

ECHANGES

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This bulletin, in its temporary form, is, for a group of comrades sharing similar positions and being in close contact with one another, a means of exchanging news on struggles, discussions and criticisms and of publications based essentially on the New Movement, on all the struggles of all kinds carried out by those directly concerned for their own emancipation. It is, therefore, important that each recipient make his own contribution to this end, in exchange for what he expects from the others. He will of course determine the nature, the importance and the regularity of such a contribution himself.

ADDRESS for all correspondence, payments and subscriptions (no bulletins will be sent free) ECHANGES ET MOUVEMENT B.P. 241 - 75866 Paris Cedex 18.

Subscription payment of 10 F (or the equivalent value) to cover a period of time which will be determined by the cost of each bulletin (specify whether you want the French or English version). To obtain the texts mentioned in the bulletin, write directly to the addresses given. Only the texts mentioned as produced by « Echanges » will be sent by us after payment of the price indicated.

Correspondence and money can be sent either to :

FRANCE : Echanges et Mouvement BP 241 - 75866 PARIS CEDEX 18 (ccp La Source 31708 40 F)

GREAT BRITAIN : Joe Jacobs , 29 Troutbeck , Albany Street , LONDON N W 1

HOLLAND : Daad en Gedachte , Schouw 48-11 LELYSTAD

PLEASE NOTE 2 mistakes in Echanges n° 7 . In the ccp (Post office account) number and the address of Joe Jacobs . For corrections see above .

DOCUMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A meeting has been organised between individuals participating in Echanges at Strasbourg for the Easter Week-end (9th , 10 th and 11 th April) . The propositions for discussion are, as of now , the following :

1/ On ITALY: The debate about the working class in the present period (following a text written by the Ccrap group of Milan (text available in Italian , French and English)

2/ On FRANCE : The present struggles (text on this subject appeared in Echanges n°6 in French and English) . The Unions in France to day (text by a French participant in Echanges available in French and English) .

3/ Concerning the refusal of work . An account of the debate between different comrades and a discussion between some Dutch and French comrades which took place in Holland (text available in French and English) . This discussion has continued among the Dutch and they would present the follow up at the meeting . Also some new texts published in the USA on the same question.

4/ On GREAT BRITAIN . Texts published in Echanges N°6 and 7 in French and English could be completed by new material from English participants .

5 / The struggles in the present period of crisis and the difference between these struggles and those of the period 1967-1973 (Theme suggested by an English comrade without text)

6/ From a Dutch Comrade .- (a copy of her letter is available in English)

a) On GERMANY - That the German participants give a general account of the situation in Germany (i.e. New forms of repression and resistance against them)

b) On the Marxist method of analysing and interpreting events . "This so-called scientific method doesn't serve our interests . What we need is a method , a way of experiencing our lives and the lives of others , that is liberating , opening the way to what is possible , not the way to necessities , social laws , etc... " (she proposes to write something on the subject)

c) On the changes that could be made in Echanges and its diffusion .

7/ On the concept of the New Movement (thoughts of an English participant) Rather than a really new movement , is it not rather a new way of understanding events ?

To receive the texts already written and for all material details on the meeting, (accomodation will be provided) write to Echanges -PARIS .

The agenda for the meeting will be fixed with reference to these various texts and propositions. Those unable to be present can nevertheless send written contributions if they want. Any more texts and critiques to come must arrive in Paris in sufficient

time or be brought to Strassbourg and it would help if they were written in both French and English.

"Crises and theories of crises", by Paul Mattick. There is a french translation ("Crises et theories de crises") published by "Editions Champ Libre" of the German work "Krisen und Krisentheorien", a marxist critique of the different explanations of capitalist crises.

"Technology and capitalist domination", a study of the development of capitalism and industrial revolutions, in "Lutte de Classe", November - December 1976, available from: Renée Togny, B.P. 62009, 75421 Paris Cedex 09.

"Who killed Ned Ludd?", by J. and P. Zerzan, a study of the Luddite movement and a comparison of its structures and nature with those of political and union organizations. Copies in English available from Echanges.

"Marxism and monopoly capital", by Paul Mattick, a critique of "Monopoly Capital" by Baran and Sweezy. This pamphlet is available from: Root and Branch, Box 236, Somerville, Massachusetts 02143, U.S.A.

Discussion on "Marxist theory and Anarchist politics", exchange of letters in English between Dutch and Australian correspondents. Copies from Echanges..

"The dictatorship of the proletariat", special number of the review "Spartacus" on this subject, viewed mostly from a very traditional point of view. Available from: Lefeuvre, 5 rue St. Croix de la Bretonnerie, 75004 Paris.

"Pour l'abolition du salariat", (for the abolition of wage labour) by Claude Berger and the "associationists", a collection of texts, previously published around the theme of the abolition of wage labour, and a critique of all party and union practises, which finishes by a project of a new regroupement launched by a group in Roanne (central S.E. France) composed of workers, peasants and "worker-peasants". It is published by "Spartacus", see address above.

Discussion about Trade Unions in Solidarity (London), including a text by J. Zerzan "Unionism and the Labour Front" on the transformation of "democratic" unions into Nazi unions (texts published first in the American magazine "Telos". Copies in English from Echanges). Among other texts in Solidarity, also "More on the unions" which we think points out very well the difference between the old radicalism which "exalts the worker" and the new which refuses the condition of worker (Solidarity London, 123 Lathom Road, London E.6., the articles are to be found in vol.8 no.5 of nov. 1976).

STRUGGLES AND ANALYSES

ARGENTINA: we are in regular correspondence with some people in Buenos Aires who publish a paper and books, including spanish translations of fundamental works (e.g. Pannekoek's Workers Councils, Voline's The Unknown Revolution etc.). This is an extract from their last letter:

"... We have little by little overcome the hardest moments of oppression and we will still try and send you our opinion on events as soon as possible. What seems urgent to us, is to demistify the role of the "guerrilla". Hardly anyone here is interested in their sermons. Their terrorist attacks have only a vague sympathy. They have nothing to do with "anarchist vengeance", neither in their methods, nor in the people chosen as victims, for they massacre en masse and often people who have nothing to do with any political oppression. Their methods are very obscure and often cowardly. I repeat they have nothing to do with the methods of social struggle used by those at work.

On the other hand, there are some very promising developments in the self-organization of workers. They are organizing secretly. This helps the guerrilla by giving it a pseudo-romantic role because the armed forces don't yet know the potential of the mass of the people they want to subject. The hack psychologists and sociologists who advise the army lea-

ders don't know the people either. All their calculations, their "organigrammes" refer to typical cases like Chile, Bolivia, Brazil etc. ... They have drawn no lessons from the death squadrons in Brazil, the mass killings in Chile, nor from the attempt at total control of communications ..."

In fact the European press publishes little about Argentina, apart from the effects of the military confrontations between the army and the guerrillas and saying nothing usually about the real social movement and the workers struggles. Nevertheless an article in "Le Monde" of 8-1-'77 claims that the buying power of the average Argentinian has been reduced by 50% since 1974 and that the inflation rate is 34%. The author of the same article says on the one hand "workers made no resistance to the coup d'etat" and on the other that "the struggle against subversion has been the excuse for carrying out a repression without precedent against union leaders and militants above all in the most combatative sectors: engineering, automobile, mechanics, shipbuilding" and he adds further on: Despite everything, workers at Peugeot (5,000 people) and others in the car industry went on the offensive in September. Since the right to strike had been suspended, they chose other forms of struggle: lightening stoppages on the job go-slows, meetings and demonstrations inside the factories, sabotage etc. The government did not dare repress this agitation and the companies gave in. To get around the rules forbidding "wildcat" wage rises, they granted improvements in other ways: productivity bonuses, transport allowances, food allowances, "loans" which don't have to be paid back etc. etc."

This item of news alone shows that the reality of social movement in Argentina should not be identified with the confrontation between the military power (hesitating, however, and with reason, in front of workers) and some guerrilla groups, often leninist. The recent electricians strike confirms this analysis. We will publish other information as soon as we receive it.

SPAIN: among the many conflicts in Spain, since the beginning of 1976, none has had been somewhat talked about in France, the strike at the Roca factory. At the same time at the other end of Spain a strike not dissimilar to that at Roca took place, but its communication to the outside world was practically non-existent.

Roca is in Catalonia in the suburbs of Barcelona; the factory employs 5,000 workers. Tarabusi is a factory in the Basque country near Bilbao and employs 1,300 workers. Both firms were established in the 1920's and have always had a very paternalistic management. There had been no tradition of struggle before 1976 in either factory. The rise of foreign competition and the necessity of transforming techniques led to a worsening of buying power and conditions of employment in both cases.

The conflicts: the strike at Roca began over wage claims and problems concerning work conditions and then later the demands were enlarged to cover proposed sackings. At Tarabusi the strike broke out over a refusal to accept redundancies. In both cases the management reacted very sharply: 1,300 locked out at Tarabusi and the use of police violence and extreme right-wing terrorist groups at Roca. There were arrests as well.

In both factories the strike broke out in November. The strike at Tarabusi ended February 19th.

Organization of the strikes: at Roca, following on a first strike which showed clearly the uselessness of the vertical union (C.N.S. - the "legal" union) and brought to the forefront "combatative workers without the charge of the union" (from a pamphlet from Roca), the workers elected their own representatives in June. In September, a 24 hours work stoppage took place to try and force the management to recognise the delegates directly elected by the workers.

From this moment on, the 15 elected delegates became transformed into a committee of coordination and orientation of the struggle. In October the number of delegates was increased to 60. A "rank and file" project was drawn up at this moment, which proposed "a push towards creating a unified union structure". It was proposed in the factory and accepted by some sections.

During the strikes the principles for the functioning of the conflicts were the same both at Tarabusi and Roca: mass meetings in the factory, all delegates revocable.

The confrontation with the C.N.S. made all the workers extremely suspicious of all union organizations. The workers wanted total control of their strike and reserved to other unions a role purely of propaganda and solidarity.

On December 4th the Roca workers made an appeal "to all workers and people in general" for support.

On December 10th a circular was sent to all union headquarters. This plus the earlier appeal were intended to generalise the strike, as this was considered the only way by the Roca workers, and at Tarabusi too, for the workers to obtain their demands.

It appears that the appeal to the unions after the appeal to workers in general, shows above all that the strikers felt very isolated, faced with the intransigence of their employers and the resulting repression.

At Roca, the workers were involved in several violent clashes with the Guardia Civil, who handringed the district. Nevertheless the spreading of the strike to the whole Barcelona region remained very limited. At Tarabusi, solidarity remained also formal in the main (collections, demonstrations etc.)

In both conflicts the employers were holding out for a complete victory over the strikers. They used a dual tactic. On the one hand direct confrontation: use of police violence while avoiding deaths at the same time and while avoiding too many arrests in order to avoid solidarity actions. (At Barcelona several hundred people demonstrated during the trial of Roca workers. At Tarabusi, 19 workers were arrested and then released.) On the other hand, the employers sought to facilitate the taking over of control of the conflicts by the established unions.

The role of the unions: for the unions, they must in the general optic of "democratisation" in Spain show their capacity to represent and control the working class. Therefore, they all (with the exception of the C.N.T. whose role is rather special) criticise the type of strike described above.

At Roca, the unions called the strikers "groups of incontrollable elements", when they demanded the right to "create their own union" and to be "represented by the most combatative workers". (Roca text)

At Tarabusi, the strike which broke out over the sacking of a worker, after a strike appeal by the C.O.S. (Coordination of Union Organizations) did not receive any support at all from the C.O.S., apart from a convocation" at the end of three weeks of striking.

Union strategy tied up with that of the employers. On the one hand, they tried to isolate such conflicts (the first union organized day of solidarity took place on January 21st and had a very limited success: one or two hour stoppages affecting 17 firms at Bajo Llobregat and one at Barcelona.) The unions tried on the other hand to use this isolation to confirm themselves as the only representatives of the workers in negotiations. Thus after the breakdown of negotiations at Roca "a commission composed of two delegates, each of the district (town) of Bajo Llobregat representing four main unions (U.G.T., U.S.O., C.N.T. and C.O.), plus five delegates of the factory delegates was created. (after two months of striking). It stated as its aims: to study the possibilities of re-opening the negotiations, an eventual extension of the movement to all of Bajo Llobregat and desirable forms of solif rity for the movement (details published in the French daily Liberation of 13-1-'77).

The unions not represented at the level of factory delegates intervened at the level of negotiation with the employers and relations with outside workers.

In this union "dance", the C.N.T. played a double role, by its talk of support for autonomous struggles, they have begun to forge a popular success when up against the C.O. representatives (Comisiones Obreros - workers commissions - now largely C.P. controlled) who have been booted by the workers, since at the same time their presence in a union cartel makes them for the employers one of the "official" workers representative bodies. This strategy makes the C.N.T. play the role of bridgehead in the process of taking over control of the working class by the union. At the same time, its "rank and file" "talk and 'unconditional' support for the strikers has permitted the C.N.T. to strengthen its position against other unions. The Roca strike is for the C.N.T. an opportunity to get ahead of the C.O. in Catalonia and become the most important organization.

(The big publicity made by anarchists about the strike at Roca and the silence on Tarabusi is very significant in this context.)

The failure of the Tarabusi strike has lead the strikers to be more and more critical of the unions as well as of employers. One worker at Tarabusi is quoted as saying: "When the workers get their union, either they'll realise they've been done, or else they'll realise in enough time to say, 'this struggle isn't the working class' fight'" (Liberation of 1-3-'77)

POLAND: the pamphlet in French "Le 25 juin en Pologne" is now available. Cost 5 Fr.Fr. (payment to C.C.P. account or in stamps or international money orders, no free distribution, pamphlet sent on receipt of money). We ask subscribers to Echanges to help us to diffuse this pamphlet, if they find it interesting.

"More on June 25", and the follow-up (extract from Bulletin no. 2 of the Committee for Solidarity with the Polish Workers. Its French section address is: Cahiers du Cinéma, 9 Passage de la Boule Blanche, 75012 Paris) "At Lodz a strike also broke out on June 25th. We don't have a complete list of all the firms which went on strike. A strike committee was set up at the knitwear factory M. Fornalska. According to rather vague facts, about 300 workers appear to have been sacked (violation of article 52 of the Labour Code) on July 1st. As of now most of these have been taken on again after a period of lay-off (unemployment) of one to four months. In the main they were taken back with conditions inferior to those they had before June. The M. Fornalska factory in fact was the only one, where a large number of those sacked succeeded in getting legal aid and in getting themselves reinstated. In all other cases in Lodz, we know of the judgement of appeal commissions were against the workers' cause. In the second fortnight of July all those who had lost their jobs were called in for questioning by the militia as to their means of existence. They were told to contact the militia in the case of finding or getting back a job."

Other works on these events:

"La Guerre civile en Pologne" (civil war in Poland), a pamphlet inspired by situationist thinking (from Librairie des deux mondes, 10 rue Gay Lussac, 75005 Paris). Collection of documents of the Polish Workers Defence Committee (10 F.F., c/o J.J. Marie, 11 rue de Reuilly, appt. 2A2, 75012 Paris. C.C.P. (= account no.) Paris 15872 V).

PORTUGAL:

"Portugal: anti-fascism or anti-capitalism", pamphlet in English by Root and Branch, address see above. It is a translation of the crucial parts of the texts published in France on Portugal by "Mise en Point" and "Spartacus" (see also old no!s of Echanges).

"Interview with a worker at Lisnave", published in the journal "Comarade", no. 3, dec. '76, available from S.A.R.L. Alternative Sociale, B.P. 168-10, 5643 Paris Cedex 10.

U.S.S.R.:

"Capital, profit and crises in the U.S.S.R.", very well documented and interesting articles on the birth, the development and the present capitalist crisis in the U.S.S.R. (from the journal "Lutte de classe", address see back, in French, the number of February 1977).

CHINA:

"Chinois si vous saviez", (Chinese - if you knew) is a book published in September 1976 as part of the collection "Bibliothèque Asiatique" (published by Christian Bourgois). The main text in this book is a text which appeared in the form of a "dazibao" (a mural newspaper) by a certain Li Yizhe and two of his friends at the end of 1973 and which had a considerable success when it was re-published in November 1974 attracting "a crowd of readers of such size, that the busses had to be re-routed on the day of publication in order to avoid traffic jams". The text was entitled "concerning democracy and legality under socialism", and showed a marked difference in its finesse and "libertarian" spirit from the heavy, mechanical marxist texts, which usually come to us from China. In addition this appears to be an important text of we consider recent events, which even an established newspaper like "Le Monde" has been forced to relate, e.g. ... "In Tien-An-Men square, monday evening a young man was haranging the crowd."

After being applauded when pronouncing the name of Teng-Hsiao-Ping he began to talk of "liberty", "democracy" and the "rights of man". Giggles from the audience... this isn't the "theme planned" and accepted by the authorities and from this fact, for the Peking workers who listened to the speaker, this vocabulary belonged perhaps to another world. But could you imagine, 8 years ago, someone being able to use this type of language in public in the middle of the capital?" (Le Monde of 12-1-'77).

In the preface of "Chinois si vous saviez" is an official account of the events in Tien-An-Men square in April 1976. An account so detailed, that its authors were called upon to answer for it by Mao's wife.

Canton: the traditional festival of the double nine (9th day of the 9th moon, when people must give homage to their ancestors by going to high places, the hills etc.) had a very special character in 1974. There was a spontaneous gathering of three to four hundred thousand people on the hill of the White Cloud. "People had arranged to get special time off work. Others had got permissions to visit relations in other parts of the province. Others decided to go sick that day. So, the day of the festival, the factory managers found that most of their young workers were absent". ... Everyone was in very gay mood. They understood each other without speaking ... Some wore T-shirts with the letter K on them. Everyone knows means. The "Old K" means Hong Kong and to run away to Hong Kong has become for many young men and women the only way of getting away today in this most southern province of China." ... "At the beginning of the afternoon it seems that the party was informed of this massive and spontaneous gathering. Small cars began to appear and were rapidly crowded out and spat upon to such an extent that they were quickly chased away." This account appeared in no. 2 of "Minus 9" (9 years before 1984) and comes from an old Red Guard refugee in Hong Kong. "Minus 7" (now!) appears every month in English. Subscription 10 U.S. \$, address: Minus 7, 180 Lockhart Road, 1st floor, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

U.S.A.: the pamphlet on the U.S.A. which is at the same time no. 8 of Echanges, has been reprinted in French (initially 500 more copies). Those interested in its diffusion can ask for other copies from Echanges. The English version has not been widely diffused. Those interested in reprinting it, should contact "Daad en Gedachte" in Holland (address on page 1), who have the English stencils. Other texts could also be included and later perhaps a deeper study taking this collection of texts as a base.

We have received "Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act" which gives an idea of how the U.S.A. and the Petroleum trusts disposes the indigenous population of its territorial rights which until now hardly interested capitalism.

Extract from a letter from an American friend: "The situation in the U.S. appears to be one of retrenchment. The big activity so far has been the Sadlowski campaign for president of the steel workers union. He ran on the image of militancy, which evidently made little sense to most steel workers. The majority, of course, did not bother to vote at all. Of those who did, some 40% voted for Sadlowski. The campaign was run largely by lawyers, students, professional leftists and some union bureaucrats. There was no rank and file movement behind them. Indeed, there is really no rank and file movement in the steel industry at all. The American "left" was solidly behind Sadlowski, from the C.P. to the Trotskyists to the new American movement. What is interesting is that the majority of those who voted prefer an established conservative leadership to a potentially disruptive one. The only real issue was the "experimental negotiating agreement", which was meant there can be no national strike of steel workers for the duration of the contract and even after the contract expires. The union defends his position by arguing that during a national strike the Japanese steel workers could move in and take over the markets of the American producers. The fact that so many could accept this argument is indicative of the degree to which retrenchment is the dominant feeling.

Rent strike: More than 10,000 tenants out of 15,000 in a New York City housing project (Co-op city) have been involved in a rent strike since July 1975 to try and cancel high rent rises to be spread over 5 years; this struggle is still going strong despite a campaign of intimidation, heavy fines, blocking of bank accounts etc. ... (Articles in New American Movement, February 1976, information from Gil Shrank, 107 W 86 Street, New York N.Y. 10024.)

GREAT BRITAIN:

"On the buses", by "Penny Fair", Solidarity (London) pamphlet no. 53 on working conditions and relations between the union and rank and file among workers on the London buses.

(We shall speak about the pamphlet by Solidarity/London on the Durham cleaners at the university in a later number of Echanges, as this has provoked some discussion.)

Solidarity National: is a national working group, its address is: 34 Cowley Road, Oxford (note new address). First trial number of a new bulletin. One article, "Some thoughts on the present crisis", has the merit of posing the problem in very clear terms, in relation to the British situation, even if it does not contain a reply. Comments on no. 2 of the bulletin in a later Echanges.

FRANCE: the pamphlet on the strike at General Motors (Strasbourg) announced in Echanges no. 7 is now available (sent on receipt of 3 F.F. or equivalent stamps, c.c.p. money orders etc.). We ask for help in diffusing it. A criticism of its conclusions by a dutch comrade will appear in Echanges no. 10. Comrades from Strasbourg would like to hear from contacts the world over from automobile factories and especially from General Motors (write to Echanges).

Reuil: strike at Franlab.

Franlab is a branch of I.F.P. (Institut Francaise du Petrole) concerned with the computer section. Franlab deals with data for several clients and has computer terminals in several places in the Paris region and in several provincial towns. One of their major terminals is Framatome (which is involved in the construction of atomic power stations), famous for having forced into bankruptcy two smaller computer firms. Franlab, now "in the red", was to be taken over by C.I.S.I., the computer section of C.E.A. (Centre d'Energie Atomique), which would have meant the virtual dismantling of the plant and wide scale redundancies.

To fight this, the personnel went on strike with the exclusion only of the highest management. The strike spread to parts of the rest of the I.F.P. There were daily mass meetings.

In order to spread their strike the computer workers used the instruments on which they work every day. On the initiative of one department an information leaflet was passed through the computer. It was thus diffused to all other terminals. A second of a computer's time costs about 1,500 F.F. (about £ 175). The "treatment" of the leaflet took 8 minutes. Franlab has not been dismantled. All new hiring has been suspended for two years. The I.F.P. are to remain majority shareholders. 30% of the capital is to be bought by a consortium of the French petrol concerns C.F.P. and Elf-Aquitaine, plus S.G.Z., which is the computer branch of the French Bank "La Société Générale".

Renault: (Billancourt), extract from a tract diffused by the conservative Union F.O. on September 21st 1976: "At the reunion of central representatives, Mr. Houdart, personnel manager, opened the meeting announcing that: "The company had enormous difficulties in carrying out programmes given the absenteeism rate which has surpassed all foreseen norms; in some workshops, it is 30% ... This practice is due to the fact that at this time of the great immigrant workers prolong their holidays (1 month) by at least 1 month by various means. This situation can be found as well in other branches of industry, e.g. building."

Paris: "Lutte (à loyer) modéré" is a pamphlet on the struggle against the renovation of the old working class district of Belleville. Price 3 F.F. from: "L'Amicale Bouliste des Envierges", 28 Villa Faucheur, 75020 Paris. It tells about an attempt to organize squatters and the struggle inside an association of defence committees of proprietors and tenants against the "renovation" involving the eviction of inhabitants.

Toulouse: the "hypermarket" MAMOUTH at Toulouse employs 400 people. Friday 17th December 1976 the store's employees, especially all the cashiers, went on a totally surprise strike for higher wages. Here is now the local newspaper, La Dépêche du Midi of 18-12-'76, which relates the consequences of the strike:

"The many clients in the hypermarket who were doing their Christmas shopping, were informed over the loudspeaker by the management three times over, that a surprise strike meant that the store could not serve its

clients. They were asked to kindly leave the products they had wanted to buy in the caddies on wheels and to leave by the exit. But the clients did not react in the way one would have expected. Thinking certainly at first that it was only a short temporary stoppage, they continued to do their shopping. Then they stopped, they reached the check outs abandoned by the cashiers, but they didn't leave their caddies behind. It was then that they realised they couldn't pay and feeling very annoyed, the vast majority just took all their shopping with them without paying a penny. It is estimated that several people participated in this way in this unexpected collective theft. No one tried to prevent people leaving the store." In the same newspaper of 21-12-'76: ... "The amount lost Friday afternoon and Friday evening is estimated at 12 million old francs" (£ 15,000), even though "several clients had written and sent cheques to cover what they bought". The C.G.T. union representatives took over the control of the movement of discontent by the employees, by calling small 20 minutes strikes on the following days and obtaining the opening of negotiations with the management, who asked non-strikers (those belonging to the union F.O., about 200) to sell the store's products outside in front of the premises, which they did.

ITALY: "Once more social violence serves to reveal a situation", from a French comrade, who recently paid a visit to Italy. More than ever the outcome of the Italian situation remains uncertain:

On the one hand: the United Federation of Unions (created in 1972) signed in January 1977 an agreement with the employers, which represents a big defeat in terms of the contract system for regulating wages: overtime work allowed, drastic cutting down of national holidays, control visits at home for workers on sick leave, renouncement by the union of wage rises to "save the nationaleconomy", acquiescence in the "mobility of labour" etc. All this was followed, two days later, by government decrees virtually reducing to nothing the threshold agreements for the sliding scale of wages.

On the other hand: the struggle continues as strong as ever. In all the big factories not a day goes by without a conflict. In Alfa-Sud (Naples) absenteeism has reached 40% in some cases. Many small factories remain occupied against closure and the themes of struggle surpass those of simple wage demands: employers and unions have to deal with "workers' autonomy" whose organised groups mask an even stronger but diffuse reality which refers to a refusal to delegate power and a desire to "do it ourselves."

At government level the impression is widespread that the real party in power isn't the Christian Democratic Party but the C.P., consulted for each decision and above all the only party capable of getting such decisions "accepted" by the people. It's not the Christian Democrats who talk of "sacrifices" and "limiting labour costs", but the C.P. Since there is a compromise, "why not go all the way?" say the leaders and the militants are incapable of criticising. And so, at the present time, it's the C.P. stewards who manhandle demonstrating students, sometimes workers and they even attack high school students after class, which reminds one of another period in Italy ...

This shows that the "democratisation" of the C.P. doesn't mean softening up. Stalinism and social democracy only diverge above all in ideology. As far as the rest is concerned ...

Seven months after the C.P. wins the elections, calm has not returned in Italy, although 80% of the police are unionised. There is:

- violence in the factories, "rounds of workers" spreading their conflict from factory to factory, go-slows etc.;
- violence of women. 3,000 Women took over the streets one night in Turin, crying out their desire to be able to move freely at night in the streets;
- violence of the strikers of public service industries, who regularly disrupt transport, the hospital service, schools etc.;
- violence of the "free radios", which are becoming more and more widespread, which give the air to users of drugs, gays, young people, women and organize events, demonstrations etc.

- violence above all recently of students, who have been involved in very hard street battles where gun-shots have not been unknown. For those who think that violence is synonymous with former repression and a regression of trouble, it is not the case here.

A dozen managers have been wounded by the "Red Brigades" during the last few months, 16 cars of managers have been burnt, 32 bomb attacks causing serious material damage in several factories have not led to any particular state repression. If this type of action has hardly any impact, we should nevertheless understand its symptomatic character: it reflects a high degree of confrontation where the problem of open violence has begun to be posed.

The students of Rome and Turin have replied to the physical provocation of the C.P. by violence: on February 18th, the combined stewards of 1,000 C.P. militants, some disguised as union men were busted up and the C.P. platform overturned by demonstrating students ironically shouting "sacrifices, sacrifices". A discussion followed among the workers unions whose shop floor sections refused to strike in favour of the C.P. who tried to call a general against the students.

The economic crisis deepens and social autonomy strengthens. The state is unable to keep order, but the U.S.A. is forced to finance the crisis: contradictions of capitalist solidarity

U.S.A.:(contd.)

We have just received the first number of NOW AND AFTER, a "socialist libertarian" bulletin published by a group who resumed their position in "A world to win" of which we spoke in Echanges no. 7 and 8. Their address is: P.O. Box 1587, San Francisco, Ca. 94101. We will discuss this bulletin in more detail in a future Echanges (a copy available in English from Echanges).

The next Echanges no. 10 will contain information on SPAIN, FRANCE (strikes, unions and discussions), HOLLAND (strikes) and on GREAT BRITAIN (strike at British Leyland).