

socialist

REVIEW

Monthly Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

37
SPACE
WARS: THE
NEXT GENERATION
OF DEATH MACHINES

15 November - 12 December

(091) 10 506
37



A new look for Europe?

The Managerial Alliance

The Social Democratic Party is doing much better than many of us expected. The Alliance victory in Croydon has been matched by a score of local government by-election victories. Who is backing it? And what do they represent? **Dave Beecham** provides some answers.

'At the end of last year I joined the Labour Party because I felt I could no longer sit back and watch the Tories ruin people's lives. I wanted to *do* something, and the Labour Party seemed the only hope at that time.'

Thus Madelon Dimont, new chairman ('I couldn't care less whether I am called Miss, Mrs or Ms') of the Brent (London) Social Democratic Party, expressing her ideals. Sadly she was 'appalled' by the Labour Party she joined and found the new party 'stood for everything I passionately believed in'.

'Passionate belief' is of course something the SDP has in great swathes—but in what is hard to find out. There lies the problem for us. It is all too easy to shrug off the success of the SDP, even after its astonishing electoral win in Croydon, and make jokes about it. (Question: 'How many smoked salmon sandwiches would go round Roy Jenkins?' Answer: 'I don't know, he'd finished them before I could start counting'.)

In reality the SDP has enjoyed massive success since its launch in March, with a membership of 67,000 by the end of October, roughly equivalent to the rate of growth of CND. Much of this growth, admittedly, took place during the first phase of media coverage. At the end of May, barely eight weeks after its foundation, the SDP already had nearly 52,000 members—spread rather unevenly across the country.

But the reality of the SDP's appeal goes alongside a complete absence of facts about its members or those who vote for it.

To take the most extreme example, William Rogers, one of the original breakaway from Labour, claimed that 20,000 of the SDP's 60,000 plus members were trade unionists at a press conference in October. In fact this figure was a total invention. There is *no* analysis of SDP membership in existence and Rogers' estimate, to be extremely charitable, was probably based on the proportion of trade unionists in the adult population (including pensioners). The only source of information about the new wonder of the democratic age is therefore anecdote, and there is precious little even of that considering how the press have fawned on the SDP.



They voted for Bill Pitt in Croydon — but what policies did they want?

The first, most obvious, characteristic of the SDP is its professional middle class 'cadre'. Madelon Dimont, whose quote heads this article, is a feature writer for the *Daily Mirror*; the chairman of Islington SDP is the features editor of the *Financial Times*. In London in particular this influence is enormous: a sample of SDP members in the London Borough of Richmond found over half were 'professionals' (journalists, lawyers etc).

October 29th council elections

St Pancras
SDP 6,919 (1,506 Lib)
Lab 6,181 (9,935)
Con 2,684 (5,202)

Vote: 38%

Rotherham
Lab: 1,714 (2,605)
SDP: 1,639 (1,025 Lib)
Con: 424 (1,464)

Vote: 33%

(Figures in brackets show previous election result.)

More significant perhaps is the evidence of widespread *managerial* support for the SDP. It is in fact a predominantly managerial party: for example it has been recruiting from the ranks of engineering management in the Midlands and Yorkshire. Previously right-wing labour managerial figures, like the industrial relations chiefs of Ford and British Leyland, Paul Roots and Cliff Rose, are being drawn in.

The activist recruiting is therefore largely elitist. The leadership of the Brent SDP, apart from a *Daily Mirror* feature writer, includes a dentist, a British Telecom manager, a barrister (former Labour MP Paul Rose), a former Belfast councillor from the Alliance Party, a former chairman of Hendon Young Conservatives and the secretary of the (middle class) Pakistan Social Cultural and Welfare Association.

The politics of this elite are also clearly to

the right. Of the 376 people at the SDP's London conference only 8% disagreed with the proposition that 'union's are too powerful', according to a MORI opinion poll. Exactly 80% either 'strongly agreed' or agreed with the proposition.

The activists also hold quite different views from potential supporters, it appears—as Ian Bradley, an SDP publicist, admits in his book on the party *Breaking The Mould?* He was talking about the issue of EEC membership: 54% of SDP supporters were quoted as being in favour of taking Britain out of the EEC (end-April 1981). Yet of SDP members at the London conference recently, 96% had voted 'yes' in the Common Market referendum.

The other major issue which tends to divide the SDP elite from its support is of course the bomb. Nearly one third of SDP supporters are said to be in favour of unilateral disarmament, whereas only 14% of London conference activists were. These figures are of course a little suspect, but they illustrate the fact that the SDP's politics as an alternative ruling class, managerial, party are quite different from its appeal to a very broad mass of people.

SDP Support

It is no longer possible to describe the SDP as a figment of journalists' imagination, even if the SDP does seem to have 'infiltrated' the media very successfully. Both the Warrington and the Croydon elections showed that the SDP could pull away substantial sections of Labour support, granted in two rather prosperous areas compared to many other parliamentary constituencies. The two most recent local council elections also illustrate this—though they show that the gap between Labour supporters and Labour politicians varies in different areas.

On 29 October there were two council elections—one in the GLC area, in St Pancras, the other in South Yorkshire, in Rotherham. Both areas are very strong working class Labour. The results are shown in the box.

In London there were clearly a lot of workers prepared to vote SDP—two weeks after the GLC's supplementary rate demand to offset the cost of reduced fares and the government surcharge. In Yorkshire, the picture is a bit different: some Labour supporter's didn't vote and there was a rush of *Tory* support to the SDP to try and defeat Labour in an area where 62 out of 66 councillors are in the Labour Party.

The lesson in terms of electoral politics is that workers are prepared to vote against Labour where Labour policies have resulted in vastly increased costs. But in the 'harder' working-class areas in the North, the SDP doesn't have much appeal.

In terms of revolutionary politics, the conclusions are a bit different. We have to adjust to the possibility that those who are turning towards the SDP are not 'scabs', even though the SDP as a party is a scab party. They may in fact be people actively looking for an alternative, who are sick of politicians using them and are sufficiently naive not to recognise the SDP as the tired old hacks of all.

socialist REVIEW

Contents

- 2 Who supports the SDP?
- 3 Europe against the bomb
- 8 Ireland after the hunger strike
- 10 Positive discrimination
- 11 View from inside: the BBC
- 12 Egypt
- 16 Import controls: the textiles case
- 17 Space wars: no longer fiction
- 21 Poland
- 25 Industrial discussion section:
Staffa, rank and file, Scargill
election
- 28 Richard Branson: hippy
millionaire
- 30 Books are weapons: Trotsky on
terrorism
- 33 Book reviews: Stump City,
Hungary, Girls, Wives,
Factory Lives
- 35 Films: French Lieutenant's
Woman
- 36 Revolutionary calendar:
Mexico 1910

Edited by Chris Harman
Assisted by Colin Sparks, Simon Turner, Pete Goodwin, Norah Carlin, Sue Cockerill, Stuart Axe, Jane Ure Smith, Dave Beecham, Gareth Jenkins, Jill Poole, Jon Bearman, Christine Kenny, Jim Scott, Andy Durgan Peter Court.

Business Pete Goodwin, Jane Ure Smith

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

(TU All Depts) London E2

John Sturrock: Network



This time we've got to win

'Anything that gets 150,000 people on the march has to be taken seriously.' Casper Weinberger was taking a low estimate of the October 24 CND demonstration, and he was ignoring the massive demonstrations in other European countries, but he summed up a sudden realisation on the part of our rulers. Minister of State at the British Foreign Office, Douglas Hurd suddenly announced that 'every democratic politician knows people are worried about nuclear war.'

The counter-attack has not been long in

coming. Lord Carrington has started the fight back, and the Social Democrats, in the shape of David Owen and Peter Jenkins, both writing in the *Guardian* have joined in eagerly.

There is little chance of their winning the propaganda battle outright. As our survey over the page shows, the big demonstrations in major European cities last month are only the tip of the iceberg of massive popular opposition to nuclear weapons. But our rulers do not need to win this battle outright: whatever they might say about being demo-



John Sturrock: Network



John Sturrock: Network

crats, they grasp the grand fact that they have power and their opponents do not. In order to have any chance of defeating them, the mass demonstrations have to be the base from which we can build a power strong enough to challenge theirs.

It is here that the problem arises. The vast majority of those on last month's demonstrations across Europe had no conception of the militancy which will be needed to win the struggle. They believed that all they had to do was go on the streets and register their disapproval, and that what they wanted would come about.

Last laugh

This illusion was fed by many of the platform speakers in London. These assured them for instance, that the Labour and Liberal Parties had already been won to their cause—when in fact the Liberal leadership has said it will simply ignore its own conference decision in order to maintain its alliance with the pro-bomb Social Democrats, while the majority of Labour MPs continue to be prepared to go along with virtually anything the US suggests.

Under such circumstances, it was hardly surprising that the demonstration was passive and very unpolitical.

Yet if the movement is to enjoy success, it cannot remain like that indefinitely. For in 18 months time the moment of truth comes. If by then the Americans have not succeeded in beginning the installation of their new missiles in at least one European country, they will have suffered a considerable defeat. Reagan and Thatcher will do everything in their power to ensure that doesn't happen.

Then we will be faced with governments that are installing the missiles, rather than simply talking about it. The movement will either to continue to protest passively—and achieve nothing. Or it will have to change its style, to act rather than merely to talk.

Very, very many of those who were on last month's demonstrations will choose action. This is what has happened with such movements in the past—for instance, with the formation of the direct-action Committee of 100 out of CND in Britain at the beginning of the 60s. That is what we can expect to happen again. Once people are convinced of the dangers of the new missile systems, many will stop at nothing in their endeavour to get rid of them.

This change in attitude will not happen over night. But it will happen.

The problem is how to prepare for it, and how to ensure that it leads to people learning to struggle in effective ways.

This is not easy. Many of those who dominate local CND committees are those least likely to make the change. A year ago the local groups were attracting an influx of keen, new people. Today a lot of that energy has been dissipated, due to lack of clear focuses for activity. The meetings tend to be smaller and to be dominated by middle class people, who genuinely want to get rid of the bomb, but who shy away from the sort of militant activity which will be necessary to achieve that goal. Notably absent from the meetings are the vast numbers of youth who

made the demonstration such a success.

Absent too are those with real links with the working class movement. CND exists in middle class neighbourhoods. It still does not exist inside the docks, the car factories, the typing pools. There must have been at least ten times as many school teachers on last month's London demonstration as there were miners, and more college lecturers than car workers.

Unless things change the movement will find itself standing on the sidelines in 18 months time making ineffectual protests while the missiles are installed and the bombs primed. Even a turn by many of the demonstrators to direct action will mean nothing unless the direct action is of millions, not of isolated groups of middle class activists. And the millions will not be won unless the battle against the bomb is tied in to their day-to-day concerns over jobs, social service cuts, wages.

The movement will not be shifted in the direction necessary simply by socialists arguing within the existing local CND groups—though this remains an important task.

It is necessary to take the initiative in building against the bomb in ways that the present CND groups hardly think of. Two areas of work are especially important here.

Youth and students The tens of thousands of teenagers who were on the demonstration are hardly touched by existing CND structures. They will not be won to boring meetings. But they will be won to activities—to local activities, to weekend long marches like those across the Pennines at Easter and from Faslane to Glasgow in the summer, to militant pickets when people like Reagan and Weinberger visit Britain. And they will want to talk not just about the bomb, but about Thatcher, the system, the struggle in Poland, the war in Ireland, and a hundred and one other things as well.

Pro-bomb

Unions and workplaces: This is not just a question of getting paper support from union general secretaries. It is a question of taking the arguments into every union branch, every shop stewards committee, above all every workplace, of getting *The War Game* shown in miner's welfare halls, dockers' clubs, factory canteens.

The argument about the unions is not an argument about recruiting members it is an argument about turning 150,000 demonstrators into a social force. And therefore it is an argument about the workplace and about the rank and file. That means that 'Jobs not Bombs' has to become very much more than just something shouted on demonstrations. It has to become a class slogan. It has to be argued on every picket line and in every occupation. It has to be tied into the rebuilding of the confidence and the militancy of the rank and file after the defeats of the last five years.

If these things are done, the movement can be sustained and can develop the strength and militancy to confront the missiles. If not, Reagan and Thatcher and Weinberger and Carrington can still have the last laugh—the very last laugh



West Germany

West Germany saw its biggest demonstration ever on 11 October when a quarter of a million people demonstrated in Bonn.

The movement took off following the 1979 NATO decision to modernise nuclear weapons. A number of independent leftists, together with the West German Communist Party and the 'Green' ecological party launched the 'Krefeld Appel' opposing the decision.

This movement quickly gained very substantial support. More than one million signatures were collected within the first few months. Some of the support came from very odd quarters indeed; for instance a former army general, Bastian, has played a leading role in the campaign and given it a great deal of credibility amongst 'respectable' opinion.

One of the first major signs of the growing strength of anti-militarist opinion was a series of demonstrations organised in various towns against the public ceremonies in which new recruits to the army take an oath of allegiance. These were big enough and militant enough to seriously worry the army leaders and the Social Democratic government. This year, the public ceremonies have been abandoned and the lambs are recruited for the slaughter in secrecy.

The movement has no national organisation but does have a network of very lively local groups. In Frankfurt, for instance, there are six local groups with a membership of between 30 and 60 activists. These groups can very quickly get a big public response, particularly among the youth. A group in Hanover, for example leafleted a demonstration of school students calling for the setting up of youth anti-bomb movement. The first public meeting attracted 30 school students, the second 60. The local branch of the Social Democratic youth organisation,

the Falcons, joined immediately.

Nationally, the movement can mobilise very large numbers of people, as the massive demonstration in Bonn demonstrated. But there are also considerable political problems.

For one thing, the level of trade union involvement is very low. There were some trade union youth groups at Bonn, and some other left elements from the unions, but the main trade union federation, the DGB, is very hostile to the movement. It instructed its members not to go to Bonn and has issued its own programme, calling for multilateral negotiations between governments.

Blind alley

The Social Democrat Party is another big headache. The left of the SPD support the Krefeld Appel and one of their leading figures, Eppler, spoke at Bonn. But his speech was clearly designed to build a bridge between the anti-bomb movement and the SPD. He said, for instance, that West German Chancellor Schmidt 'should consider himself a part of the peace movement.'

The danger of this is that it will deflect the movement into endless arguments about why other governments won't do anything rather than putting pressure directly on the West German government. An example of this is the use to which the left of the SPD is putting the 'Russell Appeal'. This is closely linked to EP Thompson's FND movement and, in West Germany, is clearly seen as a multilateralist document. Just because it does not put any specific demands on the German government, it provides a fine cover for the left of the SPD to lead the movement up a blind alley.

The obvious alternative is for the peace

movement to move from simple opposition to NATO modernisation plans to all-out unilateralism. Since the Russians are so near this is a very difficult argument to win in West Germany, and it is not yet anything like the consensus within the movement. It is the job of the left to argue as hard as possible for this in the next few months.

Volkhardt Mosler

Italy

The Bonn demonstration of 11 October was greeted with ecstasy by the Italian left, and was followed by very large demonstrations in Italy. On 15 October 30,000 school and college students demonstrated in Rome during school time. The left wing daily *Il Manifesto* described it as:

'A demonstration such as we haven't seen for years. 30,000 students gathered in Esedra Square. They had taken time off school to demonstrate against war, against American and Soviet missiles, for disarmament and peace ... The majority were young students, boys and girls of 15 and 16, who had not before had the opportunity and probably the desire to get involved in politics.'

'The slogans were all against the government, the Christian Democrats, America, the neutron bomb, the missiles planned for Comiso in Sicily, the Socialist Minister of Defence Lelio Lagorco.'

Comiso

When the demonstrators reached the national HQ of the Christian Democrats the generally pacifist slogans gave way to 'We only want one nuclear bomb—on this place'.

One focus of the anti-missile campaign has been Comiso itself. Of a demonstration there on 11 October, the revolutionary weekly *Quotidiano dei Lavoratori* wrote:

'We have not seen such a demonstration in Sicily for a long time. The old comrades and workers were immersed in a flood of youth, of boys and girls, from every corner of Sicily. All sorts of groups were on the demonstration, but the main characteristic was opposition to both blocs and the non-party presence.'

But of course, the high point of the campaign so far was the demonstration of 24 October in Rome. This was half a million strong according to the *Il Manifesto*, a quarter a million strong according to the bourgeois press.

The political make-up of the demonstration included Christian groups, through pacifists and conscientious objectors, left wing Socialist Party member opposed to their party's support for Cruise missiles; a huge Communist Party contingent and a sizeable contingent from the far left party, Proletarian Democracy.

It remains to be seen where the movement will go from here. The CP leadership will no doubt try to use the movement as simply one other tool in its parliamentary games with the government. The far left could offer an alternative—Proletarian Democracy put

out a call for the demonstration insisting upon unilateralism and opposition to both blocks, and linking the struggle against the bomb with the struggle against the effects of the economic crisis. But the revolutionary left has been generally demoralised and disorganised in recent years, after the revolutionary upheaval they expected in the

mid-1970s did not materialise and the disillusioning discovery of the truth about the Chinese regime they used to identify with.

There must be a danger now that they will simply get carried away by the size of the movement, and forget about the need to argue within it for revolutionary, class politics.



Holland

The anti-bomb movement took off in Holland before elsewhere. In spring 1978 the committee against the neutron bomb mobilised 80,000 in Amsterdam, and another group, the Inter-Church Peace Council (IKV) mobilised 75,000 against Cruise missiles in Utrecht in December 1979. There are demonstrations of up to 25,000 each year in places like Soesterberg and Steenwijk where nuclear weapons are stored.

All of this is having its effect on the powers that be. The leader of the Dutch Labour Party, Joop den Uil—a man with a record of which David Owen would be proud—had to threaten to resign in order to stop his party congress adopting the IKV slogan of 'Away with all nuclear weapons, starting with those stored on Dutch soil'.

These limited signs of success are a great gain in Holland, which was for years the most loyal of NATO members. For example, from 1956 to 1970 the Foreign Secretary was Dr Joseph Luns, now NATO Secretary General, and a former member of the Dutch National Socialist Party.

Although the IKV anti-bomb movement grew very rapidly in the mid-1970s, penetrating right down to the smallest hamlets, it was, for its first few years, a very respectable collection of discussion groups. One of the major reasons for this was that it was built overwhelmingly by the churches, who used their parish organisations as a starting point for the local groups. And its national officer were responsible to the churches, not the local groups.

The situation was transformed by the 1979 NATO decision to modernise its nuclear forces. This radicalised very many people, even those who had previously thought of themselves as paragons of godly respectability. The national secretary of the IKV made a speech arguing that it would be necessary to organise a blockade of the harbours to prevent new nuclear arms being landed.

Because of the anti-bomb movement the

leadership of the Dutch Labour Party are under heavy pressure from their membership to take a stand against the NATO modernisation plans, and there are pressures in other parties as well. When this issue was first debated in the Dutch parliament, the then government only survived by two votes.

On the other hand, the current campaign has built its momentum around opposition to Cruise, Pershing II, and other modernisation, and winning such wide support for unilateral disarmament will be much more difficult. On the question of NATO, the situation is even more confused. The IKV, for instance, believe that Holland can unilaterally remove nuclear weapons but stay in NATO and develop a new direction for the alliance based on the 'small nations'.

One of the major weaknesses of the movement is its lack of organised working class support. Although many of its members are actually workers, there has been little impact on the trade unions themselves. Hardly anyone outside of the very small revolutionary left raises the slogan of 'Jobs not Bombs'.

The Dutch movement has one strength which is not present in Britain: it has considerable support inside the armed forces. Holland has a conscript army, with 40,000 people serving at a time. These conscripts have trade union rights and a real, if comparatively weak, trade union exists, called the Union of Conscript Soldiers. Since 1977, the issue of nuclear weapons has been widely debated in the union. But under threat from the commanding general of the Dutch army, the union retreated from its previous position of calling upon soldiers to demonstrate in uniform against nuclear weapons.

About 30 more radical soldiers formed a 'Soldiers against Nukes' committee, which has supported illegal actions by soldiers. About 30 soldiers have refused orders to guard nuclear weapons dumps, and have been sentenced to three weeks imprison-

ment by the Military High Court. When the military police attempted to arrest some soldiers marching in uniform on a demonstration, the very respectable burgers of the IKV fought them off and protected the soldiers.

The Committee has also been able to release classified military information to the movement. For instance, army officers instruct soldiers that, in the event of a nuclear attack, they should lie down for 90 seconds, get up and brush off the fall-out, and then get on with fighting the commie hordes.

There must be some scepticism as to whether the anti-bomb movement can continue to grow in the present way. If the going gets tougher, then the movement will have to start thinking seriously about direct action against weapons dumps, which is a step for which it is not at all prepared as yet.

Hans van Velzen and Gijs Nederlof

Belgium

The huge Brussels demonstration of 24 October differed in some important respects from those in the rest of Europe. It had the active support of both the major trade union federations—the Christian and Socialist—and of all the political parties except the Liberals and the Social Christians.

The trade unions prepared for the demonstration by calling a one day conference for officials and shop stewards. This ensured that coaches were paid for and that not only national, but also branch banners were there.

The scale of the mobilisation was very much influenced by the fact that an election is pending, after a demand from bankers for government that will obey their will and cut living standards.

The national action committee which organised the demonstration was made up of representatives from the parties and the far left groups, and so was more directly political than CND is. The official slogan was 'No to both SS20s and Pershing', with only the CP refusing to oppose the SS20s. The other main slogan, raised by the extreme left, was for withdrawal from NATO.

The Belgian demonstration showed very clearly that rank and file trade unionists can be drawn into the anti-missile movement. The next test will be whether the work is done to persuade them to take industrial action against the weapons if the pro-missile parties win the election or if the anti-missile parties goes back on their promises.

Spain

In recent months the campaign against Spain's entry into NATO has taken on massive proportions. Most cities and towns have anti-NATO committees and 100,000 demonstrated in early October.

The rightist UCD government is trying to push the country into the alliance with as little debate as possible. They hope to placate the military by this move, supposedly opening the doors for more US hardware, for the 'badly equipped' Spanish army.

The massive opposition to NATO has

been particularly significant both because it represents the only mass fight against the government since the abortive coup attempt in February *and* because of the lack of involvement of the main left parties.

Both the Socialist and Communist Parties have wanted to keep opposition within the 'institutional framework' in line with their general policy of not 'provoking' the military.

The luke-warm nature of the Socialist opposition was clearly demonstrated by MP Luis Solana who said, 'We would enter NATO if we got Gibraltar back and could join the EEC'.

The CP on the other hand organised their own demonstration on 5 October but have continually refused to work inside the united campaign, even accusing the latter of being financed by Moscow gold! The CP refuse to oppose the already massive US presence in the peninsula, arguing that a call for total American withdrawal would only 'aggravate' the situation. The USSR, the CP claims, may accept Spain as a US sphere of influence, but joining NATO would be going too far.

Only Turkey has a bigger US presence than Spain in the Mediterranean and, of course, these bases can be used to launch an attack without Spanish government permission. The bases were installed in 1953 during the Cold War when the US realised that the bloody Franco dictatorship would be a sure ally against communism. The massive economic aid received in return greatly strengthened the regime in the 50s and 60s.

Obviously to oppose joining NATO and not call for the bases to be thrown out is absurd. Spain is already in great danger of being used to launch US military adventures: NATO membership only increases this danger.

The key difference between the Spanish movement and its European counterparts, apart from its focus being exclusively NATO, is that it was instigated by the revolutionary left, in particular the Movimiento Comunista.

The campaign is based on an alliance of far left groups, environmental, youth and community organisations and well known personalities. It has managed to mobilise large numbers without Socialist or Communist support, beginning last February with a 20,000 strong march from Madrid to the local US base at Torrejon. Since then 50,000 attended a rally and festival in July in the capital and massive demos took place throughout Spain on 4 October.

Obviously many Communist and Socialist supporters are involved in the campaign despite the position of their respective parties.

The Madrid demo of 4 October which called for opposition to NATO *and* existing bases attracted more people than the separate CP demo two weeks later—and it must be remembered that the capital has always been a CP stronghold. The decision of the important Catalan CP to call openly for the removal of US bases, against the national party line, is particularly important if the movement is going to draw in even more workers to the struggle.

Andrew Durgan

Provoking a fight back?

Leyland workers were putting up picket lines as we went to press. By the time we had finished typesetting, the strike had been called off. For the fourth time in two years, the union leaders—especially Duffy of the engineers—had ensured that a spontaneous revolt against the company and the government came to nothing.

It remains to be seen what the effect on other workers is. But one thing is clear—the beginnings of a revolt over wages have been visible elsewhere besides Leyland.

Strikes over pay issues during October included the following:-

Plessey, Beeston (against a 4 per cent offer)

Bass Breweries, Yorkshire (for more than the 8 per cent on offer)

Holset Engineering, Halifax (against strings attached to a ten per cent offer)

Rolls-Royce, Hillington (over job timing related to 5 per cent)

Courtaulds, Greenfield

Council typists, Liverpool (for a living wage)

Ransone-Rapier Ipswich

BL, Cowley (over lay-off pay)

Lucas Aerospace, Birmingham (for pay for new technology)

And on top of this list there a large number of groups of workers who have thrown out low offers and are threatening their employers with action in November. These include the 4,000 workers in Shell oil refineries who have rejected 8 per cent and oil tanker drivers of Esso, Shell, BP and Texaco who have rejected 6.7 per cent. 4,500 workers at the UK Atomic Energy Authority have rejected 4.5 per cent. In addition, the miners are looking for much more than their 6.8% offer and so too are workers at Electrolux, United Glass, Vauxhall and Ford.

Other signs of resistance are the solidarity strikes that have taken place—in the Scottish pits, and in British Shipbuilders in support of the Rob Caledon yard in Dundee.

Overconfident

It is because the rate of inflation is going to stay between eleven and twelve per cent for the foreseeable future that the government and the employers want to see settlements below five per cent. But their provocative attitude is rebounding in quite a few faces. Following a year in which most workers got much less than the rate of inflation some employers have become overconfident and are pushing people beyond tolerance. Private sector employers wary of the CBI line are settling pay deals between five and twelve per cent, and even the government has been forced to allow the firemen to get ten per cent.

A range of pay deals are coming through which the CBI will be very angry about. Reckitt and Colman in Norwich settled for

12 per cent from October with the introduction of a 38 hour week next April. Holset Engineering in two plants in Huddersfield and Halifax got ten per cent from September and moves to a 35 hour week by 1985. Smiths Industries in Cheltenham got around fourteen per cent in August. More commonly workers are being forced to accept between five and nine per cent—less than the rate of inflation, but more than the government and CBI policy of four per cent.

Vulnerable bosses

That things are not going right for employers was a major theme at the CBI annual conference. They expressed their worries that workers might be beginning to fight back, and blamed the government for the fact that economic recovery is still off the agenda. In the CBI's economic trends survey published at the end of last month their economists said that output is not recovering, investment is still falling and even more redundancies are on the way.

Because the slump has been so long and there is little sign of recovery, companies have had to fight each other much more fiercely. This increased capitalist competition paradoxically means that many companies are now very vulnerable to loss of production through industrial action. Workers can win on the pay front and some are beginning to flex their muscles for the first time in quite a while.

Stuart Axe

ROSA LUXEMBURG



How many people, when asked to list the great socialist thinkers, will come up with a line of men? Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky ... Far too many of us forget that among the greatest stands Rosa Luxemburg. Here's a book to redress the balance.

TONY CLIFF

Cover price £1.95
Bookmarks Special
Offer £1.35 including postage

BOOKMARKS,
265 Seven
Sisters Road,
London N4

Ireland after the hunger strike



Picture: Laurie Sparkham Network

Hunger strike relatives black May vigil outside Downing Street

The ending of the H-blocks hunger strike before any real concessions were made to the demands of the prisoners was a victory for Thatcher. But, like many of her other 'victories' the price of achieving it may well prove in the long term to have been too high and to have dealt a damaging blow to the interests of the British ruling class in Ireland. Far from solving the problems of the British government in Ireland it has helped to exacerbate them.

For socialists and republicans there are many heartening aspects of the 'defeat', but there are also some difficult lessons to learn for the future.

From our point of view what did the hunger strike achieve? Not since the aftermath of Bloody Sunday in 1972 has there been such a mass movement on the streets of the nationalist communities in Ireland. There have been massive demonstrations: the 50,000 who turned out for Bobby Sands' funeral in Belfast would be equivalent to well over a million in London. These demonstrations did not just take place in the cities of Belfast, Derry, and Dublin, but in numerous small towns and villages on both sides of the border. The symbolic black flag of the national H-Block campaign was flown from windows, lamp posts and vantage points in nearly every

corner of the country.

In addition to the peaceful protest marches, the period of the hunger strike saw some of the fiercest and most extensive rioting on the streets of the North since the present phase of the conflict began in 1968. Even the RUC were forced to admit that there had been over 1,000 demonstrations in the North alone, that 7,000 plastic bullets had been fired and 1,700 arrests made during the period of the hunger strike. In Dublin on July 18th there was a pitched battle between the police and rioters attacking the British embassy: 84 policemen and hundreds of demonstrators were injured.

For the first time in recent years activity was not confined to street activities: there was massive electoral support for the hunger strikers in elections on both sides of the border. Bobby Sands polled more than 30,000 votes in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone By-election of April 9th and gave the lie to government propaganda that the Republican movement resorted to bullets because it was afraid to test its support in ballots.

In the general election in the South on June 11th two hunger strikers were elected and deprived prime minister Haughey of continuing power. In the local government

elections in the North there was a dramatic polarisation of opinion that led to several supporters of the hunger strike being elected—even though the National H-Block Committee, dominated by the Provos, did not officially support the contesting of the elections.

The moderate, middle-class SDLP was marginalised where it was opposed by H-Block campaigners and two of its most prominent former members, Gerry Fitt and Paddy Devlin, lost their seats on Belfast City Council. After the death of Bobby Sands the second Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election was won by the prisoners' candidate, Owen Carron, with an increased majority, despite being opposed by two other anti-unionist candidates.

Hardening attitudes

The hunger strike, in particular Bobby Sands' election and subsequent death, led to widespread international publicity that severely damaged the image of the British government abroad. Visits of British politicians and royalty to the United States, Australia, Scandinavia, Belgium and France have been met with vociferous demonstrations of support for the hunger strike. More ominously for Britain there was a marked increase in financial assistance to the Republican movement from the States; it is conservatively estimated that £250,000 was sent over during the hunger strike. Alongside this financial support there has been a dramatic increase in recruits to the Provisional IRA. 'The greatest influx' according to Cardinal O'Fiaich, 'since Bloody Sunday'.

Finally, and in some ways most significantly, the hunger strikes have led to a hardening of political attitudes against Britain and any future British initiatives.

As David Beresford put it in an unusually sensitive piece in the *Guardian* (5.10.81). 'The sense of alienation from the rest of the United Kingdom from many Ulstermen and women as a result of the government's disparate handling of violence in the province and that in Brixton and Liverpool' and 'the polarisation of political attitudes in the North and the inhibitory effect on future political initiatives in a purely UK context' would both be regarded as political gains by the Republican movement.

What of the debit side of the balance



BOBBY SANDS
Died May 5



FRANCIS HUGHES
Died May 12



R McREESH
Died May 21



PATSY O'HARA
Died May 21



JOE McDONNELL
Died July 8

sheet? There are three main areas for concern. Firstly, at least at the time of going to press, we do not know if the reforms proposed by Lord Gowrie, which go some way towards meeting the five demands, will be accepted by the prisoners.

Secondly, we have to acknowledge that the response to the hunger strike on this side of the Irish Sea was depressing. An extensive opinion poll conducted for *New Society* (24.9.81) showed that 87% of British voters had no sympathy with the hunger strikers and only one in twenty thought they should be granted political status.

These figures come as no surprise to those of us who tried to build for solidarity during the hunger strike. Despite a number of initiatives, we failed to mobilise beyond the fringes of the revolutionary left. A demonstration in London on April 26th could only muster a few hundred to defy a government ban on marches, and when Bobby Sands died on May 5th, no more than that turned out for a Downing Street picket.

Even during the first hunger strike before Christmas two national demonstrations on 15th November and 7th December succeeded in mobilising no more than 3,000. This response is not, as some would have it, the result of the British left failing to take the issue seriously. It is rather an indication that the hunger strike evoked very little response among British workers or even among trade union activists. Any attempt on our part to generate such a response was met with downright hostility or with a distinct lack of enthusiasm. There were, of course notable exceptions to this pattern, but we should not kid ourselves that they were anything other than exceptions.

Sustaining the movement

We must be equally honest about the reasons for this attitude; on the issue of the hunger strike, at least, the government won the propaganda battle among British workers and convinced them not to regard Irish Republican prisoners as anything other than common criminals. Thatcher's banal assertion that 'a crime is a crime is a crime' might have failed to make any international impact and might have been greeted with howls of derision on the Falls Road, but it did correspond to the prevailing mood among British workers.

Thirdly, among republicans and socialists in Ireland there is another problem. How can the mass support built up during the hunger strike be sustained and incorporated into a continuing movement against the British presence?

Frequent articles in the Provos' paper *An Phoblacht/Republican News* have acknow-

ledged the importance of sustaining the mass movement, but there are already ominous signs that they do not have enough understanding of united front work to be able to live with a genuinely broad based movement that is not under their direct control. Indeed, they may seek to perform a sleight of hand and try to transfer the mass support of the H-Block campaign into direct support for the Provos themselves, pushing other groups involved in building that support to the sidelines.

That would be a mistake because only by giving priority to political campaigns and political activity that involves *all* those who are prepared to fight against the British presence will a mass movement be able to be sustained.

Campaign for withdrawal

We have to be clear what we mean about solidarity work. The only effective solidarity campaign in Britain will be built within the working class and trade union movement on the basis of an active contribution to the struggle in Ireland. It will not be built by standing on the political touchline and simply cheering on those engaged in struggle on the other side of the water.

There is no doubt that the issue most likely to connect with British workers is withdrawal of the troops from the North; the same opinion poll quoted above showed that 37% of British voters were in favour of immediate withdrawal and a further 17% for withdrawal within five years.

This does not mean that building such a campaign will be easy or that withdrawal is a soft option, but there is an increasingly sympathetic audience within the Labour Party and some sections of the Communist Party.

The Labour Party conference had a serious debate on Ireland for the first time in years and the party has eventually come out in favour of Irish unity in theory. The resolution on withdrawal, admittedly a weak one, won the support of 85% of the delegates from the constituencies and was only defeated by the block votes of the trade unions. The ideological log-jam on the discussion of the Irish struggle may not have been cleared but it has at least been dented.

The proposed trade union conference on Withdrawal on February 27th, called by the Campaign for Withdrawal and the Labour Committee on Ireland, offers the chance of launching an effective solidarity movement in Britain and support for it should be raised in as many workplaces and trade union branches as possible.*

We will only be able to do that if we can convince British workers that it is in their own interests to support the Irish struggle;

consequently we need to link the question of Ireland to all of the other struggles workers are engaged in. Single issue politics are anathema to socialists and we should always attempt to relate the various strands of our politics to each other. The key to success will be the extent to which we can involve rank-and-file trade unionists by broadening the political base of the Irish debate.

No article which seeks to assess the impact of the hunger strikes and to spell out the basis for future activity can afford to ignore the resumption of the bombing campaign in this country. The Provos have claimed responsibility for the Chelsea barracks bombing, the car bomb attack on the Commander of the Royal Marines, and the Oxford Street bombing.

The first thing we should express is our contempt for the hypocritical response of the government. Thatcher's hushed tones of disgust at the effects of a nail bomb have to be put in the perspective of her sanguine approval for infinitely greater weapons of destruction like the Neutron bomb and Cruise missiles. Neither will we be a party to any moralistic condemnation of the bombs that sees them simply as the work of criminals. We applaud the courage of Ken Livingstone for seeking to make the point that those responsible for the bombs regard themselves at war with the British government and that as long as the British presence remains in Ireland then there will be the possibility of acts of war in this country.

Criticism

What we must do, however, is make a serious political criticism of the effects of the bombs. There can be no doubt that continued bombings in this country will make the building of a campaign for withdrawal extremely difficult. Given that we regard such a campaign as a necessity and not a luxury, we must make our criticism of the impact of the bombings clear. If we cast our minds back to the Birmingham bombs, it was easy enough to say that the ultimate responsibility for the deaths of those British workers lay at the door of successive British governments, but well nigh impossible to convince other British workers of that fact.

The bombings are also a clear indication that the Provos give priority to the military campaign and regard any other political activity as secondary to it. Socialists have always argued that military activity should be determined by political circumstances and is no substitute for building political support among the workers. If any military action hinders the building of that support then it should be condemned.

Shaun Docherty



MARTIN HORSON
Died July 13



KEVIN LYNCH
Died August 1



KIERAN DOCHERTY
Died August 2



THOMAS McELWEE
Died August 8



MICHAEL DEVINE
Died August 20

Positive discrimination: The next goal for women workers?

Norah Carlin looks at various measures aimed at overcoming the hurdles facing women that are being discussed both in the trade unions and the women's movement.

Despite more than a decade of the women's movement in this country, women workers are still very much at the bottom of the heap. There are now more women employed than ever before (9.2 million out of a total workforce of 22.5 million), even though the number of women registered as unemployed has increased fivefold since 1975. Yet the gap between men's and women's earnings has actually been *increasing* since 1978, and the vast majority of women workers (69% according to a recent survey) are employed in women-only jobs or grades.

Clearly, the Equal Pay Act and Sex Discrimination Act, which both came into force in 1975, have not been effective. Nor has there been anything like the collective action needed to win what the law cannot guarantee, as the Trico workers did.

More and more women are arguing that 'equality of opportunity' is not enough: there must be positive discrimination to enable women to claim the equality as workers that neither the law nor the trade unions have got for them.

Unfortunately, positive discrimination is regarded with suspicion by many socialists. Is it a feminist diversion, a divisive issue, a luxury in the present economic crisis which will only increase male workers' sexism?

The cake

Some of the ways in which positive discrimination has been raised have probably increased such suspicions. Among these are the repeated suggestions from writers in publications such as *Red Rag* that male workers have to sacrifice not only their personal interests but also their *class* interests by 'moderating traditional wages militancy' or accepting some form of incomes policy in the interests of 'redistribution of the workers' share of the cake'.

The quota systems imposed on employers by legislation in the United States are regarded by British trade unionists as taking the initiative away from the unions, while the provision of 'reserved seats' on union bodies such as national and regional executives are regarded by many socialists as by-passing the rank and file.

There are basically two kinds of positive discrimination which need discussing—the demand that *employers*



provide special recruitment and training policies to give women access to better paid and higher graded jobs so as to raise the status of women workers generally, and action within the *unions* to ensure that women's needs are given the necessary priority. The main issues so far have been whether legal provi-

Unions with a majority of women members

National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers	92%
National Union of Public Employees	67%
National Union of Teachers	66%
Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied Workers	63%
Association of Managerial, Professional & Executive Staff	51%
National Association of Local Government Officers	50%

sions or collective action are the best method of dealing with employers; and what forms of discrimination within the unions are effective—formal provisions for separate representation, special committees at national and local level, or women-only education and training provisions.

In addition, socialists should be asking what measures of positive discrimination would strengthen the position of women at rank and file level, and in general improve the strength of workers *as a class* rather than just one section of workers

The two sorts of positive discrimination in employment that are usually considered are the US and Swedish ones.

In the US, various legislation since the early 1960s (Civil Rights, Equal Pay and Equal Opportunities Acts) has led to the development of Affirmative Action Programmes to counter inequalities for both racial minorities and women. All large federal contractors are required to provide such programmes, which include a statistical analysis of their workforce, the identification of

groups suffering from inequality, and recruitment and training policies to redress the balance.

Affirmative Action Programmes have proved controversial in the United States. White male workers have brought test cases claiming 'reverse discrimination', and the fact that the government has the power to require AAPs—not only in the case of federal contractors but also in any arbitration award—is seen by the unions as interference with free collective bargaining.

The Swedish model, upheld by many British trade unionists as the main alternative, rests on the collective bargaining power of the main trade union federation, which negotiates annual contracts with the Swedish employers' federation affecting the majority of Swedish workers.

This has obtained policy agreements favourable to women workers, such as six months' paid maternity leave, 'equality subsidies' for employers training or recruiting one sex for jobs previously exclusive to the other, extensive parental leave and flexible working hours. In addition, legislation has made financial provision for local authority creches and non-discrimination training for teachers. Women's hourly earnings in Sweden are now 86½% of men's (73% in Britain), and 61% of all Swedish women are employed (46% in Britain).

Concessions

How much these are results of union strength and how much of Sweden's more favourable economic position and/or continuous Social Democratic governments from 1932 to 1976 remains to be seen—economic problems and right-wing governments have now arrived there. The 'model' is clearly inapplicable to Britain because of the different structure of trade union bargaining here — the TUC is certainly not in a position to wring concessions out of the CBI above our heads, however much it would like to be.

At the local level, collective bargaining *can* win concessions from employers. The London Borough of Camden, for example, agreed an Equal Opportunities programme for both women and racial minorities in 1978, though it was felt to begin with that until adequate child care facilities were provided for women workers the benefits would not begin to appear for them.

Some measures which would positively benefit women do not at first sight appear to be concerned with gender. Security for part-time workers (84% of whom are women), issues involving grades which are not exclusively women's jobs but just 'happen' to have a high proportion of women, and the question of differentials between skilled and unskilled workers (not usually alleviated by job evaluation exercises) are some of them.

The real way to tackle these problems is not by centralised, bureaucratic bargaining but by collective *mass*

action at the shop floor level. The employment position of women will not improve without more struggles for equal pay (like Trico), upgrading (like the Liverpool typists) and the right to work (like Lee Jeans). Such struggles depend on rank and file mobilisation and supportive action by other trade unionists, both male and female.

To demand legislation for positive discrimination is not in itself a bad thing. The position argued at a recent TUC conference on Positive Discrimination for Women (November 1980) that 'voluntary packages' and 'good employment practices' without legal sanction are more in the British tradition is just weak-kneed evasion. But to rely on legislation having an automatic effect, or to allow the more dubious features of American legislation (such as enforcement through arbitration awards) to be included would be highly undesirable.

Collective action

If the answer lies in collective action, how is this to be achieved through trade unions in which women members are often inactive and the needs of women workers come bottom of the list of priorities? Some form of positive discrimination within the unions is clearly also necessary.

There are now almost 3½ million women in TUC-affiliated unions, forming nearly a third of total TUC membership—a massive increase since 1968. There are at least six trade unions with a majority of women members, and even the Transport & General's 16% represents a real figure of over a third of a million women.

Many of the female-majority unions are white collar, but the distribution of women in managerial, professional, scientific and administrative jobs is weighted overwhelmingly towards the *bottom* grades and *lower* pay. The same is true of the female-majority manual unions, NUPE and the Tailors and Garment Workers.

Why are the trade unions so ineffective in getting equality for their women members? The answer which many feminists automatically give is *because they are male dominated*. And so they are—very few women sit on national executives, regional or district committees, only a few serve as shop stewards or branch secretaries, and women delegates to the TUC are in a tiny minority. That a union with 51% women members (APEX) had in 1980 only *one* woman out of fifteen members on the national executive (NALGO, with 50%, was not much better with only 14 out of 70) is indeed scandalous.

But why are men dominant in the unions? If this is just taken as the natural result of male chauvinism and selfishness, there is no answer in *specifically class terms*—the problem with male trade unionists, as with all men, is seen as their wrong ideas and the solution as in somehow persuading or

forcing them to change those ideas.

There is an answer in specifically class terms, however—the unions are male dominated *because they are bureaucratic*. The under-representation of women is one result—perhaps the most appalling and immediately obvious result—of the fact that the unions are run by small cliques of professional or semi-professional men remote from the daily lives and real needs of the membership. They are often drawn from the highest grades themselves. This is true of unions all the way from the white collar NUT, notoriously run by headmasters, to the manual AUEW, dominated by Section I toolmakers.

The idea, which many feminists seem to believe, that the unions in general do a grand job for their male members while keeping women down,

Unions with special measures for women's participation

General & Municipal Workers' Union officers, conferences, regional committees

Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff national advisory committee

National Union of Journalists national equality working party and women's conference

National Association of Local Government Officers committees and bulletin

Technical and Supervisory Staff (AUEW/TASS) national organiser, national and regional committees, annual school

Association of Managerial, Professional and Executive Staff national and regional committees

National Association of Teachers in Further & Higher Education national advisory panel and regional sub-committees; occasional training schools

National Union of Teachers equality working party

National Union of Public Employees five 'women's seats' on National Executive; more recently, national and local committees

must be laughable to many male rank and file trade unionists.

What this means is *not* that women should not press for special measures of positive discrimination within the unions. On the contrary, such measures are absolutely necessary so that women, who are particularly obviously and seriously disadvantaged by bureaucracy, can *take the lead* in the fight for union democracy.

The most striking thing about a union women's training school I attended recently was an unscheduled discussion (imposed by the women present despite the official programme) on male domination. Women who started off asking, 'Why is our union male dominated?' were very quickly agreeing that the question was really, 'Why are unions so

undemocratic?' Every part of the union's operation, from the 'expert' branch secretary to the remoteness of National Council, was subjected to criticism by women made angry by their own frustration. This was consciousness raising with a vengeance!

It follows that measures which simply place a few women in 'leading' positions, without the necessary rank and file backup, are not very useful. There has been a lot of criticism, for example, of the 'reserved seats' for women on NUPE's National Executive, which were not at first accompanied by any national or local women's committees or training. Women who become members of national bodies tend to lose contact with the rank and file, perhaps even more so than men already do, because they are so few. Established union bureaucrats clearly regard such measures as 'selecting able women for promotion', and they are often advocated as providing 'a career structure for women in the union'.

National equal rights committees can be useful but are likely to get bogged down in bureaucratic procedures. This is my own experience on a national advisory panel where it can take up to a year to get a simple information leaflet produced if it is not being pushed from above, and a 'political football' such as sending delegates to an outside women's conference can take up to an hour and a half.

None of a group of women members of the GMWU interviewed in 1980 even knew that their union had equal rights officers, committees and conferences. (A. Coote and P. Kellner, *Hear This, Brother*)

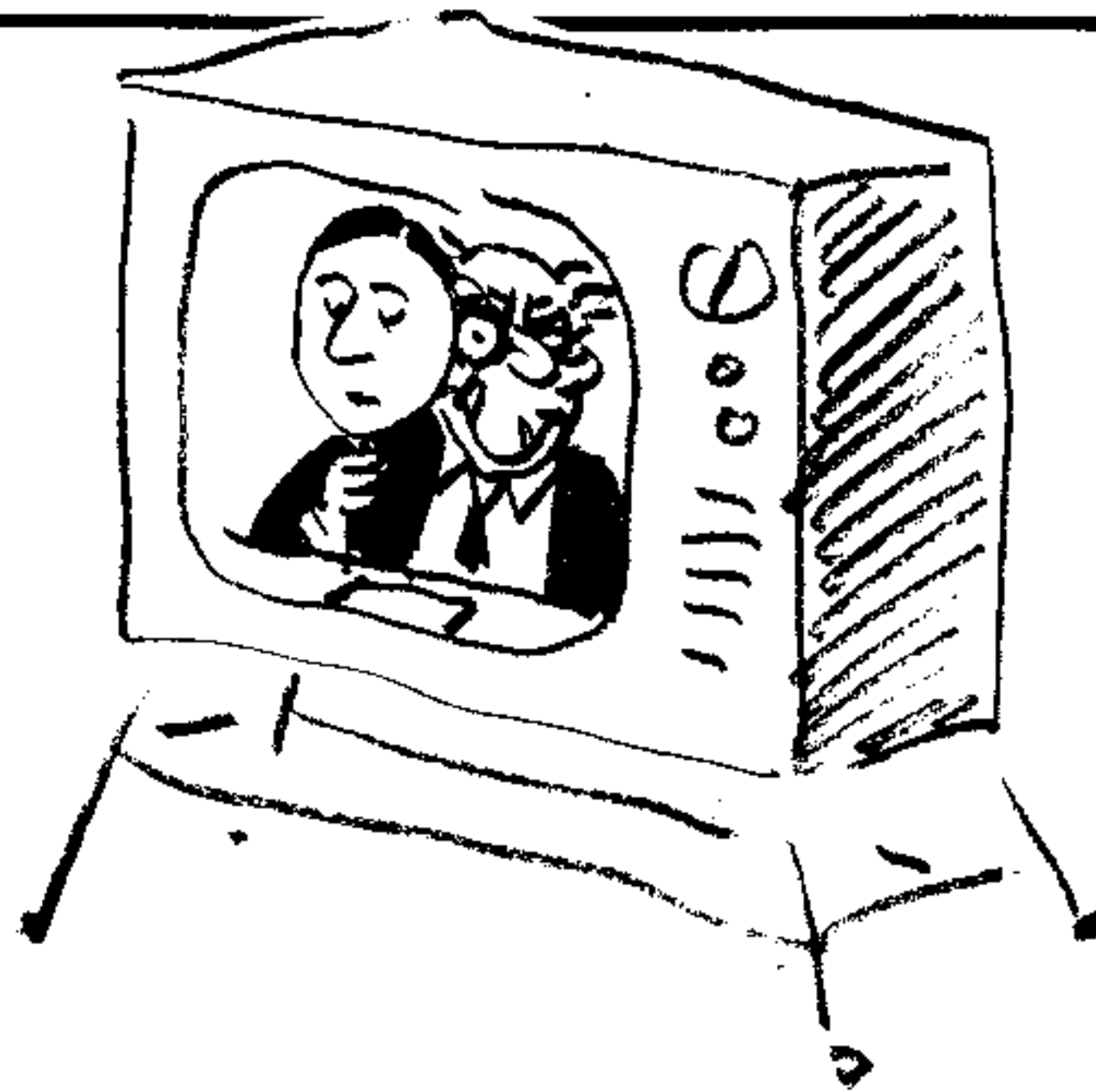
Ghettoisation

Women's training schools—so long as training is not seen as a 'skill' imparted to Us by Them—meetings during working hours, childcare facilities or expenses for union meetings, and encouragement to women to stand for branch and shop stewards' committees (so long as they have the backing of constant contact with their members) are all useful and necessary. They need not mean 'ghettoisation' of women's needs: the aim should be for women to gain the confidence and experience to take their problems back to the wider union.

And if rank and file men start asking, why don't *we* have more training schools, more meetings, more contact between members and their representatives—good luck to them! The answer is for them to fight for these things, not try to take them away from the women.

The essential aim of positive discrimination in the unions should be to produce more action, not more conference resolutions. When there are more Tricos, more Liverpools, more Greenocks, *then* male trade unionists' ideas on women will be challenged and national union bodies will have to commit themselves to supporting our demands.

Bias, prejudice and blatant hypocrisy



Socialists often complain about bias in news programmes. But we do not often hear what conditions are like for those who work on them. We received the following letter from an employee of BBC news. She remains anonymous, for obvious reasons.

Naive. That was me when I joined the BBC. Six months down from a red brick university, a degree worth precious little in employment terms in my pocket, I felt elated at having secured a post in that most sought after British institutions, the BBC. A lowly rank to start with, of course, but then weren't we always told foot in the door and away you go?

Two years later, and my feet are still firmly planted on that 'Welcome' mat. Only somehow I don't feel so very welcome any more.

I work in Television News, the only area in broadcasting terms that, ideally, holds any attraction for someone like myself; 'hard' news stories, up-to-the-minute dispersal of political and social 'fact', an essential life-line to any thinking person. Ho hum.

The bias, prejudice and blatant hypocrisy

of much news presentation is no revelation. One can discourse at length on the distortion of events, the way in which language is used to convey the message of the prevailing mentality, the motives which lead to the inclusion or exclusion of specific news stories, even the 'running order' which indirectly confers importance to some things whilst demeaning others. Books on the subject are legion.

I would like, however, to describe the actual experience of having to work 'behind the scenes' in this rarefied atmosphere of reaction; for the BBC as an institution is monolithic in bureaucratic structure, archaic in outlook and, I would go so far as to say, destructive in humanitarian employment terms.

Careerism

Employees are constantly kept in check by a system of short term contracts and annual reports. This ever present threat of redundancy dismissal serves as a political tool in making sure you toe the line; it keeps you acquiescent, because although you know it would take some trouble to actually 'get you out', everything goes on your personal file and we don't want any obstacles preventing us from soaring to the lofty heights of whatever goal we first got our foot in the door for, eh?

Careerism abounds at the BBC, arse-licking is an occupational necessity and perfect time-keeping, sickness admissible three days per annum and a glowing smile every minute of the day will ensure you do well.

I have personally been threatened with 'closure of job opportunities' if I did not make an effort to 'look more cheerful'. Perhaps I should explain that the work I do, on a shift basis of 12 hour days, consists of stultifyingly boring tasks of an administrative nature, on a par with the factory worker at the conveyor belt. At least the alienated factory worker is more often than not left to deal with the futility of their toil in their own way, but, oh no, not us; evidence of dissatisfaction, frustration, mental degeneration is unpleasant and forces your superiors to question the wisdom of employing graduates to sell their souls for a pittance.

I do not like to dwell on attitude, but it

does play an important role in staff relations at the BBC. In classic tribal tradition the majority of people working in TV News are of a middle-of-the-road, soft-centred SDP political tendency. Some are out and out feudalists, and those of any radical leaning are few and will always be found in solitary groupings, quite apart from the in-crowd and never, but never, will they have 'got on'. Tied down by mortgage repayments, family commitments and car tax, they stoically endure the inequalities and conservatism of the system.

Worse still are the closet lefties who rise to positions of power by being all things to all people, avid readers of the *Guardian* editorials, declaring Jill Tweedie as their guru (closet feminism too?) These people 'play the system' (their words), a difficult occupation when sat, superglued, squarely on the fence.

I myself fell foul to one of those managerial parasites who play individuals one against the other, one second lending a sympathetic ear to union turbulence, the next creeping to upper management. Having been wined and dined in true cavalier fashion, and then rejecting his sexual advances, my presence became an embarrassment and I became the victim of unprovoked displeasure, jibes, snide comments of my professional worth/potential. But the basic criticism of the BBC is that while extolling existing society, it pathetically tries to convince itself that it is an impartial organisation, providing an essential service to the people. I cannot describe the disgust I felt at the spate of Bobby Sands 'jokes' passed around at the time of his death; I do not need to point out the contrast with the saccharin attitude towards the coverage of 'that' wedding, when any criticism was viewed as nothing short of blasphemy. Impartial? Ha!

It came as some comfort to read Stuart Hood's *On Television* when first disillusionment set in. The somewhat nebulous idea that a 'BBC person'—with whom you'd really rather not associate—did exist was compounded by that reading.

Prestige

I must be fair, however, and admit that one cannot blame totally those that are duped into the organisation, for it is like a surrogate family structure—it gives you a secure pensionable future (once over the short term contract hurdle), an incremental regular salary, help with your mortgage/car loan/holiday insurance, a host of clubs/societies/discounts and oh boy, a certain degree of prestige.

In my opinion the BBC News has for too long been given an easy life, spared of valuable criticism. It is no wonder I find the barbs of Messrs Benn and Livingstone—among others—a welcome change. A personnel department which provides the basic function of a buffer to management, a static and inward-looking union (isn't there a basic anomaly in there being a union which serves the needs of both management and employees anyway?), a great rigid hierarchy based on spurious achievement, this forms the great part of my observation of the BBC and I want no part of it. But for the time being I have rent to pay.

THE CIS REPORT ON REAGAN
MONETARISM
REAGAN/THATCHER
UNEMPLOYMENT
RACISM/FASCISM
MONETARISM
CAPITAL/PROFITS
LAW AND ORDER
WAGES/PRICES

OUT NOW: Counter Information Services report on Tory Britain '81, packed with up to date facts and figures. Available CIS, 9 Poland Street, London W1. Price £1 plus p&p.

Oct 6: Gunmen advance and Sadat's reign comes to a sudden and surprise end



The Middle East after Sadat

The death of Sadat stunned the Western media. The mediocre soldier and dictator suddenly became a statesman of world significance. But in the Arab world the feeling was different. This underlines the problems Reagan faces in his attempts to reassert US dominance in this part of the world, as **Phil Marfleet** explains.

For his last four years Anwar Sadat was living on borrowed time. With the huge riots of 1977 it became clear that the Egyptian workers and poor had lost all patience with his broken promises and years of economic failure. When Sadat died he was utterly unmourned. 'He was nothing', said an Egyptian oppositionist, 'just a bad actor'.

In Washington, London and Paris the reaction was different. Sadat's killing sent a shock wave through the Western capitals. The parade of heads of state and government leaders at his funeral was witness to the key role that Sadat was playing for them. The United States was represented by secretary of state Haig and no less than three ex-presidents—an unprecedented 'honour' at the death of a world statesman. Prince Charles was sent to represent the Queen, attending with an assortment of royals from all over Europe.

By contrast just three Arab states sent

representatives to Cairo, and only five—Morocco, Oman, Bahrain, Somalia and Sudan—sent messages of condolence to Egypt for Sadat's death. Given the traditions of Arab custom this small showing underscored the extent to which Sadat had become almost completely isolated in the Arab world.

In Washington Sadat was regarded as 'our man'. He was the lynch-pin of American strategy in the Middle East, and increasingly in the whole of north and east Africa. Yet Washington's attitude to Egypt had for years been pathetically short-sighted. When Sadat fell he died at the hand of an assassin whose aim had been steadied by the Pentagon strategists so enthusiastic that Sadat should remain in power.

A catastrophic plan

In 1973 Richard Nixon visited Cairo. He told Sadat that the US would guarantee \$2.5 billion of investment for his sickly economy. Sadat declared the *infitaah*—the 'open door'—which invited the Western multinationals into Egypt on the basis that they could operate tax-free and carry off whatever profits they could accumulate.

The plan was a catastrophe. By 1981 a mere handful of factories had opened, a few miserable millions had been invested. Meanwhile the Egyptian foreign debt continued to grow, population increased massively to the present total of some 40 million, and pressure on land and jobs became intense.

Western companies simply would not

invest in Egypt—it was lacking in basic infrastructure, grossly bureaucratic and far too dangerous, having been involved in no less than four wars with Israel in just 30 years.

For eight years the Americans continued to make promises to Sadat. He seemed to continue to believe them, constructing all manner of schemes based on the investment and jobs which never came. Meanwhile, by entering into the Camp David agreements with Israel, Sadat cut himself off from almost all the Arab states, isolating Egypt from the main supplies of cash in the region. Until Camp David in 1978 Egypt's main assistance had come from the Gulf states of GODE—the Gulf Organisation for the Development of Egypt. After Sadat's trip to Jerusalem they were less enthusiastic about their support.

Under Sadat the Egyptian economy went into rapid decline. His predecessor Gamal Nasser had insisted on the development of basic industries which could provide cheap consumer goods in Egypt. Sadat smashed Nasser's nationalised industries and instead gave the go-ahead to the layer of middlemen and western commercial agents—soon known as the 'Sadat class'—to step up imports from the West.

For years it has been impossible to buy even Egyptian soap. In contrast there have been plentiful supplies of Coca-Cola.

Sadat was despised by many Egyptians—not merely because he had made the poor poorer, but because he had reintroduced the sort of grubby corruption which last existed

on such a scale during the reign of King Farouk. The contrast between rich and poor in Cairo became simply breathtaking—one of the most dramatic presentations of inequality in any major city.

Anger and repression

It was only a matter of time before the anger of the poor was manifested in the streets. In January 1977 vast demonstrations swept Egypt's cities. For three days large areas of Cairo were beyond the government's control. The food price rises which had sparked the protests were withdrawn, with Sadat surviving by the skin of his teeth.

The huge crowds that occupied the centre of Cairo during the riots were tired of Sadat's rhetoric. The most popular slogan—'Hero of the Crossing, where is our breakfast?'—bore out that his efforts to create myth out of the 'victory' of the 1973 war were not enough to fill stomachs.

Badly shaken by the riots and the need to make such obvious concessions, Sadat soon clamped down. After 1977 he launched a succession of purges, with widespread campaigns of arrest, even of the mildest liberals. The left in particular suffered badly, with one after another of its newspapers being closed down.

Trade union activists were weeded out, and the considerable wave of strikes which had led up to the '77 riots (like the bus strike which had paralysed Cairo in 1976) soon diminished.

The mock 'opposition' parties created out of Sadat's own National Democratic Party were limited to the most narrow parliamentary activity. Soon there was no public forum for opposition to the regime.

In a system in which many institutions are bureaucratic and inefficient it is said that only the army and the secret police really work. Certainly the secret police did a thorough job, but this cannot be unconnected to the fact that they have been assisted by some 600 American 'advisors'. Recent reports emanating from the US State Department and the Pentagon suggest that during Sadat's visit to the US in August this year he was briefed at length on the activities of radical Islamic groups in the army.

This may have encouraged Sadat to organise his massive purge of September 3rd. Some 1600 arrests were made covering oppositionists from left to right, but concentrating on religious fundamentalists like the Muslim brotherhood. There have also been reports that 200 army officers were sacked or imprisoned at the end of the round-up.

For several years Sadat has been playing a dangerous game with the Muslim Brotherhood. Founded in the 1920s, the Brotherhood or *Ikhwan* was especially important in the post-war years, and was severely repressed by Nasser. In the 1970s it was given considerable leeway by Sadat, largely in an attempt to control the left. The *Ikhwan's* weekly magazine *Al-Dawa* was, for example, easily obtainable throughout Egypt.

In attempting to manipulate the Brotherhood Sadat was trying to ride a tiger. In traditional Islamic centres of learning, like the famous Al-Azhar in Cairo, there has always been a ready audience for fundamentalist Islamic ideas, but during the 1970s such notions spread widely in the universities, and in some southern towns and villages.

But fundamentalist Islam also found a more important audience. Sadat's economic policies created frustration and anger

among the small merchants and traders who were squeezed by the big trading monopolists of the 'Sadat class'. Close parallels with the events in Iran are dangerous, but it is clear that years of resentment among the petit bourgeoisie led many in the same direction as the bazaaris who opposed the Shah.

The rapid rise of Islamic fundamentalism must also be connected, as in Iran, with the chronic deficiencies of the left. For some years the ex-general Sadedien Shazli has led a 'broad left' opposition of liberals, Nasserists and some religious figures. It has been largely ineffectual, and the fact that Shazli has broadcast into Egypt from Libya has created instant suspicions among Egyptians.

The legacy of Nasser

The Progressive Unionist Party of Khaled Muhedein is a weak reformist grouping of parliamentary oppositionists who have never built a worker base, though they are said to have some support in the Delta towns like Mansoura.

The Egyptian Communist Party is tiny, having been regularly repressed under both Nasser and Sadat, but also having been limited from its earliest years by being an organisation largely composed of members of the former minority communities—the Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Italians and others—who left Egypt in the 1950s and 60s.

The pro-Moscow Communist Workers Party which seemed to have a modest influence in the mid-1970s is underground and now of apparently little importance.

While the Egyptian working class has grown rapidly, and the effects of the world crisis and Sadat's own failures have opened up many possibilities, it remains the case



January 1977: the poor explode, how long before the same happens again?

that there has been no current of opposition prepared to take up the long-term activity of organising independently in the workplaces. But besides the difficulties of repression a further enormous obstacle has been placed in the path of Egyptian socialists. This is the legacy of Nasser.

Nasser called himself variously an 'Arab socialist', a 'nationalist', a 'pan-Arabist'. He presented his party, the Arab Socialist Union, as 'revolutionary'. For years this rhetoric concealed the construction of an economic and political system little different from that of former years. Egyptian state capitalism created a new ruling class of military men and technocrats. Its rule was often harsh and sometimes brutal.

But Nasser carried with him the enormous prestige derived from having rid Egypt of the British—who had dominated Egypt for 80 years—and then of having nationalised the Suez Canal and successfully survived the 1956 invasion by British, French and Israeli forces.

This record, combined with the reputation of being the man who 'toppled' King Farouk (an achievement actually completed only after massive worker demonstrations) and carried through a modest land reform, made Nasser the most popular leader in modern Arab history.

It remains the case today that varieties of Nasserism are the most popular of all Arab political ideologies, and nowhere more so than in Egypt. Sadat was for years compelled to pay lip service to Nasser, and most leftist organisations incorporate some reference to his achievements in their propaganda. Nasserism has been a deadweight which has helped to prevent the development of an independent socialist presence in the Egyptian working class.

Ecstasy and agony

Under these circumstances it has been the Islamic organisations that have made the running as the most determined opposition to Sadat. But the Brotherhood's branch of fundamentalism has been criticised as being too 'soft', and some young activists have been drawn into organisations like *Takfir wal Higrā*—held a responsible in early official statements for the killing of Sadat.

Takfir wal Higrā ('Repentance and Atonement') assassinated the Minister for Waqfs (religious endowments), a Sadat supporter, in 1977. A similar group, the Islamic Liberation Organisation, attacked the Egyptian military academy as long ago as 1974. Some Egyptian oppositionists have spoken of a new secret society of Islamic fundamentalists in the Egyptian army calling itself *Al-Talia* ('The Vanguard'). It is said to have drawn up a deathlist with Sadat's name at the head. As if in confirmation of such reports 400 soldiers have been purged since Sadat's death.

Since Sadat's killing there has been widespread fighting between the fundamentalists and the army in the southern town of Asyut and in the Cairo district of Gemaliyya. The fundamentalists clearly have some popular base, and with the kudos of having rid Egypt of Sadat under their belts, are likely to make more ground. Just how far they can extend their influence in the army remains the big unknown.

Outside Egypt, the Palestinians were most delighted with the news from Cairo. 'Today Sadat, tomorrow Numeiri', PLO leader Abu Iyad promised a rally in Beirut. Similar statements came from Colonel Gaddafi in Libya, and there were also celebrations in Damascus. For the Iraqis the killing was 'a historic lesson for those who betray their people'. Conservative Arab states said little or nothing, the Kuwaitis summing up the general reaction with a curt 'Kuwait condemns acts of violence'.



Halg and Mubarrak
the beginning of a lasting friendship?

Only Sudan provided the sort of obituary message that suggested real approval. For president Numeiri Sadat was 'leader of fraternal Egypt' 'guide in its march along the path of pride and freedom', 'great leader Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat.' Numeiri declared 40 days of mourning and cancelled all official receptions.

Numeiri's reaction is no surprise. Six months ago, after surviving a mysterious coup attempt he too began a series of extensive purges, in a statement which violently attacked Colonel Gaddafi in Libya and Russian intentions in the region in general, he announced that Sudan would be placing its military facilities at Washington's disposal.

Reagan was delighted, sending a 'warm message of support' to Khartoum, and announcing that military aid to Sudan would treble to \$100 million. The United States believed that it would now be able to put the central piece of the new 'Red Sea Alliance' into place. This informal pact between Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and Saudi Arabia is Washington's strategic plan for the area, and is a badly-needed guarantee for oil supplies from the vulnerable Gulf. Egypt, Sudan and Somalia are all to provide advance bases for the Rapid Deployment Force, the strike force for use if Western interests in the Gulf are threatened.

With Sadat's death Washington has hurried to assure its remaining allies of continued support. With more than a hint of panic Reagan promised Numeiri the speeding up of his arms supplies and the despatch of 'mobile training groups' to assist him. The US military manoeuvres 'The Bright Star' will be extended to include joint exercises with Sudan, as well as marine landings in Oman and Somalia and B52 flights over Egypt.

Numeiri is frightened for his own security, but Reagan too is nervous. With Sadat gone, he fears a repetition of the 'domino' collapse which took place in South-East Asia. Sudan, the US fears, is the next 'domino'. If Numeiri goes, Somalia too is vulnerable. The whole US strategy for the Red Sea and Gulf area will have come crashing down.

In Egypt the Americans hope for a smooth transition with Mubarrak adopting Sadat's policies. It seems likely that he will follow the same domestic regime—the new purges have been carried out enthusiastically, on the basis that Sadat was not 'thorough' enough. But Washington will have to step in with more aid and, if it is capable of learning the glaring lessons of Sadat's fall, attempt to make certain that its former promises of investment and development are seen to be implemented.

At a time when Washington is cutting back hard on aid to Third World countries, it may not be easy to sell the idea of the huge package of cash, arms, and technical assistance that Mubarrak will demand. Not to respond to Cairo this time round would, however, seem unthinkable.

On the question of Israel the Americans are in difficulties. Sadat was obsessed by the belief that 'The United States holds 99% of the cards'. None of the cards he so badly needed was ever cast in his direction, and as the years passed after Camp David even the most reactionary of the Arab states publicly lined up against him for betrayal of the Palestinian and Arab cause.

This time round Washington must obtain some concessions from Israel. If they do not, they are as good as condemning Mubarrak to the same fate as Sadat.

Mubarrak, too, will be under pressure to move closer to the Arab states. It is almost certain that he will begin a slow process of realigning Egypt against Israel, encouraged, perhaps, by promises of Saudi and Gulf cash.

American dilemmas

Sadat died because his American backers believed that they could count upon stability in a country which was being progressively wracked by economic failure. As the world crisis deepened, countries like Iran and Egypt in the Middle East, like Poland in Europe, have witnessed the process of an increasing repression as the imperialist and domestic ruling classes have turned the screw.

The panic in Washington reflects the fact strategists are badly confused by events. There is still no suggestion that they can grasp any other alternative than that local rules can best be supported by endorsing their application of brute force. During a period of world recession such an approach can only bring more grief to the White House and the Pentagon.

Meanwhile Sadat will go down in the Western history books as the 'man of peace'. In his own country and throughout the Arab world he is seen as a fool, a man whose vanity, political shortsightedness and corruption wrote his own death warrant. For socialists the only regret is that he fell to the gun rather than to the mass movement which removed his friend the Shah.

Phil Marfleet

Import controls in one industry

There is a magic answer to redundancies and factory closures, if we are to believe the Labour left and most trade union leaders. It is import controls. Nowhere is this message hammered home more consistently than in the textile industry. But, Sue Cockerill shows, it is not true.

The blame has been particularly attached to exporters in Asia—Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Indonesia.

In fact, import controls already exist on textiles coming from what are laughably called the 'developing' countries. The formal agreement is called the Multifibre Arrangement, or MFA. That agreement is coming up for renegotiation at the moment, with Britain and the rest of the Common Market countries clamouring for more restrictions, and the Third World textile producers calling for a return to freer trade.

Like everything else about capitalism, international trade is chaotic, unplanned, subject only to the laws of competition. In a world dominated by the major capitalist states there is nothing inherently 'fair' about free trade.

So if free trade is unplanned and unfair, why not have import controls? Aren't they at least likely to bring some order to the chaos?

The textile industry is an old industry in those countries where industrialisation occurred in the nineteenth century—Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, America—and was already in decline by the 20s and 30s.

This situation made textiles an early case for import controls—the first international restrictions were imposed in 1963, on cotton.

The first Multifibre Agreement, signed in 1973, extended restrictions to man-made fibres, and provided for a six per cent annual rate of growth in textile exports from the 'developing' countries. But the decline in Europe's textile industry continued, and in 1977, the new MFA provided that importers could depart from the agreed growth rate if their markets were being disrupted by imports. This clause has been invoked almost 800 times since 1977. Such restrictions are not supposed to discriminate between exporters. But, in practice, they are applied to those countries which can be bullied into accepting them.

So, in the case of Britain imports from industrialised countries, including



the rest of the EEC, rose by 37 per cent between 1976 and 1980. Imports from the developing countries rose by only 10 per cent (in total, not per year), and from the poorest countries they actually fell by one per cent.

In other words, Britain succeeded, for the most part in bullying Third World producers into cutting their exports well below the formal six per cent agreed growth per year, but imports from other industrialised countries, particularly from the USA, which are not covered by the MFA, rose by more than that amount.

The real job killers

Most of the Third World countries covered by the MFA are in no position to retaliate against industrialised countries which impose restrictions on their exports. But the USA or Japan could easily slap controls on British goods if their textiles exports to Britain were seriously restricted. Hence the controls in one case and the lack of controls in the other.

Since job losses and mill closures soared during a period when imports from the Third World were being severely restricted, it is quite clear that they are not the main cause of job loss.

But are imports from the industrial countries the main problem either?

The answer is that they're not: between 1970 and 1975, it is estimated that imports cost 85,000 jobs in the British textile industry, while new technology cost 143,000. And the process of 'rationalisation' is speeding up.

To complete the picture, in America, where the biggest import 'threat' to the UK in the last few years has originated, the textile employers are telling their workers that their jobs are threatened by cheap labour in Taiwan!

Meanwhile they are busy investing in high technology machinery—micro-processor-controlled sewing machines,

computerised pattern setting systems, laser cutting machines and so on. The American industry has spent \$1 bn on automated equipment in the last decade, and it will spend twice that in the eighties. This spending programme could eliminate 300,000 jobs by the end of the decade, while America's share of world markets is maintained, or even rises.

Britain and Europe are treading the same path of technological rationalisation. How many of those job losses will be blamed on imports? The employers will certainly play that card for all its worth.

In West Germany, France the UK and Italy, textile workers occupy a similar position on the pay ladder: in all four countries, wool is among the lowest paid five industries; and cotton, knitting mills and clothing suffer the same fate in three of the countries.

A study carried out on behalf of the EEC Statistical Office into pay differentials suggests that competition with Third World producers only partially explains this.

In the case of Britain, we have already seen that the major import 'threat' recently has come from countries with higher wage economies than ours.

While wages remain very low and employment continues to fall, the profits of UK textile companies are recovering. According to the stockbrokers Phillips and Drew, 'recovery to near peak profits is possible in many cases over the next two years'.

Three of the biggest companies—Tootal, Courtaulds and Coats Patons—export at least half their output, and their exports have been increasing at exactly the time that they have been screaming loudest for import controls.

In general terms, controls push up the prices of goods. Evidence given to the House of Commons by the Retail Consortium in 1980 showed that prices of imported adults' clothing covered by the MFA restrictions rose by 37 per cent over 1978/9, and children's clothing by 51 per cent, compared with a general rise of 24 per cent for similar UK goods.

Import controls push up prices either because cheaper imports are no longer available, and people are forced to buy more expensive home-produced goods, or because the imports now have duty on them. Of course, many people can't afford to buy as much at the higher prices. Demand falls, and more factories are closed. Textile employers have been complaining about falling home demand as well as imports as a reason for sackings.

Most importantly, the demand for import controls has diverted workers in the industry from their real enemy, the employers, and towards workers in other countries. American and French and Japanese workers are all hearing the same story from their employers: one country's 'fair competition' is another's 'dumping'. If jobs are to be saved, it will be by struggles like Lee Jeans, not by the Multifibre Arrangement.

SPACE WARS

NO LONGER JUST SCIENCE FICTION

For more than 20 years military strategy among the superpowers has been dominated by the long range ballistic missile. From the late 1950s it became clear that these weapons could at intercontinental distances deliver nuclear warheads with enough accuracy to destroy cities; and they had the advantage over bombers that no known defences could seriously prevent them. Since then accuracy and throw-weight of the missiles have been greatly extended; underground, submarine and mobile launch platforms have enhanced their invulnerability; and multiple, independently targetable warheads have increased their scope and power.

Yet for all these rapid advances in ballistic missiles, there are a number of indications that missiles themselves are becoming of *secondary* significance. Soon, strategic superiority will not be decided—as it is decided today—by the number and sophistication of the missiles, but by one side's superior capacity to prevent the other from using them effectively. How will this be done?

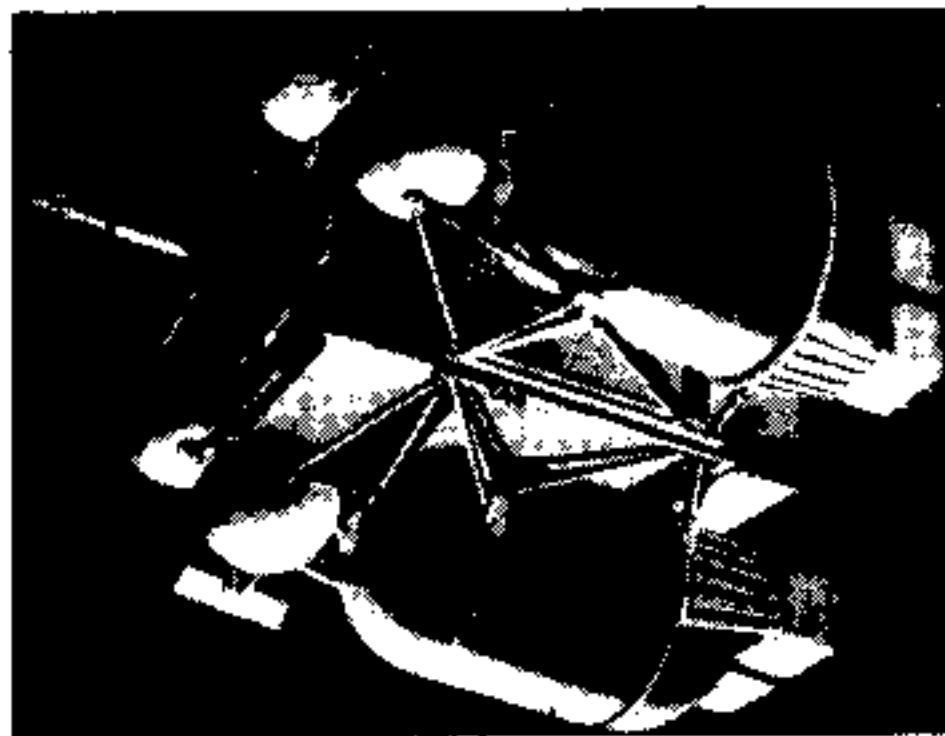
Beyond the missiles

Readers of *Socialist Review* will, no doubt, already be familiar with the fact that the new generation of strategic missiles (like the Trident and MX in America and the SS16-20s in Russia) are already designated primarily to fulfil this role. As 'counterforce' weapons with their multiple independently-targetable warheads, each one would be used to destroy *several* of the other side's own missiles in their underground silos. But the 'counterforce' missiles are themselves basically similar weapons to the ones they are aimed to destroy. The real changes are therefore occurring elsewhere.

First of all there is the war under the sea. Important to both Russia and America's strategic forces is the submarine launched ballistic missile, until recently thought of as the most invulnerable weapon there was.

But the Americans in particular have made huge advances. Both their missile carriers and submarine hunter/killers are now extremely quiet, and therefore difficult to detect. Their new generation of submarines are very fast, and are equipped with highly advanced sound detection equipment and the most modern homing torpedos. In addition there has been a huge US investment in automatic sensors which are being depo-

Cruise, Pershing, Trident, MX, SS20. The list of nuclear weaponry being built at the moment is horrific enough. But they are child's play compared to the generation of weapons that could follow them unless the anti-bomb movement enjoys success. Peter Binns looks at what Pentagon and the Kremlin are already planning for the second half of this decade.



sited in large numbers in the oceans. They are to be found everywhere, but special effort has been put into placing a detection barrier between Britain and Greenland so as to put a tab on each Russian submarine that enters the Atlantic. In theory, once detected the submarine can be trailed and destroyed at will.

A crucial part of the anti-submarine strategy involves satellite surveillance. Special satellites scan the ocean with infra-red telescopes to detect the trails of fractionally warmer water left by the atomic reactor motors of the submerged submarines.

Surveillance and control

Improvements in space surveillance have been quite spectacular in recent years and they have not at all been confined to anti-submarine warfare. The use of outer space is now crucial to all forms of modern warfare, and it is this more than anything else which has shifted the locus of the strategy from the battle over the missiles to the battle in space.

Space is needed first of all for detection and surveillance. Space-mounted optical telescopes can 'see' objects a mere one inch

wide on the ground, and they can build-up three dimensional solid maps by computing data from such things as shadow lengths. Electronic 'ferrets' perform the same task for all electro-magnetic emissions, and other satellites are employed on more specialised tasks involving 'active' surveillance (radar, millimeter band and, shortly, lasers). Every rocket that is fired and every tank that is moved can easily be monitored from space. Without this constant flow of data it is impossible to fight a modern strategic war effectively: Cruise missiles could not have terrain guidance accurately programmed into their computers, strategic headquarters would be reduced to haphazard guesses in formulating targeting policy, missile submarines would not be able to chart their position accurately enough to launch their missiles correctly, and so on. Even in the field, space communication is crucial for determining the deployment of the other side's forces and reserves.

Satellites that kill

Without going any further it is obvious that control of space would confer definite superiority to whichever super-power achieved it. Only they would be able to launch a first-strike attack because only they would know where the other's missiles were. If the other power threatened a strategy of terror against the cities it would not be credible. For if they *did* press the button it would be an act of suicide, yet if they did not they would be inviting a pre-emptive strike against themselves just in case they changed their mind.

What then would the control of space mean? First of all the ability to eliminate the other side's satellite hardware. Secondly the ability to protect one's own space hardware from similar attack.

Since 1967 Russia has developed a series of tests that involved manoeuvrable orbital killer satellites; the putative targets were destroyed by shrapnel from a conventional explosive charge. More recently the Americans have developed a direct-ascent ballistic missile produced by the Vought Corporation which is air-launched from an F-15 aeroplane; guided by sensors and computer it destroys satellites up to 1000 km high by direct impact. The USA is also seriously considering using newly miniaturised neutron

warheads for this purpose too (in spite of their 1967 agreement not to use nuclear weapons in outer space).

The ability to destroy satellites up to 1000 km high is very useful for either protagonist, for all the important ocean surveillance work is carried on at this level. But other extremely important satellites are put into what is called a stationary orbit (exactly matching the Earth's spin and therefore appearing to be stationary from the ground) at around 36,000 km, and for this quite other weapons are needed.

Death rays and the shuttle

Two principle new weapons have come to be discussed quite extensively in military and scientific literature recently—the high energy laser and the particle beam. Both at first sight look as though they belong more to the realms of science fiction—ray guns, death rays and so on—than to sober military reality. So what are they, how do they work and what are the chances of them being employed?

The laser is perhaps the more familiar of the two.

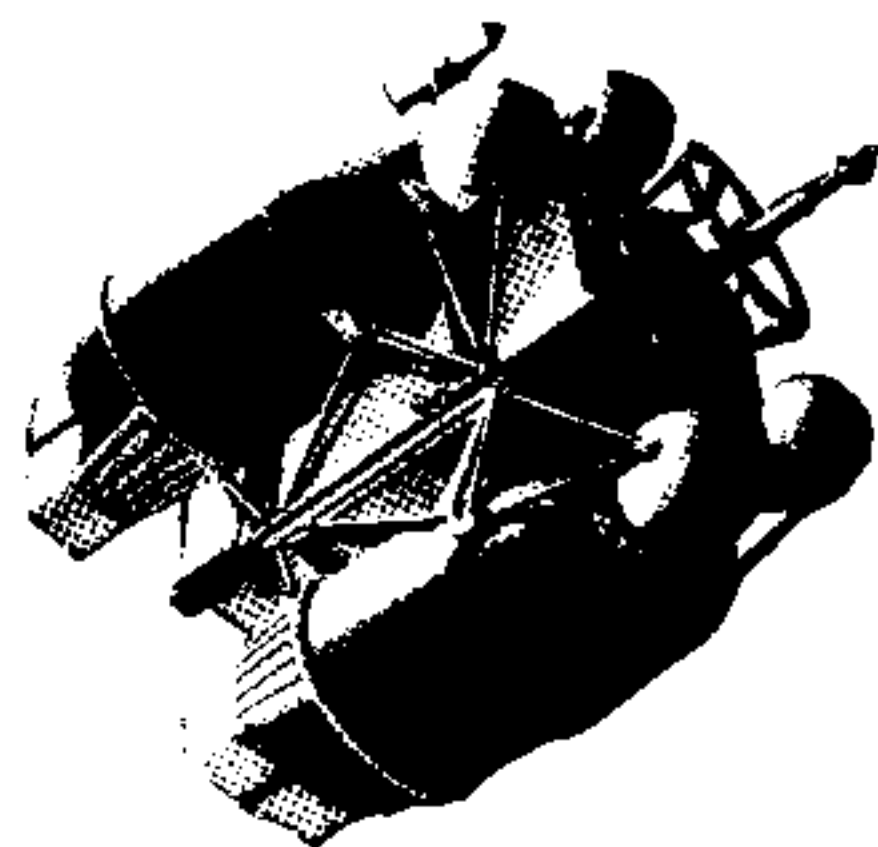
Ordinary light consists of a jumble of different waves and so the energy it contains

cannot be focussed into a single coherent beam. Lasers on the other hand rely on the stimulated emission of light from atoms in a crystal, a gas or a semiconductor; and this—because all the atoms are identical—produces a coherent beam of phased light that will not spread out.

A laser will therefore deposit its energy with the speed of light to any target. If the energy output is high enough the laser can be used to burn up the sensors (and even the main body) of a satellite.

Mounted in a space platform and free from the distortions of the Earth's atmosphere, it would obviously be a very formidable weapon. It could destroy any satellite, however high its orbit, with a few seconds exposure to the laser beam. Within a very few hours, such a weapon could destroy every space platform in orbit.

The laser weapon, could also, crucially, destroy ballistic missiles in flight. It is comparatively easy to detect such missiles in the early part of their trajectory when they are burning up huge quantities of fuel. A directed laser beam could destroy them at this early stage when they are just emerging into space from the atmosphere. And in that case the ballistic missile would no longer be the



primary determinant of strategic superiority. The control of space and its use for orbital high-energy laser platforms would then have taken its place. Above a certain number, the size and accuracy of each side's missiles would no longer determine its relative military strength.

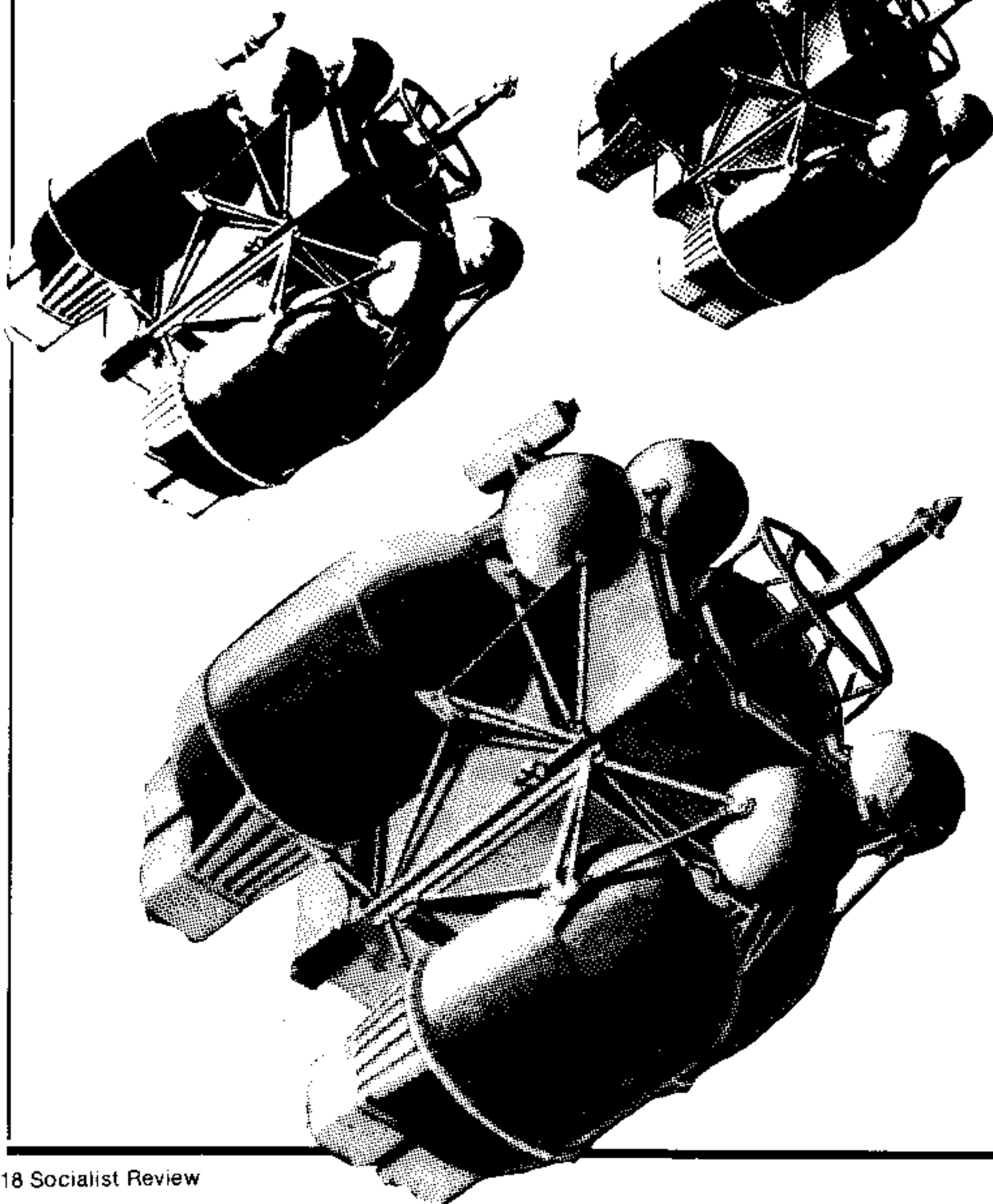
Both Russia and America have devoted very large sums of money to laser research and development and we know that America certainly (and Russia probably) already has an operational weapon. The US high energy laser has already completed a successful series of tests against aircraft and precision guided missiles within the atmosphere, and a couple of months ago succeeded in using an aeroplane-mounted laser to shoot down another airborne target.

The problem with high energy lasers is that they need a great deal of heavy and expensive equipment to get them to work. And if they are to be effective in aiming for the right targets they also need the very best electronic sensing equipment too. To put a properly functional laser-armed battle satellite in orbit would therefore be very costly.

Here the US has a huge advantage in the Shuttle which enables them to lift the kind of space hardware into orbit that the Russians cannot for several years to come. Although the Russians have been working on the technology of laser weapons for a longer time than the Americans—and may even be ahead in the weapons themselves—their inability to mount them in space may be fatal. For, it is quite likely that by the mid 1980s the US will already have such a weapon in orbit.

Beam weapons

The particle beam weapon is similar in type to the high-energy laser, but the potentialities and problems connected with it are that much greater. Instead of light it uses a collapsed beam of elementary particles—protons, electrons or neutrons. The enormous energy imparted to these particles accelerates them to a sizable fraction of the speed of light, which again would enable them to be used against missiles and satellites. Huge technical problems are involved, among them: (1) the generation of huge amounts of power (something like 1,000 billion joules of energy are used in a typical beam weapons pulse), (2) the need for more powerful particle accelerators, far more than each side has hitherto admitted to possessing, and (3) the development of totally new techniques of elementary particle enrichment by means of particle injectors.



The scale of the problems might initially lead to extreme scepticism over the immediate possibility of producing such a weapon. That, at least, was the received view of most experts in the learned physical journals until recently. However a recent book (D Baker, *The Shape of Wars to Come*, Patrick Stevens, Cambridge, 1981) argues that all these problems have now been solved; that the Russians have already built such a weapon and that the Americans are not far behind. The technical arguments advanced to establish this cannot be gone into here, and caution is needed before making any definite pronouncements on the matter, but a number of important non-technical facts should be mentioned.

Five years to go

In the last three years a number of quite new particle beam weapon programmes have been authorised by the US government, and several are already quite far advanced.

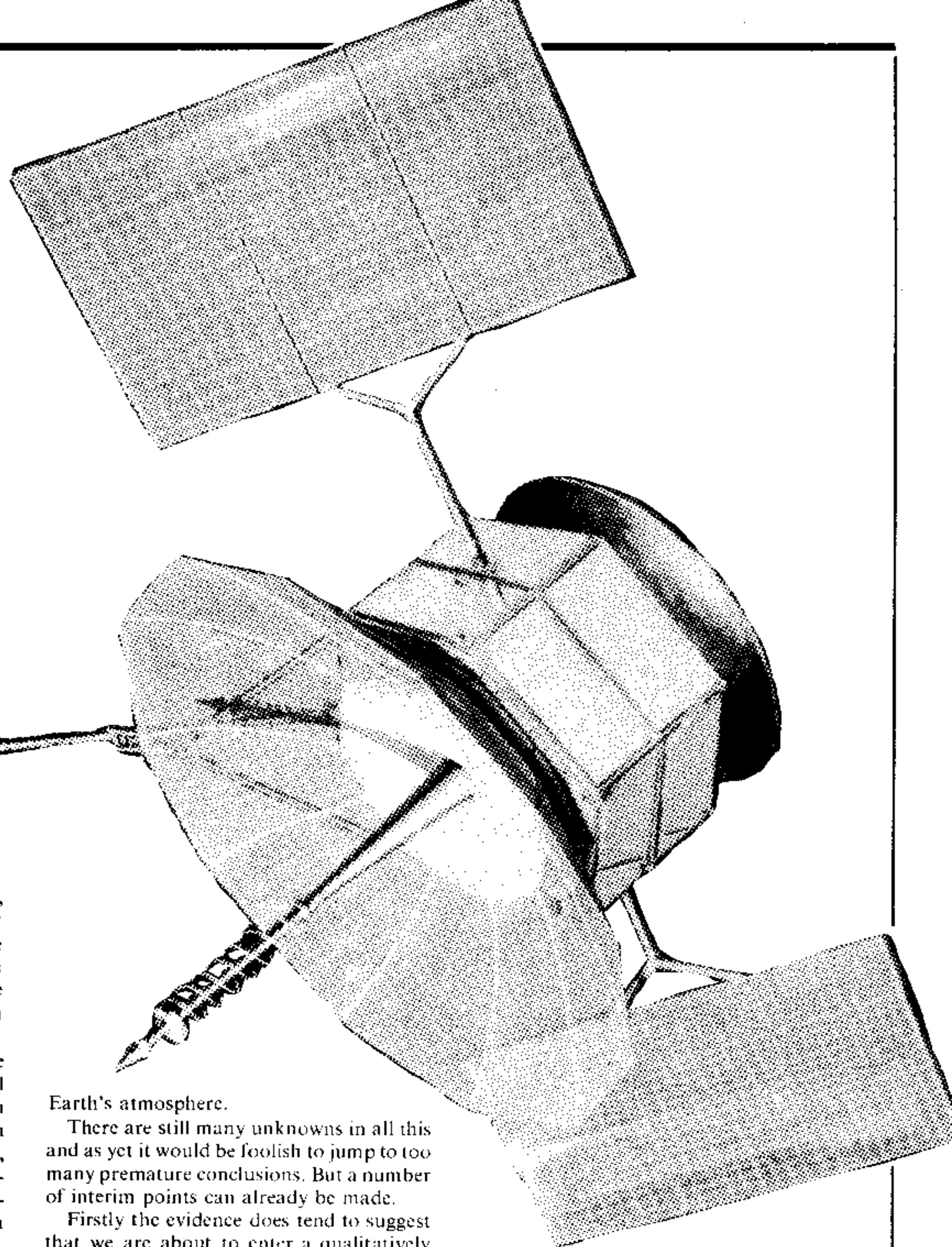
There is, for instance, the Chair Heritage programme, which is being built for aircraft carriers. It involves equipping the ships with such devices, by the

middle of the 1980s, designed to destroy Russian anti-ship Cruise missiles with rapid pulses of particle beams. As far as we can tell the US has already begun propagation tests on this weapon.

The advanced state of this programme certainly suggests that the fundamental physical problems must by now have been largely solved. The same impression is given by the US Army's White Horse programme, which is specifically designed for anti-ballistic missile defence. It involves the utilisation of a pulsed proton beam for a ground-based anti-ballistic missile defence, and, eventually, a continuous flow neutron beam for a Shuttle-based orbital anti-missile station.

The basic technology involved also seems largely to have been developed by the Russians, though, as we mentioned above, they will be less able to mount any such weapons in space. Their own programme seems mainly devoted to ground based systems of enormous power designed to screen Russia from ballistic missiles—though here, according to Baker at least, they are well advanced, having successfully tested charged-beam devices against simulated military targets as early as 1979.

Particle beam weapons are much more effective than high energy lasers. Anti-laser screening devices might well be developed in the near future, but it is most unlikely that the same would happen for the particle beam. The energy that it could deliver in a concentrated packet is much higher, it can penetrate military structures as opposed to lasers which merely burn their surfaces, and it can be used more effectively within the



Earth's atmosphere.

There are still many unknowns in all this and as yet it would be foolish to jump to too many premature conclusions. But a number of interim points can already be made.

Firstly the evidence does tend to suggest that we are about to enter a qualitatively new era in the balance of super-power strategic forces, one dominated by the control of space. Secondly, the control of space will, to an increasing degree, reflect the ability of either side to be able to introduce the new technology of death-ray machines into their own forces in space. Thirdly the stakes are so high that whichever side has emerged (or *thinks* it has emerged) superior will be strongly motivated to *start* a war in space.

Pre-emptive war

If such a war were to leave it relatively invulnerable to ballistic missile attack, it would certainly look a more attractive way of intimidating the other super-power than some of the farcical 'limited nuclear war' scenarios that Reagan and company take so seriously at the present time. Such a war could, after all, be fought without having to tell anyone about it until it was all over.

What can we expect for the interim period before such a conclusive war could be fought? Again the differences in approach

between Russia and America are important here. If it is true that the huge particle-beam facility in Semipalatinsk in Siberia has been (or shortly will be) completed, then it will be seen as a threat to both America's own space operations and its ballistic missiles. It will make the US Cruise missile programme that much more important as the least vulnerable of its weapons systems. It will also encourage a preemptive strike against the Russian weapon by the Americans before it can be used against the American's own military space programme.

However quickly or slowly we enter this new epoch in military strategy, one thing is certain; the passage from the age of the ballistic missile to that of the death-ray battle satellite will be paved with the greatest possible dangers and uncertainties. Coupled with the ever sharpening competition between Russia and America as a result of the world capitalists crisis, the necessity of building a massive movement of working people to stop our warmongering rules has therefore never been greater.

Extensions of the nuclear family

Time and again in CND meetings you come up against the argument that Britain could do away with nuclear weapons, but still retain membership of NATO. Canada and Norway are always singled out as the countries we should emulate. The implication is that because these countries do not have nuclear weapons on their soil they are somehow innocent members of NATO and would be out of the firing line in the event of nuclear war. But, *Jane Ure Smith* shows, this ignores certain basic facts.

NATO's structure as an alliance means that each member state must contribute something to it. And, it is a *nuclear* alliance, whose military thinking has always been based on the possibility of war involving nuclear weapons, irrespective of whether member states have their own missiles or not.

The question we need to ask, therefore, is what contribution do Canada and Norway make to the NATO alliance.

Norway's geographical position makes it vitally important. It is the only NATO country besides Turkey to share a border with the Soviet Union and provides an excellent vantage point for keeping an eye on the 'enemy's' activities.

Not surprisingly, the kind of surveillance carried out goes way beyond anything that could be legitimately described as being for the defence of Norway. There are 10 or so openly acknowledged installations

concerned with tactical intelligence gathering which fall into this category. But these installations are just the tip of the iceberg.

Over the past ten years evidence has emerged of a vast secret electronic spy network operated by Norwegians for the United States providing continuous information for the latter's long-range military planning. In 1972 free-lance journalist and anti-bomb campaigner Ivar Johansen began to investigate the existence of a chain of electronic super-spy stations in Norway directed against the USSR. The official position was that nothing of the kind existed.

Johansen's methods were somewhat unorthodox. Using every available public information source from union files to the telephone directory he managed to locate and identify seven of the installations, several of which were in the supposedly 'neutral and demilitarised' zone on the Russian border known as Finnmark. In Vadso, a small fjord town just above the arctic circle, Johansen found that no less than 1500 of the towns 5000 inhabitants worked at a huge listening station.

Strategic spying

Johansen was eventually arrested and charged with 'endangering the national security' of Norway. All his material and files were confiscated.

His findings were later corroborated by an interview in the liberal daily *Dagbladet* with former CIA operative Victor Marchetti. Marchetti not only confirmed the existence of the spy network, but also described its nature as strategic as opposed to tactical. He said that the National Security Agency (NSA) had built these listening and intercept stations and operated them with the co-operation of the Norwegian Secret Service. CIA and NSA personnel were regularly assigned to work there.

At least seven types of highly sophisticated spy work are carried out by these installations. The information provided is of little relevance to Norway's security. The use of radar is a case in point.

Radar is usually thought of as a purely defensive system. But the NADGE (Nato Air Defence Ground Environment) array is much more. NADGE ray domes stretch from eastern Turkey to northern Norway where their 500 kilometre reach rules out any defensive posture. NADGE in Norway watches, for example, the scrambling of Soviet fighters from their base at Murmansk during defence exercises. This is direct spying on a defensive activity and the information obtained is of use only if an intrusion of Soviet air space (by US F111s or B52s, for example) was being contemplated.

Norway is the only country on the European side of the Atlantic feeding continuous and current strategic data into the world's largest, all military computer in the United

States. Clearly it is anything but the innocent non-aggressive state it might formally appear. A policy of no nuclear weapons, no foreign troops and no foreign bases does not stop it carrying out a massive super-spy operation vital both to NATO and the long-term strategic military planning of the United States.

With macabre efficiency the Norwegian state contributes to the Pentagon's plans for the destruction of Europe in a 'limited' nuclear war.

Canada

Canada is equally well locked into the United States war machine. Not having nuclear weapons on Canadian soil is about as significant as not having them in, say Texas. Canadian air space is under the protection of what is called America's 'nuclear umbrella'.

Since 1957 an integrated US-Canadian air command known as the North American Aerospace Defence Agreement (NORAD) has been in effect. For the past 30 years Canada has given the US the right to construct a radar system across its northern regions. This system, known as the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line, is to help defend the US against a Russian attack from the north of Alaska.

Since 1941 Canada and the US have had a free trade pact regarding weapons. This has meant that the Canadians produce component parts for the American military. Today for example a Toronto-based company called Litton Industries produces the key navigational component for the Cruise missile.

The result of this defence integration is that Canada has no elementary sovereignty in military affairs. In 1962 at the time of the Cuban missile crisis US President Kennedy called Canada's prime minister Diefenbaker and asked that the Canadian military be put on Red Alert. Diefenbaker refused. Twenty minutes later he got a call from his own Defence department informing him that Canadian forces were now on Red Alert. The order had come through from Washington.

Recently Canada has been undergoing a process of rearmament in response to US pressure. It is currently in the process of purchasing 150 fighter planes (probably the F15) which are designed to carry nuclear weapons, although they won't ... yet. It has recently bought long range patrol aircraft from Lockheed to the tune of one billion dollars; it is buying 128 Leopard tanks from Germany and spending freely on armoured vehicles and ship replacements. None of this is specifically nuclear weaponry, but there is no way either the weapons Canada has or its decisions regarding defence can be separated from America's overall military strategy.

Thus neither Canada nor Norway would be safe from attack in the event of a nuclear war. Clearly both are involved up to their eyeballs in contributing to and sustaining NATO's nuclear strategy. Bombs or on bombs, it makes no difference. That is why in CND we have to argue not simply for unilateral disarmament, but for Britain out of NATO as well.

socialist
REVIEW

**FREE
OFFER**

FREE with each new subscription to Socialist Review on this form a copy of our **OVERKILL** — the new, expanded and updated edition of John Cox's classic handbook on nuclear disarmament.

Send me 12 issues of Socialist Review starting with the issue

Name

Address

Return to Socialist Review, PO Box 82, London E2
Make cheques payable to Socialist Review
Subscription rates for 12 issues: Britain and
Ireland £7.50, Overseas Surface £8.50, Europe
Air £10, Elsewhere Air £12 (institutions add £4)

POLAND

NO ROOM TO COMPROMISE

It is not often that a major industrialised country finds itself in a crisis so severe that the old rulers can see no way out. But it does happen on occasions. And then all the classic symptoms of a revolutionary situation begin to accumulate: the ruling class becomes divided against itself, the masses no longer feel that society can proceed in the old way, people begin to look, in desperation, for a solution to the crisis, however 'extreme'.

At such moments the question of revolutionary leadership suddenly becomes absolutely crucial. *Either* a section of the oppressed class is prepared to press forward with a programme for reconstituting society on a new basis through revolutionary action, *or* the disintegration of society continues, until the exploited as well as the ruling class is disorganised by it and the basis is laid for the most aggressive and barbarous section of the old ruling class to impose its will.

All the indices indicate that such is the condition of Poland at the moment. There has been a fall in the output of the economy by between 15 and 20 per cent in the last year. The shortages of basic foodstuffs have become so grave that even after queuing for five or six hours at a time, people are being turned away from the shops empty handed. Women who occupied their factories in Zyrardow were 'openly weeping, saying they had no food for their children'. And now it is no longer just food which is in short supply.

But the crisis is not just economic. The economic failings of the regime have exacerbated the elements of political and ideological crisis.

Already two years ago there was a widespread feeling that those who ran the government and the party were living from hand to mouth, with no real notion of where they were going. Factions were formed and reformed within the apparatus not on the basis of any principle, but on the basis of the crudest careerist calculations of who was likely to win any petty power struggle.

Under such circumstances those in the middle were completely cynical about those at the top, and those at the bottom came to despise all those who gave them orders. The political crisis became an ideological crisis

The crisis in Poland reached a new peak of intensity last month. Kania fell from power and was replaced by Jaruzelski. Both police and unknown groups organised attacks on Solidarity members, and the union responded with its second one hour general strike this year. Speculation in the press is one moment that a state of emergency and a ban on strikes will be announced, the next that a coalition government will be formed.

Where is the Polish regime going? And what is Solidarity going to do? **Chris Harman** looks at some of the issues involved.

throughout society as not only those who read stories in the press ceased to believe them but so did those who wrote them.

The replacement of Gierek by Kania after the Gdansk strike of August 1980 did nothing to alleviate this problem. Nor did the much heralded party congress of this summer. Its secret ballots were an exercise in what Lenin once called a 'slave owners democracy'—those who exercised power in and enjoyed privilege in the state, the economy, and the party argued over who was going to provide the political direction needed to defend their power. They were as divided after it as before. The replacement of Kania by Jaruzelski cannot be expected to end the political and ideological crisis either.

Reports indicate that the popular discontent was growing daily in the week after Jaruzelski's appointment. What are often written off as 'local strikes' involved thousands, tens of thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of workers: witness the 14,000 women workers who occupied the textile mills of Zyrardow or the 180,000 workers who joined a one hour general strike in Zelena Gora.

At one point there were strikes in something like two thirds of the country's provinces. 'Strikes and threats of strikes continue to dominate Poland, despite earlier promises by Solidarity that they would try to avoid a possible showdown with the new Jaruzelski administration' (*Guardian* 21 October)

The warring factions inside the regime continued to be unable to provide a unitary response to this discontent. The finance minister Krzak continued talks with Solidarity leaders over economic issues and rumours began to circulate that some elements in the regime wanted to draw figures from Solidarity and from the church into the government providing they accepted 'the leading role of the party'. Yet Jaruzelski called for a ban on strikes and announced that soldiers would be used to 'restore order' and maintain supplies. While the local authority in Zyrardow recognised that local strikers had a case, the Ministry of Labour nationally denounced these strikers for being 'politically motivated'.

Any strategy being pursued by Jaruzelski seems to have been consciously ignored by the hard-line pro-Russian Forum faction centred upon a section of the apparatus in Silesia. In two Silesian towns, Wroclaw and Katowice, police responded to Jaruzelski's appointment with the most provocative of actions. They operated in crowded streets to seize members of Solidarity who were distributing bulletins and speaking from radio vans.

The actions could almost have been designed to provoke riots, if not local uprisings. As it was, in Wroclaw it took all the efforts of the local Solidarity leadership to move a crowd which was besieging a cordon of police around the police station, while in Katowice thousands of workers overturned a police van and eventually forced the freeing of those detained—despite the use of tear gas by the police.

If these police actions were not enough to enrage the workers, members of the Forum then proceeded to occupy a Solidarity office in Katowice and issue from it denunciations both of the union and of ministers identified as wanting to reach a compromise with it.

A mustard gas bomb attack on miners

pickets on 27 October, on the eve of the national one-hour general strike, was clearly another instance of deliberate hardline provocation. The pro-Russian Forum elements have clearly been studying the tactics of fascist groups like *Partia y Libertad* in Chile and *Ordina Nero* in Italy.

The faction fighting in the regime is both a product of the economic and social crisis and a factor that aggravates that crisis. It means the regime finds it very difficult to mobilise any other section of society behind itself. It means its isolation grows worse by the day. It means that even its closest adherents just do not see a way out of the mess the country is in. The crisis has reached such a depth that those outside the regime's ranks to whom it has given privileges in return for their support are now reluctant to provide that support; the intellectuals are more attracted to Solidarity than to Jaruzelski; even within the police a movement exists for an independent union, linked to Solidarity.

Under such circumstances, Solidarity should find itself in an immensely strong position. Yet all the evidence suggests that confusion rather than strength is the general feeling in the union at the moment.

In the issue before last of this *Review* I characterised the standpoint shared by all the tendencies within Solidarity as 'syndicalist'—the belief that the union could build itself as a counter-veiling power on behalf of the working class while leaving the regime intact. But the very depth of the Polish crisis no longer made this a viable option. It put a gun at the head of the union: either show that you can solve the crisis by shoving the government out of the way or collaborate with it to solve the crisis. The alternative of pressure on the government could only help deepen the crisis and encourage a fragmenting of Solidarity's own strength.

Events since have confirmed this analysis.

The so-called moderates in Solidarity have gone further than ever in moving towards collaboration. Walesa commented on Jaruzelski's appointment:

'At least it means power is concentrated in one man's hands. What we need is a strong, reasonable government we can negotiate with.' (Quoted *Guardian* 20 October).

After the police actions in Silesia, Walesa argued against calls for a general strike, saying that his programme was 'to construct institutions and not to destroy them' (Quoted in *Il Manifesto*, 23 October).

His line of thinking does not seem to differ from that of the Catholic hierarchy, which while making token gestures towards the popular discontent could still make it clear, in the words of the head of the Polish church, Cardinal Glemp, that:

'The nomination of General Jaruzelski was received in Rome with great benevolence.' (*Il Manifesto* 22 October)

Walesa's own position inside the Solidarity leadership is not as powerful as it was. The recent Solidarity congress seems to have been very much a victory for the 'radicals' who are deeply suspicious of any collaboration with the regime. Walesa and those close to him were censured for coming to an agreement with the regime over the appointment of factory managers without consult-

ing with other elected Solidarity representatives; leading 'moderate' experts were voted off the new National Commission of the union while the most prominent radicals won seats easily; Walesa himself only retained the leadership against a substantial 45 per cent vote for three rival radical candidates; and the draft programme of the union was modified in a radical direction.

Rakowski, the minister in charge of negotiations with the union and a darling of the Western liberal press, charged that the first part of the conference was 'hegemonised' by the 'radical faction of Solidarity guided by Kuron and other exponents of KOR' (Quoted *Il Manifesto* 29 September). A socialist reporter notes of the second part of the conference:

'The radical current in the union has decisively oriented the second phase of the congress, conceding to the moderate wing which practically ran the union over the last year the presidency of Walesa only. Solidarity has a national commission with a majority independent of the church and supporting the dissolved KOR, and a radical programme.' (*Il Manifesto* 20 October 81)

Yet the radicals themselves are by no means clear as to what they want. Their programme is radical in words, but evades the key question of power that faces everyone in Poland today. It calls for 'self-management, control of the economy and political liberty' but does *not* specify when

Walesa wants collaboration



POLAND NO ROOM TO COMPROMISE

these should come into effect. The radicals want to avoid collaboration with the regime and to fight for *control*, yet at the same time seem to shy away from any notion of the workers they represent overthrowing the regime. So they call for workers' representatives to control parts of society through special mechanisms while leaving the existing order in control of the rest.

At the local level this means workers struggling to gain control over the nomination of new enterprise managers. At the national level it means aiming at 'the institution of a second chamber in parliament, the chamber of self-management, elected democratically and deliberating on all economic questions' (*Il Manifesto* 26 September). This would 'control the political economy of the government and legal actions in this area'.

This formulation is especially interesting. For it is not the first time it has emerged in the history of the workers movement. In the period immediately after the end of World War One, revolution seemed imminent and the whole of the European labour movement was divided over whether to back a reformed version of bourgeois rule based on 'parliamentary democracy' or to press for a workers' council state. The leaders of the half a million strong left socialist USP party in Germany tried to bridge the divide by proposing the formula: parliament *plus* workers councils.

To millions of workers who were just becoming radicalised, this at first seemed much more 'realistic' than the 'extreme' call of the few thousand people in the Spartakus League for a workers' council state. It seemed to offer the best of both worlds. It took two years of bitter defeats and passionate arguments before the majority of the left socialists came to see that workers' councils were incompatible with the existing state.

The argument was not then and the argument is not now merely one about the phrases used to describe a distant final goal. At stake is the whole strategy of the workers movement. Is it at every point to support any spontaneous struggle of workers that increases their confidence in their own ability to take control of industry and to replace the existing bureaucratic state? Or should such struggles be restricted in the interests of negotiating a space for the parallel institutions of self-management with the existing regime?

The majority inside the Solidarity leadership still tend to opt for the latter view. So Kuron, who has been accused of directing the 'radicals' at one stage was urging the formation of a government of national unity, in which the present regime would hold the key foreign and public order ministries, while Solidarity and the church would hold other posts.

Fortunately, this does not seem to have appealed to other 'radicals'. Kuron retracted his suggestion. And when there were rumours that the regime was considering a coalition the Solidarity presidium declared it could not have any confidence 'in any offer from a government which does not respect the law and refuses Solidarity access to the media.'

But this formulation itself points to a very dangerous tendency among the 'radicals'—to offer to restrain the economic struggle in

return for political concessions. And so when the Szczecin delegation at the Solidarity conference protested at Walesa's readiness to meekly accept the government's doubling of cigarette prices, they urged, as well as protest actions, an 'attempt to get government concessions like access to the media in return for concessions on price increases'. (*Financial Times*, 6 October)

Yet for many workers, particularly those who have not been politically active in the past, it is precisely Solidarity's ability to champion grievances that arise in their everyday lives—'economic' grievances—that leads them to identify with its political demands. Every time Solidarity hesitates over full support for their economic struggles, it undercuts its own political hegemony.

As Rosa Luxemburg, the greatest of Polish revolutionaries pointed out more than 60 years ago, at a time of a great upsurge of working class struggle, economic struggles lead directly into political struggles and political struggles into economic ones. Those who try to separate the two in the interests of some clever 'strategy' weaken the whole movement.

Yet this is still what Solidarity is attempting to do, despite the radical majority in the national commission. The one-hour general strike was a much better way to respond to the police attacks in Silesia than the inaction that Walesa wanted. But it still does not match the challenge facing the union.

The radicals want an alternative to the collaboration suggested by Walesa—but it seems that they still cannot grasp in a coherent way what this alternative should be. And so they end up accepting a slightly more radical version of Walesaism.

This is especially dangerous at the present time. As the economy becomes more and more chaotic, the regime is hoping to turn people against Solidarity—or at least the more radical elements in Solidarity—by claiming that their strikes, not its crisis, are behind growing privation. Just as the right in Chile in 1973 deliberately intensified the economic crisis so as to turn people against the workers' parties, so at least a section of the regime is doing the same in Poland today. Hence its Thatcher-like statements to the effect that strikes are creating shortages.

For the present, such actions are intensifying rather than diverting working class anger. But all past experience shows that eventually endless queuing and continual shortages of essential foodstuffs will take their toll in terms of workers morale—unless a powerful tendency emerges in Solidarity which consciously directs anger and frustration towards a revolutionary alternative to the regime. Without this, a point can be reached where not only Walesa, but many peasants, intellectuals and workers begin to see a 'strong man' from the regime as the only way to deal with the queues, the hardship, the police attacks, the pro-Russian terrorists, spawned by the regime itself.

The alternative to the danger of such a deterioration is for the radicals to start pressing for the structure of direct workers' delegates that makes up Solidarity to take over the running of the whole of society. A programme which could begin leading the

POLAND NO ROOM TO COMPROMISE



Jaruzelski wants to ban strikes

mass of the Polish population out of the crisis would not then be difficult to elaborate. The key points it would have to include would be:

- (1) An end to privileges enjoyed by the mass of bureaucrats—their chauffeur driven cars, their secret supplies of food, their luxury apartments and villas, their very high salaries, their private kindergartens, their privileged access to health facilities etc.
- (2) An end to wasting six per cent or more of the output of the economy on Warsaw Pact forces designed to put down Solidarity-type movements in Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe, and to help threaten nuclear annihilation of other countries.
- (3) An end to sacrifices designed to help pay off loans to Western bankers contracted by the ruling bureaucracy in the past. Instead appeal to all those workers organisations in the West that have pledged support for Solidarity to help Polish workers throw off the burden of their masters' debt.

Such a programme could begin to deal with bridging the shortfall in Polish output over the last year and alleviating the distress of the population.

But it could not be implemented without a complete transformation of society. At the local level it would require the most thorough-going struggle for what the Solidarity radicals call 'self-management'—in each plant and office, the workers would have to seize power and impose tight controls on the operations of all levels of management. But it would also require something that the radicals have hardly spoken of yet—a struggle at the national level, to overturn the hierarchies of control in the police, the army and the ministries, replacing them with direct representatives of the workers organisations.

No-one seems to have argued for such a revolutionary programme at the Solidarity conference. Yet rarely has a workers' movement historically been in a stronger position

for making a bid to solve society's problems by taking power into its own hands. All the other oppressed groups in Polish society—the peasants, the students, a sizeable chunk of the intelligentsia—have shown over the last year that they will follow when Solidarity and the workers lead. Even within the army and the police, only a few hardliners would put up determined resistance to any serious attempt by the mass workers' movement to bring the present chaos to an end by taking power.

Two sorts of arguments are used against any such programme of action. The first is not new: it is that workers are congenitally incapable of running an advanced industrial society. It is an argument that should fall completely flat in present day Poland. For it is absolutely clear that those running Poland at present are congenitally incapable of doing so. And it is also clear that all the creative forces of society—not merely the manual and white collar workers, but the technical experts, the middle class professionals, the intellectuals—can be drawn behind the workers.

The second argument is that any truly radical development would invite an immediate Russian takeover.

This argument is not new either. It was used by Dubcek and then Husak to justify the reimposition of bureaucratic control—so called 'normalisation'—in 1968-9 in Czechoslovakia. Similar arguments have been used in the West—during the revolutionary upheavals of post-World War One Germany and Austria (when it was said any revolution would lead to the allied powers cutting off food supplies and starving people) and in France and Italy at the end of World War Two (when the CPs argued that any revolution would be crushed by American troops). No doubt it will also be used should any genuinely revolutionary situation develop in Western Europe in the next couple of decades.

The argument rests on a confusion. It assumes that the Russians have not moved into Poland so far because the workers have restrained themselves. Yet whatever restraint has been shown, events in Poland over the last year have been a hundred times more radical than they were in Czechoslovakia in the first eight months of 1968.

In Czechoslovakia the Dubcek regime may have been too weak to impose its will on the intelligentsia, but the most extreme thing to happen (driving the Russians crazy) was the drawing up of an intellectuals manifesto, *2,000 Words*, which suggested that workers might, possibly, consider taking token strike action. By contrast in Poland we have had 14 months of almost continual strike activity, the publication of open, anti-regime and anti-Russian news sheets, the open appeals for workers elsewhere in Eastern Europe to follow the Polish example, completely open debate among millions of people as to what is to be done. Yet the Russian tanks have not yet crossed the frontier.

What has held them back has not been Solidarity's self restraint. It has been a recognition that the very radicalness and depth of the Polish movement makes an invasion attempt very dangerous for the Russian leaders. It could bog them down in

a struggle against the people of a country three times the size of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, just at the time when there is manifest discontent among workers elsewhere in Eastern Europe and inside the USSR itself (witness the strikes in Russia's huge auto plants last year, the strikes and riots in Estonia, the chaos that followed attempts to mobilise forces in nearby parts of the Ukraine for possible use against Poland).

The one thing that will encourage the Russians to move on to the offensive against the movement in Poland—whether directly by sending huge numbers of troops across the frontier or indirectly by using 'reliable' sections of the Polish army and police to restore 'order' while the Russian forces stationed inside Polish garrison towns are gradually strengthened—is a faltering in the forward momentum of Solidarity.

The moment Solidarity's forces show any signs of dissipating, then the pressure will be applied hard and good. In so far as Solidarity's leaders try to slow down the forward momentum of the workers movement, they produce such dissipation—and thereby increase the chances of Russian action.

Of course, the Russians would do everything they could to overthrow a genuine workers regime in Poland—just as at the moment they are doing everything in their power to weaken Solidarity. But the Russians are not all-powerful. They are restricted by the knowledge that the Poles might fight back and the fear of rebellion elsewhere in their empire. A workers movement that had taken power in Poland would be able to increase Russia's hesitancy on both counts—by preparing coherent military plans for the self-defence of the revolution and by using the maximum propaganda resources to aid those dissidents and workers elsewhere in the Russian bloc seeking to emulate Solidarity.

We have seen in Poland over the last year a text book example of how a 'purely spontaneous' movement of workers begins to give rise to various tendencies within it—to what in the great revolutions of the past

have been called 'parties'.

The 'parties' of the Polish movement are still far from fully formed. But it is possible to delimit three rough groupings within Solidarity—and reports indicate that relations between them are often quite acrimonious.

On the right stand the 'moderates' around Walesa, who are usually seen as close to the church. In the middle stand the ex-KOR group of 'secular' reform activists. And, partly overlapping with them, to the left are the various radical leaders with their strong regional bases—Giazda in Gdansk, Rulewski in Bydgoszcz, Jurzyk in Szczecin.

Yet it is doubtful if any of these groupings is based upon a clear and coherent view of the world. KOR has just dissolved itself, and at the Solidarity conference two of its fore-

POLAND NO ROOM TO COMPROMISE

most members, Kuron and Michnik were on opposite sides in the argument over the conduct of the 'self-management' negotiations. And three different 'radical' candidates stood against Walesa in the presidential election.

The most significant thing at the moment, however, is the absence of a clear revolutionary current.

In every great revolutionary upheaval, a gap opens up between what the workers are actually doing—beginning to take control of society—and their consciousness of what they are doing. They have been brought up under the old society to believe that they themselves are incapable of exercising power, that only 'educated people', 'those born to rule' can do so.

These ideas do not disappear overnight. They are challenged by new perceptions, but not automatically overthrown. So the workers who had overthrown the Czar in Russia

in February 1917 let the government fall into the hands of the war profiteer Prince Lvov, and the workers and soldiers councils which ran Germany in November and December 1918 handed power back to politicians and generals of the old order.

It takes months of bloody struggle and bitter disillusionment before workers en masse begin to see that they themselves alone can rule effectively. Whether they learn this lesson before they are crushed depends, in part, on how effectively the first groups of workers to grasp it offer leadership to the rest of the class ie the extent to which they organise themselves as a *revolutionary vanguard*, a party.

Yet the crystallisation out of a revolutionary party can be held back by the very thing that makes it necessary—the ideological dominance of the old order over the new. Unless there exists in advance of the workers' upsurge at least the embryo of a party, a nucleus of people arguing the possibility of workers power, then development of a real party can be very much delayed.

Worker militants have to try to think their way through all the old prejudices to an understanding of the role their class can play. And they have to do so in the heat of the most bitter struggles, when they have little time to study the lessons of past workers' movements or carry through scientific analyses of what the outcome of their present actions will be. For months, even years, bastardised conceptions can prevail which combine the best of the new with some of the worst of the old.

In the case of Poland, this means that Solidarity activists can combine an instinctive rejection of compromise with a nationalist belief that all Poles have a common interest—precisely the prejudice the regime is trying to exploit to turn people against Solidarity. It means they can play with the notion of a 'self-management chamber' alongside the existing parliament. It means that Walesa can get away with his references to Jaruzelski as an 'honest' soldier.

The great danger in Poland is that the best activists will not succeed in cutting through this web of false ideas until it is too late. The question of power—of which class is to rule—cannot be postponed indefinitely. It will be raised in the sharpest possible way if an all-out general strike develops in defence of what the workers have won over the last 15 months. Workers would not be able simply to sit passively at home or in the factories. They would soon be suffering as much as the regime from shortages of food and fuel and the collapse of essential services. They would either have to move forward to kicking the regime aside and producing these things for themselves, under their control, coordinated by their power. Or they would very rapidly be under immense pressure to accept the terms of the regime.

The Polish working class has fought heroically over the last 15 months. It has destroyed for once and for all the myth that the Eastern states are 1984-type societies against which no successful revolt is possible. But the movement cannot go much further forward unless the radicals in Solidarity come to terms with the problem of power.

CRITIQUE CONFERENCE **"The Political Economy of the 'New Cold War'"**

Speakers: Mary Kaldor, Dan Smith, Martin Shaw, Fred Halliday, Hillel Ticktin, Tariq Ali, Moshe Machover, Phil O'Brien, Andrew Gamble, Mick Cox, David Goodman, Lionel Cliffe, Peter Lawrence, Frank Furedi, Mike Haynes, Sandy Smith.

Programme:

Plenary Sessions on 'The New Militarism', 'U.S.S.R. and the Capitalist System' and 'Detente or the New Cold War'. Workshops on Afghanistan, China, Middle East, Latin America, Southern Africa, Reaganism, Socialism and Militarism, Eastern Europe, Britain in Decline and Europe v America.

Time & Place:

Friday, January 15th (7.00pm) and Saturday January 16th (10.00am all day). University of London Union (U.L.U.), Malet Street, London WC1. Refreshments available.

Price:

£3.00 the weekend, £1.50 per session, £1.00 per workshop. Advanced Booking (highly advisable) to: 'Critique', 31 Clevedon Road, Glasgow, G12 0PH, Scotland. Phone: 041-339-5267.



The police strike breakers at Staffa

London's first jobs struggle

'Like a load of bleeding penguins they came pouring over the factory walls, three hundred coppers to evict 17 strikers, like a David Attenborough film gone mad.' (Dave Green, AUEW Convenor Staffa Products)

The occupation of Staffa Products is over, the strike to defend the jobs and keep them in East London has just begun. After only three weeks the Staffa management and the Engineering Employers Federation have regained control of the factory. They were aided in this by the High Court and the Metropolitan Police, the national media, the Department of Industry and the inability of the trade union movement to move fast enough to assist them.

The Staffa occupation was in some ways unique. The workers had gained prior knowledge of management's intention to close the Leyton site by pre-emptive action and occupied. During the occupation they discovered that all 'negotiations' on proposed closure in the previous few months had been conducted on the management side according to a script provided by the Hays Corporation, a firm of 'industrial consultants'. It became obvious that the management had no intention of remaining in East London when they had what they hoped would be a docile labour force lined up in work-starved Devon.

There is no question of Staffa going bust. If they stay in London on their own estimate they would be earning profits of between £5 and £7 million per year as opposed to £9 million in Plymouth. What is important to them is summed up in their statement, 'the advantages of moving to Plymouth':

(a) 'lower labour rate and other operation costs'

(b) 'A more willing workforce (minimum union influence)'

In other words cheaper labour and poorer organisation. They anticipate a 20% reduction in job rates and a 100 fewer jobs.

For the workers in Leyton the situation is much simpler. If Staffa closes it means a third of all engineering jobs in the Borough of Waltham Forest are lost. For many of them

as semi-skilled machine operators, it also means the end of any chance in London of earning similar money or even obtaining jobs in engineering.

Each year since the end of the fifties engineering jobs in London have disappeared, as more and more firms have been 're-located' in new towns. So the power of the engineering unions in the city has diminished, and this in turn has led to acceptance of closure and redundancy by many sections of the industry.

The once powerful ship repair industry no longer exists, the machine tool firms of Camden Town have gone and Park Royal estate,

the heartland of engineering in London, is now reduced to a ghost land of warehouses and small workshops.

The decision of the Staffa workers to fight to retain the jobs in London becomes that much more symbolic and important. The response they've had from other workers is heartening; no other strike in London has received as much financial support in such a short time.

But important and vital though the financial support may be, it is blacking which will win this dispute and win it soon. For this management must continue production at Leyton, for at least another year, before their Plymouth factory is even ready for production, let alone with a trained and capable workforce. The key areas for blacking are the coal mines, where the Staffa pumps drive the coal cutters, the heavy duty cranes such as those manufactured by Coles, the docks to hit exports and, last but by no means least, the new Thames anti-flood barrier where Staffa pumps are used to raise and lower the barrier.

All of these areas are heavily unionised and Staffa workers have spent the last few weeks touring and appealing for support. A complete blacking of the company's products in the coal mines alone would mean a victory for the Leyton workers. Such a victory is possible, but it can only be achieved if the rank and file can be convinced that a victory for the Staffa workers is a victory for all.

One final ironic point. The government through the Department of Industry are funding the move to the tune of £4 million. At the same time Heseltine is pleading the case for inner city development to head off further riots, his government is encouraging work away from these very inner city areas.

Jim Scott



Arthur Scargill King at last?

It seems highly likely that the next president of the National Union of Mineworkers will be Arthur Scargill, 'the Marxist president of the Yorkshire miners' (*Daily Telegraph*). Given the period that we are in with low industrial struggle, a shift to the right, etc, and given the present control of the NUM leadership by the right wing, it means an unusual jerk in terms of the trade union leadership.

There is no question that Scargill is a very strong left wing candidate. So much so, that the 'moderate' areas of Durham, Northumberland and particularly Nottinghamshire have come out in support of him. Scargill enjoys the support of nine of the 19 areas, the others being Yorkshire, Kent, Scotland, South Wales, North Derbyshire, and the Scottish Craftsmen. These nine represent more than three quarters of the country's miners.

Nottinghamshire, fondly known by mil-

itants in Yorkshire as the 'yellow bellies' when it comes to ballots and action, decided by 15 branches to nine to back Scargill against their own area president, Ray Chadbourn.

Of the other two candidates, Donaghy, the Lancashire president is absolutely unknown outside his own areas, and the general secretary of the white collar section COSA, Trevor Bell doesn't have the stature necessary to beat Scargill. Allied to that, Bell is a white collar worker. In the pits, even among moderates, this does not give the candidate credible credentials.

So it looks like a Scargill landslide.

But the right wing have at least attempted to put the brakes on Arthur's campaign. Firstly with the decision to push back negotiations on the wage claim to November 11th, the right has neatly brought the wages claim in line with the presidency.

Although Joe Gormley wanted to get an early settlement, pressure from both his executive one way (for 25%) and the NCB the other (6.8%) meant a delay.

It is part of Coal Board and right wing tactics to leave negotiations as near as possible to Christmas so as to avoid a strike. It has worked well since conference resolutions as early as 1976 for £135 a week started being torn up.

Left in the dark

At the same time the delay is an attempt to shape the presidential election at the time of writing, with six weeks still to go before the election, the press has not sunk its claws too deeply into Scargill. No doubt it will have started as you read this. What better reason for Fleet Street to attack Scargill than for 'ridiculous' wage demands that 'will bring the country to its ...' etc

Unfortunately, the left in the NUM has been very slow and very quiet. There *should* have been a campaign started well advance of election for the wage demand of 25%. What better preparation for the left election campaign than a tough wage campaign, possibly successful? But no, we are left to ITN interviews with Arthur Scargill as he comes out of negotiations with the Coal Board. The rank and file are left in the dark.

A possible second right wing ploy is the use of the multiple opponents. In the 1950s, when Alex Moffatt stood as the left candidate, there were several other candidates, all right wing. On the first ballot, Moffatt led by 60,000 votes. (This was when there were over half a million miners, there are 225,000 now). Yet, as each candidate dropped out the votes transferred every time to the right wing, and Moffatt was defeated by Sidney Ford, of COSA—repeat, of COSA.

Without a Joe Gormley type character as candidate, it looks like Scargill will pull through, possibly on the first ballot. But, we have to be very critical of the way that the left assumes Scargill victory, and then relaxes while Arthur delivers international socialism.

By way of electioneering, the release of the pamphlet of the thoughts of Arthur Scargill, *Miners in the Eighties*, was a classic coup.

The Yorkshire miners 'decided' to print

100,000 copies, which outlined 'a programme essential for the long term interests of the industry, the union and, above all, rank and file miners'. Without admitting to it, it is an election address, and a pretty formidable one too.

It received a very good reaction at every Yorkshire pit—it was a talking point for weeks, and rank and file miners were quick to defend and identify with many of the ideas and demands that it contained.

Not to be a wet lettuce about it, a number of the demands are those that the rank and file miners paper *The Collier*, has organised around and pushed for over the years. It is welcome that they are recognised.

There is no real need to go into detail about them here. Suffice to say they include the four day week, retirement at 55 on full pay, a democratic union, etc. However, it will be left to Arthur Scargill to carry out these changes to the union and demands on the NCB. Which is plainly stupid. Scargill has said on numerous occasions himself that if people think they can sit back while he leads them to Jerusalem they're 'in cloud cuckoo land'.

Yet it is indicative of the way that the left has organised, particularly in Scargill's Yorkshire pits, that this is the way the policies are to be carried out.

As Trevor Brown, an SWP faceworker at Houghton Main Colliery near Barnsley said in a recent copy of *The Collier*:

'The strategy in the Yorkshire pits is that you look for a good man, whether it's Arthur Scargill, or Tony Benn, or your branch delegate, or president or whatever. The work isn't projected downwards to the rank and file, but upwards, to



Militant action and democratic control by the rank and file lie at the heart of the SWP's activity in the unions. In the early 1970s, the International Socialists (as we then called ourselves) spawned a rash of rank and file papers and organisations based on these principles. Few have survived.

They were born in a time of rising industrial struggle when a much larger number of workers than were in the IS felt it was possible to fight to improve their jobs and change their unions. Rank and file activity gave us the opportunity to make some connection with these militants, most of whom did not agree with us on other issues.

You only have to summarise the situation that existed then to see how different things are now. The SWP's commitment to rank-and-fileism is as strong as ever. But the other side of the equation no longer applies. The long industrial downturn has seen to it that,

getting 'good men' into the positions'.

There is no question that, if campaigned for, the election of Scargill can do a lot of good for the left in the pits. But it must be on the basis that a vote for Scargill has to be linked up with the activity in every pit for the socialist, rank-and-file ideas that Scargill throws up.

That means that Scargill himself has to be under democratic recall, something he's not been prepared to accept in his Yorkshire stint. It means organising at pit level. It means the broad left has to break out of being a secret Scargill supporters club.

Solidarity

It means returning mines to the days of 1972 when you were proud to be a member of the NUM. And it means an end to messing about with tried and trusted trade union principles.

That includes solidarity. Solidarity with workers in struggle. Arthur Scargill's attitude to the Laurence Scott strike has been 'it's not official. I can't do anything' instead of blacking all mining supplies.

In 1972 and 1974, the miners relied on other workers solidarity. The Staffa strike shouldn't be dealt with in the same way as Scotts was.

If the work is done to get Scargill elected on the basis of militant socialist ideas, and then to see them put into practice at rank and file level, it be well worth it. If not, then the demoralisation that occurred in the engineering industry after the sad demise of Hugh Scanlon will could be repeated in the pits.

Andy Smith

Reassessing the Rank and file

by and large, militants have little confidence in drawing other workers into activity. On the contrary, it is often the militants who are being pulled to the right by the inertia of the mass.

These are pretty broad generalisations and can no doubt be challenged in a number of specific instances. Yet for socialists it must always be the general trend of events that conditions the way we put our principles into practice (though not, of course, the principles themselves). The importance of the Right to Work Campaign, for example, and of ensuring a basic level of support for individual strikes arises out of the general weakness of the industrial movement.

Building rank-and-file organisation in the workplace is an ambitious aim. Although we cannot usually tackle it directly at the moment, much of our activity is concerned with preparing for the time when it will be possible to do

so. It is with this in mind that I want to raise a couple of points that came out of the earlier period of rank-and-file activity mentioned at the beginning of this article.

For one thing, we tended to rush in to building the house of rank-and-file organisation without a strong foundation of SWP membership (this is not a sectarian point: a low level of SWP membership often reflected a general lack of militancy—not a promising basis for a wider organisation). We were rather mesmerised by the fact that a rank-and-file paper could have many times the sale of *Socialist Worker*.

This caused a number of problems insoluble within the limits of rank and file work. It meant that there was an enormous gap between the handful of activists who spent great amounts of time writing, producing, distributing and selling the paper and the sales themselves which could run into thousands. A producer/consumer situation arose in which the producers had great difficulty in involving the consumers in activity, especially if the level of militancy in the particular industry was low.

We thought it would be possible to increase the size of the rank-and-file group (and consequently of the SWP membership) through the activity around the paper. This hardly happened, mainly, I think, because the situation I have described in the previous paragraph became established so quickly.

Contrary to what we tended to assume, a commitment to rank-and-file politics does not automatically mean an immediate commitment to building rank-and-file organisation. Just as important, we should not have confused the sale of a rank-and-file paper with the actual influence of the rank-and-file group, ie our ability to involve in activity.

It would have been much better if we had concentrated at the initial stage on selling *Socialist Worker* and producing *Socialist Worker* bulletins. My own rank-and-file group on the London buses got a lot of its ideas from the London Busmen's Rank and File Movement of the 1930s. What we ignored in practice was that the Communist Party members who led that movement began by building round a Communist Party bulletin and only launched rank-and-file activity when there was a clear militant movement in the garages that clashed with the official leadership.

The result of this error was a tendency to substitute rank-and-file activity for socialist activity. We assumed that rank-and-file organisation was the broad highway through which a substantial minority of workers would find their way to the narrow gate of the SWP. This can, of course, be the case in the right circumstances. But it can also happen that the appeal of rank-and-file organisation can be much less than that of more directly political issues.

Our rank and file paper was devoted almost exclusively to what was happen-

ing in our own corner of the world and this also determined our priorities. We therefore wildly underestimated the appeal of the Anti Nazi League and of the Right to Work Campaign and consistently downgraded them. Partly because we were so small and wanted so desperately to reach a mass audience we accommodated to the sectionalism of the majority, ironically missing an important minority with whom we could have united in action.

Many, many trade union activists fall prey to the same illusion. Individual militants are always uncomfortably aware of the gap that separates them from the majority of their workmates, especially if they are shop stewards dependent on those very people for votes. It is simply not possible to bridge so wide a gulf in one step. If it were, we would have had a revolution long ago. Class struggle, even at a low ebb, means struggle *inside* the working class.

Uneven consciousness

What Tony Cliff said back in 1970 essentially to a student audience, has a special significance for socialists today:

'If the whole working class had one level of consciousness there would not have been any need for revolution, there would never be any need for a strike, there wouldn't have been any need for a picket line. There is a picket line because workers act differently. To fight millionaires you don't need a picket line because the duchess never crosses picket lines. Workers cross picket lines. With every strike, the fight is never between the workers and the employers, because the employers never did anything for themselves in their lives. They didn't break strikes themselves, they sent workers to break strikes.

And if you want to say that every strike is a fight between workers and workers, it is absolutely true. The struggle between the workers and the capitalist class is always reflected in the struggle between the section of the working class which is under the influence of the capitalist class and the section which is opposed to the capitalist class.'

(David Widgery ed., *The Left in Britain 1956-1968*, Penguin 1976, pp. 443-4)

It is possible to work together with the minority who want to fight and to aim one's appeal to a wider audience. But it is not possible to leap straight to the majority. Those who attempt it cannot avoid making concessions to the right, becoming demoralised, retreating into passivity and cynicism and often falling into the arms of the union bureaucracy. Rank-and-file trade unionism is not an alternative to raising the whole range of political issues at work in a socialist way. It is part of it.

This is a discussion article. I have deliberately left out many aspects—including many positive aspects—of

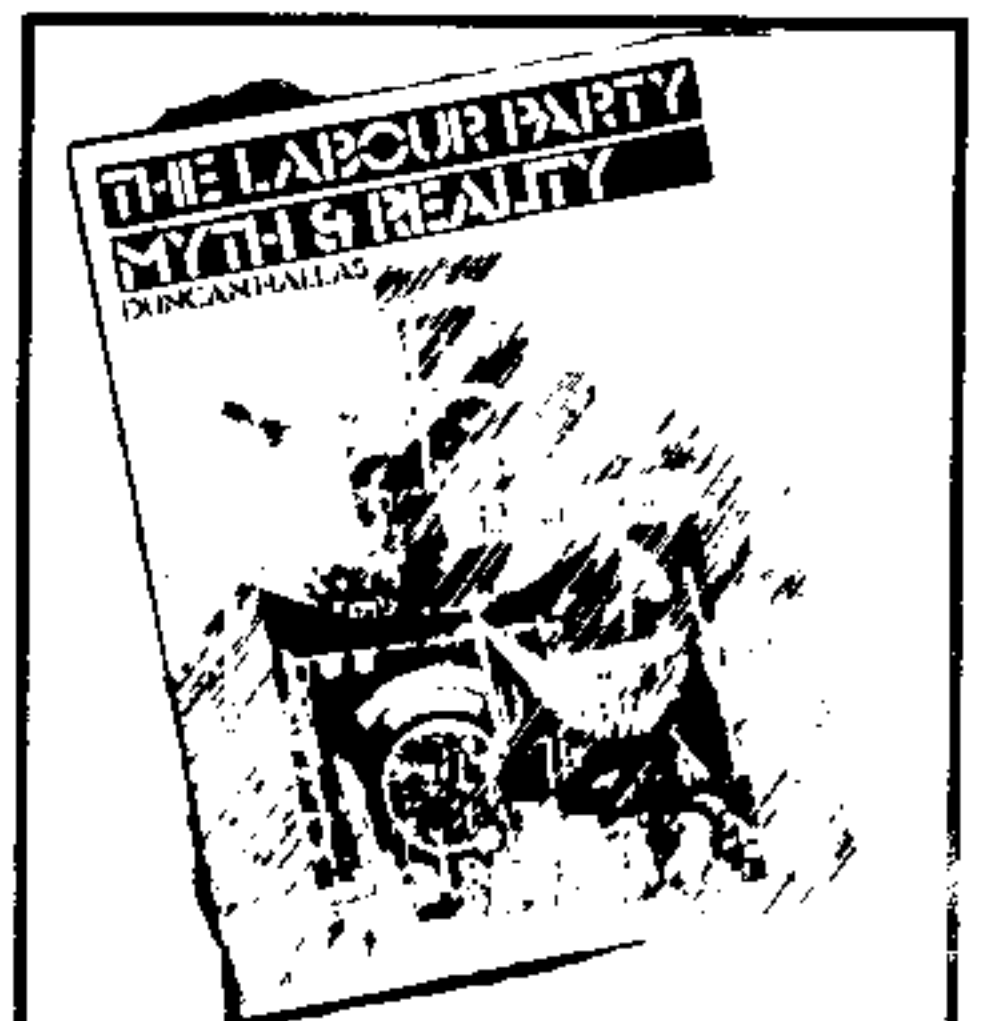
rank-and-file activity in order to make a few points as sharply as possible. To some, what I have said may seem obvious; to others, it may sound like the worst kind of sectarianism. I'm also uncomfortably aware that my own experience of rank-and-file work is pretty limited. Yet general discussion about rank-and-file activity is all too rare. I hope that others (both in and outside the SWP) will be stimulated—or infuriated—enough to challenge my arguments and correct my mistakes.

A former activist around the London Platform



MISSILE MADNESS

SWP pamphlet by Peter Binns on the new weapons system and how they threaten your life. 40p (plus 10p postage). Bulk orders £3.25 for 10 post free from Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4.



A new pamphlet from the **Socialist Workers Party.** 35p + 15p postage. 10 copies £3 post free. **Socialists Unlimited** 265 Seven Sisters Rd London N4

The biggest hippy capitalist of them all

Richard Branson—head at Virgin Records who have just launched *Event* in competition with *Time Out* and with *City Limits*—is one of the few successes British capitalism can boast. He is praised in the *Sunday Telegraph* and *Marketing Weekly*.

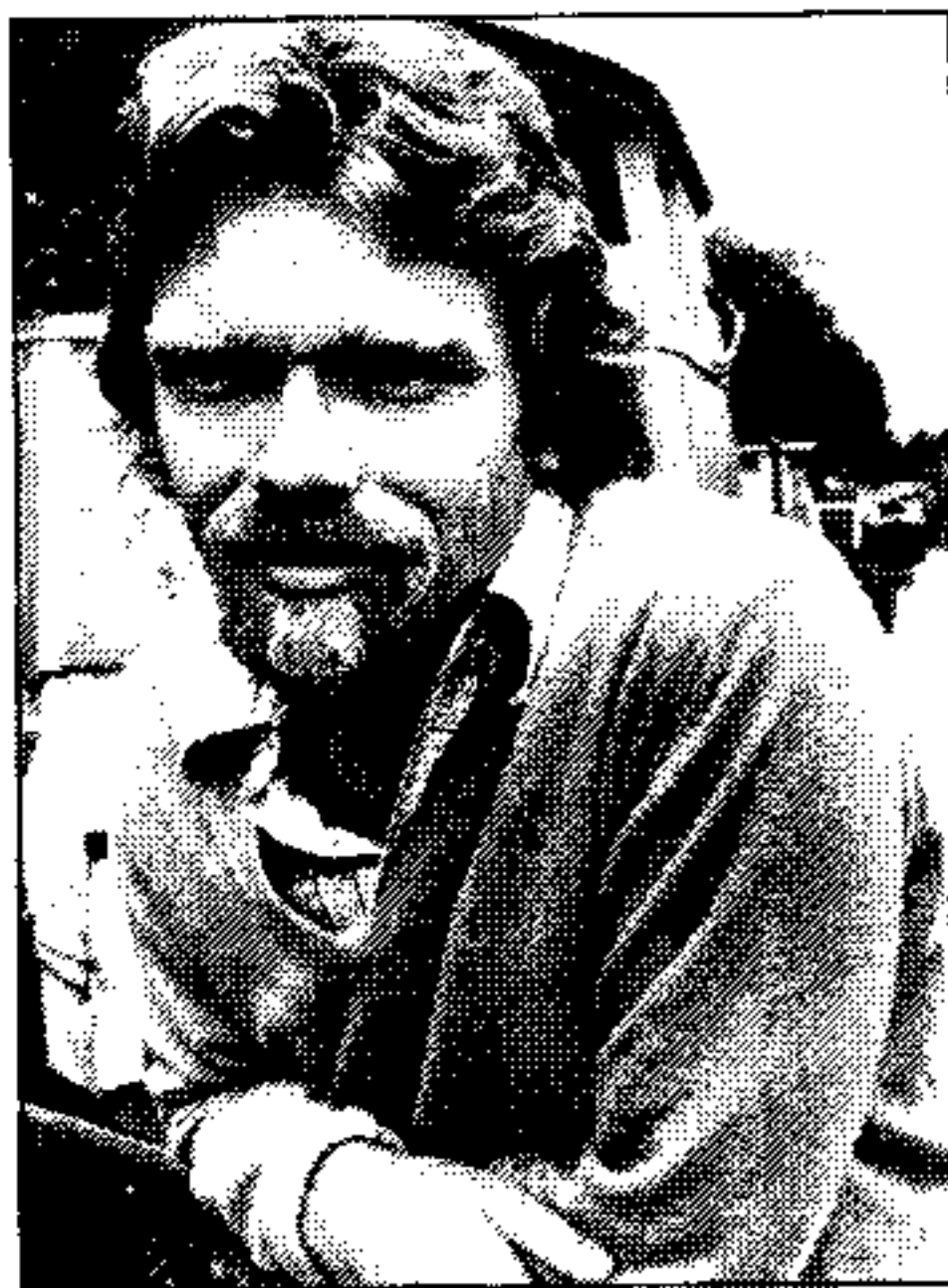
Yet he was originally part of the attempt to create an alternative within the capitalist system, back in the sex-and-drugs-and-rock-and-roll hippy, underground era of the 1960s.

Now that 'alternative media' are very much in vogue again, Noel Halifax thinks it is worth retracing the history of Britain's first alternative millionaire.

Before delving into the turgid history of Richard Branson it must be said that the closer you study him the less demonic and super entrepreneurial he becomes. There was no *Mein Kampf*, no great plan, just hosts of squalid little plots and schemes that finally hit the jack-pot. Virgin Records filled a gap left by the collapse of EMI and British based record companies. By a combination of stupid management and bad record signing, they lost their near monopoly of the British market of the early 60s, opening it up for the entry of American rivals and creating the space for Virgin to exist. It was their collapse rather than RB's brilliance that has been behind Virgin's growth.

Today Richard Branson owns Virgin Records and has control of it and its many subsidiaries. Since it is a private company it is not required to issue reports, its dealings are not open to any public scrutiny and it's difficult to be precise about all of its holdings. But everyone in the music business would acknowledge that Virgin holds a dominant position in the music scene, in many cases bigger than just a glance at its turnover figure, as it is often the only outlet to a mass market for new types of music.

Altogether the Branson empire has a turnover of £45-50m a year and claims a growth rate on turnover of 40 per cent. It employs 900-1000, all strictly non-union except the typesetters of *Event*. He has four recording studios in Britain and he has bought one of the smaller Virgin Islands with plans to transform



it into a recording studio complex. Then there's Virgin Films, Virgin Books, and his newest scheme, *Event*, a sort of cross between *Now* and *TV Times*. Via Front Line Entertainments he runs 'The Venue', 'Heaven' and the 'Garden' in London, together providing quite a sizeable chunk of the live music that is reported in the *New Musical Express*. He is now negotiating for the purchase of Ronnie Scotts jazz club in Soho and there's talk of investments in oil in America and interests in video games.

Branson is no hero from a Hollywood film who battles from the bottom to reach the heights of fame and fortune. His father is to be found in *Who's Who*, his mother is a local magistrate and his class background is solidly English upper middle class. Little Richard was sent to prep school and then on to a fairly good public school, Stowe—from which, as it happens, two years earlier fellow hippy capitalist Tony Elliot (of *Time Out*) had passed out. But the turbulent 60s had other effects than toppling President Johnson, challenging monolithic 'Communism' in Prague and exciting students throughout the world. They also shook out little Richard from his seemingly safe and predestined niche. He didn't particularly like school (especially school uniform, games and stupid regulations), and wanted more exciting times. He dropped out, came to London and became part of 'the alternative scene', emerging editor and supremo of *Student*, a magazine geared to the new student movement. Like scum on top of a tidal wave, Branson

appeared, cashing in on and seemingly to lead the new generation.

Student was run from a basement flat in Notting Hill Gate. It was a general review magazine, full of interviews with famous people such as James Baldwin, Jean Paul Sartre, Bertrand Russell, Vanessa Redgrave. Being only 17 and the head of a magazine, Branson attracted great media coverage. Overnight he himself became a personality to interview and write about. A thrusting young man of the times etc etc. For example:

'Editor, aged 17, hopes to be "voice of the youth"' (*Guardian*, 13.1.68).
'At 17, Richard really hits the headlines...' (*Sketch*, 30.1.68).

He even made it to be the subject of a BBC documentary on the young hopefuls for the future.

Student was distributed by 'helpers' (very low paid students or kids on the dole) round the colleges and pubs. And it was highly successful, making a profit on advertising, if not circulation—Branson would ring around and persuade companies to back *Student*, being a great talker with the right accent.

Today 'Student', tomorrow ...?

The alternative paper developed an amazingly alternative way of being produced. For, you see, though Branson was in charge, the rest of the staff, as part of this great alternative thing, were never paid wages.

'They all work for nothing. I supply them with somewhere to sleep and some food. It's not so much they are working for you as working with you' (RB, *Evening News*, 26.6.68).
'We don't need any extra cash. Our girlfriends live and work here with us, so all our social life is here' (RB in *Guardian* interview, 22.2.70).

This was a marvellous way of getting rid of silly old capitalist problems such as unions, proper pay etc. And proved a great way of making it for old RB. By 1969 *Student* claimed a circulation of 110,000, with 18 full time staff all under the age of 20.

Richard no longer so little, started to think big, and plot newer and bigger plans. As an offshoot from *Student* he set up the Student Advisory Agency. His fame reached America and Germany:

'Richard Branson has been promised unlimited funds by a large psychiatric institution in Philadelphia to start an advisory centre for young people like *Student* in London' (*Campaign*, Nov. 69).

'His next venture will be an arts mag devoted to the work of young artists and photographers...he plans to revive *Picture Post* as a British rival to *Paris Match*. He says negotiations with a TV company are now under way to provide finance' (*Guardian*, 22.1.70).

Of all the ideas that RB has ever had 'the Nurses' Union' is my favourite. For crude exploitation of the low paid, with insensitivity and callousness hiding thinly behind a social conscience, it

really does take some beating. Put simply, RB realised that there were a lot of very low paid nurses around and a lot of people not covered by the welfare state. So why not put the two together, and have the nurses doing odd jobs, babysitting etc in their 'sparetime' for all the people willing to pay for it. With, of course, dear little RB getting his cut.

Fortunately, the scheme failed, after being slammed by the Royal College of Nursing.

Other plans of RB rested on the fame of his Help agency. He was aided here by the media and the stupidity of the British authorities. His Student Advisory Centre was taken to court in May 1970 for contravening the Indecent Advertising Act of 1889 for giving advice on VD. This hit the headlines and added to RB's image as a young go-ahead editor and general expert on 'youth problems'. Given all the 'youth problems' of the time RB seemed to be onto a good one here. So we hear that:

'Richard Branson became an authority on youth. A huge magazine company paid him to advise them on their youth publications. German television arranged for him to make a speech against the Vietnam war at a rally' (*Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 10.2.80).

It was claimed that the Advisory Centre

'Deals with 500 queries a week, has branches in Paris and Berlin, and negotiations for a centre to be set up in Philadelphia have just been finished. Branson says he has 250 American doctors and psychiatrists, and he hopes eventually to set up an advisory centre in every American state' (*Guardian*, 22.1.70).

Yet in spite of all the noise and claims, little of substance seems to have come from these plans. Perhaps governments' agencies aren't as thick as they seem. Whatever the reasons, the youth of the 70s have not been plagued with Branson advisory offices set up next to the doles.

In fact, by the 70s Branson was in a bit of a pickle (sorry about that). With the collapse of the student wave RB was in danger of being left high and dry, a forgotten piece of the 60s like the hoolahoop or Simon Dee. RB tried Student Survey Limited (using students to generate opinion polls among students to sell to marketing firms etc), Student Distribution (using cheap student labour for distributing leaflets) and a plan to launch an accommodation agency. All in the end came to nothing.

Then he had his second good idea. He launched Virgin.

But at first Virgin lost money; and the new born-again Branson was in danger of a still birth:

'Discounts were often excessive; and customers fiddled free albums by claiming the first had been lost in the post' (*Sunday Times*, 10.2.80).

'By 1971 Virgin Records was losing money, fast; and the postal strike of

that year finally closed down the mail-order business. In a last desperate throw Virgin opened a record store in Oxford Street... They went on losing money' (*Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 10.2.80).

What success Virgin had was a pure accident. It was able to supply a demand neglected by the major British companies—that of the 'literate rock fan' of the 'counter-culture' for imports. So it became a cult. But its debts continued to mount.

Things were bad; bankruptcy loomed. Like many a desperate little business man before, RB tried a desperate and illegal way out of the problem. In the pre-VAT days records in the UK had to pay 33% purchase tax, while those for export paid no tax. He found that by driving a van full of records to Dover to get the papers stamped for export and then driving back to London he could save £12,000 per van load. Unfortunately, after a few trips he was caught by the customs and was put in Dover prison for the night with a bail of £30,000. Young Branson was terribly shocked.

Life after debt

Now as anyone from the upper middle class will tell you, when this sort of thing happens there is only one solution—daddy (actually in this case mummy). Through all his plans RB always had the security of his class background behind him. Mummy paid the bail, he spent only one night in jail and was fined £50,000. That night in Dover prison had a profound effect on RB, he was a new person—he wanted even more to be successful.

This new improved Branson reorganised Virgin, cutting out deadwood and salaries, and wildly expanding in a final bid to survive, opening more shops throughout the country.

'It was the need to make a profit fast which drove Virgin to expansion. They pulled themselves together, went for efficiency, quickly opened 25 shops and kept the bank happy with their rising turnover' (*Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 10.2.81).

'He paid it off (the fine) during which it is said, his staff's salaries were cut' (*Sunday Times*, 10.2.80).

And it worked. He clicked into a new market, using modern high turnover warehouse techniques and low paid (high turnover) staff with the image of the 'alternative scene'.

'In ambience and attention to detail, no other stores could touch them. Virgin shops were informal yet highly snob—thus irresistibly hip. Instead of stark listening booths they had headphones, dispensed coffee and displayed a relaxed attitude towards dope smoking. The only rule was that they would sell no music they deemed untrendy. The places throbbed with excitement' (*Sunday Times*, 10.2.80).

To cap it all, Virgin signed Mike

Oldfield and issued Tubular Bells as their first LP after all the majors had turned it down. RB had stumbled onto one of the great sellers of the 70s. With that one record's five million sales the dreams of RB had been realised.

Virgin expanded and expanded helped by the failing of EMI (they eventually crashed and were forced to amalgamate with the defence group Thorn), and went on a wild spree of signing new talent. These were the halcyon days of the mid-70s for Virgin signings. Even punk was soaked up with the famous signing of the Sex Pistols in May 77—after they left EMI. It was to be a short-lived bonanza, but while it lasted RB's second wave of fame was chorused by the media, with interviews and colour supplement specials.

By mid-70s, the ex-students of the late 60s were now mostly settled down to comfortable jobs and plush stereo systems. They had money to spend on their tastes and they still liked Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones and our Tubular Bells. Virgin, like the American giants, tuned into this profitable consumer market, introduced differential pricing and rode the wave that brought 'underground music' into big business.

Boom time was to be short lived though and by 1976 Virgin was making a loss of £22,000.

This time Virgin decided to get rid of a number of uncommercial bands (Faust, Gong and Henry Cow among them) and from then on to sign only on the basis of commercial prospects, with no more silly notions of alternative, musical work or the suchlike. Since then bands have complained of Virgin contracts. Ironically the one man responsible for Branson's success, Mike Oldfield, is now suing him for a million pounds.

At the same time Branson has increasingly been keen to introduce the most modern of micro-chip controlled warehouse techniques, making the Mega-store in Oxford Street about as friendly as a Cruise missile.

Zena Becic used to work in Virgin's legal department, but left on principle after some people had been sacked. According to her the staff didn't join a union because they were scared to (*The Leveller*, 2.10.81).

Chloe Gummers tells how:

'I used to work at the Venue as a waitress when it first opened. My pay was £9 for working 6pm to 3am daily. After it had been opened for only two months Richard Branson stormed through the door and informed all who would listen that "this place is losing a fucking fortune". He then told everyone that their wages were being lowered to £6 a shift and anyone who didn't like it could leave' (*Private Eye*, 10.10.81).

The contract that employees of Virgin sign when they start work states that they can be sacked for gross misconduct, including 'being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on or near the company premises' (*The Leveller*,

2.10.81). Grounds for dismissal also include loss of driving licence and illness or disability.

In short, Branson is one of the most vicious of employers, who has manipulated his 'alternative' image to gain an almost 19th century control over his workers

He himself is to be found lounging on his Virgin Island, or more likely, on his Oxfordshire estate:

'Woodfires burn in the stone grates. Groups eat dinner by candlelight at a long table shipped from Venice...unmistakable manner of the squire' (*Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 10.2.80).

Like an old rebel made good he muses on the past:

'The BBC made an half-hour documentary on him. He watched it recently, with a crowd of young people from Virgin, and reflected on how greatly his idealism had exceeded that of the present young generation' (*Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 10.2.80).

He flits around buying up London's music venues, experiments in books by launching Virgin Publications, then closes it:

'He closed Virgin Publications and bought the Gardens. His hyperactivity has left staff utterly bewildered. First among them is Maxim Jakubowski, managing director of Virgin Books. "I really don't know what he is up to", a shell-shocked Jakubowski told me. "We had a £200,000 turnover last year and managed to break even in the first twelve months trading. Richard seems to be taking a very short-sighted view of things"' (*Evening Standard*, 15.4.81).

Oh the problems and decisions of being a member of the ruling class! So much, so it seems, that he's unable to share it with anyone.

'In an American magazine he was recently quoted as saying "I am determined not to pay a penny to the taxman". And he certainly conveys the impression of a man who will expand until he busts rather than let the Inland Revenue take an undue cut' (*Financial Times*, 14.11.79).

So has ended one attempt to build new and different structures inside capitalism. The old days have long since ended when you could think that because you bought a record from the hippy alternative Virgin shop you were dealing with something slightly different than the sterile W.H. Smiths' down the road. In fact, Virgin was always the same as the rest of the companies, except that it probably paid less and treated you worse if you were one of its workers. But Virgin isn't bad because of the personal morality of Branson. Any company to survive has to compete. With 'alternatives' all that this means is that the exploitation is hidden for a few years behind a mask of wishful thinking. It is most extreme in Virgin because Virgin is the most successful.

Trotsky on terrorism

Just after the recent IRA bomb in Chelsea I was approached by a young Labour Party supporter with the question: 'What does the SWP say about the IRA now?' His assumption was that there must be some change in the basic position we held during the hunger strike now that the Provisionals have embarked on a new bombing campaign. This, despite the fact that many of the prisoners in the Maze were there precisely for planting bombs and other 'terrorist' activities.

But my questioner's attitude was quite understandable, even if not strictly logical. In our society reactions to terrorism vary enormously according to proximity in time and place. If Robert Mugabe visited Britain he would be received at Buckingham Palace. Anyone arguing that he was a criminal and attempting a citizen's arrest would themselves be locked up. But let Ken Livingstone say the IRA are not criminals, and he is pilloried in the press as 'the most odious man in Britain' (*The Sun*).

No abstract issue

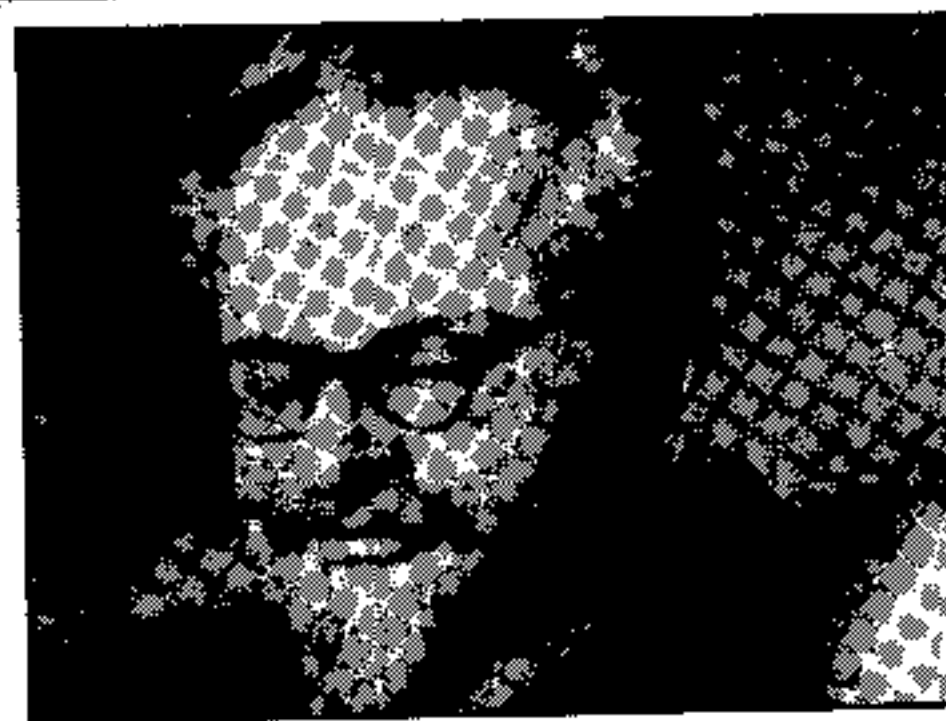
In other words, at a distance, it is generally possible to view terrorism in some historical and political perspective, but the nearer to home it gets, the more it becomes an issue on which rational thought is engulfed by emotional blackmail.

Overwhelmingly the emotional blackmail is employed by the ruling class through the press and TV to create an atmosphere in which the terrorists are viewed as inhuman monsters, the cause they fight for is damned, and the usually all-too-real oppression they suffer is obscured.

In opposition to this there arises, first and foremost inside the terrorist movement itself but then spreading to many of its supporters and sympathisers, a romantic hero worship of the terrorist as the true revolutionary—a standpoint from which any criticism of terrorist strategy and tactics seems a cowardly betrayal.

This 'romance of terror' is infinitely preferable to the hysterical baying of the professional hypocrites of the media. But it is still far from a sober analysis of the role of terrorism in the class struggle. And that is what we need.

One place where we can find such an analysis is in Trotsky's articles on terrorism. Written over a period of thirty years and collected together in



the pamphlet *Against Individual Terrorism* they are the best source in all Marxist literature on the question.

Trotsky's credentials for writing about terrorism were, of course excellent. The organiser of the October revolution and the builder of the Red Army was unlikely to be accused of pacifism or liberal prejudice. Moreover, for Trotsky it was no abstract or academic issue. As he himself put it:

'For us, the Russian revolutionists, the problem of terror was a life and death matter in the political as well as the personal meaning of the term. For us a terrorist was not a character from a novel, but a living and familiar being. In exile we lived for years side by side with the terrorists of the older generation. In prison and police custody we met with terrorists of our own age. We tapped messages back in the Peter and Paul fortress with terrorists condemned to death. How many nights, how many days, were spent in passionate discussion! How many times did we break personal relationships on this most burning of all questions!'

At the same time Trotsky is not limited by the 'Russian' experience. He approaches terrorism as an international social and political phenomenon to be assessed rationally on its merits. His writings lift us from under the emotive rubble on to clear ground of scientific Marxist analysis.

Trotsky begins and ends by dissociating himself from the 'bought-and-paid-for moralists' who 'make solemn declarations about the "absolute value of human life"', and by exposing the hypocrisy of 'the bourgeois politicians' who 'pour out their floods of moral indignation when their entire state apparatus with its laws, police and army is nothing but an apparatus for capitalist terror.'

These words were written in 1911, but they ring just as true today when we have reached the ultimate absurdity of advocates of Cruise missiles and producers of the neutron bomb condemning the violence of terrorist groups.

But Trotsky does not simply establish this clear line of demarcation between himself and the reactionary critics of terror, stressing his emotional sympathy with the 'self-sacrificing avengers' as opposed to the tyrants and oppressors. He goes on to demolish the case for terrorism brick by brick until not a stone is left standing. It is worth following the argument in detail.



He begins by examining the *class* character of the terrorist act and comparing it with the fundamental weapon of the working class, the strike, 'the method of struggle that flows directly from the productive role of the proletariat in modern society':

'Only the workers can conduct a strike. Artisans ruined by the factory, peasants whose water the factory is poisoning, or lumpen proletarians in search of plunder, can smash machines, set fire to a factory, or murder its owner. In order to murder a prominent official you need not have the masses behind you. The recipe for explosives is accessible to all, and a Browning can be obtained anywhere.

'In the first case there is a social struggle, whose methods and means flow necessarily from the nature of the prevailing social order; in the second a purely mechanical reaction identical everywhere.'

Trotsky goes on to argue the complete ineffectiveness of terrorism as a means of destroying, not individual oppressors, but the oppressor class and the oppressor system.

'Whether a terrorist attempt, even a "successful" one, throws the ruling class into confusion depends on the concrete political circumstances. In any case the confusion can only be short lived: the capitalist state does not base itself on government ministers and cannot be eliminated with them. The classes it serves always find new people, the mechanism remains intact and continues to function.'

Substitutionism

But for Trotsky terrorism is not merely ineffective; it is also positively harmful. It gives the enemy an ideological field day, it enables police repression to grow more savage and brazen, and it demonstrates that 'the state is much richer in the means of physical destruction and mechanical repression than the terrorist groups.' Above all, it is an extreme example of 'substitutionism', of individuals or movements trying to substitute themselves for the actions of the mass of workers:

'If it is enough to arm oneself with a pistol in order to achieve one's goal, why the efforts of the class struggle? If a thimblefull of gunpowder and a little chunk of lead is enough to shoot the enemy through the neck, what need is there for a class organisation? In our eyes individual terror is inadmissible precisely because it *belittles the role of the masses in their own consciousness*, reconciles them to their powerlessness, and turns their eyes and hopes towards a great avenger and liberator who someday will come and accomplish his mission.'

This is the heart of the matter, the basis of the Marxist criticism of the terrorist as 'a liberal with a bomb'. Trotsky demonstrates the underlying affinity between terrorism and petty

bourgeois nationalism, between terrorism and its apparent opposite, reformism.

'Whoever stalks a ministerial portfolio, as well as those who, clasping an infernal machine beneath a cloak, stalk the minister himself, must equally *overestimate* the minister—his personality and his post.'

'Sometimes where terrorist organisations arise alongside Marxist ones and have to meet Marxist criticisms, there is proposed a compromise formula: "terror not instead of mass struggle, but alongside it". When terrorist moods begin to infect a Marxist movement itself, it is usually this formula that is adopted. Trotsky, however, will have none of it.

'But this does not change matters. By its very essence terrorist work demands such concentrated energy for "the great moment", such an overestimation of the significance of individual heroism, and finally such a "hermetic" conspiracy, that—if not logically then psychologically—it totally excludes agitational and organisational work among the masses...

'The revolvers of individual heroes *instead* of the people's cudgels and pitchforks; bombs *instead* of barricades—that is the real formula of terrorism.

'And no matter what sort of subordinate role terror is relegated to (in theory) it always occupies a special place of honour in fact.'

This last remark made by Trotsky about the Russian Social Revolutionaries at the beginning of the century is confirmed once again in the relationship between the military and political wings of the contemporary Irish Republican movement.

It is always dangerous to take the writings of Marxist classics on tactical questions and apply them mechanically to their historical context, but there we have a case of what might be called 'principle in the field of tactics'. In my view practically every word Trotsky wrote on this subject still stands today. They apply to the IRA, but they apply equally to the Mujahadin in Iran, who have elected to resist Khomeini's tyranny with bombs rather than mass actions.

Let's hope we don't soon have to say that Trotsky's comments apply also to a section of the left in Britain. This is by no means impossible, for the continuation of Thatcherite devastation combined with the passivity of the working class movement might well generate a despairing terrorist response. It is our job, by ideological struggle and by rebuilding workers' confidence and power at the base, to make sure that doesn't happen. In this struggle Trotsky's *Against Individual Terrorism* is indeed a useful weapon.

John Molyneux

Against Individual Terrorism is available from *Bookmarks* (265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DE) for 55p (including postage).

Janos Kenedi
Do It Yourself
Hungary's Hidden Economy
Translated by Julian Schopflin
"vastly amusing" The Guardian
£2.95 paperback

Experience and
Future Discussion Group
Poland
A Report of the State of the Nation
£4.95 paperback

Big Red Diary
and Directory 1982
The Art of Resistance
£2.50 paperback

Young Observer Diary
128 pages, fully illustrated
£1.95 paperback

Jack Eaton and Colin Gill
The Trade Union Directory
A Guide to all TUC Unions
A Workers' Handbook
£5.95 paperback

Margaretta D'Arcy
Tell Them Everything
A Sojourn in the Prison of HM Queen Elizabeth II at Ard Macha (Armagh)
£1.95 paperback

Gerard Challand
Food without Frontiers
A Big Red Cookbook
Introduction by Claudia Roden
£2.50 paperback

Conrad Atkinson
Picturing the System
Edited by Sandy Nairne
and Caroline Tisdall
£3.95 paperback

Martin H. Ryle
The Politics of
Nuclear Disarmament
£2.50 paperback

Karl Korsch
Revolutionary Theory
Edited by Douglas Kellner
£4.95 paperback

Rosa Luxemburg
Comrade and Lover
Rosa Luxemburg's letters
to Leo Jogiches
Edited and translated by
Elzbieta Ettinger
£3.95 paperback

Paul Frolich
Rosa Luxemburg
Ideas in Action
A socialist classic
£4.95 paperback

Pluto Press, Unit 10 Spencer Court,
7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH.



Jack London: The overrated rebel

Jack London has been considered the father of proletarian literature in America. In 1929 the *New Masses* said of him:

'A real proletarian writer must not only write about the working class, he must be read by the working class. He must not only use his proletarian life as his material; his writing must burn with the spirit of revolt. Factory workers, farm hands, seamen, miners, newsboys, read him and read him again. He is the most popular writer of the American working class.'

By 1913, London was the highest paid, best known and most popular writer in the world. He was dubbed by many to be the 'champion of socialism', a prophet and revolutionary.

On the other hand, he has also been dubbed a racist, sexist and elitist. The champion not of socialism, but of individuals, of supermen. There is evidence to substantiate these latter allegations, for London abounded with contradictions.

Today, London is still best known for his dog stories. Books written to appeal to our sentimentality about animals: *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*, etc. His 'socialist' novels still largely go unread: *The Iron Heel* and *Martin Eden*.

Jack London started work at the age of 13 in a cannery. He grew up knowing no childhood, no companionship, only solitude. He became a pirate, tramp, seaman, prospector, amongst other things, thus providing much of the material for his future writings. His early life style bore all the hallmarks of a strong individualist, a loner, who found collectivity and all its implications intolerable.

While tramping on the road London was introduced to socialism. He heard a good deal about trade unions, workers' solidarity, and socialism. But he was also influenced by the ideas of such thinkers as Darwin, Spencer and Nietzsche.

London was determined at an early stage to be a writer. He was intent to do for literature in his own country what Gorky was doing for the art form in Russia, Maupassant in France and Kipling in England. He would take it out of the Henry James high society salon and place it in the kitchen of the mass of people where it would smell of life.

His first political work was *The People of the Abyss*, which describes life among the lumpenproletariat in the East End of London in 1902. It is a first hand, condemning account of his experiences there. The book argues that this cruelly used mass must revolt as the downtrodden mobs of France had done, 'crawl out of their dens and lairs' and bring down their exploiters.

The book still has the power to move and

shock. Yet it contains many deficiencies. Drawing attention to the evils of capitalism has always played a large part in socialist propaganda. But the book is silent on *how* to bring about fundamental changes, of *how* socialism is to be achieved. It talks of reorganising society and of putting a capable management at the head. But who this management is to be London does not spell out.

This is not a problem restricted to London. Much of pre-First World War socialism was equally vague about the means, assuming that socialism was destined to come about as a result of the inevitable breakdown of capitalism. So perhaps the way in which workers organised themselves in the workplace or understood their conditions was of less importance than the way in which socialist leaders grasped the overall movement of capitalism as a preparation for managing the new society.

Elitism

The truth of the matter is that London was pulled in the direction of seeing the leaders as all-important in the transition to socialism, not the masses. For the person who had the greatest effect on him was Nietzsche—particularly, the theory of the supermen, bigger, stronger and wiser than others, able to conquer and rule by teaching, leading and directing the masses.

London's quick rise to fame and prestige, the vast amount of money he earned and spent wildly, the people he surrounded himself with, all had its effect on him. He went virtually uncriticised in the socialist movement. At the height of his fame he could pull 10,000 people to a meeting. Yet he was his own man. As his daughter Joan wrote in her biography on him: 'He saw himself as a top dog.... The function of others was to comply with him.' The class struggle he claimed to have found was something he never really understood or identified with. He wrote about it, yes, but never from the battlefield.

The contradiction is present in *The Iron Heel*, (1907) his best known socialist work. It is written in the form of a text, discovered centuries later when socialism rules the earth, which tells of a counter-revolution in an advanced American capitalism where totalitarianism rules. The centre of the novel is occupied by the charismatic figure of Ernest Everhard, a socialist leader (and very much an idealised self-portrait), who is eventually killed when the revolt fails and his comrades let him down. The organised working class do not play a central role in the same way, though page after page

reports on their magnificent struggles as a perpetual challenge to the obligarchy.

London also professed a belief in racial superiority. His idea of socialism was to give 'more strength to those certain kindred races so that they may survive and inherit the earth to the extinction of the weaker, lesser races.' At a time when the socialist movement was very much the movement of a white working class, this can be explained, though not excused—especially as London's racism was explicit and ugly. When challenged, he stated: 'I am first of all a white man and only then a socialist.' He asserted his racism publicly before the big fight in 1910 between Johnson and Jefferies, by stating that Jefferies should 'wipe the golden smile off the nigger's face.'

On the other hand, *The Iron Heel* is full of comments on the brotherhood of man, of the need to use the general strike to prevent war between nations, of international solidarity in the face of international capitalism. This internationalism disappeared, as it did for many other socialists, when it came to the First World War, though his belief in white supremacy did not help him choose sides. Should he support Anglo-Saxon Britain or Nordic Germany? He supported Britain, as he had British blood in him, and encouraged American involvement in the war.

Martin Eden was his next socialist novel. A thinly disguised autobiography, the book dramatises London's rise to fame, from sailor to successful writer in three years, and the difficulties he overcomes on the way. Like Jack, Martin attends socialist meetings, gets involved in debates, but recognises socialism as unattainable. He is an individualist, steeped in Spencer and Nietzsche. He tries in vain to keep his feet in both camps. But finally, in despair, he commits suicide, disillusioned by success, with nothing to hold him to life. The book was disliked by socialists at the time for its pessimism, the hero's inability to be happy and its elitism.

Throughout his life London continuously tried to defend the myth about himself being a socialist. So long as he wrote the occasional 'socialist' novel and gave the occasional 'socialist' lecture, he believed it and fooled many others too. But his track record proves otherwise. As his health rapidly deteriorated, his faith in socialism vanished. In 1916 he died. All the evidence points to suicide. *Martin Eden* was the prediction. The radical press was generous to him. 'He brought the pulse of revolution into popular literature,' one magazine said. Much of the truth about him was conveniently forgotten.

Despite his contradictions London still has an appeal to socialists, trade unionists and radicals. The contradictions are partly his own, partly those of the movement of the period. His books are certainly worth reading, though the legend has to be disentangled from the facts. The argument that he was an inspiration to other working class writers is part of the dream of creating a working class literature—which is still to be achieved. London's contribution to it is best explained by the fact that his popularity still lies on the shelves of nurseries rather than in the kitchen.

Owen Gallagher

Contours at the crisis

Slump City: The politics of mass unemployment

Andrew Friend and Andy Metcalf
Pluto £3.95

This book's theme is the impact of the crisis upon the working class, particularly in the inner cities. It shows how on top of the old geographical distribution of unemployment—with far higher levels in Scotland, the North and South Wales than in the South East—there has also developed an uneven concentration within the major cities. The inner city areas have become areas of deindustrialisation, with double the average areas of unemployment and with the employed population very much dependent upon jobs in the service sector or in sweat shops.

The authors take from Marx's *Capital* the concept of 'surplus population' to define many of those who live in these areas. This includes not just the unemployed, but other groups as well who cannot find permanent employment in the main sectors of the economy:

'Those for whom long periods of unemployment alternate with dependence on temporary or casual part time work; those participating in the bottom reaches of the 'black economy' outside the tax system; all those who are dependent on state benefits or forms of charity (including the mass of pensioners, the chronically sick and disabled, the

single parent families on social security); and those people who, although in regular employment in labour intensive sweated occupations or the state service sector, earn wages significantly below the national average...'

They suggest that this 'surplus population' can constitute up to half the population of major cities like Liverpool, and an even higher proportion of the inner city population.

Many of the old institutional structures of British capitalist society have begun to break down in such areas. The traditional stereotype of the 'male headed nuclear family', for instance, hardly makes sense in inner London, where a quarter of families are single parent families and where there has been a rapid growth of single people (particularly old people) living by themselves.

'The cyclone of social change that has enveloped family life in the post-war period has both destroyed the working class extended families and progressively fractured ever larger number of the nuclear units that succeeded them. As this has happened, the working class has effectively lost the haven of family life which acted as a shield against the harshness of capitalist urban life ... As economic stagnation engenders cut backs in public spending and new ways of disciplining the surplus population are sought out by the state, the welfare lines are

hauled in and 'personal problems' are screwed to a new pitch.'

Under circumstances, there is a growth of mental ill health on the one hand, of petty crime on the other. The only response known by the forces of the state is to increase the level of harassment, particularly—but not only—of black people and of youth.

By April 1980 'an ORC poll on attitudes to the police... showed that while a majority of the North West's population generally had confidence in the police, hostility to and distrust of the police was high in Huyton (Merseyside) and Moss Side (Manchester) and cut across both age and race divides.'

The riots of the early summer—with adults as well as youth, white as well as black, joining in—confirm this finding.

There are, however, faults with this book, both at the level of analysis and in what it has to say about the way forward. Here all the authors can do is to mouth clichés about the 'danger' of 'militant defensive struggles' based upon the 'skilled male working class' which will 'inevitably fail'. They urge a 'strategy' of 'building alliances between consumers and producers and between different groups within the working class'. In this way, they claim, the 'richness of political action and the depth of analysis'

which the 'autonomous black and women's organisations have developed' can overcome 'the economic approaches of the labour movement'.

That is all so much nonsense. Apart from the IWAs, 'autonomous' black organisations hardly exist in Britain today; at best there are small groups of activists in a few cities. The women's movement hardly exists between conferences or demonstrations every couple of years and, in many cases, is dominated by upper grade white collar women whose attitudes and traditions are a million miles from those who toil in the sweat shops or try to bring up families on SS. And the 'traditional' working class—whether in manufacturing industry or in the lowest grades of white collar work—is neither all male or all white. In fact, both black men and black women are *more* likely on average to be employed in manufacturing and transport industry than white men, with black male workers being especially concentrated in the large workplaces. And a third of the workforce in inner city areas have jobs in 'manufacturing, despite deindustrialisation.

The problem is not establishing 'alliances'. It is one of political agitation and organisation, so that the militancy that exploded in the inner city areas in the summer can be directed into the factories and offices where a good number of the rioters work.

Chris Harman

Goulash capitalism

Do It Yourself

by Janos Kenedi
Pluto Press £2.95

'No part of this story is true—just the whole of it.' That is how Janos Kenedi introduces his book. It is a humorous and apt beginning to this highly readable, immensely interesting and often very funny account of life in 'socialist' Hungary.

Hungarian dissidents are aware that most people in the West think conditions in Hungary are generally better than those in other East European countries. So great is this misapprehension that the Hungarian writer Miklos Haraszti was provoked to comment that 'No Orwellian state has ever been so popular with the free press'. And in his book *Worker in a workers state* he did much to dispel such Western illusions with his vivid account of the grim and oppressive conditions of factory work in Hungary.

Janos Kenedi continues the process of our education with this brilliant description of Hungarian social relationships—all revealed in the story of one man's attempt to build himself a home.

'I only wanted to build a house. In the process I was compelled to analyse, then to synthesise, the ideal

approach to acquisition through the various pathways of the mutual network, the moonlighter syndrome, the necessary scale of bribery and corruption, and their requisite combinations.'

The descriptions of the process of procuring materials, bribing workers, exchanging favours and bluffing suppliers build a picture of an immensely corrupt society. This also results in hilarious reflections on the dynamic of the system. The search for cheap carpets, for example, leads to a boutique which sells offcuts of Danish carpet. These highly desirable remnants are shipped by the lorryload at irregular intervals from a factory in Copenhagen.

'God only knows who set up the deal. Maybe it's a foretaste of the next five-year housebuilding plan, in which room sizes are adapted to the sizes of carpet offcuts.'

Such ponderings can equally lead to an unconventional look at traditional phenomena. Kenedi of course cannot openly condone thieving—but he does notice that it has modified the effects of hooliganism:

'In earlier times hooligans vandalised telephone booths, tore the directories to pieces, ripped out cable, smashed the coinbox for the



THE NEW militancy in the white collar trade unions, the pros and cons of single sex schools, extracts from the new book *Girls, Wives, Factory lives*. Also all the usual features in this month's *Women's Voice*, out now, 30 pence.

money. Now they carefully lift the plate glass windows of the telephone boxes and build them into the dividing door between kitchen and dining room.'

Some sociologist could doubtless make a meal (or a fellowship in deviancy) out of that. But Kenedii doesn't have time for abstractions—he is busy trying to obtain the 'unobtainable'. On one occasion he picks up the phone and by a process of name dropping manages to bluff a contractor that he is an important enough perso-

nage to deserve a heating boiler.

'The fitters who delivered the boiler weren't fooled, however, and persisted in calling me "comrade"—so much so that my wife too called me comrade for days on end.'

Surprisingly Kenedii rarely comes a cropper in the assault course through the system of shortages. In fact his tone sometimes has an oddly familiar ring—reminiscent of those self satisfied entrepreneurs who you see boasting in bars that they have doubled the values of

their houses by getting improvements made by 'moonlighters', or jobbing electricians working 'on the side' during corporation time. In fact the fiddles Kenedii describes are not peculiarly Hungarian at all—although perhaps more widespread in a system of dire shortages. And perhaps that's the real attraction of the book—it tells us a story about Hungary which relates remarkably easily with our own experiences under capitalism in the West.

Anna Paczuska

ideas and organisation. To reduce working class ideas to men's consciousness' and women's consciousness' is a gross over simplification.

The difficulties are compounded by Anna rating the family as equally important as the production process:

"Common sense" in Gramsci's view, arises both from "received" ideas and from practice: from ruling class ideology and from making sense of the world of everyday action. And for working class working women this world is simultaneously that of social production and of human reproduction: the workplace and the family'.

The implication seems to be that women workers are conditioned by the outside world and in particular their role as wives and mothers, but that male workers are not. This is simply wrong.

Anna believes not simply that women are oppressed, but that their oppression is crucial to the nature of their exploitation. For her, the fact that workers are *women* drastically alters their consciousness of the world. In other words consciousness is affected just as much by issues of gender as it is by issues of class.

Consciousness within the working class is uneven. The major areas of unevenness are not on grounds of gender. Male workers are not united against women. There are a thousand and one different material reasons for differing levels of consciousness. Of course whether you are a man or a woman is relevant, but to claim it is the *major* determining factor is to fly in the face of reality. The same arguments which Anna documents as used by the Bristol women are often used by most badly organised men, who are also alienated from the union and feel powerless.

Men too are influenced by factors outside the workplace — including the family. Marriage is referred to by Anna as 'patriarchal', as if it were an institution which benefited the male half of the working class. But marriage and the family are a product of *class society* and have a double edged role. On the one hand they are supposed to provide a haven from the outside world for both men and women. On the other the family also provides a constraint which can lead workers, particularly male workers, to keep their heads down, to work hard and to be unwilling to go out on strike.

To pretend that the male world is the world of work and the female world is the home, is to deny the double edged nature of the family and to turn it into a male conspiracy. Of course, Anna doesn't go this far, but the danger in what she is saying is to separate men and women into two different spheres.

This is a shame, because there are few enough books which talk at all about women workers. Anna not only talks about them, but allows the women to speak for themselves, which is a refreshing change from most sociological studies.

Lindsey German

Women and the world of work

Girls, Wives, Factory Lives.

Anna Pollert.
MacMillan

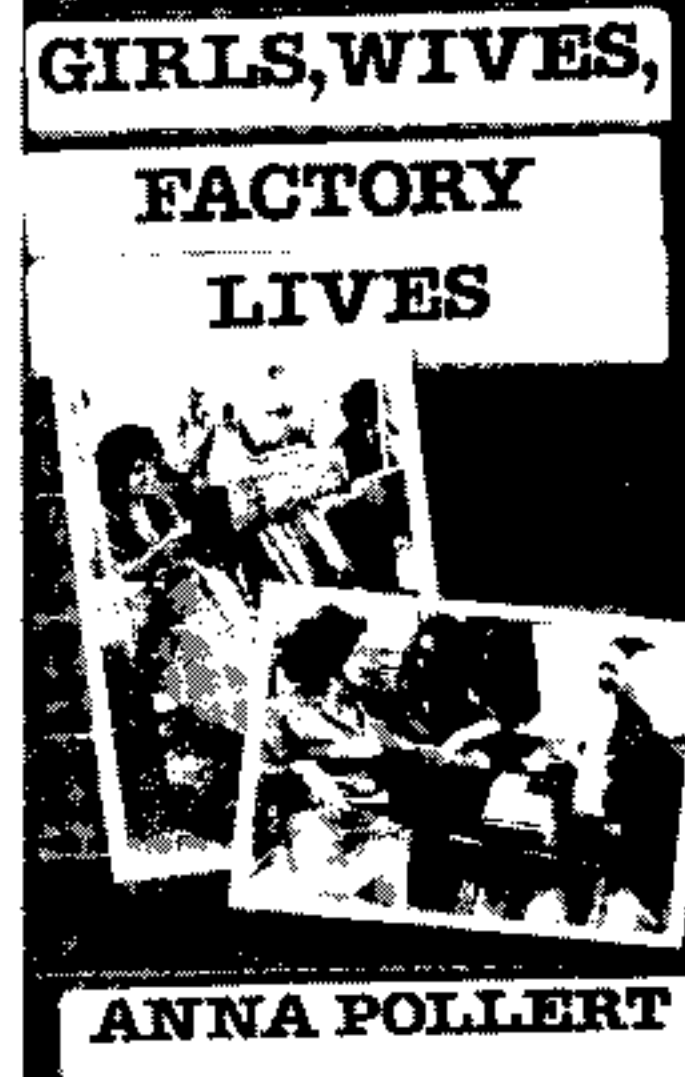
Women have entered the workforce on an unprecedented scale since the war. This fact is obvious to even the most cursory observer. But what is much less obvious is how that entry into the workforce has changed the ideas and expectations of working women.

Anna Pollert's book is an attempt to look at those ideas and expectations. She spent some time in 1972 talking to women workers in Churchmans tobacco factory in Bristol.

The results are interesting. She

looks at the methods of control used by the employers, the women's ideas of work and home and the role played by the union. We see the women responding to harassment from foremen and chargehands, a one day strike and its effect on them; and their relationship — or rather lack of it — with the union.

But this sort of sociological study has a limited value in explaining working women's consciousness. A study of 200 women in a poorly organised workplace in a city not noted for its high level of class struggle cannot be generalised to the female working class as a whole. The attempt to do so leads to a number of problems.



Quarterly Journal of the Socialist Workers Party

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM ★ 14

THE SUMMER OF THE PETROL BOMB



Chris Harman provides the most comprehensive analysis yet published of the riots of 1981
Plus: Tony Cliff on Alexandra Kollontai; Dave Beecham on the class struggle under the Tories; and discussion on feminism and the working class from Janet Vaux, Lyn James, Anna Paczuska and Juliet Ash.

Single copies £1.25 (plus 25p post); Annual Subscription in Britain and Ireland £5; from IS Journal, PO Box 82, London E2.



Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons — starring in a film that is very pretty, very clever and very empty.

Good book, bad film

John Fowles' novel, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, has become a very popular book probably for good reason. The film of the book, directed by Karel Reisz from a screenplay by Harold Pinter, is also likely to prove very popular — but undeservedly.

John Fowles took an interesting theme: the relationship between a Victorian gentleman, Charles Smithson, his upper middle-class fiancée, and a woman who is a semi-outcast as far as respectable society is concerned, Sarah Woodruff. He made it interesting for a number of reasons. First, because he set the novel at the moment in the 19th century when the aristocracy finally consented to become the junior partner in the British ruling class. To avoid complete extinction, it surrendered its titles to the wealth and power of the bourgeoisie, which in turn used them to give prestige and dignity to its rule.

It is, therefore, highly appropriate that as a symbol of this partnership Fowles should focus on the projected marriage between a member of the lesser gentry, uncertain of his inheritance, and the only daughter of a prosperous, enterprising owner of an up-and-coming chain of department stores. Their affection for one another is mixed with other, less romantic notions: for Charles, a sense that the future lies with the dynamic world of trade and commerce (however distasteful for a gentleman); and for Ernestina and her family, a

sense of gaining greater social status and gentility (however suspect these considerations may be for anyone steeped in the Protestant work ethic).

Secondly, it is interesting because Fowles develops these conflicting yet overlapping values by setting them against the huge network of social and personal relationships dependent on ruling class money and influence: the world of servants, prostitutes, and significantly for this novel governesses.

The 'other woman', Sarah, is variously seen as all three. She is also, because she is not conventional, an alluring figure, representing a kind of sexual and intellectual freedom for Charles in a way that his fiancée never can.

Her unconventionality matches Charles's. He is an amateur scientist (a gentleman of leisure had time for such pursuits), but also a closet atheist and believer in Darwin's theory of evolution. While this put paid once and for all to Biblical ideas about the origins of Man, it could also provide a justification for the notion that if the weak went to the wall in the struggle for existence it was just a necessary by-product of capitalist progress. Darwin's theory then, was doubly shocking: either because it destroyed old, traditional beliefs; or because it nakedly and amorally justified cut-throat competition.

So Charles does not share the pieties of his class or the class he's marrying into perhaps because as a minor

aristocrat he knows he is a doomed species (which makes his Darwinism a fitting irony). But if he is a fossil-survival, Sarah is the prototype of a new social species, the more emancipated woman of the end of the 19th century. Because she is still in a state of development she is hard to pin down and define; she represents a process, not a finished product.

Thirdly — and it follows from the last point — it is an interesting book because Fowles reflects this uncertainty by making his novel an experimental, unconventional one. There is not just a single ending, but two possible endings (the second of which itself contains variants). He uses 20th century hindsight to comment directly on social issues, reminding us that his characters aren't real people at all, simply words on the page that allow him to think through different possibilities.

In the 'happy' ending, the 'hero' marries the 'heroine', having put the tempting dangers of a scandalous liaison behind him. That is to say, it is a happy ending that reflects the hypocrisy of the period and callously ignores all those outside respectable society. In the 'unhappy', inconclusive ending, Charles breaks off his engagement and becomes an outcast himself. After a brief sexual encounter with Sarah, he loses track of her, wanders the world before finding her again (in a Bohemian artistic household), only to part from her once more (or do they remain together?).

So, all in all, it's a stimulating novel. Unfortunately, it's also an irritating one, assuming an academic type of audience self-conscious and verging on the pretentious. Sometimes its experimentalism appears as little more than cleverness.

It is this side of the novel that dominates the film version. The director goes for the same ploy of setting off the story against a 20th century perspective. The actor who plays Charles and the actress who plays Sarah are also having a secret relationship, one that matches the twists and turns of the characters themselves. But the film hardly goes beyond this to the social themes that Fowles explores. These become little more than marginal concerns, simply providing period decoration to a film about 'personal relationships'.

So, what we're left with is a very pretty, very clever, but very empty film. There are beautifully composed shots of Lyme Regis and its surroundings; Wapping warehouses make their customary appearances to thrill us with their urban poetry; and we are presented with lovingly assembled middle-class parlours full of knickknacks. It says a lot about the capacity of the props department to raid antique shops for Victorian bric-a-brac; it says very little about the issues of the period. If you enjoy picture postcards, go and see the film. If you want something more solid, read the book.

Gareth Jenkins

NOVEMBER 1910

In 1914 a revolutionary army marched on the Mexican presidential palace. A famous photograph of the time shows the leaders temporarily enjoying victory: cattle rustler and bandit, Pancho Villa, is sprawled happily across the presidential throne, while peasant leader Emiliano Zapata sits beside him looking anxious and uncomfortable.

These two men and their peasant army did not stay long. They vacated the palace of their own accord and returned to their home states, leaving the place to the bourgeois politicians. Rather sadly, however, the occupation was the symbolic highpoint of the Mexican revolution, one of the first upheavals of the twentieth century.

The revolution began inauspiciously on the 20th November 1910. A mildly eccentric son of a land-owning family, Francisco Madero launched his plan for the political reform of Mexico. Madero was concerned to end the ruthless, 34 year dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, who had opened up Mexico to foreign capital, while slavery still existed and most of the population lived on the verge of starvation.

Madero wanted to introduce democratic elections for the presidency. He spoke for the middle classes, the small businessmen, professionals and civil servants who were excluded from the profits gained from foreign capital.

Land and Liberty

The plan did not speak of land reform or workers' rights. But it was enough to spark off a revolution that lasted seven years, killing tens of thousands, and involving the mass of Mexico's peasants.

South of Mexico City, the peasants in the state of Morelos, had been driven off the land to make way for expanding sugar plantations. Their bitterness exploded in a movement led by Zapata, and calling for 'Land and Liberty' they marched on the mansions of the landowners. In the north, Pancho Villa formed a revolutionary army—the Goldshirts—with the support of the landworkers.

Many others formed revolutionary bands; some wanted personal power, others were fighting for limited political reforms. In the south and west, the Indian populations rose against those who had enslaved them.

In May 1911, Diaz resigned, and in November Madero was elected as president. His first act was to call on Zapata and Villa to lay down their arms; they were a threat to the orderly political change he wanted, and their demands threatened the comfortable middle class alliance he hoped to build. Both Zapata and Villa refused to move, until their basic demands for a redistribution of land were met.

Counter-revolution followed. Madero was murdered by one of his generals—a man named Huerta—who took over the presidency with the support of Diaz' men. In the

civil war that followed, an uneasy alliance was formed between Zapata and Villa on the one hand and the 'constitutionalist' landowner, Carranza, on the other. Together they managed to overthrow Huerta, but then Carranza swung round to oppose the peasantry.

The revolution officially ended in 1917. With Carranza as president, the constitution was supposed to lay the basis

for a post-revolutionary order. It promised land to the peasants, but it also protected private property. It promised workers' rights but it protected the bosses. Needless to say it was impossible to implement. Zapata again refused to lay down his arms. He fought on until he was betrayed and murdered in 1919.

Villa, finally defeated, retired to his ranch, where he was gunned down in 1923. The tragedy of the Mexican Revolution was the absence of the working class from the ranks of the revolutionary army. Under Carranza, in fact, the so-called 'Red' battalions of industrial workers were sent against Zapata's army.

In 1908-9, a series of major solidarity strikes had developed in the mines, the textile industry and on the railways. The political leadership of that movement was mainly syndicalist. Scorning the question of political power, the leadership concentrated on industrial and trade union issues. There was no form of political organisation capable of linking the struggles of workers and peasants. Although the slogan 'land and liberty' moved thousands of peasants, the movement had no programme for seizing power.

As a result, very little was changed by the Revolution. Although the country is ruled by the Party of Institutionalised Revolution, in reality the old ruling class was simply replaced by a series of generals who used the state for their own benefit. Madero's demand that no Mexican president should be re-elected has not stopped each Mexican president from becoming a millionaire. One of them Miguel Aleman is a partner in Hilton Hotels and has his milk specially flown in from Jersey every day.

In 1964 a new revolutionary movement grew up around a peasant called Ruben Jaramillo. It echoed the old battle cry of Zapata, 'Land and Liberty'. Jaramillo and his family were murdered by the army.

Mike Gonzalez

