

CENTENARIES

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Rosa Luxemburg

V Penn on

The Paris Commune

Mike Cooley on

**Aspects of Technological
Change** (PART TWO)

Wages & Inflation

Number Seventeen

Price 10p

**THE
MARXIST**

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Surface mail (unsealed). All countries 78p (Six issues)
Single copies 15p post paid.

COMMENT

by Tom Hill

Rising Unemployment

The ruling class are showing their skill by refusing to be put on the defensive by the growing unemployment. They are not resting content with the belief that higher unemployment will automatically reduce the value of wage settlements but are seizing the opportunity to wage a battle of ideas to convince the working class that the growth of unemployment is their fault for being too greedy. The obvious development of this argument is that a wage freeze if necessary in order to safeguard jobs and a further development at a later stage in which the same argument is used for an actual reduction in wages.

The Labour leaders are doing their best to make capital out of the widespread feeling that the Tories are the Party of unemployment. If we get taken in by this we will soon find ourselves back on the roundabout of 'fighting for the return of a Labour Government.'

The basic fact is that the current developing crisis of world capitalism has very little to do with the level of wage settlements or even wage levels. In France, Italy and even West Germany and Sweden the same problems are being thrown up and the same remedies advocated. Those of us who work in industries or firms geared to exports are so often told that the kind of wage increases that we are demanding will render 'us' unable to compete with foreign

firms. It is equally well known that our counterparts in other countries are being fed on the same diet.

Productivity Deals

Whilst it is true that Productivity Deals do not cause unemployment, they hasten its growth and help to create the frame of mind which accepts unemployment as being due to inefficiency and the growth in wages outstripping the rise in productivity.

Increases in productivity have been probably the highest in Electricity Generating, Steel making and Chemicals with the result that the numbers employed in these industries has fallen considerably over the past ten years or so. In Steel alone it is forecast that there will be 40,000 less jobs in 1975 than in 1967. 9,000 have already disappeared and 11,000 more are due to vanish in the next twelve months. Towns like Irlam will be transformed almost overnight from comparative affluence to distressed areas, already hard hit areas like Teeside will be pushed further into poverty.

A sidelight on the question of unemployment was notable in the radio programme "Any Questions" in which Callaghan, former Chancellor of the Exchequer, made the statement that unemployment can be controlled by Government action. This view was opposed by a Tory member of the team but unfortunately no one asked why unemployment was allowed to rise to over 500,000 under the

Labour Government which was supposed to favour full employment.

The fact is, as Marx stated over a hundred years ago, capitalism needs a reserve army of unemployed in order that the system shall run "efficiently".

The sole argument between Tory and Labour on this question is simply about what constitutes full employment. In the years immediately following the 1939-45 war no politician dared openly question that full employment meant exactly what it said. Gradually the terms "over employment" and "acceptable levels of unemployment" have been introduced until now the "argument" is over what constitutes "excess" unemployment.

The Actuaries of the National Insurance Scheme have stated that their calculations for the next three years have been made on the basis of a Government assessment of 660,000 unemployed.

This clearly shows that the "acceptable" or to put it more correctly, the necessary level of unemployment is increasing from year to year.

The ruling class foresaw this development and introduced the Redundancy Payments Act. This was hailed as a Workers' Charter but in practice it proved to be just one more example of how the British ruling class know how to make concessions in order to divide the opposition. There is no doubt that resistance to closures and redundancies would have been much greater had it not been for the operation of this Act.

There have been many cases of workers with long years of employment with one company actually volunteering to be put on the redundancy list because of the (for a

worker) large sums of money they would get.

In these circumstances it is very difficult to get united mass action to fight redundancy because, apart from the inherent difficulty of fighting on such an issue, there is the additional factor that whilst some prefer to take the money in preference to fighting, others hesitate to fight for fear of losing any redundancy pay to which they would be entitled.

Action in individual factories against specific cases of redundancy may or may not be successful, depending on the local circumstances but if conducted on a broad enough scale and accompanied by a Marxist explanation of why capitalism must have an army of unemployed as a condition of survival, then a start will be made on creating a public opinion which will challenge the ruling class on this issue.

After the Bill

In spite of one of the biggest street demonstrations in recent years and strikes by over one million engineering workers it is evident that the Bill is going through without any significant change for the better.

On the Sunday demonstration called by the T.U.C. and those connected with the one day token strikes, one could hear such remarks as "after this the Tories will have to reconsider their attitude" To question this was, in the main, regarded as heretical and defeatist.

Basically, this attitude is a reflection of the still strong influence of reformism over the working class. It is the belief that, in spite of everything, the ruling

class will bow to mass pressure and refrain from becoming more reactionary. How else can one explain the underlying supposition that whatever changes are taking place in the economic and political situation of the ruling class, the trade union movement can still continue in much the same way (mergers, etc. notwithstanding).

The point is that the deepening crisis is compelling the ruling class to revise its attitude towards all the political, economic and social institutions now in existence. They may still have room for manoeuvre so that they can make tactical changes when faced with uncomfortably strong opposition, but the main objectives will not and cannot be changed.

A fact of life

This is a fact of life that needs to be understood if there is to be any advance towards building a revolutionary movement.

The role of the Labour Party, C.P.G.B., Trotskyists and most trade union leaders has been to direct attention away from this and into constitutional channels.

As far as the Labour Party is concerned, its electoral support is largely on the basis of the lesser of two evils. It no longer has any positive appeal to the mass of the working class and its influence on day-to-day activities is practically non-existent. The Communist Party can still trade on its capital accumulated from its more militant past and is still the best organised party of "the left". Its support for demonstrations against the Bill was for the purpose of bringing about the return of a Labour Government. Because this was its main aim and not the raising of

the political understanding of those involved in the struggle, it resorted to "scare" tactics to get people to take action. By this we mean that C.P. members of our acquaintance (and we believe this was widespread), tried to get workers to move into action on the basis of such slogans as "The Bill will put us back a hundred years", "Without the trades unions the working class is defenceless", thus giving the impression that the passing of the Bill would be an act from which the working class could not recover or fight against until its repeal by the "democratic process".

We do not consider this to be accidental; how better to assist the return of a Labour majority to Parliament, along with some Communist M.P.s so that a "Left" Labour Government can be formed in line with the policy advocated in "The British Road to Socialism".

The alliance between the C.P. and the Trotskyists is also not accidental or tactical, it flows from the same basic policy of "pushing the Labour Party to the left and forming a new left Labour Government".

An example of how this alliance operates in practice was provided by the campaign against the Industrial Relations Bill.

Even though the Socialist Labour League was more loud-mouthed on the question of a General Strike, its objectives were the same, namely to compel the resignation of the Tory Government, force a General Election and return a "Left" Labour Government

Apart from Feather's argument that a Labour Government would not necessarily be returned under such circumstances, it demonstrates that the aim of the Trotskyists,

like that of the C.P. is to attempt to contain the struggle within the confines of parliamentary democracy. Its ultra-left slogans are only the cover for its attempts to bring workers back into Tweedledum-Tweedledee politics at the very time when they are seeing through them with ever-increasing clarity.

The One Day Token Strikes

The decision of the A.U.E.W. to call for such strikes was a progressive step but the notices issued by the E.C. did nothing to clarify the strategy or tactics behind them. The struggle against the new laws will be of a protracted character and can only be conducted as part of the general struggle against worsening living standards. It is in this context that we consider the decision should have been one of recommending strike action along with the political reasons for doing so. In this way the militants would have been compelled to enter into political arguments about the Bill in order to move the membership, thus assisting the growth of political understanding. This would perhaps have been less effective initially in terms of numbers of workers on strike but a start would have been made on a really mass discussion of the politics of the situation and this is, after all, what is most needed.

In the event, many shop stewards used the E.C. directive as a means of avoiding the need of winning political conviction amongst the membership.

What Now

The main immediate danger now is that sections of the trade union leadership will begin, and indeed have already begun, to

accommodate themselves to the provisions contained in the Bill.

The contradictions between the various interest groups within the trade union leadership will create strong pressures to "take advantage" of those provisions in the Bill which are concerned with the body to be recognised as the bargaining agent. This is the reason for the attitude of Jones and Scanlon when they correctly pressed for a T.U.C. decision to instruct all affiliated unions to refuse to allow themselves to be placed on the Register. The fact that the T.U.C. refused to take up this position opened up the almost absolute certainty of some unions registering and the others following on behind for fear of losing members.

The Ford settlement

There is another aspect which is underlined by the settlement at Fords where Jones and Scanlon overrode the accepted negotiating body and agreed amongst other things to a secret ballot and a no strike clause.

Here we have two individuals who have been amongst the most vociferous opponents of the Bill voluntarily agreeing to some of its provisions being included in a direct Union-Employer agreement.

In the coming period the main struggle will be to prevent such agreements being made at any level and to adopt tactics which will leave each individual employer in no doubt that the operation of any of the undesirable clauses in the Bill will be a very costly business for him. In short, to help breed an atmosphere and attitude of mind amongst workers that to pass legislation is one thing - to operate it is another.

The role of the trotskysts

The fact that the trotskysts, and the Socialist Labour League in particular, are having what appears to be a new lease of life, is no accident either. The same phenomenon is showing itself all over Europe. As the old parties of the 'left' lose their influence, particularly over the youth, the ultra-left moves in to fill the gap. The S.L.L. is seeking to fulfil this role at the moment. We are not making the error of saying that this is all part of a plot hatched by the ruling class but are simply making the point that this development is to be expected and that it operates in the interest of the ruling class.

The demand for a General Strike to "Kill the Bill" is in line with their usual tactics of making demands for action on matters which appeal to a relatively few militants but for which the material basis does not exist. When the mass of workers, even organised ones, show little enthusiasm for such activity the frustration in the minds of some militants leads them to lose faith in the ability of the working class to learn lessons and, consequently, take decisions for themselves. It leads to the attitude that workers must be compelled to take action to save themselves from the folly of their own backwardness. This is a distortion of Marxism and certainly contrary to the teachings of Mao-Tse-Tung, the greatest exponent of Marxism.

Officials and Membership

During the next few years aspiring Marxists who see the trade unions as a power base will also be compelled to re-think their position. The same pressures which make Scanlon and Jones move from their

'militant' positions are at work on all those who are part of the union superstructure. The tendency of the trade unions to become part of the capitalist establishment will gain momentum and those who take up leading positions will find their situation untenable in terms of mass leadership as distinct from petty manoeuvring.

The confidence with which the Government is pushing through the Industrial Relations Bill is an indication that they have the measure of the trade union leadership and understand how to exploit the contradictions between the leaders and between them and the membership. They fully understand that the union leadership will not present any real threat to their position but are also just as aware of the potentialities of mass struggle by the rank and file once it breaks out of the confines imposed on it by the trade union machinery and agreements.

It is noticeable how the propaganda machine is now going to great pains to emphasise that the majority of shop stewards are not 'trouble makers'. The vicious attacks of a few years ago did not intimidate them so 'sugar coated bullets' are now being tried. The carrot as well as the stick.

After a short time as a shop steward one recognises that self reliance is the keynote in any workshop or factory. To enter into any struggle on any other basis is to court defeat and this will be even more true in the future as far as official support is concerned.

The question of whether trade unions will develop as organs of mass struggle or degenerate into organs of mass suppression on the fascist model is one of the key factors which will determine our perspective for mass struggle in the future.

ROSA LUXEMBURG, 1871 - 1971 : AN APPRECIATION.

By Mike Faulkner

"An eagle may sometimes fly lower than a hen but a hen can never fly as high as an eagle. Rosa Luxemburg erred over the question of Polish independence; she erred in 1913 on the theory of capitalist accumulation; she erred when in July 1914, along with Plekhanov, Vandervelde, Kautsky, etc. she favoured unity between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks; she erred in her letters from prison in 1918 (although after her release she largely corrected her mistakes at the end of 1918 and early 1919) but, in spite of all these mistakes, she was and remains an eagle".

Before commencing this appreciation of Rosa Luxemburg I think it necessary to say why I consider it important for Marxist-Leninists to celebrate the centenary of her birth.

Rosa Luxemburg was a contemporary of Lenin's. Like Lenin she was throughout her life wholeheartedly dedicated to the revolution that would liberate mankind and, like him, she brought to the struggle a warm and dynamic personality, an indefatigable energy and extraordinary intellectual gifts. Unlike Lenin, she often failed to see the wood for the trees and, as a result, made serious errors of judgement on several important theoretical and organisational questions. Unlike Lenin, she failed to lead a revolution to victory and for that failure she paid with her life.

Because of her sharp differences with

Lenin on such issues as nationalism and the party, many Marxist-Leninists have come to regard her with the slightly awkward affection reserved for the martyr whose heroism was beyond question but whose politics, it is felt, were less than 'pure'. But her centenary should not pass unnoticed for she was a truly great revolutionary whose deep confidence in the working class and unshakable devotion to the cause of socialism sustained her through the most bitter trials and reverses and enabled her to make the supreme sacrifice with quiet serenity.

She was born in Poland in the same month as the Commune arose in Paris and her entire life was devoted to the cause for which the Commune stood. To celebrate the Commune and ignore Rosa Luxemburg is to ignore the historic significance of the Commune.

In this essay I want to deal briefly with some of her ideas and to show how, in spite of her mistakes, she never lost sight of the fact that the socialist revolution must be made by the masses of the workers. The need to involve the masses in all stages of the struggle was her constant preoccupation and it is this aspect of her thinking more than anything else that links her with the two greatest revolutionaries of this century - Lenin and Mao.

Biographical background.

Rosa Luxemburg was born in the Polish

town of Zamosc on March 5, 1871. She became a revolutionary while still at school and by the time she was 18 her activities had come to the notice of the police. She was forced to flee the country and, like many other Russian and Polish revolutionary emigres, she found her way to Switzerland. She entered the university of Zurich in 1889 and soon became active in the socialist movement. She helped form the Polish Social Democratic Party in 1893.

Germany was the centre of Social Democratic politics and Rosa Luxemburg made her way there in 1898, just as the German party was engaged in the great controversy with Bernstein. She led the attack against revisionism with a series of articles published in the party's paper 'Neue Zeit' entitled 'Social Reform or Revolution'.

Bad health prevented her from returning to Poland immediately when the 1905 revolution broke out. She did return at the end of the year, by which time the revolution had passed its peak and the initiative had passed to reaction. She worked clandestinely in Warsaw for a few months until in March 1906 she was arrested and thrown into jail. Her deteriorating health led to her release later in the year. She was expelled from Poland and before returning to Germany she went to a short time to Finland where she summed up the experiences of the 1905 revolution in her pamphlet 'The Mass Strike, the Party and the Trade Unions'.

In 1907 she attended the London Conference of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party as a delegate from the Polish Party and later in the same year she spoke at the Stuttgart Congress of the Socialist International where, together with Lenin, she introduced the famous anti-imperialist

war resolution.

Her most important theoretical work, 'The Accumulation of Capital' was published in 1913 and immediately it gave rise to a heated controversy in the SPD.

With the outbreak of the imperialist war in 1914 the Parliamentary group of the SPD voted in favour of war credits for the Kaiser's government. Finally only one deputy in the Reichstag upheld the honour of revolutionary socialism by flouting Party discipline to vote against the war credits. That was Karl Liebknecht.

From that time onwards the two names - Luxemburg and Liebknecht were linked together as symbols of socialist resistance to the Imperialist War in Germany. Together, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg and Kar Liebknecht salvaged from the opportunist debris of the SPD a small group of principled revolutionaries who became the nucleus of the Spartakus Bund.

In February 1915 she was thrown into jail once again. From there she continued to agitate against the war, collaborating in the publication of the illegal 'Spartakus Letters'. In 1916 she issued under the pseudonym 'Junius' her famous pamphlet 'The Crisis of German Social Democracy' which came to be known as 'The Juniusbrochure'. In it she submitted the leaders of German Social Democracy to scathing denunciation and called for the establishment of a new, revolutionary International.

In November 1918 the revolution in Germany released Rosa Luxemburg from prison. She entered immediately into the political fray and, together with Karl Liebknecht and others she played the leading part in found-

ding the German Communist Party. She became the editor of the new party's paper, 'Rote Fahne'.

But the rightist politicians of German Social Democracy into whose hands the reins of state had fallen, put themselves in the service of reaction and acted as the executioners of the revolution. They used the armed forces of the old Prussian power to crush the workers uprising in Berlin in January 1919. On January 15, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were arrested. On the same day they were brutally murdered by their captors. Karl Liebknecht was shot in cold blood. Rosa Luxemburg was struck on the head with the butt of a rifle. Repeated blows smashed her skull. She was then dragged half dead into a waiting car where she was shot at point blank range. Her body was thrown from the Liechtenstein Bridge into the Landwehr Canal from where it was not recovered until the following May.

Throughout her turbulent life she never for a moment flinched from the dangers that confronted her and she well understood her personal stake in the struggle. Less than two years before her death, in a letter to Sophie Liebknecht, written from prison, she had said: 'You know that I really hope to die at my post, in a street fight or in prison'. Like so many brave fighters, before her and since, who have devoted their lives to the revolution, she was finally prepared to give up her life in its cause.

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The period 1900 - 1914 was notable for the intense battles waged within the European Socialist movement against revisionism.

The early revisionism of Bernstein and the later revisionism of Kautsky had one

feature in common - they both represented an abandonment of revolution in favour of reformism. When Bernstein said: "The final aim of socialism, whatever it may be, does not matter to me; it is the movement itself which matters", he turned his back on revolution. For the revolutionary potential of the masses he substituted the parliamentary party establishment, acting on behalf of the masses, in pursuit of social reform. It was against this betrayal that Rosa Luxemburg reacted so passionately. Although she often had the support of Kautsky and those who later formed the "Marxist Centre" in the German Party, she was, from the beginning, distinguished from them in her belief that the masses were themselves the makers of history. This profound confidence in the working class and equally profound distrust of anything that in her opinion sought to cramp the workers' revolutionary energies, was at once the source of all her strength and all her weaknesses. It sustained her where others sank into cynicism or despair and it led her, through a sometimes too simple belief in spontaneity, to make serious errors of judgement where political skill was needed.

Her earliest controversy with Lenin occurred in 1904 shortly after the historic 2nd Congress of the RSDLP. Lenin had defined the Bolshevik position in "One Step Forward; Two Steps Back", a sharply polemical article against his Menshevik opponents, which dealt with the organisational problems of the Russian movement at that time. It was to this work that Rosa Luxemburg turned her attention in two long articles in "Neue Zeit" in 1904.

We are not concerned here to recount the details of her argument with Lenin but an outline of their differences over the nat-

ure and role of the party is necessary to an understanding of her conception of social democracy as "the movement of the working class itself".

The Party and the Working Class

At the second congress of the RSOLP, held in London in 1903, a serious split developed amongst the delegates over questions of party organisation. Rosa Luxemburg, who followed developments in the Russian movement very closely, found herself in strong disagreement with Lenin on the question of centralism and over his concept of a professional revolutionary cadre. Her views were very close to those of the Mensheviks.

She was working in conditions very different from those prevailing in Russia. For many years there had existed in Germany a mass socialist party working in conditions of legality and with considerable representation in parliament. Its leaders were known and respected throughout the European revolutionary movement. She was acutely conscious of the need to involve the masses of workers in political struggle and to her it appeared that Lenin's view of the political vanguard would preclude such an involvement. She criticised him for attempting to stifle the initiative of the masses and accused him of wanting to impose a bureaucratic clique over the proletariat. She believed that leadership should be exercised by way of example and had great faith in the ability of the working class spontaneously to generate its vanguard organisations which would carry the revolution to victory. She seemed to think that Lenin was advocating a form of Blanquism - "the absolute blind subordination of the different organs of the party to their central authority and the extension of the

decisive powers of this latter onto the outermost periphery of the party organisation ... a central authority which alone thinks, acts and decides for all". (ii)

She reacted so strongly against Lenin's emphasis on party centralism and a professional cadre because, for her, they were incompatible with what she termed the "self activation" of the working class. It was not simply that she found the views expressed in "What Is To Be Done?" and "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" inapplicable to the different conditions prevailing in Germany; she regarded them as inapplicable to Russia as well:

"Even from the standpoint of the fears entertained by Lenin - i.e. the dangerous influence of the intellectuals upon the proletarian movement - his own conception of organisation constitutes the greatest danger for Russian Social Democracy".(iii) In posing an alternative, the spontaneous element was uppermost in her conception:

"Social Democratic Centralism must therefore be of an essentially different construction from the Blanquist. It can be nothing other than the imperious co-ordination of the will of the enlightened and fighting vanguard of the workers as contrasted with its different groups and individuals; this is, so to speak, a "self centralism" of the leading element within its own party organisation". (iv)

But Lenin advocated neither Blanquism nor Jacobinism. He actually went to some length to point out that, in attributing to him the definition of a revolutionary Social Democrat as the "Jacobin indissolubly linked with the organisation of the class-conscious workers", Rosa Luxemburg was confusing "comparison of the two revolutionary trends of the eighteenth and twen-

tieth centuries with identification of those trends". (v)

There is no doubt that she failed to grasp the meaning of the struggle in the Russian party.

Her opposition to the Bolsheviks on organisational questions expressed a deeply felt antipathy to all centralised rules and discipline within the proletarian movement. She was reacting against the particular type of organisation existing in the German Party where, long before 1914, the leadership had come to see their parliamentary role as all-important. The parliamentary group, the trade union leaders and the Party theoreticians came to regard themselves as the decisive factor in the class struggle; the working class would await their command and act only when and as they chose. Mass action by the workers came to be feared as it might disrupt the leadership's smooth plans for the workers. The Party leadership was supposed to act on behalf of the class; the class was expected to be malleable material in their hands. She expressed herself against the Party regime in a letter to Klara Zetkin in 1907:

"The plain truth is that August (Bebel) and still more so the others, have completely pledged themselves to parliament and parliamentarianism and whenever anything happens which transcends the limits of parliamentary action they are hopeless - no, worse than hopeless, because they then do their utmost to force the movement back into parliamentary channels and they will furiously defame as 'an enemy of the people' anyone who dares to venture beyond their own limits".

The German Party was heavily bureaucratic and this feature was closely related to its

lack of confidence in the masses - its reformism. Rosa Luxemburg was conscious of this relationship but she saw organisation itself as a danger, rather than the particular type of organisation in the German Party. This led her to an over-optimistic view of what could be achieved through the spontaneous action of the workers and she failed to understand the importance assigned by Lenin to the vanguard political party integrally linked to the working class as a necessary weapon in the struggle for power. For her, social democracy was "the movement of the working class itself".

During the decade and a half following the 1903 Congress of the RSDLP, events were to show that the Bolsheviks were essentially correct. Only they were capable of "seizing the hour" in the revolutionary months of 1917 in Russia. The course of the German revolution shows that, while Rosa Luxemburg may not have underestimated the ferocity of ruling class reaction, she never really came to terms with the question of how it could be successfully fought and defeated. In spite of her deep disagreements with the right and centre of German social democracy and even after she had come to realise that the Party leadership constituted a barrier to revolution, she refused to effect an organisational break with them. Ironically, her belief in "self-activation" was, in part, responsible for her failure to make such a break. She was hypnotised by the SPD even though she saw its faults. She seemed to think that to break from the Party necessarily meant to isolate herself from the workers. While Lenin and his comrades were building a "new type" of party in Russia, she continued to allow the opportunists to wear the mantle of leadership in Germany. Even at the end of her life, in her speech to

the foundation Congress of the German Communist Party in January 1919, she had not abandoned her belief in spontaneity as the decisive factor. "Activity itself educates the masses" she said. As far as the political education of the masses was concerned Lenin had argued precisely the opposite.

It can be said that Rosa Luxemburg erred not in her deep faith in the creative revolutionary power of the masses but in her belief that a disciplined, centralised organisation of the Leninist type was somehow incompatible with the revolutionary will of the masses. Lenin's "party of a new type" was not, as she believed, conceived as something apart from and above the masses but was, on the contrary, the only effective expression of their will to power.

But in pointing to her error it is important to remember what was positive and good in her thinking. She was motivated by a genuine revolutionary desire to remove obstacles to the workers' path to power. She hated the opportunism, the intellectual arrogance and the conceit of so many self-styled leaders and in their attitude she correctly detected contempt for the working class. In the preface to one of her earliest works "Social Reform or Revolution", written in 1899 against the revisionism of Bernstein, she said:

"As long as theoretical knowledge remains the privilege of a handful of 'academicians' in the Party, the latter will face the danger of going astray. Only when the great mass of workers take the keen and dependable weapons of scientific socialism in their own hands will all the petty-bourgeois inclinations, all the opportunist currents come to nothing. The movement will then

find itself on sure and firm ground".

The subsequent history of the revolutionary movement has shown this to be true. Without the leadership of a revolutionary party the workers can never take power; but unless the workers control the party and unless they are drawn fully into the administration of the state, they can never retain power. Since 1917 most communist parties throughout the world have gone the same way as the parties of the Second International; they have become divorced from the workers and have degenerated into bourgeois parties. That Lenin was awake to this danger is clear from much of his writing, particularly from his last articles and speeches.

One of the most important questions facing the working class movement in a pre-revolutionary situation is how to ensure that the Party is both democratic and centralist and that it gives effective political leadership to the workers while encouraging their fullest participation in struggle. One of the most important questions after the seizure of power is how to ensure that the working class and the masses are drawn fully into the administration of the state so that the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist democracy become a reality. In view of the terrible stultification of mass initiative that occurred in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe there is no room for complacency about questions such as these. In considering them, revolutionaries will find much that is of positive value in the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg.

The National Question

Like Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg had no patience with those who attempted to use the letter of Marxism against the spirit of Marx-

ism. In one of her earliest works "The Industrial Development of Poland" (1896), she opposed the petty-bourgeois nationalists in the Polish Socialist Party who insisted on clinging to Marx's view that it was the duty of all socialists and democrats to support actively the demand for Polish independence from Russia. This standpoint had been correct through the middle and later years of the nineteenth century when the centre of revolution was in Western and central Europe. At that time Tsarist Russia was still the bastion of counter-revolution and, in the absence of mass democratic movements in Russia and other Slavic countries, the Polish landed gentry who led the independence movement, assumed an important role in the European democratic movement.

But by the end of the nineteenth century things had changed. Independent democratic and proletarian movements began to arise in the Slavic countries, including Russia itself. The centre of gravity of the revolution began to shift away from the west towards Russia. The old Poland of the landed gentry gave way to a new Poland of the capitalist bourgeoisie. In these changed conditions Poland ceased to have the pivotal importance it had in Marx's day. Writing on the national question in 1914, Lenin pointed out that in this respect Rosa Luxemburg's standpoint had been correct:

"Therefore, the Polish Social-Democrats were quite right when they attacked the nationalistic infatuation of the Polish petty bourgeoisie and pointed out that the national question was of secondary importance for Polish workers when they, for the first time, created a purely proletarian party in Poland and proclaimed the very important principle that the Polish and Russian workers must maintain the closest alliance in their class struggle". (vi)

Throughout her life Rosa Luxemburg argued that socialists should not fight for Poland's national independence. She argued that the demand for separation served only the interests of the Polish capitalists and drew its support from peasant backwardness. She argued that the workers of Poland and Russia should unite their struggle against their oppressors in both countries on purely class and not national lines. But in a long article written in 1908 she went much farther than this, arguing that the very concept of national "self determination" was wrong. She severely criticised the Russian Marxists for including the demand for self determination of oppressed nations in their 1903 programme.

On this question she crossed swords with Lenin who, in 1914, subjected her arguments to an incisive critical analysis in the course of which he placed the problem in its historical perspective. He warned against the chauvinism of even socialists belonging to oppressing nations, recalling Marx's criticism of a young Russian socialist for his attitude to Poland:

"Marx asks a socialist belonging to an oppressing nation about his attitude to the oppressed nation and he at once reveals the defect common to the Socialists of the dominant nations (the British and the Russian): they fail to understand their socialist duties towards the downtrodden nations, they echo prejudices borrowed from the bourgeoisie of the "Great Powers". (vii)

Such chauvinism in the ranks of the proletarian movement of an oppressing nation was utterly intolerable to Lenin. He argued that from the standpoint of the new proletarian parties during the period of the bourgeois democratic revolution in East

ern Europe and Asia, all nationalism must be opposed on class lines, as it was always either bourgeois or feudal. But he also insisted on the right of all nations to self-determination and stressed the particular relevance of this demand to the currently existing situation in which Tsarist Russia oppressed numerous nationalities - including the Poles. He thus made no concessions to the "nationalism" of either the oppressing or the oppressed nations but he fully recognised the rights of the peoples of the oppressed nations such as Poland to self-determination - i.e. to secession.

Concerning the national question, it can be said that Rosa Luxemburg's passionate internationalist spirit and commitment to the workers' struggle was not balanced by a sufficiently sober appraisal of the complexities involved. In this, as in other matters, her Marxism fell short of Lenin's.

The Accumulation of Capital

Rosa Luxemburg's major theoretical work is undoubtedly "The Accumulation of Capital" which she wrote in 1912.

Bernstein and his supporters based their rejection of revolution on the premise that capitalism could go on expanding indefinitely and, while this theory was rejected by the anti-revisionists, no serious attempt has been made to develop a theoretical alternative to it. In "The Accumulation of Capital" Rosa Luxemburg set out to provide one.

Her reading of Vol. II of "Capital" led her to the conclusion that Marx had not conclusively demonstrated the possibility of capital accumulation within a 'closed' capitalist system. After studying the writing

of other economists she concluded that accumulation within a closed system was impossible.

Central to the problem of capital accumulation was, in her view, the realisation of surplus value. In simple reproduction surplus value is sold to the capitalists for their own consumption. In expanded reproduction the realisation of constant and variable capital is achieved through the capitalists' replacement purchases and the expenditure of the workers. How are the capitalists to realise that part of the surplus value they wish to accumulate? It cannot, as in simple reproduction, be sold back to the capitalists themselves and the workers' wages are only sufficient to realise the variable capital. In this theoretical construction of a 'closed capitalism' the problem now becomes one of finding a demand for the accumulated surplus value. In such a system that part of the surplus value not consumed by the capitalists cannot effectively exist in the form of additional means of production, as the only effect of such means of production would be to increase accumulation still further without solving the problem of demand. Such a state of affairs, she concluded, was rather like a:

"Merry-go-round which revolves around itself in empty air. This is not capitalist accumulation, i.e. heaping up of money capital but the opposite: production for the sake of production, thus, from the standpoint of capital, utter nonsense". (viii)

Her way out of the insoluble dilemma posed by her own theoretical structure was to abandon as unworkable her a-priori assumption - the closed or 'pure' capitalist system. That part of the surplus value which, within the structure could not be

profitably accumulated, now finds an outlet in a non-capitalist sector which alone can provide the effective demand enabling the capitalists to accumulate.

This expansion to the non-capitalist environment is the basis for Rosa Luxemburg's theory of imperialism. The backward nations become drawn into the capitalist orbit and when the non-capitalist environment has been fully absorbed there once again emerges the closed capitalist system which she has already shown to be unworkable. It will not work - and that will be the end of capitalism.

According to this theory the crisis of capitalism-imperialism occurs as a result of the exhaustion of the non-capitalist market and the impending doom of capitalism becomes as mechanically inevitable as the destruction of a driverless car heading full speed towards a cliff edge.

The most glaring error in this theoretical construction is her assumption that the consumption of workers cannot realise surplus value. From this error she is led to conclude that the sum of variable capital remains fixed under expanded reproduction, and likewise the workers' consumption. In practice variable capital does not remain fixed with accumulation but is added to. When spent by the workers it realises surplus value which takes the form of consumption goods.

Rosa Luxemburg thought that it was impossible for consumption to increase within the framework of capitalism and concluded that any addition to the total means of production would serve no purpose. Once the dogma about the constancy of consumption is shown to be false, the whole theory

falls down. As Bukharin said:

"If one excludes expanded reproduction at the beginning of a logical proof, it is naturally easy to make it disappear at the end; it is simply a question of the simple reproduction of a simple logical error".(ix)

The flaws in her theory were well summed up by Paul Sweezy:

"There is no a priori impossibility of capital accumulation in a closed capitalist system; and if there were, the non-capitalist environment would in no way help matters. What Rosa Luxemburg really does is to examine the problem of accumulation with the premises of 'simple reproduction' (from which accumulation is excluded) and then call in the non-capitalist environment as a sort of deus ex machina to get her out of the resulting muddle."

Although the logic of her argument led to the conclusion that capitalism was bound to collapse regardless of any conscious action on the part of the workers to assist its destruction, Rosa Luxemburg was too good a revolutionary to accept the logical consequences of her own proposition. She concluded "The Accumulation of Capital" with a passionate condemnation of imperialism and an appeal to the workers to prepare for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist-imperialist system before it was allowed to drag the world into barbarism. That was two years before World War 1.

Her book was greeted with a storm of hostile criticism from the party theoreticians in Germany. Not only was it attacked by the old-style revisionists but also by the 'orthodox' leaders like Kautsky. Almost the entire leadership of the SPD had by this time come to fear revolution. The revisionists openly repudiated it; the Kautskyists

always argued that the time wasn't ripe. They all, in one way or another, believed in the indefinite expansibility of capitalism, so it is hardly surprising that they reacted so strongly against a theory which treated revolution not as a possibility in the distant future but as a necessary concomitant of capitalism's impending collapse.

Whatever the theoretical errors in this work (and they were not inconsiderable) it was still an outstanding achievement that put her head and shoulders above most of her critics.

Rosa Luxemburg the Woman

It has not been possible to touch on more than a few of Rosa Luxemburg's ideas and it is impossible to convey the full drama of her life and struggle in an essay. In concentrating on the theoretical contributions of outstanding revolutionaries, Marxists are often inclined to pay too little attention to their lives - to the kind of people they were. This seems to me a mistake, for if the struggle for socialism is not about the quality of human life, then it is about nothing. The greatest revolutionaries have been outstanding human beings.

Rosa Luxemburg was an outstanding human being in every sense. She was a woman of deep compassion and intensity of feeling. For her the revolution was not an abstraction to which one devoted oneself by retreating from the world of ordinary men and women into a political coterie. The struggle concerned the real lives of men and women, their joys and their sorrows, their aspirations. She led a "real life" in the fullest sense. She saw no contradiction, for example, between her commitment to the rev-

olution and her life-long interest in botany and ornithology; she found time to paint and she painted well; she read and loved the great classics of European literature. Nothing of this detracted one iota from her total dedication to the cause of the proletariat. Her combination of emotional passion and soaring intellect is perhaps most evident in the burning denunciation of imperialism with which she concluded her "Junius Brochure". It was written from prison in February 1915 as Europe was plunged into the bloodiest war in History. The following will surely stand for all time as the most eloquent condemnation of imperialist bestiality ever written:

"Imperialist bestiality has been let loose to devastate the fields of Europe and there is one incidental accompaniment for which the "cultured world" has neither heart nor conscience - the mass slaughter of the European proletariat ... It is our hope, our flesh and blood which is falling in swathes like corn under the sickle. The finest, the most intelligent, the best trained forces of international socialism, the bearers of the heroic traditions of the modern working class movement, the advanced guard of the world proletariat, the workers of Great Britain, France, Germany and Russia are being slaughtered in masses. That is a greater crime by far than the brutish sack of Louvain or the destruction of Rheims Cathedral. It is a deadly blow against the power which holds the whole future of humanity, the only power which can save the values of the past and carry them on into a newer and better human society. Capitalism has revealed its true features; it betrays to the world that it has lost its historical justification that its continued existence can no longer be reconciled with the progress of mankind

"Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles!

Long live Democracy! Long live the Tsar and Slavdom! Ten thousand blankets guaranteed in perfect condition! A hundred thousand kilos of bacon, coffee substitutes - immediate delivery! Dividends rise and proletarians fall. And with each one sinks a fighter for the future, a soldier of the revolution, a liberator of humanity from the yoke of capitalism and finds a nameless grave. The madness will cease and the bloody product of hell come to an end only when the workers of Germany and France, of Great Britain and Russia, awaken from their frenzy, extend to each other the hand of friendship and drown the bestial chorus of imperialist hyenas with the thundersous battle-cry of the modern working class movement; 'Workers of the World, Unite!'

It is appropriate to end with the tribute

paid to her by her old friend Klara Zetkin:

"In Rosa Luxemburg the socialist idea was a dominating and powerful passion of both heart and brain, a truly creative passion which burned ceaselessly. The great task and the overpowering ambition of this astonishing woman was to prepare the way for social revolution, to clear the path of history for socialism. To experience the revolution, to fight its battles - that was the highest happiness for her. With a will, determination, selflessness and devotion for which words are too weak she consecrated her whole life and her whole being to socialism. She gave herself completely to the cause of socialism, not only in her tragic death but throughout her whole life, daily and hourly, through the struggles of many years. She was the sharp sword, the living flame of revolution."

References

- (i) See Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 7, pages 476-477 and Rosa Luxemburg's "Marxism or Leninism". (I.L.P. 1962)
- (ii) Rosa Luxemburg's "Marxism or Leninism", page 11
- (iii) Ibid, page 14
- (iv) Ibid, page 12
- (v) Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 7, page 477
- (vi) Lenin, Selected Works, 1943 Edition, Volume 4
- (vii) Ibid, page 274
- (viii) Rosa Luxemburg's "The Anti-Kritic", page 17
- (ix) Bukharin's "Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital", page 20
- (x) Paul M. Sweezy. Review of 1955 edition of "Accumulation of Capital" New Statesman, June 1951

THE PARIS COMMUNE

by Virginia Penn

One hundred years ago, for just 72 days - March 18-May 28 1871, the working people of Paris exercised the first Dictatorship of the Proletariat after seizure of power from the ruling bourgeoisie. Ever since the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century and the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 the reins of government had been shifted about among various elements of the bourgeoisie - in the form of a restored monarchy, a 'republic', then another empire under Napoleon III. During this unstable period the conditions of the people, both peasants and workers as well as petty-bourgeois elements, had become increasingly hard to bear. Peasants who could not live off their meagre land drifted to the cities seeking work in the young but growing industry, swelling the ranks of the unemployed and the under-employed workers. At the same time a wealthy and corrupt capitalist class had come to dominate the scene. Strife among sections of the ruling class enabled Louis Napoleon Bonaparte to seize power, becoming Emperor Napoleon III, with an ostentatious and glittering court for the people to maintain.

This was a period of bitter rivalry between France and Prussia to dominate Europe when the latter was growing fast in size and power under the astute leadership of the ruthless Bismark. In 1870 the less intelligent Napoleon was outwitted in a diplomatic contest, as the result of which he was provoked into declaring war, leading to his downfall. The Prussians swept through

France, occupying many of the main cities, bringing untold suffering and sorrow to the French people.

In September 1870 the completely discredited Napoleon fled, leaving others to save France from the ruins. A new government calling itself the 'Government of National Defence' took over, a ruling class government later stigmatised by Lenin as a 'Government of National Betrayal'. The Prussian intention was to seize Paris, which was besieged for nearly five months, but the invaders were frustrated by the staunch determination of the armed workers. In January 1871 the upper-crust 'Government' surrendered Paris to the Prussians, later removing itself to the safety and comfort of Versailles, well away from the nearly starving city.

Even so the working people won a victory for they prevented Bismark's soldiers from occupying their Paris except for one small corner. They had been preparing their defences, setting up their own armed Workers' Battalions and National Guard. They had set up Committees of Vigilance and taken over some of the Paris fortresses. Fearing the workers more than the foreign invader, the 'Government' sought by force and persuasion to disarm them and to seize their fortification but all their efforts failed in the face of the workers' unbending and united determination.

On March 18th the people of Paris awoke

to the jubilant call of the Commune leaders the armed workers. Having made careful preparations for months, the day had arrived to go into action. The Manifesto of the Commune urged:

'The proletarians of Paris, amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs .. They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies by seizing governmental power'. (Quoted by Marx in Civil War in France)

The leaders of the Commune movement had been alerted by a nocturnal attempt by the 'Government' to seize the artillery of the National Guard, a move frustrated by the workers with the assistance of some of the very soldiers instructed to disarm them.

The Seizure of Power

This heroic action was warmly acclaimed by Marx, Engels and, later, by Lenin and by the Chinese Communist Party. On the 95th anniversary of the Commune the C.C.P. journal, Red Flag (no. 4, 1966), stresses the international significance of the struggle:

'The Paris Commune ... was the proletariat's first rehearsal in taking up arms to overthrow the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, to overthrow the capitalist system and establish the socialist system. The heroes of the Commune bequeathed us invaluable lessons and experience gained at the cost of their blood'.

Paris was firmly in the hands of its working people, as Marx clearly described in

his Civil War in France:

'... this was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative, even by the great bulk of the Paris middle-class shop-keepers, tradesmen, merchants - the wealthy capitalists alone excepted ...'

The Commune had saved the former from a morass of debts and, as for the peasants, he continued, 'the Commune was perfectly right in telling (them) that "its victory was their only hope".'

Lenin stressed the point in his 1908 speech in Geneva, commenting that in the national crisis of that time, with the German victors settled in the main cities of France, the bourgeoisie showed their true colours when they consorted with the enemies of their own people. Moreover, the Parisian working classes have taught 'the European proletariat to deal concretely with the problems of Socialist Revolution' and that only the proletariat could be relied on to do so.

Smash the Bourgeois State!

Not only had the Parisians seized power from the renegade 'Government of National Defence' which fled to Versailles but they revolutionised the state. In each sector of Paris the Committees of Vigilance were responsible for safeguarding the people and the National Guard was manned by working men, at the service of the dispossessed classes. The first decree of the Commune was the abolition of the National army and its substitution by the people's own National Guard. The police was transformed from being an agent of the old central government to become an elected force respons-

ible to the people. The proletariat took over the functions of the former mayors of Paris districts, the judiciary and all administration. Judges and other officials were to be elected and subject to recall and all reactionary functionaries were dismissed. There was to be no separation between legislative and executive organs; the elected committees of the Commune controlled all aspects of administration. In other words, the new state machinery was completely in the hands of the working people; law enactment and enforcement was their prerogative and responsibility.

A barrier to careerism, bureaucracy and corruption by office-seekers was erected by the treatment of salaries. The lowest were raised and no functionary could draw more than the average worker. The holding of, and payment for, more than one post was forbidden and all special privileges and emoluments were abolished. On April 6th a resolution was passed abolishing the rank of General as 'incompatible with the principles of democratic organisation of the National Guard', a resolution which was unfortunately not implemented. All factories and workshops which had been closed by timorous or fleeing owners were taken over by the Commune, to be operated as social property. Other measures included the cancellation of all arrears of rent and debts, the secularising of education to break the reactionary control of the clergy and laws to protect workers, such as that against the onerous night baking, which was forbidden.

Not only were all functionaries elected and subject to recall but the people met regularly in their 'clubs' to express their views, make proposals and above all to supervise the elected committees and officials. Criticisms were freely aired in the

press and by letter or personal representation to the individual or committee concerned. For instance, a letter dated April 27th and published in a Paris paper said;

'Please give members of the Commune a jolt from time to time, ask them not to fall asleep, not to procrastinate in carrying out their own decrees. Let them make an end to their private bickering because only by unanimity of view can they with greater power, defend the Commune' (quoted in Red Flag, no: 41966). Similarly, the Commune was sharply criticised for not taking resolute action against counter-revolutionaries, deserters and renegades.

It was the aspiration of the Paris Communards that their example would be followed throughout France but the situation in general was not ripe for such a widespread revolutionary movement.

Bourgeois deceit

The proletariat of the Commune sought to establish a state where 'supreme justice' and universal magnanimity prevailed; where there would be no more human exploitation but their objectives could not be attained. The Versailles government carried on 'peace' negotiations with the Commune, all the while secretly preparing for an armed assault. From Versailles, Thiers, head of the Executive, declared on April 27th;

'I repeat it again and again. Let those impious weapons fall from the hands which hold them and chastisement shall be arrested at once by an act of peace, excluding only the small number of criminals.'

The Paris Commune was a serious obstacle to the domination of both foreign invaders and national reactionaries. It was therefore natural that Versailles should seek

the collaboration of the Prussian command, which was only too willing to assist in the demolition of this proletarian dictatorship. The Prussians were urged, and they agreed, to release French prisoners taken in the invasion, to reinforce the weak military forces of Versailles. The counter-revolutionary attack on Paris succeeded in breaking down the fierce resistance of the Commune and, entering the city on 28th May was followed by a widespread massacre which continued well into June. Fighting to the last the valiant defenders of the Commune were overcome and slaughtered, assisted by traitors within the gates.

An example to all revolutionaries

Although it lasted only 72 days, the initiative of the working people of Paris, their noble attempt to set up an entirely new type of socialist state surrounded by corrupt reaction, their staunch fight ending in bloody sacrifice, has ever since been honoured by revolutionaries everywhere. The positive lessons and analyses of the causes of defeat have inspired and guided future generations of fighters for the emancipation of all oppressed people.

Lenin saw the destruction of the Commune as the result of a number of causes. In their inexperience, the communards were deceived by the words of 'peaceful' agreement emanating from Versailles, so that vigilance was relaxed. They were unable to distinguish between friends and enemies, so that reactionary agents had been free to move about on their nefarious business. The Commune did not seize the opportunity in the hour of victory to advance on Versailles to wipe out the bourgeois reactionaries in their lair. They had not completed the takeover within Paris of reactionary inst-

itutions such as the Bank of France. In their sincere desire to consolidate their victory in a truly 'socialist' style, they did not destroy their enemies but sought 'to exercise moral influence on them', to show 'benevolence' and 'magnanimity' in order to achieve true 'fraternity'.

Also, in the exciting and awe-inspiring attempt to construct an entirely new society, the Parisians became engrossed in elections and the supervision of their committees, police, National Guard, to the unfortunate neglect of military vigilance. Above all, the crucial factor was the absence at that stage of the revolutionary proletarian struggle of a Marxist party to lead the way.

Nevertheless, the Commune provided unforgettable lessons for all later revolutionaries; it was appraised by Lenin as 'the greatest example' of the great proletarian revolutionary movement to date (1908 Speech in Geneva). It was an illustration of the principle that the emancipation of mankind can be achieved only under the leadership of the working class, themselves led by a Marxist party and with guns in hand; that the whole bourgeois state apparatus must be replaced by a state of the working class; and that victory must be consolidated in a continuing revolution to prevent a comeback by the old reactionary forces. The heroism of the Communards has been an inspiration to all later revolutionaries and the Red Flag flying over the Paris Hotel de Ville has been a symbol of future victory by the oppressed everywhere.

The Management Committee welcome comment, criticism and suggestions for future articles. We also welcome letters for publication. Please write to Tom Hill, 11 Barratt Avenue, Wood Green, London N.22

WAGES PRICES AND INFLATION

Inflation, Deflation, Revaluation, Devaluation. Tariffs and quotas. Imports, Exports and the balance of trade. Unemployment. Taxation. Rising prices. Rising wages and the Government's proposals for clamping a new legal framework around the trade unions and factory struggles.

This catalogue could easily be extended but it indicates how economic and financial questions have dominated the headlines and not merely as remote pieces of news. Rising prices and the struggles they bring over how to live, affect the widest number of people. These economic and monetary questions often involve complicated technical points and people are open, therefore, to be "blinded by science" and thus capitulate to seemingly plausible ideas publicised with persistence.

The Temple of Money has long endured but its priests change. What is unchanging is the complexity of the priestly doctrines. It is a bold man that claims their mastery. Without pretence to genius, we feel that current developments centred around inflation are important enough to compel some attempt at their clarification.

When Money Changes Value

What happens as the value of money is altered by inflation? Some gain, others lose. As prices rise to reflect the reduced value

of inflated money, those with fixed incomes, such as pensioners, lose in real consuming power. Workers who secure higher wages suffer through the time-lag between the rise in prices and the adjustment of their wages. Those with money who are actively engaged in business can, if they are adroit with timing, be one jump ahead, as it were, of the inflationary process. They pay costs in terms of original prices and sell in terms of inflated money at higher prices and put the proceeds, in a new cycle of production, back into costs at levels still not fully reflecting, because of time-lag, the measure of monetary depreciation. Thus in addition to a "normal profit", they profit from the situation of inflation. The entrepreneur's gain from inflation is the counterpart to the pensioner's loss.

The effect of inflation differs in relation to varying types of asset. People whose ownership is expressed in terms of money (e.g. holders of bonds, savings certificates, cash) suffer a loss of command over real resources as the value of money falls. Those with direct title to real resources such as land, factories and goods (and this includes title through shareholdings in companies,) in general see the money valuation of these assets move higher.

Of course we are over-simplifying. There are many complexities in the detailed working out of the effects of inflation in a

particular situation. But the essence remains that in its alteration of the relation-ship between money and real resources, inflation favours those with wealth who use their money actively and who command the course of business, at the expense of those on wages or pensions who are under the command of their employers and who respond to price charges rather than initiate them.

Wages and Prices

Is it true that higher prices cause wage increases or do wage increases cause higher prices? Mr. Heath has assumed the latter in his denunciation of "wildly excessive wage demands". But we should avoid getting imprisoned in a chicken-and-egg argument. Each situation has to be studied specifically to trace its sequence of political and economic developments. Two things need to be said about wages, however. First, producing arguments for keeping them down is as old as capitalism itself. Second, the fixing of wages touches different sensitivities from the fixing of other prices.

How are prices fixed? Clearly not on the basis of moral or social judgements since otherwise a sewage worker doing essential and unpleasant work would get more than a fashionable model. What fixes prices is the push and struggle of the market. Business monopoly or government intervention may appear sometimes as qualifying factors in this struggle but ultimately the qualifications affect form more than substance. Prices are fixed by market struggle with advantage going to the strong.

Capitalists take no exception to this struggle as the general basis for commodity pricing. Indeed they exalt the market as the necessary means of getting "efficiency".

The struggle is waged forcefully. When recently Copper, with a production cost of around £450 a ton, moved into a market situation permitting its price to be increased, this went to £750 a ton. But there was no howl against the copper producers. Copper users did not like the high price but they paid it. They had to, because unless they did they were not supplied.

Why then should attempts to put up wages be so denounced? Why the anger over strikes, the equivalent way for workers to say that, except at their price, supply of their commodity, labour-power, will not be forthcoming?

The reason is that, although capitalists accept market struggle as the determinant of prices, they regard wages as a special case. Profit is derived from the difference between what the worker is paid for the hire of his labour-power and the value his labour creates. Capitalists have a common interest in maximising this difference. The prices the capitalists charge for their goods affect the distribution among themselves of the profit extracted from the workers and each is concerned to secure a distribution to his advantage, which means clashes over these prices. But the capitalists have a common interest in extracting the profit itself; hence their special attitude towards wages.

As with other commodities, the price of labour-power has ups and downs which centre around its cost of production. What is the cost of production of labour-power? It is the cost of maintaining the worker and his family (thus ensuring his replacement by a following generation) at the standard which, at the given time in a given society is regarded as acceptable. This standard

changes, of course, with social and economic developments but in a given situation there is an area of earnings which reflects expectations of what is reasonable.

The actual fixing of a wage is somewhat different from fixing the price of another commodity, say bicycles. The capitalist selling bicycles fixes the price himself. Of course he will be influenced by production costs and what he thinks the market will bear but in the end he decides a price. The worker cannot fix his wage by similarly taking a decision. He has to agree with his employer which means negotiation and time. In general, therefore, wages tend to respond to prices rather than the other way round. Capitalists may argue - this is the position of the present government - that they over-respond; but this really only makes the question one of figures since the very concept of response involves admission that the initiative lies elsewhere.

Argument over wages is not just a theoretical exercise. Wages are the price not of inanimate things but of men with thinking heads and with the power to reshape society if they become agreed on what they want to do and how to do it. Influencing the thinking of the workers is therefore a practical and important matter for the capitalist. Hence the propaganda against 'excessive' wage demands, strikes and trade union practices with promises of good things to come in the future if these are modified and with appeals to patriotism and national interest. Thus those whose whole economic strength rests on the market and its settling of issues by the strength of contending interests advocate a different attitude when they clash with their workers. Their "theory" in this regard is clearly the servant of their interest.

Wages in Britain

What are the facts about the wages explosion which is said to necessitate the new measures proposed by the present government? "The Economist" of September 19th, 1970, tabulated important wage settlements and claims. There were settlements ranging up to 12% increase with current claims often considerably higher. But these are gross figures. The worker lives on what he takes home after deductions, expenses and taxes, not on gross pay. With taxation biting harder as money pay rises, a good part of any increase is immediately negated. The rest is, in general, offset by rising prices which, notwithstanding Mr. Heath's election campaigning, have continued to go up since he won. For it to be true that the British workers were taking more out of the economy, their real consumption would have to go up. But, in fact, from the early days of the Labour government, there has been virtual stagnation in real consumption.

The Spread of Inflation

What has been the depreciation of money throughout the world? Some measure, even if we need not regard it as precisely accurate, is given in the September Economic Letter 1970 published by the First National City Bank, which includes the following:

Depreciation of Money : Annual Rates*

Industrialised Countries	Annual Rates*		
	1959-69	1968-69	1969-70
Japan	5.0%	4.9%	7.5%
United States	2.2%	5.1%	5.7%
France	3.7%	5.7%	5.4%
United Kingdom	3.4%	5.1%	5.3%
Italy	3.6%	2.5%	3.7%
West Germany	2.4%	2.6%	3.6%

Less developed			
Countries	1959-69	1968-69	1969-70
Brazil	31.4%	18.8%	17.9%
Indonesia	58.2%	5.8%	12.0%
India	5.6%	0.8%	4.8%
Pakistan	3.6%	3.1%	4.5%

The figures show:

- (a) Inflation is widespread
- (b) A striking change in the rate of inflation in the U.S. From a moderate rate averaging only 2.2% a year over the period 1959-69 it accelerated to reach 5.7% between 1969 and 1970.
- (c) The acceleration of inflation in the U.S., the most powerful capitalist country, has been accompanied by its acceleration in other countries although with variations of pace, giving rise to uneven changes in the value of national monies and hence to exchange rate problems.

In this situation, inflation has brought to countries internal problems and international problems.

*The table shows the rate of decline in domestic purchasing power and not rates of inflation. Inflation, bringing 100% increase in prices, is expressed on this basis as 50% depreciation in the buying power of money.

Effects of Inflation

Internationally, inflation has brought problems of exchange rates and currency reserves, of balance of trade and balances of payments and of relationships among industrialised countries and between them and the "under-developed" countries. Despite some measure of co-operation amongst govern-

ments and central banks to ease some of these strains (e.g. the Basle Agreement in 1968 over support for sterling; the French and German Currency changes in 1969; central bank "swap" arrangements for supporting currencies), the basic trend has been for contradictions to sharpen. Problems which may be temporarily pushed into the future become more acute.

Internally, inflation affects living standards and the relative position of different social classes; alters the valuation of capital held in various forms and the relationship between those who owe and those who are owed money; and it changes the conditions in which governments and central banks determine their fiscal and financial policies. Moreover - a longer range but very important point - persistent inflation which brings stresses and strains into relationships between capitalists and workers, creditors and debtors, buyers and sellers, is a powerful dissolver of social stability. For example, the galloping inflation in Indonesia in the period before the military coup of 1965 was undoubtedly a major factor leading to the overthrow of the regime; things could not go on as they were and a shift one way or the other, to left or right, became inevitable. As inflation has persisted, the consideration, although not as yet made too much of publicly, has begun to be of increasing weight in ruling circles. Their fear of the social and political consequences of gathering inflation has contributed to their concern to curb it.

The City of London

British Imperialism, which at its peak embraced a quarter of the globe, has characteristics reflecting the conditions of its creation and growth in earlier years - the

primacy of Britain with the Industrial Revolution and her naval supremacy which assured free access to the undeveloped countries whose peoples were not as yet politically aroused. Britain was able to take and exploit territories and populations quite disproportionate to her domestic base. An island of 80,000 square miles and with about 1 1/2% of the world's population dominated a quarter of the world. The trading and financial profits of imperialism, flowing back to this base, made for "parasitism", for reliance on the inflow of easy money from commercial and financial manipulations, from the quick plundering of mineral resources. Domestic British industry was subordinated to this money-spinning. Already by about 1870 British industrial supremacy had passed away and with intensifying international competition there was all the more attraction to Britain's rulers in the profits from finance and trade.

While the City of London certainly should not be thought of as separate from and opposed to British industry, since financial and industrial capital interlink and the spreading activities in recent years of the merchant banks and other financial institutions have been making the association closer, yet the City, as one of the greatest international money centres, does have its own conceptions of interest. It fought hard to maintain the international status of sterling. Forced to retreat, it established a new role as the main arena of the Eurodollar market and co-operated with American banks to this end. (London now houses around thirty American banks whose business is rapidly increasing). The City has stood for the fullest association with the U.S.; partly in the hope of benefitting from American help against anti-imperialist popular movements and partly to borrow

from the American resources which it hoped to turn to profitable use; the counterpart to persistent British investment overseas has been the flow of investment, mainly American, into Britain.

Hence the policies backed by the City included massive arms spending and full military collaboration with the U.S. and constant efforts to enlarge the resources for overseas investment by squeezing living standards at home and by limiting domestic investment. As Britain, year by year, has fallen back competitively in consequence of these policies, so even more emphasis has been placed on the financial earnings of the City. But the Chancellor's recent congratulations on the City's achievements should be seen with their accompaniment - the warning on October 2nd 1970 by Mr. Catherwood, then director-general of the National Economic Development Office, that Britain is "very near the point of no return" in its decline as an industrial power. He said:

"If, in the next two years, we do not strengthen and restore our international competitive power, we will drop out of the ranks of major industrial powers ... In the 1950s we were one of the richest nations in the industrial free world. In the 1970s we will be one of the poorest ... High wage demands, inflationary settlements, wildcat strikes and rigid exchange rates are all problems but they are problems common to other countries. There is no easy solution to be had in preaching restraint to the unions ... We simply have not put down enough industrial capacity".

We anticipate that Catherwood's warning will go unheeded. There may be some tinkering but under the Tory Government the

main emphasis is likely to be on more not less of the old medicine, even though it may be poured into new bottles. Pressure against wages will be intensified. Legislation to register and control the unions is intended permanently to reduce their effectiveness in order to squeeze more out of British living standards to provide resources for the City's policies.

Unquestionably wage claims are an element in the merry-go-round of inflation. But what can workers do but try to keep up? They do not frame the policies which have weakened Britain. Modifying their claims would not lead to change in these policies.

Indeed, whatever advantages the capitalists can wrest from the British workers will be used to apply these policies more intensively.

This is a reprint of part of "Inflation and the Politics of Money" in the October-November issue of Politics and Money, a journal obtainable by postal subscription from Politics and Money Publishing Co., 14 South Hill Park Gardens, London, N.W.3.

Annual subscription rates (issued normally monthly but a minimum of 10 a year): British Isles 30/-. Europe (airmail) 40/-. Rest of World (airmail) 50/-. There are special rates for students who should state the institution attended and subjects studied.

The next issue of The Marxist, out in August, will include
Education in China
Open Letter from Italian Workers
Workers' Control
Red Trade Unions?

DO YOU EVER HAVE THE FEELING YOU HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE?

"This Congress calls upon all Communist Party members and sympathisers to work unceasingly to win the mass of trade unionists officials and members alike, to a recognition of the need for combined action between the unions and a united political Labour Movement for the purpose of bringing down the National Government, thus creating conditions which will facilitate the further growth of working class unity and political understanding and will accelerate the advance to working class power and the building of the classless Socialist society."

"Unity can bring to the working-class the fundamental idea of their own strength and power, the sense that they can transform the Labour Party into the united body that welds together for one common purpose, the whole organised working-class movement."

"We declare our firm opposition to all attempts to disrupt the Labour Party, either by disaffiliating those workers and organisations that desire working class unity, or by defeatist conceptions that the Labour Party cannot be won for a policy of unity. In order to combat both these tendencies it is necessary to demand with increased energy that within the Labour Movement there shall be full democratic rights for advocating views and policies which will help the movement to free itself from the disastrous policies of its present leadership."

(Harry Pollitt, Report to 14th Congress Communist Party of Great Britain, 1937)

ASPECTS OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Part Two

by Mike Cooley

"Machine labour is simplified in order to make a worker out of the human being still in the making, the completely immature human being, the child - whilst the worker has become a neglected child. The machine accomodates itself to the weakness of the human being in order to make the weak human being into a machine"

Karl Marx. "The Meaning of Human Requirements". (Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844).

The ever increasing complexity of the products made possible due to advances of Technological Change necessitates enormous research and development programmes. The drive of vast companies and even nations to maintain their "technological monopoly" over their competitors further compels them to embark upon research and development programmes on unprecedented scales. In the United States \$2,000 millions were spent on research and development in industry in 1950. This figure has increased to \$11,000 millions in 1961.

Industrial "research" effort is concerned almost solely with "applied research" - advancing new scientific knowledge in order to exploit commercial objectives. However, the expenditure on "Development" - the translation of research findings into actual products and processes accounts for some three-quarters of industry's Research and Development costs. Few companies will spend amounts which are of any significance on "Basic Research". Even when they sponsor research through fellowships and other means at universities it is usually on projects of specific commercial interest.

Basic research is generally carried out in State or non-profit making institutions.

The cost of Research and Development is now so great that in some leading areas of technological endeavour private enterprise is totally incapable of meeting it. There is, for example, no company in the world capable of developing an advanced aircraft system on its own resources. The capital problems of developing an advanced aero engine have been amply demonstrated by the Rolls-Royce crisis. Private enterprise attempts to overcome this problem by using its State Machine to provide State funds for "Development Contracts" or Government Research on projects for the "National interest" or for reasons of "National Security". Thus Private Enterprise retains the right to commercially exploit products developed at the taxpayer's expense.

In the United States today less than 40% of all research is financed by private enterprise compared with 70% in 1930. The historical trend is shown by the following table:-

Expenditure on Research and Development

1930-1959	(Millions of dollars)		
	<u>1930</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1959</u>
Government	23	2,810	7,200
Business Firms	116	2,370	4,500
Universities	<u>27</u>	<u>220</u>	<u>300</u>
TOTAL	166	5,400	12,000

This tendency will result in industries requiring a high research and development effort being 'nationalised' to provide a technological service to private enterprise. (Rolls Royce will probably be a case in point. Demands by the labour movement that sections of industry be 'nationalised' should be carefully analysed since nationalisation in capitalist society is actually a means of increasing the rate of exploitation of the working class. The simple belief that nationalisation is necessarily 'Socialistic' is entirely erroneous. (M.I.5 in Britain and the U.S. army in Vietnam are both nationalised and certainly neither of these institutions are socialist emissaries)

The distribution of research and development effort when examined on an industry-by industry basis provides a remarkably accurate picture of the true nature of our society and its concept of priorities:

Research and Development in U.S. Industry in 1961.
(Millions of dollars)

<u>Industry</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Financed by Companies</u>	<u>Financed by Government</u>
Aircraft & Missiles	3,957	392	3,565
Electrical Equipment & Communicat's	2,404	871	1,533

Chemicals	1,073	877	196
Machinery	896	610	286
Motors	802	628	174
Scientific Instruments	384	212	172
Petroleum	294	286	8
Primary Metals	160	151	9
Rubber Products	126	88	38
Fabricated Metal Products	118	90	28
Food and Kindred Products	105	105	0
Stone, clay and glass products	103	95	8
Paper and allied products	60	60	0
Textile and apparel	33	33	0
Lumber and Wood products	9	9	0
Other Industries	<u>348</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>221</u>
TOTAL	10,872	4,631	6,241

Economic consequences

Some of the economic consequences of technological change at this stage of development are:-

(a) Increasing costs for the means of production of most commodities.

(b) Increased rate of obsolescence of all capital equipment.

(c) Increased Research and Development costs.

(d) Diminishing rates of profits.

(a) and (b) are considered in detail in The Marxist No. 16 and (d) in No. 14.

This means that the manipulation of markets (to effect economy of scale), takeovers and "rationalisation" becomes the prime function of top management. A moribund stage is reached in which in fact the production of capital becomes more important than production itself. Hence we will see more financiers such as Arnold Weinstock in industry and fewer technicians such as Sir Denning Pearson.

We will now see how man as a worker relates to technological change. We have seen (in part 1) that the increased rate of technological change increases the rate of fragmentation of skills, i.e. the division of labour. We demonstrated with concrete examples that man is increasingly subordinated to the machine and treated as a "man component" in the total man/machine system.

Only when we grasp fully that the capitalist sees the worker merely as a unit of production can we fully understand the implications of technological change in a class divided society.

When a unit of production - a machine - is designed, certain criteria are observed.

Some of these are as follows:-

(1) It is designed with the minimum "brain" to fulfil its task; i.e. no tape or electronic control if a manual or simple type would suffice.

(2) Minimum maintenance service to keep it operational for designated life span.

(3) Minimum housing. If capable of operating in primitive surroundings then it will not be housed in a temperature controlled room.

(4) The unit will be operated on the crudest fuels and materials consistent with the requirements of production.

Since man is a product of his environment and since the capitalist controls that environment, he will seek to apply the above criteria to the "Animate Unit of Production" - the worker.

(1) The worker will have the minimum "brain" (education) necessary to do his job. Trained to do it docilely, not educated to think as a developed human being. Vance Packard quotes in "The Hidden Persuaders" the instance of an engineering trade college, National Schools of Los Angeles, which in effect certifies its graduates to be co-operative candidates for industry through a process known as Human Engineering. A Trade Journal "Diesel Power" describes it this way:-

"Human Engineering, as we refer to it here is the science of moulding and adjusting the attitude of industrial personnel"..

Truly here is the "custom made man" of today, ready to help build a new and greater era in the annals of diesel engineering.

(2) A National Health or factory medical service to keep the worker just

healthy enough to work up to his retirement at 65. Consider the directive of the Medical Officer of Health at Willesden hospital that no N.H.S. patients over the age of 65 need be resuscitated. The directive was immediately withdrawn and was said to have been a mistake when there was a public outcry.

(3) Appalling housing is provided for the working class and minimal shelter for the worker and his family. Millions of slum dwellings exist in spite of the feasibility of mass-produced unit construction homes.

(4) Minimum food and clothing to merely sustain the working class as units of production. There are still thousands of families in London alone which are below the subsistence level. Even free school milk is to be withdrawn.

Thus the drive, as Marx put it "to make the weak human being into a machine", has spread out from the point of production - the direct interaction of man and machine - to invade every facet of working class existence.

We have seen that the more advanced the means of production becomes through technological change, the more the worker is dominated by the machine. The products of the worker's labour are increasingly alien to him as a human being. He increasingly sees that the products of his own labour confront him as an independent power. This we have demonstrated by examining concrete examples and trends at the point of production in a 1970 context. Most militant workers would readily identify the situations described. However, few unfortunately would recognise that the fundamental problem involved can only be fully understood through a Marxist analysis of it.

In 1848, Marx and Engels said:-

"Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to the division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine and it is only the most simple, most monotonous and most easily acquired knack that is required of him" (1)

We observed that more workers seem to be induced to work three shifts to exploit high capital equipment for twenty-four hours per day whilst the permanent pool of unemployed grows.

Engels stated:-

"Thus it comes about that the economising of the instruments of labour becomes at the same time, from the outset, the most reckless waste of labour power and robbery, based upon the normal conditions under which labour functions; that machinery, 'the most powerful instrument for shortening labour time, becomes the most unfailing means for placing every moment of the labourer's time and that of his family at the disposal of the capitalist for the purpose of expanding the value of his capital' (4) Thus it comes about that the overwork of some becomes the preliminary condition for the idleness of others and that modern industry, which hunts after new customers over the whole world, forces the consumption of the masses at home down to a starvation minimum and in doing destroys its own home market." (2)

We showed how the introduction of numerically controlled machines is eliminating

some of the most highly skilled jobs on the shop floor. Marx foresaw this tendency.

"Modern industry never looks upon or treats the existing form of a production process as final. The technical basis of industry is therefore revolutionary, while all earlier modes of production were essentially conservative. By means of machinery, chemical processes and other methods, it leads to continual changes not only in the technical basis of production but also in the function of the labourer and in the social combinations of the labour-process. At the same time, therefore, it revolutionises the division of labour within the society and incessantly transfers masses of capital and of work-people from one branch of production to another. Large scale industry by its very nature, therefore necessitates changes in work, variability of function, universal mobility of the labourer; on the other hand, in its capitalistic form, it represents the old division of labour with its ossified particularities. We have seen how this insurmountable contradiction robs the worker's situation of all peace, permanence and security; how it constantly threatens by taking away the instruments of labour, to snatch from his hands his means of subsistence and, by suppressing his particular sub-divided task, to make him superfluous. We have seen, too, how this contradiction works itself out through incessant sacrifices by the working class, the most reckless squandering of labour-power and the devastation caused by social anarchy". (4)

The Rolls-Royce collapse is a glaring example of this social anarchy. Thousands of the most highly skilled workers in

Britain are being thrown on the dole queues. At the same time the results of literally several millions of pounds spent on research and development (paid for by the taxpayer) will be abandoned.

We demonstrated (by the analogy with a machine) that the worker will be provided with the minimum education, housing, maintenance and even food and clothes consistent with his satisfactory performance as a unit of production.

Marx expressed it in this manner:-

"Political economy conceals the estrangement inherent in the nature of labour by not considering the direct relationship between the worker (labour) and production. It is true that labour produces for the rich wonderful things but for the worker it produces privation. It produces palaces - but for the worker, hovels. It produces beauty - but for the worker - deformity. It replaces labour by machines but it throws a section of the workers back to a barbarous type of labour and it turns the other workers into machines. It produces intelligence - but for the workers - stupidity - cretinism". (3)

"He (the empirical businessman) shows:

(1) By reducing the worker's need to the barest and most miserable level of physical subsistence and by reducing his activity to the most abstract mechanical movement, he says: Man has no other need either of activity or of enjoyment. For he calls even this life human life and existence.

(2) By counting the lowest possible level of life (existence) as the standard, indeed as the general standard - general because it is applicable to the mass of

men. He changes the worker into an insensible being lacking in all needs, just as he changes his activity into a pure abstraction from all activity. To him, therefore, every luxury of the worker seems reprehensible and everything that goes beyond the most abstract need - be it in the realm of passive enjoyment or a manifestation of activity - seems to him a luxury. Political economy, this science of wealth, is therefore simultaneously the science of renunciation, of want, of saving - and it actually reaches the point where it spares man the need of either fresh air or physical exercise. This science of marvellous industry is simultaneously the science of asceticism and its true ideal is the ascetic but extortionate miser and the ascetic but productive slave." (5)

He indicates how, through technological change, computers 'proletarianise' the intellectual worker (the designer) and the C.A.V. airveyor 'ensnares' its shop floor operator. We said that the worker feels that the products of his labours are increasingly an alien power which dominates him. Marx explained this in the theory of "the alienation of the worker in his object."

"The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. With the increasing value of the world of things proceeds in direct proportion the devaluation of the world of men. Labour produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity - and this is the same general proportion in which it produces commodities.

This fact expresses merely that the object which labour produces labour's product - confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labour is labour which has been embodied in an object which has become material: it is the objectification of labour. In the sphere of political economy this realisation of labour appears as loss of realisation for the workers; objectification as a loss of the object and bondage to it; appropriation as estrangement, as alienation.

So much does labour's realisation appear as loss of realisation that the worker loses realisation to the point of starving to death. So much does objectification appear as loss of the object that the worker is robbed of the objects most necessary not only for his life but for his work. Indeed labour itself becomes an object which he can obtain only with the greatest effort and with the most irregular interruptions. So much does the appropriation of the object appear as estrangement that the more objects the worker produces, the less he can possess and the more he falls under the sway of his product ... capital ... The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him, independently, as something alien to him and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him. It means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien." (3)

We said that the contradictions stem from the ownership of the means of production

Marx demonstrates that ownership gives rise to alienation since the worker does not own the product of his labour.

*What then constitutes the alienation of labour?

First the fact that labour is external, i.e. it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore feels himself only outside his work and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working and when he is working he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary but coerced, it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague. External labour, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self sacrifice, of mortification. Lastly, the external character of labour for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own but someone else's, that it does not belong to him but to another. Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of the human imagination, of the human brain and the human heart, operates independently of the individual - that is, operates on him as an alien, divine or diabolical activity - so is the worker's activity not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self. The alien being, to whom lab-

our and the product of labour belongs, in whose service labour is done and for whose benefit the product of labour is provided, can only be man himself.

If the product of labour does not belong to the worker, if it confronts him as an alien power, then this can only be because it belongs to some other man than the worker. If the worker's activity is a torment to him, to another it must be a delight and life's joy. Not the gods, not nature but only man himself can be this alien power over man.

We must bear in mind the previous proposition that man's relation to himself only becomes for him objective and actual through his relations to the other man. Thus if the product of his labour, his labour objectified, is for him an alien, hostile, powerful object independent of him, then his position towards it is such that someone else is master of this object, someone who is alien, hostile, powerful and independent of him. If his own activity is to him related as an unfree activity, then he is related to it as an activity performed in the service, under the denomination, the coercion and the yoke of another man." (3)

To end that domination is the historical task of the proletariat. Technological change heightens the contradictions and is another important factor in providing the fertile ground for revolutionary change. Whilst on the one hand it tends to dominate and impoverish the workers, on the other hand it brutally demonstrates to them the need to attack the whole system at its source and bring about a revolutionary change, a change in which the working class seize political power and the means of pro-

THE CASE OF SMULLEN AND DOHERTY

On May 25th 1971, at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, an appeal against conviction and sentence of two Irishmen was heard.

The decision of the Lord Justices, one of whom was the Lord Chief Justice of England, was that the original sentences of eight years imprisonment in respect of Eamonn Smullen and four years for Jerry Doherty should be reduced to five years and three years respectively.

These simple facts were duly broadcast by the B.B.C. in the afternoon of the same day and reported in the press as a news item. Thus it would appear that their Lordships, in their infinite wisdom and mercy and with due regard to the facts had, in the interests of Justice, been 'fair'.

An arms dealer in Huddersfield acting under the instructions and guidance of the police, furnished a list of armaments which he was never in a position to supply, in order to arrange discussions which were tape recorded and arraigned as evidence of a conspiracy to purchase arms. No deal was ever concluded. The two men were arrested when they left the dealer's premises. These events took place in October 1969. These men were held in custody until their trial in February 1970.

After sentence they were placed in category 'A' classification by the Home Office. Category 'A' is defined by the Home Office as deserving maximum security on the reasoning that an escape would constitute (a) a danger to the public and (b) a danger to the security of the State. The conditions of imprisonment within category 'A' include

strict surveillance at all times, more frequent physical searches, not allowed to work in the open.

Both these men were the victims of a police frame-up.

Not only should they be withdrawn from the rigours of Category 'A', they should be released immediately.

Jim Kean

Continued from p. 34

duction and create circumstances "when the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour and with it the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; when labour is no longer merely a means of life but has become life's principle need; when the productive forces have also increased with the all round development of the individual and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly - only then will it be possible completely to transcend the narrow outlook of bourgeois right and only then will society be able to inscribe on its banners; From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." (6)

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