“Let’s all move one place on”

It’s party time and they’re fighting for seats we get the crumbs

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Labour's dead end

It would be difficult for any socialist to mourn the Callaghan government. By any reckoning the last five years have been a disaster for the British working class. Labour came to power in March 1974 on the crest of a wave of mass working-class resistance to the Tory government of Ted Heath, pledged by its Manifesto to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families.

Any shift has been in the opposite direction. This is what an economist writing in the Observer had to say about the effects of Labour's policy of wage restraint:

"The past twelve months have seen the sharpest fall in real living standards of Britain's working population in any year for at least a century, including the wars. Indeed, to find a comparable fall, it would probably be necessary to go back to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (1 May 1977).

Even in its own terms the Labour government has been a failure. The National Enterprise Board was intended to mark a new break-through in state control of the economy by buying into the profitable sectors of private manufacturing industry. No longer was the state sector to be reserved for unprofitable but essential industries which private enterprise was no longer interested in running.

The NEC's most important state turn came to be British Leyland, the biggest state-owned firm, and in shipbuilding (another creation of the outgoing Labour government), and in other nationalised industries (for example, steel). Wilson and Callaghan have presided over lay-offs, reduced manning levels, productivity deals, closures all designed to squeeze every more work out at shrinking labour force.

The biggest joke of all was Labour's slogan during the February 1974 election: 'Back to Work with Labour'. Production has still to recover from the levels to which it fell during Heath's three-and-a-half years. Unemployment remains bitterly at the post-war high of around 1½ million.

Dennis Healey, who promised 'to squeeze the rich until the pips squeaked', has become the toughest of hard-money men, beloved and trusted by the City for cutting public spending and company taxation and keeping interest rates high at the price of employment and output.

Even the proudest of Labour's post-war achievements, the welfare state, has not been sacrosanct. Healey's public spending cuts have hit social services, and the Nuffield Council on Social Policy has warned that if the Labour government does not reverse the cuts, "We will have no choice". Labour's defenders will whine: "What else could we have done during an international economic crisis? If only the times were better".

The trouble is that the time will never be right for Labour. The last five years have seen the most serious economic crisis the capitalist system has faced since the war. Internationally the system has been struck a variety of shocks: mass working-class militancy in Spain and Italy, a near-revolution in Portugal, victorious liberation movements in southern Africa and Indo-China, and new revolution in Iran.

The British working-class movement was at its strongest in 1974, having just brought Heath to his knees. Even in the face of mass unemployment and falling living standards, trade union membership has continued to rise over the past five years. What could have been a
more favourable opportunity for making serious inroads into the very foundations of the capitalist system?

The truth is that there has long ceased to be a secret that the leadership of the Labour Party do not want, to overthrow capitalism, they are committed to making it work. The logic of making capitalism work during a crisis is to cut living standards, to lay off workers and close down factories, to make those that are left work harder, to cut social expenditure.

No wonder a Financial Times columnist commented: "I cannot for the life of me think of any reason why anyone should consider voting Conservative at the next general election. In terms of what Mrs Thatcher's Tories have to offer, we are already served by about as good a Conservative government as we are likely to get. For a start Mr Callaghan's government has set out a level of unemployment that no Conservative government would have dared to accept" (29 November 1977).

The loss of the 1977 Labour's overall majority in the House of Commons provided Callaghan with the perfect excuse to follow his natural bent and do nothing. Should any Tribune try and remind the Labour government of the Long-Forgotten Manifesto, Callaghan could reply that to stay in office he dare not offend the Liberals/Scottish Nationalists/Even Powell (delete where appropriate).

For much of his premiership Callaghan was fortunate. The TUC general council backed wage restraint. Thanks to South Sea oil and Healey's hard money policies the pound rode high, helping to bring inflation down from the peaks it reached in 1975-77.

Callaghan could safely adopt the role of a compliant father-figure who knew best. He reminded many commentators of Stanley Baldwin, do-nothing Tory prime minister during the last slump, in the 1930s.

But once the going got rough, especially during the industrial struggles of the past three months—government disintegrated. Abandoning the most basic tradition of the Labour movement, Callaghan called on workers to cross picket lines. He agreed with the TUC a Concordat which opened the way for anti-union legislation under a Tory government (see our last issue).

He scrambled around for the parliamentary votes necessary to ensure his survival for a few more months, offering lower energy prices for northern Ireland to the Ulster Unionists, quaranternisation in compensation for the SDS and the anti-nationalists, engaging in the student sort of pork barrel politics.

Watching the creeping paralysis of the Labour government over the past few months, called to mind Disraeli's description of a decrepit Liberal administration of the last century.

"As I sat opposite the Treasury Bench, the ministers reminded me of one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coasts of South America. You behold a range of exhausted volcanoes. Not a flame flickers on a single pulpit crest!"

Callaghan's desperate efforts to stay in office have finally failed, and we are now in the middle of an election campaign. What can socialists expect from the result?

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**Election 79**

**5 years hard Labour**

1974. The year of two elections—February, when Labour under Harold Wilson wins the largest number of seats but not a majority, and October, when Wilson scraps in with a majority. The miners' strike is settled and the Industrial Relations Act repealed. After caving in before the miners' Council's opposition to power-sharing in Northern Ireland, the Labour government introduces a 'temporary' measure the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which permits detention without trial and summary deportation, and is still in force.

1975. Troops are used to break dustmen's strike in Glasgow. The referendum on Common Market membership in June is turned into an opinion poll on wage restraint. After a massive 'Yes' Wilson removes Anthony Wedgwood Benn, the most vocal left-winger in the Cabinet, from the Department of Industry, and, with TUC backing, introduces a £6 limit on wage increases. When Chrysler threatens to withdraw from the UK, the government dissuades them with a massive bribe.

1976. Harold Wilson resigns and is succeeded by James Callaghan. One of his first acts is to sack Home Office Minister Alex Lyon, who calls him a racist. During the wave of racist propaganda in the Sun and other papers, giving rise to the murder of a number of blacks and stimulating the growth of the Nazi Front, in the spring and summer of that year, Labour continues to implement the racist Immigration Act inherited from the Tories. Denis Healey uses the pretext of a loan from the International Monetary Fund to cut public spending by £1 billion.

1977. A wave of strikes notably in British Leyland, threatens the survival of the social contract. To stay in office Callaghan makes a pact with the Labour Party, Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason openly deploys Special Air Service trooper terrorist squads in the Six Counties. Aubrey, Berry and Campbell are prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act for their interest in signals intelligence. The TUC continues its support for wage restraint. Troops are used against the Firemen's strike.

1978. The end of the Lab-Lab pact forces Callaghan to rely on the support on the Scottish Nationalists (in exchange for the Devolution Bill) and the Ulster Unionists (many of whom admire Roy Mason's firm way with 'terrorists'). Despite the TUC's decision to return to 'free collective bargaining' Healey proposes a five percent limit on wage increases.

1979. The success of Ford workers and lorry drivers in the five percent limit, encourages widespread strike action in the public sector. The failure of 40 per cent of the Scottish electorate to support devolution brings to an end Callaghan's alliance with the SNP. On 28 March the Tories win a motion of no-confidence in the government by one vote.

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**The Tory enemy**

The day after the Labour government fell share prices rose to their highest level ever. The stock market is a very imperfect indicator of the desires or intentions of big business. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the British capitalist class wishes to see a Tory government elected.

This situation represents a marked change. Until very recently big business was quite happy to see Labour continue in office. Callaghan and Healey, as shown in the previous article, implemented impeccably pro-capitalist policies.

Furthermore, they had been able to mobilise the loyalties of the trade union leadership, and indeed many rank-and-file activists at convenor and senior-steward level, in support of, or at least acquiescence in, these policies.

A Tory government, especially one headed by Margaret Thatcher, would be feared, disrupt our consensus and re-awaken old hatreds. After all it is only five years ago that trade union militancy crushed the Health department. Would Thatcher have any better? Why bother, since Labour is implementing Tory policies anyway?

What changed this situation was the collapse of the social contract. The trade union leadership were unable to prevent the strikes of the past six months, even though they did their best to sabotage them once under way (see, for example the article by Martin Jones on the Ford strike on page 20).
The left's choice

A Tory victory in the general election would bring to office the most right-wing government of the century. It would provide a mandate for a programme of viciously anti-working-class policies.

Thatcher has promised to reduce the tax burden on the rich, increase indirect taxes and, therefore, prices, cut public spending (except, of course, on defence and law and order), prevent Britain from becoming "swamped" by black people, and take on the unions.

This is the heart of the case for voting Labour in the general election. Callaghan may be bad, but Thatcher will be much worse.

We should not, however, allow ourselves to fall into the opposite trap. If the Tories win the election, we will hear a great deal from those on the left of the Labour Party about how things might have been different, and the sorry fate of Michael Foot, the

It's going to be a race between an election and inflation getting back into double figures. The latest government price index showed a rise of 9.8 per cent over the year to February; the March figure might just fall short of Henley's magic ten per cent. It's a certainty, however, that prices are now rising faster than late last year.

The government's Price Commission admits that the period before the December-January wage-offensive was already showing a big rise in price notifications from large companies, and the rate of retail price increases, even excluding big rises in seasonal foods like fresh vegetables, has been rising since October. Apart from the big oil price rises coming through, other raw materials are now costing much more than a year ago, and the cost of food as measured by the Price Commission rose by a massive 17 per cent between January 1978 and 1979.

The total value of all price increases notified to the commission this month has risen to £38,013 million.
natives will be a defeat for those who wish to see more attacks on the workers' movement. There is, unfortunately, no credible socialist alternative to Labour which has a hearing among significant numbers of workers. To abstain in a situation where the mass of workers continue, despite everything which has happened, to support Labour would be the worst sort of irresponsibility.

Socialists will, therefore, be forced, reluctantly and against their wishes, to call for the return of a Labour government (although voting, in the few constituencies where they will stand, for candidates to the left of Labour).

However, our real task is to build the rank-and-file organisations through which workers can defend themselves from the attacks we can expect in the coming months. Implicit within these organisations is the power, not only to win defensive battles within the existing system, but to overturn that system and replace it with a socialist society. It is here that the real road to socialism, the alternative to Labour's dead-end, is to be found.

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**Cambodia**

**Popular contradictions**

Not surprisingly, the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea (Cambodia) and the Chinese invasion of Vietnam have caused much heart-searching among the world's far left.

After all, the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people against US imperialism was one of the chief inspirations during the revival of the European and north American revolutionary left in the late 1960s. Hundreds of thousands of young students and workers were swept into a movement of solidarity with the Vietnamese freedom fighters and of protest against the barbarities of the Americans and their clients.

The fall of Saigon and Phnom Penh in 1975 seemed to many socialists in the west to open up a new, more hopeful, chapter in the history of the third world. Instead, the new states created by these historic victories over imperialism have been at each other's throats in a struggle culminating in the occupation of Cambodia by Vietnamese troops in January and the Chinese attack on Vietnam the following month.

This situation has created immense theoretical headaches for those who believed that the defeat of imperialism in 1975 had opened the way to the construction of socialism in Indochina. One of the most interesting reactions has been in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI).

The USFI have long considered China, Vietnam and so on to be 'deformed workers' states'. For their (largely Euro- pean based) majority the same went for Pol Pot's Kampuchea. So the war between it and Vietnam was, for them, a 'fratricidal war between workers' states'.

This of course had nothing in common with socialism and communism. Responsibility was put squarely on 'the criminal actions of all the ruling bureaucrats'.

The 'bloody terrorists of the Pol Pot clique' were particularly singled out. 'But the task of overthrowing these tyrants was and remains the job of the Cambodian workers and peasants. Under no circumstances can this task be given to the bureaucracies of other countries and their armies'. And so they called for the immediate withdrawal of the Vietnamese regular army from Cambodia.

But a large minority of the USFI did not share this position. The Japanese section for instance, hailed the victory of the Vietnamese armed forces and the Kampuchean allies as a "new advance of the Indochinese Revolution". The paper of the USFI's British section, Socialist Challenge, also welcomed the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

The American supporters of the Fourth International, the Socialist Workers Party, took a similar position and this is where the argument becomes interesting: backed it up by asking 'Pol Pot Regime: Was it a Workers' State?" An article in this issue of Socialist Challenge, by Donald Wright, answers quite clearly that it was not.

This is the bare bones of their argument. In 1967, a massive peasant uprising took place in the main rice growing district of Battambang. The rebellion was crushed. But in its aftermath guerrilla forces led by the relatively young Cambodian Communist Party began to grow. By 1975 they had an armed force of about 4000.

In March 1970 a US-supported coup imposed the regime of General Lon Nol. After this and the abortive US invasion in May 1970, the peasant rebels won the vast bulk of the countryside and held on to it until the fall of Lon Nol in April 1975.

'As in Vietnam, the military command structure that heads the peasant army was not revolutionary socialist but Stalinist. The Kampuchean CP... adhered to the strategy of "people's war" which called for peasants fighting in the countryside to the exclusion of the revolutionary mobilisation of the urban working class and poor.'

So... it failed to take advantage of the massive anti-Lon Nol, anti-war and anti-US demonstrations that shook Phnom Penh and other Kampuchean cities in 1972.

Nevertheless, they were welcomed by a further urban mass upsurge in 1975. 'The Khmer Rouge commanders, however, quickly demonstrated they had no intention of organising and relying on the masses to overcome Kampuchea's social crisis or of acting in their interests.'

"Having come to power on the crest of a revolutionary upsurge in the countryside, they not only..."
brutally smashed and dispersed the urban population, but they drove back the land seizures and redistribution begun by the peasant mass movement.

The authors of the Militant article then outline the vicious way in which the Pol Pot regime dispersed the urban population but make clear that despite the extreme character of the measures taken by the Pol Pot regime, such policies offer no solution and it is understood that Stalinist and other petty-bourgeois nationalist currents are alien from the working class in practice, and in China and Indochina, in social composition as well.

Developments such as those of Pol Pot were, they argue, surpassed by Trotsky, writing on the peasant guerrillas in China in 1932: 'The commanders and commissars appear in the guise of absolute masters of the situation and upon occupying the cities will be rather apt to look down from above on the workers.'

There were, they say, tendencies in this direction in China after the 1949 revolution, but in Kampuchea the conflict Trotsky warned of took an extremely sharp form, resulting in defeat for the working people.

The fundamental economic strategy of the Kampuchean regime under Pol Pot... was to maximise exploitation of labour and minimise consumption, so as to become self-sufficient in food and accumulate an agricultural surplus that could be sold on the world market. Through these exports, it would finance industrialisation.

The defeat of Lon Nol's imperialist-backed forces was a devastating blow to Kampuchea's bourgeoisie, almost all of whom had fled by the fall of Lon Nol in 1975. The government came into the hands of the 'Angkar' (the Kampuchean CP apparatus), as did all urban property and a growing portion of the agricultural land.

For some commentators, this was enough to prove that capitalism had been overthrown in Kampuchea.

But the nationalisation of property is not by itself sufficient to establish a workers state. The intervention of the workers the only force in modern society capable of establishing and maintaining a progressive economic structure is needed.

The nationalisations in Kampuchea came about through mobilisations of the working class even limited and controlled ones but following the Khmer Rouge's crushing of the urban workers.

The Kampuchean working class has no stake whatever in the nationalisation of property, carried out without its participation, by the petty-bourgeois in the Angkar. These were the actions of a new bourgeois gestating in the state apparatus. They were not anticapitalist actions by the Kampuchean workers... the nationalisations under Pol Pot have numerous parallels.

They are in the same family with the extensive nationalisations by regimes in Egypt, Burma, Mozambique and Angola, which were the opposite of social overturns by the workers... Newcolonial regimes are frequently forced to foster the primitive accumulation of capital through the state apparatus.

Now the American SWP are not the only people to decide that Pol Pot's Kampuchea had nothing to do with socialism. But what is interesting about their position is that it does not simply throw up its hands in horror at the barbarities of the regime but draws parallels with other developments in the 'Third World' including China and Vietnam.

Not of course that they draw the conclusion that these too are capitalist. They claim that mass mobilisations overturned capitalist property relations in South Vietnam in the spring of 1978 (nearly three years after the fall of Saigon).

And when the Chinese government was compelled to take on US imperialism in the Korean War, it had to change course. Land reform was extended to all of Southern China. (Previous waves of reform had affected only the North.)

The resulting peasant mobilisations spurred urban anti-capitalist mobilisations beginning in 1951. A workers and peasants government came into being and began carrying out under the auspices of the mass organisations the urban mobilisations and economic measures that in 1953 transformed China into a workers' state. (Four years after the Chinese Communist Party had taken power,

But alongside their hard-headed analysis of Cambodia it must be said that these claims of 'mass mobilisations' begin to look a little flimsy. It will be interesting to see if anyone else draws the same conclusions. Pete Goodwin

Sao Paulo

Ten days...

...from the international press in the first month of the newly inaugurated Brazilian president, right-wing hardliner Figurenredo.

Labour sources said the settlement was temporary pending further wage negotiations.

23 March (Reuters)
Two of the three striking metalworkers' unions last night rejected proposals reached between their representatives and employers to end a nine-day strike... labour sources said.

More than 100,000 workers overwhelmingly voted against the settlement with a show of hands at the football stadium in the industrial suburb of Sao Bernardo.

At the Sao Caetano suburb where General Motors has its factory, at least 30,000 more workers also voted to continue the strike.

Members of the third union were still meeting tonight to decide on whether to accept proposals.

The unions had previously turned down a staggered 6.5 percent increase offered by the Sao Paulo Industries Federation (FIISP) unless an 11 percent increase won last year went ahead separately.

23 March (Latin America Economic Report)
Workers have also been more adventurous in their tactics. Factories run by Sotra Cruz, the Brazilian equivalent of British American Tobacco, were closed in several states in the first simultaneous strike in units of a single company. The ABC metalworkers (Sao Paulo) have been mounting protests.
Engineering Employers Federation

‘Nein’ is a 4-letter word

Broadway House, Toddall Street, just off St James’s Park in London doesn’t sound the sort of place where you’d expect the class struggle to be hotting up. And if you had to pick a spot it wouldn’t be there. You’d choose to hear about the result of the German steelworkers’ strike.

But times are changing. Broadway House is the home of some of Britain’s most aggressive bosses—The Engineering Employers’ Federation. And last month they declared war.

First of all came a document (see box) which spells out publicly what a lot of top companies, and quite a few smaller ones, have been saying in private: now is the time to crush the militant stewards.

Second came the EEF’s answer to the national engineering wage claim. The small but enthusiastic lobby outside the AEAs (the jauntilyibboned Lord Sdenford) couldn’t have been much surprised by the pay offer: a pathetic £5 in response to a £20 claim. The amount of steam behind the claim would in any case embarrass a leaky kettle.

But as part of the offer came a demand for union ‘commitments’ on productivity and against strikes outside the procedure. And the employers further generously proposed long-term agreements on conditions (with no reduction in hours for many years) and alterations to the engineering lay-off agreement—because firms had to pay out a lot during the lorry strike.

German Lesson

From their reply to the Confed unions and from their now headline document on disputes it looks as though engineering bosses have been watching what’s been happening in Germany and have liked what they’ve seen.

Their reply to the union’s first of all quotes with approval the ‘highly respected’ Council of Experts in West Germany—a so-called impartial body which advises government and employers on the economy, rather like the set up proposed in the Concordat.

This body came up with their views last year on the 35-hour week and surprise, surprise, condemned it. Its conclusions, say the EEF, ‘are the background to the recent agreement in the German engineering industry which confirms the standard 40-hour week until at least 31 December 1983, that is the next five years.’

The EEF also throws the German agreement in engineering (reached in the aftermath of steelworkers’ defeat) into the argument about productivity. German employers can afford to pay very much higher wages than British ones, and yet we all know that German employers in the engineering industry settled for a wage increase of just 4.3 per cent on 1 January this year.

And just to encourage Terry Duffie, and his favourite hobbyhorse of harmonising shopsfloor and office conditions, the employers suggest they copy Germany and have a long-term agreement, perhaps like the one which ‘maintains the 40-hour week until 1983 and fixes holidays for the next seven years’.

David Becham

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“We need to restore authority and discipline on the shopfloor,” said the Director of Manpower from Delta Metal at a conference last month, to nods of approval from assorted industrial relations managers of such companies as GKN, APV, BOC and Fossco. He is not alone, nor a member of the ‘iron ring’. The clearest indication of the tough line management now wants to take comes in the policy document released to the press by the Engineering Employers’ Federation on March 14.

The EEF document doesn’t just invite its 6,000 member companies to take a hard line. It virtually orders them to. It says:

— “These guidelines aim to help employers achieve greater confidence and coherence in the practice of collective bargaining, and in responding to the threat or fact of industrial action”.

— the guidelines aim to ensure “any employer following them will not feel isolated”.

— “where an employer has rights under a national, local or domestic agreement, he must be vigilant to exercise and maintain them”.

— employers “should press the need for appointment of stewards with proper qualifications who are competent for office”.

— “abuse of the position and power of stewards should not be accepted”.

— “employees should be made aware that their employer is willing to provide facilities for secret ballots”.

— “to maintain the authority of Procedure, of union officials and management, companies should refuse to negotiate where Procedure has been breached”.

— “lay-off pay should not be offered for those affected by disputes in the same plant or wider bargaining unit”.

— “industrial action such as go-slows, refusal to work normally, and blocking of employees, products or machines should not be tolerated for more than a few days. After a warning, with a sufficient period allowed for refection, suspension without pay should be the normal response”.

— “lump sum payments should not normally be offered by way of settlement as an inducement to return to work...as regards income tax refunds, companies can limit their obligation to pay them during the course of a strike by giving notice, and passing the obligation back to the Inland Revenue”.

— “a company’s striking employee should not be recruited by other companies while the strike lasts: nor should its work be carried out by other companies, unless by agreement. A customer company should not pressure a supplying company whose employees are on strike to make an unsatisfactory compromise settlement. Any company subjected to such pressures should feel free to invoke the influence of its Association or the Federation”.

TUC lobby, Blackpool 77
The employers’ offensive

There is now a quite clear pattern of moves by leading companies and employers associations to take the offensive. The lead-up to a probable Tors election victory, with hints of changes to the picketing laws, and the Concordat’s guidelines on weakening trade unions have been quite important. But the real reason lies deeper than this.

First of all the employers recognise the ultimate failure of the social-contract strategy. The tremendous wave of strikes which shatterered the government’s pay policy and exposed union leaders’ inability to control the rank and file have convinced a lot of managers that they’ve got to take the initiative themselves in confronting the workforce, forcing redundancy, rooting out militants etc.

Right-wingers like Chapple, Duffy, Boyd and Co are trying to do their best to convince employers to leave it to them. But for the time being management don’t believe the union leaders can do the trick.

Solidarity appeal

This feeling lies behind a series of appeals by CBI leader Sir John Meaden for more ‘employer solidarity’. Partly this is in an attempt to enhance the CBI’s all-appeal, not just by the employers’ associations themselves, but it also represents the same forces behind the new engineering employers’ document ‘Guidance on Collective Bargaining and Response to Industrial Action’ (for free).

The origins of the EEF document go back some months. Several major firms GKN in particular threatened to quit the EEF if it didn’t produce a policy which would enable management to get back to work. This led to the publication of the EEF document.

The document is quite clear: it says that ‘a substantial part’ of government’s public sector action took this form. February’s figures hadn’t appeared as this issue of Socialist Review was printed, but it looks as though the government’s experts are going to have a lot of head-scratching to do before they work out how massive the revolt against the five per cent was.

Spain

After the vote

The general elections of 1 March were, with the exception of the Basque country, a victory for the ruling UCD and their right-wing policies. Although expected to lose seats, prime minister Adolfo Suarez’ party ended up with 168, a couple extra.

The major electoral challenge of the Socialists (PSOE) was to capitalise. In fact, while gaining three seats, they actually lost votes.

The UCD won again, though it was a close race. The threat of a victory by the left united the right behind the UCD. This was reflected in the failure of the far-right UCID (Democratic Coalition, formerly the Popular Alliance) whose seats fell from 16 to 9, though this was partly because it lost votes to the Socialists for having supported the new ‘democratic’ Constitution last December.

The PSOE won, with 121 seats, obviously failed to break through among middle class and small local parties. The Communist Party (PCE), which spent most of the campaign attacking the Socialists, increased their seats from 20 to 23.

Since the election the PCE have continued to insist on the need for a government of democratic co-operation (i.e. a coalition uniting the UCD and the reformist parties) or at least
a pact between the government and the left—otherwise, "the country will be faced with four years of instability".

The low turnout (67 per cent ten points below the last election in June 1977) was surprising and reflects a considerable degree of apathy and disenchantment after 20 months of bourgeois-democratic rule.

However, the real blow against Suarez was struck in Euskadi (the Basque country). Much to the horror of all the big parties, the radical nationalists (Abertzales) won four congressmen and a senator.

Here are the results for the Basque country (the Abertzales are starred):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PNV (Basque National Party)</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCD</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSOE</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB (Herri Batasuna Popular Unity)*</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE (Euskadiko Eskerra—Basque left)*</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCE</td>
<td>46</td>
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Between them the two radical nationalist coalitions polled nearly 260,000 votes, not far behind the bourgeois PNV, which won seven seats. The Abertzales stand for national independence, socialism and a complete break with Francoism.

Two of the four parties which make up HB called for abstentions in the 1977 election, and their support undoubtedly comes from sympathisers with ETA (militar), the wing of the Basque liberation army currently engaged in armed struggle against the police and the army. Thus the myth of the 'terrorists' isolated from popular feeling has been shattered.

Although HB is a coalition of social democrats, libertarians and revolutionary socialists, the latter are closest to ETA and enjoy the greatest influence on HB's predominantly youthful supporters. Their programme differs from those of the main revolutionary groups mainly in its emphasis on national independence.

On other issues—women's rights, opposition to class collaboration, the revolutionary road to socialism—HB's position is broadly similar to that of the far left. HB seems to have won votes mainly from the PSOE in the large working-class areas.

HB's deputies will not sit in the 'Spanish parliament' unless certain conditions are met, notably the right to self-determination, withdrawal of the Spanish security forces and their replacement by forces under Basque control, amnesty for all political prisoners, the legalisation of all Basque political parties (two of HB's component organisations, HASK and L.A., are still illegal), equality for the Basque language and a wide range of social and economic reforms which would benefit the working class.' One HB deputy recently emphasised that 'the struggle for our liberation and for socialism won't take place in any parliament but in the factories and in the streets.' Essentially, EE is 'more moderate' than HB. It is prepared to go to Madrid and is prepared to work with the PNV in demanding a statute of autonomy for Euskadi. Nevertheless, EE is to the left of the PCE on all issues. It is linked to ETA (polite-militar), a group which specialises in spectacular propaganda stunts, kidnappings and bombings—hardly the image of a respectable parliamentary party.

The PSOE and the PCE accuse the Abertzales of splitting the working class in Euskadi between Basques and immigrants. In reality, many of the radical nationalists' supporters are 'immigrants', as the election results show.

'Anyone who sells their labour in Euskadi is a member of the HB working class,' affirm the Abertzales. Many of them, despite their intense and sometimes mystic nationalism, argue that only the working class can win genuine independence for Euskadi, and that independence can only be guaranteed by international socialism.

The radical nationalists' case has been strengthened by the consensus politics of the reformists, the continued repression practised by the state apparatus and the relative passivity of the working class in the rest of the Spanish state, which have made it increasingly difficult for the revolutionary left to argue against the radicals' often sectarian and adventurist behaviour.

Radical-nationalist parties did well elsewhere (with the exception of Catalonia)—particularly in Galicia and the Canaries. At the same time right-wing nationalists have lost ground.

Over a million votes were cast for parties to the left of the Communists (although over half went to the radical nationalists), representing serious dissatisfaction with the slowness of the reform process, opposition to consensus, and the demand for national self-determination.

The right-wing monarchists, the PTE and ORT, got around 131,000 votes. Since both organisations confidently predicted that they would have deputies elected, they have gone into crisis since the election.

The two main revolutionary organisations, MC (Communist Movement) and LCR (Revolutionary Communist League—Spanish section of the Fourth International) won 89,000 and 45,000 votes respectively, improving on their performances in the 1977 elections, when they were still illegal.

Given the relative down-turn in workers' struggles outside the Basque country, these results were reasonable. Both organisations did best in Euskadi, respectively winning 17,000 and 10,200 votes there.

Carillo: 'Long live the constitution' 'Long live democracy'

Bishop: 'Don't forget the family'

'Long live the king' 'Long live Spain'

'Viva la constitución! Viva la democracia!

'Viva el rey! Viva España!

'No te olvides de la familia.

'Viva la familia!'
The election campaign itself was like a gigantic battle between soap companies. Most parties reached unimaginable heights of banality in their electoral propaganda, which could have been swept around without making any noticeable difference. 'Firm government' and 'moderation' were the watchwords.

The campaign was marked by the censorship of numerous wing broadcasts by the openly pro-government television and radio. The main targets of censorship were the revolutionary left, the radical nationalist and a coalition of 45,000 media workers called the Union for Liberty of Expression.

The ICR had the demand that fascists be purged from the army and references to repression in the Basque country cut from TV broadcasts. The MC had two programmes completely stopped when they refused to accept similar cuts aimed particularly at references to the king and republicanism.

Meanwhile the fascists were allowed to pedal all their filthy unscrupulous. The illegal use of the national flag was conveniently overlooked.

The campaign involved numerous fascist attacks on the left. Often the assailants were well-known Fuerza Nueva members, or even candidates. But the police did little to hinder their friends.

One of the most vicious incidents took place outside the PTE's offices in central Madrid. Three fascists attacked the party's youth leader. Announcing they would 'change the pretty face on the PTE's election posters', they proceeded to strip her face and chest with knives.

Meanwhile a number of strikes continue to trouble the UCD government and its reformist allies. Numerous disputes have again broken out in the metal industry, with big demonstrations and strikes in Bilbao and Gijon.

No sooner had the elections finished when electricity workers in the Canaries and metro-workers in Barcelona were threatened with dismissal if they did not make the government's favourite demands if their strikes continued.

One of the most important disputes during the election was in the hospitals. The failure of wage negotiations affecting 166,000 hospital workers led to widespread stoppages and lightning strikes. However, under the new Constitution it is illegal to strike in 'essential services', so the government decided to ban the strike.

The situation came to a head in the massive La Paz hospital in Madrid. Here, as elsewhere, hundreds of doctors and nurses were drafted into the hospital to prevent a strike. They then proceeded to chase strikers from building to building to stop them holding a mass meeting. In one day alone 74 strikers were arrested and four wounded.

The workers responded with barricades and occupied part of the hospital. In the end the government backed down over the strike's illegality as the issue became increasingly an embarrassment for their 'democratic' electoral image.

However, the militancy of the hospital workers owes nothing to the official union leaderships. The Socialist UGT opposed the strike from the start, telling the workers to wait until after the election, when the new, no doubt Socialist, government would solve their problems, while the PCI-controlled Workers' commissions (CC0) withdrew their support as the strike radicalised.

The real leadership fell into the hands of the workers' assemblies, which included members of all unions, as well as non-union members. The workers demanded not only higher wages but a genuine public health service for the working class. After further government and union intervention, negotiations are continuing.

At FASA-RENAULT in Valladolid, the CC0, having sold out the massive strikes (see Socialist Review 10), has now expelled six MC members for supporting 'unofficial' action. The disgusting behaviour of the official leadership during the strike has led to a mass exodus from the unions: an estimated 50 per cent of the CC0 membership have left, despite the opposition of the expelled MC militants.

Meanwhile, over 500 pickets have been detained during the first few weeks that the new anti-terrorist laws have been in operation. Near Madrid riot police attacking a demonstration against water shortages killed a 14-year-old boy with a rubber bullet.

This incident highlighted the terrible housing conditions under which so many workers live. Apart from the police, the municipal administrations are one of the main relics of the dictatorship. These administrations, directly responsible for the denial of resources to working class areas, are run by fascists and notorious for their corruption and incompetence.

The much postponed municipal elections, the first since 1933, are now due to take place on 3 April. Of course, they won't solve these problems, but they do give socialists an opportunity to intervene in many localities where the neighbourhood committees have played a militant role.

In many places the whole of the local fascist bureaucracy has joined the UCD. The left is expected to do well in most major cities and so the CD and the fascists are standing down in favour of the UCD to ensure the widest possible unity on the right.

The radical nationalists, greatly encouraged by their victories in the Cortes elections, will play a prominent role in the municipal elections as well.

Already illegal demonstrations, street battles and strikes have broken out in many Basque towns and cities, as the Abertzales and the left have taken to the streets in support of political prisoners and against the persecution of Basque refugees in France. During one such clash, two of HB's newly elected deputies were beaten up by the police after showing their identity cards.

The real struggle against the UCD government and for the elimination of all vestiges of fascism continues. Doug Andrews and Mary Reid

France (1)

Blowing the lid

In recent weeks the world's press has been full of news of the French steelworkers' revolt. Pictures not only of mass demonstrations but of besieged police stations and battles in the streets have illustrated the determined nature of the steel workers' answer to the announcement of 25,000 to 30,000 sackings.

However, although the reaction to the problem in France has been more dramatic than elsewhere the problem itself is one faced by workers of all the advanced capitalist countries.

Bourgeois economists estimate that there is a surplus in steel production on the world scale of between 15 and 20 per cent and for the Common Market countries alone between 100,000 and 140,000 sackings are planned.

The massive nature of the investment necessary for a modern steel industry and its importance for each national capitalist has meant an increasing amount of state intervention through subsides, participation or complete nationalisation. The crisis since 1974 has only accelerated this process.

In France over the last ten years over £100 million has been given to the steel barons in handouts culminating in the decision last December by the government to become the major shareholder in the steel industry in order to prevent its liquidation and the disastrous effect this would have had on the rest of French capital.

The attempts of the government to 'rationalise' the steel industry are only part of

rationalisation plans throughout France which are all the more drastic for having been delayed till after last year's general elections. In a whole series of industries the bosses, with the government's backing, have been on the offensive. The elections were hardly over before the lay-offs started and factories began to close.

Encouraged by the government's almost immediate abolition of price controls, by the demoralisation of workers after the defeat of the left and above all by the total lack of any organised response by the union leadership the bosses went on the attack.

Some defensive struggles did take place but they remained isolated and were defeated often with the violent intervention of the riot police.
removal of workers occupying sections of the Cain and Finis Renault factories, or of fired workers attacks on the picket lines at Mouline.

The reaction of the unions has been typical although all the more disgraceful given the nature of the situation. The national one-day stoppage as a safety valve has over the years been a commonly used tactic to defuse rank-and-file militancy and to strengthen the bureaucrat's bargaining hand but in 1980 does it force any change in the capital's basic policies?

However since the elections, the one-day stoppages haven't even been national but by industry and often regional at that. This has been true for both of the two major unions—the CP-dominated CFB and the CFDT, which is closer to the Socialist Party. This flagrant attempt by the union leaderships to divide and weaken struggles has not gone unnoticed by the government who have only tightened the screws further. On top of the price 'shock,' social security contributions have been raised, the law concerning the 40-hour week has been made more 'flexible,' and the law allowing in certain cases for unemployment benefits of 90 per cent of wages for a year has been scrapped! All this with no more than a whimper from the unions.

No wonder, you might think, that the lid finally had to blow. And blow it certainly has in the north and east. In fact these are two areas which already had high levels of unemployment: the Nord-Pas-de-Calais up to 23 per cent in 1978 to 9 per cent with 115,000 unemployed and in Lorraine 30,000 or 7 per cent of the active population out of work.

It was in the heart of Lorraine at Longwy, where out of a working population of 20,000, 7,000 steelworkers were threatened with the sack, that the first explosion came. In previous 'reorganisations' many workers had been given special early retirement so this time round it is mainly workers between 35 and 45 who are for the chop with all that implies. Family ties, children at school, mortgages etc.

For over a month Longwy has been the scene of demonstrations of one sort and another but things really exploded at the end of February when the police station was stormed, the local 'chambre patronale' employers' federation, ransacked, furniture and documents knocked out of the windows and burned, and finally the local television transmitting station occupied and a pirate programme popularising the struggle sent out.

A week later the steelworkers in the north took a page out of the Longwy book and after a series of skirmishes in different towns. Dijon erupted in a response to continued provocations from the police-arrests, beatings up of demonstrators etc.

Late into the night they fought it out with the riot police not only with the usual stones, nuts and bolts, and catapults against truncheons, tear gas and anti-riot grenades but also with petrol bombs and somewhere in the crowd a rifle.

show that they are good patriots, but in recent months their chauvinist campaign has reached a high pitch.

In addition to the well known poster 'Fabriques Francaises' Build French (strains of I'm backing Britain) the walls are now adorned with 'Against a German Europe.' France will not be a suburb of Bonn and so on.

The CP's anti-German propaganda dates back to the war with such slogans as 'A chacun son Boche' (Each man get his Jerry) or 'Make Germany pay.' Campaigns in the 1950s against German rearmament have led to the recent support for the French nuclear deterrent (which is crazy enough) and a campaign to stop Germany having the bomb.

In the steel industry the CP claims that all the problems are the fault of orders coming from a German-dominated Brussels. 'The Davignon Plan' which is nothing more than an attempt by the European ruling classes to regulate steel production and face the existing crisis in steel production without cutting each others' throats is bitterly attacked by the C.P. as the cause of the crisis.

In the build up to the European elections the defence of France, of French culture and French sovereignty are the recurring CP themes, of which the logical conclusion must be an inevitable rallying behind French capital and an unbroken alliance with the Gaullists who are playing the same tune.

Humaire, the CP daily, is forever singing the praises of our successes in industry by which they mean export action, no solidarity, no-blocking of French steel sold to Germany during the strike, no meetings, no collections, nothing.

And yet the rank and file of Longwy and Dijon have shown that action does indeed speak louder than words. The first 'explosion' brought the government to the negotiating table, and second managed to extract (the following day) the suspension of the, 6500 redundancies payments, and the reduction of the 90 per cent dole for a year.

Crumbs they may be, but if you consider the prospects of finding another job but the lesson has surely not been lost on many that the only way to win, results is to use the real strength they possess in being.
Testing ground

Whatever its outcome, the French steelworkers' struggle is of European-wide significance. They are the victims of an ambitious industrial rationalisation programme which Giscard and Barre hope will transform French capitalism into a first-class economic power.

A recent survey in the 
Economie which referred to Giscard's "Gallicid" as a "latter-day French Gallo-Roman", described the "economic revolution" initiated after the defeat of the left in the March 1978 elections in the following terms:

"By launching what he calls a new liberal economic policy, he hopes to move France towards a more open capitalist system of the kind operating in the United States and West Germany. His analysis is that French prosperity will depend on the vigorous development of industry, and that French industry can only become competitive and efficient if it is freed from the straitjacket of state controls."

One basic element in Giscard's economic liberalisation has been to allow company profits to rise freely by scrapping price controls in operation since the second world war.

The result is that the inflation rate is still around ten per cent, despite the austerity programme whose main feature is wage restraint introduced by Barre when he became prime minister in 1976. Meanwhile the Bourse has been booming, share prices rose by 70 per cent in the nine months following the elections.

The other main element in the Giscard-Barre strategy has been to scrap subsidies to all types of state monopolies. Some of these like the French steel industry, especially the higher profits resulting from the scrapping of price controls are intended to serve as an incentive for companies to invest in new plant and equipment.

In order to impose the discipline of the market even more firmly on French industry, Giscard has been one of the main advocates of the European Monetary System. Under the EMS, the franc is now tied to the Deutschmark.

French firms can therefore no longer use the devaluation of their currencies to give the prices of their goods a competitive edge over German goods. They must now compete with German technology and German industrial discipline if they are to survive on the world market.

Despite the fact that these policies are being carried out by the French working class, Barre has stabilised the franc and put the balance of payments into surplus thanks to tough deflationary policies. Gross domestic product rose only 2.6 per cent in 1978 and is predicted to rise by three per cent this year.

A growth rate of 4.5 per cent per annum is required merely to keep unemployment from rising. It is now at a post-war high of nearly 1.3 million and is still going up. The rationalisation of the steel and other industries of course simply makes matters worse.

All of this is of little interest to British socialists. After all, the Tory Party promises exactly this sort of "economic liberalism" to its British workers. It is not a post-war high of nearly 1.3 million and is still going up. The rationalisation of the steel and other industries of course simply makes matters worse.

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Malaysia

MAS action

More than 20 members of the Malaysian Airline Employees Union (MAEU) are not sex workers have been ordered out of the union by the trade union registrar and the union itself is threatened with total closure just one month after a crisis in the Malaysian State Airline, MAS.

The union is clamping parity with airline employees in Singapore which amounts to a 31 per cent overall pay increase and an improved system of allowances. MAS has to pay 8.8 per cent to date. After the breakdown of negotiations with MAS in December last year the union, which represents 4,000 of the estimated 7,000 employees of the airline, staged a 9-day work-to-rule. AFU members, further infuriated by government steps to ban the 874 members from membership and by the airline's decision to suspend 9 union officials, continued their slow throughout January causing considerable disruption to flights and other services.

Disruption was further aggravated by a number of squabbles during the month. By the end of January, 221 employees had been suspended. The next desperate move by
the authorities and the airline was to accuse a number of workers of 'tampering with MAS planes', to indefinitely suspend services and to arrest union officials and rank-and-file militant.

Among the detainees is Donald Uren the Asian representative of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF). Fortunately for the rank-and-file militants in jail, they are in good company. Uren's arrest aroused the indignation of the ITF at its London headquarters which vigorously protested to the Malaysian government and demanded Uren's release.

The ITF's international network of affiliates is one of the most sensitive to attacks on its members. On previous occasions, it has campaigned effectively for union recognition and decent working conditions for seamen on Greek and Indian cargo vessels.

On this occasion, MAS planes were blocked for 4 hours in Frankfurt by the German Public Transport Union, OTV, and also, for several days by Australian workers at Melbourne airport.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian TUC claims to be representing the interests of the AEU in negotiations with the government. The AEU appears to have lost regard for the MTUC a good two years ago when it allowed its membership of that organisation to lapse. It looks as though the MTUC places greater faith in its own ability to negotiate concessions from the government than it does in organising through the international labour movement.

What remains to be seen is whether the authorities will successfully buy the flimsy 'class' loyalties of the MTUC with a few releases—Uren and other VIP's for example. And of the 20-odd prisoners, some have to serve sentences or simply be left to rot in jail?

The MTUC and the ICFTU to which it is affiliated, have consistently turned a blind eye to the fate of at least two trade union officials who have spent 11 years in Malaysian jails without so much as a trial under the provisions of the notorious Internal Security Act.

It is fairly certain by now that without massive international support, these airline workers are not going to be permitted the space to negotiate the decent wage packet for which they have fought so hard, even if their union is allowed to exist any longer. Jill Daigeish

Northern Ireland

Down, but not out

Women cleaners and laundry workers from West Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital ended their march to the city hall on Jan 22 by singing The Red Flag in a city centre pub. They had never been on such a union march before.

They were in a euphoric mood. They usually join in H Block protests—which means they don't get to the city centre. But this winter they were part of the new wave of militancy among public sector and other workers who have rejected the government's 5 per cent limit, the rotten standard of living in Northern Ireland and the increasing differentials between British and Irish workers.

In the course of the negotiations and the strikes, rank and file union members became increasingly disenchanted with their union leaders, both here and in Britain. But the strikes also showed up the weaknesses of workers here.

There is no rank and file organisation, there are few direct links with British workers and because the unions are British dominated it was difficult for workers here to continue resistance when British workers had settled.

The militancy of workers is still contrast to last year when economists could safely say that most workers had settled within the guidelines. Only BOC and Ford workers fought and won. The firemen fought, received little support from other workers and lost. Mackies and other workers beat the guidelines without a fight.

This year it was a different story. As in Britain workers had to fight against the ridiculous 5 per cent limit while the inflation rate was at 10 per cent. But Irish workers had to fight for more.

Their wages are lower and the cost of living is higher than in Britain. So whatever British unions were ready to settle for would not be good enough in Northern Ireland.

For a typical family in N.I the food bill is 6 per cent more than the national average, transport 9 per cent, fuel 25 per cent and car insurance 60 per cent. Overall prices average out at 8 per cent above British levels. And the average wage is 10 per cent below the British rate.

The response to these differentials has come in various ways. EETPU members who work for Plessy, STC, and GEC put in a claim for a special regional allowance on top of their normal rise. The Ulster Teachers Union was looking for a flat £500 bonus.

Civil servants and post office engineers were asking for parity with their London counterparts who presently receive allowances of £300 to £500. The petrol drivers rejected their union decision and stayed out after the British drivers went back. They got themselves up to the British rate.

That meant they had to win a higher percentage increase. They didn't win more than British workers. Calling in the troops to deliver the petrol plus the rotten media coverage combined to break their strike.

The lorry drivers and health workers wanted regional agreements. The doctors already have separate pay machinery and will be looking for parity with British doctors.

During the health workers stage this point kept coming up. COHSE leaders said, 'Nurses are 22 per cent below the national average'.

In February when the request for a special supplement to compensate for the hike in the cost of living in NI had been turned down by the British leadership, there was increased pressure among rank and file hospital and school workers for a full five day strike.

It was this rank and file pressure on the union leaders that dominated the strikes. And it was the bureaucrats ability to divert and diffuse rank and file militancy that ensured defeat for the low pay workers.

The rank and file mounted an all out strike. COHSE, the major union in the hospitals, managed to postpone that and keep its members busy with lightning half day stoppages, picket marches, overtime bans, selective stoppages. These actions looked militant and got lots of publicity.

But it wasn't an effective method for organising a united fight. The bureaucrats of the hospital unions were divided over tactics. But when finally in late January the majority of the northern unions agreed to plan a five day stoppage the national executives of each union in Britain voted against.

Not that anything different was expected. Chances of getting approval were thought to be 'waver thin.' And local leaders did not organise to go it alone in the North, or to try to organise a rank and file fight throughout the UK.

In late March many hospital workers are still on strike. The Coleraine laundries is still shut. But mostly the strike has just crumbled away because of the ineffective union leadership.

The ambulance men are better organised and the majority are in the more militant union NUPE. The rank and file are insisting on staying out. But how long they can last on their own is problematic.

Rank and file militants have been particularly active in the amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union. When plans came from the British central committee to call pay action, the Belfast committee wanted an immediate strike, not a one day stoppage.

Department of Environment drivers had plans to block the roads—a tactic more usually used on Loyalist or H Block protests. The rank and file didn't want the officials to run the strike so they elected their own strike committee.

The need for rank and file organisation in the Transport union is not new. Over the past six months water workers and workers in Michelin, and Balloontyne are but a few who have been defeated after long strikes that received either no help or direct opposition from the leaders in Belfast or the national executive.

So the petrol and lorry drivers and the general workers
This round of wage negotiations has shown the militancy and increasing organisation of rank and file workers. But it has also pointed out the weak position of workers in the North. The British government, through the Northern Ireland Office, is determined to resist a regional allowance or higher wage settlements for NI. Low wages are an essential selling point as the government attempts to sell the North to American and German investors. With unemployment still at 11 per cent and industries constantly closing down workers in foreign owned and weak private sectors are particularly vulnerable. A closure threat by German owners quickly ended a strike at Grundy's. And Mackie's workers, still the lowest paid engineering workers in the UK, are particularly quiet this year because of closure rumours.

The basis for increased struggles on wages still exists. Many workers have just had their first experience in fighting back on wages. The strikes have not killed any determination to do better next time. But they will certainly have raised a number of questions about the union bureaucrats and the links with British unions and the British government.

John Kelly

Italy

Historic eurofailure

Italy, like Britain, is moving rapidly towards an election. And, like here, the major working-class party looks as though it is heading for a major defeat at the polls.

The Italian elections, which will probably take place in June, will see the end of the "historic compromise": the strategy of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) that proposed a link up with the Christian Democrats, Italy’s conservative ruling party since 1945, as the first step along the Italian road to socialism.

The strategy was attempted but has been a failure for the PCI and a disaster for the working class. Every informed commentator is predicting a big fall in votes for the PCI.

Yet it is less than three years since the PCI saw its most spectacular growth in votes in its history; the working class was well organised and on the offensive. So what went wrong? We need to have a look since the British variety of "Euro-communism" is recommending a similar strategy here.

The elections of June 1976 were the pinnacle of the Italian CP success. 36 per cent of the voters agreed with the PCI that Italy was ungovernable without them. The Christian Democrats then won a majority but had to offer some compromise if they wished to continue their 30 years of rule.

The compromise offered was small indeed: the PCI would be "consulted" on major issues of policy and in return would abstain in Parliament to let the Christian Democrats continue in power.

The PCI was indeed consulted; for instance they were consulted in June 1977 on an emergency programme, which the Communist said "contained precious little a British Conservative would sniff at". What it meant for Italian workers was increased taxes, reductions in spending, a fall in pensions and a huge increase in unemployment.

The PCI was also consulted and voted for the extension in police powers used to persecute the revolutionary left and in the trade unions initiated a witch hunt against those who spoke out against their line. On abortion, the PCI were involved in a series of concessions to the Catholic Christian Democrats which meant that the new abortion law is almost totally ineffective throughout most of Italy.

The traditional supporters of the PCI were at first trusting then confused, they became worried and then disillusioned or angry. In various elections the vote of the PCI has slipped badly. Last May they lost nine...
per cent in the local elections. In November, they lost five per cent to a radical leftist alliance in north east Italy.

Most dramatically, their membership fell last year for the first time in 25 years. In the unions the hold of the PCI was threatened as hospital workers acting outside the official union structure went on militant strike action against the government’s pay policy—a policy on which the PCI had been ‘consulted’ on and voted for.

This disillusionment explains why the Christian Democrats precipitated early elections. Opinion polls show them leading the PCI by over 12 per cent; after June they will be able to dispense with any Communist involvement and probably fix up a deal with the Socialist. The PCI out in the cold again.

But if the ‘historic compromise’ has been a disaster for the PCI, it has had a shattering effect on the mass movement which looks so powerful at the time of the elections of 1976. The revolutionary left was thrown into crisis after the elections and was totally unable to construct a viable alternative to the PCI as it galloped to the right.

The vacuum was filled by ‘autonomous’ movements of the unemployed, women, students and, to a lesser extent, workers who, repelled by the PCI’s line, saw the left’s crisis and rejected all contact with the official structures. The problem with this was that they cut themselves off from the mass of workers who still followed the traditional organisations.

Whilst this led to a re-assertion of the best tradition of rank-and-file self-activity it meant that such movements could not construct an overall alternative to the line of the PCI and their rapid rise has been followed, in many cases, by an even more rapid decline.

A much less healthy spin-off of the movement has been the highly publicised revival of terrorism as young people sickened by the cynicism of the official organisations of the workers’ movement have attempted to polarise the situation and thus win the mass of the population to a revolutionary alternative.

The real blame for this lunatic strategy, however, lies squarely with the PCI who have supported a government which has pushed up youth unemployment to well over a million, who have given the police increased repressive powers and who have made no attempt to clean up even the most corrupt aspects of the state. (Only last month, two fascists who had been convicted of killing 17 people in a bomb explosion 10 years ago managed to escape just as their trial came to an end).

The failure of the ‘historic compromise’ is a tremendous setback for the PCI but it was not really unexpected. The last time the Communists shared power with the Christian Democrats, just after the second world war, they were used in just the same way they have been used today.

Send me Socialist Review...
Then, they were welcomed into power since they were the only party that could control the armed and extremely militant workers' movement. When the capitalist economy and state were safely re-established thanks to the PCI's moderate policies they were unceremoniously booted out of power.

The same thing has happened in a more dramatic form today. The Italian economy is in a much better state today than it was three years ago thanks to the PCI's control over the majority of working-class militants. The Communists have done their job for capital and will only be brought back when they are needed again.

The tragedy is that this failure of reformism will be felt by many militants as a setback for the whole class. That demoralization could last until the revolutionary left sorts out its own problems and puts forward a political alternative to the disastrous line of the PCI.

Tim Potter

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**take out a subscription**

Socialists have always been short of cash. Karl Marx was only able to write his masterpiece *Capital* thanks to the financial support given him by his lifelong friend and co-thinker, Friedrich Engels.

Engels' income came from his job as Manchester representative of the family firm, Ermen and Engels. He hated 'filthy business' as he called it but stuck to it for over 20 years in order to keep the Marx family going.

Marx acknowledge his debt to Engels when he finished Volume I of *Capital*: 'It was thanks to you alone that this became possible. Without your self-sacrifice for me I could never possibly have done the enormous work for the three volumes. I embrace you, full of thanks!'

Now, although we wouldn't dream of comparing *Socialist Review* with Marx's *Capital*, we too are short of cash.

Our hopes of finding our Engels were dashed when Ermen and Engels went bust in February (perhaps the final crisis of capitalism is really here).

So we will have to make do with your subscriptions. All we ask you is less than six pounds a year (a lot in Engels' day, but very little in these inflationary times). Or else maybe we will end up the same way as Ermen and Engels.

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"It's a question of which is to be master, that's all"
Socialist Review

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Books for antifascists

I was glad to see that you had included a review of Phil Piratin's Our Flag Stays Red and Joe Jacobs' Out of the Ghetto (Collin Sparks, Socialist Review No. 8). I was astonished, however, to read Sparks' conclusion that Piratin's book should be kept in the pocket of every opponent of the NF.

To me, Piratin's book comes across as an adroit piece of Party propaganda, a sort of CP version of Pathe News. It is most noteworthy, for what it leaves out: the Moscow trials, the CP leaders' unwillingness to meet the Fascist threat head on, the part played in the antifascist movement by members of the Labour Party and H. P. and, most sinister of all, the shabby expansion of Jacobs from the Party are glossed over or omitted altogether. These omissions appear all the more glaring when the book is read in conjunction with Jacobs' own work.

While Piratin was busy following the parliamentary road to socialism, culminating in a rousing chorus of the 'Red Flag' in the House of Commons, men and women like Jacobs were working actively and ceaselessly where it really mattered - in the streets and workplaces.

They held meetings on every corner, they organised their own factories and sweatshops, they wrote and distributed a stream of leaflets, they whitewashed walls, they marched; surely it was this activity, and not the last-minute call from the Party leaders, which laid the foundations of the mass movement against Mosley.

I disagree with the puritanical way in which Collin Sparks dismissed the details of Jacobs' personal life as 'secondary to the political purpose of the book'; as though they were mere trimmings of human interest. In fact they are absolutely central, both as an indication of the conditions in which East End radicalism thrived, and as an illustration of the dedicated fervor of Jacobs and his comrades.

These details give the book its authentic ring. Politics was meat and drink to these East Enders; shaped their whole lives; it wasn't just another way of idling away a Monday night when the music hall was shut.

Above all, they were ready to probe and argue and question what they were doing, while Piratin seemed content to swallow whole every line which the Party fed him. Our Flag Stays Red shows only the tip of the iceberg on a sunny day, but it is Jacobs who takes the cold plunge; his book is the one to lead to your budding antifascist friends.

They will discover how to build the struggle, and will also have a salutary reminder of the dangers inherent in trusting too much in party hierarchies.

June Salvage

New techno-inspiration

I would like to comment on Margaret Chinn's article on the new technology in Socialist Review No 9 (February 1979). Working as a NALGO rep and town planner in Manchester, I am beginning to see the implications of, and socialist opportunities created by, the new technology. We have the chance to open up a broad ideological offensive.

First a bit of back history. I have recently been studying wartime government reports and the general political climate of the period which led after 1945 to the passing of town planning legislation and other Acts on new towns, national parks, the location of industry, nationalisation of the mines and the railways, and the National Health Service.

I was struck by the mass enthusiasm for these measures and the broad ideological climate which was for a 'People's Britain' in place of the evils of the 1930s and the ravages of war.

Needless to say, these 'socialist' ideals were replaced once, during the boom of the 1950s, capitalisation began to deliver the goods. This ideological initiative passed to the advocates of the free market, who emphasised personal material wealth, individual security, personal mobility (as opposed to public transport), choice in schooling and health care, etc.

However, with the first hiccup of the system in the mid 1960s, Labour was elected and 'socialist' ideas once more came to the fore, national and regional economic planning, reinvigoration of the public sector, massive slum clearance schemes, more school building, a new generation of new towns etc.

Now in the 1970s the ideological climate has led Labour to abandon its 'modernist' ideas in favour of an almost total accommodation to the short-term needs of British capitalism - wage-cuts, public spending cuts, monetary targets, etc.

There is not much in this policy package to generate mass enthusiasm among the electorate. That is presumably why Callaghan and Healey adopt the paternalistic 'you know it makes sense' approach.

But North Sea oil and to a great extent 'new technology' are being used as part of a right-wing offensive where the way to a better life is offered via higher productivity, reduced manning levels, greater flexibility and increased competitiveness.

Of course, revolutionary socialists see the need to combat these ideas in trade-union terms and point to the implications for unemployment rather than try to tackle them, like the fight against the cuts, the fight against the anti-working-class (state) technology will be very uphill, especially where regards to low-paid jobs (almost few of them) is offered as the carrot.

However, new technology does give us a greater opportunity to do something which we are not very good at - to say a lot more about the sort of society we want to build: no rigid blueprints, no instant utopias, and certainly no glossing over all the political difficulties to overcome, but general ideas about the vast potential which new and existing technology has.

This brings me back to the ideas behind post-war legislation. We do need new towns, but we need to plan and build by the working class; we do need to rebuild our cities as we want them and not as capital wants them; we need massive investment in public transport, we want more hospitals and nurseries, we can offer millions more people opportunities to study; we can build study-shops so all our kids can go and see the world and offer real help (political and material) to workers in developing countries; we can restore the battered natural environment and really set about ending the pollution of our rivers and seas etc.

So let's seize the time and begin an ideological offensive. Let's express our dreams more concretely, rather than talk clichés about the need for a 'planned economy' with all its Stalinist undertones.

As well as the usual audience to whom we address ourselves, I feel there is a much wider audience of isolated women at home, tenants' and residents' group activists, unemployed, bored or threatened workers and active environmentalists (some of whom show an amazing committment to their ideas - digging out canals for the hell of it) who will want to talk about the fight for something better.

Many such people have been reached and inspired by the Anti-Apartheid League. Can we do it again?

Russ Hayward
Manchester
On the cover of the latest George Orwell paperbacks, you will find a photo of the author. It shows Orwell in early middle age trim and conventional in his sports jacket and tie—a "gentleman" you might think, and Orwell certainly had some good qualifications for this title. He attended prep school and Eton and after the first world war, set off for the far east to join the Burmese Imperial Police. A smooth and profitable career seemed to be in prospect.

But it did not happen. By 1936 Orwell had become a socialist. And the following year, the ex-police man was to be found carrying a rifle alongside the revolutionary anarchist militia men of Spain. Orwell had, literally, deserted the army of the bosses and joined the army of the workers. Why? Because he had become convinced through his own experience that society was no longer "decency"; that it was callous, sentimental and dishonest and had to be changed.

It was Burma that first opened Orwell's eyes. The colonial régime which he describes in Burmese Days has neither mission nor morals nor ideas, or any purpose at all beyond organised robbery and its own survival. The British, he remarks, have bestowed on Burma religion, and VD. They have destroyed the indigenous culture and built prisons.

Their 'freedom' rests on servitude of the natives' and their justice is the killing of the people. For the rule of law is actually the rule of profit, corruption and racialism. Orwell refers disgustingly to the 'slimy white man's burden humbug.' Finally, in 1927 he left Burma, ashamed and worn out by the whole sordid business.

Back in Europe Orwell did not at first launch any major attack on western society. In Down and Out in London and Paris (1933) and A Clergyman's Daughter (1935) he is concerned for individuals who have been shabbily treated or faced with impossible choices. But he gives the impression that with enlightened goodwill, such ills might be easily set to right.

Keep the Aspidistra Flying is different altogether. Orwell's first broadside at the system as a whole. The strange title is a jibe at the snobbery of the lower middle class. These people are forced to sell their labour-power—they wear white collars but are part of the mass. To conceal this, to keep up appearances, is their life's work. And so, in the window of their semi-detached they display the aspidistra, as a badge of respectability.

The aspidistra is a symbol for Orwell too, the symbol of another muddle wedge of humbug. Decency is no longer a question of 'decent honest living', but of pretence. Gordon Comstock, the hero of the book, determines to opt out of such a world, to turn down the 'good job' in favour of work in a dingy bookshop. He eats frozen tripe and composes bitter poems.

Gradually poverty corrodes his ability to write and to think straight. He begins to treat his friends as enemies, to rant obsessively about the 'money god' which is the cause of everything and even to dream about blowing up the docks. Eventually he gives in and takes that 'good job' in advertising, appropriately, where dishonesty and money jointly form the ruling order.

Keep the Aspidistra Flying is the most politically intense book that Orwell ever wrote. Comstock rages at the system and damnit it like a hellfire preacher. But he can do nothing because he is powerless. And he is powerless because he is isolated—declasse. For having opted into a little bookshop and an individual struggle, collective action seems unreal to him. Orwell probably felt the same way at this time for similar reasons: the book is really about its author. But while Gordon Comstock gave up, in humiliation and despair, luckily his creator didn't.

Up until this time Orwell had made little contact with working people, and rarely wrote about them. But in spring 1936 he travelled to the coalfields of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and stayed for several weeks, mainly in the homes of miners. The experience gathered here provided the core of a new book (The Road to Wigan Pier) and also helped make its author a socialist.

Orwell was appalled by the harsh and dangerous conditions of the pit, and by the incurable diseases, injuries and deaths suffered by those that worked down below. He was impressed by the miners, and found in them some of the decency, generosity and straightforwardness which his own class had abandoned.

But was it possible that working-class people could take hold of society and remodel it in the spirit of these ideas? Reluctantly, Orwell thought not. For now, any attempt at revolution could only lead to futile massacres and a regime of savage repression. Faced with this, Orwell might have accepted the lesser evil, a decade more de lea to numb the spirit of rebellion, if that had been all. But that was not all.

On 7 March 1936, when Orwell was still in Yorkshire, learning about mines, Hitler's troops entered the Rhineland. Two months later Italian forces attacked Abyssinia, and in Spain, in July, Franco declared war on the republic. Back in Britain it was the year of Cuthbert Street: the struggle for the East End boiled on through the summer and into the autumn.

The alarming progress of international fascism forced Orwell to take sides. He finished Wigan Pier in mid December 1936, and set off for Spain. On New Year's Eve, at the Lenin barracks in Barcelona, he enlisted in the militia of the semi Trotskyist POUM.

In Catalonia, the struggle against Franco had rapidly developed into a struggle against the bosses themselves.

In many towns the workers' organisations, factory collectives and militias had taken the power, and in Barcelona they 'breathed the air of equality'.

'Waiters and shopwalkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal. Servile and ceremonial forms of speech had temporarily disappeared ... there were no well-dressed people at all ... All this was queer and moving but I recognised it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for ...'

But in Madrid the central state machine continued to control both credit and the bulk of military power, and soon it moved to curb the workers' independent military and industrial organisation. Two methods were used. First, persuasion: the bourgeois parties, the right wing socialists, the communists and even inconsistently, the anarchists argued that winning the war depended on foreign arms, on an efficient regular army, and on the unity of all anti-fascist forces. Workers' power had therefore to be ruled out.

Second, sabotage: the state withheld funds, raw materials and fighting equipment.
from the factory collectives and militias to cripple and demoralise them. By these devices, workers power was curbed, and later, in a purge of anarchist and POUM militants, crushed. The backbone and the inspiration of antifascism was broken in exchange for Russian guns and the hollow words of Britain and France.

But neither of these methods could save Spain. The fascists won the war. The bourgeois republic dared not encourage it and could not inspire it. And yet, urged Orwell, it was the only way to set ablaze the whole of Spain in a struggle for workers power: this the most visionary and utopian road was also shown finally to have been the most realistic.

Orwell's position earned him enemies. The Daily Worker called him fascist and Trotskyist by turn, though he despised the former and never really understood the latter. His stand was a lonely one and for years, socialist critics have treated him unfairly. We should be clearer. For a brief period Orwell shared most of the beliefs which guide us today.

First, he was clear that fascism had to be opposed through the building of socialism. Second, building socialism meant building a movement of masses. The 'crankiness' and 'intellectual hair-splitting' of the few left wing clubs made this task more difficult.

Third, socialism needed ideals: 'I am well aware that it is now the fashion to deny that socialism has anything to do with equality. In every country in the world a huge tribe of party hacks and sleek little professors are busy "proving" that Socialism means nothing more than a planned State capitalism with the grab-motive left intact."

This repelled Orwell. Socialists needed, not bureaucratic nightmares, but human dreams of justice, equality and a new and better freedom.

Fourth, to win socialism a party was needed—a party with genuinely revolutionary intentions, numerically strong enough to act. Orwell was not anti-party—he joined the Independent Labour Party and admitted not having joined POUM. His party commitment faded quickly, as did the organisations themselves, and the movements which gave life to them were cooled or crushed.

Orwell believed in socialism— not from loyalty to theoretical method, or to Russia or to party, but because he found his ideals in the inspirations and activity of working people. The collapse of the movement and the declaration of war dealt to his commitments a blow from which is never recovered.

Compare Animal Farm (1945) and Homage to Catalonia (1938) with Orwell's earlier writing. They are fables, timeless stories bearing timeless moral lessons. The animals worked everywhere and will be too stupid to run the farm or to resist new oppressors. And in 1984 (or actually at any time) the Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance which is the province of liberals rather than proles.

Orwell was no longer interested in the struggles of ordinary people. From about the beginning of the war he had begun to retreat, into literary criticism, into the superficial and/or trivial journalism of his Tribune column and into fantasy and allegory. This is not to say that he wrote nothing of value. The selection Inside the Whale (1940), for example, contains some of his best work especially the title essay and the brilliant piece on Dickens.

The famous style survived. 'Genius', of course, had nothing to do with it. Writers do not 'create' like gods: their work and its style is a product of their experience. There is evidence that in the 1920s Orwell had a very poor style. Later, he developed a simple, well-defined moral standpoint and a reporter's ability to describe clearly and think up striking images. It is these attitudes and skills together that make his style distinctive.

Throughout his writing life which was overwhelmingly a period of despair for socialists, Orwell remained a critic of society. If socialist writers can be judged by where they stand in a class war, then Homage to Catalonia, and the bullet in his neck ought to vindicate Orwell.

And if we have to apportion blame for Animal Farm, then Joseph Stalin who shaped the reality should bear more than George Orwell, who made a fable of it. Steve Wright
Four months ago, the Ford strike ended with the first real breach in the government’s wage policy, in three and a half years. It was the all-important breakthrough that led to the massive wave of industrial struggle in both the public and private sectors. Since then of course Ford has been out of the news. The company is claiming considerable success for its ‘anti-strike’ clause in the November agreement, but there’s evidence that the stronger groups of rank-and-file workers within the plants are maintaining their strength.

Here, Martin Jones, a shop steward and an active member of the rank and file Fordworkers’ combine until he left the company in January, describes what happened during the strike, how the combine organised and stresses how the politics of the official leadership prevented the workers winning a crushing victory.

Back in the Ford plants after the nine weeks’ strike workers kept on making the same slip of the tongue. ‘What did you do during the holidays, sorry, I mean strike?’

Shop stewards were doing it. ‘Remember the agreement we got before the holiday or strike?’

Everybody was making the same slip. Not surprisingly, for the vast majority it was just a holiday. Out of a workforce of 57,000 only a few hundred were actively involved in the strike.

It was the officials’ strike. They controlled it, they took the decisions, they determined the outcome. It was their strike.

At the beginning they had to move quickly. The walkouts came as a surprise to them. The convenors, for once, had printed 40,000 leaflets arguing for the claim; but they were to remain undistributed in the district office. The workers walked out before the leaflets could be distributed.

The pay talks had begun on Thursday morning, 21 September. Halewood workers heard of the company’s five per cent offer at lunchtime and began to go out. By the next day when the officials and convenors on the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) met to consider the offer, Halewood and Swanscombe were all out. Dagenham Body was out and Dagenham Transport was out and picketing.

The NJNC quickly supported the action. They called on Ford unions to make the strike official and said they wouldn’t talk to the company until they agreed to ‘bargain freely without reference to the Government’s 5 per cent’. They had no alternative but to support the action if they were to control it.

The votes in the plants had been overwhelming, often amid scenes of jubilation and jokes about ‘see you after Christmas’, but when the Dagenham shop stewards met the following Tuesday the officials took a firm grip on the strike.

Rank-and-file stewards had already been in touch with dockers and seamen in Hull and Harwich about blacking Ford imports and received enthusiastic promises of support. But when we proudly raised this from the floor the platform came down on us like a ton of bricks.

‘We don’t want everyone going off in all directions’, they said. ‘Blacking will be organised by district office. Leave it to the officials’. 
The pattern for the strike had been established. Convenors and their deputies were proclaimed to be a strike committee and began by not entering picketing. It was three weeks before picketing was coordinated between the five Dagenham plants and at least two Dagenham plants decided that only shop stewards would be allowed to picket. Rank and file workers were turned away.

Stewards who the previous year had stood 12 hours on picket and who had even got arrested went on strike this time. Getting the trade union official turned out not to be a great thing after all.

Nevertheless the strike was magnificently solid. Security men were out for the first time. The Ford fire brigade was out and there was no emergency cover to keep essential services going as in previous years.

Blacking was effectively organised. In the docks this was essential as Ford normally import large numbers of vehicles and could have broken the strike with imports.

The story of the blockade of Cortina denied entry to Harwich bears repeating. Ford retreated to southern Ireland and drove them over the border into the North where they were registered and riven onto the ferry to Stranraer, six at a time, masquerading as tourists’ cars.

Dockers at Stranraer saw through this and refused to unload them as did Northern Ireland dockers. And so, the story goes, six Cortinas, stuck on the ferry, shuffled back and forth across the Irish Sea for a few weeks.

On 19 October the company agreed to “bargain fairly” and negotiations were reopened. The company offered £5.48 (80 per cent) plus further talks on improvements in wages in return for cooperation in reducing problems. The trade union side walked out saying it wasn’t a realistic offer.

Mrs Susan Charlton, wife of a Southamptton Ford worker, disagreed. She thought the 5 per cent was far too low and that her husband could get back to work. This was an attitude that Southern Television could support.

Mrs Charlton said she was just an ordinary housewife but the TV treated her like a real celebrity. An appearance on local television led to national coverage and culminated in extensive promotion of a meeting she called to mobilise all “scab-wives” who were against the strike.

Wives and girlfriends in the Ford workers’ group (the “scab-wives” group) co-ordinated a counter-demonstration. Combiine supporters from Southamptton plus two car-loads from Dagenham and Langley marched into Mrs Charlton’s meeting to neutralise her efforts.

The numbers of scab-wives and women supporting the strike were about even. The third group of participants in this media event was only slightly smaller. With two camera crews, radio, local and national press the media was quite a crowd. The pre-strike women were, of course, more determined, better organised and, with banners and placards, made a much bigger impact.

The planned rally of scabs turned into a vigorous debate and the anti-strike movement was stopped in its tracks. When the TV took Mrs Charlton to Liverpool she got a similar reception from the Haleswood combine women’s group.

It was a crucial intervention: little more was heard of the anti-strike movement; the media couldn’t promote it as a national movement in the face of determined opposition.

In Dagenham, one convenor, a Communist Party member, had delighted in attacking the combine for its policy of allowing wives and girlfriends (dependants) of Ford workers a voice and a vote at our meetings.

‘Allowing outsiders into trade union meetings, he thundered, “you’re not trade unionists.” ‘The events in Southamptton vindicated our policy and this particular attack was silenced.

The first final offer came two weeks later. Ford proposed to give us £6.52 on the base (9 per cent), time-and-a-third for holiday (1 per cent) and an attendance allowance of £3.48 conditional on good timekeeping, attendance and more significantly on “normal working.”

The NJNC recommended rejection and the subsequent mass meetings were the high point of the strike. Ron Todd took the Dagenham mass meeting and made a fighting speech calling for rejection. His efforts were instrumental in getting a rejection vote (25 at Dagenham).

The pattern was repeated round the country. Convenors did an excellent job. In particular Haleswood voted overwhelmingly for rejection.

Why did the officials do this? The same officials who a year before had done their utmost to break us had pulled out all the stops to continue the strike. After three years of social contract it was quite a surprise.

The union officials had no choice but to lead the strike that had begun spontaneous and they had to make their reputations and further their careers. But the real justification for their militancy can be found in Todd’s speech to the mass meeting in which he continually emphasised Ford’s profits.

Because Ford had declared a profit of £265 million the union leaders felt justified in sticking out for more. Usually political considerations limit their support for strikes.

Careful not to upset governments or the media, careful not to jeopardise the status quo, union leaders hold back their members and take care to limit actions. This time Ford could afford to pay without threatening the economic system and so Ron Todd could press on with a clear conscience.

But if Ron Todd thought it was simply a question of an economic battle about pay, Ford had other ideas. The company stood firm and didn’t make another offer. Two weeks went without a movement.

The strike was now approaching its tenth week and really beginning to bite. It takes six to eight weeks for shortages of vital materials to affect an international operation like Ford’s, and by mid-November every Ford plant in Europe was laid off or on short time, including Cologne, the heart of the European empire. Predictably the NJNC began to come under pressure from the top and they soon caved in and approached the company for more talks.

The company came up with a modified offer which was little different from the one we had rejected. The money remained the same with the addition of a standard holiday pay for Christmas 1978. The attendance payment was reinserted. Supplementary Payment with the attendance clause watered down and the lateness clause virtually removed.

The anti-strike clause remained intact.

The £3.48 supplementary payment would be made only for a full week’s “normal working.” Ford management expressed confidence that it would significantly reduce strikes. The negotiators recommended acceptance.

First they said that if they didn’t resume talks there was a threat that ACAS, the Government’s arbitration service, would come in and take negotiations out of their hands. An unconfirmed rumour said that Ford and Chapple had approached ACAS.

Second, they said that Ford wouldn’t make a better offer until after Christmas and that the membership wasn’t prepared to stay out that long (this was the on the 20 November).

Were the negotiations right in saying that the company could hold out until after Christmas? It’s debatable. But their estimation of the resolve of the strikers was accurate. The passive strike had had its effect. There was no hard core of pickets who were committed to the strike and who would fight hard for the full claim.

More crucially the strike was isolated. It was obviously a test case that was going to establish the new ‘giving rate’ above the Government’s 5 per cent. The weight of the Government and CBI was being thrown behind Ford. Strikers were aware of this and were estimating their chances.

There was little enough to boost morale and the one thing needed to change the situation was lacking. There was no news of other workers coming out against the 5 per cent. In this atmosphere would the Ford workers stick it out for more?

There was no doubt about it at the mass meetings on 22 November. The vote to return was overwhelming. Only at Haleswood did the local stewards recommend rejection and there too the strikers voted to go back.

The officials held the dispute up to a point. They held out for free collective bargaining—a subject dear to their hearts. They had recommended continuing the strike for more money. But they hadn’t been prepared to take the necessary steps to win the full claim.

While Ford workers were out and getting demoralised, they hadn’t got other workers out against the 5 per cent. On the contrary they told other workers with claims in to wait for the Ford settlement. While the employers were united, the workers were divided with British Oxygen and council workers told to wait and see.

The unions adopted this disastrous policy because although they rejected the Government’s 5 per cent they maintained their loyalty to the Government and its
polities. A generalised strike against 5 per cent would have transformed the situation, but it would also have caused a political crisis threatening the government and even the union leader's own position.

Their militancy had strict limits. They felt justified in demanding £20 and 35 hours from Ford with £25 million profits. But their reformist position ruled out the type of action that could have won the claim.

The officials won their pay and learned their politics in the vessel post-war boom. Then an isolated action could not win today. A fight for £20 and 35 hours was never a simple economic fight, it brought the whole government strategy into question.

For victory a different leadership to the officials would have to be found. The unofficial Ford workers' group (combine) appealed to that leadership.

The idea for action came in the spring of 1978 after a conference in Cowley to support Alan Thornew and the other Leyland workers threatened with union disciplinary action found militants from different Ford plants in the same room for the first time.

We agreed to get together ourselves and the first meeting in April 1978 attracted 30 workers from Dagenham, Langley, Halewood and Swansea, with apologies from other plants. No one political group had more than six members present, with the SWP and Big Flame the dominant tendencies. The majority considered themselves non-aligned, though in many cases this meant they were ex-members of different sects.

A decision was taken to campaign for the '78 pay claim round the slogan '£20 on the Pay; an hour off the day: no strings attached.'

Before the strike two national leaflets were produced which were distributed at all Ford's UK plants.

Our greatest sales success was badges. Nervous at the financial outlay, our initial order was for 500 badges bearing our slogan. These were sold within hours of being taken into the plants and by the end of the strike a total of 6,000 had been ordered and sold.

There were 180,000 leaflets produced and distributed during the strike. We produced a regular weekly Strike News which was distributed at almost every plant. We also produced 60,000 broadsheets putting our case to the wider movement. We may have achieved a 'first' for a strike in producing our own strike record.

We passed the acid test for any rank-and-file group in that we were financially self-sufficient. We paid all our bills and expenses through badge sales and with donations from trade union bodies and political groups, raised during speaking tours round the country.

Our greatest achievement was to keep a constant pressure on the NJNC. We made sure that there was a large and noisy lobby at every meeting of the negotiators. We raised the slogan of 'no productivity sell out' in the first week of the strike and according to one NJNC member our activities were a constant factor in the minds of the negotiators and affected their decisions. The NJNC had been substantially enlarged in 1978 to incorporate all convenors.

It had previously been dominated by full-time officials from all 17 Ford unions. The presence of convenors undoubtedly stiffened the resolve of the strike in the early days. Unlike officials, convenors are accountable to their plants. But the other side of the coin came at the end of the strike when the convenors were implicated in the decision to recommend acceptance.

Convenors hold the reins in shop stewards committees and therefore any opposition has to be firmly based on the shop floor.

Throughout the strike the combine tried to involve rank and file strikers in activity in an attempt which failed to overcome the passivity of the strike. We didn't want to just stand on the sidelines shouting criticism at the official leadership but to put our money where our mouths were and show that that we were prepared to do our job when the officials fall short. We added a philosophy of self-reliance and do-it-yourself.

If the strike committee didn't produce any propaganda of course we criticised them but we also produced the Ford Strike News.

When they refused to listen to our complaints about lack of help with Social Security payments we went ahead and involved the Claimants' Union and Redder Tape and occupied SS offices.

This technique was the best way to get the officials to do their job. The Dagenham strike committee was so worried by the Strike News that they went out and bought a duplicator to produce their own bulletin.

When we occupied SS offices they did something about Social Security.

It was in fact difficult to criticise the officials during most of the strike. As described above they did a good job up to a point. This shouldn't surprise us or affect our attitude. We supported the officials as long as they supported us but where they fell short the convention maintained the ability to act independently.

It's this that's crucial. Let the officials do a good job and be pleased about it; let them make militant speeches; but don't rely on them. Don't expect them to keep it up and don't expect them to do it all for you. We can only rely on ourselves and our own organisation.

The howls of anguish that come from militants when the officials let them down are just the guard's for failing to build what we know we need: an independent organisation that can act when the official leadership betrays us. We shouldn't make the officials the scapegoat for our own failure.

Some members of the combine confused the need for independence from the officials with independence from revolutionary political groups and parties. A bad mistake.

The officials fall short because of their reformist political ideas. If the rank and file movement is to succeed it must be led by revolutionaries and not official.

The combine, like every other rank and file organisation is absolutely dependent on revolutionary ideas and leadership and it cannot honestly claim otherwise.

We have a massive task taking on the job the officials fail to do. That means uniting the maximum number of workers in campaigns and activity. The strength of the machine throughout 1978 was that we campaigned on the slogan '£20 on the pay an hour off the day: no strings' and won substantial support on that specific issue.

Rank and file organisations have to respond to particular situations at specific times. We shouldn't be worried is there is a hull in combine activity until the next issue crops up. The links between different plants have been built up; we know one another's telephone numbers; we can keep in touch.

What is vital is the ability to respond quickly to a dispute or whatever with leaflets and support.

Already the combine has the opportunities to mount a 'Smash the Supplement' campaign. We should also be prepared to campaign on broader issues, in particular the election of officials.

Activity is the key. When the combine held a meeting in Dagenham for strikers with Social Security problems and then occupied the SS offices we involved workers we'd never seen before and built our organisation. When we held the two evening meetings we made little progress. Workers will always seize a chance to fight for rights but meetings don't have the same attraction.

Before and during the strike the combine has been a presence on the factory gate, handing out leaflets. We now have to become a notorious presence in the plants, on the shop floor, selling badges, collecting money for leaflets, raising support for disputes, doing the job the official movement fails to do.

The aim must be to build combine groups in every plant holding their meetings in plant and providing a focus for all militant opposition to the company. There is a long way to go, but the foundations have been laid and there is every chance of a breakthrough in the next few years.

The Ford strike was important. It diminished the 5 per cent. ended the social contract, removed the threat of sanctions and established a new going rate at 10 per cent.

The final result for Ford workers themselves was less happy. There were remarkably few recompensations when we got back into the plants but the fact remains that after nine weeks out we only got 10 per cent out on the basic, better holiday pay and an unconsolidated 5 per cent for normal working.

This 'penalty clause' supplement equals more discipline and will inhibit action on safety, victimisation, union reform, etc. Weak sections will suffer while the strong will have to walk out to establish that they won't tolerate loss of supplement. The result will be fewer but longer strikes, that lead to layoffs.

The pattern of the Ford strike will be repeated. The official leadership will be militant up to a point, then the pay considerations will force them to a promise. To do better a rank and file movement must be free of the police tactics that handicap our present lead. And in practice this means it must be led by revolutionaries.
The German Socialist women's movement before 1933

At the first International Women's Suffrage Conference in 1911, the German Socialist Women's leader Clara Zetkin, inspired by a demonstration of striking New York garment workers in 1909, introduced a resolution declaring 8 March International Women's Day.

To coincide with the conference, tens of thousands of working class women demonstrated in every province of Germany, distributing 2½ million leaflets demanding the vote for women. During Red Week for women's suffrage in March 1914 about 40,000 socialist women demonstrated for the vote in Berlin and Hamburg alone.

International Women's Day has been revived in recent years by feminists and socialists. But what was the nature and strength of the German Socialist Women's Movement to which it owes its origins?

The Social Democratic Women's Movement in Germany, like its parent the Social Democratic Party (SPD), was one of the largest women's movements in the world in the years preceding the first world war. Working under the legal repression of the Anti-Socialist Laws (1879 to 1890), and of combination laws which banned all political activity for women up to 1906, the SPD Women's Movement grew to 175,000 members by 1914. Its members were primarily working class and its leadership Marxist.

While as militant as the British suffragettes, these women did not confine their political perspectives to the vote. Their political demands resemble those of the contemporary women's liberation movements: equal pay, the right to work, full equality in the trade unions, paid maternity leave, free child-care facilities, and education for women. Their political theory, internal contradictions and agitations among women workers, are instructive for both the feminist and socialist movements today.

The extremely rapid industrialisation of Germany from the middle of the 19th century drew millions of women into the new capitalist workshops and factories. Women employed full-time in manufacturing, trade and transport, grew from 1.4 million in 1882 to three million in 1907, when they formed about three quarters of the work force.

The superexploitation of their cheap labour by employers and the drastic effects on working class families led most male workers to demand the prohibition of
women's and children's) labour. From the 1860s, however, a core of Marxist workers argued for a woman's right to work as an essential condition for her full equality with men. At the time of its foundation conference in 1875, the SPD was persuaded to adopt the demand for 'the general, equal and direct suffrage . . . for all citizens.' But they also demanded the prohibition of all female labour which is morally or physically detrimental, so concuring with the bourgeois ideal of confining women to 'suitably feminine' jobs usually in the home. Women's work was a burning social 'problem' of the time and more male workers were against it. In 1878, six years before the appearance of Engels' book *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, August Bebel, leader of the SPD and close associate of Marx and Engels, published the first comprehensive Marxist book on women, *Women and Socialism*. It became one of the most successful socialist books of all time, to be found among the very few books in every socialist worker's home, despite its 550 pages.

For the proletarian woman who was intellectually alive, Bebel was almost always the way to Marx'. On the publication of the 50th edition in 1899, an Austrian socialist wrote that 'it went directly to daily life, to the relationship of man to woman, and exposed the sad corollary to the marriage bed found in the brothel, and the moral whole of women's lives.'

Bebel's book clearly set out the broad political themes of the subsequent SPD Women's Movement. In the introduction he wrote, 'For us the woman question is only one side of the general social class question . . . Its ultimate solution can only be found in the overthrow of the contradictions of (capitalist) society, and the eradication of the evils which flow from these'. Nevertheless, it is essential to treat the woman question specially. . . . This was because 'The female sex . . . suffers doubly, first she suffers social dependence on the male world; this would be lessened through formal legal equality but not eliminated and second, economy dependence . . . Because of this, all women regardless of their class status, have an interest in changing this situation as much as possible through all alterations in the laws and institutions of the existing state and social order. The vast majority of women, however, have an ardent interest in the fundamental reorganisation of the existing state and society, in order to eliminate wage labour, under which the female proletarian suffers most, as well as sexual slavery, which is intimately connected with present property and income relations . . .'

An essential part of the SPD programme is the true equality of women, their liberation from all dependence and oppression. There can be no liberation of humanity without social independence and equality of the sexes.'

Bebel related the particular oppression of women to the relations of production prevailing in past and present societies. Working class women were exploited under capitalism because of their class position, but 'quite independent of the question whether the worker is oppressed as a member of the proletariat, the woman is oppressed as a sexual being.'

In a true socialist society, the struggle for the physical, emotional and intellectual fulfillment of women alongside of independent of men. His frank recognition of female as well as male sexuality, and of the right to choose to be free of legal constraints, horrified many contemporaries. He shared, however, many of their social misconceptions and prejudices. He implicitly assumed that a free choice of sexual partners would result in monogamous monogamy, with children still basically cared for by women. Prostitution, homosexuality, and masturbation (the bête noire of the late 19th century) were for him, symptoms of the moral degeneration of capitalist society.

On birth control, Bebel and his successors remained ambivalent. On the one hand he discussed sexual relations from reproduction, and supported the use of barriers like a large number of children, to spend the best years of her life pregnant or nursing.' On the other, he disliked 'unnatural contraception.' While frankly recognising the need for sexual relations in women and men, he warned that 'an excess of sexual indulgence is far more harmful than too little, as an organism abused through overdose is also ruined.' Impotence, sterility, spinal damage, insanity, mental weakness, and other illnesses are the results. Medication in sexual intercourse is just as necessary as in eating, drinking and other human needs.

The primary aim of the SPD Women's Movement was the recruitment of women workers to socialism. Essential to this task was the clarification of the woman's role and her relationship to the family, of the relations between the women's movement and the party and trade unions and the active participation of all women workers that there could be no socialism without the active participation and ultimate emancipation of women.

Clara Zetkin was the undisputed leader of this movement from 1889 to 1915. Born in 1857, she was a junior school teacher when she and her husband joined the SPD, because of which she had to move into exile in Paris in the 1860s. As a representative of the SPD at the Paris International Workers Congress in 1889, she elucidated one of the major principles of the future women's movement:

'It is not female labour as such that lowers wages through competition with male labour, but the exploitation of women workers by the capitalist, who appropriates their labour. . . Just as the male worker is subjugated by the capitalist, so is the woman by the man, and she will always remain in subjugation until she is economically independent. Work is the indispensable condition for economic independence.'

Her early view, based on liberal emancipationist ideas that 'we (women demand no more protection than labour as a whole demands against capital,' she shortly rejected as an attempt to impose formalistic equality on an unequal situation. Women workers were socially, economically, and organisationally weaker than men because they also bore the burden of the family.

From 1890 socialist women were champions of legal protection at work because of the appalling physical and psychological super-exploitation women suffered at the hands of employers.

This recognition of the weaker position and different interests of women arising from their distinctive relationship to production and reproduction necessitated a semi-autonomous women's movement, with its own organisations and publications, but with representation in the SPD and trade unions. Ottile Brauer, another woman leader, stated: 'If they (the women comrades) wanted to bring socialism to the mass of proletarian women, they had to take into account these women's political backwardness, their emotional peculiarities, their two-fold burden at home and in the factory, in short all the special features of their existence, actions, feelings, and thoughts. Accordingly, they had in part to adopt different ways and means in their work, and seek other points of contact than the male comrades.'

Socialist women created an elaborate network of *Femminaspezialpersonen* (spokespeople), changed from 'spokesman' at the 1892 party conference, women elected as local political organisers and informally linked together by a women's advisory committee in Berlin. They continued the tradition of women's 'educational clubs', which had been the forerunners for socialist women in the 1880s. These discussed questions of specific interest to women: marriage, child-rearing, health, sex and birth control within a socialist framework and a form of 'consciousness-raising'.

Under pressure from socialist women, the General Commission of the Free Trade Unions (tenuously TUC) set up a national women's secretariat staffed by women, and recommended all affiliated unions do likewise.

From 1905 local trades union cartels (more influential versions of Trades Councils) appointed their own women organisers in cities like Hamburg and Nuremberg, where socialist women were strong and persistent, and funded large drives to unionise 'difficult' women workers like domestic servants. Leading women speakers did frequent women's agitational tours for both the SPD and trade unions. By 1907 there were about 30,000 women organised in the movement, with 407 women *Femminaspezialpersonen* spread throughout Germany. Within 10 months of the legalisation of women's political activity in 1908, the SPD counted 62,000 women members.

Legislation led to renewed pressure to disband separate women's organisations usually against the express desire of women comrades. Women's groups were incorporated into electoral SPD branches, with at least one seat reserved for women or the
local and national executives. The SPD set up a national women's office specifically for women's agitational; "Reading evening" clubs were formed by the women to replace the "educational clubs."

That the Women's Movement retained a separate political identity is clear from its national newspaper, Die Gleichheit ('Equality'), edited by Zetkin from 1891 to 1915. The paper, subtitled 'For the Interests of the Woman Worker' aimed at the "more advanced women comrades."

It appeared fortnightly and contained general political articles, reports on working conditions, trade union affairs, trade union strikes, and agitational material.

From the onset in 1906 of the split in the SPD on the question of the political mass strike, Die Gleichheit became one of the major publications of the radical left, whose most prominent member was a woman, Rosa Luxemburg.

Recruitment of women to the socialist cause was carried out by a wide variety of often ingenious means. The most effective was the mass meeting addressed by a well known woman speaker, preceded by weeks of canvassing factories and homes (important given the common threat of victimisation), and accompanied by a band or choir. Local and national party presses printed leaflets and pamphlets on all aspects of women's lives.

Police disruption and the infamy of the speakers provided added drama. Banned meetings were reconvened under other names; banned women speakers dressed up as men, or made hasty exits under the cover of supporters. Mass festivals to commemorate the many days in the socialist calendar (especially May Day) began with processions accompanied by bands and singing through working class quarters, showered with posters, ending at fairs and concerts in parks and beer gardens. Whole families participated.

Strikes were a period of intense women's political activity. During the garment workers' strike of 1896, 14 simultaneous mass meetings addressed by women attracted 40,000 mostly female workers in Berlin.

Feminist revolutionaries carried their politics over into their life style and behaviour, which publically contradicted the bourgeois ideal of womanhood. They declared war on the "housewife" view, shared by many workers, that the woman belonged only in the home. Luise Zietz, ex-housemaid, daughter of an impoverished rural weaver, was a particularly fiery speaker. She actively founded the political effort always present at women's meetings and with her clarity despite numerous prison terms, to shut her, "a mere woman", up.

The first world war led to an irreparable split between the radicals and the majority reformist SPD, which disagreed with the political course with the aristocratic and bourgeois parties. This truce included the complete prohibition of all independent socialist activity and of press discussion of the causes and conduct of the war.

The women leaders refused to be bound by this. Die Gleichheit, with a national circulation of 12,000 in 1914, retained its anti-militaristic politics, with reports on women's peace demonstrations and divergent socialist opinions on the war.

Conflict with the government censors led to increasing amounts of blank space, left deliberately bare by Zetkin. She joined the small nucleus of anti-war radicals led by Rosa Luxemburg, a close friend.

In 1915 the two women organised the International Women's Conference against the war, attended by socialist women from all haggressive countries. Die Gleichheit became the internationally recognised organ of women opposed to the war.

Women were very prominent in the anti-war movement, both its leadership and rank and file. Their opposition grew partly out of the fear among women in the latter half of the war, out of the sheer physical exploitation they suffered in factories no longer regulated by government legislation, and from the death of their menfolk at the front.

The political mobilisation of these affected women, however, was the result of the agitation and organisation of the women's movement, which had consistently criticised the party for its reformism and internal sexual discrimination. In 1916-17 thousands thronged into the newly formed Independent Social Democratic Party, whose main platform was opposition to the war. The majority SPD lost 40,000 of its 100,000 female members in this period, including many of its national and local women leaders.

Women were the first publicly to demonstrate against the war in 1916, an act requiring great political and physical courage. Women workers were heavily represented in the mass strikes for 'Bread, Peace, and Democracy' in 1917-18.

In the summer of 1915 the SPD national executive moved to smash the internal women's opposition. Luise Zietz, elected the party's representative on the national executive from 1908, was expelled. Zetkin was removed from the editorship of Die Gleichheit. Mass expulsions and resignations followed.

With increasing numbers of socialist men conscripted to the front, the task of mobilising opposition fell heavily on women such as Luxemburg, Zetkin, Luise Zietz and K"athie Duncker, themselves often in prison.

The failed German revolution of 1918-19 vindicated the Marxist analysis of the role of women. The emancipation of women was inextricably bound up with the emancipation of the working class, and that within the revolutionary movement women had to act in their own interests.

The National Council of People's Representatives (national workers' council), created in the revolutionary turmoil, soon fell under the control of the majority SPD and pursed its goal of a liberal-democratic state. Equal suffrage was extended to all men and women and much discriminatory legislation was repealed or modified.

Crucial for the stabilisation of the capitalist economy and state was the diffusion of the politically dangerous mass male unemployment following demobilisation. The answer? Women were sent back to the home.

A deere of March 1919 obliged all employers to dismiss anybody not unconditionally dependent on their wages, in the following order of priority:

1. Women whose husbands had a job.
2. Single women and girls.
3. Women and girls who had only 1-2 people to support.
4. All other women and girls.

No mention was made of men, with or without dependents. Women drawn into production by wartime capitalism and the government—the numbers employed in factories more than doubled in these four years—were scrapped when men had to be provided for. By April 1919, the number of women factory workers was less than before the outbreak of war.

Factory councils, with the active encouragement of the "socialist" government, were often openly hostile to women workers. Women workers' organisation was powerless, their members unemployed and bitterly disillusioned in the face of the political defeat.

The second generation of SPD women concentrated on welfare projects, electoral politics, and routine trade unionism. In 1916-17 Die Gleichheit became a 'Magazine for the Interests of Workers' Wives and Women Workers', providing 'valuable entertainment', from which politics and trade union affairs were strictly divorced.

Even the title Gleichheit had too many revolutionary overtones for the reformist hierarchy, and in 1920 a new paper, Die Frauenwelt (Women's World), issued by the female editor defended it on the grounds that 'the majority of women comrades in distress...have emphasised...that they do not want to have the misery of their domestic life before their eyes in their leisure time. They want the sun which some day in the future will shine into their lives because of socialism.'

The 'sun of socialism' consisted of edifying stories, patterns and fashions, cookery and childcare.

The alternative was the Communist Party, of which Clara Zetkin was a founder member, and in which she battled for a separate women's section, as well as agitating among women on general political questions in the crisis-ridden Weimar Republic.

International Women's Day was a product of a strong revolutionary movement of working class women. The German Socialist Women's Movement, its achievements, contradictions, and failures, are part of our tradition. The issues they tackled remain very much alive today.

Key Books

The only book currently available in English is

Thomassen, Werner. The Emancipation of Women in Germany 1863-1933 (Pluto Press, 1973)

It rips the mask off the claim to 'socialism' once and for all. And it does this not by any deep theoretical analysis but by the simple discussion of the problems of Soviet workers who have dared to confront the state.

Take Vladimir Klebanov's experience of "the worker state". For the past 15 years he has been hounded, victimised, persecuted, imprisoned, put in psychiatric hospitals and his brothers. Because as a mining engineer he spoke out against illegal working hours, incorrect wage payments, exposure to industrial injuries, lack of proper compensation, bribery and corruption.

Klebanov is not unusual. Some 50 other cases are discussed in similar detail. They are the struggle of the Soviet worker for a degree of dignity in a society in which their name denies them their humanity.

"We... who bear surnames, forenames and children who bear our patronymics... are suffering. We are undeservedly insulted, beaten up, thrown into jail and psychiatric hospitals. A dog would not have borne the kind of humiliation and derision we have suffered... People are not animals!"

The book collects together documents produced by the Free Trade Union Association, a grouping that was formed in 1977 by workers forced together when their complaints about their treatment were constantly rejected. Combining these with Samizdat (self-published) accounts of the 1962 massacre of protesting workers in the Donbass and the problems of protest and emigration, it destroys the myths about the Soviet regime.

**Myth no. 1.** "There are no workers' rights only intellectuals, criminals and counter-revolutionaries!"

None of these people are intellectuals. They are miners, engineers, teachers, sailors, drivers, labourers. They have all knuckled down — many of them have been decorated for their services to "socialism". Their only crime is that they have tried to complain about the way in which the Soviet worker is exploited, ill-treated and used. They have asked for the laws to be enforced.

And for this the state has tried to destroy them one by one. You do not complain in the worker state! Even now their demand is not for capitalism but for their legal rights.

**Myth no. 2.** "The Free Trade Union is not a trade union!"

It is the only trade union in the Soviet Union. It is the only group that fights for workers' rights, that is struggling to defend Soviet workers. The official trade unions are state agencies, as independent as Hitler's Labour Front.

In the late 1960s they were even ruled over by a former head of the KGB. As Eric Hoffer says in his introduction to the edition: "Imagine if the former boss of MI5 or MI6 were to become President of the British T.U.C."

There are no workers' rights in Russia, no right to strike, to organise, even to work!

There is only the right to be exploited, the right of unarmed workers and their families to be gunned down. Even "if the whole town protests they will simply now us down with machine guns as they did in Novocherkassk in 1962!" says one worker. This is what makes the attitude of British trade union leaders like Len Murray and Bill Siri, who have refused to take up the Russian workers' case so far, understandable. Socialism in one country is fine Brother so long as we don't have to live there.

"... I would like to give you some advice: before talking about Soviet dissenters, put yourself in our place and try to approach this question seriously and scientifically."

**Myth no. 3.** "It is just a question of democracy."

It is not! There is no democracy in the Soviet Union and so the workers must fight with the rest of the dissent movement for their basic democratic rights. But they are fighting for more. They are fighting for the whole economic system which denies them any control over their lives. They are fighting for a decent standard of living for reasonable education, for good housing, for the same thing Western workers are fighting for.

They are fighting against exploitation, against the grind of piece work. Production is all their work. It is their experience as workers which shows that restoring socialism in Russia means rolling back the whole system down and starting again.

**Myth no. 4.** "There is nothing we can do."

We can and we must. And
Pissing on corruption & evil

Wallraff The Undesirable Journalist
Pilots Press £2.50
A Bookmarks Club Choice

Tony Delaney, London dockers, has a mission in life. He likes to get in the company of the worst practitioners of the craft of journalism and tell them face to face that he does not approve of their working practices. When he lights on someone he feels has really transgressed by fingering some low-paid worker who is simultaneously holding the country to ransom and engineering the demise of civilisation as we know it, by asking for a £6 an hour wage, Delaney always tries to find a stage for his audience.

In the glorious summer of 1972, the dreadful Delaney scored two of his greatest triumphs. He entered into an East End pub a journalist who had filled the pages of The Port newspaper with tales of the dockers' beastly victimisation of the poor Lord Vestey. He plied her with drink - he's a generous man and told her how wonderful she was, following in the footsteps of Jack London and George Orwell. And then even as the audience around them was drowning in mirth, he peed down her coat without her even noticing.

For The Observer's industrial reporter who titillated his readers with misleading stories of splits in the shop stewards committee, Delaney plotted an even more heinous crime. He planted a bug in the suspect's cottage and lured him to meet in an East End pub where, once again, there would be an audience.

How the man's heart must have fallen when he entered the pub and was confronted not by his trusty contact but by the exterminating angel Delaney. How relieved he must have been when Tony smiled indigenously at him and said, 'I'll be OK. Just get a round in and we'll forget it.'

'What'll you and your mates have?', came the obvious but still nervous reply. Thinking only of his new-found journalist friend's ease and comfort, Delaney broke the spine of an empty pack of King Size and started to compose a little list, a charming gesture making the order easy to remember.

Their resistance is no longer passive, individual, they are organised. With immense courage they have begun to build a tradition of open defiance of the Soviet state. As the introduction states: 'the road to socialist democracy and an authentic workers' state in the Soviet Union lies through the fight for basic political and trade union rights, the fight for a better standard of living.'

'This conflict can only succeed if organisations like the Free Trade Union Association spread the mass of Soviet workers. For this, the support of Western trade unionists is vital.'

As one Ukrainian worker puts it: 'Soviet totalitarianism uses Marxism as a cover. It must be put in the stocks. Don't just buy Workers Against the Gulag. Read it. Use it. Shout it from the roof tops! Mike Harrnes'

Wallraff, as the first chapter in Pluto Press' entertaining new book shows in glorious detail, pissed down the trousers of no less a man than General Spinoia, the monocled monster who would like to have done for the whole of Portuguese civilisation what his friend General Augusto Pinochet did for Chileans.

Wallraff, by an excellent line in bullshit first ingratiated himself into right-wing Portuguese circles. This enables him to establish what every other honest journalist and most sensible people suspected all along: that the Portuguese right, respectable as well as Nazi, was engaged in a concerted campaign of arson, bombing and murder against trade unionists, socialists and communists.

This having been achieved, Wallraff then delivers the coup de grace. He cons Spinoia and friends into coming to Germany on a phoney fund raising trip and engages them in a range of fascinating conversations in which they came mighty close to telling all.

Wallraff has in fact rediscovered Robin Hood and made him operate in our own times and circumstances, the latter half of the century of lies.

Far from being a hired gun for the likes of Axel Springer, Germany's equivalent of Rupert Murdoch, Wallraff uses his talent and his nerve as a journalist against the polluters of society.

He takes a typical lazy-good-for-nothing-hygge-apprentice story in Bild, the German version of The Sun and dissects its supposed tact by supposed fact showing it up for the mendacious garbage that it is.

With Wallraff the reader is spurred the sterile sermon on the- comrades this is a serious political question - unchanging nature of the capitalist-yellow-gutter-press. Instead he or she discovers its full terror for themselves.

The undesirable journalist is at his most effective when he probes another tyranny, the daily tyranny of factory work, when he is in the service of Baroness von Carlowitz or of the former Obersturmbahnführer Benz, king of the Melita coffee empire.

The Baroness offers leases on desperate flats to desperate people in return for feudal service. Here in Westphalia, you pay the lady in hours of housework, painting and gardening as well as hard cash. And of course all tenants have to agree not to have children. Like free trade unionists at Melita, they tend to interrupt continuity of production.

At Melita the nice Mr Benz has become one of post-war Germany’s most successful businessmen. Such a pity that undesirable journalists should dig up back numbers of his company paper the Melita Echo circa 1936-1945.
God Bless America

Films

The Deerhunter

Ten years ago, as the United States still shook under the impact of the mass movement against the Vietnam war, it would have been difficult to imagine that a film about Vietnam, which ended with a heart-felt rendering of 'God Bless America' could be acclaimed as 'one of the few great films of the decade' (Time Out).

The films of that period very often sought to express the alienation of a generation from American society. Those who watched it would have been reminded of the concerns of the people of his community, of the world, and of the world around them.

On 12 January 1968, the incredible campaign against this man who refuses to bury the past in the now, is the extraordinary story of what happens to a honest man, a man who in the late 1960s set about researching what the North Vietnamese had done to the Jews of his community.

Paderborn.

On 12 January 1968, the incredible campaign against this man who refuses to bury the past in the now, is the extraordinary story of what happens to a honest man, a man who in the late 1960s set about researching what the North Vietnamese had done to the Jews of his community.

In this extraordinary chapter, the extraordinary man, the extraordinary story, the extraordinary story of what happens to a honest man, a man who in the late 1960s set about researching what the North Vietnamese had done to the Jews of his community.

In this extraordinary chapter, the extraordinary man, the extraordinary story, the extraordinary story of what happens to a honest man, a man who in the late 1960s set about researching what the North Vietnamese had done to the Jews of his community.

The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishing.

Founded in February 1976 at Manchester, the Federation exist to develop, encourage and publish working-class writing.

Over the last ten years, worker writers and local community publishing groups have been formed throughout the country. Working class people have been able to express a new understanding of their own experiences in the face of a mass culture that threatens to drown them. Instead of writers struggling in isolation, trying to be different in order to make their reputations or their fortunes, writer-writers have been coming together to express themselves through poems, stories and autobiography.

Isolated groups formed and published locally in response to local conditions. The formation of a national federation reflects an awareness that the conditions we are writing about are not different for working people in Bristol or Newcastle. It is a desire to see these groups spreading all over the country, to the fact that many worker writers, trade unionists, and socialists see the world of things nationally as well as locally. Working class culture has never been recorded by working people themselves through a national publication. Working class people have traditionally been left out of our history books and our literature as writers, as readers and as subject matter. Writer writers are trying to break this vicious circle by tackling all the aspects of this problem at the same time. By writing about our lives, we hope to understand them better and through understanding help to shape our own futures.

The Federation has established a national base on Tyneside in the North East of England. From there we are developing an information and resource centre for the use of federated members and allied community groups. A more detailed account of the Federation and its objectives can be found in our first national publication entitled 'Writing' available from local alternative socialist bookshops or from us. Further information is also available.

Membership of the Federation is open to groups whose aims embrace those of the Federation, subject to approval by member groups. For more information contact us.

The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishing.

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Yet The Deerhunter would not be so interesting and effective a film if it did not give the values it celebrates some real content. This is the point especially of the lengthy opening section of the film, which数字s to Steve's wedding a couple of days before the three friends enter the army. One of the striking features of The Deerhunter is that it is about the American working class in a way that few Hollywood films have ever been. In the wedding scenes a closely knit working-class community of shared ethical (white Russian) origin is depicted in loving but realistic detail. The steel-town provides the framework for the film. Michael returns to it from the war and leaves again only to bring his two friends back. The bleak shape of the steel-works physically dominates many of the most important scenes, while the film begins with the three friends at work in the smelter.

In this way way values that would otherwise remain abstract and mythical are given definite historical shape. Various ideological themes traditional to Hollywood cinema are reworked - the mystical communion of man with Nature held to be at the bottom of the 'American experience' (the hunting scenes that give the film its title) as much as the friendship (the principal, albeit largely unstated sexual relationship is between Michael and Nick, while Michael himself is passive and clumsy when confronted with women - despite some fine performances by Meryl Streep and other female leads, this is a man's film in which women are relegated to the sidelines, to await the warriors returning from the war).

Yet these themes are only given life because they are placed within the context provided by the working-class community from which the principal characters sprang. The film's power lies in its success in reworking the dominant Hollywood ideology by relating it to the experience of a generation of working-class Americans who were not radicalised by military service in Vietnam but merely endured it. In this respect, the picture The Deerhunter points of Vietnam may not be entirely fictional.

The danger, however, is that precisely because it is in this way such a good film, The Deerhunter lends itself to a massive rewriting of history. Whether this rewriting succeeds depends in part on whether films are made which use the Vietnam experience to undermine the dominant ideology as effectively as The Deerhunter reaffirms it. See: Cullumson

You can't win (?)

Blue Collar

"... they pit the lifters against the new boys, the young against the old, the black against the white. Everything they do is to keep us in our place."

You might expect a movie which ends with this message, and has the title Blue Collar, to show some understanding throughout of the nature of class-struggle. You might expect an understanding of the potential power of workers in the factory.

Given that Blue Collar uses the Ford Plant in Detroit as its setting, you might even expect a sense of what it must be like to work on the line. None of these things are present in the movie. Perhaps that's asking too much of a Hollywood movie, but my expectations were raised by the critics' epithets of 'left-wing' and 'political', and by the comments made by the Director, Paul Schrader:

"I didn't set out to make a left wing film. I had no visions of making this into a concrete political thing... while I was working on the script, I realised that it had come to a very specific Marxist conclusion."

This raises the question of whether it is possible to arrive at a Marxist conclusion when the film was a whole is not based on a notion of class society.

The film gives a strong impression of how the bosses operate. They themselves are never actually visible, but they make their presence felt through the foremen. They have absorbed the union right down to the level of shop steward. But they are not seen as part of one class which is exploiting another class, because in Blue Collar the working class does not exist.

The workers in the factory merely form an artifice backdrop to the line. Once the main characters, Smokey, Zeke

Blue Collar is unusual in that its heroes are working class. Ordinary working people exist only rarely in Hollywood movies. In this respect there is a difference between British and American films.

British films often contain a notion of class - class as a psychological or moral state. Films such as Room at the Top and The Imitation Game have realisations of class horizons.

British comedies more often than not base their humour on expectations about behaviour associated with class. The rich behaving richly etc.

During the sixties a series of films emerged which can only be described as "working class" movies. A Kind of Loving is one of the best examples. Dated and patchy as it might seem now, there is nonetheless a definite attempt to portray working class people, an attempt to convey the relationships of the workplace.

You feel you are watching ordinary people. Hollywood has never gone in for this kind of realism.

In form, Hollywood films are realist. That is, they don't for example, do funny things with the time sequence: they don't present dialogue which doesn't fit the picture.

In short, they don't do anything which will fill you back into realism you are watching a movie. Everything is geared to allowing you to identify with the hero, and to sink into his comfortable role of voyeur.

Very rarely are the main characters people you might meet in real life. It looks like real life, but usually it's just that bit larger than life. The heroes are more powerful, more attractive, more articulate than ourselves.

Individuals who have the power and ingenuity to find solutions to the problems which crop up in the world of the film. In a way it would be cutting their own throats to identify these superpeople as members of the working class.

Jane Ure-Smith
To the deceptively simple question 'Is science objective?' Dave Albury answers 'No' and Alex Callinicos 'Yes' (Socialist Review No 8, December 1978). Both make some good points, but each in his own one-sided way misses the point.

Dave rejects any distinction between scientific knowledge and its use in capitalist technology which leads him to the reactionary implication that science is not a progressive force. His crude materialist analysis rests on the unproven - and in my view untenable: assumption that the unchallenged influence of capitalist interests on natural scientists necessarily means their science cannot be objective.

Alex correctly dismisses this as 'vulgar marxism' but his own argument that science is objective because of its 'relative autonomy' from class interests, is if anything, worse. This idealist approach divorces the sciences from their social purposes and is particularly inappropriate where he extends it from natural science to a defence of marxism's 'scientific objectivity'.

'Science' refers to a diverse range of socially produced knowledge and theories about the natural and social world. Because of the class contradictions in capitalism they do not have a unified purpose. The extent to which objectivity is achievable depends on class interests in objectivity and class barriers to it.

For capitalists it varies greatly, depending on the field of study and its bearing on capitalist accumulation and relations of production. Their material interest in objective science is much more limited than that of the working class, and in the realm of social science it is crippled by their overriding interest in maintaining the capitalist system.

As Dave indicates, 'science' and 'ideology' interpenetrate in widely differing ways, which can only be established by concrete historical analysis of the different fields of study. However, we can outline how such analysis should proceed by noting the main weaknesses in Dave's and Alex's approaches and by contrasting the different social purposes of natural and social science, bourgeois social science and marxism. This should provide a more adequate class based conception of 'objectivity'.

Where Dave rejects 'the internal logic of science' as 'mystical', Alex correctly insists that science is not the simple response to ruling class needs which Dave suggests. Theoretical developments are by their very nature unpredictable; research can have unintended theoretical spin-offs, capitalists cannot specify precisely in advance what research will best serve their class interests; and natural scientists need some freedom if they are to do creative work which may (or may not) be of immediate use to capital in developing the forces of production.

'Relative autonomy' in this sense is in the capitalists' interests. Given the marxist distortion of the concept into what often amounts to 'a unilateral declaration of complete independence', Alex is justifiably keen to stress he means 'relative autonomy' and is not being idealist. He is idealist, however, in seeing 'relative autonomy' as the basis of objectivity. He argues that Dave confuses 'two quite different things': the bogus neutrality of science as separate from class interests, and the genuine objectivity of science which Alex defines not as absolute truth but 'approximations to reality'.

But Alex fails to relate these 'different things', despite the fact that it is precisely because of the absence of neutrality that objectivity is questioned. He sees the sciences as both theoretical and social practices, and any approach which seeks to reduce them to one or other of these two aspects is going to get... into a mess.

Dave stands accused of reducing science simply to a 'social practice', but Alex himself gets into the 'opposite' mess of reducing the question of objectivity simply to the realm of 'theoretical practice'. He sees the relationship between these two aspects as 'contradictory', but does not say how and why.

Indeed, using the fact of relative autonomy as the explanation of 'objectivity' side-steps and precludes a proper investigation of its dialectical relationship with class interests and purposes in their historical context.

In making 'relative autonomy' the sole basis for objectivity its relative or limited aspect is lost and objective science becomes autonomous, elevated above the social, a position suspiciously similar to the Althusserian. One is tempted to add that religions also have a relative autonomy from capitalist interests and what could be less objective?

By implying that science is 'protected' from capitalist influence by its relative autonomy, Alex appears to accept Dave's assumption that capitalist interests are necessarily opposed to objectivity. But are they? It seems to me capitalists have a strong interest in the natural sciences being as objective as possible, for increasingly their profits depend on it.

Furthermore, in marked contrast to the class-ridden social reality which the social sciences purport to explain, there is nothing inherent in the parts of reality studied by the purely natural sciences which constitutes a specifically class barrier to objectivity. This is the main reason for their generally greater
SCIENCE & IDEOLOGY

objectivity than bourgeoise social science.

This does not, however, mean the natural sciences completely escape the influence of capitalist ideology and production relations. The varying extent of this influence can only be established by concrete analysis of the inter-relationships between the ‘internal logic’ of science and capital needs and ideas. In general, these do tend to distort and impede scientific development.

Capitalist science is elitist, excluding the vast majority of workers from the opportunity to do creative research, excluding too the majority of ‘scientists’ who are reduced to little more than pragmatic technicians; and research in particular areas (eg. the health dangers of particular chemicals) may be starved of funds or completely by-passed in the rush for profits.

But with these provisos, it is better not to assume a general fundamental contradiction between capitalist interests and objectivity in the natural science that does actually get produced under capitalism. Hence we should not assume any fundamental contradiction between the natural sciences and workers’ interests, not because natural science is somehow above or ‘protected’ from capitalist interests but because here the capitalists have a strong vested interest in objectivity. That is why the idea of a ‘proletarian’ relativist theory is ‘silly’.

The natural sciences are an important part of the forces of production. Capital in its drive to accumulate continually seeks greater control over physical processes and this requires objective knowledge about them. More ideological mystifications do not enable people to get to the moon and back.

Natural science has proved itself in practice which is a necessary, though not sufficient, test of objectivity. Knowledge of

Accepting the objectivity in natural science does not mean we have to accept as ‘scientific’ or ‘objective’ the ways its knowledge is used in capitalism—the redundancies, speed-ups, deskilling, dangers to health, etc. Dave rejects any distinction between natural science and technology because “There are many examples of science influencing technology and technology influencing science” and clearly they do interpenetrate.

But there are good reasons for not collapsing the distinction. It led Dave to the implication that natural science is not progressive, and cannot be objective in capitalism. It implies that the only type of technology that can result from existing science is the existing technology, a form of idealism where scientific knowledge, not material class interest, is the determining factor. This would make socialism impossible as it denies the possibility of using the same scientific knowledge produced for capital to construct acceptable technology in socialism.

The idea that capital misuses scientific knowledge is sometimes unpopular because it was used to support the bogus theory that science was natural. But we should not throw out the baby of ‘misuse’ with the bathwater of ‘neutrality’. It is the misuse of science, not its objectivity, which is the important political issue in the ‘new-technology’ or nuclear power.

Sometimes the misuse is physically built-into the technology; sometimes it arises purely from the social context of its use and under socialism would require little technical change, and whether nuclear power could be safely used in socialism is interesting as idle speculation but the important point is it’s potentially lethal for humanity until socialism is firmly established. Whatever the type of misuse, none is an inevitable result of science. It is only inevitable under capitalism. That, as Alex reminds us, is what we are fighting.

In social science, however, ‘objectivity’ is a major political issue—bourgeois ideology paraded as ‘objective’ science is a political weapon against workers’ interests. Although there cannot be an absolute distinction between natural and social science there are significant differences in the possibilities and implications of objectivity and the penetration by bourgeois ideology.

In Marx’s conception, Man is part of Nature but consciously transforms it through production, and in the process transforms his own nature and the class structures arising from the mode of production. ‘Men make history but not in circumstances of their own choosing’. The unity of Man and Nature is thus mediated in capitalism not only by human consciousness but by class relations and workers’ alienation from Nature (which is transformed for profit rather than use).

Therefore, in contrast to the purely natural sciences, there are specific class barriers to objectivity inherent in the contradiction-riddled reality which social sciences study.
IT IS THE MISUSE OF SCIENCE, NOT ITS OBJECTIVITY, WHICH IS THE IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUE...

Capitalists need objective knowledge to manage capitalism but bourgeois social theory is severely limited by their overriding concern to maintain and hence obscure the central contradiction between capital and labour, and their need to keep workers' understanding even more limited.

Thus, the Financial Times, written for a capitalist readership, is much more objective than, say, The Sun, and its 'more journalism' is also superior to much of bourgeois social 'science'. But for capital the problems of national and world capitalism (including the threat of lethal world war) are always preferable to the solution of removing the contradictions in a class-less world order.

Whereas natural science helps revolutionise the physical forces of production, bourgeois social science is mainly involved with social relations of production where revolution is ruled out. The solution is thus ruled out (usually implicitly) before bourgeois social analysis even starts, not the way science is supposed to proceed. Ideology is the main result.

‘Ideaology’ refers to partial and superficial accounts of reality which (intentionally or not) serve the interests of a particular class or group in society by claiming to be the ‘whole truth’ or universally true for everyone (e.g. in the national interest as if class contradictions didn’t exist).

Social science has overtaken religion as the main source of bourgeois ideologies. Some of the most pervasive are based on the misuse of valid theories from natural science lifted out of context to 'explain' human society (e.g. Social Darwinism's 'Survival of the Fittest', which has some plausibility in the 'jungle of capitalism'). Studies of Man as part of Nature (e.g., in biology, psychology, medicine), whichignore people's social being are a fertile source.

Thus people are 'naturally' greedy, animal-like, etc., and the natural fact of racial variation in appearance is used as basis for the social fictions of racist ideology. Witness the popular influence of racist 'intelligence' testing. Desmond Morris's The Naked Ape, or the granddaddy of animal behaviour studies, kindly old Konrad Lorenz, who in 1942 produced the naıve theory that 'Arians' could use 'racial biology' to weed out 'degenerate' characters on the basis of their physical appearance.

But much of the social sciences have a greater degree of objectivity and for that reason can constitute more powerful - if not always more popular - ideologies. A positivist social science claims it's 'objective' because it uses only the method of natural science (not its content), as portrayed by such 'philosophers of science' as the anti-Marxist Karl Popper. Results show, however, that this method is not fully adequate, is not copied properly, nor can social theory ever match the successful predictions made in the natural sciences.

Vicarious 'authority' is derived from allegedly copying natural scientists whose authority is based on real predictive ability, despite the pathetic results of projecting past social trends into the future. Often disastrous in economic management, it is suitable as ideology for at least 'predicts' that capitalism will continue.

Producing 'predictive laws' for society as natural science does for nature is only 'possible' by leaving out human consciousness, or at least that of subordinate classes, as in the positivistic and deformed 'marxism' of Kaunsky and Stalin, with its mechanistic historical 'stages' and the 'inevitability' of socialism. This mechanistic materialism is allied with reformism; if socialism were 'inevitable' why bother organizing for the working class consciously to take state power?

Marxism is only 'predictive' in the sense of analyzing the possibilities latent in present class contradictions as a guide to conscious workers' action to overcome the contradictions, eventual outcomes depending on what people and classes might or might not do in the future.

Confusing 'objectivity' with 'neutrality' and therefore wishing to appear 'neutral', bourgeois social analysis makes a virtue out of confining itself to surface appearances - in which it is quite unlike natural science. These appearances are part of reality (therefore bourgeois ideology has some plausibility), but in capitalism 'appearance' is necessarily different from 'essence' for the system to function.

For example, surplus labour is extracted not openly by force as in slavery but through the law of value in the apparently fair exchange of labour power for wages, so a fair day's wage for a fair day's work can appear possible. In positivist or 'empiricist' social analysis immediate surface 'facts' supposedly 'speak for themselves' and there is no coherent theory to enable a full understanding of the underlying reality of capitalism in which particular social appearances and problems are embedded.

In fact the underlying reality is obscured even further by the fragmentation of bourgeois social science. Economists typically leave out 'politics', political theorists leave out 'economics', and sociologists often leave out just about everything of importance in their 'sociology' of this, that, and the other. Bourgeois social scientists are 'conweb spinning eclectic fleckcrackers', to borrow Engels' phrase.
Fragmentation and the limited relative autonomy from direct capitalist control—results in a confusing multiplicity of competing ideologies, one-sided 'economic', 'sociological' etc. 'explanations' which are more protective of capitalist interest than a single 'party-line' ideology. They help provide piecemeal pragmatic solutions to capitalism's problems; problems are pushed off to the future, often to strike again with greater severity or, as Engels said of housing problems, 'they are merely shifted elsewhere'.

Lenin concluded that bourgeois economists and natural scientists 'may be capable of very valuable contributions in . . . factual and specialised investigations' but they cannot 'be trusted one iota' in their general theories of political economy or philosophy of science. But bourgeois social science (or the Financial Times) cannot be dismissed out of hand: 'ideology' and 'science' interpenetrate in widely differing ways, to be disentangled by concrete analysis, not a priori definitions. Thus immediately after saying that in general 'the professors of economics are nothing but scientific salesmen of the capitalist class . . . the professors of philosophy . . . salesmen of the theologians,' Lenin goes on to say:

'The task of Marxists in both cases is to be able to master and adapt the achievements of these 'salesmen' (for instance, you will not make the slightest progress in the investigation of new economic phenomena unless you have recourse to the works of these 'salesmen'), and to be able to tap off their reactionary tendency, to pursue one's own line and to combat the whole alignment of forces and classes hostile to us.'

Bourgeois social science misinterprets the world: Marxism's point is to change it. This is the basis of its objectivity. Like the best of natural science, it has a revolutionary approach to what it studies. As Engels wrote, 'socialism became a science' with Marx's 'two great discoveries', the materialist conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalist production through surplus value.'

The bourgeois argument that marxism is just 'ideology' reflecting the interest of a particular class, 'forgets' that workers are the 'universal class' with an interest in achieving a classless society in which everyone (including former capitalists and other parasites) could do socially useful work. In contrast to capitalists, the working class has an unfeathered material interest in objectivity in all fields of human understanding, natural and social.

But what is 'objectivity'? The concept is meaningless unless related to class interests and purposes. However, it cannot be established simply by the pragmatic test of how well a theory 'works' in practice; if workers accept its misunderstandings of capitalism and the success of marxism theory depends not simply on its objectivity, but on how, and how many, workers put it into practice.

Its past political defeats do not disprove the theory; just as well, for they outnumber the practical successes. Equally, theoretical objectivity cannot guarantee future practical success, but it is essential a pragmatic 'stick it and see' approach has limited uses, but you may simply 'poison' yourself in which case the 'test' is fatally late!

The conception of 'objectivity' as approximation to reality which Alex Callinicos uses is also inadequate for it leaves unanswered the question 'how close' an approximation? It is an empiricist formulation which postulates an ahistorical subject (or observer) separate from the object being observed, thereby dogmatically breaking the dialectic, or two-way interrelationships, between subject and ob-
Karl Marx’s Theory of Revolution
Vol II: The Politics of Social Classes
Hal Draper
Monthly Review Press (11.80)

I had the privilege of reviewing the first volume of this work (State and Bureaucracy), which is now happily available in paperback (5.60). At that time, I was more dismissive of the project than I now care to recall. In particular, I suggested that Draper’s work was one of ‘marxology’, a term which for myself as for Draper, is a term of subtle marxist abuse.

Having recently had the occasion to re-read the first volume, and now also the pleasure of reading the second, I should like publicly to alter my previous excessive statements. Draper is not producing marxology, but scholarly Marxism of the highest order.

The scholarship is simply amazing. Draper has read everything there is to read, and has organised his resulting mass of material into a wonderfully clear and systematic presentation of the political ideas of Marx and his comrade Fred Engels. I noted the indispensability of the first volume as a reference work, and can only reiterate that point again.

But something more must be said about the politics of the work. Hal Draper is well-known and some publisher should make him still better known by a re-issue of his marvellous short pamphlet of the 1960s, The Two Stains of Socialism: The burden of that pamphlet was the sharp distinction within the socialist tradition between all the manifold varieties of socialism from above (including reformism, Stalinism, Marxism, etc) and the revolutionary tradition of socialism from below.

We hear a good deal these days from the reformist communist parties of Western Europe about ‘democratic socialism’, by which they mean a lukewarm struggle to expand popular control, and a mild dose of national-state planning. They urge the retention of the semi-democratic forms of parliamentary government, of ‘representative democracies’ where the electorate have no real control over their parliamentary representatives.

Faced with real popular movements towards workers’ control and workers’ power, they are at best uneasy and more commonly positively hostile (consider the shameful history of the Italian and French parties in every significant crisis for more than forty years). Hal Draper is a marxist, and will have no truck with such perversions. His Marx and his Engels are firmly quoted over hundreds of pages as consistent, red revolutionaries, ever concerned with the expansion of popular freedoms, and with an expansion of freedom and control won by the working classes themselves, by their own efforts and their own power.

The Marx and Engels who shine through every carefully annotated page of this monumental work are revolutionary revolutionaries whose central principle was collective self-emancipation, workers’ power. True, they were intellectuals, but intellectuals whose whole lives were organised around the principle of struggle—of political engagement, whose intellectual work aimed always at the central point: making it easier for freedom to conger.

They were acrid in their condemnation of idiots, not out of love of their own cleverness (as we find in so many latter-day ‘academic marxists’) but because the truth mattered to the working class, because ignorance and muddle were impediments to their struggle. For them, reason and freedom went hand in hand.

Hal Draper aims to recover Marx and Engels as revolutionary activists and thinkers. In this volume, he discusses the anatomy of classes, the role of the modern proletariat as the key agent in the overthrow of capitalism, and the relation between struggle and the working class to other classes and strata.

Initially, one further volume was planned, but the author now announces that the remaining material will occupy two further substantial volumes. No question if the next volumes are up to the standard of the first two, we should be pleased at his excesses.

The term ‘work of reference’ may turn prospective readers away, so do not imagine this work is dull as an index. Despite the massive scope of the work, and its integrated conception, the various separate parts are themselves a whole series of smaller pleasures. This is a book to dip into, as well as to read right through.

If you want to know why Marxists emphasise the working class before all others, the materials are all here. Students can shiver at Marx and Engels’ remarks on their forebears’ roles in the revolutions of 1848-9, and their reported enthusiasm for knowing the plans of the revolution while not liking safe feet. Academics should ponder what Marx and Engels thought of them.

Anyone having to argue with the disordered residues of marxism should rejoice in the most definitive collection of Marx and Engels’ very clear-headed views on the present question available anywhere; these three long chapters, in themselves, are political dynamite. The Marxist attitude to trade unionism is clearly spelled out, together with the issues of reformism, the need for an independent revolutionary party of the working class, and so on.

Perhaps most important of all for revolutionary strategy, Hal Draper presents an extremely clear and unambiguous account of Marx and Engels’ development, through their experience of the 1848 revolutions, of the theory of ‘permanent revolution’. Lenin Trotsky’s claim that he did not invent the theory, but developed it from its foundations in Marx, is amply supported by this fully
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Jargon-free guide through marxist theory

A Short History of Socialist Economic Thought
Gerd Hurdach, Dieter Karras, Ron Fine.
Edward Arnold. £2.25

Nowadays one has to go a long way to find an intelligible and reasonably cheap introduction to socialist economic theory. Most modern marxist economic theory is beset with abstruse jargon and requires not just a glossary of terms but a devotion to academic study bordering on masochism. At the same time, most books on marxist economics are intolerably expensive.

This book, the work largely of two German marxists, Hurdach and Karras, is part of a very welcome move in the opposite direction—that of taking a critical look at traditional marxist economic theory in a language which ordinary mortals can understand.

The authors guide the reader through the ideas of the early bourgeois economists such as Malthus, Ricardo, Say, McCulloch and provide a convenient backdrop against which they develop Marx's criticisms.

With each economist, trouble is taken to illustrate their specific contribution to bourgeois economic theory and this is later developed when consideration is given to Marx. Here, in my opinion, the authors are a little weak, emphasising the "method" of Marx's analysis to the detriment of the object, namely capitalism.

This leads them to spend rather less time on Marx's economic theory than would do justice to it; for example use-value, exchange-value, labour-power, surplus-value, specific and general labour, the dual aspect of circulation, 'valorisation' (horrible word!), accumulation, value and prices of production and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, are all covered in less than ten pages. That makes neat, if well-written, reading!

Having given the essentials of Marx's theory, the authors then discuss various attempts to develop or 'revise' Marx's theories in two excellent chapters on theories of capitalism before and after the October revolution.

Stating clearly the essentials of the "revisionism" debate in German Social Democracy led by Bernstein, essentially, whether or not capitalism would of its own accord result inevitably in socialism, the authors then pass onto what they consider to be the more important debate inside Russia. This concerned the process of development of capitalism and was of crucial tactical importance to the marxists in Russia at the time.

In opposition to the German revisionists Rosa Luxembourg had written a controversial criticism of Marx's theory of the reproduction of capitalism, i.e. how it can reproduce itself on an increasingly larger scale to develop. At the same time, in Russia, the debate was between the "narodniki" and the marxists, the narodniki believing that capitalism could not develop in Russia and that it would be possible to pass directly to socialism based on an agrarian economy.

It was in this context that the theories of imperialism formulated by Luxembourg, Bukharin and Lenin and the famous Finance Capital by Hilleberg were written. The authors have produced excellent expositions of these theories and these alone would make the book worth reading.

When they come to the second chapter dealing with theories of capitalism, a number of relatively unknown names are introduced such as Varga (an early theorist of state capitalism), Steinberg and
Recent books on Marx & Marxism

Chit-chat from the common rooms

Main Currents of Marxism (3 vols)
Leszek Kolakowski
CUP £26.95
(That's right, twenty seven quid - or what the average Asian worker earns in a month).

How they must love this second-level philosophical Self-Heisenberg in the Oxford common room that he now inhabits! The brave Polish intellectual who defied Stalinist repression in the fifties in the name of socialism and freedom, and who became the focus of so much opposition east and west of the Iron Curtain when Russian troops destroyed the Hungarian workers' revolution in 1956, has at last found his utopian western 'liberal' society.

It must be very comforting to be told, after a decade in which intellectuals influenced by Marx have been on the offensive, and by someone who, after all, speaks from the horse's mouth, that all the cold war myths are in fact true.

Just in case you were worried that Trotsky might have had something to do with proletarian internationalism and opposition to the Stalinist bureaucratic, it's nice to know that he really believed in creating a state where "commodification is universal...a huge concentration camp in which the government exercises absolute power over every aspect of citizens' lives".

Out of context? Not at all. Apart from a page and a half on the permanent revolution this is the only part of him that Kolakowski looks at in any detail.

Nor is his cavalier treatment of Trotsky an isolated example. Lenin and other Bolsheviks suffer in the same way. Only Stalin emerges, if not in an acceptable form, then at least in a form in which his crimes are distinctly mitigated by being shared by the revolutionary socialist tradition from which they are supposed to have sprung.

And poor old Karl himself emerges as a clever, but hopelessly confused thinker, permanently split between the 'scientific' Marx who studied in the British Museum wrongly predicting the imminent collapse of capitalism, and the committed reformer who, because he tried to get people to do things, didn't believe in anything else.

The intellectual world that Kolakowski inhabits is an extraordinarily simple one. There is no history, only lists of the good guys (all of them are antibourgeois intellectuals) and the bad guys (revolutionaries/socialists).

Marxism has been proved false because capitalism has not collapsed and because "socialism" in its Russian variety has given rise to a tyranny not freedom.

Marxism is therefore not a science but a religion, and a dangerous one in its revolutionary form. So although Kolakowski says he would like a more equitable society, he has now given up all hope of getting it.

And so he sides with the status quo against those who want to change it, whether they are the students of the 1960s protesting against the Vietnam war, or middle-class children...the extremists amongst them indistinguishable from 'Fascist thugs', or black civil-rights activists 'who advocated violence and black racialism'.

In short Kolakowski has clearly been recruited to the tradition of the reactionary academic 'liberalism' of other European emigre anglophiles like Papper and von Hayek.

Apart from the flagrant violence he does to Marx and other revolutionaries' ideas (at times sinking to the level of Papper's detached Perversities of Historicism), he also makes the same equation between collective activity and totalitarian dictatorship, and worship the same shrines of 'individualism' and preeminent social reform.

The result is not only catastrophic for his politics, but for his intellect and scholarship too. In these 1,500 pages of rambling, fuddled myopia there is hardly a single acute insight to be found. The sharp essayist who at one time expressed (however inadequately) the humanity of socialism is gone.

Bizarre perspective

Socialist Construction and Marxist Theory - Bolsheviks and its Critics
Philip Corrigan, Harvie Ramsay, Derek Sayer Macmillan £8.95

This is an interesting but contradictory book. It is interesting because it contains one or two valid and important insights. It is contradictory because these insights are hatched to a political position that is completely untenable and, far from flowing from these insights, directly negates them.

The authors' basic argument is as follows. Bolsheviks inherited from the Second International a restricted view of the 'forces of production' concerning of them in purely technical terms, quite separate from the relations of production and from politics.

Thus after the revolution the transition to socialism came to be seen as merely a matter of adding economic development to the workers' state regardless of the social relations generated in this process. Hence Lenin's slogan that 'socialism equals soviets plus electrification' and his admiration for Taylorism. This, the authors maintain, led to the progressive adoption of capitalist methods and relations of production in industrialisation, and was the 'original sin' of Bolshevism.

On this question they say there was no disagreement between Lenin, Trotsky or Stalin, or the latter's successors and consequently they claim that "no casuist separates Khrouschov or Brezhnev from the fundamentals of their Bolshevist heritage".

Finally they see the 'practice of the Chinese people' and Mao-Tse-Tung thought as providing an implicit critique of and alternative to the Bolshevist tradition.

Is there any truth in this rather bizarre perspective? Yes, there is a grain, but no more. It is the case that free enterprise (including and, at times, especially Trotsky) did tend to conceive of socialism in terms of a purely quantitative expansion of industry and state ownership.

The root of the problem, though this is not brought out in
the book, was an almost complete unawareness of that aspect of Marx's thought which centres on the relationship of the worker to his own work and which is most clearly displayed in the 1844 Manuscripts. This unawareness clearly inhibited and distorted Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism in the 1920s and 1930s. But the rest of their argument is the purest nonsense.

Moss's Carrigan et al. attempt to ruin their critique in a restatement of Marx's historical method. In this they insist that the 'material and social dimensions of production are related internally' and that relations of production are themselves productive forces. They criticize a crude base superstructure division and the view of the state as merely an instrument of coercion separate from the economy. Finally they note Marx's denial that he had developed "a general historical-philosophical theory, the supreme value of which consists in being super-historical" and emphasize the empirical nature of the Marxist project.

So far so good. But while it is certainly correct to combat the view of Marxism as a technological deterministic and to criticize a 'technologically motivated account of social change' it is certainly not correct to exclude almost completely the level of technique and economic development as a major factor in human history.

And this is what our authors try to do. When Marx wrote that "men make their own history, but not in circumstances of their own making" both terms of the equation had force and meaning. The Second International jettisoned the first term of the equation and produced a mechanical determinism. Our authors here ignore the second term and arrive at a radical idealism.

Forgetting Marx's statement that "with generalised want all the old ways will revive", they want to deny that a high level of economic development is in any sense a prerequisite for socialism. This, of course, is necessary to sustain their semi-marxism but it involves abandoning Marxism for naive utopianism.

In fact extreme idealism underlies everything they write about Russia and China. When they attack Lenin over one-man management and taylorism they do so as if these were simply wrong ideas reflecting an abstract struggle between capitalism and socialist ideas, without even mentioning the desperate material situation in Russia which gave rise to these positions. Similarly, when they argue for the essential continuity of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and Brezhnev they do so simply on the basis of isolated quotations removed from their context, completely disregarding the manifest discontinuity in their general political positions and, even more important, in their objective social positions in Soviet society.

When they tell us that 'for Stalin ... socialism in one country is not to be counterposed to world revolution', this is again purely on the basis of quotations from Stalin, Stalin's practice (in China, in Germany, in Spain etc.) is completely ignored.

On China (the book takes off into the banal world of quotes from Mao. Any actual history, any contact with the awkward reality of China for the kind to be found in Nigel Harris's recent study) is avoided like the plague. The whole analysis is conducted in terms of the struggle between the 'two lines'.

Class struggle continues in China. They say, but it is not a struggle between real social groups growing out of the process of production, instead it is a mythical struggle between capitalist and socialist rulers. From authors who have stressed the empirical nature of Marxism it is a strange performance: even the quotations are vigorously selected to fit the theory. This method has two particularly unfortunate consequences. The first is the analysis of China's foreign policy. Unable to swallow Maoist antics in Chile, Angola, Iran etc. they explain them by the failure to extend the critique of Bolshevikism to embrace foreign policy and by the separation of discrete policy areas so typical of Bolshevikism. Material interests don't count in it, for that would pose the problem of whose material interests. Instead it is all just a survival of Bolshevikism.

The second is the analysis of Russia. Everything that the authors have written at the beginning of the book about the relations and forces of production and about the state should, if it were developed, lead them to the view that Russia today is state capitalist. But no, they insist that Russia remains a socialist country.

In order to support this view our authors at last, and in contrast to the rest of the book, have to resort to some facts, "It is necessary", they say, "to be brutally and insistently empirical". This empirical analysis consists of precisely one paragraph 'proving' that Russia is socialist by virtue of the fact that there is no inflation and living standards have risen. Here idealism is replaced by rampant empiricism. The facts selected are termed 'great facts of working-class experience' to inflate their importance and the other facts of working-class experience such as low wages, shortages, the absence of workers' control, and workers' rights in general are passed over in silence.

"All this is this book worth reading?" At £8.95 it is hardly worth buying. But it is worth glancing at the first three chapters (in a library) for certain ideas which, in other hands, could be integrated into a serious Marxist analysis. John Moloney

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**Recent books on Marx & Marxism**

- **Eleanor Marx**, *Volume 1* Family Life 1855-1883
- **Volume 2* The Crowded Years 1884-1898

By Yvonne Kapp

Virago Vol 1 £3.95 Vol 2 £4.95

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Inspired biographical writing, created with devotion to and empathy with its subject, can bring alive the meaning and practice of socialism much more than dozens of dusty tomes on political theory. This is particularly true of Yvonne Kapp's two volume biography of Eleanor Marx, now published in paperback by Virago (it was originally published in hardback by
Lawrence and Wishart, it will now appear alongside such works as Deutscher's *Twilight of Liberalism* and Cliff's *Lenin*, the fourth and final volume of which is to be published in this month.

The first volume covers Eleanor Marx's formative years in the material poverty but exhilarating spirit of the exiled Marx family in London, ending in the year of her father's death in 1883.

We gain fascinating insights into the Marx family's life in London, their friendship with Engels, and the attempts to build international links across Europe. Passing through their house, frequently overstaying their welcome, were the bright young minds of the defeated Paris Commune who returned immediately after the 1871 uprisings.

The second volume covers her life as an active revolutionary. Here we see her as a committed socialist in first the Social-Democratic Federation and then the Socialist League. As working-class struggle rose at the end of the 1880s she was as one of those who transcended the limitations of the small socialist sects, throwing herself into the East London agitation. Unlike many of her contemporaries in the middle-class socialist milieu of London she was at the centre of the new unionism of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Her efforts were acknowledged when she came first in the poll for the executive of the Gas Workers Union.

On Christmas Day 1889 she wrote to her sister Laura: 

"... For my own poor part, lack you, life seems to be becoming one long strike. First there was the dock strike. No sooner was that over than I was summoned to Silvertown, and in the following month I travelled daily to that out-of-the-world place at least two days out of the week, and often three days a week, in all weathers in the open air. I began to hope for peace when the Gas Strike begins... I am a member of the Gas Workers (and General Workers Union, and Secretary of a Women's Branch which I started in Silvertown, and that takes up my end of time."

"How this strike will go it is difficult to say. The blacklegs in the works are getting very unmanageable. 132 were seriously burnt (through lack of skill) in one week... Things are moving here at last, and though the methods differ from those on the continent, the movement remains the same...

Her participation in a long apprenticeship through the inspiration of her father, and her research for *Capital* in her long association with Engels, among the exiles of revolutionary Europe, but most of all by the potential demonstrated by working-class struggle in the 1880s, is her active role, their ultimately destructive relationship with Edward Aveling is described with clarity and sympathy by Yvonne Kapp. Eleanor Marx's suicide in 1898 reflected not less than a lover's betrayal. Kapp shows how Eleanor's despair was moulded by the crushing of her optimism.

The working-class advance was stemmed by the employers' offensive and the ending of the 1886 general strike. Engels died in 1890 severing her connection with his father's generation. That tragedy for her was reinforced by her anticipatory for the increasingly crude interpretations of Marx's writing in Britain and throughout Europe. Above all these volumes are much more than biography. They bring to life the politics, aspirations and setbacks of two generations of socialists, the old guard (post-1848) of the 1880s and 1870s and the new socialists of the 1890s and 1900s.

With the skill of a playwright Yvonne Kapp weaves into the narrative the huge numbers of characters that fill Eleanor's life, from the communards of Paris to the young leaders who organised the unskilled into new unionism. She discussed Shakespeare with Bernard Shaw, sexual politics with Olive Schreiner and Havelock Ellis, unemployment with William Morris and internationalism with Clara Zetkin. With her life, cut short though it was, she knew and discussed with socialists who took part in the revolutions of 1848 and were to take part in the revolutions of 1917 and 1919.

In her own right Eleanor was a talented activist, speaking up and demanding the country on all manner of socialist topics, working as a journalist, especially on international issues, as an organiser in the working class, and as a pamphleteer. One pamphlet that she wrote with Aveling, *Shelley's Socialism* is currently in print (from *The Journeyman Press*).

But what this biography also shows, unmissably, brings home, as it reveals the connections and the continuity of revolutions through the nineteenth century to the end of the 1st World War, is that revolutionary socialists today are the children of a missing generation.

The international defeat of working class in the 1930s and 1940s broke the continuity. These books can, however, help us find our roots, Yvonne Kapp deserves all the praise she has received with their publication.

*Abigail Hatfield*

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C is for 

CAPITALISM

Nigel Harris

Capitalism is a world system governed by competition. Of course, people 'compete' before capitalism was invented. Feudal lords competed to build the largest castles, to capture the largest number of serfs or kill the largest number of soldiers in other lords' armies. But that was just a small local affair, and, for much of the time, it left the lords much as before, poorer but essentially the same.

Capitalism is the first society organised exclusively on the principle of competition between people, between firms, between States and between groups of States. It drives everyone. For the capitalist, the drive is not so that he or she can eat more. Most capitalists receive so much, they cannot possibly spend their income on consumption: a fifth car or fifth house is hardly worth the effort. The drive is to survive. Unless the capitalist continues to receive, he is liable to be bankrupt.

The capitalist is not interested in what happens to what he produces, only in whether he can sell it at a profit. For the profit determines whether he can then invest and whether he can survive against his rivals. He drive for profit, not the drive to produce goods which people need, is the central principle. It is that which perpetually transforms our lives.

One day, the revolutionary breakthrough is the invention of the steam locomotive. Steel railway lines spread out across the country like a web, snatching their way through cities, plunging across the fields, tunneling through mountains. Thousands of people are pulled into making trains, building lines and stations.

But scarcely a lifetime later, it is the petrol engine, the car, which suddenly explodes. The miles of railways, platforms, tunnels, become ghost towns. And then the men and women who manned them become redundant. Now motorways gouge out the fields, oil refineries flare in the night, giant tankers nose their way into ports. Thousands more sons and daughters of those who built the railways are sucked into a new industry only to find, as in British Leyland that capitalism has moved on in the feverish search for profit.

It does not matter what sort of a person the capitalist is. Perhaps he thinks he is human. He reads poetry at the weekend and falls in love. He worries about the hungry, and is kindly to the old and sick. But in his office, he has few choices. He mans a machine that consumes people, and if he does not consume people as ruthlessly as his rivals, he also will end up redundant. The machine must constantly be rebuilt, wages constantly reduced as a share of the costs. And if people starve, there is no time to think of it.

The capitalist is not just one man or woman. It is also the state. Indeed, today only the state makes it possible for the individual capitalist to survive. The employee cannot lower wages on his own: he needs the state to introduce an improper policy or wage freeze. And the state needs to do so to cut the prices of its exports to defeat its rivals, other states.

In the past companies hired private armies to beat up their rivals and to frighten workers into accepting the dictates of competition. States have always meant armies and policeman to do the same thing. War is the 'most advanced' form of competition. Neither the capitalists nor their state are willing to wait to see if the market will favour them. All of them are interchating to make sure they win, and if they look like losing, then pure physical force will be used.

In the 1820s, Lancashire millowners did not wait to see if Indian weavers would be bankrupted by British competition; they hired things to cut all the hands of the weavers. General Motors did not wait to see whether the car would defeat trams in Los Angeles; they brought up the trams and tore up the lines. Rich farmers don't wait for prices to fall in a bumper harvest; they burn the wheat or plough in the cabbages to make an artificial scarcity.

If people starve, that is just a regrettable necessity. Full granaries and empty stomachs always go together. In capitalism. For the starving have only their need - they don't have the money to buy, the money to ensure the profit. Without profit, the capitalist always finds it cheaper to destroy what his workers have made. Wheat is not grown to be eaten by the hungry: it is grown solely to be sold.

But capitalism is not simply the sacrifice of needs to profits. of workers to capitalists. It breeds a culture that soaks into every pore of society. It drills into every head the perception that the survival of each one of us depends on defeating every one else. If you can't overtake them, at least push them down till they drown.

The competition inevitably generates nationalism let us all rejoice when foreigners starve: it breeds racism: the only good Indian is a dead Indian. Competition divides us all into separate competitive units so that profits remain king. Each individual is driven every day to calculate his or her saleable potential. For how much can I sell myself, how much as I worth in cold pounds or dollars or yen?

And then the market says: "Nothing! You are worthless - too old or too young or too stupid or too clever or too ugly or too beautiful". In the logic of competition, the unemployed face despair and suicide, removing themselves from a market for which, in any case, they do not exist.

The logic of the market, however, cannot conquer all. Capitalism can survive only under the most competitive system. Yet it can buy people's tolerance if their love. But a system of production for exchange, for profit, not use, can in no way guarantee infinite expansion. On the contrary, it guarantees slump.

Just as the cabbages are ploughed in, so now people are thrown in the scrap heap. The ethics of capitalism - you can win if you fight hard - now return to fight capitalism. Survival for the majority means they must unite. All the competitive squabbles on the shop floor have to be overcome for the shop to fight. Unity is forced on the squabbles by the logic of capitalism's self-unity or die separately.

But it is not now simply unity of the shop, nor between shop, nor between workplaces. Unity between the peoples of different States, all gripped in a single world capitalist system, is the necessity.

Capitalism can be destroyed but not in one factory or one country. A change in one factory or country does not conquer competition. It is a small temporary step, a vital step forward, but only one step.