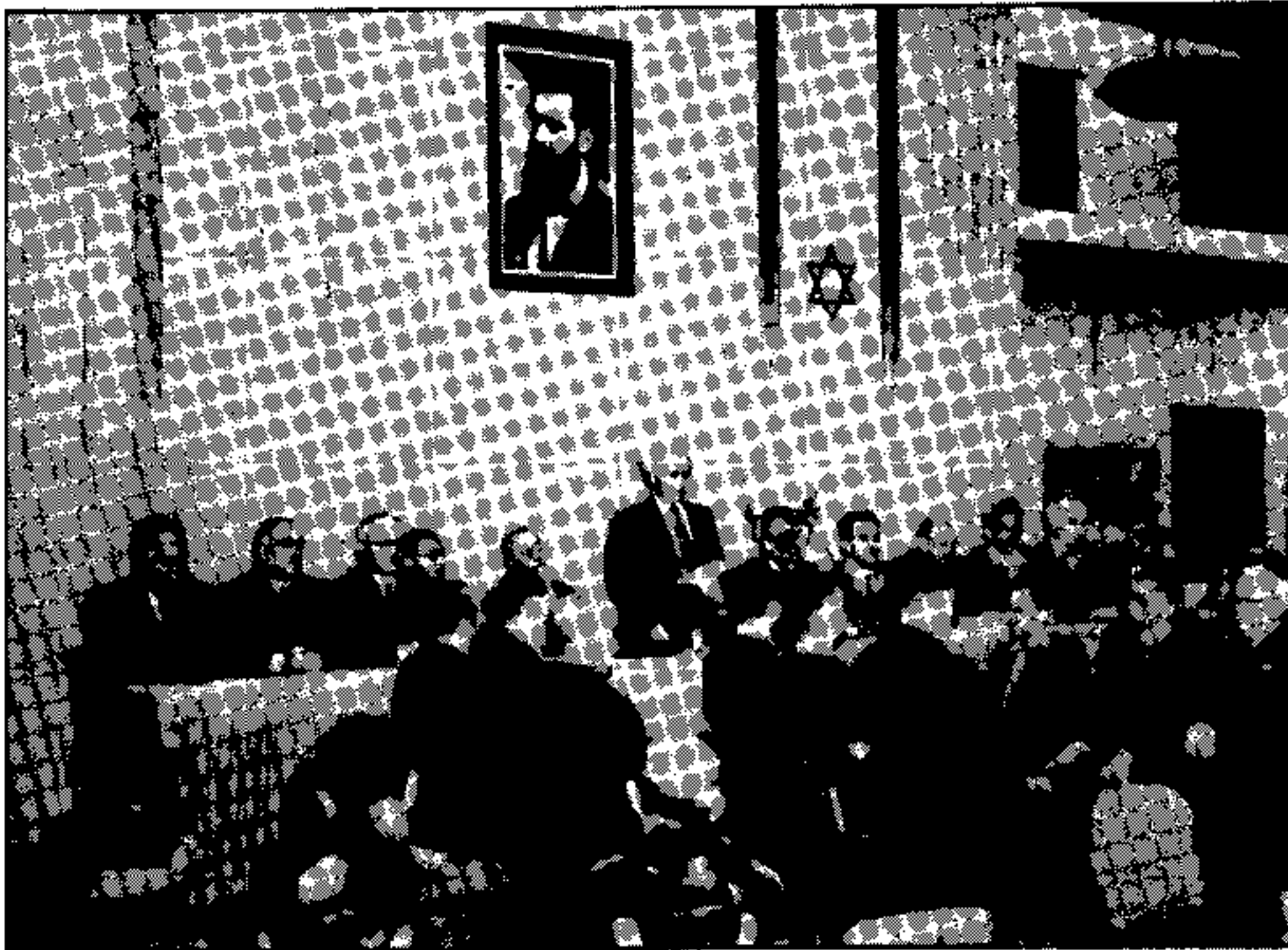
Even if the Socialists do win the post of prime minister, however, this will have an absolutely minimal effect on Italian society.

The PSI stand no chance of implementing their project, either in terms of the state or in the economy. To rationalise or modernise the state immediately runs up against the domination of the Christian Democrats; a domination which for years has been used for and maintained by corruption. The PSI is fully involved in that corruption and has neither the will nor the power to root it out.

The PSI's appeals for modernisation of society attract only a very small social layer of technicians, specialists, supervisors, etc. The PSI project has little attraction for the working class and even if it could be mobilised by the PSI it is today in a far weaker position to force through any real changes in society.

Although the working class today has been weakened over the last five years by a series of major defeats, it still represents a formidable barrier to the kind of change that the PSI would like to implement. The PSI certainly cannot do it on its own – it demands the active participation of the Christian Democrats and the involvement or complete marginalisation of the Communist Party.

While the long crisis of Italian politics continues, the PSI may be able to grab itself a bit of the parliamentary action. But it will never fundamentally change Italy nor be able to mobilise substantial social movement. Sooner or later it looks destined to be sucked back under the wing of one of the two great parties that have dominated Italian politics for so long. □



David Ben Gurion Israel's first Prime Minister proclaims the State of Israel in 1948.

The road to Beirut

There can be no doubt as to the responsibility of the Israeli government for the massacres in Lebanon. It confirms something that we have always argued — that Zionism leads directly to the concentration camps. Only this time it is not the Jews on the receiving end of this genocide.

Steve Cedar examines the roots of the terrible events in Lebanon

Many people are confused by the situation in the Middle East. They are shocked and outraged by the actions of the Israeli forces, but they are also bewildered. How could Israel do such a thing? The reality is that they are only continuing to do what they have done for over sixty years. The displacement of the Arab population, and expansionism has gone alongside a deep-rooted racist ideology which says that the Jews have a god-given right to their own homeland.

Where do these ideas come from? Firstly Zionism is a 'political' ideology, not a religious one. In Israel, as everywhere else, there exists a class society, albeit distorted. Zionism seeks to cloud over these class differences, and has done so successfully, but to look for its origins we need to go back to the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Jewish minorities in countries like Germany, Austria and Russia were victims of racist, antisemitic government policies, ranging from everyday discrimination to wholesale pogroms.

There were two responses from Jews to this. There were those who said that in order

to fight anti-semitism it was necessary to fight the whole system which bred it. Revolutionary movements in Eastern Europe and Russia included many Jews within their ranks: Trotsky, Luxemburg, Radek, Levine, Martov, and many more. Their position was clear. They had to involve themselves in the struggle of the working class as a whole for socialism, irrespective of race or religion. They differed widely from people who then, as today, called themselves 'Marxist Zionists' or 'socialist Zionists' in as much as they were, like us, internationalists.

Other East European Jews opted for another solution. They thought that anti-semitism could not be fought, that it was inherent amongst gentiles, part of 'human nature'.

In fact the Zionists from the outset shared the same basic ideology as the anti-semites. That it was one race against another, gentiles versus Jews. Therefore, their conclusion was that they must set up a separate Jewish state. Indeed, historically the Zionist movement has welcomed outbreaks of anti-semitism as a justification of their ideas.

Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, wrote in his diaries after a wave of anti-semitism in France in the 1890s:

'In Paris as I have said, I achieved a freer attitude towards anti-semitism, which I now began to understand historically, and to pardon. Above all, I recognised the emptiness and futility of trying to "combat" anti-semitism.'

On the one hand, anti-semitism is hated and feared because it threatens the very existence of the Jews, on the other it perpetuates 'Jewishness' by forcing Jews to band together in self-defence. This is by no means an old idea, outgrown by time and experience.

The 'liberal' Zionist, Uri Harary, said in 1969:

'It is of course, not customary to talk about it in public, but many of us felt a tiny bit of joy when we read in newspaper reports of the Swastika outbreak in Europe in 1960, or about the pro-Nazi movement in Argentina.

These phenomena form a part of our world outlook because Zionism said, and is still saying, that this is the way things are. This is what *has* to be as long as Jews live among gentiles.'

Even more astonishing were the words of a Dr Gevanjahn in a report on the situation of the European Jewish communities:

'Anti-semitism has a certain role to play in preserving Jews and Jewishness... Anti-semitism is similar to the Jewish way of living — to be too wealthy or too poor is unhealthy for the existence of Judaism. The same holds true for anti-semitism: too much or too little is not welcome, but in reasonable amounts it is. It reminds the Jews who they are and forces them to stick to their people and remain loyal to their ancient homeland.'

But is, or was, Palestine the 'ancient homeland' of the Jews? Palestine was not the original site considered by the early Zionists. Uganda, Syria and Argentina were all considered first before the decision was taken for Palestine, mainly because of the emotive biblical connection of 2,000 years previously. There was however one major problem in setting up the state there. Palestine was now a country full of Arabs.

The Zionists were not put off by this. In order to achieve their aim they had to win the support of those who ruled the area. The crumbling Turkish Ottoman Empire was on its last legs, and after initially allying with that, the Zionists switched their allegiance to the Western powers by the outbreak of the First World War, providing them with some support for their interests in the Arab world.

Victory of Zionism

With the great carve-up of the Middle East after the war, Britain emerged as the controlling power. On 2 November 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, which promised 'the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.'

The Palestinians were not considered for one moment. What was in it for Britain? They wanted to protect their interests in the Middle East, where huge reserves of oil were being discovered and grabbed by British companies.

Sir Ronald Storrs, the first British governor of Jerusalem, wrote in his memoirs:

'Enough Jews could return, if not to form a Jewish state ... at least to prove that the enterprise was one which blessed him that gave as well as him that took, by forming for England "a little loyal Jewish Ulster" in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism.'

Under the British Mandate Zionist settlements grew, and alongside them grew the gangs and militias which were to become the necessary elements in setting up the State of

Israel. Between 1917 and 1948 there was a steady struggle to impose Jewish minority rule on Palestine. Land was bought from the feudal Arab landlords, and Arab peasants were replaced by Zionist settlers.

The other major factor was the founding of the Histradut (the 'Hebrew only') trade union. It was founded in 1920. The number of Jewish workers in Palestine in 1920 was about 5,000 with roughly 50,000 Arab workers.

The founders of this 'general federation', who were all inspired by Zionist ideology, and who were members mostly of Jewish petit-bourgeois parties, limited membership in the Histradut exclusively to Jews. When the basic principles of the Histradut were being laid down, the founders made it clear that 'national interest' took priority over 'economic or cultural interests.' The internationalist idea of a class society, naturally, was never brought up.

A year after its foundation, it set up its own enterprises. A large company dealing with public works, the Workers Bank, insurance companies, even a building contractor for constructing luxury hotels in African countries — all these were to follow.

Resistance

The Histradut has always represented the Zionist state's interests and was never intended to do anything else. In 1960, the then General Secretary, Lavon, summed up the historical role of the Federation.

'The General Federation of Workers was set up forty years ago by several thousand young people wanting to work in an under-developed country where labour was cheap, a country which rejected its inhabitants and which was inhospitable to newcomers. Under these conditions the foundation of the Histradut was a central event in the process of the rebirth of the Hebrew people in its fatherland. It is not a workers' trade union, although it copes perfectly well with the real needs of the worker.'

The Histradut leadership decided the political line of the Jewish community both in Jewish affairs, relations with the British rulers, and the Arab masses. The political leaders of the state of Israel — Ben Gurion, Eshkol, Meir — all came from the ranks of the Histradut.

But of course, resistance grew among the Palestinians, both against British colonialism and Zionist settlers. There were strikes, demonstrations and armed struggles. In 1933 a general strike of Arab workers was defeated and many strikers were killed. In 1936 the British forces called upon the Zionist gangs and militias to help them as an 'auxiliary police force' to put down the resistance. Throughout the 1930s the British and the Zionists acted together as the brutal oppressors of the Palestinians, thousands of whom were jailed.

Even now, the Zionists were still a minority: 500,000 out of 1½ million. But this was not always to be, as far as the Zionists were concerned. R. Weitz, a Zionist leader and for many years the head of the Jewish Agency's Colonisation Department, wrote

in his diary in 1940:

'Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country. We shall not achieve our goal of being an independent people with the Arabs in this small country. The only solution is a Palestine, or at least Western Palestine, without Arabs. And there is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, to transfer all of them. Not one village, not one tribe should be left. Only after this transfer will the country be able to absorb the millions of our own brethren. There is no other way out.'



Theodor Herzl the founder of Zionism

In 1948 they had their chance to make this 'dream' come true. The hypocrisy of the British was shown up during the war. Between 1939 and 1945 the British imposed immigration controls on Jews fleeing from Hitler's Germany, not just into Britain, but Palestine as well. This was because British leaders wanted a passive Arab population during the war. Naturally enough, this incensed the Zionists. During the war the gangs and militias became more heavily armed and better organised.

But support from a major power was still crucial for the Zionists, and they got it — from the US. British imperialism was on the decline and it was only a matter of time before the Zionists turned their guns on the British as well as the Arabs. The British withdrew and the United Nations separated Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. The Arabs rejected the partition and war broke out. It was a war that the Palestinians had no chance of winning. On 4 May 1949 the State of Israel was declared.

It was a state which established itself quite simply and ruthlessly by the rule of the gun. Half a million Arabs were driven out and nobody knows now many were killed. The latest massacre in Lebanon has an inglorious pedigree.

The succession of wars, the policy of massive expansionism, with full backing from American imperialism has resulted in over two million Palestinian refugees. Most people have now seen the refugee camps, but not so many know of the pass laws, the discrimination in jobs and housing for those Arabs who live inside Israel, the constant policing and now the genocide that has taken place against the Palestinian people.

But class contradictions do exist within Israel, as they do in any other class society. The largest demonstration ever to take place in Israel, of 300,000 people took place at the end of September. Many young Israelis, born inside the country were shocked by the renewal of the old tactics used to set up the state, something they had not experienced themselves. The 'peace now' movement is growing, and Begin's government looks shaky. But even if it does fall, will the fundamental basis of the state be threatened?

For many Jews in Israel, Zionism can no longer deliver the goods in terms of paying the rent, solving inflation and unemployment. In recent years there have been strikes by Jewish workers in the docks, the civil service and amongst teachers. Usually quickly dealt with by the state, those workers have not yet had the chance to realise their position as workers. For they are Zionist first, and to challenge the concept of the state of Israel would be to challenge their whole basis for being there.

Arab workers

As with Protestant workers in Northern Ireland, Jewish workers in Israel have a fundamental interest in the continuation of the state, because of the privileges, however limited, it gives them. The peace movement in Northern Ireland in the mid-seventies represented the interests of the Protestants, and the continuation of the statelet. At the moment the same is true in Israel.

The only people with the power to change things in the Middle East are the Arab workers, not just inside Israel, where they perform an increasingly important function for the economy, in providing a source of cheap labour, but the Arab workers in the other countries in the area.

A movement must be built which threatens the Arab rulers who the Palestinians have relied on with tragic consequences. While individual Arab nationalist leaders who cry crocodile tears for the Palestinians and condemn Israeli aggression go unchallenged by the masses in these countries, there can be no change.

As revolutionary socialists, we envisage a secular workers' state in the Middle East, where Jew and Arab can live equally as a 'class' not as a 'race' or 'nation'.

Our job is to argue that case not only with Palestinians who we may meet, but with young Jews in this country who have for the first time seen the real face of Zionism. We should remember that it was the defeat of the German working class that led to fascism and the gas chambers, and argue that it is only the victory of the workers in the Middle East that can put an end to the massacres that are now taking place. □

Tarzan the racist ape

John Newsinger looks at Edgar Rice Burroughs' books, *Tarzan of the Apes*, and highlights the colonial myths contained in the popular adventure stories.

When Professor Porter, his daughter Jane, and the rest of his sorry band of castaways stumbled across an apparently abandoned cabin on the savage African coast, they were confronted by a notice: 'This is the house of Tarzan, the killer of beasts and many black men. Do not harm the things which are Tarzan's. Tarzan watches'. In this way white men and women were first informed of the Apeman's existence.

Barely working up a sweat, Tarzan repeatedly saves them from the terrors of the jungle. When William Cecil Clayton is saved from a lion and carried back through the trees to the comparative safety of the cabin, he can only marvel at the ease with which the Apeman moves through the inky blackness of the jungle night, as easily as he would himself have strolled a London street in broad daylight.

Edgar Rice Burroughs, an American novelist, began writing *Tarzan of the Apes* in December 1911 and finished the book the following May, blazing a trail for no less

than 23 other Tarzan volumes, the last being written during 1944. They are securely established as classics of popular fiction, and only this year the whole series has been reissued in paperback by Ballantine Books. While not great works of literature, the Tarzan stories nevertheless require serious consideration. First of all as well-written, finely crafted, and phenomenally successful examples of the adventure story, and secondly for creating one of the great popular myths: Tarzan of the Apes, Lord of the Jungle.

The Tarzan myth is a myth of colonialism. Its material is the relationship between the white man and Africa during the heyday of the European colonial empires. The books provide a popular commentary upon the progress of colonialism in Africa. The first volume was written when the scramble for Africa was still only a recent event and much of the continent was untrodden by whites. The excesses of the Belgians in the Congo had only just received international publicity, and indeed the book contains comment on Belgian treatment of the blacks. The last volume was written when the European colonial empires were already battered by the German and Japanese victories in the Second World War and has Tarzan battling with Japanese troops in Sumatra. The cycle is clearly of great interest as a whole, but there is only space to discuss the origins of

the myth in *Tarzan of the Apes* here.

The story begins with Lord Greystoke, a British colonial official on his way to investigate allegations of mistreatment in a British West African Colony. He is abandoned, together with his young wife, on the African coast. They both die, leaving an infant son to be adopted as her own by the female ape, Kala. The child is named 'White-Skin' or Tarzan by the apes, and grows up as one of them. To all intents and purposes, he is a wild beast, but somehow he manages to overcome his savage upbringing and emerge as a primitive, but still recognisable, English gentleman of the old school. While still only a youth, his superior intelligence and breeding enable him to establish a gradual ascendancy over his tribe of apes. Finding his father's abandoned cabin, he uses the books stored there to teach himself to read and write in English, a task rendered even more daunting by the fact that his own spoken language is that of the apes. Even while Tarzan is a fully-fledged tribe member, taking part in the fierce, mad, intoxicating dance of the Dum Dum, his humanity is beginning to show through.

A tribe of blacks move into Tarzan's area of the jungle, fleeing from the brutal exploitation of the Belgians. The contrast with Tarzan is sharply drawn. The blacks are portrayed as low, bestial and brutish in appearance, with yellow teeth that are filed to sharp points and protruding lips. They are given to mercilessly torturing any captives unfortunate enough to fall into their hands as an essential preliminary to eating them. As far as Tarzan is concerned, their savagery is greater even than that of the apes. In stark contrast of these human brutes, Tarzan is a young, handsome, muscular, white, demi-God of the jungle, who goes on to strike terror into the hearts of the blacks.

One of the blacks kills Kala, and Tarzan pursues him through the jungle. He eventually kills him and is about to devour part of the corpse when his superior instinct stops him. His breeding saves him from the practice of cannibalism, from succumbing to the African darkness. In this way Tarzan's humanity is distinguished from that of the blacks. Their humanity is of a lower order. Before the end of the book, a French punitive expedition exterminates the men of the tribe and leaves the women and children to fend for themselves. Their fate is of little concern.

The whole portrayal of the blacks, from their physical appearance to the casual way they are dispensed with, signifies their place in Burroughs' colonial imagination. *Tarzan of the Apes* is the story par excellence of a white man's conquest of African savagery, of the primaeval jungle and its savage inhabitants.

Burroughs' portrayal of Jane Porter's maid, Esmeralda, as the stock 'comical darkie' shows the limits to which blacks who have benefited from white civilization can aspire. She is a faithful retainer, but incapable of independent activity and wholly reliant on her mistress. Tarzan regards her as some sort of domesticated animal.

This is not to fall into the trap of dismiss-





HE FASTENED THE ROPE SECURELY TO A STOUT BRANCH. THEN DESCENDING, HE PLUNGED HIS KNIFE INTO KULONGA'S HEART. KALA WAS AVENGED.

ing *Tarzan of the Apes* simply as a crude overtly racist tract. It is an adventure story and the racism contained within it is assumed rather than advocated.

By the time Professor Porter and his party are stranded on the coast by a mutinous crew, Tarzan has already emerged and longs for the companionship of his own kind. He watches events from hiding and soon concludes that the mutineers are no better than the blacks! Not only are they shown as human brutes, but they do not even have the ability to work the ship once they have murdered its officers. Their essential similarity to the blacks is driven home by their eventual resorting to cannibalism.

The new castaways are helpless and completely at a loss in the jungle, and survive only with Tarzan's help. In a chapter actually entitled 'Heredity', Jane Porter is carried off into the jungle by the great ape, Terkoz, to become his mate. Tarzan hunts him down, kills him and rescues her. Although raised as an ape himself, he behaves towards Jane as a consummate gentleman. This, we are told, is the hallmark of his aristocratic birth, the result of many generations of fine breeding.

Tarzan's relationship with Jane Porter is certainly the most celebrated aspect of the Tarzan myth, although the events of the book often bear little relation to popular conceptions that have been formed more by the cinema. After a brief passionate embrace when primaeval man meets primaeval woman, convention reasserts itself. Tarzan carries her off into the jungle for one night, all the time keeping his distance, and then he returns her to the cabin. Too late, it is his love for her that is to lure him from the jungle and bring him face to face with Western civilization.

Towards the end of the book, Burroughs begins to mount a critique of the West through the eyes of the Ape-man. While on his way to take a ship for France, Tarzan slips back into the forest to hunt and re-lives the glorious freedom of his jungle existence. Civilization, he realises, is hemmed in by restrictions and conventions. After hunting down a lion, he is tempted to disappear into the jungle, but the thought of Jane stops him.

Even when he finally catches up with Jane in the United States, civilised convention stands in the way of their love and prevents her accepting his proposal. The book ends with Tarzan having abandoned the freedom of the jungle for his love and then having lost

her to another.

For Jane, her personality can only find expression through marriage, whether it be to the odious Mr Canler, William Cecil Clayton or the Apeman, all rivals for her hand. There is no alternative for her. She can exist only through marriage, live only through a husband.

Tarzan of the Apes is a powerful, fairly complex, well-written adventure story. It is very much the product of its times, being moulded by and helping to mould the colonial imagination. As such it is a legitimate subject for Marxist discussion and consideration as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. □

Are your files complete?

A full file of *Socialist Review* is an invaluable bank of information for any socialist activist. So make sure your file is complete. All back issues are available price 60p each (post included)

Special offers

1978/9 nos 1-16: £7 (post included)
 1980 nos 1-11: £5 (post included)
 1981 Nos 1-11: £5 (post included)

Place your orders quickly as we only have a few copies of some issues.

Send your orders to **Socialist Review**, PO Box 82, London E2. (Make cheques payable to **Socialist Review**)



Arguments for revolution

Rosa Luxemburg's *Social Reform or Revolution* is a Marxist classic. Like the *Communist Manifesto* it stands the test of time. Jules Townshend shows the general line of argument has lost little of its bite and relevance, even if some of the certainties and details are a little dated.

Social Reform or Revolution, published in 1899, was a ringing declaration of revolutionary principles at a time when reformism had become deeply embedded in the German working class. Marxism seemed to be losing its revolutionary relevance. Luxemburg's pamphlet was an inspiring 'back to

basics'. Even today it has a sharp cutting edge when applied to those who seek refuge in the reformist, Bennite alternative.

The pamphlet was an attack on the ideas of Eduard Bernstein, the German Social Democratic Party's (SPD) leading 'revisionist'. Bernstein sought to revise the prevailing Marxist orthodoxy in the Party. He sought to update Marxist theory in the light of new 'facts': the fact that the German SPD was really reformist in its practice, and the facts of recent economic, social and political developments in Germany.

Bernstein was right in believing that no amount of revolutionary rhetoric could disguise the Party's reformist nature. It did not take the idea of revolution seriously. The first, Gotha, programme of 1875, with its calls for state-aided co-operatives and the like provoked an almost apoplectic response from Marx.

The second, Erfurt, programme of 1891 would probably have drawn a less contemptuous response from Marx if he had still been alive. At least its opening paragraphs talked about the need to overthrow capitalism on an international scale and the fact that capitalism was digging its own grave.

But on the question of when or how capitalism was going to be overthrown there was a big silence. Little thought was given about how to make a revolution: it would arrive like the millenium, or good weather. All one could do in the meantime was to increase the Party's electoral and organisational strength, and be ready to pick up the pieces when capitalist rule disintegrated.

The programme's minimum demands for electoral reform, free legal and medical services, progressive income tax etc., were in no way linked up to the long-term goal of making a revolution. One reason for this was the Party's desire not to be driven underground, as happened between 1878 and 1890, when many members had been imprisoned or had lost their jobs. The overwhelming desire of most Party members was to be cautious and respectable.

The party's reformism was also underlined by its numerous self-help activities - temperance societies, cycling clubs, orchestras, theatres, etc. The Party was called a 'state within a state'.

From all this Bernstein drew the conclusion that the Party was reformist at heart. He set out to prove that capitalism could be changed on a step-by-step basis. He had little faith in the idea of capitalist collapse. He believed that Marx's predictions had been proved wrong by events. The strength of German capitalism, and the absence of severe economic crises for over a quarter of a century, had falsified the idea of its imminent downfall. Cartels, trusts, credit and improved communications had enabled capitalism to adapt itself.

End to reforms

The peasantry and the middle-class had not been wiped out as Marx had predicted. The working class had not become increasingly impoverished, but had been able to improve its living and working conditions through trade union struggle and welfare legislation. Thus the 'utopian' aim of revolution was best forgotten. The final goal of socialist revolution, he said, meant 'nothing' to him, but the movement for reforms meant 'everything'.

Indeed, the whole idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was utopian: the working class was too divided amongst itself to form a cohesive ruling class. Finally, he rejected what he believed to be Marx's dialectical method. According to Bernstein this suggested that socialism was the inevitable result of violent conflict between capitalists and workers and the disintegration of the whole system. This formula for predicting future events had been disproved.

Luxemburg's criticisms of Bernstein in *Social Reform or Revolution* can be reduced to a number of elements. First, she emphasized the necessity of a dialectical approach in understanding how the working class was

socialist
REVIEW

Send me the next year's Socialist Review starting with issue no
(Cheques/POs payable to Socialist Review)

Name

Address

Return to Socialist Review, PO Box 82, London E2
Subscription rates for one year (11 issues): Britain and Ireland £7,
Overseas Surface £8, Europe Air £10, Elsewhere Air £13.50 (institutions add £5)

to achieve its 'final goal' of freedom. This approach involved seeing capitalism as something transitory, unstable and full of unresolvable contradictions, to be replaced by a qualitatively new, socialist society.

The working class was the necessary agent of this transformation. So it had to prepare itself to become the ruling class. It could only achieve this consciousness, confidence and cohesion through the class struggle itself. If in fact the class struggle was diminishing, as Bernstein suggested, then the objective conditions needed to create this process would disappear, and along with it the potential working class consciousness and organisation needed to change society. And if these objective conditions were absent, then socialism was no longer historically necessary, but rather a pleasant but harmless moral theory.

Thus with this idea of the ultimate goal in mind, the working class would lapse into opportunism, making all sorts of compromises with the employing class in order to achieve immediate reforms. The fundamental difference of interest between the two classes would be obscured, and the class struggle paralyzed. Such an outcome did not matter to Bernstein because he assumed that capitalism could grant continuous reforms.

It was precisely at this point that Luxemburg took up the challenge. She attempted to demonstrate that fighting for reforms to transform the system, by creating what he saw as socialist structures - co-ops, welfare legislation, strong trade unions, etc - within capitalism, was bound to fail. Capitalism was far too conflict-ridden and unstable to satisfy continual working class demands.

Trusts and cartels, designed to stabilise the system, merely pushed the contradictions to another level. Not only did consumers lose out through higher prices, but

'dumping' on international markets occurred, creating trade wars and movements towards protectionism. Credit was no panacea either. Whilst it expanded production, through increasing demand for goods, a loss in banking confidence and the recalling of loans could just as easily paralyse production. And if there had not been any gigantic capitalist slumps of late, this was because it was going through its middle phase: when it started to decline, recession would return.

Further, trade union activity by itself was ultimately self-defeating: all gains made could easily get wiped out in times of slump, or through changes in the labour market. The trade union struggle was about the distribution of income, not about the ownership of the means of production, and the size of the cake to be distributed was dependent on how production (i.e. profits) were faring. Co-operatives were also of little avail. They were governed by the laws of capitalist competition, which was bound to effect the co-operators' work and wages.

Tigers and lambs

Neither could the system be changed by legal measures. Exploitation itself was 'extra-legal': no law forced people to go to work. Further, it was false to suppose that by democratizing the capitalist state, it was possible to introduce fundamental reforms. The bourgeoisie, if seriously threatened, would dispense with democratic forms of government. As she said graphically some time later: 'Today's idyll in which wolves and sheep, tigers and lambs graze peacefully side by side, as in Noah's Ark, will last until the minute that real socialism begins to be put into practice.'

Although she did not believe that reforms could change the system, she still main-

tained that struggling for them was a vital component in raising class consciousness. These immediate struggles had to be linked to the ultimate revolutionary goal.

Her criticisms of Bernstein are in essence applicable to the Bennite left. Their strategy, as did Bernstein's, rests on the assumption that it is possible to change the structure of capitalism through reforms into socialism. They downplay the fundamental conflict of interest between capitalists and workers. Capitalists are seen as being unreasonable. The state through planning agreements and industrial democracy will, they assume, encourage them to collaborate with workers to form a virtuous circle of co-operation, in which both parties benefit through improved efficiency and productivity.

Unfortunately, the unstable, competitive and anarchic side of capitalism, so well depicted by Luxemburg, means that it is difficult to sustain such co-operation. The search for ever greater profits, changing competitive conditions, etc make it difficult for mutually beneficial bargains to last, however reasonable an employer might like to be.

Industrial democracy and planning agreements emphasise a similarity of interests that does not exist in reality. Equally important, if legislation on these matters really went against capitalist interests, then there would be a 'strike' of capital. If they got really desperate, they would dispense with 'democratic' forms of government, as they did in Chile in 1973, and Italy, Germany and Spain in the inter-war years.

We ignore *Social Reform or Revolution* at our peril. It brings the deficiencies of the Bennite programme into sharp focus. It probes the limits of reform. That's what Benn fails to do. □



Rosa Luxemburg addressing a rally of the German Social Democratic Party in 1907

Against the new moralism

Campaigns against pornography and sex-shops have become part of the activity of the women's movement and the left over the last few years. Noel Halifax argues that this is mistaken.

Porn as an issue to campaign against by the left is a recent development. In the late 60's it was part of the 'new' politics to champion sexual freedom and for some feminists to

try to write non-sexist porn. The magazine *Suck* had Germaine Greer among others on the editorial board. The mood of the time was to believe sex was a liberating experience and to fight against any oppression of it.

Of more substance than Greer's contributions to *Suck* is Simone de Beauvoir's essay 'Why we should not burn de Sade' in the 60's and the recent work of Angela Carter (her novels *The Infernal Desire*, *Machines of Dr. Hoffman* and *The Passion of New Eve* and her book *The Sadeian Woman*). Both look at the work of de Sade, after whom the word sadist is named, and

from which much of porn evolves.

Both explore de Sade and his porn as revealing characteristics of alienated sexuality 'natural' under capitalism and containing revolutionary contradictions that include the possibility of liberation. Angela Carter goes so far as to describe de Sade as 'pornography in the service of women'. Both analyse him beyond the descriptions of mutilation and sexual torture up to death.

But these tend to be minority voices. The Women's Movement has turned inward, away from collective action and class politics to life-style politics and separatism. Away from campaigning for collective women's rights (nursery campaigns, Women's Charter, night-cleaners etc.) to fighting round issues of women as individual victims - rape, violence, porn.

Of course this is part of the wider downturn in class struggle and one example of it. But it has created a body of opinion inside feminist circles that views porn as a central issue and area of struggle. The works of A. Dworkin (*Pornography: Men possessing Women*), S. Griffin (*Pornography and Silence*) and the film *Not a Love Story* are part of this trend. Though all three differ they are part of a body of opinion that has led to the slogan 'Porn is the theory, rape is the practice'.

Fighting sexism

Crudely simplifying, the anti-porn feminist argument goes like this. Porn affects *all* women who are threatened by *all* men. Fear of rape is one of the main instruments of male rule throughout history. Porn is one of the main ways men learn to be sexist, it is in itself violence against women and should be banned.

I do not discount all that Dworkin or Griffin have to say. Porn is a mirror on sexism and society. You can learn a lot by looking in the mirror to see just what society is about. There is no doubt porn reveals sexism in the most gross form.

The campaigns are also a reaction to the early neo-Reichians of 'Suck International' who were hopelessly naive in their views of sexual liberation as the simple freeing yourself of inhibitions. But having ditched one set of utopian ideas the anti-porn feminists have adopted others, equally utopian if more bleak.

Like all utopian thinking it begs the question of how and why people have the ideas that they do, where ideas come from and how you can change them and society. I do not agree with the slogan 'porn is the theory, rape is the practice'. That is believing people are only what they are told to be: people are violent because they see violence on the telly; men rape because they read pro-rape porn. People are not empty vessels into which you pour the ideas of society.

Anti-porn feminists seem to believe, as the Utopian Socialists did, that consciousness creates social conditions. Have the wrong ideas and you will have the wrong

Illustrations from
Lithographs by the
Norwegian artist Edvard Munch in 1895



society, that porn leads to rape and sexism. But as Marx argued, social conditions creates consciousness. It is social reality that creates sexism, of which porn is but one expression.

Porn has only grown into a major industry since the war. It is estimated that between 1/2 and 2/3 of cinemas in America now show only porn. British soft porn magazines have circulations of 300,000 plus. Before the war porn was a secret and marginal 'industry'. What did exist was a huge amount of prostitution. In Victorian England, where porn was banned, prostitution was an 'industry' as big as porn is today. Something like one in eight women in London are thought to have been involved in prostitution.

I'm not saying that the two are directly linked. They are both expressions of the basic sexist nature of society. Only if the social reality, class society, is destroyed will sexism be defeated and its expressions such as porn disappear.

This does not mean I view sexism to be unchanging this side of the revolution and that it is useless to fight against till the great time comes. But I do mean that we should be careful on what aspects of sexism we choose to fight against. Porn is neither the best or even appropriate target.

The creator of sexism is a society where men oppress women, hets oppress gays, people are treated as objects and aspects of their personality are treated as if they were separate things. In other words alienation is a deep and core part of the system.

Given all that it is not surprising we have sexist sexuality with ideas of active/passive, dominance, dreams of rape and/or being raped built into our subconscious. The appeal of porn, why it sells, is the end product of a complex process, the reaction between people and society, ideas, and the effects of alienation on sexuality. It is not simple cause and effect.

No two systems

Neither do we live in a society ruled by two separate if inter-linked systems of oppression: capitalism and patriarchy. This theory views patriarchy as a system equivalent to capitalism, which expresses itself in sexism - porn, unequal pay, male control of unions etc. To combat these, the struggle against capitalism, and the struggle for women's liberation are seen as separate. Attacking porn is then part of the struggle against patriarchy, one of many and equal expressions of sexism. The obvious objection to this is it ignores alienation as a core part of capitalism, it ignores or down-grades the class struggle and blurs class conflict within oppressed groups.

From being part of a total system of exploitation and oppression, sexism is separated off into an intangible all prevailing ideology, floating free of class society like an evil genie, appearing everywhere. We are back to utopian socialism, a failure to link ideology to class struggle and to comprehend the motor and centre of this system of oppression.

Increasingly the argument is not over what we should *do* to fight sexism but a rejection of action itself as a central way of

changing sexism. Instead of people in struggle changing themselves the emphasis is placed on *being*, which is to lead to struggle. You aim to *be* non-sexist, anti-racist etc, to become ideologically sound and from this pure plain of awareness attack pernicious ideas and structures. Politics is reduced to promoting moralistic dogma, to having the correct attitudes and lifestyle.

Middle class guilt

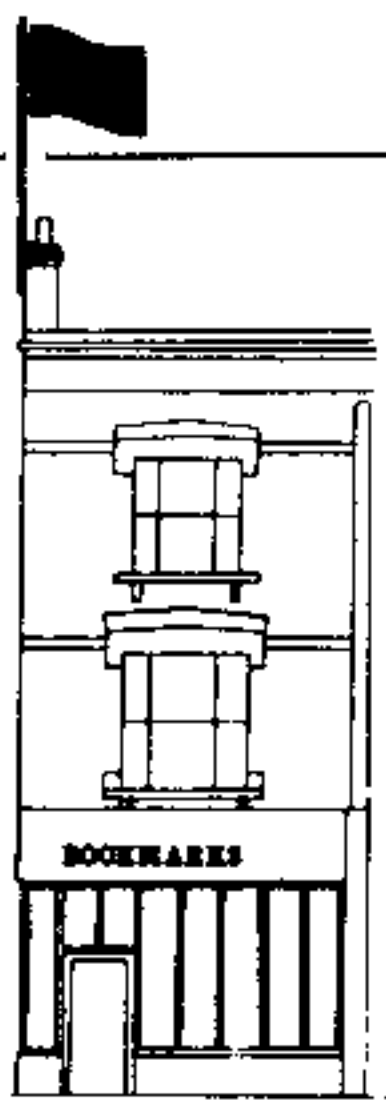
Sexism then becomes the responsibility of the individual rather than the fault of society. Failure to be ideologically sound is the failure of the individual for being so sexist. Developed further, only oppression is acknowledged, isolated from any class struggle, so that everyone, is on some level an oppressor (by being het, by being white, having a job, not living in the third world

etc.) and therefore possessing power. Being political is then seen to be coming to terms with that power and in some way giving that power up.

We are now well and truly in the world of middle-class guilt and old-fashioned liberalism. Issues are perceived in isolation or part of the all prevailing 'patriarchy' where everyone colludes with oppression. The world becomes a maze of inter-connected levels of oppression with no way out except the 'brave' and noble individual.

As a pernicious piece of sexism porn is far from unique or special. To take just one of countless examples, the sentimental slush of Mills and Boon is as sexist as the most hard core porn. In place of physical and sexual mutilation is emotional torture and a whole stream of fainting passive women. What is more Mills and Boon's sexism is read mostly by women, porn is consumed mostly by





The Bookmarx Club is a socialist book club that brings the best political paperbacks to its members at low prices. To join, you must take books from the list below to a value of £6.50 or more at book club prices (retail shop prices are given in brackets).

Summer Quarter

- 1) **The Lost Revolution, Germany 1918-23** £3.70 (4.95) Chris Harman's book will be the first full-length account in English of the workers' struggles that shook Germany after the First World War. A Bookmarx publication
- 2) **Engineers at War 1939-45** £3.60 (4.80) Richard Croucher's readable new book about the struggles of the Engineers in British industry
- 3) **Ada Nield Chew** £3.60 (4.50) The life and writings of a Crewe clothing worker, suffragist, socialist and trade unionist from the end of the nineteenth century.
- 4) **Marx's Kapital for Beginners** £2.40 (2.95) A complex subject made clear by David Smith's text assisted by Phil Evans' crazy illustrations
- 5) **Wild Lilies, Poisonous Weeds** £3.95 (4.95) Dissident voices from people's China edited by Gregory Benton
- 6) **Cement** £2.00 (2.50) by Fyodor Gladkov. A novel from Russia about the industrial reconstruction after the civil war.
- 7) **Nostramo** £1.00 (1.25) a novel by Joseph Conrad which, though written by a fairly reactionary author, gives a telling portrayal of imperialism at work in Latin America
- 8) **Curious Journey** £3.20 (3.95) by K Griffiths and T O'Grady is a history of the unfinished revolution of Irish Republicanism told in the words of the participants
- 9) **Diego Garcia** (Minority Rights Group £1.20) plus **Falkland Islands, Whose Crisis?** (Latin America Bureau £1.95) Two pamphlets about strangely contrasting chapters in recent British imperialism, the two together for **£2.50**
- 10) **The Road To Gdansk** £2.80 (3.55) By Daniel Singer. An updated paperback edition of this much-praised book which includes an outstanding critique of Szozhentsyn
- 11) **Israel and the Arabs** £2.80 (3.50) by Maxime Rodinson. Revised edition provides a readable background to present conflicts
- 12) **Tears and Joy** £1.00 (1.20) A collection of writings by a group of parents of mentally handicapped children.

SPECIAL OFFER
 Ha Draper **Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution:** First two volumes. 1) State and Bureaucracy 2) Politics of Social Classes normally £12.35 for the two, special price to club members **£10.00** when ordered with your book club choice

Suggested selections (£6.50 each):

- A: titles 1, 2
 B: titles 4, 6, 7, 12 C: titles 7, 8, 11

Name

Address

Please send the following titles/selections (ringed)

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 11 12 A B C

I enclose £..... (minimum £6.50)

■ To join, complete this form and return to **BOOKMARX CLUB, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DE**

'When we fight that sexism we should be clear for whom and for what we are fighting. In fighting for the liberation of working class women the issue of porn is at the best marginal'

men. Why then not picket W.H. Smiths for selling Mills and Boon?

Banning porn does not change any of the system which creates it. As long as there is an alienating class society then sexist sexuality and porn will have a market.

Trying to change our sexuality is the most difficult of things. Attempts to do so can be just making a new religion, to deny our feelings and desires as they are 'sexist'. Politics then becomes a moral question of oppressing the 'wrong' thoughts and desires. At the present time there is a debate in the San Francisco gay community. Sado-masochist lesbians are arguing for acceptance of their sexuality, for a right to do with their bodies as they wish and not have to conform to a stereo-type of right-on lesbianism. The debate has raised a whole series of contradictions between clashing liberal demands and rights. I relate this to show that of all the aspects of sexism, sexuality is the last to change and that not by pure will-power of the individual.

The other question the issue raises is the call for a stronger state to ban porn. In a more extreme form there have been calls for more policing against rape.

There is an implicit argument in the idea that porn should be banned, that the police and courts should protect women from porn. This shows profound naivety as to the nature of the state. As socialists we often call for reforms that fall short of a revolutionary change of society. But we should never call for reforms that strengthen the enemy. The state is not a neutral body to seek help from, it is one of the major instruments of our oppression. We should never campaign for any increase in police powers.

The campaign against porn also promotes the idea that the members of an oppressed group (women, gays, blacks etc.) have common interests that over-rule all others: In other words, the slogan 'All women are oppressed by all men'. This is not the same as saying that women are oppressed by men.

By adding *all* it generalises to exclude class mystifying oppression and lifting it out

of any class base. It is also simply not true. Working class men do not oppress ruling class women. In fact quite the reverse happens, ruling class women both exploit (live off the labour) and oppress working class men. Working class men oppress working class women (as do all other classes of men and upper class women), but not women out of their class. They simply do not have the power to do so.

All the slogan does is to blur class conflicts that exist inside the oppressed group. Blurring of class differences is always to the benefit of the upper or middle class members of an oppressed group. There are countless examples of this in Africa (Mugabe is just the latest and most obvious example or in the black ghettos of America, America.

The same process is to be seen in the gay movement. The respected leaders of the gay community who 'speak for the gay community' are always middle-class gays or even gay scene owners - people who literally live off the profits made from working class gays. It is also to be seen in more subtle ways in the types and style of demands that the women's movement make.

Individualism is always a key sign that the movement is in the hands of middle-class leaders. Often the movement just represents members of the oppressed middle-class who want to get on in the world but are blocked by sexism or homophobia. I'm not saying that the fight for women or gay liberation is middle-class, but that the women's and gay movement rarely fight for working class women or gays. Campaigns for more college courses or allotted posts in trade union bureaucracies is not gaining anything for working class women.

More subtly, shifting the emphasis away from collective demands to the individual, and the stress on the effects of oppression on the individual, is all part of a middle-class mentality. It is fighting to remove sexism so that the 'able' members of society can rise to their deserved posts in society. It is fighting for a non-sexist capitalism based on merit, not for a destruction of sexist capitalism and creation of socialism.

All that I have said is a long way from arguments over porn, but they are the arguments that under-ly the debate. Sexism is deep and central part of capitalism. When we fight that sexism we should be clear for whom and for what we are fighting. In fighting for the liberation of working class women the issue of porn is at the best marginal, at the worse a diversion with moralistic and reactionary under-tones. □



COMMUNISM AND THE FAMILY
 40p plus 20p postage/live for £1.80 post free

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
 30p plus 20p postage/live for £1.40 post free

Two pamphlets by Alexandra Kollontai, two classics on socialism and women's liberation by one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution.

■ Both from **Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Rd, London N4 2DE**

Arguments for Reformism

Eight years ago *Pluto Press* published *Bureaucracy and Revolution in Eastern Europe* by Chris Harman. This year *Bookmarks* have published Chris Harman's *Germany—The Lost Revolution*, after *Pluto* turned it down. What they have published this month are four books in a series called *Arguments for Socialism*. Chris Bamberry looks at them.

Pluto Press's new series *Arguments for Socialism* comes with high praise. All the stars of the Labour Left are quoted on the cover welcoming 'this new initiative'. But unfortunately the series promises only to deceive. Far from bringing, as Hilary Wainwright claims, arguments for a 'new socialism together into public view', the arguments presented here are far from new and none too socialist. Instead they are the all too familiar positions of the Labour left.

The choice of the first four titles reveals a concern to pick up the political fragments. The book on women is stuck in a well worn groove. For a book on women trade unionists, there's a noticeable lack of discussion about the actual struggles of women workers, from Trico to Lee Jeans, which won equal pay and defended jobs. Instead the emphasis is on how the male dominated hierarchies of the trade union movement hold women down. The solution given is positive discrimination. I find the idea that women workers need extra seats on union executives or better training courses before anything can be done a bit insulting to those like the Lee Jeans women or women who've been in the forefront of the hospital strikes.

In *It makes you sick* the solution to the NHS's problems is seen as making it more democratic. For the author 'socialist' countries like China, Mozambique and Cuba provide the examples to be followed. No doubt Thatcher will have got loads of ideas for the NHS on her recent Chinese visit.

Out of all four books it's the one on food which is surprisingly the most interesting. The authors seem to recognise such a thing as class struggle. They point out the impact of bread shortages on Petrograd in 1917 and in the Warsaw of 1981. The 1978 bakers' strike was broken by police attacks on pickets after much urging from City interests worried about the effects of bread shortages on Britain's workforce. Bread still provides the essential calories for working an eight-hour shift. But even in *More than we can chew* the solutions offered are self-sufficiency for British agriculture and utilising the EEC and the Common Agricultural Policy.

The theme in all four books is the same. But it is left to *Richard Minns* in *Take over the*

City, which is rather more central and revealing, to spell it out. 'Capitalist structures', he states, 'are what we have to work with at the present time'. Capitalism and its state are here to stay for the foreseeable future so we'd better make the most of it. You've got to use the capitalist state—not destroy it.

In *Take over the City* the tone is set by page seven when Minns states: 'A socialist strategy....must counteract the belief that radical alternative policies for the institutions will damage savings and pensions'.

For this reviewer at least we aren't making a revolution to safeguard the NUM Pension Fund let alone 'the man from the Pru'. But then naturally revolution doesn't ever get a mention. Instead the ideal models for Minns are Mitterrand's France, social democratic West Germany and post-revolutionary Portugal. His 'alternative investment strategy' comes down to nationalising the banks and insurance firms—with full compensation of course—not as part of some drive to socialism but in order to make the existing capitalist system more efficient. The problem is, you see, that all these short sighted bankers keep investing overseas rather than in good old British BSC and BL. So they've got to be made to invest in British industry which, for Minns at least, will remain in private hands. It's all part of the full Alternative Economic Strategy package with import controls protecting Fortress Britain. No doubt we will have Mitterrand style austerity as well.

Selling Pluto

The argument offered is: 'that our savings are used against us'. Our hard won savings are used by nasty banks to make profits elsewhere in the world. As if 'the man from the Pru' goes round collecting ten bob a week from working class families and then ships it off to Brazil to speculate in coffee beans! In reality 80 percent of us have no savings worth speaking of at all. The money accumulated in the City comes from profits sweated out of workers, not from the little old lady round the corner. Having somehow got his hands on this capital by nationalising the banks Minns would then invest it in 'our' industry.

The idea that investment under capitalism leads to job losses is attacked as being theoretically crude. Try telling that to a worker at BL Longbridge or steelworkers at Ravenscraig. Investment under capitalism does lead to unemployment. Machinery constantly replaces workers. Those remaining have then got to pay for those machines, their replacements and somehow try to maintain the Boss's profits. It seems at least one author of *Arguments for Socialism* isn't acquainted with even basic Marxist economics.

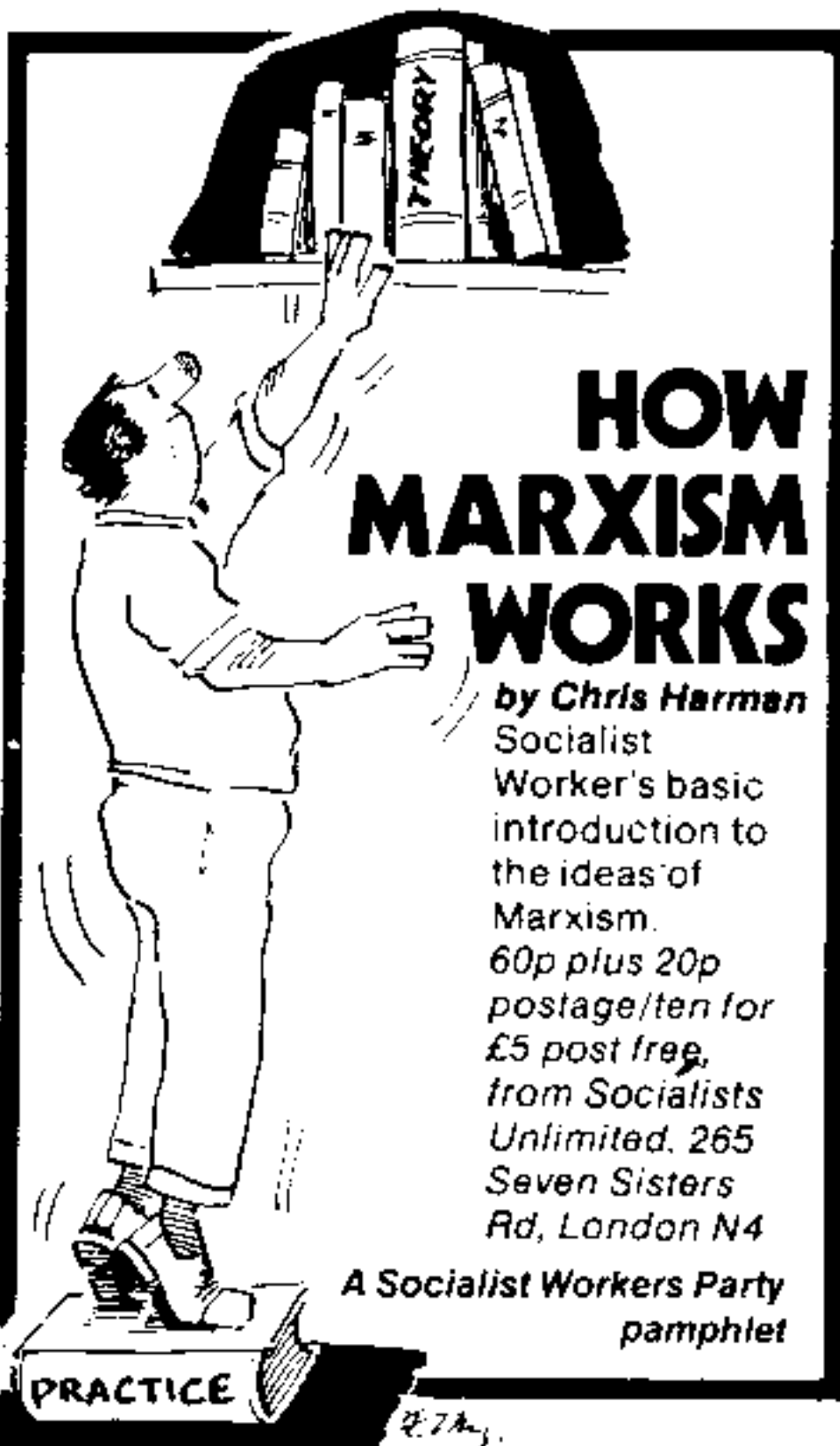
The conclusion reached in *Take over the City* is one shared by all four books. What's needed is a Labour Government which can push through necessary reforms. That hardly amounts to any 'new socialism' as

claimed on the cover. It is the same old recipe with the working class relegated to drawing up workers' plans to help restore profitability, or exerting shareholder power (*sic*) in the board rooms of the insurance firms.

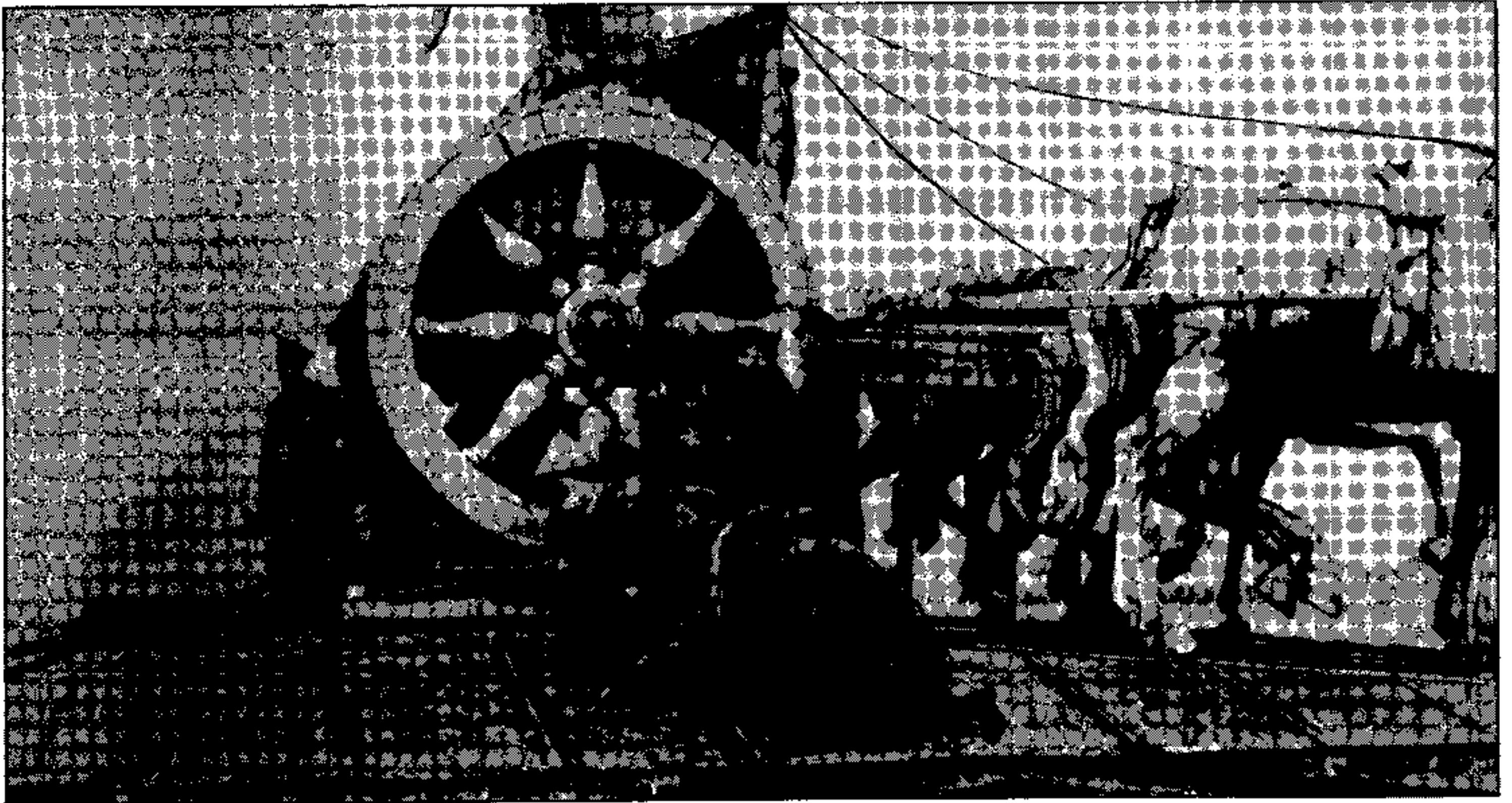
Pluto seems set on pursuing a new market, becoming the publishing house of the Labour Left. Perhaps they should have re-titled the series *Arguments for Bennism*—and a rather watered down Bennism at that. Yet not so long ago they were producing books that did provide arguments for socialism. But books like Tony Cliff's *Lenin* or J T Murphy's *Preparing for Power* haven't been reprinted, while Rosmer's *Lenin's Moscow* or Kidron's *Capitalism and Theory* just manage to creep onto the foot of *Pluto's* list. Perhaps *Pluto* think Marxism just doesn't sell. But then again, if you're out to sell to the Bennite left, books that talk of revolution, of smashing the existing state, and the need for a revolutionary workers party are just too crude for words.

I hope *Pluto* are in for a fright. As the Bennite left flees rightwards in the face of attack the last thing they're likely to be interested in is *Arguments for Socialism*. If *Pluto* want to capture the market they're so desperately seeking perhaps the next book in the series should be *Arguments for Witch-hunting Militant*. Alternatively, a somewhat more useful book might be *Why Benn Failed*, explaining recent events in Blackpool. If *Pluto* are looking for an author capable of providing the socialist arguments there are several contributors to *Socialist Review* who'd fit the bill. □

The first four titles of the *Arguments for Socialism* series are available at £2.50 each. They are: *Richard Minns Take over the City—The case for public ownership of financial institutions*, *Charlie Clutterbuck and Tim Lang More than we can chew—The crazy world of food and farming*, *Jenny Beale Getting it together—Women as Trade Unionists* and *Colin Thunhurst It makes you sick—The politics of the NHS*.



HOW MARXISM WORKS
by Chris Harman
Socialist
Worker's basic
introduction to
the ideas of
Marxism.
60p plus 20p
postage/ten for
£5 post free,
from Socialists
Unlimited, 265
Seven Sisters
Rd, London N4
A Socialist Workers Party
pamphlet



Revolutionaries taking up defensive positions on the roof of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate in 1918

The lost opportunity

Bookmarks have just published Chris Harman's long-awaited book on the German Revolution: *The Lost Revolution Germany 1918 to 1923* (£4.95). Alex Callincos welcomes it warmly.

As readers of his earlier *Bureaucracy and Revolution in Eastern Europe* will know, Chris is a master of historical narrative when he writes about revolutions. The series of convulsions which tore Germany apart for five years comes alive in the pages of this splendid book.

It recounts the spontaneous uprising of November 1918 which overthrew the monarchy and the Spartakist days of January 1919, when the treachery of Germany's Social-Democratic (SPD) government, the hesitations of the centrist Independent Socialists (USP), and the ultra-left impetuosity of the fledgling Communist Party (KPD) conspired to bring about the death at the hands of the reactionary *Freikorps* of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

The short-lived Bavarian Socialist Republic, the Kapp putsch of March 1920, which led to the formation of Red Armies on the Ruhr, the so-called March action a year later, when the KPD made a farcical attempt to seize power without the support of a majority of the workers, and the great lost opportunity of 1923, when the French occupation of the Ruhr, and strato-inflation

shoved even sections of the middle classes in the direction of revolutionary Communism are all analysed here.

The book does not, however, stand or fall as a historical narrative. The German revolution of 1918-23 was an occurrence whose reverberations are still being felt today. It is not simply that, as Chris makes amply plain, its failure paved the way for both Hitler and Stalin. More to the point, what we are confronted with here is the most important case of a revolutionary process taking place in an advanced capitalist country.

This is highly significant in itself. All the successful social revolutions of the past four centuries (starting with the Dutch revolt of 1564) have taken place in societies where most of the population lived off the soil, and where feudal relations of production still predominated, or had only recently been displaced. This is true of both Russia 1917 and China 1949, even though their outcomes were very different (respectively, a workers' state and bureaucratic state capitalism).

No immunity

Bourgeois sociologists have concluded that, contrary to Marx, mature capitalist societies are immune to revolution. Germany 1918-23 is a clear and complete contradiction of this hypothesis (recently advanced, for example, by Anthony Giddens in his *The Class Structure of Advanced Societies*).

For five years, the most powerful industrial economy in Europe, which had been ruled for nearly half a century by a

military and bureaucratic state apparatus renowned for its efficiency and ruthlessness, was shaken by a now open, now hidden civil war. Alfred Rosenberg, the first historian of the Weimar Republic, could write of the very end of this period: 'There have been few periods in recent German history which would have been so favourable to a socialist revolution as the summer of 1923.'

It is true that the German Empire destroyed by the revolution of 1918 was not a conventional bourgeois democracy. The dominance of the bourgeoisie had been established in Germany not through the forcible conquest of power, as in England 1640-60, or France 1789-1815. It was the result, rather, of what Gramsci called a 'passive revolution'.

The industrial bourgeoisie were prepared to leave control of the state apparatus in the hands of the quasi-feudal *Junker* landed class, in exchange for national unification and pro-capitalist economic policies.

This class-alliance was reflected in the structures of political domination. The *Reichstag*, although elected by universal manhood suffrage, did not control the executive. Under the federal system set up in 1870, considerable power was in the hands of the Prussian state government controlled by the *Junkers* thanks to a rigged electoral system. Bourgeois-democratic demands aimed at eliminating these remnants of absolutism consequently played a large part in the SPD's minimum programme.

Despite these peculiarities, the structures through which the organized working class were incorporated into the existing order were identical to those in other advanced capitalist countries. Robert Michels's pioneering study of the SPD, *Political Parties*, which appeared at the beginning of this century, analysed the evolution of a conservative trade-union bureaucracy closely allied to a party apparatus in which

the parliamentary leadership prevailed.

Michels showed how many of the features of the British Labour Party, which some parochial socialists believe to be unique, are indeed characteristic of classical reformist parties, which seek the improvement of workers' conditions within the framework of capitalism.

Carl Schorske, in his classic work on German social democracy, traces the way in which bureaucratization of the labour movement was accompanied by the SPD's gradual shift to the right in the years before 1914. This process culminated in the leadership's eager support of the Imperial government during the First World War, and in the role which SPD 'statesmen' such as Ebert, Noske and Scheidemann played in rescuing German capitalism after November 1918.

Yet it was workers reared in this profoundly conservative labour movement, the famous 'state within a state' with 90 daily papers, sports clubs, singing societies, and youth groups, who acted in the most revolutionary way between 1918 and 1923. One observer described a march by workers and soldiers in Berlin during the November Revolution: 'Most of the workers were of middle age, with grey bearded faces... They had the trade-unionists' corporate spirit and marched conscientiously, in order. Some of them were shouldering rifles.'

Consciousness

At the time, these workers would still have supported the SPD, or, at best, the USP. It was wartime privations which prompted them to rebel against the Kaiser, not a conscious commitment to revolutionary socialism. But Chris shows how, in the following years, as a result of the repression mounted by the SPD-sponsored *Freikorps*, and of the attempts by German capital to claw back the economic gains workers had made after November 1918, wider and wider sections of the proletariat, and even of the middle classes (their savings wiped out by post-war inflation) began to look to the KPD and to its objective of workers' power.

This process contradicts the claim, made both by many left-reformist and by some would-be revolutionaries, that 'ideological hegemony' has to be wrested from the bourgeoisie before there can be any talk of socialism. As Chris points out:

'All these views have the same basic fault. They see consciousness as a fixed property of individuals. They ask what workers believed at a certain point in time, then go on to argue that these beliefs established limits beyond which the revolution could not go. But consciousness is never a fixed property of individuals or classes. It is rather one aspect of their dynamic, ever-changing interaction with each other and with the world.'

Workers' consciousness is transformed through their experience of struggle. As Marx told an earlier generation of German revolutionaries (the Communist League in 1850): 'We say to the workers: You have 15,

20, 50 years of civil war to go through in order to alter the situation and to train yourselves for the exercise of power' (*Collected Works X 626*).

These words are entirely apposite when applied to Germany 1918-23 (although the period was one of five rather than fifteen or fifty years). A working class reared in reformism gradually shook off the tutelage of the SPD, and confronted the bourgeoisie, often with arms in their hands.

The question of time-scale is an important one. Reformists accuse revolutionaries of advocating a sudden insurrection—a charge on the Winter Palace. But the experience of Germany 1918-23 shows that revolution is a *process*, lasting some considerable period of time, and involving a series of retreats and advances for the revolutionary forces, none of which is necessarily final.



Gustav Noske the 'socialist'. Commander-in-Chief of the *Freikorps*

The Russian revolution of 1917 was comparatively brief, lasting some eight months, but then there had been the great dress rehearsal of 1905. The prolonged character of any revolutionary upheaval reflects the weaknesses of both sides. Once the state apparatus has disintegrated, as it did in Germany after the soldiers' and sailors' mutinies of November 1918, then it will take some time for the ruling class to regroup its forces, and attempt to regain its position.

In Germany Ebert's coalition of SPD and USP ministers was instrumental in facilitating this process. On the other hand, workers do not break from their traditional beliefs overnight. A comparatively prolonged period of struggle, in which the true nature of the reformist parties is revealed, is necessary.

Experience of struggle is not, however, a sufficient condition of workers making a revolution. If it were, then Rosa Luxemburg would have been right not to have broken with the SPD during, or even before the First World War. Chris shows very well how this fatalist refusal to build a disciplined revolutionary organization hamstrung Luxemburg and her successors after November 1918.

The early KPD was dominated by young revolutionaries fresh from the war, with little or no experience of the economic class struggle, too new to politics to understand

the need to win a majority of the working class before attempting the conquest of power.

The consequences were disastrous: the Spartakists (as the German Communists called themselves) fell into the trap of using the pretext of the dismissal of the revolutionary Berlin police chief to overturn the Ebert government in alliance with the left of the USP. The inevitable failure of this putsch allowed Ebert and Noske to unleash the *Freikorps*, recruited from the elite regiments of the old Imperial Army, on Berlin. Luxemburg, who opposed this adventure, and Liebknecht, who had encouraged it, were its chief victims.

The period of 1918-20 also brings out one of the chief characteristics of a revolutionary crisis—the sheer confusion of ideas it involves. Workers did not reject their old beliefs in one clean break. Revolutionary, reformist, and reactionary ideas co-existed in a bizarre mess within many workers' heads. The most successful political tendencies in such a period are likely to be those which pander to this confusion. Centrism is just such a tendency, seeking as it does to arrive at a compromise between reform and revolution, between preserving the old order and forcibly overthrowing it.

Centrism

The classic case of centrism in Germany was the USP. Formed by anti-war socialists expelled from the SPD in 1917, it initially embraced everyone from Eduard Bernstein, father of revisionism, Karl Kautsky, pope of orthodox Marxism, and the revolutionaries Luxemburg and Liebknecht. Although after 1918 the USP leadership gradually moved rightwards, it attracted hundreds of thousands of workers who were disillusioned with the SPD, but were dubious of the KPD, including the revolutionary shop stewards such as Richard Muller.

Insofar as centrism, not only in Germany but among the leaders of left Social Democracy in Austria (Otto Bauer, for example), had a theory, it was that of combining parliamentary and workers' democracy. Constitutions were devised in which parliamentary institutions co-existed with workers' councils.

This sort of conception is still very influential today. The political theorist Nicos Poulantzas advocated in his last book, *State, Power, Socialism*, the 'articulation' of direct and representative democracy. Similar positions were espoused by Louis Althusser and his French co-thinkers.

At a different level, any Labour new left worth his or her salt will happily waffle on about the importance of both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary movements. Even some ex-revolutionaries take this view. Tariq Ali apparently wants to combine workers' councils with an assembly, elected by universal suffrage while a leading American Trotskyist, Tim Woforth, recently devoted an article in *New Left Review* to putting the case for such an arrangement.

The trouble with such strategies is that they mistake the nature of state power. The

sociologist Max Weber defined the state as an association possessing 'the monopoly of legitimate violence' in a particular territory. This definition, at least as far as modern states are concerned, seems to me essentially correct. State power involves both some sort of more or less plausible ideological justification for its exercise by a particular group, and the ability to enforce that group's commands.

In the last instance, it is coercive power that is decisive, but it is always bound up with ideological factors. Thus, in January 1919 it was less the balance of military forces which doomed the attempt to overturn Ebert, than the mass of workers' (understandable) suspicions of the revolutionary left, and the vacillations of the USP.

The nature of the state power is such as to require a unified command of the repressive forces of the state, and a single source of legitimacy. (These don't have to be the same - indeed, they necessarily differ in bourgeois democracies, where parliament is sovereign, but does not control the executive.)

No two powers

Parliament and workers' councils cannot simply co-exist as equals. Unless one is subordinated to the other, they represent alternative states competing for dominance. Moreover, workers' councils radically challenge bourgeois democracy, asserting that there is a superior form of democracy, one based on the direct election and recall of workplace delegates.

To allow parliament to continue to exist, or to summon a new one (as Ebert did in 1918, convoking the Constituent Assembly), is to create an alternative source of legitimacy to the councils, one behind which the reactionary forces will gather until they can regain the offensive.

The German revolution thus followed a classic pattern, first set in the French revolution of 1848, and repeated as recently as Portugal 1974-5. The forces of the old order, discomfited in the early stages of the revolution, lend their (albeit highly critical) support to the 'moderate' left. An example is the famous pact between Ebert and General Groener, head of the Imperial General Staff, during the November Revolu-

tion. A representative assembly elected by universal suffrage is then summoned, which tends, because parliamentary elections atomize the voters into isolated individuals and encourage passivity, and because of the confusion characteristic of the early stages of the revolution, to isolate the revolutionary left.

The assembly thus legitimates a reign of terror against the 'extremist' and 'anti-democratic' left, such as that mounted by the *Freikorps* in 1919, and Cavaignac's bloody repression of the Paris workers in June 1848. Once the assembly and its 'moderate' leaders has served its purpose, however, the forces of the counter-revolution will turn on them, as the German army did on Ebert during the Kapp putsch.

Consider the career of the Portuguese Socialist leader Mario Soares, chief victor in the Constituent Assembly elections of spring 1975, front man in the offensive against the revolution that same summer, finally dumped by the Portuguese bourgeoisie in favour of the right-wing parties. (The Portuguese revolution, as Chris and Tony Cliff pointed out in their numerous writings at the time, was an eerie reprise of the German upheaval, with most of the same mistakes being made.)

To seek to reconcile bourgeois and proletarian democracy, therefore, is to doom socialist revolution to defeat. One of the main tasks of revolutionaries is to challenge the easy solution offered by the centrists, and to argue consistently that only through the workers' councils taking sole power, and suppressing the institutions of bourgeois domination, *including* parliament, can the proletariat achieve its objective of a classless society.

The experience of Germany 1918-23 establishes the essential role of a revolutionary party in more than one respect. It is not simply that reformist ideas can only be broken down through revolutionaries participating in workers' struggles, and seeking to draw attention to the lessons they contain. Also in question is the decisive role of revolutionary *leadership* in situations of crisis. 'Leadership' is a word of which one is naturally chary because it carries with it connotations of orthodox Trotskyist programme-thumping. Nevertheless, it remains true that realistic, flexible, and de-

cisive leadership is indispensable to the success of a revolution.

Take the case of Heinrich Brandler, one of the main leaders of the KPD during this period. He was in many ways an admirable figure. For example, he was able to make Chemnitz, hitherto a stronghold of the SPD, one of the Communists' main bases, refusing to be drawn into premature insurrection, and participating in a series of economic battles in which the KPD gradually came to play the leading role. Yet his responsibility for the disastrous 1921 March action fatally weakened his confidence in his own judgement.

Thereafter, Brandler took his line from the Comintern leadership in Moscow. A consequence was that in the summer of 1923, when the masses, pauperized by strato-inflation and the collapse of the mark, gravitated towards the revolution, the KPD did not grasp the opportunity fate had offered them.

What they lacked

Only when the most favourable moment had passed, and the reactionary Cuno government had been replaced by a Grand Coalition of the SPD and the bourgeois parties, did the Comintern wake up to the situation. Even then, the hesitations of the KPD leadership, plus some bad advice from Moscow, meant that the German October was a fiasco.

The German Communists lacked what the Bolsheviks had possessed in Russia in 1917: a disciplined organization of experienced members trained by years of ups and downs in the struggle, and a leadership capable of making rapid tactical adjustments while keeping the basic objective of workers' power always in their sights.

When it was founded at the end of 1918, the KPD had the ablest group of leaders anywhere outside Russia itself - Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches, Paul Levi, Brandler. It lacked the cadre necessary to translate the leadership's perspectives into concerted activity. By the time such a cadre had been formed, steeled by the bloodshed of 1919 and 1920, and swelled by the split which brought much of the USP over to Communism in late 1920, they lacked an effective leadership. Luxemburg, Jogiches, and Liebknecht were dead, Paul Levi was soon driven out for his opposition to the mad March action, and Brandler's confidence was shattered by the same events.

More than anything else, Chris's book underlines the absolute importance of building the party *before* the revolutionary crisis. By the time the upheaval is upon us, it may already be too late. The sheer hard slog of winning small numbers to revolutionary politics in years of political and economic retreat such as the present ones pays enormous dividends when the struggle revives, as the Bolsheviks learned in 1912, when the Russian workers' movement burst into action after the defeat of the 1905 revolution, and then again in 1917 itself. For all her brilliance and courage, Rosa Luxemburg remained too wedded to the fatalistic Marxism of the Second International to understand this. That must be her epitaph.



Special offer to *Socialist Review* readers

■£3.95 (plus £1 postage, £2 maximum for bulk orders)
I enclose £..... (postage included/cheques payable to Socialists Unlimited). Return to Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DE.

Name

Address

Back to the Family

The Feminine Mystique
Betty Friedan
Penguin £1.95

The Second Stage
Betty Friedan
Michael Joseph £8.95

The Feminine Mystique, published in 1963, was a call to arms. Slamming into the popularisers of Freudian psychology and the sociologists of the fifties who said 'biology is destiny' and 'a woman's place is in the home', Betty Friedan poured scorn on the ideology—the mystique—which says that true female fulfilment is to be found in raising a family and being a wife.

She must have given thousands of women the confidence to realise that in their feelings of emptiness, in their quiet desperation as housewives, they were not alone. She must have given many women the courage to stand up and be counted as part of the women's movement. That was the strength of the book.

But although *The Feminine Mystique*, contained certain insights into the workings of capitalist society, it patently lacked a class analysis. It was bourgeois feminism, underpinned theoretically by the ideas associated with 'growth' psychology. This new psychology argued that there is a basic human need to *grow*. People are only healthy and happy when they are fulfilling their potential as human beings.

In putting forward this argument growth psychology totally rejected the dominant psychology of the fifties which accepted society as it stood and suggested that people should be adjusted to fit the world like cogs in a machine. The appeal of the theory lies in its intuitive understanding of *alienation*. Betty Friedan comments:

'In this new psychological thinking... the significant tense is the future. It is not enough for an individual to be loved and

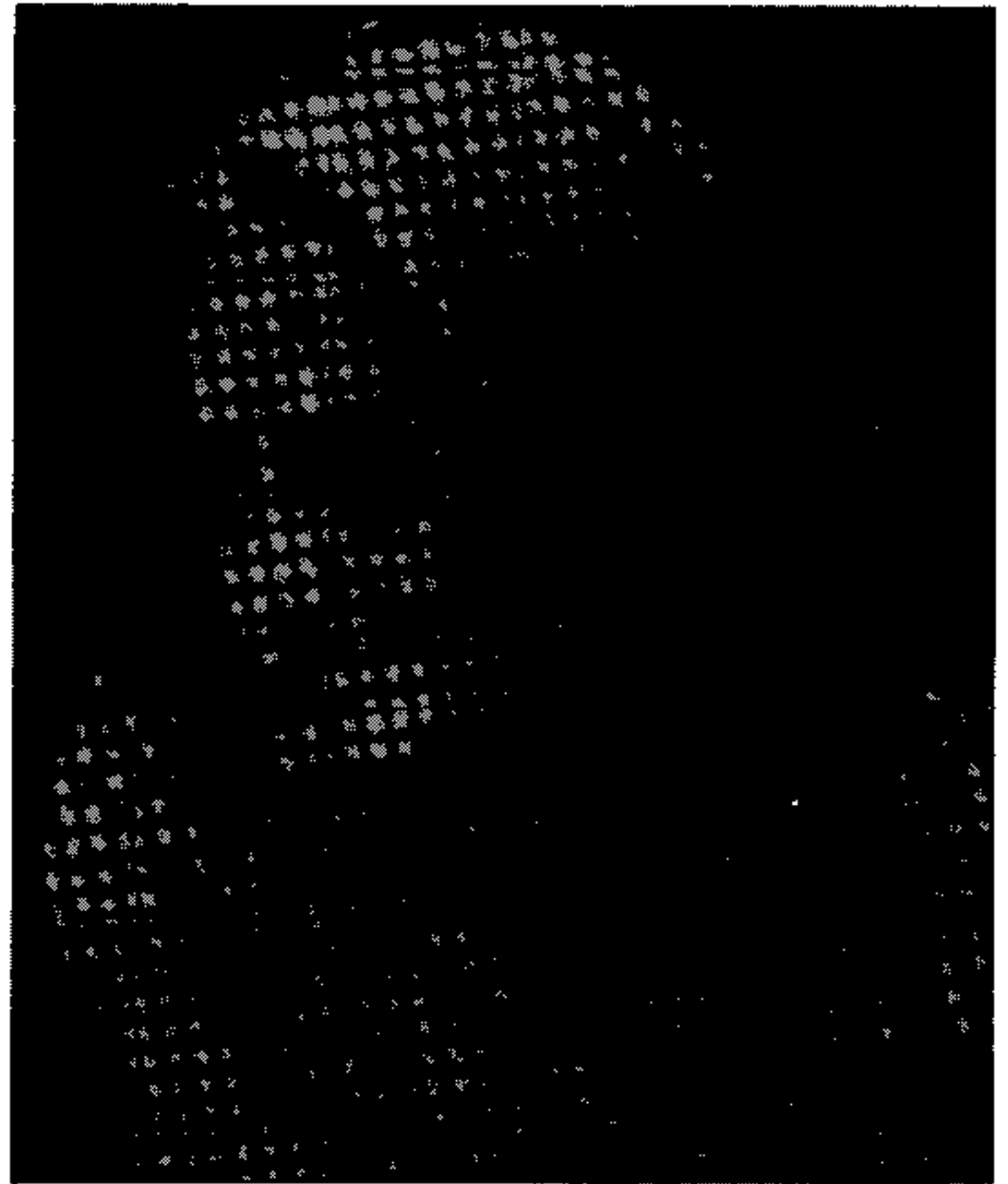
accepted by others, to be adjusted to his culture. He must take his existence seriously enough to make his own commitment to life and the future; he forfeits his existence by failing to fulfil his entire being. For years psychiatrists have tried to "cure" patients' conflicts by fitting them to the culture. But adjustment to a culture which does not permit the realisation of one's entire being is not a cure at all...'

Betty Friedan took the significant step of applying the assumptions of growth psychology to women, not flinching in the face of contradictions which the key exponents of the theory had either bent to fit their arguments or simply chosen to ignore. She says of one of them:

'Professor Maslow told me that he thought self-actualisation is only possible for women today in America if one person can grow through another—that is if the woman can realise her own potential through her husband and children. "We do not know if this is possible or not," he said.'

Friedan used the assumptions of growth psychology to cut through to a very obvious truth. By accepting the feminine mystique, she says, a woman is suppressing her own growth and denying her potential to become a complete person in her own right. She thus used the theory to make sense of the emptiness and despair felt by women whose only identity was that of 'housewife'; she made sense of the 'problem that has no name'.

In taking this step Betty Friedan was simply pointing out a weakness in the growth psychologists' application of their own theory, namely their failure to see its particular relevance for women. But Friedan had her own blind spot as well. A blind spot shared with the proponents of growth psychology which prevented them from seeing the really



Betty Friedan

radical implications of what they were saying.

Growth psychologists believe that people have a legitimate right to strive for their own fulfilment and completeness. They reject psychologies which try to reshape the untidy bits of personality to fit the social order. The logic of this seems to me quite simple: if you want to see a race of 'whole' people, and you don't believe that people should be trimmed to fit the world, then the only option left to you is that of trying to change the world itself.

Growth psychology in fact cries out for a marxist analysis to make clear its implications. Instead it has been used as a foundation stone for encounter groups and forays into alternative lifestyles in general. And it has carried Betty Friedan on that course as well.

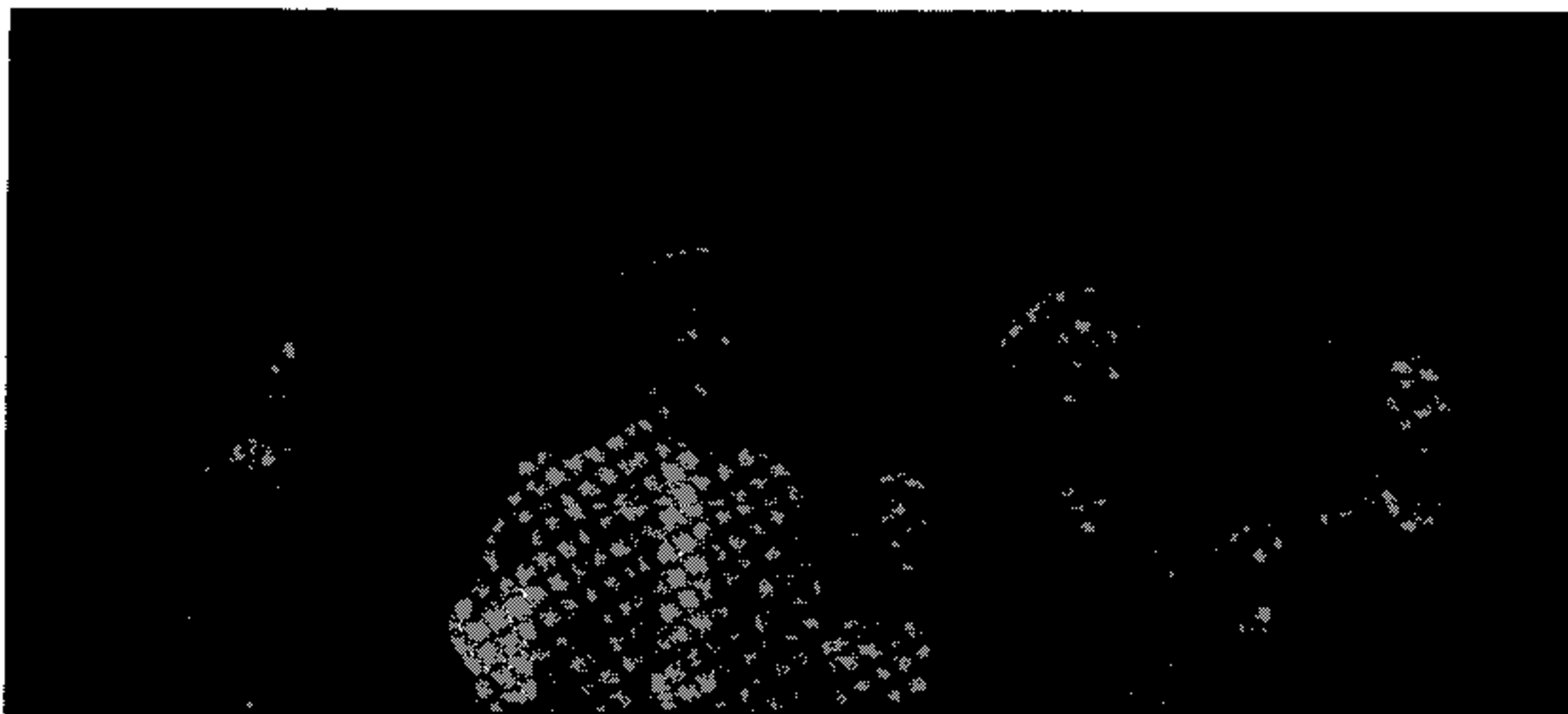
Twenty years ago Betty Friedan

was full of optimism. Women must liberate themselves, she argued. Indeed they were liberating themselves from their 'comfortable concentration camps' and going out into the world to be educated and to get jobs which would give meaning to their lives.

Today Betty Friedan is far less optimistic. She has spent more than fifteen years building the bourgeois feminist and now thoroughly 'respectable' National Organisation of Women. NOW has campaigned for changes in the law, concentrating recently on the Equal Rights Amendment, which was finally defeated in June of this year, having not been ratified by a sufficient number of states.

Betty Friedan's latest book, *The Second Stage* was written during the months when it was becoming increasingly clear that the ERA was doomed to failure. Though Friedan had not given up the fight, she admits that it would take a miracle for the ERA to be passed. The book is a bewildered statement, born of the stringencies of economic recession and political reaction, both of which Friedan lacks the politics to understand. A sense of tiredness and defeat runs throughout.

'It is hard to keep summoning the energy for battles like ERA, which according to all the polls and the public commitment of elected officials and political parties, should have been won long ago, and for the right to choose when and whether to have a child, and thus to safe legal abortion—won eight years ago... only to be fought over again and again... I sense other victories we thought we won



Bella Abzug, Rosalynn Carter, Betty Ford and Lady Bird Johnson at the First National Women's Conference Houston 1977

yielding illusory gains...

Nevertheless, with the hallelujahs of the Moral Majority ringing in her ears, Betty Friedan sets out to evaluate what went wrong and to plan a strategy for the future. Her basic promise is that 'the womens' movement has come just about as far as it can in terms of women alone.'

The first stage, she argues, was characterised by polarisations: women v men, feminism v the family. In the second stage women must reunite with men, reclaim the family from the grasp of the political Right and continue the unfinished battle for liberation. But beneath the optimistic talk of complete liberation there is a note of backs-to-the-wall desperation:

'"Family" is not just a buzz word for reaction; for women, as for men, it is the symbol for that last area where one has any hope of individual control over one's destiny, of meeting one's most basic human needs, of nourishing the core of personhood threatened now by vast impersonal institutions and uncontrollable corporate and government bureaucracies and the bewildering, accelerating pace of change. Against these menaces, the family may be as crucial for survival as it used to be against the untamed wilderness and the raging elements, and the old simple kinds of despotism.'

Not surprisingly Friedan has caused more than a slight ripple in the womens' movement by talking of a return to the family. Her argument however is not quite as reactionary as it sounds: she is not suggesting a return to the 'comfortable concentration camps' she once derided; nor is she advocating that the mythical nuclear family with its 2.2 children, cat, dog and station-wagon is where its all at. 'The family is who you come home to,' she says. And that might involve any conceivable permutation of personal and sexual relationships.

But there is a certain dishonesty to the argument as well. If your 'family' is gay, for example, then you don't mention the fact. It might lose you support. Because Friedan has no class analysis, she follows the well-worn path of arguing the need for a broad based alliance founded on the lowest common denominator. It is the politics of caution, of not giving offence, the kind of politics often encountered in the anti-bomb movement here. Abortion should be talked of as 'the choice to have children' simply so as not offend Catholic priests.

In their opposition to women v men polarisations, to separatism and single issue campaigns, Friedan's arguments have a certain appeal.

'In the first stage,' she says, 'the women's movement directed too much energy into sexual politics, from the personal bedroom wars against men, to mass marches against rape and pornography, to take back the night. Sexual war against men is an irrelevant, self-defeating acting out of rage. It does not change the conditions of our lives...'

But looked at more closely Friedan's argument that sexual politics is a 'red herring' is part of the same desire not to give offence... to the Catholic hierarchy, the Orthodox Jewish establishment, even the Moral Majority. It is a last ditch stand to save the ERA. A strategy born of desperation.

'Such slogans as "free abortion on demand",' she says, 'had connotations of sexual licentiousness, not only affronting the moral values of conservatives, but implying a certain lack of reverence for life and the mysteries of conception and birth which have been women's agony and ecstasy and defining value down through the ages.'

If the major weakness of the first stage was its pre-occupation with sexual politics, what is Betty Friedan's strategy for the second

stage? How do we wage the uncompleted battle for liberation and where will it take us? The answer is not very far. Demands on the state for such things as proper child care facilities and adequate social security are a waste of time now, she argues.

'The public program, which once seemed the solution if women and men are to share the joys and responsibilities of parenting, as they now must by necessity share the burden of earning, are hardly conceivable in the face of political reaction, economic recession, inflation, unemployment and the energy crunch,' she says.

Up against the big impersonal bureaucracy and an authoritarian government women will simply get trampled underfoot. It is no longer possible to take on these powers at their own game. Instead women, with men in tow, must retreat into community politics, relying on the grass-roots style of the early womens' movement to make changes at a local level. They must engage in 'guerilla resistance' to build their own voluntary child care programmes and communal facilities. It is all very much a case of making a virtue out of necessity.

Betty Friedan tries continually to dress up her arguments for a retreat

into lifestyle politics with grand talk of 'human liberation' and 'a sex-role revolution'. But continually the truth slips out:

'In the second stage we will transcend the false conflict between volunteerism and professionalism, because in fact the voluntary organisations will be the only way to provide the services essential to further social change, and the living of equality—now that it appears we will have to rely less and less on government agencies and the courts.'

To talk of human liberation in the face of the economic stringencies which Betty Friedan fully recognises and graphically describes, is a mind-boggling piece of double-think even from a bourgeois feminist point of view. But Friedan still clings to the language at least of growth psychology. Even its key exponent Maslow, full of enthusiasm for his new psychology in the halcyon days of the early sixties, once paused to comment: 'Though in principle, self-actualisation is easy, in practice it rarely happens—by my criteria, certainly in less than one per cent of the adult population.' Perhaps Betty Friedan didn't notice that remark.

Jane Ure-Smith

Geography lesson

The Limits to Capital

David Harvey

Basil Blackwell £15

The author of this book is a radical professor of Geography. Apparently he set out to write a Marxist study of urbanisation and ended up working his way through Marx's *Capital*.

'Everyone who studies Marx', writes Harvey 'feels compelled to write a book about the experience.' Fair enough, but these days you need to be a professor to get your exploratory scribbles, running to around 450 closely printed pages, published in full by a respectable bourgeois publisher.

The fact that Harvey is a geographer gives the book its angle. The last part of it is devoted to the impact of capitalism upon geographical space—to neglected questions of land and rent, the mobility of capital and labour, the creation of physical infrastructures and urban complexes. Harvey emphasises the tension within capitalism, between the freedom of money capital to move almost instantaneously anywhere in the world, and the immobility of capital once it has been 'fixed' or turned into buildings and factories.

All that is interesting to suggest that Harvey might one day produce a useful study of urbanisation. Unfortunately most of this book is devoted to yet another dense, tortuous, and not particularly

original, re-examination of the classical text of Marxism.

Harvey does have the virtue of taking seriously aspects of Marx's theory, such as his ideas on money, or the devaluation of capital in the course of crises, which are commonly ignored or dismissed. Perhaps that's because he didn't pass through the thorough indoctrination in bourgeois economics, from which even the better Marxist economists writing today seem unable to escape.

But Harvey's text is far too abstract and academically oriented to be recommended as a useful introductory work—whilst his discussion of some of the major controversies in the Marxist tradition fails to clarify the important political issues at stake, and often fudges over the problems in a torrent of verbosity.

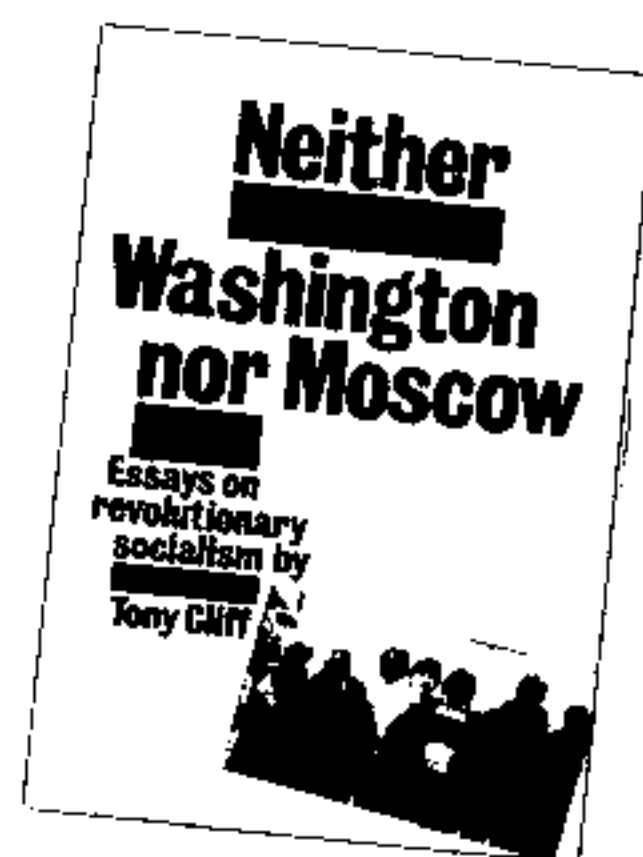
Harvey locates the limits of capital within capitalism itself. He sees that the expansion of the system tends to undermine itself, and that in resolving one crisis the system only prepares the ground for an even more severe and extensive crisis in the future. But he never gets off the level of that sort of abstraction in order to grapple with the nature of the crisis capitalism is in today. How close are we to the limits of capital? Harvey never even poses what would seem to be an obvious question for a book with such a title.

Pete Green

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW by Tony Cliff

Essays on revolutionary socialism written over a period of nearly forty years. Ranging from Eastern Europe to the postwar boom in the West, they trace the political foundations of the SWP.

£3.25 plus 70p postage from



Socialists
Unlimited, 265
Seven Sisters Rd,
London N4 2DE

Past imperfect

Braided Lives
Marge Piercy
Allen Lane, £7.95

Braided Lives is the seventh novel by Marge Piercy though it wasn't until her fourth, *Woman on the edge of time* that her work became popularly known in Britain.

In that novel the life of a poor, Mexican American woman in a New York Mental Institute is contrasted with her vision of a future utopia.

There was much in the novel's utopia that I found too close to hippiedom to really like, but what made the vision compelling was that it dealt with how people actually lived and worked together.

The future Marge Piercy evoked made the reader realise that Connie, the novel's heroine, was not just a victim. She was a patient at the mercy of lobotomy obsessed Medical 'experts'. She was a woman being cheated and it was her vision of a better future that gave her the strength to fight back against the way she was being treated in the present.

Braided Lives reverses that novel. The past, rather than the future, is viewed from the present. The past is America in the 1950s. The story revolves around Jill, a

working class girl from Detroit. It traces her life through college at the University of Michigan into early adulthood. The story is told in retrospect by Jill herself twenty years after, when she has achieved a degree of success as a poet.

Events that take place, like the effect that McCarthyism have on her student life, are thus viewed twice. First from the point of view of herself as a civil rights enthusiast and then from the hindsight of a mature political activist.

Jill telling her story in retrospect allows the reader to be distanced from some of her more painful experiences.

Much of the novel deals with the issue of abortion and the right of women to control their lives. This struggle is as relevant now as then. In the '80s the struggle is to keep abortion legal. For Jill the struggle to legalise it had not even begun. When she gets pregnant she is forced to induce the abortion herself.

'If it were even a couple of years ago I would write this scene, but if I do so now with the anti-women forces rich and powerful, desperate young girls, desperate middle aged women, all the victims of rape, incest, battering far more numerous

than any of us like to believe, all the women who simply do not agree to catching a baby as you might catch the flu or pneumonia would be tempted to do as I did, just because I survived it, but barely, abortion by my own hands, forcing my own womb. There have to be better ways. I cannot include a recipe for action that is too likely to kill you.'

Two years ago writing in *Socialist Review* Ewa Barker had this to say about Marge Piercy's novel *Small Changes*:

MUSIC

The message of rap

Rap has at last had a hit with *The Message* by Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five - one of the first political rap records. It is a fast moving indictment of life in Reagan's America. Grand Master Flash has been around for over 10 years, with the Furious Five for seven. His latest record is a far cry from the earlier raps - it is directly political.

'Broken glass everywhere, people pissing on the stairs, y'know they just don't care./I can't take the smell and I can't take the noise./Got no money to move out./I guess I've got no choice./Rats in the front room, roaches in the back./Junkies in the alley with the baseball bat./I tried to get away but I couldn't get far./Because the man from the garage re-possessed my car. Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge./I'm trying not to lose my head.' (*The Message*)

Rap has grown out of disco. It has fast rhyming jive-talk over a beat. It comes from a long tradition in black American music. It evolved from the D.J./performer of the '30s who had a touch of comic patter, through the '50s fast-talking D.J.s with such people as B.B. King (the M.C. of WDIA's Sepia Swing Club) and Rufus Thomas, who are well known as musicians, into the '60s with such people as the Black Muslims 'group', the Last Poets.

Rap has grown directly from the black disco scene of New York. The rappers, there are usually more than one, talk quick rhyming couplets over messed around with records, usually disco standards. Usually the rapper's words are bragging about his/hers characteristics - one fast ego trip. But as with much bragging it's performed with 'I'm-the-greatest' style of humour.

Many disco goers hate rap. Disco is about music, the beat and dancing. Rap is about words, listening and getting into the show of the rappers. Rapping is a real performance, full of humour and wild clothes, a full show. It has developed using record players as a musical instrument. The records rapped over are played backwards, slowed down messed around with,

'It is a book I would particularly like male comrades to read. It communicates well many things which are too subtle and complex to be easily explained. Perhaps that's what novels are for.'

Braided Lives is another excellent novel reminding us what we're fighting for. The conflicts and battles that impelled Jill towards her feminism and political awareness find an echo in all those struggling now.

Peter Court

chopped up, whatever - not unlike dub reggae. Any and all music can be used by a good rap group in Harlem and the Lower East Side party scene.

As producer Arthur Baker of *Rockers Revenge* put it:

'Everyone's a DJ - you could find thousands of DJs out in New York, who may not have jobs, who may not have the equipment, just the whole subculture that's developed: DJs, rappers, break dancers, graffiti. They're being creative in ways that haven't needed that much money and in ways that they can create their own art' (NME 18/9/82).

Political rapping like rap itself is very New York. The influence of the Last Poets of the '60s is clear and obvious. Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five have been the ones to get a wide audience in Britain. This is rather ironic since last year they were booed off stage at a Clash gig, a fact that says quite a lot about Clash fans in America.

Before *The Message* there has only been bad rip-off like Adam Ants awful rap record. But Grand Master Flash is not the only one. There is Brother D who pumps out black nationalism in the Bronx - 'How we gonna make the black nation rise/Agitate and organise.'

In complete contrast are the Symphonik B-Boys Mixx, a group of 6 quick-spin D.J.s who use as their base classical music. By repeated hornblasts, backwards violins, and slowdown woodwinds they create rap and a 'disco' beat. As I said, any and all music can be called on by good rappers, the more unusual the wilder the end product can be.

Rap has not really hit Britain as yet. There's no equivalent of the New York scene. As a new creation, it's making music without musical instruments. Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five finish their show with:

'Remember one thing. We're not a band. We've never been a band and we'll never be a band. We're just 6 guys and 2 turntables. Think about it.'

Noel Halifax

Fifth Socialist Bookfair
5th and 6th November
Camden Town Hall
Euston Road, London WC1

A comprehensive display of
Socialist, feminist and radical books,
pamphlets and periodicals from a
wide variety of publishers will be
displayed.
They will be available for
purchase by trade and
public alike.

1982
SOCIALIST
BOOKFAIR

Opening times:
Friday 5th Nov
12-6.00
Saturday 6th Nov
11-5.00

Further details:
phone
01-802 6145

OCTOBER 1956

In Hungary in 1956 the mass of the people had been watching events in Poland. The Hungarian Communist Party itself was split on the way forward after the Krushchev denunciations of Stalin. Old oppositionists who had not died in the Rajk purges began to be re-admitted to the party. The young communists began to meet in a semi-official grouping known as the 'Petofi Circle', named after the nationalist poet of the 1848 revolution.

The Petofi Circle was to be the intellectual tinder of the coming events. Initially at least it was allowed to continue meeting. The party leaders began to feel their world crumbling at the edges and they felt that they did not have the authority amongst the membership to challenge it.

By the middle of the summer, no doubt alarmed by the turn of events in Poland, the Russians intervened and forced a change in party leadership. The old stalinist leader Rakosi was dismissed and his henchman Erno Gero replaced him.

Gero himself was nothing more than a Stalinist timeserver, but the removal of Rakosi generated amongst the population the idea that change or reform was possible. This idea, coupled with the confusion in the direction of the ruling circles, meant that those groups around the Petofi Circle became bolder. On the 22 October they called for a mass demonstration in support of the Poles.

The government initially gave permission for the demonstration to go ahead, hoping to be able to contain its effects. Details were even broadcast on the state radio. The streets of Budapest were covered in the placards of the student groups. Then with no explanations, just as people were assembling in various parts of the city, the radio announced that the demonstration had been forbidden. The government had to admit its inability to control the movement. By lunch time over a hundred thousand had assembled in the middle of Budapest.

As the demonstrations developed the government became increasingly worried. Gero broadcast on the radio denouncing the demonstrators as 'nationalist well poisoners' and 'enemies of the Soviet Union'. The crowds milling around the Bem statue began to move towards the Radio Station. Others went off to the city park. In one of the most spectacular political events of the post war period they demolished the monstrous statue of Stalin, leaving only his boots on the plinth. Those boots were to be filled only too soon by the troops of his successor, Nikita Krushchev.

When the crowd arrived at the Radio Station to voice their protest at the slanders of the Government, they were met by a force of the AVO, a sort of Hungarian Special Patrol Group. The AVO were extremely worried by the turn of events.

They were the guardians of the state, highly privileged, well paid, well fed and, like most of their ilk, thugs into the bargain. Their response to the demonstration was predictable: they opened fire with machine guns and many demonstrators died.

The actions of the secret police turned a militant demonstration into the beginnings of

a revolution. From the start the revolutionaries had some access to weapons. There were amongst them many soldiers, and many of the workers were members of rifle clubs and hunting associations.

Barricades were thrown up and the AVO were pelted with cobbles and petrolbombs. Within hours of the first riots, Russian troops poured into the city. They were met by youths with petrol bombs. The Gero Government collapsed. The Russian army was the de-facto Government of Hungary.

Next day Gero broadcast on the radio. He announced a new government under the Prime Ministership of Imre Nagy. This was a concession to the demands of the previous day, but a concession hedged around by the declaration of martial law and a statement that the Russian troops would remain until law and order was restored.

The workers of Budapest knew that to lay down their arms while Russian troops remained on their soil was to lay themselves open to Stalinist repression. The reforms they were demanding could never be conceded by the Russians. Workers councils in the factories was too revolutionary a demand to be granted by the Russian ruling class. Such ideas can be carried across frontiers by soldiers and often prove infectious.

By the second day of the revolution the Hungarian Army and Militia was beginning to come on the side of the masses. Pal Maleter, the colonel in charge of the main Budapest barracks, the Killian Barracks, phoned the War Minister and informed him that the first Russian tank to approach the barracks would be fired upon.

By the third day there emerged throughout the country new organs of revolutionary power - the workers' councils. These councils developed in a surprisingly similar manner. Their demands were at first a cautious acceptance of the Nagy Government, but every resolution of support for Nagy was tied to conditions which the Russians could not swallow.

For instance, the miners of Balinkas first demand was for the removal of the Russian troops. The cautious welcome to the new government was coupled with the sending of delegations to Budapest from all industrial centres. The message was the same: 'We will support you when you agree to our programme and remove the Russian troops.'

The government were faced with a difficult decision: acquiesce to the demands of the revolutionaries and risk the wrath of their Russian mentors, or use the power of the Russians to crush the revolution in its own blood.

Nagy attempted to implement the first of these alternatives. The government claimed the revolution for its own. On the 1st of November, the Party Secretary Janos Kadar declared on the radio: 'In their glorious uprising our people have overthrown the Rakosi regime.'

Kadar then disappeared for three days and reappeared denouncing the 'counter-revolutionary' happenings of the previous weeks.

The Russians had found their man to take over from Nagy. It was now simply a matter of timing the move against the revolution. The move began by the removal of Russian troops from Budapest. That co-incided with the openings of negotiations with the military leadership of the insurrection. These were rudely interrupted by the KGB, who removed Pal Maleter and his comrades to their cellars.

Next day the might of the 'Red' army moved against the workers of Budapest. The whole workers' area was surrounded by tanks and artillery and bombed into submission. Not since the Horthyite Fascist defeat of the Hungarian Commune of 1919 had such terror been unleashed on the working population. An estimated 20,000 were killed in the first few days. But the workers' resistance to the Stalinist armies continued for well over a week. The Russians were forced to call in air strikes against determined groups of workers.

The crushing of the military resistance did not mean an end to opposition. For some months there was what could be called a second period of dual power. In factories through the country the writ of the workers' councils still ran. Although the revolution was undoubtedly crushed, the Kadar regime has never since been able to impose the same level of repression.

Jim Scott

