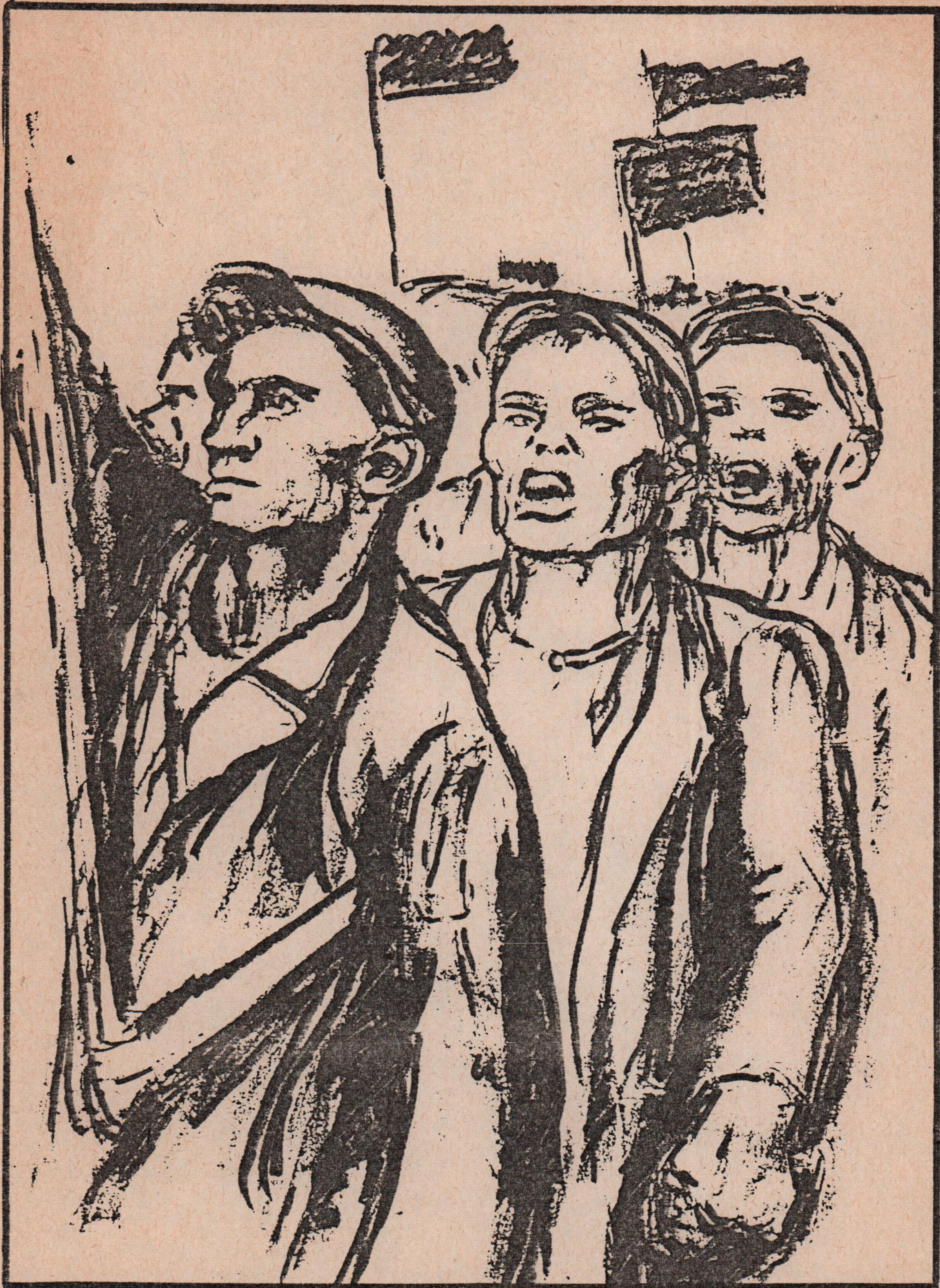


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FIFTEEN PENCE

NO. 2

VIRUS in the body politic.

an Anarcho-Socialist Magazine



ARTICLES ON The National Front, Elective Dictatorship,
Marxism, Labourism etc.

VIRUS



Since the last edition of VIRUS the level of class conflict has further intensified. The state, in all its aspects, has gone all out to break the miners' strike. Despite police repression, Social Security blackmail and a gigantic propaganda drive, the strike continues.

As the winter approaches, the situation will become more and more acute. The government is faced with the problem of dwindling coal stocks and the threat of power cuts. The miners, for their part, must suffer cold, poverty and a low level of morale brought about by the sheer size of the task that confronts them.

In the coalfields in general, and South Yorkshire in particular, miners, their families and (encouragingly) unemployed youths are engaged in hit and run battles with the police. There are some signs that despite big pay packets, some of the police have just about had enough. Stones, ball bearings, petrol bombs and freezing nights will all take their toll in the future.

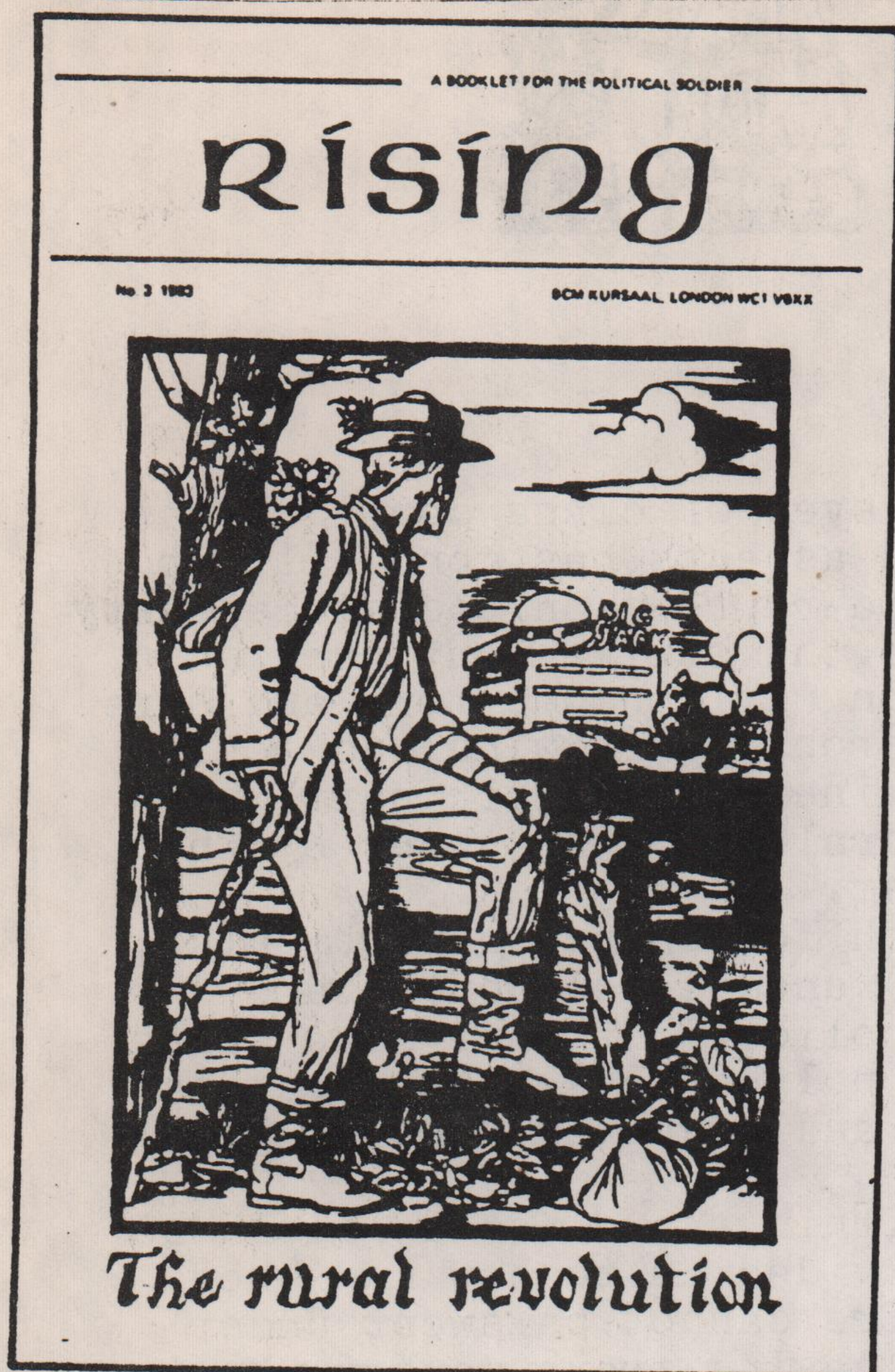
From our standpoint, despite setbacks, things are not as bleak as they seem. The ruling class is becoming divided as to how and when to settle the strike. An insurgent Yorkshire cannot be swept under the carpet and the establishment must be having grave doubts about the interminable wait and see tactic. The bulk of the miners are tough and determined. They may yet win.

Apologies to those people who wrote to us and never got a reply. Unfortunately, the piggies closed down the bookshop that we were using as a contact address and so we never received any letters. Offers of help in producing VIRUS would be very welcome. The new contact address is VIRUS c/o 84b, Whitechapel High St. (Angel Alley), London E.1.

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THE 'NEW' IDEOLOGY OF THE NATIONAL FRONT



The Industrial Threat.

The Nordic Warrior.

The National Front is in turmoil - a vicious power struggle is taking place between the Nazi old guard as represented by Martin Webster and a 'new' ideological grouping who describe themselves as 'Strasserites'. In this article I shall be examining the strange roots and ideas of the latter which unusually for the far right, concerns itself with ecological issues, supports (white) strikers and calls for an end to capitalism. In fact the Strasserites claim an adherence to 'socialism', albeit of an ultra racist and nationalist kind.

COMMUNISM and FASCISM in WEIMAR GERMANY

The history of (Marxist) socialism is full of examples of where individuals have become seduced by authoritarianism, nationalism, statism and racism. Most socialists at the outbreak of the First World War took a patriotic, pro-war position. The leader of Britain's first Marxist party, Hyndman backed the War effort, as did the (then) leading Italian socialist, Benito Mussolini. The most notorious autocrat and nationalist to have been spawned by Marxism was of course Stalin. Sometimes the differences between the nationalist right and the Marxist left became confused as in the case of Weimar Germany.

There was, for example, a flirtation between the German Communist Party (KPD) and nationalist groupings around the notion of 'National Bolshevism'. National Bolshevism arose in the 1920's as both extreme right and extreme left sought an area of common agreement. From the right-nationalist point of view there was dismay at the way the western powers were treating the defeated Germany. This led to an eastern (i.e. pro Soviet) orientation. For their part the communists were quite happy to take up nationalism and even managed to accommodate antisemitism in order to woo the nationalists. Ruth Fischer (a communist of Jewish origin) declared to a gathering of right wing students, "You cry out against Jewish capital, gentlemen? Whoever condemns Jewish capital is already engaged in the class struggle even if he doesn't realise it. You are against Jewish capital and want to eliminate the stock manipulators. Rightly so. Trample the Jewish capitalists under foot, hang them from the street lamps, stamp them out".

STRASSERISM

Whilst nothing very concrete came out of the attempted left/right rapprochement, some nationalists were sufficiently seduced by the KPD and Stalin's Russia (Socialism in one country, a strong state, repression etc.) to take 'socialism' into the Nazi Party. Along with the brothers Otto and Gregor Strasser, Joseph Goebbels and the S.A leader Ernst Röhm took up pro Soviet stances and came into conflict with Hitler.

What were their politics? They were opposed to Marxism and capitalism. They argued for a curious form of utopian socialism in which, as far as possible, there would be a return to a pre capitalist order based on feudalism. A new social equilibrium was to be set up based upon 'state feudalism'. The state was to act as sole owner of the land which would be leased to the citizens to work as they pleased. In this way, the evils of industrialism were to be overcome and capitalism rejected. Heavy industry was to be nationalised and the composition of parliament altered to include the representatives of the peasants and workers. Power, as far as possible, was to be decentralised along the lines of Swiss cantons. All in all, their programme was an elaborate scheme for setting up a reactionary, neo conservative 'socialist' order. It would involve Germany's withdrawal from the world market and an extremely nationalistic standpoint.

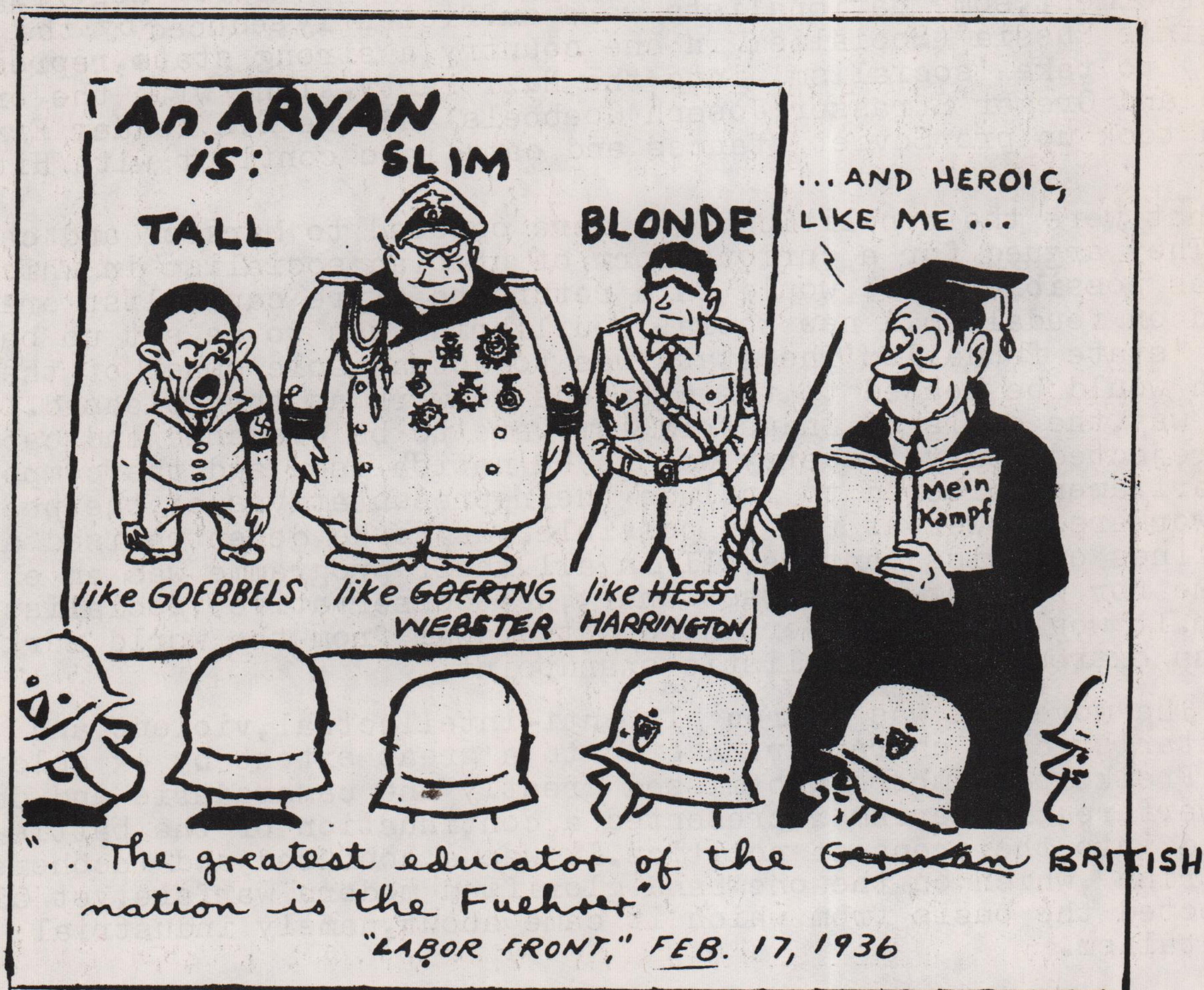
The movement was thoroughly anti-intellectual, violent and militaristic in character. Made up to a great extent by ex soldiers and Freikorps members, who missed greatly the camaraderie and danger of warfare, Strasserism represented a continuation of the battlefield into the arena of politics. It was a confused and incoherent doctrine, which on the one hand glorified modern warfare, yet also rejected the basis from which it came about, namely industrial capitalism.

STRASSERISM in the NF

It is the ideology outlined above which has been adopted by the latter-day Strasserites (with a good dose of 'British' style nationalism and racism thrown in). Their standpoint is of course, attacked by other, pro Hitler fascists. Hitler managed to wipe out his 'socialist' opponents in the 'Night of the Long Knives' and one suspects that his latter-day followers would like to do the same. The model of fascism that the Strasserites have turned to has caused a great deal of

consternation on the far right. One Strasserite publication, 'RISING', fits very uneasily into a political spectrum which condemns socialism of any sort. On the cover of one issue is a picture of a Teutonic knight on horseback - a return to the nobility of feudal times. Another depicts a rustic sitting on a fence contemplating the encroachment of urbanism and its attendant consumer-capitalism. N.F. members have turned up at picket lines to support the striking cleaners at Barking hospital (a white working class cause), have marched against United States military bases in Britain (national independence), supported the Palestinians (radical antisemitism) and so on.

All of the above have usually been considered left wing causes and indicates that the Strasserites of the Front are trying to muscle-in into those areas. So far they have been pretty unsuccessful. The National Union of Mineworkers for example, rejected NF support in their strike but we should be aware of the new 'pro working class' /radical image. The 'socialism' of the Strasserite faction of the NF will probably have little significant impact but it needs to be watched, especially regarding white working class youth.



SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE !!

The Miners' Strike

WHY WILLIS AND KINNOCK DON'T WANT A VICTORY

Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis' behaviour over the miners' strike has appalled many people within the Labour Party and the trade union movement. Kinnock dishes out mindless pacifist slogans whilst miners are having their heads cracked open by Thatcher's private police force. The T.U.C. has hardly moved mountains to win union backing for the N.U.M., there has been no campaign among ordinary trade unionists, and there has been no arm twisting (except on the N.U.M.).

The reasons for this approach are not hard to find. Trade unions exist to get the best possible deals within capitalism. Many union bosses, for example, spend much of their energy attacking the revolutionary left (the best example being the E.E.P.T.U.) and are loathe to step outside the confines of strict legality. Whilst historical parallels are not always useful, sometimes they do offer insights into current behaviour. When, in 1926, the T.U.C. called the General Strike, they became quickly horrified at the power that they had unleashed. Partly through fear of losing control over the millions of strikers who took part but also because the strike offered a challenge to the constitution, the T.U.C. leadership capitulated and the Strike was called off. The miners were left alone (as today) to fight on until they were starved back to work.

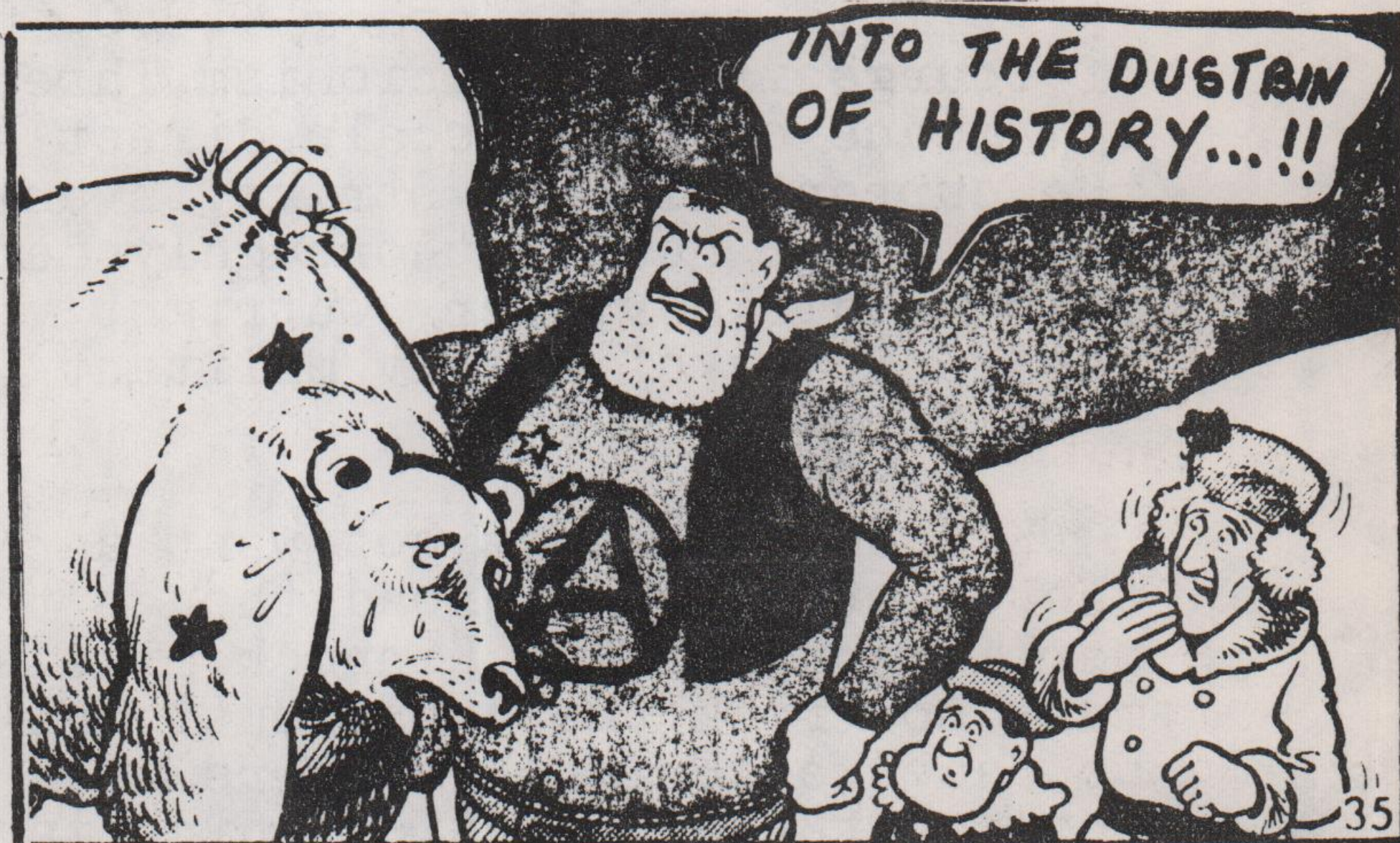
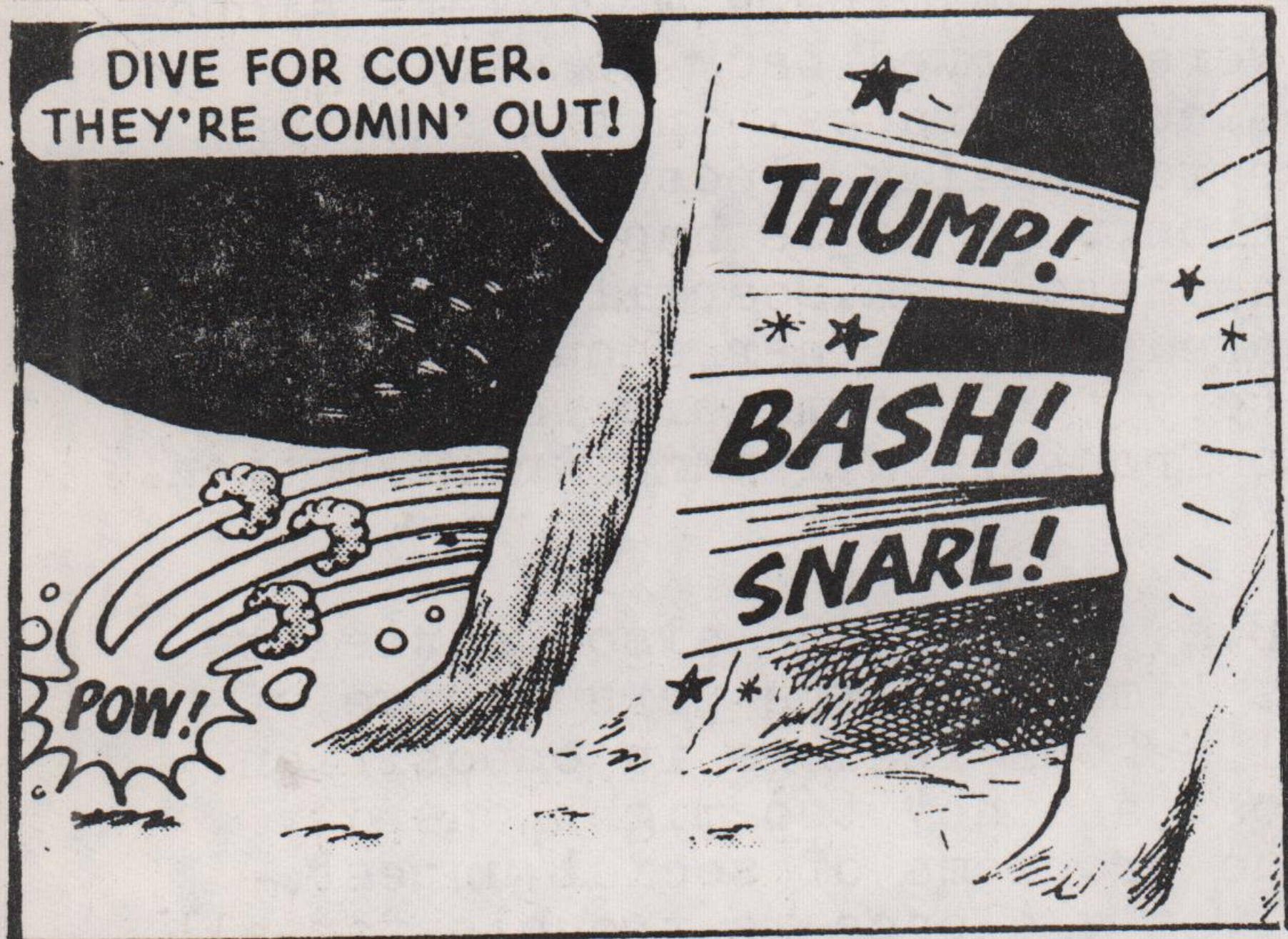
Willis and the other T.U.C. bosses are trapped in the ideology of bourgeois trade unionism. Threats to legally elected governments by means of large scale direct action, such as is happening during the current miners' strike, is anathema to them. Scargill and the N.U.M. must not be thoroughly defeated but neither should they be able to claim victory. Outright victory for the miners would show the efficacy of really militant, confrontational industrial action.

Kinnock too, does not want an N.U.M. victory. He also is tied to the constitutional road, though this time from the perspective of parliamentarianism. Kinnock, like all Labour leaders in opposition, must not rock the constitutional boat as they too might one day be faced, as Prime Ministers with the problems of social unrest. Unconstitutional action which involves violence is trouble for all prime ministers, Labour or Conservative. The only justifiable arena for politics is Parliament. Possibly more than the Tories, Labour sees Parliament as the sole legitimate means of achieving political aims. Not only do the striking miners threaten law and order and constitutionality, but also, by their methods, threaten to unleash a style of direct action politics which has been absent for decades.

All in all then, Labour and the T.U.C. leaders may make some sympathetic noises of support for the N.U.M. but never go so far as to offer total and unconditional backing. Kinnock and Willis are traitors in the old style. Their tradition goes back a long way. They may talk in leftist phraseology but their actions or lack of action serve to effectively undermine the strike.



AFTER 67 YEARS OF COMMUNIST COUNTER- REVOLUTIONARY TERROR, DESPERATE DAN EXACTS A TERRIBLE REVENGE.



ZINOVIEV

KAMENEV

ASSORTED
BOLSHEVIKS,
ANARCHISTS ETC.

{ CIRCA
1918-
1939

PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY OR ELECTIVE DICTATORSHIP ?

Virtually all of the revolutionary left takes the attitude that so-called liberal democracies based upon parliament are only liberal so long as the capitalist ruling class does not feel threatened. The mask of liberalism is soon thrown overboard, once private property order, and bourgeois dominance becomes challenged. Order, not freedom becomes the watchword of the hour.

Similarly, the far left has tended to agree on the idea that parliament is only a "committee for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie". Expressed in a slightly different way, the prevailing radical view is that elections are simply a device by which the people decide every few years who is to oppress them. Anarchists have been the most consistent current to have held this idea, 'DON'T VOTE', is now almost a principle of the movement. But, with a 'free' press, multi-party politicking, tolerance of trade unionism etc. this approach has been difficult to argue for. In the last decade or so however, much of the tolerance about which the British have boasted, has gradually been eroded in the face of mass unemployment bankruptcies and social unrest.

Lord Hailsham, not usually noted for his libertarian views, coined the phrase "elective dictatorship" when he was discussing a recent (Labour) government. This term is not at all incompatible with the left wing notion that parliamentary democracy is a sham. It is well worth examining. Taking the present Tory government as a starting point, I shall be outlining a case for the view that we do indeed live under an elective dictatorship.

At first sight, it may seem strange to argue that a system which holds elections can in any sense be considered undemocratic. Surely, goes the argument, elections and democracy are synonymous. This is in fact not so, one of the most effective ways to reinforce dictatorial rule is to hold frequent referenda. Referenda can be expected to give the required result if, as in Britain, the mass media is generally biased in favour of the present system.

The 'first past the post' electoral method has proved to be remarkably resilient to criticism which has been made of it in recent years. Despite 'third' party opposition to it, the way we choose our Members of Parliament, shows no sign of being changed. The reason for this is not hard to find, virtually all post war governments have been elected on a minority of the popular vote. Since the rise of the S.D.P./Liberal Alliance, the share of vote for Labour and the Tories has sunk to around a third each. This works quite nicely to the advantage of the Tories and Labour, with their geographically concentrated support and grossly under-represents the Alliance. Both the two major parties are more concerned with forming governments, rather than with representative elections, so for as long as the present system suits them, there will be no change. The current electoral system gave Thatcher an overwhelming majority of seats in Parliament, even though a majority of the electorate voted for parties other than the Conservatives.

The myth is sustained by politicians and the media, that we have a parliamentary system of government. In fact, with very few exceptions Parliament is dominated by the largest party, which is controlled by the government (the Cabinet etc.) under the direction of the Prime Minister. Only when governments command small majorities, are in coalition or a minority, can the Prime Ministerial domination of Parliament be challenged. Otherwise, as in the present administration, tame M.P.'s vote according to the Prime Minister's dictat. With the present system of government, the Prime Minister hires and fires the ministers. M.P.'s, if they wish to gain a Government post, must keep their noses clean. With the present size of the Tory majority, the competition must be fierce. This, combined with party discipline, whipping and a sense of party loyalty ensures a compliant body of lobby fodder.

With majority governments, the opposition must be content to question the credibility of government policies. It is impotent in terms of wielding power. Since effective opposition, in terms of amending Government proposals, is virtually non-existent, Parliament becomes a rubber stamp for the Prime Minister's dictat. Of course, it is not always plain sailing but, despite banana skins, governments get their way.

The police force exists to maintain order. In a real sense, this means preserving the present system of inequality of wealth and power. Whilst the great majority of policemen are conservative in that sense, many of them have become Conservative in a political way. The Tories have, as a matter of deliberate policy, gone out of their way to favour the police. The average new starter in the 'Met' earns over £10,000 a year and the Home Secretary, Brittan has done all that he can to show support for them. This is partly the result of a coming together of Government and police in overall approach (they are both very authoritarian), and a deliberate policy to gain unquestioning police support in a period of social unrest. The police for their part have suggested that their support for a future Labour government would be less than enthusiastic.

The police have become political in another sense. Quietly, and almost imperceptibly, the Thatcher governments have been supervising a change in police organisation. A national police force has for the first time been effectively created. The regional forces are now under the control of the National Reporting Centre in New Scotland Yard. This in turn is under the supervision of the Home Secretary. As we have seen in the miner's strike, large numbers of police men can be directed to any part of the country at will. A national riot police or 'third force' has been created, on the French C.R.S. model. Equipped with baton, riot shield, un-numbered uniform, CS gas and plastic bullet, this body has proved its brutality in the coalfields.

The major social cleavage in Britain is based on class and is most clearly expressed in terms of industrial conflict. All post war governments have opposed strikes. Labour, as well as Conservative ones have been anxious to minimise industrial unrest. In this endeavour, they have been championed by the mass media which has virtually never backed a strike. In other respects the level of agreement government and the media has varied but inevitably, if a government measure is aimed at weakening labour, it has had media support. Thatcher, we may be sure, does not actively want to control the media. She has no need to, as the enthusiastic day to day support given by the press shows. When, as in the case of the Malvinas war, news was manufactured by the government, the press were willing victims.

At the present moment, no newspaper puts forward an unswerving pro Labour line. In fact the press, as usual, overwhelmingly backs the Tories, thus making Tory rule that much more secure. Whilst theoretically, there is freedom of the press, in practice this means freedom for the wealthy to mould public opinion along Thatcherite lines. Only the Guardian and Mirror offer a voice of criticism but given the Tory bias of the Mail, Express, Times, Star, Sun etc., the competition is rather imperfect.

This article has only looked at a few aspects of the British political machine which act together to control our minds and bodies. The judiciary can hardly claim to be impartial when it comes to controlling the labour movement and the loyalty of the armed forces, civil service etc. is not in doubt. The reality of British politics, which has found its most complete expression under Thatcher, is that the elective system, Parliament, police and establishment work harmoniously so as to maintain an undemocratic dictatorship. So far, the vast majority of the population has been taken in by the facade of democracy but as more and more people who did not vote Tory (a majority) become the victims of Thatcher's policies, the legitimacy of the system may become more widely questioned.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY:

MARXISM ASSESSED, PART ONE.

BASE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

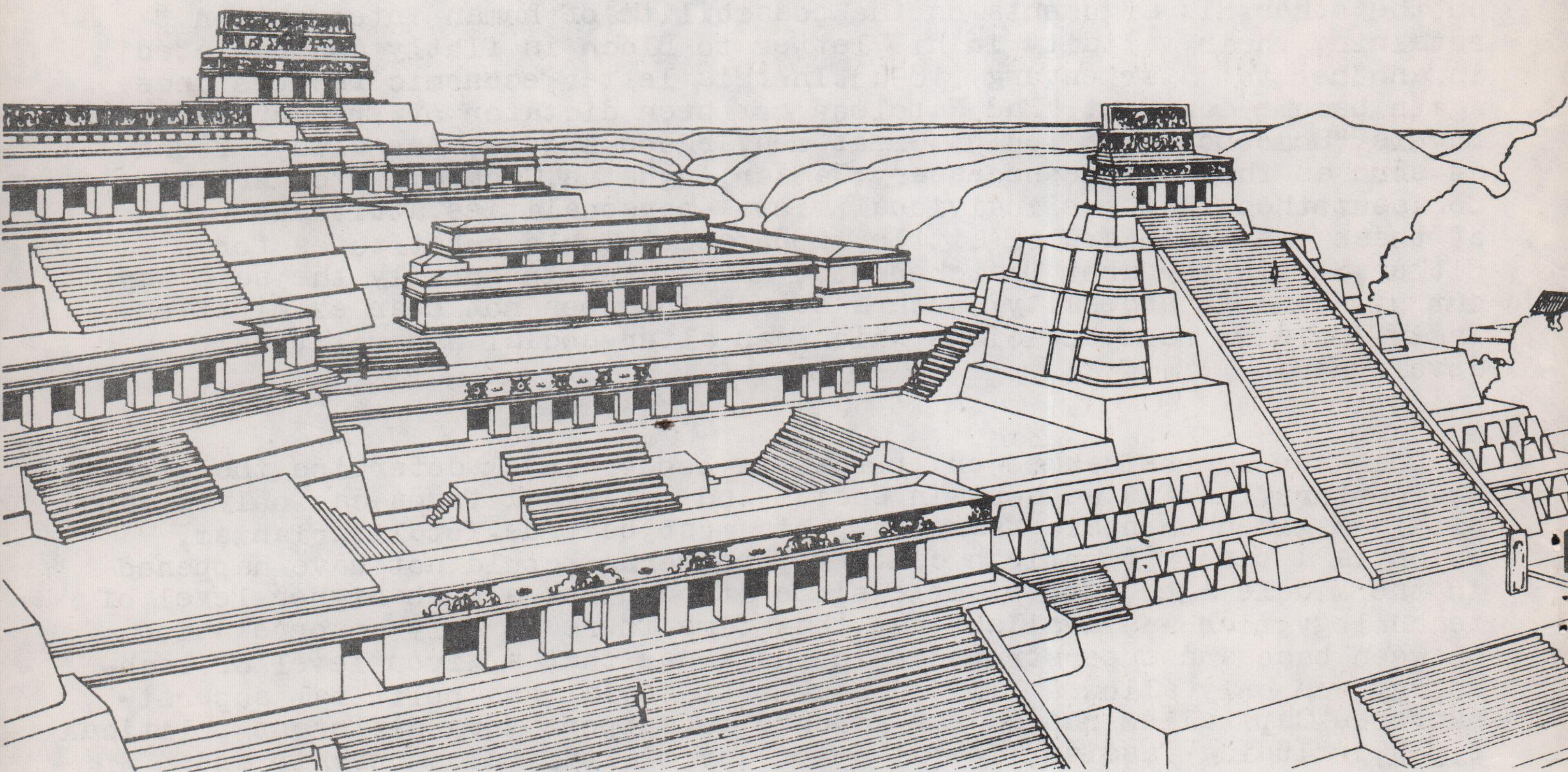
Marxism has always prided itself on being a materialist philosophy. The role of ideas in determining the nature of history and society has always played a secondary role. An often repeated aspect of Marxist thought is that it is not individuals who shape society but primarily, social and economic forces. According to Marx in his 'Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy', the economic base determines the superstructure, and not vice-versa. In other words, the mode of production (feudalism, capitalism, etc.) determines the content and nature of its laws, religions, forms of consciousness, governments etc. This formulation has always presented difficulties for Marxism. Quite simply it cannot be squared with reality. Nowadays, only vulgar Marxists are said to hold such a viewpoint; of course, say more sophisticated Marxists, other factors beyond the economic ones are important. As Engels points out in his letter to Bloch (Sept 21 1890), economic forces are only the 'ultimate' determining factors. Other elements, argues Engels, can be very important and may even supersede the economic ones. Now, if it is accepted that other, non economic forces can take precedence, the purity of Marxism as materialism is undermined.

To argue that economic factors are only the 'ultimately' determining factor is of course a cop out. Either economic forces are 'the' determining factor or they are not. How can it be, that if human intervention (based on ideas, religion etc,) can change the course of social development, can economic factors be of such overriding importance? Engels, like all Marxists wants it both ways, he tries to allow for human intervention on the one hand, yet insists on the primacy of economic factors on the other. His arguments on the possibilities of human intervention retaining their validity in his letter to Bloch is flatly contradicted in another to Starkenburg (1894). In this letter, economic factors once again become dominant. "Had Napoleon not been dictator of France," wrote Engels, "Somebody else would". Great men, argued Engels, "Are always found as soon as they become necessary: Caesar, Augustus, Cromwell etc. Are we to assume then that the individual views, personalities, attitudes etc. of these great men are of little importance? Would substitutes for Hitler, Stalin, Margaret Thatcher etc, have acted in broadly the same way out of economic necessity? Such a standpoint does not bear examination. Individuals do make decisions which can alter social and political development.

Does the economic base on, perhaps a looser level determine the superstructure? Insofar as certain social and political forms can only occur within a given economic framework, this must be true. Totalitarianism, which is a purely twentieth century phenomenon, could not have happened in the Middle Ages, for example, since it requires a much higher level of technology than was available at that time. There is only a correlation between base and superstructure in the sense that a given level of technology can only allow a limited number of social and political superstructures. Capitalism has so far managed to support very different political types, including fascism, liberal-democracy, military dictatorship and social-democracy. To be sure some Marxists cannot perceive great differences between fascism and social-democracy (Stalin at one stage described them as twins; social-democracy became social-fascism) but to the rational observer they are extremely different political forms.

The correlation between base and superstructure does not even hold true for technologically primitive societies, with their small scale and relatively simple cultures (that is, in relation to 'advanced', class divided societies). One might have expected that 'tribal' societies with similar economic bases, would have similar superstructures. But this is simply not so. There are for example, widely different political and social forms among the economically very simple horticultural societies of Africa. What was a virtually universal application of stone age technology in pre columbian America gave rise to glaringly different social, political and ideological structures. On the basis of maize cultivation and stone tools, we have at one end of the scale fairly egalitarian tribal societies of the U.S.A. At the other, we have the highly socially differentiated Mayan and Aztec civilisations who pushed the possibilities of their technology to the limit.

The view that the base determines the superstructure is very difficult to uphold, then, with both capitalist and pre-capitalist societies. The reality, which in practise Marxists recognise, is that many forces affect societal form. These include both economic factors and a whole variety of political, religious, philosophical, juridical and individual contributions which act upon one another in varying degrees. At one time, economic factors may well be of overriding importance but at others so might, for example, individual decisions of political leaders. The current governments economic policies are as much, if not more, to do with prejudices of the Prime Minister as with economic necessity. Another Tory leader might well have adopted totally different measures. Margaret Thatcher seems to be having a greater effect on the base than it is on her!



Despite being a 'stone age' society, the Mayan Indians achieved much in the realms of art, mathematics, astronomy, and urbanism. Other cultures with the same means, hardly moved beyond village horticulture. Much of the former's success must have been due to the influences of super-structural factors.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. These were the aims of the first great modern revolution. They have not anywhere in the world been realised. As slogans for capitalism, they have of course been long forgotten. But within the left where reformism and state socialism fight for superiority they are sadly lacking too. There is precious little liberty, equality or fraternity within the self-proclaiming Marxist states (though attempts have been made to justify Soviet invasions of Eastern Bloc states on the grounds of fraternal support for socialism). The Marxist parties in Britain are not exactly hot houses of free debate, equality or brother/sisterhood (see the article on democratic centralism in this issue). So where do we stand?

class conflict

Capitalism is a deeply exploitative system in which social life is determined by the needs of profit not human fulfilment. The system maintains itself by a complex network of institutions - the coercive state (police, army etc.), the ideas manipulators (the mass media, schools etc.), the family and so on. So, despite a fundamental contradiction between capital and labour, the system is 'managed' more or less successfully in the interests of a small minority. The system has no provision for reforming itself away, indeed the most powerful capitalist institutions exist to maintain that system. Consequently, revolution not reform is the only means by which it can be abolished - the system must be subverted from within, weakened, and ultimately destroyed.

exploitation and resistance

It is the working class which constitutes a large majority of the population and which is most openly exploited by capitalism. Day to day resistance to the system is an accepted and ordinary fact of the worker's life. This may range from the mundane - time wasting and fictional illness to an all out national strike involving hundreds of thousands of workers. The unemployed, the homeless and other dispossessed elements (who may or may not be of working class origin) also provide a source of irritation to those in authority. The great contradiction between exploiter and exploited, though not politically an accepted reality (note the huge numbers of workers who voted for Thatcher), is a living source of instability. Ultimately, it may trigger a general revolt among the population at large.

propaganda and solidarity

The major problem confronting revolutionaries is not the building of **socialist** parties which will lead the revolution but convincing those who are in a position to bring about great social change of the need for socialism. Economic pressures such as inflation usually bring about economic demands. These in turn may well take on a political character, especially when a government, the courts and other state bodies involve themselves.

The need however is for confrontationist political strikes to be carried further into the realm of ideas and action. Socialists, therefore, who wish to see a genuine revolution directed by the oppressed themselves have the job of indicating the possibilities and practicabilities of a libertarian socialism. The role of revolutionaries is primarily one of education, propaganda and solidarity so that workers will take over the running of society for their own ends.

uprising

No-one can predict when and under what circumstances a revolution will occur (not even the Marxists with their particularly valueless 'dialectical materialism'). However, truly spontaneous popular revolutions often involve some or all of the following : general strikes, worker's councils in factories etc. , soviets and armed insurrection. Should such a general uprising take place , it is usual for a 'dual power' situation to arise. Alongside more or less powerful remnants of the capitalist order exist the organisations of the people. To achieve liberation the revolutionaries must move ^{beyond} dual power, dissolve powerful blocs of authoritarianism (both on the right and left) and bring into being a self managed society. The overcoming, by the workers, of a dual power situation is crucial, for there are dangers of capitalist restoration on the one hand and a Leninist coup on the other. Both, history has shown, effectively destroy genuine (i.e. anarchic) socialism . To achieve a society of free and equal citizens based on non state forms of social ownership and cemented by feelings of social solidarity is the aim It will not be easy but neither is it impossible.

