

FIRST BRITISH EDITION

20 p

NEWS & LETTERS

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

Summer 1980

TOTAL CRISIS
REQUIRES TOTAL UPROOTING OF SYSTEM

EDITORIAL

This is the first British edition of an international newspaper. It is only fitting that our first editorial should sound an international note.

Everyone knows that the end may be nigh. Some care less than others. After all, Margaret Thatcher has her place in the bunker booked well in advance, as no doubt has Callaghan (and Benn), and "Born Again" Jimmy Carter, Ronald "Raygun", Reagan, Hua, and all their generals of industry, military top brass, parliamentary and party leaders—no doubt all of them have read the estimates of how much of their people and property are likely to survive. Some "think" tanks put the estimate as high as 60%.

Debt has collapsed. In the world today a million dollars per minute are being spent on arms and 40% of the world's scientists are employed in the human extermination business (figures from UNICEF).

Russia's brutal violation of Afghanistan has been seized upon by the western powers as an excuse for their own plunge into nihilisation. The US has begun registration for the draft and Carter has allocated \$50 billion for building the vast MX missile system. China now has Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and France is building the Neutron Bomb.

Thatcher's belief in herself as the new Churchill would be laughable were it not for her brainless determination to turn Britain into a launching pad for NATO's mega-death weapon such as the 150 "Cruise" missiles—thus making us a prime target for annihilation.

The drive towards war is the direct result of the world engulfing economic crisis. In a situation in which capitalists (and state-capitalists) try to squeeze more and more productivity out of fewer and fewer workers, these controllers of industry all over the world are forced to drive each other to the wall. This is taking place both economically and militarily (and with more and more production going over to the arms sector). If Nissan of Japan can make 1000 cars a day using 67 workers per shift in an automated plant (and they can!) then British Leyland, Isibot, and Ford are going to have to do likewise—or else perish. If Carter or Reagan are in the US with the Neutron Property Bomb (and they will) then Russia must get them as well—under penalty of death. These are the only answers the rulers of the world have. The so-called moderates, liberals, euro-communists, and social-democrats pose no real alternatives. They play the same old games within a diplomacy that is nothing more than a function of an increasingly barbaric world economic order and do everything they can to ensure that the masses stay in their place and cast the occasional vote if



Reagan for President? Our cartoonist fears the worst

and when required to—so long as they don't take matters into their own hands and try to get to the root of the problem i.e. change the relations of production. All of these leaders on the left flank of bourgeois politics are developing a rising tolerance towards state repression, if indeed they are not advocating it or supervising it.

We argue that the answers to the world's problems can only come from the people who are most exploited and oppressed—the workers, women, blacks, youth and peasants of the world.

The uprisings in Miami, S. Korea, El Salvador and Kurdistan and the continuing war against racism in Africa herald the 1980s as a decade of revolt and revolution. It is with these people and with workers everywhere that we identify with—rather than any superpower, demagogue or vanguard party.

Marxist-Humanists support the struggles of all oppressed groups and respect their autonomy as movements.

We resist all attempts to depoliticise struggles by dividing them only into single issue campaigns. Which is not to say that we do

not recognise the real achievements of the Anti-Nazi League, National Abortion Campaign, Anti-Nukes and Troops Out; we would simply stress that linking up the struggles and going "beyond the fragments" cannot be left to the central committees of "vanguard parties"! The terrifying totality of the crisis compels the "new passions, new forces" (to quote Marx) that the system produces as its own opposite, to embark on the "quest for universality". We recognise that the stern preaching by elitist leftists to workers to "drop everything and "build the party" invariably gets the short shrift it deserves.

Political philosophy needs to be worked out anew for our age of state-capitalism, just as it had to be for Marx in his day and Lenin in his. There is no gospel to be handed down. We make pretence at being a political party. Revolutionary organisation can only come about through actual class struggles in the free discussions that abound in all genuine movements. We intend to raise the awkward questions and we invite you to help find the answers that can pave the way for a totally new and free society based on new human relations.

UNITY AGAINST THE TORIES?— The Labour Party's Non-Alternative

By Dick Abernathy

Britain today is a mixture of state capitalism and private capitalism. Directly or indirectly, the state, at both national and local level, is employer to millions of people: workers in nationalised industries, public corporations and municipal services. Miners and hospital workers, railway and postal workers, gas, electricity and water workers, carworkers at British Leyland, British Steel workers, dustmen, park keepers, swimming pool attendants and many many others, all sell their labour power to the state.

Whether the economy is satisfied partially, as in Britain, or wholly as in Russia and China, state capital follows the same general laws of motion as private capital. There is the same drive to accumulate, to get bigger and more modern than competitors—or go under. Hence the crisis in British Leyland and British Steel, with management pushing to have production concentrated in the most modern and efficient plants, making tens of thousands redundant in the process. The same pressures apply, less directly, in the service industries which do not have to compete directly on the market. They need to accumulate capital, and squeeze more

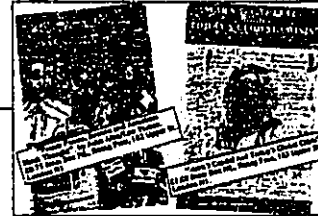
production out of fewer workers, in order to maintain the overall competitiveness of British capitalism on the world market. A look at Corby or Shotton, ravaged by the closures of steel plants, should be enough to show that nationalisation is no solution in itself whatever.

Broadly speaking, Labour is the Party of state-capitalism while the Tories represent private capital. The division is far from being an exact one. In practice, Labour accepts the need for the state to share power with big business corporations, and Labour politicians are far from adverse to directorships in private industry. For their part, the Tories are eager to sell off some profitable state businesses to private shareholders (the telephone system, for instance) but do not seriously challenge the need for state control of such crucial sectors as coal and railways. It follows from this that the Labour Party is an integral part of British Capitalism. It is not a "workers' party, but a bourgeois party that depends heavily on workers' votes and on its special relationship with the trade unions. Much of the ground for Thatcher's current cross-the-

board attack on working class freedoms and living standards was, as everyone knows, prepared by the policies of earlier Labour governments. The first round of massive cuts in public services was foreshadowed by the Labour/TUC "concordat" of 1978; stringent immigration controls were pioneered under Wilson, and so on.

Most of today's would-be revolutionaries and Marxists just will not face up to the facts of life. Confronted with the attacks of a militant right-wing Conservative government, they respond by calling for "unity against the Tories" and shout the loudest for returning Labour to power. Instead of looking for independent, working class based opposition to the capitalist system, the Trotskyists do legwork for social democracy and seek to channel struggles through the Labour party wards.

As Marxist Humanists, we flatly refuse to be the left auxiliaries of Labour. We believe that the working class and all the oppressed groups can and must develop their own forms of thought, struggle and organisation, outside and in opposition to the Labour Party's bourgeois political machine.



NUCLEAR POWER AND IMPERIALISM— THE URENCO CONSPIRACY

By Roger Moody

"The alternative to nuclear power is not solar power, but revolution"
(Quote from "News and Letters"—US, 1979)

As the anarchist philosopher Murray Bookchin has shown (and as Karl Marx himself understood in his 1844 Philosophical and Economic essays), a fundamentally non-exploitative relationship between human beings and their environment depends on a transformation of relationships between human beings. Once we understand whether in growing food, supplying energy, building schools or running bureaucracies—that we can never get more out of the earth than we put into it, any kind of energy that is centralised becomes unsupportable, not so much because of its inherent dangers and difficulties, but because it encapsulates man's ignorance (there are almost no women involved in the nuclear market) of the second law of thermodynamics. In other words, the more we depend on sources of energy which themselves depend on finite resources—such as fossil fuels—the more we destroy the eco-system on which all life depends.

Nuclear power is totally dependent, in many countries on coal and oil, to provide the huge power needed to build reactors, and keep them working; to enrich the uranium required for the fission process; and to open up, mine and mill, the often very lowgrade uranium ore. Inevitably, the few countries which can run parts of the nuclear cycle on renewable energy, are the very countries which don't need increased energy consumption, to improve the lot of their inhabitants. A few years ago, an international consortium "sold" the idea of a hydroelectric scheme on the Puan River in Papua/New Guinea. But this small third world country literally can't afford the energy needed to develop the power. The consortium then tried to attract investment in a uranium plant, to use the energy produced by the original scheme. The end-product would be sold to Australia's customers overseas. Put succinctly: uranium

stolen from Australia's aborigines would be turned into fissile material using power stolen from the Papua New Guineans. This then would be sent to countries which would turn it into vast amounts of useless heat that pollutes the atmosphere, and monstrously costly amounts of electricity.

The electricity is then used to produce—under often intensive exploitative labour conditions—the type of commodities which further entrench the unequal relationship between the West and the rest of the world.

When we examine closely the governments and corporations involved in marketing nuclear power, it is therefore no accident that they are:

- 1) Often involved in pilaging the earth of its other irreplaceable resources (e.g. Rio Tinto Zinc, Exxon, Pechiney Ugine Kuhlman and Shell). Moreover—lest we fall for the delusion that solar power involves a radically different marketing mechanism from nuclear power—we should realise that the oil/uranium companies are rapidly acquiring control of research into and production of, solar technology. Of the four major US companies involved in solar research, one (Solar Energy Systems) is majority owned by Shell and another (Solar Power Corp.) is wholly owned by Exxon. Six of the twelve largest oil companies in the world are heavily involved in solar programmes.
 - 2) Usually authoritarian, and increasingly prepared to deny civil rights in order to smooth the path for nuclear power (hence the draconian legislation recently introduced in Australia, the repression of anti-nuclear activists in West Germany and France, and the mockery of the recent Windscale enquiry).
 - 3) Usually on the Northern side of the great North/South dialogue—this includes countries like Brazil, Japan and South Africa.
- Some of these countries are manifestly involved in export deals which threaten the world from a military point of view. West Germany, Brazil, Israel and South Africa have developed what authors Cervenka and Rogers

have called a "nuclear conspiracy" to outflank the admittedly weak provisions of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. What is less often realised is that Britain and the Netherlands are themselves involved in this conspiracy, through the tripartite organisations URENCO and CENTEC. URENCO (managed in Britain by the government agency British Nuclear Fuels) has confirmed a deal to supply Brazil with enriched uranium as part of the largest nuclear contract ever signed: that between West Germany and Brazil in 1976. The deal significantly enhances Brazil's capacity to produce nuclear explosives. For, as India's detonation of its own nuclear bomb has shown—it is perfectly feasible for a country to make itself that acme of machismo, a nuclear state.

Urenco typifies what may well become a new divide among nations, as powerful and dangerous as that between "north" and "south". On one hand, we have those Western countries which—though increasingly intolerant of opposition to nuclear activities—are restrained by some ecological and other procedures, from doing certain things to their own people. On the other hand, there are countries with no such restraints who nonetheless depend on the West for their capital and technology. They have no scruples about developing atomic bombs or exploiting sweated labour. Their devotion to civilian nuclear power has but one end in view: the development of their industrial and commercial sectors, to the point at which their dominance over their region is assured. Against this nuclear fascism, the occasional nativity and ignorance of the ecological lobby pales into insignificance.

The Nuclear Axis by Zdenek Cervenka and Barbara Rogers. Published by Julian Freeman Ltd at £7.95.
STOP URENCO— a joint British/Dutch/West German/Australian/Brazilian campaign to oppose URENCO's activities can be contacted at 6 Enleigh St, London WC1.

PURARI published by International Development Action. From Roger Moody through News and Letters.

DISCUSSION NEW TECHNOLOGY AND MARX'S THEORY OF ALIENATION

In this first issue of a British Marxist-Humanist newspaper, I hope to open the debate a little on the question of new technology. A great deal of the discussion so far has centred on the economic aspects of this forthcoming "miracle", with little or nothing on the political and philosophical level. This seems surprising because it's well known that Marx criticised Proudhon using precisely this latter approach.

Proudhon called for direct economic measures to tackle the problem—the negative of the given situation. In fact he dissolved politics into utopian economics—what Marx called "abolishing political-economic estrangement within political-economic estrangement". Marx went on to say—almost it seems for the benefit of those who believe today that new technology is acceptable if it increases wages—that "even the equality of wages demanded by Proudhon only transforms the relationship of the present day worker to his labour into the relationship of all men to labour. Society is then conceived of as an abstract capitalist". Marx hammered at Proudhon for his denial of the specifically human element of production. "Estrangement" and "Abstract" (the external power over wo/man) are only meaningful if the centre of the critique is the self mediating being (wo/man) as subject not object.

In the light of this it's not too difficult to see through certain so-called Marxists who deny the use of Marx's critique of Proudhon in the battle over the New Technology. Vanguardism of one form or another stands in the way of a proper understanding of Marx's concept of alienation. For as "leaders", they believe that

they have alienated their alienation. An example of this attitude can be found in the uncritical approach to the Health and Safety demand. In reality, the safety the capitalists refers to is that of machines, whereas health relates directly to a subject—the worker. For example, the Los Alamos Nuclear bomb plant was supposed to be one of the "safest" plants in the world. But the safety the capitalists were concerned with there was that of their equipment and only with the safety of workers as part of the equipment, thereby reducing the worker to the level of a thing.

You could say in fact, that there is an implicit dualism in the term "health and safety"—Health and Hazards would be a better one. I hope no one sees this as semantic niggling—I merely want to stress that the whole issue cannot be separated from the question of alienation of the worker at the point of production which was central to Marx's whole analysis of capitalist society. We must avoid the danger of accepting alienation and moreover, regarding it as non-injurious to health.

The lack of debate on new technology and related Health and Hazards issues casts doubt on the theoretical orientation of the left towards the issue. It also casts doubt on the whole of the left's understanding of the Marxism of Marx.

Bob Turner (E.E.P.T.U.)
Tyneside

AMERICA—THE BLACK DIMENSION

INDIGNANT HEART.
An American Black Worker's Testament.
Plato Press.

All the best revolutionary autobiographies are contributions to the "Battle of Ideas". This one by the U.S. editor of News and Letters falls into that category. It is also a total critique of capitalist, racist society.

What makes a political autobiography by a worker so important is that personal experience in historical events throw a light on history that gives it a richness and life that no academic work—however learned—can ever give.

In the heat of a wild cat walk out or sit-down in an auto plant; in a confrontation with police hoses, guns and dogs in a civil rights demonstration or in an urban insurrection against the racist state, you learn what class struggle is all about—and Denby tells us.

He was born in 1907 in Alabama, into a large family of sharecroppers—his Grandmother had been a slave. The sharecroppers had to give half their product to the filthy-rich white "boss of the county" who employed "riding bosses" to lay down his law with brute force. Despite the almost unimaginable oppression, the black people of Lowndes County managed to keep on raising—sometimes with force. The riding bosses never lasted very long in their jobs and were usually sacked as a concession to discontent. The spirit of rebellion Denby got from his people in Alabama stayed with him after he left in order to find work, and it's never left him.

Subsequent chapters are full of confrontations with white racism and battles against it and are told with both anger and a good deal of humour. In one instance he tells how on a journey between North and South, he with his son and other black passengers spontaneously desegregated a train!

Denby came to Detroit auto plants to stay in 1943—the year a virtual war broke out between Detroit's black population and state troopers, which he describes from the inside in

some detail. By this time, as an auto worker and union militant he was starting to link up his fight against racism with the struggle at the point of production and getting into socialist politics.

Blacks encountering the then growing Communist Party, found it was trying to hold back the black (and class) struggle in the interests of the capitalist war effort. The Trotskyists continued the class struggle and also opposed segregation, so Denby joined them and recruited dozens more black workers. But the Trotskyists had no properly worked out policy on the "Negro Question" until Black members forced the leadership to adopt a resolution to campaign seriously on the issue. Unfortunately the leadership then ordered the black members to concentrate on working inside the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People—a non-bund organisation completely out of touch with the increasingly militant black population. The black workers weren't interested in the "new" party line and conflict with the white leadership brought the racism of many white party members out into the open. I'm sure these shocking facts will be news to most of today's Trotskyists and I know such things wouldn't be tolerated today. But do they really now recognise Black autonomy? How many blacks did you see at the last left demonstration? How many white leftists have even heard of Frantz Fanon, let alone read any of his books?

Denby's struggle carries on through the civil rights movement, the anti Vietnam War movement, insurrections of the sixties in the urban black ghettos, the black workers caucuses such as the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement and the interaction between Black American struggles and the freedom struggles of the third world.

Leaders and organisations are measured against Denby's Marxist-Humanist belief that all liberation movements must have a philosophy which doesn't allow leaders to separate themselves from the masses—who must be seen not only as force but also as reason.

Denby singles out the great liberation fighters Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko, dead so long before their time, as being key figures in our age in the fight for a new society. I would recommend that anyone who wants to understand the black liberation struggle and get some idea about linking it up with that of white workers, women and youth, should put this book at the top of their reading list. Especially in the light of recent events in Soweto, Bristol and Miami.



Victory at Chrysler, Detroit, 1973.

ENOCH POWELL ATTEMPTS COMEBACK IN WALES ON "IRISH QUESTION"—AUDIENCE NODS OFF

With our megaphones slung over our shoulders we happily arrived at the venue only to find that no one on the left had bothered to turn up to picket Powell's meeting. Our tactics had to be changed—from trying to stop the meeting to creating a disturbance from inside. Entering the hall a wave of fear overtook us. We realised that it was the "event of the year" for Aberystwyth district racists including the "Keep South Africa White Campaign" and the League of Empire Loyalists. We stood uneasily at the back, our exits barred.

Amidst a wave of tumultuous applause Powell took the stage, the crowd eagerly anticipating stirring calls for patriotic action against the spectre of communism in Aberystwyth. After some of our heckling, some of the red-faced old men around us were enraged. The 70 year old in front of us threatened us with violence. The situation could so easily have become ugly. After a quarter of an hour the excitement wore off—we were bored. Powell's speech was quite predictable—we'd heard it all before in the media. He talked about "ten years of change in Ulster"; about how the IRA had "no support"; how the "two communities were coming together"; how army violence was a "myth". When questioned about the presence of the army Powell said there was no difference between Derry and Colchester, and between Belfast and Kensington! Kensington being the latest battle ground of the "heroic lads of the SAS".

He jumbled on, boring by this time even the rosy-checked old men. It was time to make our exit.

(From three Aberystwyth anti-racists)

CHIX WORKERS REJECT UNION SELL-OUT AND FIGHT ON

Anyone taking part in the occasional mass pickets supporting the strikers at the Chix sweet factory in Slough is bound to feel a deep admiration for their enduring courage and determination. They have been on strike since October, struggling for basic union rights and better wages and conditions, against a typical low-wage, anti-union, small-time employer. As in earlier, more famous sagas such as the Grunwick dispute, clichés about the docility and submissiveness of Asian women have been shattered. "We will never go back until we win", Jaswinder Bhat told me one dismal April morning as two hundred of us stood shivering in the drizzling rain outside the factory. The strikers had been there for seven months, yet they seemed more cheerful and enthusiastic than those of us who had busted in to show our support.

At the end of May, an agreement was made

between Chix boss Denis Rose and GMWU official Jeremy McMullen. The union was recognised, 15 day-shift workers were to be reinstated, returning to work on wages some 30% higher than the miserable 95p an hour that they were being paid before. But Rose had abolished the evening shift while the strike was underway, and there was to be no reinstatement for 28 strikers who worked evenings.

It looked as if the strike was over, and I wrote an article for this paper balancing the gains and losses and attacking the role of the union bureaucrats.

That article is now in the wastepaper basket. Everyone—the boss, the union official, the press, and me—had underestimated the tenacity of the Chix strikers. In a stormy meeting with McMullen they absolutely refused to accept a settlement that consigned 28 of their

number to the ranks of the unemployed. They determined to carry on the strike until the company agreed to reinstate all of them. McMullen backed down. The strike is to continue.

Previous union recognition disputes by low-paid workers, such as the Randolph Hotel, Grunwicks, and Gamers strikes, have been sunk by union officials withdrawing support just when victory was in sight. If the Chix strikers can stick firmly to their present course, they stand a good chance of breaking out, at last, from this well established pattern of bureaucratic sell-out. They need all the help they can get, and we urge readers to send donations and take part in future mass pickets.

VICTORY TO THE CHIX STRIKERS!

Donations and messages of support to M. Anwar
271 Goodmans Park, Slough, Bucks.

ROSA LUXEMBURG—A REVOLUTIONARY THINKER FOR TODAY

Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919) flourished as a revolutionary thinker and activist in the years leading up to and during the First World War. A leader of the revolution in Berlin following Germany's military defeat, she was murdered by right wing soldiers of the Freikorps in the bloody counter-revolution that ensued.

During her lifetime, the face of the world was being transformed by imperialism. The industrial capitalist powers of Europe, North America and Japan vied with each other to carve up the rest of the world into colonial empires, to serve both as captive markets for their manufactured products and as sources of cheap raw materials and cheap labour power. Vast areas of Asia, Africa, Central and South America and Oceania became ancillary to the industrial capitalist economies. Political control was established either directly, through colonial governments, or indirectly, through protectorates and spheres of influence.

As early as 1899, Rosa Luxemburg was alert to this new phase of capitalism and predicted where it would lead—to World War between the rival imperialist powers. Her whole life was devoted to the belief that only the working people of all countries, refusing to fight and kill each other in the interests of the bosses and uniting to overturn the existing society, could avert a calamitous war that would wipe out millions of human lives.

Either the triumph of imperialism and the destruction of all cultures, and, as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration, a vast cemetery; or the victory of socialism, that is, the conscious struggle of the international proletariat against imperialism, against its methods, against war. This is the dilemma of world history, its inevitable choice, whose scales are trembling in the balance, awaiting the decision of the proletariat. Upon it depends the future of culture and humanity.

With the outbreak of World War One in August 1914, a stunning betrayal took place within the socialist movement. The powerful German Social Democratic Party, which had been campaigning for years against militarism, and was the most powerful section of the Second International, suddenly came out in "defence of the fatherland", throwing its weight behind the Kaiser's war effort. The Labour Party in Britain and the Socialist Party in France similarly backed the war machines of their own nations. The radical workers of Europe were exhorted by their leaders to go and butcher each other in the trenches

A minority of socialists stayed true to internationalist principles. In Germany, Luxemburg became the most prominent member of an anti-war, revolutionary group that included Clara Zetkin, Karl Liebknecht and Franz Mehring. She had never anticipated the SDP so blatantly throwing overboard all its former principles, but for years she had been aware that it was growing rotten with opportunism. As a participant in the 1905 Russian Revolution, she had seen how powerfully the masses in motion could challenge the old order. In mass strikes which linked together economic and political demands, the workers, acting for themselves and learning through their own experiences, went beyond the struggle against Tsarist despotism to work out new ideas of freedom and create a new form of revolutionary organisation—the soviet or workers' council. "Revolutions do not allow anyone to play schoolmaster with them", she commented. Taking the lessons of 1905 back to Germany, agitating for mass strikes in the struggle for universal suffrage, she ran into bitter opposition (and sexist abuse) from Party leaders like Karl Kautsky who were all for caution and the gradual process of winning elections.

In our own time, the integration of social democracy into the capitalist system is total. Germany's SPD, which began life in the 19th century struggling against Bismark's Anti-Socialist Laws, has evolved into an impeccably bourgeois ruling party that operates "Berusverbot" against radicals. In Britain, Callaghan claims to lead "the natural party of government", and with Labour's record of strike-breaking, cutting social services, operating racist immigration controls and military repression in N. Ireland, who can deny it? That such parties can still retain a certain progressive aura, and still count many good, sincere socialists among their dwindling ranks, only makes them more subtle and effective instruments of capitalist control.

The outright, counter-revolutionary role of social democracy was seen, for the first time in the German revolution of 1918-19. After a vast upsurge of protest against war hardships forced the Kaiser to abdicate and flee the country, the SPD leaders Ebert, Noske and Scheidman suddenly found themselves in power, and violently opposed every initiative of the working class to overturn existing social relations. For them, revolution meant a parliamentary republic to replace the Empire—and that was all. Capitalist relations in factory, farm and office were to remain unaltered. Against this, Rosa Luxemburg and the revolutionaries of the Spartakusbund pointed to the need for a total uprooting of society.

The proletarian masses must therefore replace the traditional organs of bourgeois class rule, the federal courts, parliaments, municipal councils, etc. from the supreme leadership of the state down to the smallest community, with their own class organs: Workers' and Soldiers' Councils; they must occupy all public posts, superintend all public activity, and measure all the needs of the state by their own class interests and socialist tasks. The state can be imbued with a socialist spirit only if there is constant and vital reciprocity between the popular masses and their organs—the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils...

The proletarian masses must learn how to develop from being dead machines, placed by capitalists in the productive process, into thinking, free and independent managers in this process.

Here we have the key to Rosa Luxemburg's socialism, her basic continuity with Karl Marx's revolutionary humanism—the view of working people as thinking free and independent beings, people with ideas and aspirations of their own, who were not to be schoolmastered in a revolution by the leaders of any political apparatus. And that must be our starting point for today, in our struggle against nuclear-armed state capitalism, East and West, for a truly free, human society.

It is appropriate that in this crisis ridden year of 1980 when a whole range of revolutionary upheavals all over the world are unfolding as a true opposite to the utterly reactionary conglomeration of those mirror image power blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, that News and Letters is looking at Rosa Luxemburg's thought, with David Wolff's first-ever English translation of "Theory and Practice" and Raya Dunayevskaya's "Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution". We need to develop creatively the ideas of past great revolutionaries like Marx and Luxemburg to meet the enormous new challenges of our own age.

SUBSCRIPTIONS!
British "News and Letters" four times per year includes U.S. "News and Letters" 10 times per year. £2.

DONATIONS!
(are much needed and would be much appreciated) ... as would letters and articles. Cheques/P.O.s to: "News and Letters", Box NL, Rising Free, 182 Upper St., London, N1

20p Winter 1980/81

marxist humanism

HUMAN POWER IS ITS OWN END. — Marx

Mountains of missiles...

If World War Three comes, and the superpowers throw their nuclear missiles, nerve gas and plague viruses at each other's populations, will our species become extinct and our planet become a radioactive desert or will the politicians and generals emerge from their subterranean command posts as rulers of a half devastated world, at the cost of 'only' a few hundred million deaths?

The only sane answer is that we don't know and that we are absolutely determined that the matter shall never be put to the test

Thatcher's decision to spend £5 million on Trident (replacing Polaris), and her invitation to the USAF to base 100 Cruise missiles at Molesworth and Gr. onham, are part of a global process of replacing the old weapons with a new generation: the USA's gigantic MX missile system, with its vast network of tunnels beneath the deserts of Nevada and Utah; the USSR's SS20 missiles and 'Backfire' bombers; France's neutron bomb, etc. Of course, the threat of Nuclear Holocaust is not some new development — the younger generation have lived their whole lives in a 'bomb culture'. However, the greater accuracy of the new weapons, which can knock out the enemy's missile bases and airfields instead of (or more likely in addition to) inflicting colossal but quite random destruction on cities, suits them very well for use as a pre-emptive first strike. The old theory of deterrence, according to which neither side could launch a nuclear war so they could not prevent retaliation in kind, is rendered obsolete by the new military technology.

Such is the pervasiveness and inhumanity of world capitalism that it has turned the great discoveries of nuclear physics, which opened up a new dimension in our understanding of the universe, into the threat of sudden annihilation in a squalid fight between rival imperialists.

Militarism means brutalising people's minds as well as actually accumulating weapons. The establishment seeks, via the more servile sections of the media, to create an atmosphere of pig-ignorant narrow nationalism and unreasoning devotion to authority. Britain is always right (of course), but in recent years 'we' have become 'too soft', and we need to be able to throw our weight around in world affairs once again. That is the sluggish mentality with which the likes of Thatcher and Pym approach

international affairs. Consider the jubilation after the Iranian embassy siege. The SAS were acclaimed as heroes when they shot dead five terrorists who were, according to the eyewitness accounts of hostages, unarmed at the time and trying to surrender. According to Thatcher, this sort of thing is what makes us proud to be British.

Workers in Poland have struck against their state-capitalist rulers, demanding not only wage rises, but independent unions free from party control. The conservative and pro-NATO social democratic representatives of western capitalism may welcome the Polish events on the basis that worker militancy is OK on the other side of the Iron Curtain if it makes life difficult for their eastern bloc rivals but meanwhile they spend billions on missiles to kill Poles and Russians (the bosses of NATO say its purpose is not to protect Poland from her allies.)

The most important conflict is not between

competing state powers but between the exploiters and exploited in every country. In reaching out for freedom in their own lives, the Polish workers pose a revolutionary threat to the Warsaw Pact regimes whose missiles are targeted on London, Paris and New York. We in the west have an internationalist duty to smash the NATO war machine that threatens genocide against the peoples of Eastern Europe.

The CND revival is bringing groups together from all over the country, but the question now is will the movement stagnate into single issue politics, long distance apologetics for the Warsaw Pact, or electoral support for the Labour Party which is always militaristic and imperialistic when in power (notice how quiet Foot has been on the issue since winning the Labour leadership?)

The alternative is to take up the Marxist tradition of revolutionary anti-militarism and internationalism.

... in a sea of unemployment

The new official unemployment figures — 2,360,000 — which are in any event an underestimation as this social system excludes married women from the totals (and from benefits) — have not deterred the Thatcher government from holding benefits below the inflation rate and employing hundreds more social security snooters to harass the unemployed.

Sections of the Tory party and the CBI are beginning to call for a 'U-turn' in the Government's unemployment-causing policies, in the face of what the Sunday Times called an impending 'collapse of exports'.

U-turn or not, the call from bosses and politicians alike to those who remain in work is 'Step up production and don't fight for better wages and conditions or you could end up on the dole as well'.

The most frequent target is the continually rebellious workforce at British Leyland. At the £275M Longbridge plant, manning levels on some lines have been cut from 138 to 13 a line — the whole process being controlled by computers. Conditions for

those not yet made redundant by robots are facing more inhuman conditions than ever before, for in this topsy-turvy world of Capital, technology fails to liberate us from unpleasant labour and boring drudgery and condemns others to unemployed poverty. The technology of this society also wastes our natural resources and destroys the environment.

'State Ownership' and 'Planned Economy' are no solution as long as the social relations remain as they are.

Marx argued that in capitalist social relations, not only are people alienated from the goods they produce (which go to the capitalist) but from work itself (insofar as work is regarded as free activity. Work is imposed on us by our rulers who need profits to accumulate more capital than their rivals in order to replace living labour with dead labour in the form of bigger and more advanced machines.)

It is this process, these relations of production, which are at the heart of the crisis and the tendency of falling profit rates (see Raya Dunayevskaya's 'Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crises' which needs uprooting — talk of 'greedy workers' is nonsense).

introducing marxist humanism

Marxist Humanism is a new British revolutionary newspaper, which shares the philosophy and politics of the US monthly News and Letters. Some people will have seen a pilot British News and Letters Ltd. June which is now replaced by Marxist Humanism.

We stand for the abolition of capitalism, whether in the American private corporate form, the Russian/Chinese state capitalist form or the British 'mixed' variant. That is, a total uprooting of this exploitative, sexist, racist and militarist system, and its replacement by the worldwide cooperation of free men, women and children. It is our aim to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, youth, women and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labour. We do not set ourselves up as a vanguard party to lead, rather we seek to work out a philosophy of liberation for our age — a process which involves listening to, and learning from, all exploited and oppressed people in revolt. We view the masses not only as force, but as a power in overturning the old society and creating the new. We base ourselves upon Karl Marx's philosophy of revolution: reasserting the humanity that is central to all his work, yet so much ignored or repudiated by many who call themselves 'marxists'. Far from regarding state planning as the essence of socialism, we believe that the task is to overturn the inhuman, alienated relations of production that prevail in free market and state managed economies

alike, reducing people to components in a process they do not control. With Marx we say: The free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

Marxist humanist philosophy has been worked out over the last 10 years, in particular by Raya Dunayevskaya. In 1917 she was the Russian secretary to Leon Trotsky in exile in Mexico. After the Hitler-Stalin pact, she broke with Trotsky who still called for the defence of the USSR as a 'workers' state', though 'degenerate'. Dunayevskaya argued that under Stalin, the once-revolutionary Russia had been transformed into its opposite — a totalitarian state-capitalist society. She undertook an extensive study, from original sources, of the first three Five Year Plans, which both established that the central dynamic of capitalism, the compulsive accumulation of capital, did apply to Stalinist Russia, and at the same time exposed the distortions of Marx's theories carried out by communist ideologues.

For Dunayevskaya, understanding the new age of state capitalism could not be separated from watching and listening for new forces of world revolution, like rank and file workers in revolt East and West, the Black freedom movements in Africa and the US, and the new Women's Liberation Movement, or from studying the great revolutionary acts of the past with the eyes of Today. Her major works Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution which form the theoretical core of Marxist

Humanism, brought together the movement from practice and the movement from theory. They looked at the Detroit wildcat against automation, the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama against segregation, and to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution which posed the power of workers councils against state capitalism, as well as to the rediscovery of Marx's 1844 essays and Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks.

Since the News and Letters Committees were set up in the USA in 1955, just about every freedom struggle in America and many internationally have been recorded in the paper by actual participants. Now we are beginning to develop Marxist Humanism in Britain as theory, as paper, as organization.

We aim to participate actively in the unfolding opposition to this barbarous government of right wing Tories, and the whole monstrous system, they and the politicians in the Labour Party represent. We will be supporting and reporting the many dimensioned struggle for freedom and human self-development.

And we will carry on a battle of ideas with other radical tendencies, to ensure that these struggles are not cramped and restricted into single issue campaigns, or channeled into the reformist structures of the Labour Party, or by subordinating to the building of any vanguard party — but develop to their full potential.

6375

MARKIST HUMANISM

Gardners sit in turns back the tide

By Jane Tomlinson

Over the past couple of years, the working class has consistently failed to halt the rising tide of unemployment. The steel industry is the most striking example, where whole areas such as Corby and South Wales have been deprived of their main places of work. A combination of large redundancy payments, and mass sell out, aborted any fighting spirit at an early point. In the car industry, at times it has seemed that Edwardes, that ruthless wizard, has turned one of the most militant sections of the working class into a defeated shadow of its former self, as his Plan for increased automation, speed-up and massive redundancies has taken effect.

In securing partial victory, the Gardners workers sit-in, in Manchester, has shown the way for those who will be faced with unemployment. The tide can be turned.

Back in August the workforce of this long established company heard the first news of the 500 redundancies that management had planned for them. Throughout the next two months resistance built up, as workers tried to fight these job losses through the official channels. But the management were steadfast in their refusal to accept any sort of concession over the issue, and the result was deadlock in negotiation. The decision to occupy was then taken, and immediately put into effect.

When we visited the sit-in, it was hard to see how the workers could fail to succeed, showing an iron determination to keep the struggle going until the end. The sit-in was organised on a high level of efficiency inside the factory, and in publicising their fight to the rest of the working class movement. Conditions were difficult, especially as even in mid-November many of the strikers had received no strike pay, though of course their SS payments were reduced as if they were receiving strike pay. That's the new Tory law. Management engaged in the usual intimidatory tactics, sending letters to everyone identifying the workers to be made redundant, and urging all the others to withdraw their support. This did not succeed.

The agreement that has just been signed is one which gives the workers most of their demands - there will be no compulsory redundancies, though all will be on short time working. This represents an almost complete backing down by management, yet at no time was the militant demand of a full days work or a full days pay considered feasible by the workforce. We should not be under the illusion, spread by some groups, that Gardners workers are conscious revolutionaries. In our interviews with strike committee members, the point made again and



again was the desire to 'share the misery of short time working', rather than some being put on the unemployment scrapheap, and others working full time.

Yes the very act of sitting in represents a great advance, even when taken in support of limited demands, and it is one which will not warm the hearts of management throughout the country! The main demand itself, for no compulsory redundancies, is one which capitalism will fight hard not to concede. One of the key elements of the Conservative government's strategy is to hold unemployment high in order to subdue those who are 'lucky' enough to have a job. 120 years ago, Marx described this creation of a 'reserve army of labour' as an integral product of the capitalist system.

In pursuing and finally winning their goal, Gardners workers, women and men, have shown that management decisions can be reversed. They set an example which will be followed and surpassed by other workers forced to defend their livelihood against the onslaught of Capital.

SPECIAL unrepeatable OFFER

MARX'S CAPITAL and TODAY'S GLOBAL CRISIS



"MARX'S CAPITAL AND TODAY'S GLOBAL CRISIS"
BY N. LUDWIG (1974)
PREPARED BY JAMES MORGAN, PHILIP NIEL & CHRISTOPHER TO
MANIFEST HUMANISM YOU WILL REVEAL THE TRUE AMERICAN
MARK & LUTHER'S AND CAPITAL "MARX'S CAPITAL"
FOR A YEAR, JUST SAY'S AS TO USE IN READING FROM
THE OFFICE AT, 127, CRAWFORD ST., MANCHESTER.

State racialism hardens, but black struggle goes on

For the past year, Anwar Ditta has led a mass campaign to force the Home Office to allow her children to join her in this country, in which she was born and bred. Her struggle is only a highlight of the whole black community's determination to oppose increasing state oppression, whether whether through new racist, sexist, anti-immigration laws, or the growing tyranny of officials in dealing out justice, British style.

Although she was born in Birmingham, England, in 1954, Anwar Ditta was forced to go to Pakistan in 1962, due to the break up of her parents' marriage. It was there that she married her husband and had three children. Later she returned to England, without her children, in order to establish a settled home for them to move to. But when she was ready to bring them to Rochdale, where she lives, she was confronted with the brutality of our immigration laws.

Determined to comply with the law, Anwar Ditta wanted three years while her case was considered by Home Office bureaucrats, only to find that, without any evidence, the inspectors claimed that the children were not her. Since that time, Anwar has amassed a vast array of evidence to support her case. No-one who has seen her speak can have any doubt about her sincerity.

Faced with the same willing attitude of the authorities, Anwar has built a magnificent defence

campaign, drawing from many black organisations, as well as a number of socialist organisations in the North-West. Starting less than a year ago, the Committee has had mass support for her stand, with a number of demonstrations and public meetings in Rochdale, Manchester, and London. Above all, the Defence Committee has been at pains to show solidarity with others faced with racist threats of deportation, etc. Without doubt, these trends represent a new stage in the development of the consciousness of the black community. 'HERE TO STAY, HERE TO FIGHT!'

The march and rally in Rochdale on Nov 15th attracted over 1000 people despite appalling weather. Throughout the demonstration, spirits were kept up by constant chanting and singing, but most of us very happy when at last we piled into a warm dry room for the rally. In an emotional, powerful speech, Anwar made clear her determination to go on to win total victory. The breadth of support for her stand was demonstrated by the attendance of a speaker from the Nasira Begum Action Committee, and by Mrs Desai from the Grimsby Strike Committee. Sadly, Mrs Desai was unable to speak, as the meeting was closed early due to the sudden death of a demonstrator. The loss of another comrade in struggle can only strengthen our determination to establish a society where basic human rights cannot be denied.

Unfortunately, some socialist groups have seen this and other campaigns as tools to impose their own 'strategy' for 'building a revolutionary party'. Such elitist attitudes totally misunderstand the nature of forces for revolution. The key to consciousness of those in struggle does not come from the external application of some Trotskyist dogma, but is integral in that struggle itself, which takes those involved in an individual personal sense to a consciousness of the



universality of change required. In turn, a philosophy of revolution can only develop out of this struggle, and as a developing part of it.

We urge all readers to become involved in this and other similar campaigns. The Anwar Ditta Defence Committee needs active help and donations to continue the fight, and can be contacted at 127, Crawford Street, Rochdale, Greater Manchester.

MANCHESTER MARKIST HUMANISTS

discussion

State capitalism, populism and Bennism

Now that after all these years, Michael Foot's blend of old-fashioned English radicalism and centre-left Labourite opportunism has finally paid off, Tony Benn will have to be taking a back seat for the next few years. Which may be just about long enough to convince the powers that be that he is at heart a 'moderate' and a 'pragmatist'. *Jon Murphy* takes a sober look at Bennite policies - in and out of government.

The increasing desperation of the ruling class is daily more obvious. Reagan's regime gets under way in the US and the British ruling class is taken with apoplexy such as Heath's new regular attacks upon the policies of the Conservative government. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that the other side of the coin is a stepping up of working resistance, as diseased capitalism seeks to cut wages and introduce yet more automation.

The struggle within the Labour Party is also a sign of the times. Despite being highly confused, it is possible to uncover what lies behind the respective policies of the various groups in the PLP.

The right wing, led by Owen and Rodgers, does not represent the 'moderate' wing of the party. In fact there could not be a more extreme, anti-worker faction. Their actions in government, of which they are very proud, are those of the ruling class. David Owen supported the Shah of Iran to the end and Rodgers' attempts at witchhunting socialists out of the Labour Party go back to the 60s. That other triumvir, Shirley Williams, spent a considerable amount of time defending Tory 'mole' Reg Prentice against his constituency party who wanted him out and has decided not to stand in any elections.

As for the left of the party, we must first place their performance in government on public record.

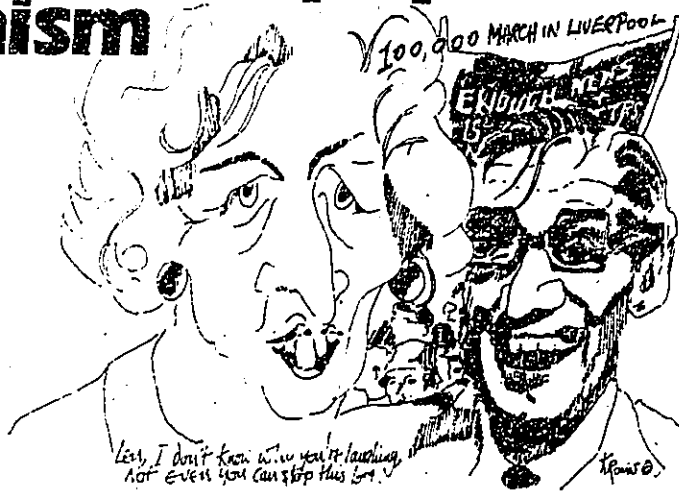
BENN AS AN IMPERIALIST

Although it is now a significant feature of the Bennites' that government actions should involve the public's right to scrutiny and discussion, the shallowness of their conversion to public scrutiny can be seen graphically in Benn's part as energy Minister in the importation of Namibian Uranium, exposed in the 'Passing Files' published by the Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contracts. The importation of Uranium from Namibia is a long-standing issue, and in which both Labour and Tory governments are heavily involved. Benn's first involvement came as early as the 1963/70 Labour government when as Minister of Technology he allowed the contract to be signed with Rio Tinto Zinc. We must remember that any dealings with Namibia are proscribed by the UN, due to South Africa's illegal colonial regime in Namibia, and it is doubly indefensible that the black workers at the Passang mine are paid grossly discriminatory wages and suffer appalling conditions and living standards (they are subject 24 hours a day to low level cancer-causing radiation).

Benn claimed later that the deal was signed behind his back, and in 1973, in a letter to the *Guardian*, he promised that a future Labour Government would terminate the contract. However on 21 June 1978, it was the very same Tony Benn who made clear the Labour Government's intention to allow the nationalised British Nuclear Fuels to continue massive importation. What Benn regarded as an example of multi-national disregard for government in 1970 became his policy six years later.

ARGUMENTS FOR STATE CAPITALISM

Benn and Stott, Holland have made it a major part of their 'alternative strategy' that workers should have a large part in the running of their factories, and both are keen on the ideas of workers co-operatives. Marxist Humanists oppose these measures because essentially they are dependant on control from above - the rights of workers to be represented on the boards of newly nationalised industries is to be



enshrined through the 'democratic tripartite element' in which workers' control is to be carried out through the existing trade union structure. Benn is even more utopian regarding co-ops, but he does not at any point discover the glaring shining reason why they do not succeed - because they are forced to operate within the limits of the capitalist market, isolated as such, it seems perfectly obvious that in the long run they will have to copy the structures of capitalism externally. That is why the initial democracy in the only remaining workers' co-op Meriden Motorcycles has been vastly decreased. If workers are forced to sack their own workmates, as happened at Meriden, is it not a surprise that a hierarchical command and pay structure has resulted?

To Marxist Humanists, the working class is at one and the same time the only viable body of people to make decisions in the individual workplace, to link up those decisions regionally, nationally and internationally. Here we come across the socialist argument against import controls (which the left of Labour support). The raising of tariff barriers is the first step towards the inculcation of a siege mentality amongst the workers of a country against those of another, not to mention the reactionary patriotism that exists among some white workers because of our long history as oppressor nation. State capitalism and nationalism of the 'Little Englander' variety are no substitute for socialism.

Benn's 'Arguments For Socialism' reels off the endless banals for his beliefs. A devotee of practically every thinker from John the Baptist to the 'liberals', he is willing to acknowledge a small debt to Karl Marx but he never touches upon what is the true essence of Marx's thought - a philosophy of human liberation based upon the self-activity of the oppressed in the present society. What is crucial in Marx is the fact that only they can found a new society. When Benn and his friends put forward their solution, however well intentioned they are, they are by their very nature piecemeal. For only the working people collectively can alter the fundamental structure of economy and society. Whilst much of his writing contains valid insights, they never add up to a theory of revolution because they recognise the working class only as 'force' in change, as cannon fodder and never as both 'force and reason', both providing the brute force to bring down the old order and the creative thinking to create a totally new one. When Marx talked of the necessity for every worker to become an intellectual, he was not expressing 'naive' ideal sentiment, but emphasising a vital part of the struggle for socialism. We need neither the 'vanguard party' to lead us, nor the erratic populism of a Tony Benn, but a new philosophy worked out for our own age.

letter

Firstly, congratulations on the first British edition of 'News and Letters'. As a first effort it was very good indeed.

A few comments on Dick's article on the Labour Party. I don't think the situation is as simple as he portrays it. Neither the LP nor the Tory party are monolithic. Within the latter there are tendencies, sometimes conflicting, representing diverse interests - those of industrial capitalism, those of finance capitalism, and those of the remnants of the feudal landowner class. Likewise, the Labour Party while the main tendencies are those of the advocates of a mixed economy and those of leftist state capitalism it would contain that this tendency of a rising new class - the techno-bureaucratic/intellectuals there are at grass roots level many actual or potential socialists within it. It remains a fact of political life that millions of trade unionists pay the political levy and millions of workers vote Labour, that several hundred thousand are individual members, in short the LP has a virtual hegemony over working class politics. It is also a fact that every attempt at a revolutionary alternative to the LP - the SDF/BSP before the WWI, the CP after WWI, ILP after 1932 & Co have all failed. To be frank, I can see none of today's sects as that alternative in embryo, they are just that - sects with as much influence on the mass workers as the seventh day Adventists. Also, you can have the most perfect theories, but until they are transformed into practice by taking hold of the minds of the masses, they're worth nothing. The problem of making the leap from sectarian theorising to mass practice is one which the far left to date has not been able to solve. To be frank, I think we're stuck with the LP for many years to come and revolutionaries have the choice of working within it (by no means an easy task) to gain a mass audience for the ideas of socialist self-management or condemning themselves to impotence in the sectarian wilderness. Any road, having said all this I still find N&L interesting and when I get a job I'll send you a donation. Fraternally best wishes, Terry Liddle

MARXIST HUMANISM



Raymond Challinor wrote this review of Cliff's biography of Lenin for Socialist Review. Apparently it was too critical. Alan Fairhead, Socialist Review's editor, did not think that his mentor should be attacked in this way. We consider Challinor to be one of the best British revolutionary humanists trying to rediscover our heritage. We hope that the publication in Marxist Humanism will help to counter a move to suppress his views.

Tony Cliff's Lenin

TONY CLIFF'S 'LENIN' - A CRITIQUE

by Raymond Challinor
T. Cliff, Lenin: Volume 4, Pluto Press £3.60
 This is the fourth and final volume of Cliff's biography of Lenin. It deals with the culminating years of his life, when Russia's internal problems became increasingly insoluble and prospects for revolution elsewhere - the only answer - became increasingly remote. If man, as Aristotle says is a political animal, then Lenin was a political death. His health cracked as he saw his life's objectives - to preserve the workers' state in Russia and see socialism triumph in other parts of the world - sink into oblivion.

Cliff's major weakness is a lack of knowledge of British working class history. Whenever there is a reference to this country, you will usually discover factual inaccuracies, highly questionable generalisations and an inadequate understanding of how the movement developed. To begin with, what appears to be a trivial point: Cliff wrongly dates the formation of the Democratic Federation, later the Social Democratic Federation (p.80). It happened in 1881. In other words in 1981 we will be able to celebrate the centenary of the creation of the first avowedly Marxist organisation in Britain. By wrongly dating its formation, Cliff obscures the significant fact that it largely came into being because of mounting criticism of the British government's repressive policies in Ireland, particularly the Coercion Act passed a few months previously.

An important lesson lies embedded here. Throughout their entire existence, the progress of the British and Irish people have been inextricably intertwined, with the oppressed of one country helping the other and the growth of new organisations in one country receiving assistance and stimulus from the other. It is no accident that Edward Thompson's classic, *The Making of the English Working Class*, contains so many references to Ireland. These are not irrelevant; they are essential to the narrative. It would be impossible to write about the making of the English working class without Irishmen like John Doherty, pioneers of the trade union movement, or Irishmen like Feisius O'Connor, who led the first struggle of British workers for democratic rights. And, by the same token Britain's first Marxist organisation - the S.D.F. - started life by expressing solidarity with the Irish people. Similarly the Socialist Labour Party assisted their Irish comrades in their anti-imperialist struggles. This spanned the S.L.P.'s whole existence, from 1903 when Connolly led the party right through to the early 1920's, when Thomas Hedley, of Sheffield, organised the occupations in Ireland, trying to turn the nationalist movement in a socialist direction. Cliff asserts that Connolly severed connections with the S.L.F. whereas in fact friendly cooperation continued right up till his death. Without the S.L.P. secretly printing it in Glasgow and regularly smuggling it into Ireland, Connolly's *Irish Worker* would not have appeared.

Cliff's book is riven with errors about the S.L.P.

For example, he refers to the circulation of its journal, *The Socialist*, as being 2,000 in 1918 when actually it was a respectable 20,000 and then brings this circulation figure forward as proof of its sectarianism. He claims the membership was overwhelmingly Scottish whereas this was untrue after 1910 and by 1920 four-fifths of the S.L.P.'s membership was south of the border. He talks of the S.L.P. playing no part in the miners' strikes of 1910 and 1912 when the editor of *The Socialist* was then George Harvey, the most prominent militant in the North East coalfields. The S.L.P. did not boycott the inaugural Syndicalist conference in 1910, as Cliff claims but sent along James Morton, a Liverpool foundry worker as a delegate. Cliff wrongly says that in the First World War the S.L.P. told its members to register as conscientious objectors. And so one could go on.

Underlying these matters of detail lurks a crucial issue of principle. Cliff wants to minimise the S.L.P.'s contribution, to suggest that it was not a revolutionary party. Likewise, he wants to be dismissive about the role of the Sylvia Pankhursts and the John Macleans. By making it seem as if the benighted citizens of these islands dwelt in dark ignorance, Cliff makes the sparkling rays of wisdom emanating from Moscow appear all the brighter. In his eyes, revolutionary socialism came to this country as a Russian import.

But when Cliff claims this, he fails to consider an important point. To be a revolutionary socialist necessarily involves understanding its contrary, reformism. In other words, the function of social democracy throughout the world, its gradual incorporation and acceptance of the status quo in the epoch before the first world war, remains a compulsory requirement. Yet, on this theoretical question the S.L.P. before 1914 had a greater grasp than the Bolsheviks. In that period, Cliff had to admit, Lenin never criticised the Socialist Democratic Party or its leading thinker, Karl Kautsky. When the German S.P.D. enthusiastically supported the capitalist-imperialist war, it came as a body blow to Lenin. He thought that the paper containing the news was a forgery, by the German secret police. The British S.L.P. on the other hand, had no such illusions about social democracy; it would have thought Vorwärts a forgery had the paper claimed the German S.P.D. opposed the war in August 1914.

The greater understanding, to a large extent, arose as a result of Britain's economic position. Cliff quite rightly alludes to the vast wealth derived from colonial exploitation. This gave the British ruling class more manoeuvrability at home. It usually did not have to fight to a finish, but could compromise. In response, workers enjoyed these concessions. Rising living standards and improved welfare arrangements kept them happily quiescent, prepared to accept the existing social system. While this applied to the overwhelming majority of workers, Cliff would be mistaken if he thought it true of the lot. A few remained opponents. They uttered their criticism with a small but remarkably clear voice. There were two reasons for this. First, the proximity of Ireland, merely a short boat ride away, meant that some workers in Britain had relatives and friends living in John Bull's other hell. These individuals did not have to wait till Lenin wrote his little booklet in 1916; they already knew, from bitter personal experience, what imperialism was - and they detested it. Second, there was the fact that Britain, the oldest capitalist country, also had the oldest working class movement. As a consequence, a long tradition existed of political and industrial representation. Most workers knew what to expect from these leaders. Their job was to help preserve the social order while simultaneously endeavouring to attain modest improvements for those they represented. For generations the labour lieutenants of capitalism revealed the practice of reformism. Unwittingly, they thereby created the conditions in which an understanding of revolutionary socialism could develop, albeit confined to a comparatively handful of people.

Cliff does not accept this argument. Instead of envisaging the possibility of a mutually beneficial exchange of experience and knowledge, he sees the relationship between the British and Russian lefts as a one-way traffic: groups like the S.L.P. had a lot to learn and nothing to give. Even if, however, for the sake of argument, we were to accept Cliff's position, surely the successful transfer of knowledge depends

upon thorough acquaintance with the political context and level of consciousness of the recipient. In my opinion, the Russians did not possess these prerequisites.

Their evaluation of the labour leaders illustrates this point. The Russians appeared to believe one big obstacle stood in the path of revolutionary progress in Britain. That was the prevalence among workers of illusions in the Labour leaders. These could only be dispelled by the election of a Labour government. Then a howl of anger would go up from all parts of the country as people saw Labour ministers merely administer capitalism; disgruntled workers would leave Labour's ranks en masse and flock to the Communist Party. Also this scenario never happened for one simple reason: the vast majority of British workers had a more realistic appraisal of the Labour leaders than they were given credit for. Some of them might have expected a marginal betterment would occur under Labour in government, others did not. But only a few who suffered from severe mental disorders, considered a Labour government would destroy capitalism. The rest realised Ramsey MacDonald & Co. kept all talk of socialism to Sunday school speechifying, and only used the term then if it did not involve sacrificing a good Sunday dinner.

A second error flowed from the Russians' first. After failing to understand the role of the Labour leaders, they went on to misconstrue the position of the Labour Party itself in relation to the class. Considering it to be a mass party of the workers, the Communist International's spokesman used all their immense influence to emphasise the importance of belonging to it. When British demurred about this pointless exercise, Lenin and others castigated them for sectarianism.

Tony Cliff endorses this characterisation, adding the proviso (p.92-3). 'One should avoid drawing conclusions as regards our time from Lenin's position regarding the Labour Party was then very different. The constituency parties (at present largely middle class in composition) were first formed in 1919; at that time the Labour Party was practically synonymous with the Labour Movement'.

Clearly Cliff is correct to suggest the Labour Party has changed in the last 60 years. In my opinion, however, this does not strengthen his position. Indeed, if there were a case for joining the Labour Party in 1919, then it is much stronger today. Today no individual would encounter difficulty in joining the party as local organisations exist in all 630 constituencies. But in 1919 constituency labour parties did not exist in over a third of the country, and even where they did national officials considered their numbers so insignificant that they did not bother to keep the membership figures until 1927. Though it is extremely difficult to describe Labour's performance at 1979 general election in favourable terms, undoubtedly it was a magnificent display when compared with 1918. At that general election Labour secured only 63 members of Parliament and a meagre 2,385,472. Yet, as Cliff says (p.10), Britain was then in a quasi-revolutionary situation. How is it this discontent found virtually no expression through Labour Party channels? Surely had the Labour Party been synonymous with the organized working class movement, as Cliff contends, then one would find regions where militancy was greatest returning Labour M.P.s with thumping majorities. That this was not so is proven by looking at Red Clydeside: Labour won only one of the 15 Glasgow seats in 1918. What this means is instructive. In February 1919, the British Government thought the revolution had actually broken out, and despatched tanks, guns etc to Clydeside. Almost certainly a majority of workers taking part in Glasgow battle of St. Georges Square had, a couple of months earlier, either voted for some political party other than Labour or not at all. Such were the tenuous links the Labour Party had with the advanced sections of the working class, precisely those people the young Communist Party wished to recruit.

Inevitably from the outset, the CPGB was burdened with handicaps. Appearing very much as a foreign import, it did not directly relate to militant workers' attitudes and experiences. The emphasis placed on the Labour Party, besides deterring potential recruits, also had the damaging effect of making the party susceptible to right wing influence. By contrast the left received short shrift: in an 'Open Letter to Lenin' John Maclean described how he was denied access even to the preliminary

- a critique

meetings that led to the formation of the CPGB while Sylvia Pankhurst heard of her expulsion from the Party from inside prison.

The overall result was disastrous. In 1920, both the Special Branch and Lenin estimated there were 20,000 communists in Britain. Two years later, according to the CP's own official historian, the CPGB had 2000 members. Even in the charge of the Light Brigade the casualty rate was not so high. But what made matters far worse was the Communist Party's failure to take a principled line in opposition to the right wing in the Labour Party and Trade Unions, an admission that did not prepare workers for the 1926 General Strike and made the General Council's betrayal that bit more demoralising. And in Ireland, the Communist Party limited itself, as it did many years later in Vietnam, to simply calling for peace; other groups provided whatever help Irish revolutionaries received.

Admittedly, Cliff may have been right in some of his criticisms of revolutionary groups. At times they were undoubtedly sectarian and ultra-left, as were many of the minuscule Trotskyist groups from the 1930s onwards. Nevertheless, they are our forefathers, the embodiment of our tradition. That they refused to make compromises with the two monstrous giants of Stalinism and Social Democracy was not a sign of weakness but strength. Likewise it was better for the International Socialists (fore-runners of the SWP) to remain small in size - remember the Evans cartoon suggesting that in 1962 the entire membership could easily be accommodated in a single toilet? - rather than gain support through unprincipled action. Socialist politics, like beer, does not improve with dilution.

This review has so far concentrated too much on British affairs. Perhaps the Editor will permit me to raise some more general matters, now it is possible to view, with the publication of the fourth volume, the biography as a whole. Lenin's life is described in almost all aspects. We see Lenin when he is isolated, standing alone against the government of a fifth of the world's land mass and providing the hope of a new society to millions of workers elsewhere. The lessons of Lenin's life, their relevance to present day struggles, are admirably described, but only at a limited level of abstraction; the underlying principles of Lenin's method are hardly touched on at all by Cliff.

Yet Lenin attached great importance to philosophical questions. After collapse of social democracy in 1917, with worker of one country slaughtering worker of another, some people might think Lenin would have something more pressing to do than study Hegel's philosophy so intently and for so long. But Lenin realised that the question of clear thinking was crucial, that without it he would not be able to grasp the full implications of the world catastrophe. Similarly, in the last stage of Lenin's life he resumed his philosophical enquiries. There is a tragic greatness about this final attempt: Lenin half paralysed by a stroke, the Russian economy in a state of collapse, the communist parties being defeated in various parts of the world, and we find Lenin reading books such as L. Axelrod, 'Against Idealism: A Criticism of Certain Trends in Philosophical Thought'. Cliff has a right to disagree with Lenin over Hegel; he has no right to behave as if volume 38 of his Collected Works did not exist.

In my opinion, a deeper, more fundamental study of Lenin is needed if we are to answer the most profound problem of the present time. It arises from a paradoxical situation: the working class, the one progressive force in society, the most reactionary leaderships. Reformism and Stalinism have succeeded in stifling the flame of revolution. Admittedly, their influence has constantly diminished since 1956. Yet, between the trade-unionists and mid-offices, the power of these two mighty forces, a power always deployed against the left, had almost undisputed control. How did they secure the allegiance of most working people? How was it that the German SPD, the party which Engels held up in pride as the model for the international proletariat to copy, was transformed into the henchmen of Luxembourg and Liebknecht? What transformed Lenin's International from being the greatest revolutionary force of all time into Stalin's global conspiracy. What in both instances caused,

what I would term, 'the counter-revolution within the revolution?' Continuity and discontinuity, the organisational form remaining the same whole, the essence changes into its opposite.

Marx once remarked that the past lies like an incubus on the brain of the living. Never has this been more true than at present. Social Democratic and communist parties continue to moult old and outdated slogans. As capitalism obligingly supplies crises of increasing severity, they reveal themselves increasingly incapable of coping with them, to meet the needs of the times. The socialist solution will only occur once we have been able to brush aside these two obstacles to progress. In other words, it means dealing with the counter-revolution within the revolution - and I am confident the answer to this dilemma can be discovered through a more profound analysis of Lenin's works.

Dogmatic anti-Leninism and...

'Beyond the Fragments - Feminism and the making of Socialism' by Sheila Rowbotham, Hilary Wainwright and Lynne Segal came out in 1976, before we began publishing. The debate around the book is still going on. Following the first 'BTF' conference last summer which drew 1600 people, another is planned for 1981 to continue the debate. Dave Black and Nigel Gibson take a belated look at Sheila Rowbotham's analysis of Leninism and at the critique by Pete Goodwin in 'International Socialism'.

Sheila Rowbotham, like E.P. Thompson believes in the tradition of British (or English) socialism. To some socialists - such as the New Left Review - the 'tradition' - William Morris' Socialist League, Edward Carpenter's struggle for sexual liberation, the Syndicalists, Socialist Sunday schools etc - 'failed' because of the lack of 'scientific theory'. Rowbotham argues that the old values of comradeship, self improvement, education and sexual liberation must be re-established to suit our needs today - needs which cannot be 'freed into the molds of Leninism'. She stresses that she is only discussing Leninism as it is practiced by those groups today who base themselves on Lenin's 'What is to be Done' and have failed to meet the challenge of today's Women's Liberation Movement.

'What is to be Done' indeed supported Kautsky's theory that socialist consciousness is brought to the working class from outside (i.e. Intellectuals) but we would point out that Lenin moved away from this position and in 1917 he came up with his favourite pre-figurative form - the Great Paris Commune of 1871. And in 1920 he was insisting to his fellow

... dogmatic Leninism

The S.W.P.'s critique of 'Beyond the Fragments' does in no respect transcend the limitations of dogmatic anti-leninism because it is so bound up with the static concept of Leninism - party to lead - it is in fact dogmatic Leninism. Rowbotham's 'Leninism' equated to Vanguard party which leads all struggles is accepted by Goodwin in his article on 'Beyond the Fragments' as true 'Leninism' which includes orthodox Trotskyists like Tariq Ali, pp 95, I.S.J. 2:91

The article makes no attempt at a Marxist critique of B.T.F. Goodwin relies on tried and tested hypocrisy, for example 'page 97' 'Beyond the Fragments was not being read on the steel picket lines nor being read among militants at Longbridge seeking some way forward after the Derek Robinson debacle... it was not being read by these people precisely because it had very little to say to them.' If accused the S.W.P. by substituting 'International Socialism' for 'Beyond the Fragments' they would retort that 'Socialist Worker' was sold on the picket lines, but then Lynne Segal could add 'but so was 'Big Flame'. Obviously this line of argument gets us nowhere fast: Beyond the Fragments was not written because of the 'debacle at Longbridge' but as a search for a theory to link 'socialism and feminism' and it is as this that it must be criticized.

But then Goodwin cannot accept that the women's movement can be both 'force and reason' in the struggle against a sexist, dehumanised world, because it leaves no room for leadership by the party: 'only the party can lead women to freedom'. T. Cliff

MARXIST HUMANISM



bolshheviks 'Socialism cannot be brought from the outside, by a Party'.

Rowbotham quotes E.P. Thompson saying 'Leninism was a product of very special historical circumstances' and is 'irrelevant to this country and this time', going on to argue that Leninism holds dangers for democratic rights.

But Olga Domanski of 'News and Letters' in America takes a different view in 'Marxist Feminism' which relates to today's Women's Movement. Movements from practice are not the problem, the revolts take place continually:

'Our problem is the movement from theory or perhaps I should say the lack of it. And what makes it so urgent is not only that Women's Liberation has become in life and not only in theory... one of the most crucial measures of how deep the uprooting must be. But, what we have to ask ourselves is *is it only 'measure'?* Or woman being disclosed as the new revolutionary force that serious revolutionaries (men and women) must see on the same level that Lenin saw revolutionary nationalism as not mere catalyst, but as a particular specific movement that could help transform the abstract universal of socialism into the concrete new society'.

As Olga Domanski goes on to argue, this is not merely a theoretical problem but as the women's struggle in Iran during the revolutionary period has shown, is a matter of life and death for a revolution fighting Clerical Reaction.

has said, 'women cannot be organised as women but only as workers.' Pete Goodwin's method personifies the crude reciting of S.W.P. credo that is unleashed by their 'theoreticians' at anything 'anti-party'. But the reciting of these old time-worn, mouldy, mice eaten Trotskyist dogmas says much about the theoretic void of the British Left.

I have heard so many SWP'ers say 'well at least Cliff built a party', but what sort of a 'party' with what sort of theory is never questioned. When Goodwin speaks of Leninism he uses it as an historical concept as if Lenin never related theory to practice: as an on-going relationship. Goodwin's Lenin is a 1902 Lenin locked in time. Theory for the SWP has been worked out, now 'is the time for Practice' (magically theory and practice are separated). Hanging on to Trotsky's fetish of leadership as though this were another timeless 'uncanny intuition', and not something steeped in empiricism and locked in history, they put the failure of all but the Russian revolution down to a lack of a vanguard party. Never is each revolution and each struggle for freedom looked at to see the masses in movement; and pointing out the contradictions the revolution has to get over; because the masses are no longer the subject of the revolution, the party is. The theory is a dogma that can be slapped onto any defeat, or anti partyism, to avoid self criticism and the need for a theory of human liberation that relates to the struggles attempting to uproot the madness of today.

FOOTNOTE page 7

MARXIST HUMANISM

POLAND: Working class freedom or Russian repression

As we go to rest the whole future of the Polish revolt hangs in the balance. With the backing down of the Polish United Workers Party over the resignation of two Solidarity leaders, the Russian ruling class and their puppets in the Warsaw party are becoming increasingly worried about the power relations in Poland. All the Eastern Bloc leaders know that revolt breaks out through the Eastern European states. It was the uprising in Poland of 1956 that sparked off the Hungarian revolution of that year. A solidarity demonstration by students in Budapest marked the beginning of the great revolt against State Capitalism in which Workers' Councils were formed against the Russian army occupying the country. Poland has not been involved, working class revolt in 1956-1957. It is also being questioned by the installation of new leaders at the head of the PUWP who have announced a series of new workers' demands. Fortunately this time they have stuck to their guns and arm themselves they surely will have to do and learn their lesson that the party manages to evade the gains from revolt. These are Gromulka, or Giersek or even later Nagy this time. The workers have taken on the power of the party, they have shown that they are not fooled by its rhetoric and compromises. Because of this we believe that this stage of revolt can surpass any other in the history of the people's democracies. And the Russians know this, they know they cannot rely on the party to restore 'normality', that only the rolling of the 'red' tanks into the towns and cities will bring them back to control. As we go to print, it looks like an invasion is on the cards, but that does not mean defeat. That depends on the level of consciousness within the Polish army and on the ability of the working class to arm and win over rank and file soldiers.

But all this is mere speculation; what we know for sure is that the church is a powerful force in the hands of counter-revolution, and it has played a reactionary role in the past.

Below we publish a satirical piece called 'Liberated Trybuna Ludu' which was translated by Ursula Walsanko of New York and letters along with excerpts from the 'Rise and Fall' (The Workers) and published in a bilingual pamphlet 'Today's Polish fight for Freedom', in March 1980. When the new events erupted in the summer the pamphlet was completely sold out, a new pamphlet will be available soon. In the mean time we give our readers a taste. A satirical piece on the Church and the Party.

THE LIBERATED 'TRYBUNA LUDU' Underground Polish Satire

Coming with the Pope's visit in Poland, the Polish underground published a satirical issue of the official Party newspaper, *Trybuna Ludu* (People's Tribune), dated Saturday, June 8, 1979. The headline reads: 'First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party Handed in His Resignation. PUWP Dissolved. Karol Wojtyla on Polish Throne.' The format, including the banners, size of paper, etc., are exactly the same as in the real paper. There are pictures, for example, of the Pope with a crown on his head and a caption, 'Karol I, after the coronation, on his way to the palace', and of skeletons before a court with a caption, 'Virus of truth found its way to USSR. The Supreme Court in Moscow reports the trial of the thirtee'.

The lead article starts with a note: 'The announcement came at 7.15 over Radio Poland, which now broadcasts only religious hymns. Giersek gave a chronic cold as the reason for his resignation. Also sick of PUWP cadres suffer from the common cold. Wojtyla assumes the name of Karol I... First miracles are scheduled for tomorrow. It goes on to state: 'recently the symptoms of the cold from which Fabian Giersek and other PUWP leaders suffered became so severe that all sessions of party leaders were transformed into organs of sneezing and sniffing.' Power was taken by Karol Wojtyla, who in his first speech stated: 'As is well known, the history of Poland is the best proof that God is a Pole.' Karol I also states that he will keep his position as Pope because he gets a kick out of it, and because you can never have too much power.'

In the 'Official Statement of Edward Giersek' Giersek describes the trouble the cold has caused the rulers. Then he continues: 'We turned to the Soviet Union for help and listened to their

recommendations... They advised us to lower wages, and we lowered them by raising prices... They advised arresting a few dissidents from time to time, and so we arrested them. But the cold held on... Considering the situation, I told myself: Edward, leave your position, dissolve PUWP, go to a tavern and warm yourself with a half pint of vodka. And so I did...'

I hope that comrades in other countries will understand the specific character of the Polish road to Christian Communism, and will support us - I mean support Wojtyla.

Perhaps someone will ask me: were we not a people's democracy? Why do we have to be a monarchy again?

I will answer them: it is possible you did not notice that our people's democracy was not a democracy at all! Did you not see the clear similarity between a monarch and a secretary general? In this case it is better to call a spade a spade, as we Marxist-Leninists do. Not the party, but the Church. Not the general secretary, but the throne. Not the democracy, but dictatorship.

The editorial staff of the paper speculated on the results of the change of power, especially as it would affect their future: 'Surely you will want to change our *Trybuna Ludu* into the newspaper of the new Polish United Christian Workers' Party. We will be here as always ready to serve the truth; that is, the rulers.'

In a recent report of the spontaneous general strike in factories and schools, where hundreds of thousands of citizens were demonstrating their eagerness over the dissolution of PUWP, Karol I gave thanks for 'the joyous spirit and boundless faith shown by this fantastic Polish Nation'. At the end of his speech Karol I turned to the workers with the appeal that at this special moment they would show a sense of responsibility and sacrifice for the common good... He also appealed to all citizens to return to normal work and school activities tomorrow. An economic advisor of the government is studying methods for making up the lost day of work.'

In another article, 'Polish United Christian

Workers' Party is founded, further deeds of the Pope are reported: 'The void left by the dissolution of the PUWP could not last long. Therefore, Karol I decided to create PUChWP. All adult citizens believing in God according to the Catholic religion will be eligible for membership in the new party... In the cadres of PUChWP there will not be room for ex-leaders of PUWP because, as is commonly known, they are atheists. In any case, they will not be subjected to any form of discrimination or prosecution by the authorities. The king-Pope forgave them, taking into consideration that the damage they did was caused by the necessity of carrying out their duties.'

There is also a 'Poem of young Karol Wojtyla' titled 'Political Power':

I know that you, painful and fleeting descended from the womb of the fallen angel, from lack of love I know that you weave subtle webs, sunk in your gloomy hatred you devour us, the lost ones I know it would be better not to chance upon you; too fragile: our will too weak: our heart But I also know that you are beautiful, I swore to myself that I will possess you and I will possess you.

From a slightly different perspective is an article 'What Do Workers Think?' Jerzy Borowski is 31 years old, and for twenty years has worked in the Szczecin shipyards as a welder... 'How do you like the monarchy?' - 'Monarchy is not any different from the actual republic. The issues will only be clearer: - 'What do you demand from the new religious government?' - 'We ask Wojtyla to let us celebrate all religious holidays, for example: Peter and Paul, St. George, Corpus Christi, Immaculate Conception, Ascension Day, St. Stanislaw, St. Andrew, and the other thirty-five saints who are dear to us. Of course we cannot work on Sunday, the day designated for



Polish workers defend Gdansk Shipyard gates

prayer, we would also like to be able to get ready for Sunday's celebration on Saturday. We demand two months' travel, every year, of course, in conjunction with pilgrimages to all parts of the Catholic world. Besides that we want higher wages; in this way we will be able to offer more candles on the altars of the Mother of God.

They also reported international opinion. Aithusser is quoted as saying: "The most important question we should ask ourselves is to which social-economic formation will the new Poland belong? We have before our eyes a society of a type unknown until now. But we can decipher it using Marx's categories in a scientific, not ideological, way. We must talk about the religious perversion underlying the economic Stalinist perversion, overthrowing the socialist 'structure'. So we are dealing with an ideological split on an unchanged structural basis. From this we conclude that events in Poland, however important they might seem to journalists and casual observers, in reality did not create anything new. One ideology is fighting with another ideology. But Marx taught us that history is not determined by ideologies.

Other communists are also represented. Kazimierz Mijal, leader of the Polish Communist Party-in-exile residing in Trans, issued a statement in which he expresses his indignation over the election of Wotyła as regent of Poland. It's betrayal of the proletariat. I always said that the so-called de-Stalinization started by Khrushchev's clique would lead to this.

Yet another view of the facts is presented by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, editor of *Annales*, who attributes the revolution's role not to people's activity, but to the virus: "Unequal and patient is the run of history. Advocates of 'economic primacy,' defendants of 'first cause,' were brought to their knees... by a microbe." "Second nature," of which they were so proud, their industrial workshops and three year plans their schools and ideological apparatuses, their whole "second nature" proved itself incapable of halting the quiet march of nature.

It is a lesson to all those who think that you can study man, disregarding the animal - fragile animal - at his basis. For years, we in *Annales* have been insisting on the necessity of "total" historical studies, in which biological phenomena have their proper

place.

In Washington, President Jimmy Carter could not hide his astonishment and anxiety over the development of the situation in Poland. "Really, I cannot understand this. The previous government raised the Poles' standard of living and enjoyed the confidence of the great powers. The American government did everything to deepen the economic and cultural ties between the two countries. There was an understanding about observance of agreements. One cannot conduct international politics when partners do not play according to the rules of the game. It's harder than ever to be President of the United States."

Deng Xiaoping revealed that the Chinese Communist Party suffered from the cold which destroyed P.T.W.P. "Do you know how we defeated it? Simply with the help of ASPIRIN." It seems certain that this was the actual background of the fight with the Gang of Four. Opium ring up to the West made a huge contract possible with the Bayer Corporation, which made it possible to tame the epidemic. But the most important information was given later. "Do you know when all this started?" asked Deng. "All this started from the famous bath of Mao in the Yellow River... After swimming the river, the Gang of Four put him on ice and thus he became ill." Before he left the journalists, Deng stated: "It's not important if the aspirin is white or red, it's important that it fights the bacillus."

Some new officials have already been chosen by the new king. Following is an interview with the head of all police forces. "Monsieur Casarulli received me in his new office in the building of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. 'Dear friend, it is a great moment for us all. Will you have champagne? No? You're not an absterger? You don't know what you are missing... You want to know if we expected what happened. I can tell you that we never lost faith in the Lord Christ. We knew that sooner or later our good deeds would be rewarded. Ever since a certain Martin Luther (Do you know about him? Really? You are an educated man, raised here in Nuremberg, it seems like everyone thinks of us as losers. And look, now we have a King in Poland... The future belongs to the East, believe me. Today Poland, tomorrow - who knows?'"

Ursula Wialanka, Chicago
July 31, 1979

review

Woman and Russia

Woman and Russia—First Feminist Samizdat Sheba Feminist Publisher £1.95

As the first feminist magazine to emerge from the Soviet Union *Woman and Russia* is by no means faultless, that could not be expected given the isolation of Russian women from the better established western feminist movement. However, with its separate development, the new perspective the Russian women's collective gives us is valuable and refreshing. I find the most drastic aberration to be in the article *Rejoice, Redemption from the tears of Eve*, where the female principle of Christianity, the Virgin Mary is lauded as a 'model of self-abnegation'—this quality is regarded as a redemptive virtue for all women. Despite the importance of the church as an underground organisation in Russia, I cannot see it as anything but a blind alley for feminists.

The everyday realities of Russian 'socialism' are described by the authors who are all middle-class and are all artists. This does not prevent them from expressing the grievances of all Russian women—their criticisms are of practical problems: the inadequacy of maternity care and abortion facilities (the major means of contraception) and the corruption among staff entrusted with the care of children. The tone is passionate and personal, all the articles are 'testaments of experience' and the solutions put forward are individual visions, from radical feminism to an ideal of the misty blending of gender roles: Homer and Sappho, Whitman and the Russian woman poet Marina Tsvetseva.


A week like any other, first published in the USSR in 1969 described the life of a Russian woman—she is expected to care for her family (including hours of queuing in shops) and at the same time, hold down a full time job! Those Good Old Patriarchal Principles confirm that this is the norm: women are subordinated and to 'succeed' they must do so on men's terms adopting their drunken habits and sexist language—denying their womanhood.

Given this status-quo it is inevitable that the discontented women be driven underground into the dissident movement. The *Almanach* women were harassed by the KGB, one of them had already experienced the Russian penal system described in the *Letter from Novosibirsk* and none of them wished to repeat this; they agreed not to publish a second magazine. *Woman and Russia* is important as the early murmurings of a nascent Russian Women's Movement. We can only hope that it is not stifled at birth.

Cheyenne Rose

THREE CLASSICS OF MARXIST-HUMANISM

1. Philosophy and Revolution AND Marxism and Freedom by Raya Dunayevskaya
2. Indignant Heart A black worker's journal by C. Denby



all at £2.50

ALSO AVAILABLE

FRANTZ FANON, SOWETO AND AMERICAN BLACK THOUGHT by LOU TURNER AND JOHN ALAN 75p

WORKING WOMEN FOR FREEDOM 60p by ANGELA TERLIANO, MAIRE DIGNAN AND MARY HOLMES

NEW ESSAYS on Hegel, Marx, Post-Mao China, Trotsky by RAYA DUNEYEVSKAYA 75p

THEORY AND PRACTICE First English translation of article by Rosa Luxemburg 90p

Make cheques payable to News and Letters Publications, Box NL, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, Islington, London N1.

ROSA LUXENBURG

THEORY and PRACTICE



First English Translation

£2.00

AVAILABLE FOR £1 FROM NEWS AND LETTERS PUBLICATIONS 182 UPPER STREET LONDON N1.

footnote

BEYOND THE FRAGMENTS AND 'INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM'

*Peter Goodwin condemns Sheila Rowbotham for using a quote from 'Facing Reality' 1958 as part of the 'Kitchen Sink' she is supposedly throwing at Leninism and Goodwin attributes authorship to P. Cardan, C.L.R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya. In fact, Dunayevskaya had nothing to do with this work which was largely an attack on her own 'Marxism and Freedom'. It is a pity that Rowbotham didn't look a bit closer to home for some quotations against vanguardist elitism, one might wonder what she (and Goodwin) might make of the 1964 Tribune review of Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* by Paul Foot (mentioned by Goodwin as 'one of the established orators of the Leninist left'). Foot rails against 'the arrogance and condescension of modern Marxists fighting against capitalism. Communists and Trotskyists all over the world form themselves into 'vanguardists' which will one day lead the workers to glory. Yet in Paris, Petrograd, Barcelona, Budapest - at crucial points in history - the workers themselves showed a revolutionary, an organisational potential far in advance of the vanguards.' (Tribune Aug 21 1964)

'Marxism and Freedom', wrote Foot would 'bring a new inspiration and a new hope to those shocked by the gangster-like dishonesty of "vanguard" revolutionaries'. Goodwin accuses Rowbotham of dishonesty. But then he, quite out of thin air lumps Dunayevskaya to James, and 'Marxism and Freedom' becomes 'flawed' without any explanation. Is this the new line? Or is Goodwin merely ignorant?

MARKIST HUMANISM

Harry McShane writes on Ireland

By the time this paper hits the streets, some of the H-Block hunger strikers may be dead. We are certain that this will not defeat the struggle of the Irish people against the 100-year-old nightmare of British Rule. Whatever the outcome, we in Britain must stand up to combat this hysterical campaign of the British media to brand Irish republicans as criminals and paid to get the news out of Ireland for good.

Harry McShane is a former associate of John Maclean and James Connolly and campaigned with the former for solidarity with Ireland amongst British workers during the various Black and Tan War. Harry is still campaigning on the issue today. We print below his analysis of the current situation.

Ireland over many years, before any of us were born, carried out a fatal policy of oppression against the Irish people. After hundreds of years of courageous resistance the people brought rule to an end in 26 of the 32 counties that make up Ireland. In the 6 counties in Northern Ireland, Britain has retained control over a number of troublesome years.

Mrs Thatcher, Britain's first woman Prime Minister, has inherited the Irish problem created by the callous policies pursued by her predecessors over many years. She is faced with a growing storm over her government's inhuman indifference to the suffering of the ten prisoners (including three women in Armagh jail) now on hunger strike. The demands of these victims is based on the indisputable fact that they are political prisoners.

Mrs Thatcher is willing to establish a new strong government to play the role of preserving the partition of Ireland. It cannot be overlooked that all attempts to carry out this pretence have failed. In their stand against the jerry-mandering of votes and religious discrimination, the Provisional IRA have brought all previous attempts to divide the people to an end. Mrs Thatcher is going to try to suppress the tremendous demonstrations of support for the hunger strikers have been taking place over Ireland. It may be that Mrs Thatcher was so busy playing up to Mr Reagan for a war against Russia, that she missed the news about the problem of Ireland. Well, she will not be able to close her mind to that problem for long. People everywhere are becoming concerned about it.

Does she even think about her own position as a woman in relation to the hunger strikers?

Up to the 1919 general election women were not allowed to vote or stand for Parliament, the victory was won by women who went on hunger strike and suffered all the tortures of force feeding prior to the outbreak of the First World War. The suffragettes waged a very courageous struggle. Mrs Thatcher without a progressive thought in her head is reaping the benefits fought by those who came before her, the Liberals were in power then and her hero, Winston Churchill, was a member of the Cabinet.

In Northern Ireland there has been the coming together of a large number of religious bodies using the slogan 'God Save Ireland'. I have looked through their demands and they make no reference to the sufferings of the hunger strikers. This situation cannot be allowed to go on. One wonders if they remember how the slogan 'God Save Ireland' came into being. In fact, it came into being in the last century when three Irishmen were hanged in Manchester and it was said that in their prayers they would say 'God Save Ireland', which became the title of a song sung by many people over many years in Ireland.

The problem of course is not going to be solved by God or any one outside of this world. The problem can only be solved by the people of Ireland and the lack of right thinking people all over the world. Here in Britain there is a very strong and growing feeling that the problem should be brought to an end. Mrs Thatcher has not yet thought of withdrawing troops, that is a big step that lies ahead, but we can be sure that in the course of time, troops will be withdrawn and Mrs Thatcher may well be the last Prime Minister to resist the withdrawing of the British troops who are being used to crush the Irish workers.

In Ireland there is now a growing Labour Movement. New thoughts have entered the heads of many people both North and South, and it is probable that in the course of time, Socialist thought will be added to the strong feelings developing there in the struggle to end British rule.



Copyright © Dave Black 1984

A nation that enslaves another can never itself be free

stop press

JOHN LENNON 1940-1980

As we went to press, we heard of the murder of John Lennon in New York.

To the post-war generation, Lennon was the working class cultural hero par excellence. Inspired by a tough Liverpool childhood and Elvis Presley (he died when he joined the army), he was the first British rock star to bite the hand that fed him. In sending back his MBE, in opposing the war in Vietnam and supporting the IRA with the songs of "Sometime in New York City", he brought down on his head all the hypocritical vitriol that only the British media can achieve to such depths. After this album and the magnificent hymn to humanism, "Imagine", Lennon's output decreased both in quality and quantity. He retreated into private life, sharing with Yoko all the responsibilities of parenthood.

His latest "comeback" album, whilst not quite having the power of earlier work, maintained a commitment to women's liberation with songs like "Woman". We could still harbour hopes that he might be drawn out once again to do some more damage to the society that produced the maniac who murdered him.

This tragic event pushed the H-Block hunger strike from the main news slots. For the British media, Lennon was "an ex-Beatle making a comeback" the man who enraged them with "Luck of the Irish" and "Sunday Bloody Sunday" never existed.

Dave Black

Racism, sexism and unemployment

The burden of unemployment falls most heavily on women and racial minorities. In Nottingham, the Commission for Racial Equality and the local community relations council did a survey, sending off applications for jobs advertised in the local press, with some of the applicants giving Asian names or birthplaces in the West Indies. Giving equal qualifications, those 'Job seekers' identified as Asian or Black were offered interviews half as often as the rest. Twelve years after the Race Relations Act, theoretically outlawed such discrimination, racism is still deeply ingrained in the structure of British capitalism, and is being exacerbated by the crisis. Seeking to dump some of the surplus workforce in the Third World, the Government cynically contrives excuses to deport immigrant workers, most blatantly in the case of the women hotel workers from the Philippines who were faced with expulsion because, when they entered the country 7 or 8 years ago, they did not declare that they had children, even though this information was never asked of them.

632,000 women are registered as unemployed, but a survey by N.U.P.E. and A.S.T.M.E. estimated that 400,000 more are unregistered, as they have no legal entitlement to benefits. Like some British Ajattallah, the Minister for Social Security, Patrick Jenkin, calls in GOD to sanctify this racist, sexist, crisis-ridden society "If the Good Lord had intended us all to have equal rights to go out to work, HE would not have created men and women."

The Employment Act overtly sets up an obstacle course for any woman seeking to exercise her legal right to resume her job after having a baby; she must write three times to her employer declaring her intent to return to work; the boss may offer her 'alternative' job if it is not 'reasonable' to give back the original one; and if the firm is small, with five or less employees, the right to maternity leave disappears altogether.

Dick Abernethy