

ECHANGES-6

This bulletin, in its temporary form, is, for a group of comrades sharing similar positions and being in close contact with one another, a means of exchanging news on struggles, discussions and criticisms and of publications based essentially on the new movement, i.e. on all the struggles of all kinds carried out by those directly concerned for their own emancipation. It is, therefore, important that each recipient makes his own contribution to this end, in exchange for what he expects from the others. He will of course determine the nature, the importance and the regularity of such a contribution himself. Address for all correspondence, payments and subscriptions (no bulletin will be sent free) ECHANGES ET MOUVEMENT BP 241 - 75866 PARIS CEDEX 18 FRANCE
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ECHANGES ET MOUVEMENT

BP 241

75866 PARIS CEDEX 18 FRANCE

For English contacts write directly to

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DOCUMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

International get-together 1st - 2nd; November, 1975 - Report - We cannot reproduce the bilingual report already typed and corrected by any other means than offset printing, unless the whole thing is typed again. 50 pages at 30 copies is too costly to print and too long to re-type considering the temporary interest of the text. The same would be true for a resumé. Unless there are other suggestions we shall just abandon reproducing it. Sorry to those who will not be able to read it.

NEW MOVEMENT

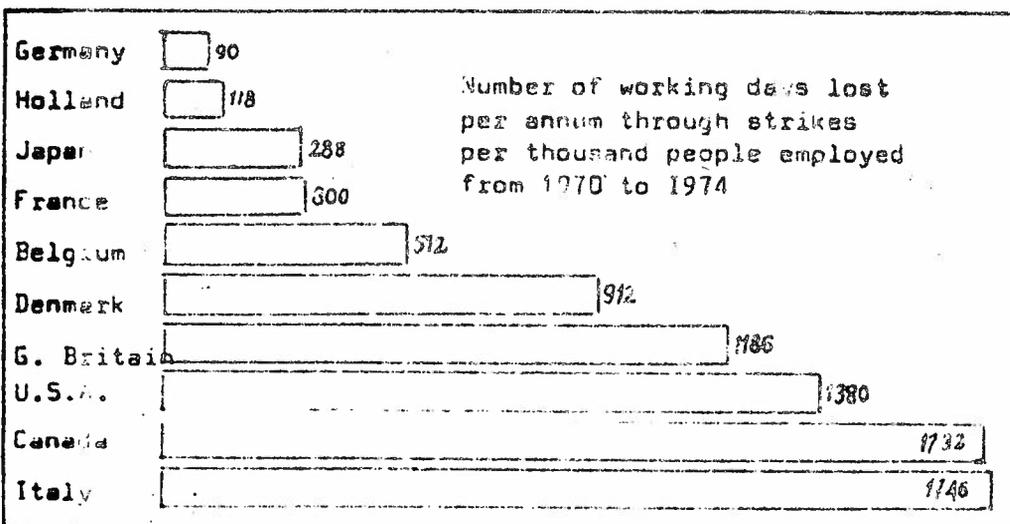
New English edition by Solidarity (London) (10p) c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E.6. with an afterword by Solidarity (London) - Socialism - Defensive Reflex or conscious creation. This new edition and its afterword follows a whole series of debates and questionings in and around Solidarity. A whole group of writings in English have been produced in these circumstances and can be obtained from Joe Jacobs (Address above). They include:

- Why was I expelled from Solidarity (London)? by Joe Jacobs
- The Illusions of Solidarity by David Brown
- Solidarity: Critique of the Malaise or ~~the~~ the Malaise of the Critique by Dave Lamb
- Contribution to the discussion raised by Solidarity (London) in their letter of expulsion to Joe Jacobs and by them in their afterword to the New edition of the New Movement by Henri Simon
- Correspondence arising out of these texts.

A meeting was held by Solidarity (National) in Oxford around the theme of the New Movement, but it did not bring any new elements to the discussion. On the contrary it showed that the preoccupation of most of those present was how "better" to organise a group in order to make individual or group "intervention" more effective.

WANTED

Someone to type the English version of Echanges. The present typist of the French version has given up, because he's having difficulty with the English. This edition has been typed by one of the compilers and editors, who would appreciate a greater division of labour. Any offers of English typists, please write to Echanges/



from Le Monde 30-3-1976
 This graph was made up from statistics from the International Bureau of Labour and published in the review of the British Department of Employment and Productivity. The figures cover mining, transformation and construction industries and transport. The two calmest countries Sweden with 64 days per thousand people lost through strikes and Switzerland with only two do not figure on the graph. The consequences of social conflicts were 4 1/2 times

more important in the USA than in France, 4 times more important in Great Britain and nearly 6 times more important in Italy than in France, Japan and France being equal.

U.S.A. (from an American comrade)

"Two weeks ago, a dozen of us went to an excellent meeting in Washington where we met with another dozen people. All were working on changing processes in specific industries and their impact on the self-organisation of workers in them. Papers were presented on telephone operators, nurses, bank workers, electrical workers and longshoremen. The discussions were animated and remarkably supportive and fraternally critical. There are plans being made to develop a pamphlet series, as well as the coordination of future work. There are plans being made to develop a pamphlet series, as well as the coordination of future work. There are serious political differences among the participants which were never taken head on... It is most important for us to compare in a concrete fashion the experiences of different countries... Three of us have discussed the possibility of collectively writing a pamphlet on participation, workers' control, and "self-management" over the summer... We want to see in what kinds of industries these activities have taken place among what kinds of workers (skill, age, sex, race, etc..) to see if there are any common threads..."

To know more and to participate, write to Peter RACHLEFF 1156 Portland Street Pittsburgh, Pa, 15206, U.S.A.

U.S.A. A very interesting new journal has just appeared in this country. It is called Zerowork and is somewhat influenced by the Italian group Potere Operaio. Their first issue is devoted to a series of excellent concrete analyses of the changing socio-economic setting in the US and particular strikes and struggles (American coal miners, American auto workers, Canadian postal workers).. They are trying to draw out the implicit thrust of these struggles, which they see as a growing tendency to separate income from productivity. In short, struggles for higher wages are accompanied by an unwillingness to perform more work, to increase productivity, to submit to additional changes in work processes and greater discipline... Their analysis also has its weaknesses - an over focus on questions of wages and income, to the detriment of an analysis of informal organisation and a tendency toward autonomy.. I have begun a serious critical dialogue with them."

Zerowork 292 Warren street - Brooklyn - New York 11201 USA

Anton Parnekoek - Los Consejos Obreros - Spanish translation of some parts of the book "Workers' Councils: the task, the fight (English edition), the ideologies thought and action (Dutch edition) - Editorial Proyeccion, S R L, Yapeya 321 Buenos Ayres - or Fidel Alegre - CCC 4459 - Argentina -

INFORMATION

Germany - Different measures taken to emasculate possible agitation due to recession

1. Vote by Bundestag of a Law giving prison sentences of up to 3 years to authors "approving of or advocating violence directed against the existence of the Federal Republic or its constitutional principles". A German Translation of "De la Grève Sauvage à l'autogestion Généralisée" (From the wildcat strike to generalised self-management) by Ratgeb and Vaneigem (published 10/18) was banned because it "glorifies violence".

2. During the last 2 1/2 yrs. 460 candidates for civil service posts (from University professors to cleaning ladies) have been refused, because the authorities had doubts about their "fidelity to the constitution" in accordance with the decree of 28-1-72 by Social Democrat Willy Brant against the terrorist dangers and applied in the Social Democrat provinces as well as in the Catholic ones. Motives for refusing jobs include bad replies to loaded questions and links, however flimsy, with leftist ideas or groups.

3. Co-management and "partnership" in companies by Unions and Management in practise in the mines and steel industry is being extended to other sectors. The casting vote, if necessary, remains with the management and the statutes are favourable to higher management categories in the Unions.

"The bomb throwers, terrorists, leftists and other drop-outs impose upon us more and more extraordinary efforts" - Employers Federation Nov. 1975. This could serve as a resumé of the three items given above. No-one is surprised any longer at these neo-fascist laws (not to mention the last one which prevents a lawyer from defending his "delinquent" if he dares to bring his case before the public at large, i.e. if he writes in a newspaper, or creates defense committees he is forbidden to exercise his functions). The Social Democrats and Christian Democrats apply the new laws to the letter, aided by and in agreement with the only Union federation the D.G.B. There are Police controls in all the leftist print works and bugging everywhere, lawyers in prison and the D.G.B. expels anyone not prepared to implement the government line.

Protest against all this is largely confined to students and Intellectuals, who have formed several committees throughout the country to denounce and fight these laws. Most workers still believe the manipulatory press (Springer papers above all) which presents all revolts as those of the terrorists (blood etc...). The rare strikes (at Erwitte a firm making concrete, they had their "Lip", 100% recuperated by the Union) do not as yet allow for any solidarity between the workers and these anti-repression committees. Protest in Germany tends to remain in fairly marginal sectors, but there are some important urban communities, womens centres and apprentices movements ... Here, at least, there is a clear tendency to struggle outside of all traditional groups.

For the "crisis" - unemployment is up to about ~~xxx~~ 4% (Information - April, 1976)

HOLLAND

A few years ago there was great autonomous struggle, a growth of wildcat strikes, firstly and then occupations. Unions were beginning to be rejected. The president of the Rotterdam Port Authorities declared that in order "to keep the rank and file in check we must play act a bit". Thus the left wing "critical" Union movement was created (1973 - 1974) whose aim was to "change the Unions". In fact in conflicts where the shop floor wanted real power (such as the Dairy industry strike of 1974), this "left wing" group of bureaucrats behaved like any other Union. Now this movement has virtually disappeared, as through them, the major Unions themselves, have seen the need to polish up their image and speak of more radical action, through pretend conflicts. They say that the new governmental wage-freeze proposals are "unacceptable" and yet declare in press interviews that compromises are inevitable.

Now most of the old autonomous struggles are stifled, because the Unions step in straight away to "lead" the militant struggle. Conflicts in general are less frequent and are rarely offensive movements for new demands, but movements for the defence of work accompanied by occupations (cf. Plessey or UCS in Scotland a few years ago). Except where there is a really strong resolution and the workers are really extra-radical, the Unions accept occupations as a form of struggle, which helps their image. For the moment one ~~xxxx~~ hears less and less of autonomous struggle and more and more of the polemic will the Unions become more radical or not, while they manoeuvre, sometimes "leading" strikes, sometimes condemning them, or sometimes one Union claims a strike for its own while another condemns it.

The present attitude of the Unions is, of course, caused by the present lull in autonomous struggle, which will no doubt recommence when the so-called "radicalisation" of the Unions comes up against too many limits. In this sense the attitude of the Union may only be a prologue for new struggles in the sense that the autonomous struggles of the past were a prologue. (Information - February 1976)

BELGIUM

The Grand workers committee (Groot Arbeiders Komitee) has dissolved

This committee of activists and militants was founded in Flanders after a wildcat strike at Balen-Wezel and were present during the Flemish strikes (docks etc.) which followed. A communiqué by a small group in this committee has announced the ceasing of activities due to:-

- Too large a difference between those who hope for the radicalisation of the Unions (cf. critical Union movement in Holland) and those who regard all Unions as tools of the bosses.
- manipulation and penetration by leftist groups
- Finally the death blow from the takeover of the committee by a left catholic tendency which more or less transformed it into an organisation for leisure activities.

The Dutch review Act and Thought published an article criticising this analysis of why the committee no longer exists, saying (to resume)

-The GAK was not killed by a battle between pro and anti-Union tendencies, but by the change in the relationship to struggles which gave rise to the committee and its daily practice which gave rise to these two tendencies. The wildcat strikes of the first years of the committee recede further into the past and new struggles of this nature which they hoped to see and even perhaps provoke have not arrived. As a result the pro-Union tendency developed. It's not the pro-Union tendency which silenced the tendency pushing for autonomous action, but the temporary decline of these action which strengthened this tendency. (Information February, 1976)

SPAIN

Letter from Madrid from a railway worker (follow-up to letter in Echanges no.5)

"I don't know if I spoke of the laws which the Army, advised by the management, are in the process of implementing for the railways (under military requisition, following the rail strike). The rhythm of work authorised by the National Institute of Productivity, approved and put into force by the RENFE (Spanish rail Board) is 100%, but the management protected by terror and the military repression of the Army, has obliged them to intervene to try and get workers to go at an even faster rate. Captain D. José Jorge Asensi, head of operations, has threatened to send all rail workers who do not reach the new norms set - 120% - to the prison at Carabanchel. Addressing workers, he has used phrases like: "It won't bother us much to take out a revolver and point it at the chest of one of you. There are some empty cells at Carabanchel which I wouldn't mind filling".

The workers were thus forced to work at the new rate. But the Captain was informed by the management that the workers still pursuing their claims had instituted an overtime ban. Letters then went out to about 60 workers saying that because of changes in the service they would have to work an extra 4 hours a day until new orders, which makes a 12 hour working day. Some at first refused to sign the letters, but were told that if they continued to refuse there would be no alternative but military arrest and sentences of between six and twelve years for such a motive. They were warned it was better not to run the risk of trial for sedition and disobedience to military authority.

Through the requisition, the railways are becoming profitable and productivity is maintained at a high level, profiting from the poor conditions of the workers who work with a sentiment of disgust, because none of their demands have succeeded. All demands concerning work conditions are suspended because of the military requisition.

The men keep up a tremendous moral, nevertheless. When the soldiers do eventually go they are ready to press home their demands which still remain posed. We will have no rest until our claims and petitions achieve their aim. Our claims are more than justified since the wages at the RENFE are the lowest in all Spain. For example, I have 34 years seniority, I earn 10,800 pesetas a month, being in the most skilled category. We do also have bonus payments etc apart from this basic rate. They are not considered in the calculation of retirement pensions. In fact we have been given a stop-gap payment of 3,200 pesetas while the new collective contract is supposed to be being negotiated. This shows that they are afraid that our just demands finish in a strike (for we are by no means resigned).

march 1976

ITALY - This is a personal analysis by someone following the events quite closely, but is largely conjectural. In the next Echanges we hope to have an article giving a more detailed account of some very interesting concrete struggles.

The electoral victory of the Italian CP (PCI), June 15th 1975 and its arrival at the head of several municipal and regional councils, poses in new terms the problem of power and its questioning.

The very unbalanced industrial growth in Italy, often orientated towards old fashioned technologies privileges the use of human labour. This joined to the State's weakness in structural terms has resulted in a constant social crisis since 1968. The weakening of the competitiveness of Italian produce on the world's markets has been all the more pronounced, because wildcat strikes, occupations, "self-reduction" (refusal to pay more than a certain percentage of gas; electricity, transport etc. by the collect imposition of their own tariff), and absenteeism have served as a break on economic restructurisation this in the context of the endemic underdevelopment of the South.

The great upsurge in the late sixties provoked a crisis in workers institutions marked by the formation of shop-floor committees (1968) and gang delegates (1969) and at present by the "Autonomous" movement. Although the Unions have re-captured the rank and file councils and committees these remain strongly influenced by extra-Union tendencies and new factory and community struggles have led to the recomposition of associations of struggle where one can find leftists, even members of the PCI and mostly the unorganised" in a melting pot of autonomy.

The movement called for workers Autonomy is diffuse and scarcely organised, but very effective in the factories and in all conflicts. Some neo-leninists (Rosso etc.) are associated with this movement in quite a big way as also are individuals coming from the collapse of the Leninist groups Lotta Continua, the Gramsci group and Avanguardia Comunista as well as individual Anarchists; the other components are radical groups here and there in factories and elsewhere with a very strong capacity for both action and analysis prefiguring modes of organisation which refer neither to the Union or Party models. This tendency is developing very rapidly and shows itself in very hard forms of conflict and the refusal of demands linked to the traditional contract framework of Italian negotiations as well as a refusal of the consumer society shown in articulated strikes as well as in the looting of supermarkets etc. Such groups remain however the minority confronted by the management and participation tactics of the PCI, who want to get into the government, but who haven't waited for the call before putting into practice the "compromise", implying the cooperation in the reconversion in production (creating unemployment) and the limitation of wage rises. We can say without exaggeration that the PCI is the only guarantee of the maintenance of the present power in place.

The situation is not serious enough to force the bourgeoisie to integrate the PCI into the government as yet. This might encourage even more intense struggles and draw the workers further away from the influence of the PCI. If the social crisis gets worse the presence of the PCI in the official power structure could lead to an increased repression, followed by the expulsion from power of the PCI as in 1947, once calm was restored, but the big gamble is on whether the workers would be as passive as they were in 1945. The fear is that in 1976 they would be less passive and provoke actively the events themselves. So the PCI flounders around looking for lame solutions of a Social Democratic nature. The only other way open would be that of militarisation, which nobody wants in Italy nowadays for the moment. (March 1976)

GREAT BRITAIN

In operation since August 1975, the Labour government-Trade Union pay-deal to limit pay-rises to six pounds a week for all seems to have been generally accepted, while inflation has run at a much higher rate than this ^{seems} cover. However, estimated drops in the standard of living are only 2% by the most pessimistic estimates and many categories have not suffered a drop at all, although the rise has been temporarily halted. Explanations for this include the fact that the amount of actual take home pay has increased for some workers, due to increased overtime (despite well over a million unemployed - figure now stabilised and no longer rising) and in some industries widespread tax evasion, any working without being registered for tax health insurance etc (New laws to try and stop this practise in the building Industry, where it is endemic have just come into force). Production is still dropping It is below the 1971 -4 levels (the great strike years) despite the fact that there have been no recent major strikes. The response of many to attempts to depress

living standards is increased absenteeism and lower work rates., rather than by general strikes. The steel industry has, however, been menaced by increasing sporadic strikes (see Echanges no. 5) but now trouble is beginning in the car industry.

British Leyland (Britain's biggest car firm - now publicly owned) was brought to a standstill, the beginning of April as a result of a four week strike by 32 toolmakers in the SU carburettor plant in Birmingham, which though only 1,000 strong makes 95% of all Leyland's carburettors. The strikers wanted parity with other toolmakers in nearby plants, which would have meant another six pounds a week pay rise. This was agreed locally but stopped by the government as the men had already had the maximum rise possible for the year. At the same time 350 toolmakers at Rover Triumph in Coventry and 400 toolmakers at Leylands 8 Solihull (Nr. Birmingham) plants which make Land Rovers, 70 machine tool repair fitters at Dews Lane Suspension plant in Birmingham and some press workers at Llanelli (Wales) were all on strike, also over the question of parity with other skilled workers and demands for backpay. At Dews Lane the tool fitters wanted to be paid as much as the staff demonstrators a higher grade of worker (i.e. ten pounds a week more) and at Triumph, Coventry, as much as the tinsmiths. The SU carburettor men wanted as much as the toolmakers of Coventry. Leyland is the result of the amalgamation of 34 plants with 58 separate negotiating units and rates of pay. All the strike claims were for amounts going over the wage freeze agreement of six pounds in twelve months. It is the desire of skilled workers to maintain wage differentials which is attacking the government and Union wage freeze. None of the striking toolmakers have a militant record. They are in favour of hierarchical wage differentials. It is industry, the government and Union bureaucrats who are against differentials in trying to level all wage rises down to a flat rate. This sheds new light on the old argument about the progressive value of attacking all wage differentials. The 32 men at SU defied the management, government and the Union for nearly a month. Compromise agreements have been reached satisfying no one, but it is feared that those lower down the scale will now demand wage rises to catch up again etc. etc.

In the Annual budget (April) the government announced for phase 2 of their wages policy a project to limit all rises to 3%. If the Unions agree, then in exchange in June there would be back dated tax concessions for all wage-earners (amounting in reality to not much, especially for the more skilled or workers with small families). Even Union bureaucrats are reluctant to accept such a low offer (inflation is currently officially a 14%). Now that the Leyland troubles have created the first open attack on the old pay policy, it is even more doubtful that all workers will accept this new proposed limit.

Squatting in London is still very widespread, but has not reached most other towns - with the exception of Oxford and some in Birmingham and recently a little in Liverpool. New laws to try and outlaw squatting are being considered. Community centres, food co-operatives, womens' groups and childrens' groups are also building up around some squats and extending into the community at large. In Moss Side, Manchester the municipal community centre has been occupied and is run by the local inhabitants without municipal or government control. Local action and self-help e.g. mothers and children is an increasing feature of English life, especially to cope with inflation, unemployment and the atomisation of modern urban living. (Information April 1976)

FRANCE

Blocking the dynamism of the most concentrated sectors of capital in France, the crisis has reanimated France's traditional problems caused by the backwardness of certain sectors and inadaptation of structures. These problems are :-

- How to reform structures to eliminate the excessive political and economic weight of the middle classes, who are nevertheless the traditional supporters of the dominant powers
- How to reduce production costs when, since May 1968, workers resist more and capital is hardly invested in industry.

Increased unemployment (4-5% of the active population), short time working, pressure on immigrants, restructurisation of companies, reform of public services, inflation etc ... have all heightened conflict. The halt in expansion has separated large scale capital (Multi-nationals and Nationalised concerns) from the less concentrated variety (family firms etc.) These latter have been able to re-establish a power more favourable to their interests resulting in the pumping of government money into e.g. Citroën, the small scale watch industry etc. This limits the impact of recession on these sectors. But this investment is taken from other sectors e.g. Nationalised Industry where firms are given back to American multi-Nationals (Atomic Energy with the dismantling of the CEA, computers with the folding up of CII etc.)

The slowing down of wage rises, unemployment and inflation only have limited effects on internal consumption: In 1975, the overall living standards were hardly touched (14 to 15% wage rises (12% considering short-time working) as opposed to 10% inflation) Here also Capitalism is forced to take into account a latent potential for struggle which prevents the taking of measures too brutal.

The evolution of Industry tends towards the reduction of the power of the traditional middle classes (Doctors through the opening of medical centres run by the French National Health Insurance, lawyers through the simplification of court procedures, chemists through the creation of co operative pharmacies, garage owners through the sale of cut-price petrol by hyper and super markets, shopkeepers by the increase of these same "hyper" and supermarkets) This evolution comes up against strikes and other movements whose effectiveness shows the place still occupied by the middle classes in France. It is the protectionism of the State (Giscard-d'Estaing's govt. orientation as opposed to Gaullism the ally of large scale and State capitalism) which defends the privileges of "free enterprise" of these sectors threatened by more powerful sectors. The peasant problem is more ambiguous. Their struggle is the same as that of other middle classes, yet more desperate since for a long time, the elimination of these marginal sectors has been decided upon (in order to supply manpower for other sectors and reduce the cost price of foodstuffs). The struggle of the Languedoc winegrowers (like those of the Breton peasants or those in the Larzac threatened by the extension of a military camp) are those of a class forced into extreme measures, because there is nothing more more they can do: they have attacked and looted lorries, destroyed administrative buildings, blocked roads and railway lines, destroyed signals, vandalised the cellars and warehouses of the wine merchants within a radius of 300 Km, attacked the police with rifles and they practically control a whole region ... However limited their aims are in class terms, such action can only have serious repercussions on other struggles showing in itself the weakness of the government which can't really effectively repress this struggle for fear of provoking more serious events. Already, in the Languedoc, for example, other elements (unemployed etc ..) have got mixed up in the struggle. (I)

The rise of the student movement touches the same classes. Since 1968 (and before) the govt. has tried to reform the University system. There are too many students (800,000 in 1975 -6) result of the importance of the middle classes and the democratisation of education. The only theoretical end result is to teach or do research. If not the student has to accept the lowering of class and status and accept any job. The latest reform proposes

- to create a lower University sector accessible to all and a higher one open to 10%
- to provide "utility" diplomas whose content would be regulated by agreements between the Universities, the State and public and private industry.
- to limit the formation of teachers to those following a years' post graduate teaching course where selection would be according to professional and political aptitude.

This project sparked off a unanimous movement in all disciplines throughout France by students and teachers including the least leftist. In order not to be completely useless the movement must take to the streets where demonstrations take a violent turn & because of the large numbers (50,000 in Paris April 15th) the existence of more radical marginal groups and police over-reaction and aggression. Elements from other groups and classes have also joined in (young unemployed etc...). Repercussions in other sectors could here also result from the violence of the repression as well as from government weakness rather than from the movement itself and its limited aims.

Workers struggles are not very different from those of the last few years. Nevertheless one can stress that they are caused more and more by a feeling of being generally fed-up rather than for precise ends to be obtained at all costs. They break out over wages, work conditions, redundancies, factory closures and short time working. There are in permanence more than 30 occupations in very different sectors, but most often in relatively small factories. There is no respect for capitalist Industry and management. Occupations, sequestration of management, fights with management and scabs, taking of machines and material as guarantees or in order to pay wages through sale of produce or stock, work-ins, use of material as a means of action (65 lorries from a bankrupt transport firm abandoned at the entrance of the Mt. Blanc tunnel in the Alps, giant cranes of a metal construction firm in Marseille brought as far as Paris to block the Place de la Concorde) and some speak openly of sabotage.

(I) Someone wants to take up a study on peasant movements in France. Liaisons and contacts to Michel Besson, Souleya de Biše, BAX, 31310 - Montesquieu - Volvestre.

The forces for channeling and repressing this struggle are changing (Unions "United Left" etc...) The CFDT, refuge for leftist group activists, tries to get in first with seemingly more radical methods (Social democrat "left" Union as opposed to CP controlled more conservative CGT). Occupations are often started by the Unions to prevent shop floor action which might escape their control. Such Union led action remains sporadic, or rejected, or divides the workers: at Fougères in Brittany, capital of shoe making, when half the firms closed down, the official protest demonstration could muster only 1,000. Many occupations are symbolic and include only C.G.T and C.F.D.T. militants; the CFDT tried to start up a "mini-Lip" in a small firm making biro pens and cigarette lighters in the Haute Savoie (Alps) as propaganda for their National congress with the only result that they broke completely the 5 week old strike. The strike of the paper Parisien Libéré is over a year old while the CGT printers section and the CP Paris make superhuman efforts to keep the so-called occupation on its legs amidst total indifference and while old style press and print shops close one after the other. In March the strike on the French railways called by the Unions was only total the day the Unions called the men back to work "in order not to disturb the departure during the school holidays" and for a couple of days the Unions were overrun.

Many other conflicts are spontaneous at the beginning; they then seem to fall under the control of the Union leaders. But, between the Mass meetings, the combativity and the initiatives of the shop floor and the ruse of the Unions there is a sort of fight to the end with very varying results (2) At the same time a solidarity is developing through the initiative of individuals or little groups outside traditional organisations and Unions.

In the big concerns where high level agreements between Unions and management of the trusts control the whole of conditions, the conflicts tend to be wildcat, but very localised (Steelworks Solmer at Fos (nr. Marseilles); Peugeot bicycle section at Beaulieu (East France); different workshops at Renault - Billancourt (Paris - presses, paint-shop, foundry); the Gare de Lyon (Paris) during the rail strike) Union and management agree to let the strikes go on until they "rot" usually without any result. These strikes without result take particular forms and are beginning to surpass old forms of action which will make them more effective. In smaller firms, on the other hand, it is possible, if the strike lasts, to impose a new agreement, because the bosses are not strong enough to hold out in a long strike. Many end in considerable concessions except in the case of factory closures where all depends on selective government credits. These conflicts only reinforce the contradictions as they slow down concentration and the essential reforms capitalism needs to deal with the "crisis"

There are however some indications that this relative weakness of movements is to be surpassed: firstly, such movements are becoming more frequent, also there is a stronger resistance to Union and police repression which has always been at a low level (In a small factory, for the first time, a factory was re-occupied by the workers after the police had taken it over).

We must especially mention the strike against rent increases in the immigrant workers hostels run by the SONACOTRA in 50 of the 260 hostels. The strike was also over living conditions. It was led by a committee of residents who were not Unionised and a coordination committee; it shows that despite the repression and isolation of immigrant workers they are beginning to express the autonomy of their struggle, as the strike at the Chausson factory (Paris suburbs) showed last year or just recently the Peugeot cycle strike where one third of the workers are immigrant covering 26 nationalities (After one month of strike 30 proposed sackings annulled, but no concessions on the original objectives of the strike, concerning wages and conditions).

(April, 1976)

This text has had to be limited and is to serve as a basis for a discussion for a more thorough-going work on conflicts in France.

(2) Some comrades from Strasbourg are preparing a pamphlet on the strike at the General Motors gear-box plant in Strasbourg, in which some of them took part.

ARGENTINE

"Les avatars de la politique économique en Argentine: Une explication de la situation actuelle" (article in Esprit November 75 and Problèmes Economiques 11-2-76)

A very complete and well documented article on political and economic evolution in Argentina since the last War. They try to explain how the multinational companies, especially USA) have tried to make Brazil their primary source of benefit in South America, thus necessitating the need to break the pole of development of a competing national capitalism which could be increased in Argentina. So break out political conflicts

between different capitalist factions and direct armed confrontation between the "para-police death squadron" (the A.A.A.) in the pay of the imperialists and an active guerilla heavily dominated by Argentinian State Capitalist tendencies. The Army plays the traditional role of guarantor of political stability with difficulty and the workers struggles including many wildcat strikes which bear witness to the strength of the movement escape with difficulty the repression and the manipulation of these competing capitalisms. (for copies of article write to Echanges.

POLAND

An article "Apropos du Capitalisme d'Etat" (On State Capitalism) - Critical notes on the ICO book "Capitalisme et lutte de Classe en Pologne" appeared in the December 1975 issue of the French journal Lutte de Classe (for copies write to R.Togny -B.P. 620-09 - 75241 Paris Cedex 09)

Strike by Dockers at Gdansk and Gdynia July-August 1974 -Further details now available

Go-slow by 8,000 dockers in 1st. fortnight in July 1974 just after the opening of new, ultra-modern port. Ships were laid up ten days instead of the normal two or three -173 ships laid up for the two ports August 7th. The Army was then used to replace the dockers and the strike was broken two weeks later. Reason for the strike was the ending of special bonuses (up to 60% of wages in some cases) or their limitation to between 7-15% of wages in other cases. Since 1971 dockers' wages had gone down relatively. Temporary dock labour (usually peasants from surrounding countryside) no longer encouraged to work in the docks. They now have to pay tax on these earnings and so prefer to stay at home.

More recently

New openings towards middle classes -Following peasant farmers, artisans and small-scale industrial employers (integrated into the State in 1964) private enterprise is now allowed in pork butcher-delicatessen and baker shops. The reason: lack of provision in the State sector.

Not enough foodstuffs Not so much caused by bad harvests or insufficiencies of State Capitalism as regards agriculture or distribution. Since the struggles of 1971 wages have risen by 40%; National revenue by 60%; industrial production by 70%, but agricultural production by only 27%. Giersek is looking for ways to unfreeze food prices, because Poles "consume too much". The riots and strikes of 1970-1971 and the persistence of long drawn-out resistance even now are the limits that the class struggle imposes on the ruling class (according to Giersek in 1974 real wages were up 8% where as according to the plan they should only have been 5%) The margin of action is that much more reduced because of world economic recession reducing the possibilities of manipulation of external trade (exports or selling of manpower on the spot); this may explain the opening up to capitalist investors from the West (Western financial experts now have access to all State accounts) with the aim of borrowing Euro-dollars (copies of various articles on the subject from Echanges), or the sale of manpower of German origin to West Germany (authorisation to emigrate to West Germany against the giving of capital) (March, 1976)

SWEDEN

Sweden: was not affected by economic recession until this year, largely due to the nature of its exports. Also by large scale borrowing, credits to encourage expansion etc ... the govt. held back economic difficulties for over a year. The standard of living has hardly if at all fallen; unemployment has not been very high. Now things are more difficult. Profits are down and competitiveness on world markets is declining. Unemployment is up and the govt. Social Democrat (SAP) and the Unions (controlled by the SAP) speak of "no reforms for this year", "no wage rises" etc... Perhaps there will be more wildcat strikes as inflation is growing (February, 1976)

GREECE -from a letter

" There is a strike wave at the moment (all wildcat); even yesterday an explosive situation occurred at Spotor (near Athens). Peasants protesting against the expropriations for the creation of an airport) chased away 500 police with armoured cars and then literally occupied Spotor (a town of several thousand inhabitants) (February, 1976)

PORTUGAL

"After the Portuguese 25th November, repression and resistance in the working classes" (Après Le 25 novembre portugais, répression et résistance en milieu ouvrier -article in French) by C.Reeve -Spartacus review -April 1976 (copies of article from Echanges) - "L'expérience Portugaise -La conception putschiste de la révolution Sociale" (the Portuguese experience the putch concept of Social Revolution) pamphlet by C.Reeve complement to the book "Portugal-l'autre combat" (both available from Spartacus -Lefevre 5 rue St Croix de la Bretonnerie -75004 Paris -New pamphlet 5F)

USA

Synthesis -"An anti-authoritarian magazine of ~~and~~ self-management ideas and activities"
No. 2 ,January 1976 has an interesting list of "anti-authoritarian groups and
individuals" chiefly in the USA (from League for Economic democracy -PO box 1858-
San Pedro -Ca 90733)