

ECHANGES

54

ECHANGES ET MOUVEMENT, BM Box 91, London WC1 N3 XX United Kingdom

USA

We have received from the USA various texts which could be the basic material for a more general approach to understand class

struggle there. Those interested after reading the following, short presentation of the material, can ask for a copy at Echanges.

Productivity Outlook (Economic Impact, 1984/4) - a) Capital, Innovation and Productivity Growth (Martin Neil Bailey); b) Factors that point to improvement (interview with John Kendrick).

Show Wages still declining (The People, 29/8/87). In June '87 the purchasing power of average weekly wages of workers in private non farm business was 3,7 % lower than in June '86. Average weekly wages actually purchase slightly less now than in 1962.

Industrial Worker (October '87) in North American Labor News gives some information about strikes against this wages decline and factory closing, but also about new union contracts allowing firms to maintain low wages and workforce shrinking (e.g. the UAW-agreement with Ford last September).

The Worker's Question (Washington Post National Weekly, 21/9/87) This editorial underlines too that for the past 20 years the value of an average hour's work is essentially changed. More women are working and they have fewer children .. Atop of all this tumult has been a decline in productivity. For many reasons, the hourly output of the average worker is not rising as fast as in the past ...

The crumbling of America: a new crisis in public works As Federal money dries up, business is footing more of the bills (Business Week, 1/12/86).

This article gives an outlook of the scale of the deterioration of public services.

The other end of this deterioration is the life of the more numerous and ever poorer poor. In Prisoners of the Economy (New York Times Book Review, 25/10/87) R. Greenstein reviews the book: The Truly Disadvantaged - The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy (William Julius Wilson University of Chicago Press). A more specific article The slum that Rethoric left behind explains why 'The South Bronx remains the most famous ghetto' (Washington Post National Weekly, 14/9/87). The killing of a black youth by a gang of white teen-agers, known as the Howard Beach Attack, can give some idea of the racial tensions in New York and of the way justice deals with them (New York Times, 8/10/87 and 22/12/87)

The Christian Science Monitor (30/9/87) explains that Americans step social activism in what is described as a 'Climate of civil disobedience which 'reflects a turning point in the nation's consciousness as Reagan era wanes'.

The Nation (10/10/87) examines in The Defiling of Writers (Natalie Robius) the FBI's files on writers and the consequences of the FBI's 'chilling effect' on writers.

In These Times (Institute for Public Affairs - 1300 Belmont Avenue, Chicago, IL 60657 - USA.- in English) 25/11 - 8/12/87. How to put the military on an anti-deficit diet. Back to the future: behind South Korea's crisis. Review of books: 1) Between the Devil and the deep blue sea (M. Rediker), on ships and sailors; 2) Don't be afraid Gringo: A Honduran Woman speaks from the Heart, the story of Elvira Alvarado; 3) Roll the Union On (H.L. Mitchell).

Processed World - The magazine that's old enough to drink (41 Sutter Street, Nr 1829, San Francisco, Cal. 94104, USA - in English) N° 21: Exploding heads, letters. The cloistered workplace. Interview with a military saboteur. The Sit com Vietnam. My nuclear family: Growing up in Los Alamos. Fat Wars. Work, Family and Country: life in a terrorist state.

Labor Notes (7435 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, Mich. 48210 - USA) N° 105/Dec. '87: The Teamster Reaffiliation. Labor's Giant Step Backward. Blue Cross strikers want more support from UAW. N° 107/Febr '88: Buffalo nurses united: innovative tactics beat scabs and management (after a 14-week strike). What's the real issue in the Teamster Reaffiliation? (discussion about a previous article in N° 105). Mine workers push for security.

News and Letters (59 East Van Buren, room 707, Chicago, Ill. 60.605) N°15 /Dec '87: Mexican women garment workers speak. Women's struggle in South-Korea. Reagan's Central American wars persist despite Arias' peace plan.

N° 1/Jan-Febr '88: Raja Dunayevkaya's final dialogue with us. Black Chicago after Washington (first black mayor who died last November)

Report on Guatemala in: Guatemala News, N° 5/Nov-Dec '87 (PO Box 28594, Oakland, Cal. 94604 - in English). Central American Peace Plan. The rise of the religious right in Guatemala. The new lives of Guatemala's Development Poles.

A U S T R A L I A

The fall in real unit labour costs over the past six years has largely gone unnoticed (8.8% since '81-'82.. The causes are falling real wages and productivity increases in industry - The Herald Melbourne, 4/1/88). Even so, Australia's economy is expected to grow at a higher rate of 1.4%. There is also little joy for Australia's seven million workers with wage increases expected to lay even further behind price rises while the number of unemployed now 620.000 is unlikely to fall (8-9% of the workforce). The Australian general union (ACTU) was closely associated with the employers, the Federal and state governments in an Arbitrary Commission to hold the line on wages (awarded wage rises totalling just 4.89% while prices have risen by about 19% since the start of this Commission in '86): it is a real success for the present Labour government. The ACTU has to launch some vigorous protests to reassure the workers that the unions were not in cahoots with the employers. As said the article: 'it is difficult to believe that the ACTU officials who have been instrumental in achieving wage restraints and emphasis on productivity and restructuring would undo all their good work for the smallest national wage claim in a decade' (The Age, 31/12/87 and 2/1/88).

A I N

Dockers and Coordinadora's struggle (see Exchanges N° 5 and the previous issues). Letter from a Spanish comrade, 24/11/87.

' .. Once the strike against Contenemar was over, this firm - and consequently the government - had recognized they were unable to have the new regulation implemented: it was a complete deadlock.. Both sides couldn't talk anymore: they had nothing new to offer.. The strike is over since April. The firm (Contenemar) had for six months to fight the dockers' boycott in all the Spanish ports and had been obliged to step down. The management had thought for a time to bring in scabs to break the boycott: such a way would have implied the military control of the docks, a situation impossible to cope with for a long time. On the other side Contenemar was loosing millions and millions pesetas. Even for such a big firm and even considering the help it was getting from subsidies of the government, such a

long strike was something it could not stand. All the sacked dockers were reintegrated and all the charges dropped (some dockers had been issued for occupying a boat and for violence against scabs). Even the office workers in Bilbao Contenemar offices were reintegrated in this town; during the strike and in order to break the solidarity of these white collars with the dockers, the firm had closed its Bilbao offices and transferred them to Vigo. This last result was actually a big success for the Coordinadora, because these office workers were neither threatened by the restructuring nor members of the dockers' Coordinadora. Their solidarity strike had brought a pretext for restructuring this sector, making these workers redundant very legally. It was very important for the future of the Coordinadora not to fail in the defense of these workers.

All the consequent particular regulations had been quickly published by the government. The Contenemar attempt to implement them was for the government a checking of the level of dockers' resistance. The dockers' answer brought the necessity to move to another tactic and at some time to stick - apparently stronger than ever - to the new regulations and to go ahead with the plan of reforming the ports work. The new regulations first steps were the formation of new societies for the management of the ports work: the government imposed them in April '87 at Barcelona, Las Palmas and Tenerife in Canary Islands, i.e. in the three ports strongly dominated by the Coordinadora. But in all these places, the dockers succeeded in imposing new agreements with the old port firms. These agreements did not change anything of the old system. It was a paradoxical situation for the government and the firms themselves: the plan was to implement the new rules and nothing could be done this way; the core of the new system was to remove the negotiations from the firms (and of course from the Coordinadora and its local strength). The dockers had got what they wanted to keep: the right to negotiate at their place of work and so to keep their present working conditions and their unity. The situation was very confusing; the government manipulating it as well: recently, it got the resignation of the chairmen of the societies it had promoted some months ago. The new way is to try to 'officialize' the only unions acquired to sign the agreements according to the new rules - of course excluding the Coordinadora. The chairmen of the new societies, having to cope with a very different reality in the ports, could not progress at all this new line to implement the restructuring in the ports as Madrid had planned on the paper.

Officially, the new societies organized by the new regulation have a 'legal' existence, but they cannot do anything without negotiating with the Coordinadora. Precisely it is what the government refuses. The Coordinadora itself has issued a 'platform for an agreement' which is the basis for such an agreement. Commentators see there something impossible to overtake: negotiating on the Coordinadora proposals would mean practically invalidating all the new regulations. Everybody has got the feeling the final step has

been attained and that government will at last negotiate with the Coordinadora. But for the moment, every week, the same kind of discussion takes place; nothing's settled and nothing has changed in the docks. Another possibility would be to let things going like that: the new regulations on the chairmen's table at a standstill blocked by the government refusal to recognize the Coordinadora. Actually it would mean the practical recognition of the impossibility to implement the new regulation mainly because the involved firms are afraid to provoke a new outbreak of the conflict.

The May Days Barcelona 1937

Anthology from Freedom Press (84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX), £ 2.50. Jose Peirats: Prelude to the May Days. A. Souchy: The tragic week in May (long time out of print day to day eyewitness account). B. Bolloten: Barcelona: The May events. Emma Goldman: Political persecutions in republican Spain. Vernon Richards: Bibliography.

Barcelone mai '37 - Fascisme et antifascisme contre le proletariat

Pamphlet in French by the Belgian groups Groupe Communiste Internationaliste (B.P. 54, 1060 Bruxelles, c.o. 'l Herbe Rouge, 1bis rue d'Alesia, 75014 Paris) and RAlA (B.P. 1724, Place de la Monnaie, 1000 Bruxelles 1). An Introduction by the groups is followed by three texts from the publications of the bordigists in exile in the 30s and 40s, including a manifesto from a left communist group formed in Mexico in 1937.

Espagne 1937 - Images de la revolution sociale (Pictures of social revolution)

A beautifully equipped book with pictures from the anarchist movement in Spain 1936-39, explained in five languages (French, English, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese). Published by the French group 'Federation anarchiste-Group Sacco-Vanzetti. No address given, but can be ordered from ASP, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX and PO Box 96, Doncaster DN4 0QU.

Cultura Libertaria (Apdo 1687, Vitoria 01080, Spain - Boletin de la A.J.P. Vitoria - in Spanish) Libertarian ideas in Basque country. Insurrection at Rio de Janeiro in 1918 (review of a book of C.A. Addor)

La Estiba - Voz de los Puertos (c/ del Mar, 97, 08003 Barcelone - in Spanish)

N° 32/Dec '87: Port workers assembly at Las Palmas. Sahara: people in exile. Movement in the port district of Hamburg. Impressions after a visit in the U.K.

N° 33/Jan '88: Agreement for the regulation of the labour relations in the ports.

'To the bitter end' - Grève des mineurs en Grande-Bretagne (Mars 1984-Mars 1985)

H. Simon, Acratie. Available at Echanges-only in French)

Letter from a Spanish comrade: '... I agree with what is said according to the various degrees of analysis about the miners' strike: i.e. the contradictions inside the bureaucratic machinery ('left' and 'right' of the unions), the necessary adaptations of the NUM to the capital need and the rank and file tendencies. But what is weak is the analysis of the contradictions well described in the text (p. 83) inside the English working class; they explain the lack of a real solidarity with the strikers. Of course what is said about it is relevant: if dockers, electricians, railwaymen, lorry drivers, etc. did not go on strike, it is because they did not see their 'interest' to do so. I think it is not enough to explain the size and the importance of these contradictions. We have to go beyond to try to explain why this fragmentation of interests exists, how it happens, how workers experiment it and what part it plays in the building of the proletarian subjectivity. I don't know if we are not discussing about a concept (a social subject) more and more cut from the daily social reality when we write about the 'working class'. 'Working class' is an actual fact but coming from such a degree of abstraction that it is difficult to find its adequacy to the fragmented proletarian daily reality in which we can see only the 'interests' either of separate groups, or of sectors, or even corporatist. On one side it is evident it was always the situation inside the workers movement; on the other side, I think that in this period of total domination of capital we can see the disappearance of the past elements of class unification. The disappearance of the social life based on the structure in the rising of capital commands the disappearance of the forms of the struggle which were formerly opposed to it: the text describes well this phenomenon when it deals with the 'proletarian' answers to the strike.

I think of course that the most important thing to consider is the rising of the tendencies to self-organization in the struggle, not only the miners themselves but all the daily life activities for the survival during the strike too. Considering this point I ask myself if these autonomous struggles express nothing else than the discontent between rank and file and mining bureaucracy, between proletariat and the State. We can see everywhere the same spontaneous initiatives of men and women according to their interest but up to the point when the 'leaders' can bring them a 'solution'. Actually the process is almost everywhere the same: the struggle burst up, pushed by rank and file initiatives, then it is following the 'assembleist' way, more and more formal and it is impossible to hide the fact that 'leaders', the traditional or new ones, receive delegation to settle the dispute. We can see that in the French railway strike, to take a recent

example. Another text from Echanges says expressly that the bureaucracy could control the movement because the rank and file action refused to go beyond certain limits. Why, and for which reason, the rank and file movement stops its rising and comes back under the bureaucratic control: it is a situation we can see again and again. I don't know if we have to describe the rank and file movement as the expression of a permanent conflict between leaders and rank and file which most of the time is bringing a permanent adaptation for a 'perfect' running of the capitalist institutions. I think it is a real tendency in people's mind to consider as 'alien' what is beyond their immediate surroundings (microcosm). The same feeling leads them to consider macro-social problems as 'general questions' out of their reach in a kind of 'reserved' territory: only 'professionals' are able to deal with them, i.e. politicians, leaders, etc. I think it is what could explain the problems of the autonomous movement: when the struggle is more or less generalized, or lasts a long time, more and more tasks have to be developed and more and more people are not actively participating; then we can see what could be called the 'contradictions of autonomy': the 'autonomisation' of individuals and their way to take 'their time for themselves' is weakening the movement. I remember having read in an Echanges text this concept of 'time for oneself' (political and social crisis in UK): I found it very interesting and helping to understand the dialectical process of the contradictions inside class autonomy. It is, I think, this taking of 'time for oneself' that is bringing proletarian people to loose links with the tasks the movement is requiring when the struggle is jumping from the daily life (factory or some limited sector) into a more general activity asking for more time from the strikers.

For this reason, the most interesting in the miners strike has to be seen in the transformation of the struggle into a new way of life, which remains as a possibility for the future. The 'restructuring' of the class (which is the consequence of the mines restructuring) will bring the miners more identity with other workers in already restructured industrial sectors.

I agree with this analysis but will this 'objective unity' become a practical subjective unity? I am doubtful about it. I think that the restructuring of the working class and of the proletarianised society will cut workers according to their 'objective' situation in sectors separated by deep ditches. The introduction of new technology is bringing a new hierarchy among workers according to the concrete conditions of their professional activity.

Of course the general conditions of work and life stay the same for every worker, but in the daily life, the actual conditions are very differentiated. E.g. a computer specialist or a worker on an automatic process (a relatively well paid and permanent job) will be very far from ancillary worker, or unemployed, etc.

I think we have to consider this new restructuring/division of the proletarian

riat according to the new work organization with the new modern technics. There is the question: on one side the total domination of capital is bringing an unification of interests of workers because it brings a very deep proletarianization; on the other side the implementation of new technology is bringing objective conditions and barring the way to this unification because these common interests can only be expressed through fragmented sectors in which we are all closely jailed. Up to which degree?'

Counter Information (Box 81, c/o 43 Candlemakers Row, Edinburgh) N° 18/February '88: Healthy strikes. Miners' strike in Yorkshire. A lot of short reports on struggles in different countries all over the world (Palestine, Italy, Poland, Germany, Rumania, France, Spain). Supplement: more about struggles and leaflets on local action in Scotland.

Here & Now (P/H2 c/o 340, West Prince Str, Glasgow G4 9 HF, UK - in English) N° 5/summer '87: Editorial. The power of the powerless (Vaclav Havel and the Charta 77). Gift against commodity. Notes on credit. Art and fashion. The Third Assault. New social movements.

The Heavy Stuff (Class war, Box 467, London E83 QX) Dec '87: Introduction. Human rights or class justice. Politics and its relation to the masses. World economics. Fire brigade politics. Down with capitalism (translation from Autonomous plenum of South Germany)

The Raven - Anarchist Quarterly New journal from Freedom Press (84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX) for theoretical and historical articles. The reason for publishing historical material on the libertarian movement is given in issue 1: '... dead 'comrades' are nevertheless still comrades, and deserve respect and gratitude, if one is not to behave more 'capitalist' than the establishment, not caring about human beings, their values, their identity .. history is potentially one of the most effective educative and instructive means .. It is therefore not an antiquarian interest that is our guideline in historical matters - to us history is a means to understand complex developments, to evaluate better commonly hidden human (and institutional) potentials, and, by no means least, to acknowledge that we stand on the shoulders of comrades'.

N° 1: Anarchism and the informal economy. 'Informing', communicating and organization. 'Freedom' and Freedom Press 1886-1986. Notes on Malatesta and Bakunin. Biographical article on Guy Aldred. Anarchists in Australia 1886-1986. Review of Nancy MacDonald: Homage to the Spanish exiles.

N° 2: Biographical article on John Neve (1844-1896). Walden Center and School. Surrealism in England. Indian anarchism: the case of Vinoba Bhave. Critical review of George Woodcock: Anarchism.

N° 3: Burgess Hill School: a personal account. M. Bookchin: Social ecology

versus 'deep ecology'. Debate on surrealism in England. On Alexander Berkman's unpublished Russian diary.

Internationalist Perspective (External fraction of the International Communist Current. International Perspective is published: in English, USA - PO Box 1748, Mont-clair, NJ 07047; UK - BM Box 8154, London WC1 N 3 XX; in French: Belgium - Destryker - BP 1181, Centre Monnaie, 1000 Bruxelles)

N° 8/Autumn '87: Against the whole logic of war, class struggle (War in the Gulf). Workers struggle internationally: Korea, South-Africa, the same struggle. Irangate: what was really at stake. The timeliness of the Russian Revolution. On the nature of the Russian Rev. (debates). Collective and individual consciousness. Mass struggle and Workers Democracy (discussion with Wildcat - see Echanges answer on the same question in N° 53 about Po!')

Workers' Councils - Pannekoek We can offer for £1 - in a limited number - the reprint (by the now disappeared american group Root & Branch) of the two first parts of Workers' Councils. The parts 3 and 4 are still available at Echanges (50p each booklet). For any postal order: add 50p.

'Rebel Violence v. hierarchical violence' (BM. Combustion, London WC1 N3XX - in English) This pamphlet has been reviewed in Echanges (N° 52 in English and N° 50 in French). We have received the following letter from BM. Combustion:

'On page 7 of N° 52 of Echanges, you deliberately misquote my pamphlet 'Rebel .. ' saying 'Of course revolt .. needs an explanation' when the actual quote (on page 33 of the pamphlet) is the complete opposite: 'Of course, revolt - particularly prison revolts - need no explanation'. Being 'fastidious' is far more helpful than petty malice. The rest of your depressing review is equally - though more subtly - deceitful and/or competitive - a typical snotty theoreticians' discouraging demoralising humiliation, a smugness reflected equally in the abstract optimistic determinism of the review's last paragraph'. (24/2/88)

Echanges answered the following:

'If someone is expressing disagreement or difference should you think he 'deliberately' is 'malicious and/or competitive'?

Indeed there is a misquote on page 7 of N° 52 of Echanges. Thanks for your careful proofreading we were not able to carry through seriously. If your parti-prix can allow a slight opening for a discussion, we will ask you:

1) to read again the whole paragraph beginning by the misquote which is followed by "we can't agree with such a declaration .." Then the text insists on the "lack of a real analysis" or any kind of explanation. How could you understand such a "deliberate" misquote? The comrade who typed the

review from a manuscript took "no" badly written for "an" and this mistake escaped proof reading. Sorry for it and for the consequent misunderstanding. 2) We can add more to our words you are not obliged to believe. We join to this letter a photocopy of the page 19 N° 50 of the french edition of Echanges. The last sentence is the translation of the "misquote": "naturellement, la révolte n'a pas besoin d'explications ..". The french quotation was "deliberately" right.

We will add that it is difficult to answer your small letter beyond this plea to be discharged of an accusation. We claim for the right to think and act differently, to tell what we think and the explanations we think relevant. Doing so we don't pretend to be right or to bring the truth. We never despise those who recognize the same attitude for us, not asking for leniency or agreement but looking for a more clear view through right discussion'. (26/4/88)

JAPAN

Privatisation des chemins de fer et crise du syndicalisme cheminot au Japon, Masanori Hanada - from the French review Travail, October 87 - in French.

This article is more a collection of various documents on the structure of the railways unions and of their involvement in the discussions about the working conditions. When the national railways company was divided in several privatised companies, the railways unions were unable to adapt to the new situation and nearly collapsed, even though workers were fighting hard against a general attack on their conditions. (copy at Echanges)

RUSSIA

L'improbable Gorbatchev et ses impossible reformes, par C. Castoriadis (in French, copy at Echanges)

Three articles published in the French daily Liberation (9, 10, 11 November 1987). A very brilliant but not all convincing analysis and an attempt to foresee the future. The conclusion is that a reform of the Russian system, ordered from above will fail in a way or another. Telling us from the very beginning that 'Russia can be considered as the first country to be threatened by a social revolution', Castoriadis develops his former ideas on the power of the military establishment and of the bureaucracy, who in a way or another will keep the control on the reforms or on any revolutionary rupture.

Glasnost and unemployment - The labour pains of perestroïka (The Economist 26/12/87) Russia, after some other Eastern countries (specially Hungary) is going into restructuring to raise productivity. Unemployment is now openly

considered as unavoidable even if presented as a necessary temporary step. It is difficult to know what it was before: frictional unemployment, parasitism, overmanning, etc. were previously the hidden face of redundancies. Now it is openly recognized, unemployment has to be legally answered. Russia is developing the same kind of measures we know very well in Western capitalism to cushion the effect of this capitalist plague. The article underlines the difficulty to know the consequence of the economical U-turn in a country where the job security was one of the bases of state capitalism.

Russia Re-Mystified - The RCP's new apology for State Capitalism (Workers Voice, CWO N° 30) This article is not recent. It is a review of a book 'The Soviet Union De-mystified' by Frank Ferudi (Junius publication). The book expresses the arguments of a trotskyist English group, the Revolutionary Communist Party. These arguments were that the law of value no longer operates in the USSR, that the bureaucracy does not constitute a ruling class and that the Soviet Union is not an imperialist power. The reviewer does not agree with any of these arguments. The best part and the most relevant for the present days discussions about Russia concerns the law of value and the falling profit rate. (copy at Echanges)

CHINA

A world turned upside down, The Economist, a survey of China's economy (1/8/87)

If you do not find in this collection of articles a real analysis of developing capitalism in China, you will find a lot of useful information and data to begin such an analysis. (copy at Echanges) The political aspects of this evolution are examined in an article of Daad en Gedachte (12/87, Cajo Brendel): Deng Xiaoping is leaving his most important functions but his policies will go ahead (the French translation will be published in Liaisons N° 3)

SOUTH - KOREA

South-Korean unions prepare for new wage battles - The price of democracy (Far Eastern Economic Review, 28/1/88)

Last summer's strikes, like most labour actions in the past were almost exclusively spontaneous wildcat strikes. In the wave of these strikes and up to now, a lot of attempts were made either by new unions (1400 were formed) or by groups of dissident workers to break the leadership of the official union FKTU. As unions federated in FKTU are limited to representing workers at only one company, these attempts aim at swapping information within the same group of companies, coordinating bargaining and action on an inter-companies basis. This is made very difficult by the labour laws. The article foresees a spring offensive on wages; it is evident that capitalists in

what is the 'necessary work - voluntary and conscious - of formation of party leaders'.

ITALY

Class struggle in the last years ('86 and '87) has seen the emergence of a new form of organization: the COBAS (rank and file committees). Actually the media gave this general name to various autonomous 'rank and file workers' groups trying to coordinate and impulse strikes and struggles out of the unions. We will give a more general article about this original present way of class struggle in Italy; more detailed texts are published in Liaisons N° 3, available at Echanges. The following texts can be found either in Italian or in French:

- Railways workers: Drivers' Cobas: history and perspectives of a new form of organization; Interview with a driver of the National Coordination of Milano (translation from Operaio Contro N° 41/Nov '87. 'Macchinisti Uniti' for a new cycle of struggles (Euzo Fantozzi, 26/9/87).

- ATM Turin (text written by a Collegamenti comrade after discussions with ATM workers, 12/87, Turin buses).

- Education: Interview with a new member of the COBAS coordinating committee for the Turin Schools (12/87).

- The Cobas: A general view and a long interview with an Italian comrade giving a lot of details on the complexity of these rank and file committees.

- Letter from Italy:

'There are a series of problems dealing with such a widespread and confused movement that appears and disappears (the railway drivers' cobas has largely been reabsorbed by the unions, while every conceivable effort is being made to prevent an abandonment of the unions by airport workers; the Turin bus drivers' cobas seems to have been defeated, at least for now, while here (Turin) there has been the emergence of one among city 'police' which ended in a punch up at the Town Hall just yesterday) and that obviously cannot be reduced to the label 'cobas'. I shall get down to more work this Easter, but I feel that it might be better to wait a while before writing a complete text instead of a few small articles. There was a very interesting report on Italy in the Economist (27 Febr.- 4 March) which is particularly useful on commenting on the question of the 'black economy'. Here we can see an area which the state could not readily integrate into the normal economy, despite its huge deficit and an urgent need to find new sources of taxation; if we simply read the following: 'One study discovered that 54% of civil servants has second jobs, 33% sold goods within their ministries and 27% ran other businesses during working hours' (page 9), one can see that low pay is supplemented by other jobs (usually illegal) and the black economy is a safety valve for discontent. The same percentage is calculated for FIAT factory workers (50% moonlight), then there is the 'black economy' of those who have

no proper job: prostitution and the drug traffic are widespread while corruption of politicians is at such a level that the newspaper requires 2-3 pages every day just to report new cases and here in Turin hardly a day goes by without groups of hospital administrators being arrested. The state does very little. Even the basic measures that have been taken in France for example (i.e. issuing open cheques or large sums of cash only to those who can prove that they will use them legally) have yet to be considered. This leaves those who could only make up for low pay by working overtime (i.e. mainly transport workers etc.) at a loss. (There is a good article in Collegamenti that shows how bus drivers in Turin could make up to about £ 1,000 a month with overtime until the state began to try to cut costs, and now they have to get by on £ 600-700 - the shift system making any possibility of a second job illusory.)

On the front of the objective economic process: we can see that the state cannot simply get rid of run down services (even if this were politically possible, which it is not). The much vaunted 'liberalization' of air travel has fallen flat on its face because there is no air space available in Europe to run more flights, thus someone at least will still have to take the train. The short lived debate about selling off state assets to pay off the debt has also collapsed when it was discovered that while every other country has assets to cover the national debt, Italy does not. Meanwhile the state expects that some miracle will help avoid the bad consequences of '1992' or a possible depression.

D.B. 31/3/88

Collegamenti Wobbly - for the direct class organization (Angelo Caruso-Via Felice Casati 26 - 20124 Milano - Italy - in Italian) N° 20/winter 87: On the criteria to interpret the movement. Short notice on emigrant workers in Paterson struggle in 1913 (New Jersey). Discussion about the 'Cobas', teachers and others ..(see special article on the cobas). Try the possible to get the impossible. Note on the movement of the 'rank and file' committee in the schools. 'Macchiniste uniti' for a new cycle of struggles? (on the railways drivers struggle). Interview with a deputy of the rank and file coordination in the post office. Hard and soft: the artificial intelligence. Korea. N° 21/Spring 88: A series of articles on the 'cobas', including one on the strike of bus drivers in Turin which is a classical case of where the integration of the state (the local council and the police), the management and the unions managed, for now, to head off a strong rank and file movement. Hammer and sickle: when the software strikes, deals with the organization of work in the Turin area in software houses. These firms are generally small and have a high labour turnover due to bad pay and long working ours. What is also interesting in this article is the complete lack of mention of sabotage or inserting 'viruses' in programmes, something now so widespread in the UK and US that not only Processed World talks about it, but also top

financial publications such as the Financial Times and The Economist. Other articles on FIAT aviation, la Banque de France strike, women blues singers, etc.

Maelström (Accademia dei Testardi, CP 16, 55061 Carraia, Italy) On Wolf Woland Radical Theory, Class struggle (and terrorism). A series of letters and a discussion of this book following on from the last issue of M. Among other things discussed are the usefulness or otherwise of material from Theorie Communiste (cf. Echanges N° 52) and Invariance (Capital and Community) in examining the present class struggle. Notes on the proletarian class as experience, on the other hand, re-proposes the theories of Socialisme et barbarie as a key to understand new events. Two re-publications: On the work of the league (Genoa, 1968) and Vaneigem Isidore Ducasse.

USA

Discussion Bulletin (P.O.Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501) No 28/ March 1988: Contents summary by DB editor: 'we conclude the publication of the proposal by the Guilford Branch of the SFGB to make what amounts to an about face in the SFGB program. Adam Buick responds to the proposal... Tom Wetzel, coordinator of IDEAS & ACTION, the Workers' Solidarity Alliance publication, answers recent letters by ...IWW members and WSA critics. Laurens Otter writes on the same topic. Monroe Fussack has three letters dealing with the SLP, DeLeonism and the Soviet Union. In another letter Otter comments on the DB review of CLASS WAR ON THE HOME FRONT and provides new information on the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation. Rik Winslow writes on the frustrations that beset an active revolutionary when the working class is not revolutionary. The last item, a broadside from the Spanish Information Network...'

Healyism implodes. Documents and interviews on the WRP's buried history (Spartacist no 36-37, available from Spartacist Publications, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, or PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE, one dollar, 75 pence). Contains information which can be of interest to some in addition to the material in Solidarity no 16 (see Echanges no 53). Even if their perspective have nothing in common with Solidarity (or Echanges), being a rival trotskyist group, the 'Spartacists' have for many years revealed and denounced many of the nasty affairs in the WRP which most people only recently have become aware of. (This issue also contains a long critical review of R.Challinor's important book on the UK Socialist Labour Party, 'The origins of British Bolshevism'.)

THE HUNGARIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

An Eyewitness Account of Magyar Fuggetlensegi Mozgalom
Istvan Szent-Miklosy

Autumn 1987 256 pages
0-275-92574-9 £30.95

The Magyar Fuggetlensegi Mozgalom (Hungarian Independence Movement) played an important role in the history of Hungary in the latter part of World War II. This non-governmental movement provided leadership for Hungarian resistance to Nazi control and Communist Russian attempts to dominate Hungary. Yet, activities of the MFH have not yet been described reliably or comprehensively, either by former participants

The bulk of this volume is based on the author's personal experiences as a participant in the activities of the MFH. The author, the last survivor in the West of the Central Secretariat of the MFH, describes the failed attempts of the group first to assist efforts to obtain an armistice with the Allies and to save the Jewish population of Budapest, and then to introduce a Western-style democratic political system into Hungary. The book also identifies the causes of the movement's failures, causes which lay not just in the actions of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, but also in the shortcomings of Hungarian leadership. The author concludes that despite the eventual failure of the MFH its various efforts had to be made in order to demonstrate Hungary's commitment to Western

European culture and style of democracy.

TROTSKYISM AND MAOISM

Theory and Practice in France and the United States

Belden Fields 288 pages
1985 £23.95
0-275-92035-6

The theory and practice of communism today does not adhere rigidly to the dogma of the Communist Party. This book provides a systematic comparison of Trotskyist and Maoist political theory and practice. Pulling together material from widely scattered sources into a comprehensive framework, this book follows the development of the Trotskyist and Maoist movements in France and the United States from the late 1930's to the present.

Spring offensive launched

A fresh wave of strikes sweeps South Korea

By Mark Clifford in Seoul

South Korea's expected spring labour offensive has kicked into high gear with nearly 100 strikes under way at mines and factories across the country. The Daewoo group, whose car, shipbuilding and defence units are closed by strikes, has been the hardest hit of the country's major conglomerates, partly because of the belief that its chairman provided critical financial support to the ruling party in last December's presidential election.

For the first time in South Korean history, most of the strikes appear to be taking place within the framework of the country's labour law. While the labour code was revised last October, it still demands a cooling-off period and requires workers to give prior notice of strikes and other job actions. And though a security guard was killed at the Hyundai Engine Co. in March, violence has been minimal at most sites this spring, especially compared to last year's disputes.

Most of the strikes are narrowly focused on economic issues, unlike last summer's disputes when the right to independent unions was a primary demand. But this year's wage demands are steep, especially coming on top of last year's average increase of nearly 20%. And many of those companies that have been hit hardest are in depressed industries, such as shipbuilding and mining.

The most serious dispute in the country is at Daewoo Shipbuilding and Heavy Industries. Despite union leaders' endorsement of a package that included a 14% basic pay rise, workers at the shipyard turned down the settlement by a nearly 2-1 margin and continue to push for a 43% raise in basic pay. Daewoo chairman Kim Woo Choong, took over direct management of the company, which lost Won 69.4 billion (US\$91.3 million) last November in an effort to turn the ailing shipbuilder around.

Moreover, Daewoo Motor, which produces LeMans cars in a joint venture with General Motors, has been hit by a series of strikes and slowdowns since the beginning of April. On 12 April, 4,000 union members walked out to press demands that include a 26% wage increase. The company has already missed at least two shipments of its cars to the US because of the strike, which has shut down its main production facility in Pupyong, near Seoul. Workers are also on strike at Daewoo Precision, which produces tanks and other military equipment, despite a prohibition on strikes at defence firms. Demands at Daewoo Precision include a 36% pay rise. The company has sued leaders of the strike for staging an illegal action.

Why has Daewoo been hit hardest?

A company spokesman says it is because the company, unlike some other business groups, has allowed the formation of strong labour unions. But diplomats, labour activists and business sources in Seoul say that the company is also being hit because of Choong's rumoured financial support for ruling-party candidate Roh Tae Woo during last year's presidential election.

"The unions say that Kim weighed in with substantial contributions at a critical point in the campaign," says a Western diplomat in Seoul. While radical activists hope to press a political point by hitting Daewoo, many workers apparently see the issue in simple economic terms. "Workers think that if Kim can afford large donations to the ruling party he should be able to afford large pay increases," says a South Korean executive.

Labour activists say Daewoo is also hurt by the legacy of last year's labour disputes. A worker at its Okpo shipyard was killed in a confrontation with police last August and seven workers from its Pupyong car plant remain in

jail for last summer's labour activities.

Resentment among blue-collar manufacturing workers at Daewoo and other business groups is also building as sister companies in the financial-services area turn in record results. Although Daewoo Shipbuilding can scarcely afford substantial wage rises, workers at Daewoo Securities are reaping the rewards of boom times in the security business. Over the past year, the securities company has paid bonuses equal to 13 months' wages and employees have been able to take advantage of generous employee stock-ownership schemes.

Samsung's shipyard has also been shut by a strike. The shipyard, located near Daewoo's yard on the southern island of Koje, was shut after workers were thwarted in an attempt to register a union. Samsung's founder Lee Byung Chull, who died last November, was vigorously opposed to unions and none of the firm's industrial units have a union.

The Hyundai group, which has suffered the worst labour relations among the large business groups in the past, is not faring as badly as Daewoo this spring. The bitter strike at Hyundai Engine, which shut that factory down for much of February and March, has now been settled. And at the Hyundai Mipo dockyard, a one-day strike on 15 April prompted the company to reach a tentative collective-bargaining agreement with workers to avert a prolonged walk-out. It was an unusual move for a business group that has generally chosen confrontation rather than conciliation in its labour-management relations.

Labour negotiations will not begin until next month at Hyundai Motor, however, so the group's flagship company could face another round of labour disputes. "Ulsan is simmering," says a labour adviser, referring to the southwestern city where most of Hyundai's factories are located.

Strikes are also spreading in the country's mining district in the northeastern province of Kangwon. Miners have traditionally been among the country's most militant workers and some of the most violent 1987 strikes occurred in this region's mining towns.

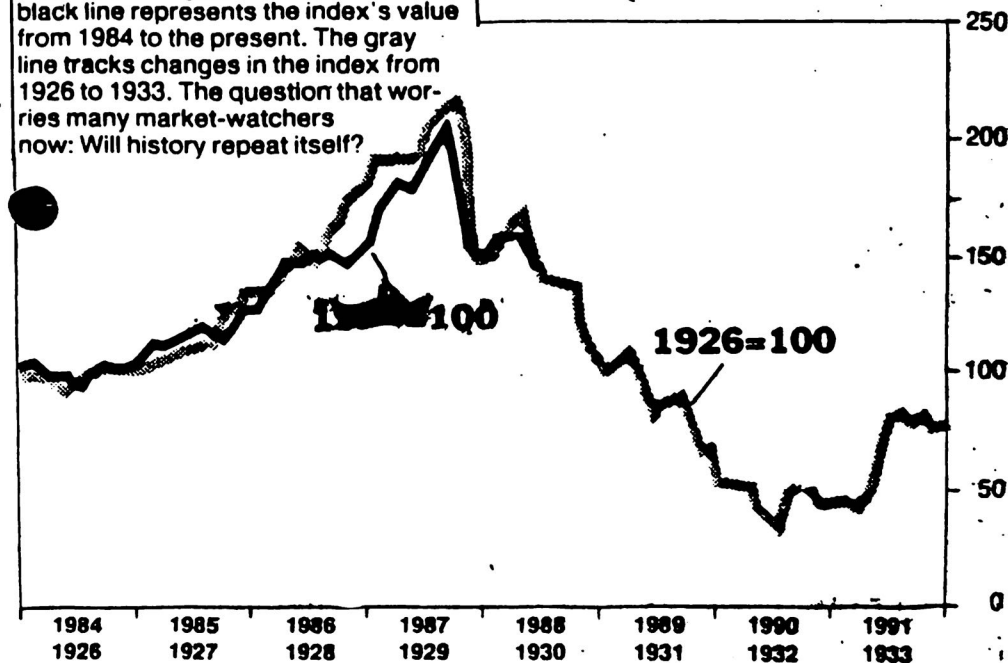
The news is not all bleak, however. More than two-thirds of the 363 labour disputes reported to the Labour Ministry so far this year have been resolved. Major textile, apparel and footwear companies have already wrapped up negotiations with workers, settling on wage rises of 10-14%. Labour sources say that industry-wide labour talks, conducted under the auspices of industry trade associations, facilitated the negotiations.

The government has largely con-

tinued the neutral posture it adopted during last summer's labour disputes and encouraged management and workers to settle them autonomously. Although riot police are sometimes still used to quell protests, the general tenor is very different from what it was even a year ago, when the government habitually suppressed union activities. Moreover, part of the more peaceful tone to this year's disputes reflects a new maturity on the part of workers. "In the old days a lot of the labour action was an anti-government statement," says a labour adviser. "Now there's no advantage to having the police intervene. The labour laws have been changed and the mood in the labour movement now is 'let's play it by the rules'."

The S.&P. 500: 1987 Versus 1929

The chart at right indexes the Standard & Poor's Index of 500 stocks so that the starting points equal 100. The black line represents the index's value from 1984 to the present. The gray line tracks changes in the index from 1926 to 1933. The question that worries many market-watchers now: Will history repeat itself?



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