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STRIKES SINCE 1982

DEMOCRATISATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

VERSUS THEIR ENEMY, PROLETARIAN AUTONOMY

SUBVERSION

DISCUSSION PAPER No4

Notes on class struggle in the USSR

КЛАССОВАЯ
БОРЬБА
В СССР

PREFACE

This is the fourth discussion paper produced for a conference held by the SUBVERSION group on the 1st July 1989. The main theme of the conference is "the importance of the market and bureaucracy for capitalism and its enemies".

The first paper dealt with the basis of capitalist economy, and went on to identify two primary laws: a "law of value" and a "law of command", in line with Capital's twin but contradictory needs to enforce both "generalised competition" and "structured order". It examined these concepts in relation to aspects of crisis in the USSR and the Western banking system.

The second paper looks at the specific example of Japan, dealing with the non-bourgeois capitalist revolution of 1868, the consequent relationship between State and industry, and the effectiveness of the "plan-oriented market economy system" since the Korean War. Attention is given to the "dual workforce", divided in accordance with the structure of the economy.

The third discussion paper defends the ideas of "decadence" and "the world tendency towards State capitalism" associated with the pro-Bolshevik part of the "ultra-left". The capitalist "beast" is described as having been on a life-support system since 1914. Attention is given to Keynesianism and the economic role of the British State in the Thatcher era.

The present paper deals with the bureaucratic nature of Russian and 'Soviet' capitalism through the ages, and the changing forms of working class struggle against it since the Bolshevik counterrevolution. It also looks at the present and likely future impact of Gorbachev's reforms, and gives a brief account of local revolutionary extremists, particularly in Leningrad.

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** To **
** our comrades on the **
** Eastern front **

INTRODUCTION

These Notes provide a general account, an outline of what Bolshevik-style capitalism has meant in practice, how it relates to the Russian bureaucratic tradition, and how it has conflicted with the men and women it dispossesses. A full analysis of proletarian resistance to 'Soviet' capitalism since 1917 remains to be published, but as Gorbachev's reforms begin to hit home over the next few years, the need for such an analysis should become clear. Not only this, but as struggles in the USSR begin to break into new ground, in uneasy correspondence with the reforms, it will become even more important for us to make contact with our comrades on the Eastern front. A meaningful contribution by Western-based revolutionaries to a comprehensive theoretical critique will probably only materialise when such contact gives rise to practical cooperation. Our difficulties in analysing struggles over there must be at least as difficult as 'Soviet'-based comrades' difficulties in analysing struggles in the West.

ROOTS OF THE RUSSIAN BUREAUCRATIC TRADITION

One very widespread idea about the USSR is that 'Soviet' (1) government and economic management have taken their present form because of a mind-bogglingly extreme series of events in 1917 that changed everything. This view is held by virtually all political activists of left, right and centre, and by most non-political people too. We only need take a brief look at Russian history to check whether or not this view is justified (2).

Before the 13th century the rulers of the small Russian State shared political power with popular assemblies of "townspeople", and with a senate formed by the independent nobility. Neither the nobles nor the larger cities paid any taxes. These were characteristics shared by the kinds of system being developed in western Europe at the same time. However, in Russia the princely court derived its maintenance from a general poll tax and not from royal domains. This tax was imposed on the whole of the rural population on behalf of the sovereign, who also held supreme judicial power. Although this would seem to imply that the society was more absolutist than Western-style feudalism, in other ways it was less so, since the nobles had absolute land-rights, and their ownership of land did not depend on the provision of a fighting force, as it did in the West (3). The nobles (boyars) were not particularly weak in face of the princes, but in fact the absence of primogeniture meant that both classes were weak. Land was usually split up among a landowner's sons, and the size of estates was thus reduced after each generation, leading to the disorganisation that was one factor in the collapse of the society when faced with the Mongol invasion. The Mongol hordes were fully victorious by 1240.

During the invasion most of the major cities of eastern Russia were destroyed, and there followed an even more successful political campaign against the towns. In the latter campaign the Russian princes and boyars supported the Mongol overlords; the urban assemblies ceased to exist and craftsmanship declined rapidly (4).

The Mongol khans ruled by means of massive taxation, conscription, and by holding the right to appoint local Russian princes. Mongol officials and census-takers formed an army of bureaucrats who were soon at work throughout the whole of Russian territory, imposing taxes and tolls. Everything was reduced to efficiency in matters of military administration, and relied upon a service class bound to serve the khan with absolute obedience.

Meanwhile, Moscow was well-situated with regard to trade routes: this meant that one Muscovite prince, Ivan Kalita, was able to accrue money and use it to buy prisoners and influence in Sarai, the Mongol capital. Secondly, Moscow was relatively safe from direct Mongol attack, and its princes extended their usefulness to Sarai by crushing anti-Mongol uprisings in lesser Slav principalities. These factors helped Muscovy grow stronger by means of self-Mongolisation. The Muscovite

prince was a slave to the khan, but a khan to his subordinates. Or, as Marx put it, he had to blend in himself "the characters of the Tartar's hangman, sycophant, and slave-in-chief" (5). Muscovy eventually won the important right of collecting the taxes imposed by the Mongols on the Slavs.

The rise of Muscovite despotism, heavily influenced by Mongol patterns, involved the rise of a new type of civil and military serving-men, who, as temporary holders of plots of State land (pomestiya), were unconditionally at the disposal of their supreme lord. Holders of pomestiya, or 'pomeshchiks', gathered some of the tax revenue from peasants, thus lightening the load of the professional bureaucrats. However, handicrafts, which recovered slowly, and commerce, which offered greater opportunities, were kept under direct or indirect State control. Government bureaucrats fixed the prices at which merchants had to buy goods given to the State as tax payments, and compulsorily purchased goods in order to sell them at inflated prices. Even the foreign merchants had to allow their goods to be priced by the State. Tax-collectors often doubled as the Tsar's commercial agents. The pomeshchiks, or holders of office land, sold their grain surpluses on the market, thus providing another direct link between commerce and the State. There was very little room for independent professional trade, and even the richest merchants were not immune from confiscations by their despotic masters.

Rural serfdom was introduced between c.1500 and c.1650, in the face of much peasant resistance, including some full-scale rebellions by revolutionary peasants and slaves. Urban commercial activity declined in the century leading up to 1650, and boyars lost the right to leave State service. What remained of the boyar class was defeated by the service gentry. These developments, taken together, added up to a major victory on the part of the autocratic State.

Under Peter the Great (1689-1725) the foundations of modern economic development were laid. The State organised the requisite investment, and provided the demand for goods, mainly military matériel (guns, clothing, sailcloth, ammunition). It also organised the supply of labour, which was forcibly mobilised from rural districts and from the ranks of conscripts and the destitute (criminals, prostitutes, orphans, etc.). Unlike in Western Europe, the State did not merely supervise the new industries; it directly managed the bulk of heavy industry, and part of light industry, thereby employing the majority of all industrial workers as forced labour. State munitions and metallurgical industries grew in the Urals; textile works sprang up around Moscow to supply the army and navy. Many foreign specialists were induced to migrate to Russia.

Meanwhile, agriculture was largely neglected; no funds were directed towards its technical development. The bonds of serfdom were tightened. Rather than wait a few centuries while serfs became free peasants before ending up as agricultural proletarians (a process which in England took from c.1350 to c.1750), Peter expanded forced labour. He began the transfer to private ownership of crown and State lands along with the peasants living on them, so-called "State peasants" whose conditions of existence had previously been somewhat freer than those of private serfs.

Serfdom spread in industry too. After 1721 merchants could buy whole villages for their factories, as long as the labour remained bound to the factory and not the factory-owner. In every factory—and they all manufactured either under the direct surveillance of State functionaries or by governmental concession—decisions on company policy were taken by a small bureaucratic group whose main objective was not so much profit as advancement up the 'Table of Ranks', Peter's equivalent of the nomenklatura. Decisions on production and investment were influenced far more by political considerations and physical factors than by economic accountability and the cost of currency (6). As for the serf-workers themselves, there is little documentation about their resistance, although it is known that they risked being summarily shot or even thrown into furnaces if they stepped too far out of line.

Peter's policies achieved short-term growth, but the success this brought fed the illusion that investment resources arising from increased peasant productivity could be obtained solely from cuts in peasant incomes. There was no

agrarian revolution. Eventually rural serfdom was disconnected from economic development and became merely an obligation to the nobility in the post-Petrine "period of stagnation". In the 18th century many nobles required money dues from their serfs, and many peasants left their villages to work as artisans or industrial workers, simply in order to pay their dues. More life was breathed into serfdom per se when labour-service dues came back into fashion as grain prices rose and canals spread, leading nobles to step up direct exploitation, which was also their reaction to their own emancipation in 1785, nearly 600 years after the Magna Carta. Serfdom also spread geographically under Catherine the Great (1762-96).

In the early 19th century Russian backwardness became chronic. Geographical problems and the non-existence of a free bourgeoisie meant that there was no real national market, and railway construction was kept at a low level for fear of peasant rebellion. Many urban workers still had to pay money dues, and many kept rural "reserves", which impeded their domestication via factory labour and discipline. Serf labour in industry restricted productivity growth; moreover, owners of industrial serfs faced suffocating regulations on quantity and quality of output, and restrictions on labour deployment. Consequently those landowners who doubled as industrialists failed to undertake much new investment. Serf-entrepreneurs, however, who helped contribute to landowners' income, often did introduce technical innovations, as did many Jewish and Old Believer entrepreneurs. But their enterprises had to operate under the tightest form of State control of all; labour relations in particular were subject to an even greater degree of government control than in enterprises owned by landowners. This control was often evaded, but usually only by means of bribery of State officials.

When the serfs were freed in 1861, in an effort to forestall peasant uprisings and possible future military defeat, the peasant communes obstructed migration from the villages, and poor techniques hindered growth. Peasants remained faced with a complex web of obligations to former landowners or the State. The absence of agrarian revolution led to major problems. Peasant famine "had" to be ensured via taxation as a deliberate act of policy, in order to contribute to the funding of industry, as would later happen in the 1930s. Secondly, the problems of demand and supply both had to be tackled by means of government spending. This did not mean Keynesian "deficit financing"; it meant direct orders, covered by current tax revenue. In the case of the railways it meant large-scale nationalisation by 1900. Private-sector industrialists were more involved in bureaucratic wheeler-dealing than in efficiency-raising projects, because too much independence would not have been in their best interests.

Another distinctive feature of Russian industrialisation was the investment of foreign capital on a very large scale. Much of this took the form of investment banking, or foreign purchase of Russian State bonds. Many of the shares in Russian banks were foreign-owned, partly because banks were considered a low-risk option because of their importance to the economy and their reliance on State support. Indeed, it was the Treasury's credit department that controlled the entire Russian financial apparatus.

The industrial working class was also distinctive in many ways. A high proportion of factory workers worked in factories that were very large. One reason lay in tradition: many slave factories had also been very large. Another reason was what today would be called blat ("influence", or "pull"): big firms had more of it than little firms, and won preferential access to credit. Rapid industrial industrialisation without local authority housing meant that employers often set up "factory villages", on the grounds that big prisons were cheaper to run than smaller ones. And of course some such villages had existed since long before 1861. Industrial plants also had to be fairly well integrated, because of the poor state of the infrastructure. These factors combined to ensure that Russia had the largest factories in the world.

The industrial revolution of the 1880s and 1890s left many wage-labourers with varying degrees of attachment to the rural community, since usually the peasants who left the villages to find work in the towns carried passports issued by the communes, and used to return home for holidays, for the summer, or when they retired. However, this was less common in the more advanced industries and

in the largest urban centres, especially by 1900. Labour turnover also took the form of migration from factory to factory, as well as from town to countryside. The turnover in some companies was as high as 100% per year. This meant that often even unskilled workers had to be offered long-term contracts, which hindered reorganisation of the work process.

Factory discipline generally was a major problem. Stopping work on major and minor saints' days, as well as on "Holy" Mondays, was common practice. In 1900 the average working year was only 264 days. Management was not only faced with absenteeism, but also with lateness, violation of production norms, and a large amount of pilfering (7). Pilfering in particular often proved impossible to combat with normal disciplinary methods; sometimes "trustworthy" workers were roped in to condemn workmates to a good hiding. At the same time, workers with more spirit often used to get their own back on foremen by subjecting them to the "wheelbarrow and hood" treatment.

Government intervention in labour relations at enterprise level declined after 1880, but overall financial control of industry was retained, via loans, subsidies, protection and large orders. Meanwhile, most legislation on the working day, responsibility for industrial accidents, and female and child labour, favoured the workers. For reasons of unrest-prevention, the Ministry of the Interior was often at loggerheads with the Ministry of Finance. The police force grew in size and strength, and in 1902 organised the first trade-unions, which helped the Ministry of the Interior spy on both workers and employers, supposedly for the Tsar, but really for the State bureaucracy. Meanwhile, most employers backed the Ministry of Finance, and favoured political rather than economic concessions.

The famous revolution of 1905, in the towns at least, represented a change in the main form of workers' struggle, even though it failed to overthrow capitalism. Theft and labour turnover were superseded by strikes and riots. The driving force was provided by the artisans and the most skilled factory workers (8). Achievements were made in the fields of health and unemployment insurance, wages and hours. There followed a wave of repression (1907-12), and then a period of resurgence (1912-14). In July 1914, on the eve of war, strikes and riots ripped through St. Petersburg, opposed by the Bolsheviks on the local Party Committee once they realised they were out of control (9). The most active rebels were urbanised youth and young workers just in from the countryside. Some rebels seem to have been involved in the Bolshevik underground, in opposition to the "wiser" "social fireman" types higher up the Party hierarchy.

CLASS STRUGGLE IN WARTIME, 1914-21

The importance of the proletarian revolutionary movement in Russia for the international class struggle is usually drastically overestimated. In Russia the soviets, or workers' councils, were generally Menshevikised prior to July 1917 and Bolshevikised after March 1918. Attempts to centralise the autonomous workers' movement (10) on the basis of new soviets, in opposition to the old ones, were nowhere to be seen. This does not compare very well with the movement in Germany (1918-21), where the IKD denounced the official soviets after a mere week, and where the revolutionary elements in the enterprise organisations formed their own action committees out of which grew an organisation (the AAUD) which at its peak had 150 000 members. The AAUD's aims were quite clearly to fight for the real dictatorship of the proletariat, and not to potter around with negotiations, sectoral struggles or activities within the unions or the old soviets. In Russia the revolutionary tendency within the factory committees never successfully managed to centralise outside of government and trade-union control, despite a shortlived attempt to do so between August and November 1917 (11). Many enterprises were indeed seized by workers between October 1917 and March-April 1918, but labour discipline was considerably tightened at the end of this period and, bearing this in mind, it is fair to see the Brest-Litovsk treaty of March 1918 as sounding the death-knell of the autonomous proletarian revolution. In Russia, the revolutionary content of the working class insurgency that brought one bosses' war to an end was

confined to the enterprises before being crushed in time for the State to mobilise for another bosses' war: the civil war. It was only in the south-west Ukraine that a revolutionary proletarian force confronted all sides in any concerted fashion.

The process of counterrevolution has been adequately covered elsewhere, especially by Maurice Brinton (12), although one should ignore his democratic and managementist perspective! The questions that concern us here are: 1) what form did capitalist management take during and after the counterrevolution? 2) What form did working class struggle take in opposition to this?

The main capitalist organising force in Russia, as we have shown above, had always been the State, not the bourgeois market. For several centuries, the State bureaucracy had developed, albeit in fits and starts, and can only be seen as inherently reactionary in relation to proletarian revolution (or bourgeois reform), not in relation to capitalism. When the geographically and sectorally skewed nature of industrialisation propelled the economy into crisis in 1914, the methods used by the authorities to deal with this crisis would grow more severe as the wars dragged on, but they did not change in nature. They all involved stepping up the economic role of the State.

Faced with an initial supply crisis in 1915, the government set up a network of War Industries Committees, led by prominent political freemasons (13). These included representatives of management, government and workers, and by 1917 had spread over almost the whole field of industrial production. During the first half of 1918 the Bolshevik-run "Supreme Economic Council" (Vesenkha) took over these bodies -- or what was left of them -- and converted them, under the name of glavki and tsentry, into administrative organs subject to its own control (14).

Most proletarians' lives deteriorated substantially between 1918 and 1921. The death-toll was 8 million, including 7.5 million from starvation or disease. The number of industrial workers fell from 3 million in 1917 to fewer than 1.5 million in 1920-21, as people returned to the villages to benefit from the post-October land share-out, or simply to stand a better chance of survival. Thus, once more, migration ("flight" rather than "fight") was a major means of struggle against the hardships imposed by capitalism. At the same time, though, there was also an influx of new workers, including the children of workers who had gone back to the villages, and even some who had migrated from the villages.

In general the urban workforce did not act as if it were at all "domesticated". Struggle continued in various forms: theft, absenteeism, insubordination, low productivity. After the nationalisations of June 1918, and the subsequent growth of wages in kind, labour discipline plummeted, and continued to frustrate the productivity campaign, even after piece-rates spread across the country.

As enterprises closed because of shortages and lack of workers, because anti-Bolshevik managers shut them down, or because owners or managers embezzled huge sums of money, workers too took part in economic sabotage. Hungry workers and soldiers stole industrial products, materials and tools to sell or barter for food or fuel. Workers had to try to get hold of boots, petrol, salt or matches to pass on to the peasants for food, either directly or through traders. Thefts continued despite the repeated searches carried out by the Cheka at the factory gates (15).

Many workers continually arrived late, preferred drinking to working once they had arrived, or simply stayed away altogether, especially in July or August. In 1920 the "average worker" reported for only 219 days (16). Meanwhile, many enterprise politicians (including some workers) left to take up jobs in the administration of party, unions, army or State. But there were still enough enterprise bureaucrats to put their backs into the productivity campaign, which of course might also have been called the labour discipline campaign. Bonuses were not of much use in encouraging discipline, since they were paid in inflated roubles, but neither was the practice of paying rations according to occupation rather than output. Eventually in November 1919 the "militarisation of labour"

involved the tying of rations to productivity (i.e. "piece-rates in kind"), the generalisation of one-man management (already in existence in May 1918), and a rapid growth in the power and differentials of specialists, who then received even more abuse and harassment from workers. This campaign also saw the introduction of "comradely courts" in the enterprises; sentences in extreme cases could include hard labour, which during such a chronic food shortage must often have been tantamount to execution.

In the resistance, men tended to specialise in absenteeism and lateness, while women preferred the more direct crimes of theft and abuse of administrators (17), although of course this is a generalisation! When labour conscription was introduced in January 1920, supervised by none other than Dzerzhinski, head of the Cheka, non-compliance continued, but penalties included a 60% deduction in rations for as little as 3 days' absence. In 1920 productivity rose at last!

It should also be mentioned that, whilst this struggle was raging, some workers and soldiers willingly worked "subbotniks" (extra days), especially when the perceived threat from Denikin and the Polish army was greatest. Probably there were factors other than the war effort involved, such as access to wood for fuel, or even genuine solidarity with hard-up soldiers, not to mention extra rations.

THE POST-WAR STRIKE WAVE

Until the summer of 1920, the authorities had turned a blind eye to the illegal markets which existed in almost all towns and which provided much of the food consumed by urban workers. But then Zinoviev issued a blanket ban on privately-organised commerce, and the famine intensified. Even the official rations were distributed irregularly and often in less than the prescribed quantities. As the peasants were known to have surplus grain in their possession, having concealed it from the government committees, militia detachments were ordered to set up roadblocks to stop grain coming into the towns for sale on the illegal markets. Workers saw these detachments for precisely what they were, enforcers of starvation. In February 1921, barely 2 months after the end of the war on European fronts, strikes and mass street demonstrations erupted in Petrograd, immediately politicising the simmering conflict between workers and the capitalist authorities. Soon the naval fortress at Kronstadt was in open rebellion, the proletarians there forming a Provisional Revolutionary Committee which openly called for the power of newly-elected soviets rather than the Bolshevik party dictatorship. Other factors which helped spark off the revolt included the movement of resistance to despotic command within the armed forces, particularly the navy. The strikes in Petrograd escalated. The giant Putilov works renewed its reputation. Workers demanded the withdrawal of militia detachments, the liberation of working class political prisoners, and the reestablishment of urban food markets. The Kronstadt comrades went even further and demanded the abolition of political police in the factories, the equalisation of rations, and an end to the State coercion of peasants and artisans.

Faced with resistance on such a scale, the overriding consideration of the party was order, order not jeopardised by a movement obstructing the growth of the national product of wage-labour. They could not permit this order to be subverted by an organised movement of those at the bottom. When such a movement gave rise to strikes, demonstrations, even uprisings, and began openly to accuse the Bolshevik party of being usurpers, liars who spoke in the name of those who were proving in practice to be their enemies, blood had to be spilt. The delegates to the Tenth Party Congress were quite categorical. On this the Party was absolutely united (18).

An uprising in Kronstadt. Strikes in Petrograd. Rumblings in Moscow. At all costs the movement had to be kept disunited. Foodstuffs were rushed to Moscow. Roadblocks were removed from around Petrograd, despite the state of siege. Kronstadt remained in revolt, in open defiance of the State. After military mistakes by the insurgents, and several mutinies on the part of troops sent in by the government, the fortress and its rebels were crushed with thousands of

casualties before being buried under calumnies still trotted out by Leninists and Trotskyists to this day (19).

CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE 1920S.

In March 1921 the government introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), thereby replacing grain requisitions with a tax in kind, privatising small firms, legalising private trade and forcing firms and trusts to balance their books. The commanding heights of the economy, however, remained in State hands. Working class composition changed as the economy recovered from a very low base: gross industrial output in 1921 was around 31% of the 1913 figure (20).

From 1921 to 1923, management hiring policy tended to be to fire juveniles, newly-employed women, and "yesterday's peasants", in order to replace them with skilled and experienced workers returning from the countryside and the army. But from 1923 increasing numbers of inexperienced and unskilled rural migrants secured jobs in the towns, partly as a result of managers attempting to cut wages bills when filling vacancies. As a consequence, the average age of the workforce fell. Meanwhile, workers themselves made sure of a fairly rapid rate of turnover, and there was a shortage of skilled workers. The average size of a workplace increased, partly because this was government financial policy, as it had been during the industrial revolution, and partly because many small and medium-sized firms failed to reopen after being nominally denationalised.

Although no-one starved during NEP, unemployment doubled between 1923 and 1928, reaching the unprecedentedly high figure of 12%. The bureaucracy and the unions tried to get managers to hire labour-power via the labour exchanges, probably to ensure that urbanised workers were hired first, but by 1925 the employers won the legal right to hire whoever they wanted to.

Unemployment had many causes: the economic policies of NEP, the influx of former peasants into the towns, and the demobilisation of 3.5 million soldiers between 1921 and 1924. Some jobless army veterans were very poor, and often had to do without winter clothes or proper housing; such people occasionally turned to robbery, or organised demonstrations. However, enterprise book-balancing and industrial concentration brought about unemployment the simple way: via redundancies. "Rationalisation" began in 1924, and the dole queues got longer. The replacement of sacked workers with raw recruits from the countryside increased the antagonism between "urbanised" and "new" workers. Competition for seasonal jobs grew very intense, and many of those who were "lucky" enough to find such precarious jobs often had to sleep in public parks, uninhabited buildings, or the streets. Unemployment hit the young, unskilled and female more than the middle-aged and male, although there were jobless proletarians in all categories. Many unemployed juveniles fell "under the influence of the street", where they "associated with criminal types and engaged in begging, hooliganism and prostitution, and freely used drugs and alcohol" (20). We shall see below how there was already a thriving criminal scene for them to become part of.

The government was kind enough to organise public works projects, where the unemployed could dig ditches, clean streets or chop wood, but not surprisingly many people preferred to turn to crime, and most armed robbers were unemployed men in their twenties. There was also unemployment assistance, which was supposed to include meal coupons (until 1924), temporary free accommodation, and some money. But to qualify one had to have lived in a town for at least three months, and to have had work experience. Even then, rates varied according to skill level and experience. The average handout was a mere third of the minimum wage, and fewer than half of the unemployed received any aid at all. Occasionally unemployed people physically attacked the offices which symbolised their plight. According to the head of the OGPU, in 1924 an "anti-Soviet" movement was growing among Moscow's unemployed (21), who circulated anti-government leaflets and "petitions" to create committees of the unemployed. More than 3000 unemployed metalworkers attended a meeting where they demanded faster growth, cuts in imports and the working day, and increased benefits. Unemployed workers --many of them army veterans-- ransacked the Odessa labour-exchange and killed the director and

several of his staff, immediately after holding a demo to demand jobs. Though such outbreaks of organised unemployed "hooliganism" were usually isolated and "spontaneous", they continued throughout the late 1920s.

Crime spread in the major cities, particularly among bezprizorniks, homeless children who had run away from home or been orphaned. There were also professional criminals around, but information on them is scarce. Bezprizorniks, though, were themselves quite "professional", and often formed gangs for their own protection. Boys specialised in theft, girls in theft and prostitution. Organisations were created to divide the spoils. These rebels lived where they could -- in parks, abandoned buildings, boats, or, if they could afford it, in hostels. The use of drugs such as cocaine and alcohol was common. Indeed, many of the girls went on the game to support a cocaine, opium or morphine habit. Prostitution was quite open in many parts of Moscow; like drugs, crime and the bezprizorniks, it resisted attempts by police, party and government to clean up the city. Needless to say, there were the usual complications. People worried about being mugged or raped, or about their children turning into rebels.

Whilst it is probably true to say that, for those in work, living standards rose in the 1920s, one major countertendency was the deterioration of housing conditions, despite the fall in rents. By 1927 many workers in Moscow, especially those who had moved to the city after 1921, lived in Tsarist-style squalor. Often two or more families would share the same room. The populations of factory barracks swelled. Many homeless people lived in "overnight barracks"; others lived in corridors, sheds or kitchens. Disrepair was also a major problem, and workers often stole from workplaces in order to repair their rooms and staircases. Complaints were made at factory committee and production meetings.

In the workplaces, the class struggle continued apace. The working class had undergone quite a few changes since 1921, but the fight went on. In industry, urbanised hereditary proletarians tended to be literate, but fairly domesticated, but new workers were anything but tame, and often clashed with foremen over such matters as taking days off, drinking on the job, and fighting one another. The latter group tended to be among the less literate --indeed, to some they were "bumpkins"-- and used to get out of the towns whenever they could. Between these two extremes were such people as former artisans undergoing the deskilling process; they tended to resent keeping the boss's time rather than their own. Outside of industry, there were a large number of clerical and office workers, as well as "service personnel" working as doormen, cooks, laundresses, etc. And of course there were the domestic servants who cleaned up after Nepmen, professionals, academics and top party people like Lenin and Trotsky. Between 1923 and 1926 the number of domestics in Moscow trebled.

The managerial and higher-technical class ("cadres") expanded rapidly under NEP, and in industry the ratio of cadres to workers was much higher in 1926 than before the wars. The petty bourgeoisie, or the class of "Nepmen", thrived during the 1920s, but possessed little autonomy, often being subject to close police surveillance.

In the early years of NEP, laws governing safety and working hours were often flouted, most blatantly by private bosses, but also by bosses in the State sector. The unions were supposed to combat such violations, but until 1924 they did very little other than to chant about the need for productivity growth, putting party interests above everything. The workers soon forced them to change their tune.

After the government dealt with high industrial prices in 1923 by tightening credit and encouraging lay-offs, a wave of wildcat strikes broke out in the major industrial centres. Rumours of a general strike circulated in Moscow, but no such strike occurred, and strikes rarely involved more than individual enterprises. As pressure grew from below in 1923 and 1924, the unions quickly changed their tune, and began to pay serious attention to labour protection. No longer were the unions simply workplace cops; between 1924 and 1929 they began to balance their priorities between channelling workers' grievances and helping to enforce management policy. Labour conditions improved, and the breach between workers and the unions was partially healed. All the same, wildcat strikes did not die out, and continued to erupt over wages and labour

intensity campaigns.

After 1926, workers were officially encouraged to expose "management incompetence", and this they did, taking advantage of the "production meetings" organised by party cells and attended by workers, unions and management. Initially it tended to be the urbanised workers who turned up at these meetings, and the most vociferous were usually the fairly young and the skilled. Often such workers were party members too. The new workers, for their part, tended not to show much interest in the production meetings, and preferred to keep up their own traditions of indiscipline and laxity. However this division was gradually overcome in the years leading up to 1929, by which time many new workers joined their urbanised colleagues at the production meetings, thereby causing even more trouble for management. Workers vented their hostility toward factory administrators and specialists. Such "criticism" may have been in line with party policy, but the same cannot be said of the physical assaults. Chaos escalated as militant working class unity grew in the only way possible: from the bottom. In the end the party broke this unity by creaming off the workers' leaders and moving them into educational institutions or administrative positions, in a sort of re-run of 1917. Others, particularly the young and fit, were bribed and turned into exemplary workers during the "shock work" campaigns.

FROM THE "GREAT TURN" TO THE "GREAT FATHERLAND WAR" : 1928-41

Stalin's announcement of the "Great Turn" in November 1929 marked the onset of changes that affected the entire population. In December the targets of the first Five-Year Plan were revised upwards, and four years were now considered to be adequate instead of five. Stalin gave the go-ahead to the forcible proletarianisation of most of the peasantry, and by 1936 90% of peasants had been "collectivised", i.e. turned into wage-workers, even though many of them kept some sort of private plot. As "surplus" peasants were dragooned into the towns, the urban working class doubled in size to 24 million between 1929 and 1932.

The changes in industry were manifold. In practice, unions were excluded from the drafting of plans in 1929, and thus they lost their role in enterprise-level bargaining in exchange for a subordinate role in the State structure, as a "transmission belt" for the party. They were no longer recuperators of workers' antagonism towards management. The idea now was to centralise the entire decision-making process concerning norms and wage-levels, getting rid of local disputes altogether. The government began by accentuating differential wage-scales, rewarding what it called "true proletarians" (skilled, urbanised, "well socialised" industrial workers) with relatively high wages. Almost all workers in heavy industry were being paid piece-rates by 1928; this meant that even the unskilled were entitled to become well-paid if they became domesticated and more productive. After all, as 10-15% of the industrial working class had moved on upwards, others had to take their place.

But no amount of central "planning" could ensure orderly development. Indeed, resistance to industrial mobilisation came from managers as well as workers. Laws designed to restrict labour turnover, introduced in 1930 and 1932, were largely ignored as managers continued to poach workers from each other and to hire casual labour at the factory gates. In practice, absenteeism did not fall by as much as was officially claimed. Workers and managers built up a tradition of collusion against the bureaucratic authorities. The interests of capitalist economy as a whole, as interpreted by the central party elite, conflicted with the interests of those who ran individual enterprises. It is therefore quite wrong to identify "the bureaucracy" with the ruling class, as some have tried to do. In fact, when the government reorganised the education system, putting the emphasis on vocational training and the recruitment of party and army nominees, it was clear that it wanted to recompose the managerial class as well as the working class. This was one of the reasons for the purges of 1936-38.

As wages deteriorated in the immediate aftermath of the "Great Turn", so did working conditions, because the figure for gross output became the main indicator of an enterprise's success, and often regulations on the length of the

working day were ignored. But resistance was massive: turnover skyrocketed, as workers took advantage of a severe labour shortage. In 1930 the "average worker" was changing jobs every 8 months, and in the mining industry turnover was twice the average. Labour turnover had been high under Nicholas II and Lenin, but these levels were unprecedented. The end of unemployment in 1932 put those proletarians who wanted to work in quite a good position in that they could move from job to job to see which they liked best, as British workers would later do in the 1960s.

Real wages, though, fell between 1928 and 1932, thus providing extra funds for accumulation, and industrial output rose by about 40% in the three years leading up to 1932. But this was achieved through an 89% increase in the industrial workforce. In other words, output per head fell by more than 30%. Part of this reduction must have been due to equipment breakdowns and other inefficiencies resulting from the hectic efforts of party bureaucrats to stimulate "maximal" (but not "optimal") growth and investment. A second factor, however, was the old-fashioned stubbornness and laxity of Russian workers. "Shock work" and "socialist competition" were introduced in 1929 as an attack on workers' resistance to work intensification, but the attack was not wholly successful: shock workers were highly productive but, being in general quite young, they were sometimes the instigators of strikes. Strikes continued until 1934, whereupon the movement was beaten by the GPU, who went into the enterprises to round up the ringleaders. However, in the preceding years some of the strikes had won concessions concerning the withdrawal of wage-cuts or the increased availability of food.

It is significant that the end of strikes preceded the introduction of Stakhanovism by a mere year. Organised collective action had to be broken up before across-the-board pressure to increase industrial productivity could have any chance of success. Under Stakhanovism, which was a further development of shock work and "socialist competition", piece-rates were cut, output quotas were raised, and the stratum of fit, privileged workers loyal to the regime (usually young male scabs) was consolidated by means of soaring differentials. Stakhanovists were subject to abuse and physical attacks by more class-conscious workers, and a few were killed.

In 1936 the elite imposed the "Great Terror": one direct effect this had on the proletariat concerned the expansion of the concentration camp sector. This sector made a positive contribution to national growth in various sectors: timber, the mining of gold, platinum and coal, and construction work. The horrific conditions hardly need to be elaborated. The brutality of the regime was also seen in 1932-33, when 4½-6 million people were killed off in a famine which hit the Ukraine and parts of Russia and Kazakhstan.

In industry, however, the bosses did not have everything their own way even after the Great Terror was imposed. Labour turnover and absenteeism remained at high levels throughout the 1930s. Laws had to be passed in 1938 to curb the poaching of labour, and to reintroduce "employment books" and their corollary, the blacklisting of workers sacked for disciplinary offences. A new decree toughened the restrictions on job changing and absenteeism, restrictions which had been included in the largely-neglected law of 1932. A single case of absenteeism or lateness was supposed to mean automatic dismissal and loss of enterprise housing. Managers could be disciplined for rehiring fired truants or disrupters. Workers resisted by "losing" employment books to conceal the fact of dismissal for disciplinary offences, and clocked in for each other, as workers often tend to do all across the world. Sometimes managers collaborated by imposing insignificant penalties instead of dismissal, but in 1940 absenteeism and quitting were made criminal offences, and managers had to send "bad workers" to court, or else risk ending up in the dock themselves. Even judges had to be pressurised not to take the new law too lightly, but by the time of the German invasion in June 1941 the State had gained the upper hand, reducing indiscipline by extending its use of repression to everybody who might even think of obstructing the operation of the draconian labour laws. Thus began the real and full-scale militarisation of labour in 1941. (22).

The war represented the lowest point reached by Russian and Soviet class struggle since the post-1905 repression. The defeat inflicted on workplace resistance by 1941 was made even worse when Nazi Germany invaded. In the non-occupied areas holidays were suspended, all workers in war industries (including transport workers) were placed under military discipline, and anyone not actually "engaged in social work" was liable to labour mobilisation. Many pensioners and juveniles found themselves drafted. Things were even worse for those living under German military occupation, and worse still for those living under the SS. It was official Nazi doctrine to regard Slavs as subhumans: millions of Soviet workers were deported to slave labour enterprises in Greater Germany, and of course Jews were executed by the SS.

The war accentuated the differentiation of a workers' aristocracy: highly skilled workers in war industries, increasingly subject to Fordism, were guaranteed tolerable food rations. This meant, of course, that they were considerably better off than the rest.

Despite the appalling hardships inflicted on the Soviet people during the war, it is a fact that the overwhelming majority of them supported the war effort, and it is perhaps for this reason that there are few descriptions of workplace or social resistance. It is known, though, that some previously law-abiding proletarians turned to petty crime in order to feed themselves and their families. They usually ended up in camps, where they were known as bytoviki ("those who do things to live").

HONOUR AND REVOLT IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

The concentration camps had been incorporated into the economy in 1930. The fear of starvation was the main spur to production, and in general camp labour was used in highly labour-intensive sectors (mining, lumber, construction). Most camps were in isolated areas such as the North and the Far East, but camp labour was also used to build the infrastructure (roads, railways, mines, factories) in the new industrial areas of western Siberia, the Urals and Kazakhstan, and there were convict construction sites in every city. At a rough guess, we can say that the average camp population between 1936 and 1950 was 8 million, with a death-toll of about 1 million per year. Thus the first two points to realise about the camps are that they were part of the economy, and that they were a mass phenomenon.

Although quite a few cadres were sent to the camps during the purges, it is clear that we cannot judge prisoners by their class background, but only by their position in the internal class system of the camps. In fact the divisions among prisoners were clearly laid out: there were prisoners who collaborated with the authorities, sometimes even becoming sub-screws themselves, and there were those who refused to collaborate, with varying degrees of stubbornness. The most interesting culture of non-collaboration was associated with the blatnye (pronounced blat-NEE-yuh), or "thieves". These were people who, when they were on the outside, prided themselves on never carrying ID and never doing any work. In the camps, their strictly-defined codes were as follows: no member could ever accept a job in administration, or even the kitchen, nor could he help build anything to be used against prisoners, such as fences, watch-towers or isolation cells; no part could ever be taken in supervising other prisoners; and nothing was ever to be stolen from a fellow-con (24). Finally, ex-blatnye who had broken the code and become trustees ("bitches", or suki) had to be killed at the earliest opportunity. A similar ruthlessness was evident among the suki, who were often more vicious than the official guards. To become suki they had to "kiss the stiletto", and it helped if they publicly killed former comrades. On one occasion (25) it was reported that suki threatened to withdraw support for the administration unless the blatnye were cracked down upon with greater severity.

It is likely that at least some of the blatnye had radical ideas to complement their radical practice. One of them, Mikhail Dyomin, has said that the difference between himself and Makhno was that his own gang had no leader (26). Research

into the blatnye might well reveal them as the bearers of the real communist flame during the dark years of Stalinism. Also worthy of mention are the Ukrainian prisoners from some of the wartime partisan groups, who saw themselves as heirs to the Makhnovist tradition, but without making such a radical critique as Dyomin's.

In the years immediately following VE-day, the camp population swelled to around 12 million, or at least 10% of the adult male population in the country at large. (Most of the prisoners, though by no means all, were men). This was due to the imprisonment of large numbers of armed nationalists from Russia, Poland, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Muslim areas, and prisoners-of-war and refugees from the areas previously under German control. Many who had been taken prisoner by German forces found themselves sent directly to Soviet camps for "treason". By 1947 the camps included sizeable numbers of Poles, Ukrainians, Germans, Finns and central Europeans, as well as Russians repatriated by the other Allied powers. There were also Japanese people, Greeks and some unfortunate Belgians and Spaniards picked up by the GPU during the Spanish civil war. Language and nationality fostered major divisions in the camps after 1945. However, many of the newer prisoners had had combat experience, and this helped fuel the eventual revolts.

Strikes and revolts erupted throughout the camp system between 1946 and 1956. The first major revolt occurred in 1947. It started in a camp near Vorkuta in the Arctic region of European Russia, and was organised by three Russians who had formerly been colonels in the Soviet army before being captured by the Germans. The revolt was well-planned, and according to one account suki and blatnye managed to sink their differences in order to unite against the guards. The guards were soon disarmed and killed, and the insurgents planned to march on Vorkuta, a huge complex of camps which by 1953 housed a million prisoners. They liberated at least one other camp, but unfortunately word reached the Vorkuta authorities about the revolt, and they were met with heavy machine-gun fire. Eventually paratroopers and dive-bombers had to be sent in to disperse them. Thousands were killed.

By 1949, anarchists and anti-regime Leninists had formed a discussion circle at Vorkuta, where they debated whether or not a war between the US and the USSR was imminent or desirable, and decided to call for a general strike in the camps. The strike call was supported only by the blatnye and monachki (religious anarcho-types), and was spurned by the Baltic and Ukrainian nationalists. In 1952, however, there were major strikes in at least two camps. In the Ekibastuz Special Camp, death-squads killed informers and raised the spirits of combative prisoners. The screws' information network broke down completely, and stool-pigeons lived in danger of retribution. Not being strong enough to launch an armed insurrection, the insurgents settled for a hunger-strike, which proved partially successful in that physical violence against prisoners was drastically reduced. In the Kengir camp there was also a major strike, but it is not known what part was played by some former members of the CNT-FAI, who had been imprisoned since 1939.

After Stalin's death in March 1953 the camp system was shaken by a massive movement of strikes and risings. Inmates at Norilsk (northern Siberia) rose in May, and Vorkuta rose in July, to be followed by Kengir (Kazakhstan) in early 1954. At Norilsk 55 000 prisoners struck, demanding to be allowed to contact their families, receive letters and parcels, and to be given regular rations. A thousand rebels were killed when the strike was suppressed. At one of the Vorkuta camps, the authorities made immediate concessions on letters and visits, and issued an ultimatum warning that the concessions would be revoked unless the prisoners left the compound. The prisoners complied, and as they did so, guards and informers picked out the ringleaders and drove them off in trucks. In another camp at Vorkuta, where Edward Buca was the strike-leader, prisoners held out for a commission to arrive from Moscow. Buca forbade extremist posters and the execution of informers, and some of the demands were met. Vorkuta prisoners "enjoyed" conditions that were not introduced in other camps until 1956. Some young men, invalids and pregnant women were released, and prisoners were allowed to receive as many letters as they liked, and were paid for work. Perhaps this relative laxity had less to do with Buca's cool-headedness and more to do with the fact that Vorkuta supplied coal to Leningrad. When the Kengir camp rose, however, the attack on the authorities was more brutal, and so was the response. Slogans appeared, urging convicts to "Arm yourselves as best you can, and attack the soldiers first!" and to "Bash the

Chekists, boys!" The prisoners held the camp for 40 days, during which makeshift weapons were fabricated with metals and chemical from the Technical Department. The State thus had to mount an operation involving sappers, infantrymen and tanks. The tanks trailed barbed wire behind them in order to subdivide the compound, and in some cases they crushed the corners and sides of huts, along with the prisoners in them. Unarmed women failed to stop the tanks and were killed under their tracks. The courage and violence of this revolt are reminiscent of the Hungarian revolution and the recent conflict in Beijing.

"CUT UP KHRUSHCHEV FOR SAUSAGE-MEAT" : WORKPLACE STRUGGLES BEFORE 1964

In 1945 an amnesty was decreed for workers who had been given 6-year or 8-year sentences in camps for absconding from their jobs, usually to go back to the countryside in search of food. Meanwhile in the workplaces there was a very slight liberalisation of atmosphere when enterprise-level collective agreements were reintroduced in 1947. Until 1957 this measure usually remained a dead letter, but occasionally a local union branch would make demands in the field of housing or social amenities. Generally such demands would be settled by ministries rather than by local managers, whose autonomy in such matters was limited to the right to introduce very slight salary revisions.

The years 1956 and 1957 marked a turning-point in Soviet labour relations. In 1956 workers were freed from being "tied" to specific workplaces, and quitting was no longer a criminal offence. In 1957 administration by industrial ministries in Moscow was replaced by a system of regional economic councils (sovnarkhozy). Although plan fulfilment remained the dominant characteristic of the economic system, and the only main change in the "planning" field was that the autarchic tendencies associated with ministries were partially transferred to the sovnarkhozy, there were in fact major changes in worker-management relations at enterprise level.

The central authorities began to criticise unions for lack of initiative, and spoke of the unions' role in safeguarding workers' rights. Laws introduced in 1957 and 1958 gave enterprise union branches more rights concerning the settlement of labour disputes and the regulation of economic activity. The idea, of course, was to turn unions into a recuperative force, something they had not been since 1929. This marked a tentative destalinisation of industry: the ex-peasant labour force had been broken in, and dictatorial authority seemed a poor method of encouraging output. From now on responsibility for agreements on wages and conditions would lie with the sovnarkhozy and the regional union committees. In 1958 factory committees composed of union and management representatives even began to participate in drafting the annual plans, and they had to give permission before workers could be sacked.

As enterprises and regions were given slightly more official autonomy, they bid against each other and wages slowly rose. Meanwhile economic development allowed workers longer holidays and a shorter working week. Capitalist exploitation was still expanding the reproduction of "relative" surplus-value. In other words, changes in the productive forces meant that workers could reproduce their own intake of consumer goods in a shorter time. This meant that they spent more time producing surplus-value, and the working day could even be reduced. In fact, during this period workers were more likely to win disputes over holidays than over wages (288). But the majority of regulated disputes in this period arose from workers' efforts to challenge management illegality. Most of these were settled quickly at enterprise level according to the new procedures. We mention these regulated disputes in order to describe the background to the more famous but less frequent strikes and riots of the time.

STRIKES AND REVOLTS, 1945-64

1946-56: strikes and risings in the camps: Vorkuta, Pechora, Norilsk, Kolyma, Karaganda, Ekibastuz, Kengir, Salekhard, Nizhni-Aturyakh, ...
1947: troop mutinies in Frankfurt-on-Oder & in Hungary.

STRIKES AND REVOLTS, 1945-64 (cont.)

1948-51: troop mutinies in East Germany & on ships in Baltic fleet.
1953: defections to insurgents, East Germany.
1955: mutiny, Weimar.
1956: riots in Tbilisi; strike wave in Sverdlovsk.
1959: Temirtau revolt.
1960: Strike in Kemerovo.
1961-62: strike wave: Alexandrov, Minsk, Kemerovo, Moscow region, Donetsk Basin.
1962 Insurrection in Novocherkassk.
1963: disturbances in Krivoi Rog, Odessa, Ryazan, Baku, Omsk.

The earliest reported incident of serious labour unrest took place in 1959 in the new industrial town of Temirtau, in Kazakhstan. Young workers and Komsomol volunteers had been brought in from other parts of the country to help build a metal works. When they arrived, they found they had to live in tents (in an area exposed to furious sandstorms), that the supply of drinking water was only intermittent, and the food very poor. And what was more, young Party people from Poland and East Germany working alongside them were being much better paid. A group of workers set fire to the site canteen, marched on the police-station, caught the chief cop and hanged him. They also killed the site director. Soldiers were flown in, but they soon fraternised with the rebels. One report describes how the rioters then built barricades and took over the entire town. Special KGB troops had to be used to quell the riots. At least several dozen people were killed there and then, and others were executed afterwards.

Similar demonstrations occurred in Kemerovo, the centre of the Kuznets basin, an industrial area of Siberia, in January 1960. In 1961 and 1962, as the nomenklatura system was proving too strong for Khrushchev, and the Cold War with the US was reaching its peak, whatever decentralisation of "planning" had followed the sovnarkhoz reforms was put into reverse. A currency reform provoked strikes in 1961 in several towns across the country. In Alexandrovsk trouble broke out when a workers' delegation was sent to a police-station after a worker had been killed inside. After shots were fired at the crowd, the police-station was stormed and burnt to the ground. Workers then swarmed to the local prison where party bureaucrats had taken refuge, and demanded the liberation of their comrades. The gates opened and armed troops poured out, but so, not being militiamen, MVD or KGB, they were mingling with the crowd. After they had withdrawn to the prison without having fired a single shot except into the air, new troops were called in from outside the area: these were men from the Special Intervention Division of the KGB, and only the officers were Russian. They had no qualms about shooting into the crowd. Dozens were shot or crushed. For days the KGB occupied the town. Some of the arrestees "disappeared", but three people were tried and shot: the local factory director, a doctor, and an artist!

In the first 6 months of 1962, 47000 workers took part in strikes, according to an official Soviet journal. But the biggest and most widespread explosion of proletarian discontent occurred when the government raised meat and dairy prices by about a third on June 1st. There followed sit-down strikes, factory protests, street demonstrations, and in many parts of the USSR, large-scale rioting. Unrest was reported in Grosny, Krasnodar, Yaroslav, Gorky, Zhdanov, Krivoi-Rog, Dneprodzerzhinsk, Odessa, and even Moscow, where there was a mass meeting at the Moskvich car factory. The most serious trouble took place in Novocherkassk, in the heavy industrial region of the Donetsk basin, where there erupted what was the biggest workers' uprising since Kronstadt in 1921.

Events in Novocherkassk took a radical turn when the management of an electric locomotive works raised the piecework norms by 30% just as the government was raising food prices. Workers from two of the workshops asked to see the director, but no-one would meet them. Another source says that the director did meet them, and when they asked him what they were supposed to live on, replied, "You're used to guzzling meat pies -- put jam in them instead." This budding Marie Antoinette and his retinue were lucky to escape in one piece. Workers from other shops gathered round. A passing train was stopped and the track of the main Moscow-to-Rostov

line was ripped up. All workers downed tools and draped the factory with posters reading "Down with Khrushchev!" and "Cut up Khrushchev for sausage-meat!" The militia arrived, but were soon driven off. Tanks and armoured cars then occupied the workshops, but the crowds refused to disperse. Thirty ringleaders were arrested during the night. The next morning, workers decided to march to the town centre. Some carried peaceful slogans (!) and pictures of Lenin (!!!). They marched past some tanks, across a main bridge and into the town, by which time crowds of women and students had already gathered before the Party headquarters, and people were taking over lorries to use as platforms for speeches. After an attempt to smash into the police-station, the crowd returned to the party building and found it empty. Troops guarded the post office, the radio station and the bank, and tanks soon confronted the crowd outside the party offices. After local troops had refused to fire, and one army officer had reputedly torn up his party card and shot himself, non-Russian troops shot over the heads of the crowd, killing some small boys in nearby trees. The crowd went wild, and troops pumped dum-dum bullets into its midst, before being replaced with units armed only with ordinary rounds. At least 70 people were killed; some accounts spoke of hundreds dead. Three very senior Party people flew in; Kozlov was supposed to have wept when disclaiming responsibility for shooting the children. Use of dum-dum bullets was denied; it was all said to be a rumour spread by enemies of the State. No promises were made, but food was rushed into the shops, which were soon better stocked than any others outside Moscow. The wounded all "disappeared", and their families were shipped off to Siberia, as were many who had been filmed taking part in the rioting. Some accounts suggest that the Donbas strike movement had set up a regional strike committee to coordinate action in Rostov, Lugansk, Taganrog and elsewhere, but that the committee was pre-empted by the insurrection.

The "lessons" of this wave of unrest are many. First, nothing was more natural than for Soviet workers to see themselves as being in a total relationship with their employers, and when violence was used it tended to hit the right targets. Second, the speed with which the State employed extreme levels of violence surpassed anything seen in urban riots in, say, France or Britain for a very long time. Recuperative machinery was extremely underdeveloped. The authorities had not experienced mass "civil unrest" for a generation. Third, locally-based soldiers would not shoot proletarians who worked or studied locally, but KGB units and troops of other nationalities were more likely to do so. Fourth, although reports state that some of the Novochoerkassk rebels returned fire, the strikers as a movement did not use firearms on a large scale. Fifth, the uprisings did not spread. Part of this may have been due to the news blackout; people in Moscow only heard about the Novochoerkassk revolt several weeks after it was all over.

CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE BREZHNEV PERIOD: 1964-80

During its first four years in power (1964-68), the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership courted popularity and pursued a much more generous wages policy than Khrushchev had done. Only three incidents of large-scale unrest were reported, all in 1967: strikes in Kharkov and the Gorky tractor-plant, and a riot in Priuluk. "Only" one person was certain to have been killed in any of these three conflicts, and so they cannot be likened to the bloodbaths of 1959-62.

The Priuluk riot of 1967 started after a worker was arrested and killed by the police. The funeral procession filed past the police-station where the killing took place, and several women shouted "Down with the Soviet SS men." The crowd sacked the police-station, and several cops were beaten up. Some reports say that cops were lynched too. An army brigade was sent into the town, but it was driven away by workers from several factories. Later a letter was written to the Central Committee of the CPSU demanding that the cops guilty of murder be handed over to be lynched, that 5 arrestees be freed, and that all party and council administrators in the town be sacked. The threat was made to set fire to a main oil pipeline running through the town if the army intervened again. One

account says that a general then arrived from Moscow and promised to meet all the demands except the handing-over of the cops, who would be tried in the courts instead. Another account says that the arrestees guilty of lynching cops would be kept in custody.

STRIKES AND RIOTS, 1964-82

1967: strikes in Kharkov and Gorky; riot in Priuluk.
 1969: riots at Togliatti training-camps.
 1969: strikes at Vyshgorod, Sverdlovsk, Gorky and a Kiev HEP station.
 1970: strikes in Kaliningrad, Lvov and in Byelorussia.
 1971: strikes in Cherginov and Kopeiske.
 1972: revolt in Dneprodzerzhinsk; oilworkers' protest in Baku.
 Early 1970s: a number of stoppages by construction workers in Moscow and Leningrad; some strikes in Sverdlovsk and Vladimir.
 1973: strike at a machine-building factory in Kiev.
 1973: strikes reported in Vytebsk, Kaunas, Moscow and Leningrad.
 1975: mutiny on the Storvecoi destroyer.
 1976: strike wave: strikes in the Baltic region, the Donbas, the Caucasus, Byelorussia, the Volga region, Kazakhstan, Siberia, Dneprodzerzhinsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Riga, Lvov, Kiev and Rostov-on-Don.
 1977: strikes in Yaroslav and Kauna.
 1978, 1979 and 1980: bus-drivers' strikes in Togliatti.
 1979: strike in Leningrad.
 1979-81: strike wave: RSFSR: strikes in the Leninets factory, Leningrad, a porcelain factory, Michekevsk-Usolski, in the mines of Novokuznetsk and Vorkuta; bus-strikes in Monchegorsk (5 times) and Togliatti, strikes in car factories in Togliatti, Gorky and Pavlovsk. Ukraine: strikes in the Kiev region in early 1981 at 2 factories and a construction yard, followed by troubles over shortages; Baltic republics: several strikes in Vilnius, Tartu, Kaunas and Riga. Strikes by miners in Komis and Kuzbas areas. Other strikes also reported, in Pavlovsk, Nikel, Vyborg, etc.

In the 1970s a pattern began to emerge as follows: 1) individualised conflicts continued with quite a degree of resilience; and 2) collective conflicts flared up in a minority of workplaces, and became established as a useful weapon, although such conflicts never reached the earlier levels of violence. Over the decade as a whole, the main forms of workers' struggle were, firstly, turnover, pilfering, drinking and absenteeism, and then, occurring with less frequency, go-slows, silent sit-ins and strikes.

Voluntary turnover mainly involves people under the age of 30. As they pass this age, many become more oriented towards "making something of themselves", either by becoming "good" activist workers, or by making some money on the black market (30). The turnover rate for the 1970s was approximately 20% per year, with an average interim between jobs of 4 weeks. This gives us a figure for "frictional unemployment" of about 2%. There were in fact significant variations according to industry, geographical area, and size of enterprise. For instance, in 1971 the turnover rate in coalmining was 47%, and in textiles it was 65%. Turnover was particularly high in Tadzhikistan, Siberia and the Far East, but low in the central regions of the RSFSR. In analysing why workers change jobs, it should always be remembered that it is the enterprise that often provides accommodation, nurseries, cafeterias and holidays; in other words, enterprise services amount to a sort of "semi-social" wage. Turnover, therefore, was highest in small enterprises, because such enterprises, usually run by local councils, have a narrower range of services than that offered by larger firms, as well as fewer promotion opportunities. Nevertheless, auxiliary unskilled personnel, who exist in large numbers in the archetypally backward huge Soviet plants, often have restricted access to resources, and are prone to switch jobs for this reason, often accepting lower individual wages. They also leave jobs in order to find lighter and less hazardous work elsewhere.

A growing group within the Soviet working class during the 1970s was that of the shabashniks, or freelance construction workers, who move from site to site and often have their own shady ways of obtaining materials. They are responsible for a large portion of rural construction, and probably not a few of them are excluded from turnover figures because they are supposed to be holding down jobs on collective farms. There are also the "vagabonds", who live by casual work, often in the highly shady timber industry, and are sometimes on the run from the police. Turnover for these two groups of workers can hardly be considered voluntary, which only goes to show that **the practice** and class composition of the working class are the product of a two-way struggle.

Pilfering from work continued to be a popular pastime in the 1970s. An academic once wrote that "a little larceny can do a lot to improve employee morale", but more recently Tatyana Zaslavskaya has **bemoaned** how older generations of workers have a "spiritual influence" on their younger workmates, turning theft into part of labour culture. Drinking, too, is unquestionably part of working class life in the USSR to a much greater degree than in most other countries. Often workers use drink to have a good time whilst not bothering at all about the quality of their work, and there is an obvious link between drinking and absenteeism. But just as alcoholism is a form of drug addiction whose unpleasant effects on proletarians and their friends and families need no elaboration, so does alcoholism at work cause a deterioration of general safety standards.

Pilfering, drinking and absenteeism continued to contribute to the indiscipline endemic to the Soviet economy, despite such indiscipline being the most common reason for workers to be given the sack. We shall have more to say on these forms of **activity** when we come to consider how struggle might develop in the future.

As the regime began to aim for lower wage-growth in the years following 1969, collectively-organised forms of struggle reappeared on a large scale. Informal go-slows became very popular, especially just before output norms were revised. Another method of workplace struggle was to pressurise foremen by collectively organising sabotage. Broken machines would be repaired, or spare parts retrieved, if and when workers received extra bonus-payments. A third form of action was the "Italian strike": workers would clock in but refuse to work (31). In some workshops in Leningrad, about 400 workers used this form of action to protest against the treatment of prisoners who worked in the factory during the day. Another "Italian strike" took place in a Moscow cement works after the director reorganised work schedules without consulting the union committee. Workers opened their pay-packets to find that they were being paid a mere 20 roubles for a fortnight's work. For two days they sat around at work, doing nothing. They demanded to see the director, but he was too terrified to meet them face to face. Instead, the secretary of the local Party committee arrived, promised to loosen the production standards, and the strike ended. Afterwards, they tried to get the director to pay them for the days when they had been on strike. It is not known whether or not they were successful, but what is certain is that all the strikers were subsequently forced to leave the plant.

Along with these actions, strikes increased in frequency after 1969. Thirty were recorded between 1969 and 1978, and the real figure must have been much higher. Whilst workers tended, with a few exceptions, as we shall see, not to rush into violent confrontations, the authorities tended to grant concessions more easily.

Several strikes broke out in 1969. Workers at a Sverdlovsk rubber-plant struck against a 25% drop in salary resulting from the introduction of new norms and a 5-day week. Another factor was the shortage of meat and dairy products. Sverdlovsk workers demanded equal rationing, claiming that at least that way everyone would get the same amount. At a hydroelectric station in Vyshgorod, near Kiev, a strike broke out on the question of housing. Many of the workers were living in prefabricated huts, and the houses on the temporary workers' settlement were subject to general neglect. Barracks walls were cracking, and some houses were unfit for human habitation. Workers called a mass meeting and sent delegates to the Council of Ministers in Moscow. Soon

repair work started on some of the houses. But government bureaucrats then visited the settlement and demanded the election of a new housing committee to replace the one the workers had elected, which had not received management approval. A few scabs elected a new committee in the presence of troops. When the local authorities called a residents' meeting, workers started to raise complaints about how they had been refused internal passports, and made noises about corruption in housing allocation. A colonel from the MVD promised that workers would be given permanent housing, but at a second meeting this promise was withdrawn. Police tried to arrest the workers' delegates but were prevented from doing so. The final result of this struggle is not known.

In Krasnodar, also in 1969, workers from several factories stayed at home for three days, refusing to go to work until decent consumer goods and foodstuffs arrived in the stores. Later in the same year, women at a Gorky arms factory walked off the job, stating that they were going to buy meat and would not return until they had bought enough of it. This year also saw a premeditated riot at some "training-camps" (borstal centres) in Togliatti. Inmates prepared for revolt by stockpiling Molotov cocktails and filling fire-extinguishers with petrol. They used a tractor to break from one camp into the other, and soon two camps were set alight. Trustees who had tried to put out the fire were killed or beaten up. Rebels freed their comrades from the isolator block after screws had tried to let it burn with the prisoners still inside. One screw was killed. Armoured cars and a helicopter arrived, but the order from Moscow was only to shoot those trying to escape. No-one tried... When the fires went out in the morning, only ashes remained, and no-one could stop the ringleaders being picked out and given a heavy beating. A few weeks later, prisoners set light to a camp near the Kryai railway junction. Afterwards, an amnesty was declared. Only later did the authorities name the insurgents who had been shot.

According to a single account, the Hsinhua Press Service in Peking (!), Soviet workers launched **solidarity strikes** to express their support for the December 1970 revolt of the Polish workers on the Baltic coasts. Supposedly these strikes took place in Kaliningrad, Lvov, and in some cities of Byelorussia. If this is true it is of major significance.

In December 1971, some 200 workers at a Baku oil refinery met to protest against substandard working conditions and to demand extra money and holidays. Three hours before the meeting took place, the authorities tried unsuccessfully to force its cancellation by arresting 13 workers for organising the protest. Those arrested were later imprisoned on charges of anti-Soviet activity.

An incident involving the militia sparked off a riot in Dneprodzerzhinsk in June 1972. Militiamen had arrested a few drunken members of a wedding party and driven them off in a wagon. Minutes later the wagon crashed. The militiamen, who had themselves been drinking, concentrated on saving themselves, leaving those they had arrested to burn to death when the wagon exploded. A crowd assembled, marched to the city's central police-station and ransacked it. Police files were burnt. They then marched on the Party headquarters and attacked it after being told to disperse. Thereupon two militia battalions opened fire. Eight insurgents were killed by the militia and two militiamen were themselves killed. This is an example, once again, of poor crowd control leading to a furious and immediately understood breach between the proletariat and the State. No such major riot (as far as we know) would occur on Soviet territory again until 1986.

In February 1973 a strike occurred at the largest factory in Vytebsk after the introduction of new norms for skilled workers had led to a 20% wage-cut. The strike lasted for two days until the KGB ordered the factory director to restore the wages. The KGB apparently tried to track down the instigators of the strike, but could find none.

In Kiev, a strike broke out in May 1973 at the city's largest machine-building factory. The factory was located on a major highway, and was therefore politically strategic. As soon as the workers stopped work, at 11 a.m., the factory director telephoned the Central Committee of the Ukrainian CP (CPU). By noon a member of the CPU politburo arrived at the factory, met a delegation

of workers, and promptly gave in to their demands for higher pay. By 3 p.m. the workers were told that their wages would be increased, and most of the top administrators of the factory would be dismissed. According to one report, the local population attributed the success of the strike to its high degree of organisation, and to the régime's fear that it might develop into a "Ukrainian Szczecin", (Szczecin was one of the cities where Polish workers rebelled in December 1970; according to Henri Simon, struggle there reached the point of urban guerrilla warfare).

In the same year, scores of strikes were reported on construction sites in Moscow and Leningrad. More information is available about a strike at a woodworking plant in Kaunas (Lithuania). Both day and night shifts struck over a cut in wages. Security agents and various Kaunas officials tried unsuccessfully to cajole the workers back to work. On October 4th the old wage-rates were restored, and the workers returned to their jobs.

In 1975 construction workers on the Baikal-Amur Railway walked out over poor organisation of the work plan. Further details are unavailable. Dockworkers went on strike in Riga in May 1976, protesting against food shortages in local shops. Four people were imprisoned. An account published by French anarchists (32) describes a wave of strikes in 1976 against food shortages, involving workers in the Baltic republics, the Ukraine, the Donets basin, the Caucasus, Byelorussia, the Volga region, Kazakhstan and Siberia. The same account states that women in Rostov-on-Don broke the windows of shops whose shelves were bare. (Why they should want to do that is not certain, and it is possible that this account is exaggerated. It should be clear that our own aim in giving this long list of strikes is not to overstate their significance, but to describe the mechanisms involved.)

In Yaroslavl in 1977 proletarians besieged local refrigeration depots which stored meat even when there was none in the local shops. Police killed thirteen people. In December of the same year, workers struck at the Kaunas rubber goods factory after management effectively reduced wages -- with union consent-- by decreasing the admissible rate of spoiled goods. The first shift in the shoe-moulding shop refused to work at all, and the second shift walked out for four hours. State security officials confronted the workers verbally, and one worker was beaten during a militia interrogation, but the spoilage rate was restored. A shift foreman was fired, a senior technician suspended, and the chief engineer severely reprimanded after the strike.

In August 1979, bus-drivers went on strike in Togliatti. They blocked the depot gates with a big articulated bus to stop scabs from driving out any of the 200 buses inside, and presented management with a list of 15 demands. These included a wage-rise, the sacking of a particularly detested boss, and a threat that if one striker was arrested after they returned to work, they would immediately go back out on strike. Management, union and party officials tried to persuade them to end the strike before discussing their demands. The strikers refused. Scabs were sent in, telling the drivers to get out of "their" vehicles. Two scabs were beaten up, but despite this, two strikers were freed by the militia. Thousands of workers at the Volga car factory were unable to get to work because of the strike. As rumours reached them about what was going on, and millions of roubles of lost production went down the drain, the bosses gave in and met the strikers' main demands. No immediate retribution followed, but one source suggests that an arrest of strike organisers occurred some months later, directly or indirectly precipitating the disturbance in Togliatti the following year.

THE STRIKE WAVE OF 1980-81

If collective workplace struggles had occurred increasingly frequently in the 1970s, the years 1980-81 saw a veritable wave of strikes. The influence of the movement in Poland on events in the USSR remains an unknown factor.

The movement began in a town we have already mentioned: Togliatti. In May 1980 an unknown number of bus drivers struck in protest against being

assigned extra routes without additional money. They were joined by 70 000 assembly-line workers at the Togliatti car plant, one of the biggest factories in the world. The car workers live in large housing developments 10 miles from the factory, and depend upon the bus-drivers for transportation. During the 1979 strike some of them managed to devise their own transportation. In 1980, angered by shortages of food (especially meat and dairy products), they joined the drivers. One Soviet source told the New York Times that "an unofficial worker leadership" at the plant had become more powerful than the union, and was instrumental in organising the strike. According to this source, this unofficial leadership had already protested against unsatisfactory working conditions and had supported several previous 30-minute stoppages. Soviet authorities moved quickly to restore order, stocking local stores with large amounts of food and consumer goods. Sustained workplace militancy at the Togliatti plant led to the installation of "some of the best social and medical facilities" in the USSR.

The Togliatti drivers had walked out on May 6-7. On May 7-8, several thousand assembly-line workers walked out of the Gorky motor plant, builder of trucks and other vehicles, in protest against local food shortages. Handwritten pamphlets listing complaints had appeared in April. Food supplies improved in the town immediately after the strike, but four strike leaders were arrested.

In June 1980, following the departure of politburo member Kirilenko, who had asked them to work harder, employees of the Kama River truck plant struck for four hours in protest over food shortages. Like the Togliatti car plant, this is also one of the biggest workplaces in the world.

On October 1-2, 1980, about 1000 workers struck at the Katseremonditehas tractor factory in Tartu (Estonia), demanding the withdrawal of recently-revised norms, payment of increased bonuses, and the elimination of food shortages in local shops. A special commission sent from Moscow quickly met the first two demands. The success of the Tartu strikers reportedly encouraged demonstrations in both Tartu and Parnu on October 10 on behalf of Estonian independence and other nationalist causes. The Kremlin elite must have been pleased with such rapid ideological recuperation.

Also in 1980, although precise dates are uncertain, one strike is reported to have taken place in Nikel, and a second took place in Vyborg. In the latter strike, workers protested police brutality in a previous incident. In the same year, workers at a Chelyabinsk tractor factory struck against food shortages.

The trouble continued into 1981. In early 1981, coalminers came out on strike in Vorkuta. In late March and early April, two strikes occurred at a machine design plant in Kiev. The first strike was precipitated by an increase in production norms amounting to a cut in wages. The strike was successful. The issue in the second conflict was the unavailability of water in the area where the plant is located. Unusually, the organisers were reported to have been members of the party and union committees of the factory. This strike too was victorious -- the water system was soon repaired. However, the plant director was fired, and changes were made in the party and union committees. During the same period, there was a strike elsewhere in Kiev, at a factory producing reinforced concrete elements. Again the issue was an increase in production norms. Again the conflict was settled in favour of the workers.

In August 1981, workers struck at a Kiev motorcycle plant for one or two days to protest against reductions in piece-rates and bonuses. The earlier rates were restored and workers went back to their jobs. Also in 1981, labour stoppages are reported to have occurred in Riga and various parts of Lithuania. There were also reports that 500 workers on two shifts at the Zhdanov bus factory in Pavlovsk (Leningrad region) struck for better conditions. Similar walkouts have occurred in other Pavlovsk factories in recent years, and the workers' demands have usually been granted. The PAZ car works in particular experienced a series of strikes. Since December 1981 it has been impossible for management to identify the "leaders" (33). Other strikes reported during the 1979-81 period include a miners' strike in Novokuznetsk, repeated bus strikes in Monchegorsk, and a stoppage at a porcelain factory in Michelevsk-Usolski. There were also strikes in the Komis and Kuzbas mines, and two strikes in a fortnight at the Dzhimask construction yard in Kiev.

We have shown how the strike wave of 1980-81 followed on from a decade where strikes had become more frequent, less violently confronted and less violent in their own dynamic, and usually more successful than in the previous period. This seems to have come to a peak in 1980-81. We feel confident about referring to a "wave" of strikes, firstly because of the sheer number of them, and secondly because several of them were clearly not isolated occurrences, and were influenced by strikes in other workplaces. In Togliatti in 1979-80 and in Kiev and Pavlovsk in 1981, one disturbance followed upon another, in more than one workplace (33).

When Mikhail Holubenko analysed Soviet working class opposition up to the year 1973 (34), he noted that strikes occurred most often in outlying areas, that is, in areas removed from the central Moscow-Leningrad region. Two of the main reasons for this are that the peripheral regions suffer more from shortages of all kinds, and that control by police and security services is much tighter in big cities and major industrial centres. The rulers know, as we know, that whereas an all-out strike in Magadan would be of little effect, an all-out general strike in Moscow would rock the world, and nothing in the USSR would ever be quite the same again. The movements in Kiev and Togliatti were, like the strike wave of which they were part, a step in the right direction, and this was unmistakably shown by the unilateral concessions won from the bosses. The second major strength of the movement was that workers' demands focussed on food shortages and not merely on labour matters such as pay and norms. In the past, such demands have lit the touch-paper of revolutionary movements.

The regime's fear during 1980-81 was perhaps best expressed by its publicly broadcast line on "workers' problems". From mid-1980 to late 1981 there was a press campaign to expose the shortcomings of union officials in listening to complaints and pressing for workers' interests. Brezhnev himself spoke out. After late 1981 this campaign subsided, and back came the traditional emphasis on raising productivity. This provided a neat parallel with coverage of the workers' movement in Poland. The initial wildcat strikes of July were ignored in the Soviet press, which only began to give selective coverage to the Polish unrest in mid-August. After mid-September 1981, however, there was an extensive anti-Solidarnosc campaign. By November the main Soviet literary journal was calling Solidarnosc leaders "fascists". The regime was far less likely to have been concerned with whipping up support for a possible invasion than with preventing an adverse effect on struggles "at home". According to two sources, there was already agitation in several Soviet factories in support of Gdansk workers. Just how far were we from a Gdansk in Kiev or Togliatti?

MODERN-DAY REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE USSR

In Leningrad in 1976 there appeared a group of students known as the Left Opposition (35). The name was significant in itself: the Russian word oppozitsiya is far stronger than its English equivalent, and implies anti-constitutionalism at the very least. This group distributed leaflets against the CPSU's 25th Congress, ending with the words "Long live the new revolution! Long live communism!" One student was sentenced to two years in a camp for "instigating" the action. In June 1978, his comrade Alexander Skobov set up a "community" in Leningrad where sympathisers and young marginals could meet each other. The group published 3 editions of a review which, alongside "classical" texts, contained some new articles of an informative or theoretical nature.

One of the principal projects of the Left Opposition was to hold a conference of a number of left groups from Leningrad, Moscow, the Ukraine, the Caucasus and the Baltic states. The aim was to argue and get organised. The conference was put back because of the attitude taken by an "orthodox Marxist" group, but in fact it was never to take place, because delegates were arrested as soon as they arrived in Leningrad. One comrade from Moscow was put straight into custody. The community's base was searched and ransacked, and in October

Skobov was interrogated by the KGB. After this, people close to the community were subject to searches and interrogation. Skobov was soon arrested, as was Tsurkov, a "veteran" from 1976. A demonstration against the arrests was held by more than 200 students in central Leningrad in December. But the harassment continued: Reznikov was attacked by unknown assailants, and arrested more than once. In April 1979, Arkady Tsurkov was given 5 years hard labour, and Skobov was hospitalised indefinitely in a mental asylum. In August, another member of the group, Alexis Khavin, was sentenced to 6 years for trafficking in drugs, after what could have been a police plant, given that Khavin had refused to grass on Skobov. The repression against Skobov's community and the Left Opposition was thus successful by 1979.

So, what were the politics of the Left Opposition? First it must be put into the context of the Leningrad "radical" scene. Since the early 1970s, Leningrad had been home to a movement of young people living in communes. There were other communes, mainly in other university cities, but the movement was most developed in Leningrad. These communes formed a support network, which could, for example, give hitch-hikers somewhere to stay. Within the movement there were several tendencies: Marxist, anarchist, Trotskyist. Although the general tendency was towards anarchism, the movement was heavily influenced by "modern" thought of the kind put out by Marcuse. The Left Opposition appeared within this milieu, with ideas that were, generally speaking, "ultra-leftist". Meanwhile, one faction of the group was heavily influenced by anarchism. The group's review, Perspectives, contained orientation texts from various points of view. "Classics" by Trotsky, Bakunin and Kropotkin were mingled with "modern" texts by Marcuse and Cohn-Bendit. Other texts criticised or defended the Kronstadt revolt. There were also programmatic texts and articles taken from other samizdat publications. Some contributors referred approvingly to Kropotkin and Bakunin. Articles pronounced in favour of illegalism and violent action, counterfeiting and the eventual seizure of hostages and launch of armed struggle inspired by "West German anarchists, especially the Baader-Meinhof Group". Skobov defined himself as an anarcho-socialist and partisan of the young Marx. In the group's library there were works by Trotsky, the young Marx, Kropotkin and Soviet dissidents. Skobov, along with Khavin, belonged to the non-violent tendency which wanted to continue to act above-ground whilst rejecting sectarianism. Khavin had already been imprisoned in 1977 for distributing works by Kropotkin when he was still at school.

During the same period, the Revolutionary Communards also arose from the same milieu in Leningrad, but unlike the Left Opposition, they were clandestine from the very beginning. For this reason, not a lot about them is known. But what is a fact is that clandestinity helped them for a time to resist the sort of repression that had broken the Left Opposition. However, by 1981 some of them had been arrested for handing out leaflets, and three of their cells had to be dispersed. At that time they were seeking contact with similar Western groups, and they are rumoured to still exist.

In May 1978 the Revolutionary Communards helped organise an anti-war demonstration on Nevsky Prospekt, a main thoroughfare in Leningrad. In the same year, in collaboration with the Left Opposition, they held a fake course on "Diamat" ("Dialectical materialism", the official name for a course of political brainwashing) at Leningrad University. In front of 300 people several students spoke of Bakunin, Trotsky and others. The Revolutionary Communards also published numerous leaflets.

In October 1979, three members of the group were arrested for having written slogans and pasted posters on walls. The slogans read "Democracy not demagogy" (ugh!) and "Down with State capitalism". The posters demanded "Simply an anti-authoritarian order" and defined the enemy as "the family, private property and the State". The posters were signed by the "Movement of Revolutionary Communards". All three people arrested were sentenced in December 1979 to imprisonment in strict-regime camps. One was a mechanic in a refrigerator factory; another was a musician, poet and painter. Police searches of their home netted works by Bebel, Kautsky, Marcuse, Fromm and the bourgeois-democratic "Chronicles of Current Events". In his trial, Alexei Stassevich spoke of

the Communards' solidarity with the French movement of 1968, and voiced the group's opinion that the commune was the basic cell of communist society. Vladimir Mikhailov ended by announcing that "Many things depend on the tribunal's decision, notably the form to be taken by the struggle we will carry out at a later date. As for the verdict, only history will give it." Alevtina Kotchneva, tongue-in-cheek, announced "I have never worked, I have abandoned my studies, I had no fixed abode. Never have I been useful to anyone -- I was happy being a 'consumer'. I have been thinking, and I assure the tribunal that I will completely change my lifestyle, that I will work and study. I will teach people to love each other. But first one must get rid of one's own faults. I know the court will give a fair judgement, but I would ask for a light sentence."

As we shall see below, the Revolutionary Communards, despite their reference to "democracy", cannot be likened to the current Soviet left. On the contrary, they should be seen as the most radical elements of what can only be called a "new left" insofar as it sought -- within specific historical conditions, in the Leningrad of the 1970s -- to reject the traditional left, without the aim of providing an equally capitalist alternative to it. The Soviet "new left" today is more comparable to the Greens than to the original Communards.

INDEPENDENT TRADE-UNIONISM : THE ROAD TO INSTITUTIONALISATION OR JUST MANIPULATION ?

The main organisation actively demanding the creation of an independent trade union is SMOT (the Free Inter-Professional Workers' Association), which already sees itself as such a union. Its official creation-myth chronicles how the founding members ran across each other in the waiting-rooms of the official TUC, the procuracy and the Supreme Soviet, whilst waiting to complain about illegalities they had suffered at their workplaces. They formed the Free Trade Union Association in February 1978, but following arrests, it was dissolved soon afterwards, and SMOT was founded in October of the same year. The most famous SMOT activist, Vladimir Klebanov, is a victimised Ukrainian mineworker who has been subjected to drug treatment in a series of psychiatric "hospitals".

FTUA announced, in typical Soviet dissident fashion, that it would welcome support from the leader of the American AFL-CIO, and would seek recognition from the ILO, the UN's labour organisation. SMOT's initial "Declaration" called for a representative "Workers'" union "independent of the State's power" to defend workers' rights under Soviet and international law. Whereas the FTUA had claimed 200 members, SMOT claimed 100, in 8 separate groups. By 1981 its membership had risen to 200, and by mid-1982 it was claiming 300 members and 1500 supporters. One member, the now exiled Vladimir Borissov, an anarcho-syndicalist who was once in contact with the Revolutionary Communards, asserted that since the existence of SMOT served to "partially defuse" workers' unrest, the government might not want to destroy it entirely. (This begs the question, of course, of why Borissov was and is a SMOT activist, but then anarcho-syndicalists have a long history of defusing workers' unrest. Borissov now cooperates with the notoriously reactionary Fédération Anarchiste in France). In fact, as far as we are aware, SMOT did not try either to defuse or to exacerbate workers' struggles during the 1980-81 strike wave -- it simply did not have the means. However, it did manage to issue a "Proclamation" in support of the Polish Catholic-nationalist union Solidarnosc.

By 1987 SMOT was circulating an appeal in several Soviet cities, calling for strikes in the event of the price-rises likely to be induced by perestroika. By that time it claimed 400 members, but none in the Donbas coalfields or elsewhere in the Ukraine, where alternative trade-unionism seemed strongest, albeit among a tiny minority, in the 1960s. Dissidents from the intelligentsia attacked the document as "demagogic". Such a reaction could have been predicted, for there is no love lost between the majority of the members of the intelligentsia and the majority of proletarians. Sakharov refused to support Klebanov's project in 1977 because some workers "did not understand the risks of open dissent", and Klebanov might not be committed to individual liberty. Klebanov said of the intelligentsia: "They consider themselves above us."

The future role of SMOT as an organisation to institutionalise workers'

struggles, thereby removing their anti-capitalist sting, is uncertain. We doubt very much, though, whether it will be able to stir up strikes so as to build up its own value to the regime at a later date, or whether it will ever be able to play the role of Guardian of the National Identity, as Solidarnosc undoubtedly does in contemporary Poland. On the other hand, the regime will eventually need some sort of "independent" workers' organisations, so as to regulate wage-labour in a more modern and market-oriented way, and SMOT is unlikely to disappear. Its strength will one day be directly proportional to the weakness of a workers' strike movement. To the extent that strikers feel the need to compromise and hold back from offensive proletarian unity, they will identify with trade-unionism, be it with SMOT or with a revamped and democratised version of the official unions.

In relation to SMOT, we shall mention one other factor that one day might prove to be very important. We have heard that in 1980 or 1981 it was effectively taken over by a sinister organisation called the NTS, or "Popular Labour Alliance". Founded in 1930, the NTS is a Russian Christian-democratic party, based in Frankfurt and London, which operates secret cells on Soviet territory. In World War 2 it recruited high-ranking officers of the Russian Liberation Army (ROA), a nationalist force which was originally pro-Nazi but ended up fighting both sides. After the war the NTS collaborated with secret British military operation behind the Soviet lines. It is known to have cooperated with the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) in the 1960s. Today it is a very broad organisation; although it is basically Christian or liberal-democratic, its members literally range from monarchists to Christian anarchists. It is the major political organisation among Soviet émigrés, and one theory about it is that it has been heavily infiltrated by the KGB. We have heard that it offered arms to the Solidarnosc leadership in 1981 and would operate on a military level in a future crisis in the USSR. It is almost certainly connected with Russian nationalist groupings active in the "political vacuum" created by glasnost, and possibly with the Democratic Union. In our view it still works very closely with British intelligence. The more publicity its real operations are given, the less likely it is to be able to play a pernicious role in a future upheaval, which we can guarantee is what it will try to do (36).

THE PRE-CRISIS SITUATION

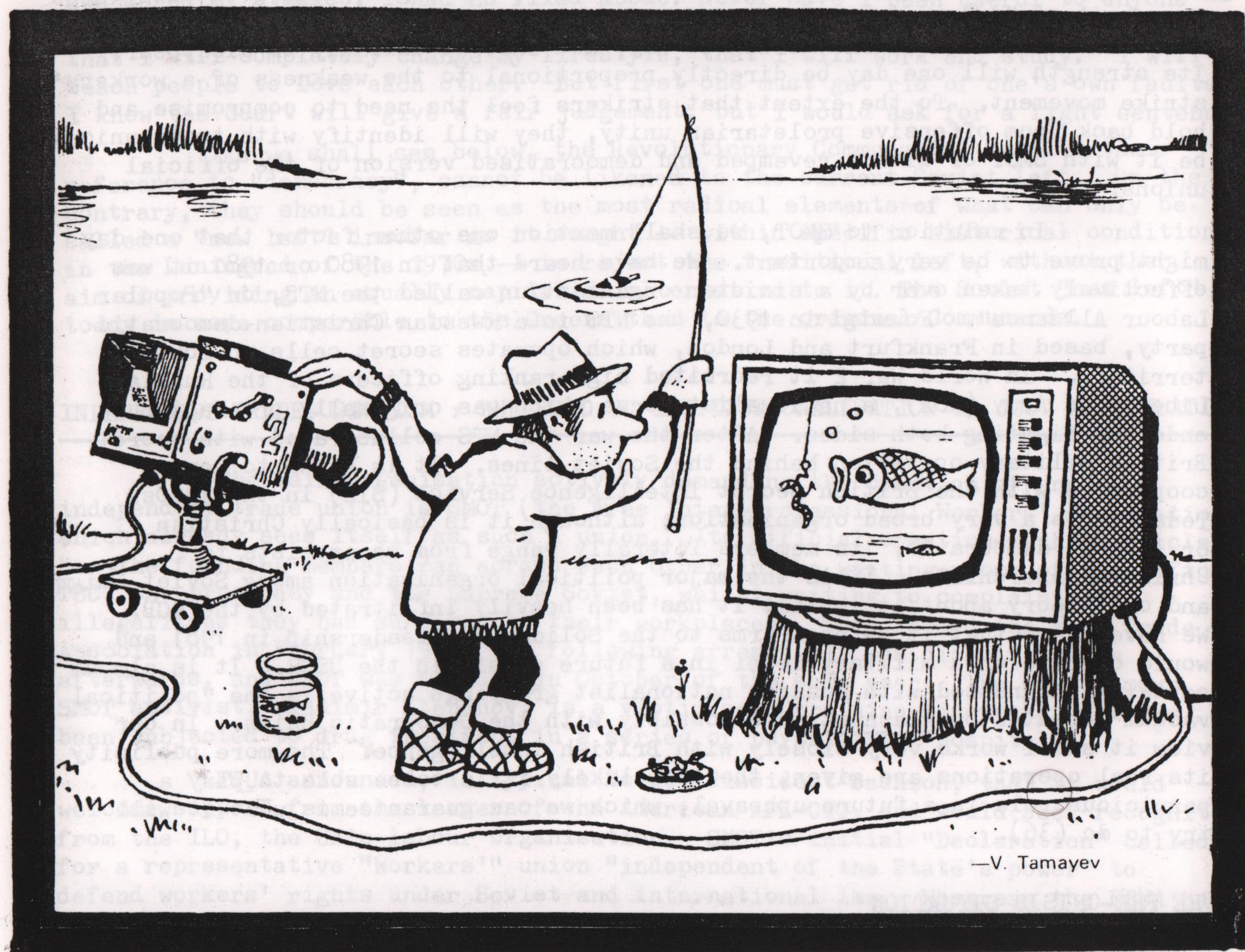
It is now accepted by virtually all top bureaucrats that the USSR was rapidly entering into a "pre-crisis situation" by the early 1980s. This, rather than any ideological conversion to "new economic thinking", is the fundamental reason for the introduction of perestroika.

When Brezhnev died in 1982 the technological gap with the more advanced economies of Japan and the West had reached chronic proportions. Whereas Western economies had improved energy conservation techniques after the oil shocks of 1974, and had made giant leaps forward in the fields of microelectronics, information technology and robotics, the Soviet economy was still a long way behind, as if stuck in a bygone era. Perhaps the best illustration of this is the fact that whereas the world production of steel was falling, due to a more efficient use of the steel actually consumed, Soviet production was rising, as output grew extensively but not intensively. There really did seem to be something wrong with the way Soviet "planners" measured success.

Secondly, after the invasion of Afghanistan and the election of Reagan in 1979, relations with the US soured. The Chinese invasion of Vietnam in the same year was another factor which made it seem as if Soviet military expenditure would demand an ever increasing proportion of the country's resources. This would be a drain on the rest of the economy if production continued with all the old problems of bureaucratic waste and inefficiency.

A third factor in the pre-crisis situation was the falling influence of the central Moscow elite over large parts of the country. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan

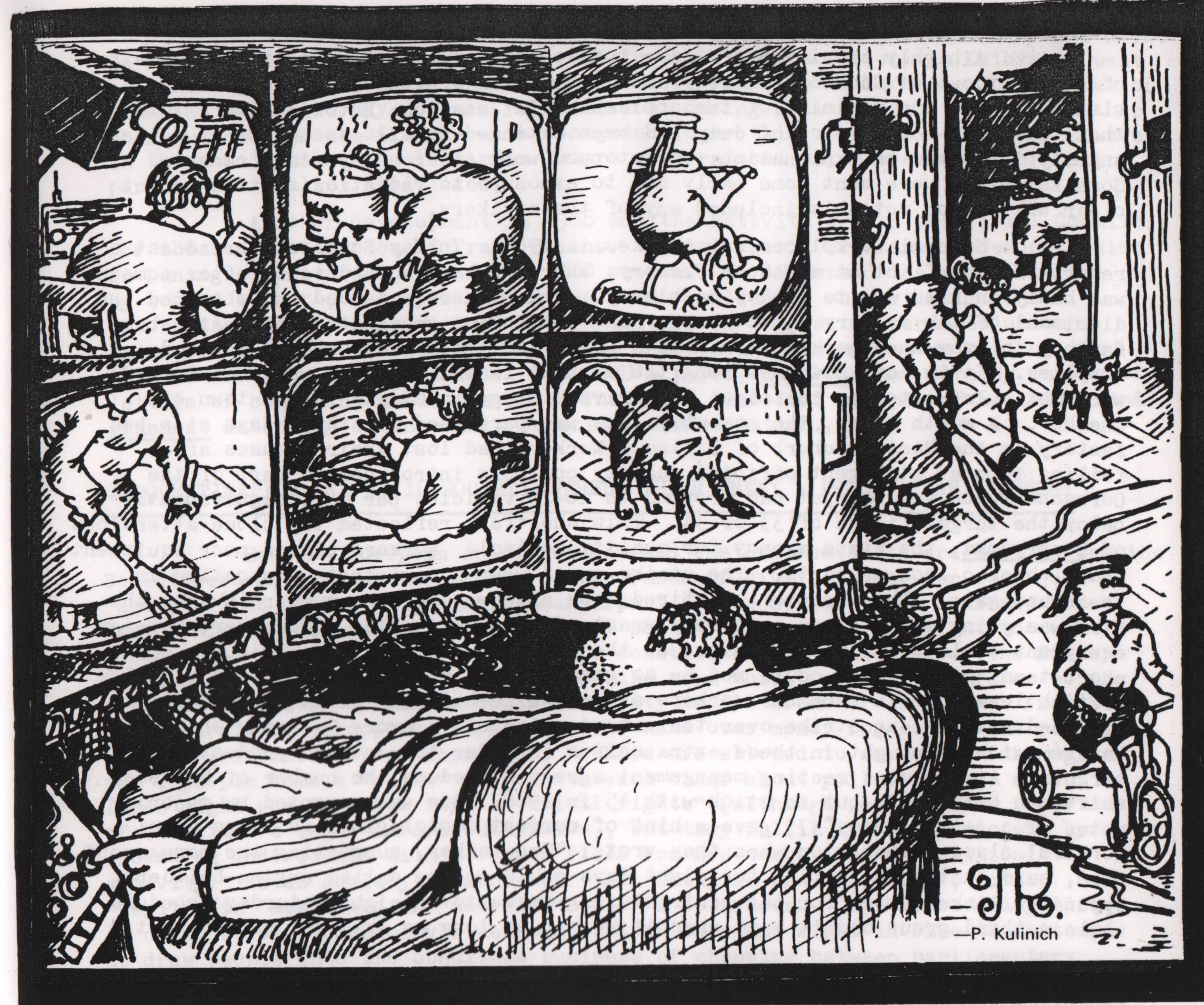
If cartoons like these are already part of the popular culture, how long will it be before Soviet subversives start sending us sophisticated critiques of the modern spectacle?



had effectively become an area where a mafia economy prevailed. The falsification of figures for Uzbek cotton production corresponded to the de facto theft of billions of roubles from the central budget, which were used to oil the wheels of an economy where bribery and corruption were predominant, and the rulers squandered money on mansions and "pleasure palaces" without bothering about the republic's output at all. Similar circumstances prevailed in Kazakhstan, presided over by First Party Secretary Kunayev, who had the effrontery to sit on the Politburo. In Moscow too, although to a far lesser extent, corruption was dysfunctional to economic efficiency. Thus at the Politburo meeting to decide on a successor to Andropov, KGB chief Chebrikov demolished the character of Viktor Grishin, Moscow party chief, in a way that made it sound as if he were talking about Al Capone.

The fourth factor was the one that included all the others: economic stagnation. Economists now accept that the growth-rate from 1981 to 1983 was less than 1%, corresponding to zero productivity growth when we take account of population figures. Some Western analysts have even said that if we exclude oil and vodka production, there was no real growth between 1964 and 1982. If this is true, and for the later Brezhnev years (1975-82) it probably is, this means that productivity actually fell. This has various implications.

Firstly, falling productivity, in a country where the State owns as much capital as it does in the USSR, must mean a drastic shake-up of the system of



command, the internal organisation of management. Soviet trainees are not coming to the London Business School solely in order to learn about Anglo-Soviet trade! Secondly, what else does falling productivity mean but a workers' offensive in the struggle against capitalist-imposed work? This offensive necessitates a counter-offensive, a recomposition of the working class according to the modern needs of capitalist efficiency. The weapons include both carrot and stick — or, as some have said in the Soviet context, both rouble and knout.

STRIKES SINCE 1982

Strikes subsided somewhat after 1981, probably as the "lessons of Poland" were assimilated by both sides. But they continued to occur. Workers went on strike in Vyborg in January 1983 when management did not have the cash available to pay wages. Panicking, they soon found some cash and handed it over. In the same year, even Izvestiya reported a strike in a car-park in Narva, although they avoided the word for strike and used the euphemism "buza" (row, disorder). In the summer of 1983 there were strikes and demonstrations in the Ukrainian town of Krivoi Rog, and in 1983-84 there was a strike at an arms factory in Sverdlovsk. In Georgia students at a teacher training college went on strike in December 1985. Under Gorbachev strikes seemed to become slightly more frequent. There was some kind of action by workers at the Kamaz truck

factory, east of Moscow, in December 1986, but details are unclear.

A highly significant strike took place in July 1986, in the aftermath of the meltdown at Chernobyl. Reservists were being drafted into doing stints cleaning up in the vicinity of the accident. In June some Estonians were told that their two-month tour of duty had been extended to six months. They gathered angrily to demand an explanation, and stopped work after a physical fracas. Some Estonians were sent home early due to exposure to radiation, but it is not clear whether or not this included any of the strikers.

Several workplaces saw strikes in 1987. In May Soviet TV broadcast a report of a conflict at a Moscow factory, where workers downed tools after someone was badly injured due to faulty machinery. The workers demanded and obtained the dismissal of the factory director. In June production ground to a halt at a bus factory in Lvov when workers demanded a wage-rise and an improvement in food supplies. It is not known how long the dispute lasted, but the workers' demands were met. In September municipal bus-drivers staged a strike in the town of Chekhov. A month later, the assembly line was paralysed for three days at a bus factory in the Moscow suburb of Likino. Workers had lost their bonuses after failing to meet stringent official quality controls introduced as part of the Gorbachev package. Output had dropped to 20-25 vehicles per day, significantly below the target figure of 33 or 34. This shortfall reflected the close attentions of Gospyromka, the State agency for quality control. Workers blamed poor equipment and a chronic lack of parts. The strike ended when a magistrate was called in to investigate. The director was fired soon afterwards. The rumour is that the firm was going to be given a special grant of 800 000 roubles. Moreover, foreign equipment would come into operation at the plant in early 1988. Obviously such short-term "generosity" could not be so great if the strike rate rose to mid-1989 British levels! In December workers at an engine-building plant in Yaroslavl launched a week-long strike over the introduction of 15 extra Saturday shifts. Management had brought in these extra shifts in order to meet new production targets. At a joint meeting management agreed to reduce the number of Saturday shifts to 8 in 1989, but to stick with 15 in 1988. This was accepted by majority vote. Two journalists (37) gave a hint of current sociological thinking about workers' class composition when they wrote: "One worker, supporting the management plan, said that those opting for eight days could not be called engine-builders. Opponents linked hopes for the restructuring drive to an eight-Saturday schedule, while a third group didn't mind when it worked as long as they got paid for it."

There were even more strikes in 1988. In February, savings bank employees in Novosibirsk refused to serve customers, demanding better conditions and more workspace. Management went some way to meeting their demands, and the strike ended after a day and a half. In Tallin in April, lathe operators struck over failure to have repairs carried out. Workers complained of union inaction. In May, bus and taxi drivers in Klaipeda struck over poor conditions. A new scheme had cut wages by up to 18 roubles per month, and many workers were receiving reduced bonus payments. The next day, strike-breakers were sent in from Vilnius, but eventually it was agreed that workers would receive the lost wages. (It is unclear whether this means wages at the new or the old rate.) Strikes broke out at the end of July in the town of Kamensk in the Urals. Assembly workers were protesting against management and a new wage system. Two shifts were out for two days before management began to "take their problems seriously". In an interesting development in July, workers from Kirovokan in Armenia sent a telegram to the Soviet TUC in Moscow demanding compensation for non-payment while fellow-workers were on strike over the authorities' refusal to allow the Armenian annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh. The TUC called the work stoppages "unlawful", and no payments were made. The following month in Tashkent, the local court dismissed appeals by 7 Crimean Tatars seeking reinstatement after being dismissed for taking part in a strike, presumably a nationalist one. These two examples show how nationalist conflicts based upon unity of workers and management (and intelligentsia) can sometimes turn into conflicts between workers and management. There were numerous nationalist strikes in non-Russian republics throughout 1988 and 1989, but of themselves they do not concern us in the present context.

In Archangel in September, post office van-drivers struck for five days. In the same month workers at the Novo-Kuibyshev textile factory in Kuibyshev went on strike for four hours. In October several factories in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, agreed to pay workers for time lost during nationalist strikes. Whether there was any great struggle with management over this issue is not known. However, in the same month several Crimean Tatars were refused reinstatement after taking part in nationalist activities.

Another development in 1988 was the activity of the unofficial Committee for the Democratisation of Trade Unions. In October it organised a demonstration in Leningrad which was attended by 400 people. It discussed the recent strike by boiler workers, set up a strike fund and resolved to support Solidarnosc. An organisation like this could have a major role to play if hardened union bureaucrats resist Gorbachev's desire to democratise the unions as part of the plan to free the labour market. The CDTU's paper, Rubikon, has already published letters of complaint about the TUC. This is a classical example of mediation and glasnost deterring autonomously organised confrontation.

DEMOCRATISATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY: VERSUS THEIR ENEMY: PROLETARIAN AUTONOMY

Eastern European intellectuals and Western democrats are wont to see the Soviet reforms as a matter of the reappearance of civil society (or even just "society") as a non-antagonistic counterpart to the State. This nonsense comes from a simplistic understanding of civil society as meaning the right to associate in social or political groups constituted independently of the State's political structures. We prefer to use the term "civil society" to refer to the accepted framework for individuals' activity in all areas of life apart from State administration. Shoppers are expected to hand over money for goods, but really have a "grievance" about shortages; workers are allowed to demand a "fair day's pay"; people have a "right" to moan to each other about pollution, and so on. These might not take the form of "civil rights" (although we await the reports of Chebrikov's legal reform commission), but they fulfil the same function by providing individuals with a common field for non-combative non-political activity. Civil society is about our "all being in the same boat", with "legitimate" needs and an "accepted" code of behaviour. Capitalist daily life, in other words. Gorbachev's democratisation campaign might involve the attempt to draw people into the obnoxious business of choosing between parliamentary candidates, i.e. the democratisation of the State. But it also concerns the official recognition of daily life in order to legitimise the State by reference to what supposedly lies outside it: the "people", the country.

Nowadays if Ivan Ivanovich thinks treatment at his hospital is atrocious, he is exhorted by Health Minister Chazov to understand the scale of the inefficiency in the Soviet NHS. If he wants to join a local "unofficial group" to campaign for the dismissal of the notoriously corrupt director of the local health authority, all's well and good -- it's good to see him doing his duty as a citizen. In fact this is not just a matter of citizenship, i.e. the political right to participate in managing one's own exploitation. It has more to do with "civil" rights, and is central to the attempted legitimisation of the CPSU regime. Of course we accept that in our example an unofficial group might well function, among other things, as a means for proletarians to improve health provision. But we know that at the same time local marginals will prefer to obtain medicines from black market dealers, and they will sneer at Ivan Ivanovich's efforts. We use this example to illustrate the main problem facing the "subterranean maturation" of a future revolutionary movement in the USSR: how to distance itself both from modernised integration and from "old-style" circumvention. This problem affects struggles in various spheres, not least of which is the workplace. Democratised trade-unionism might well allow wage-increases for certain categories of workers, but we know how insipid its divisive and anti-escalatory nature can be. We know how it always assumes workers can only do well when the bosses are doing well too. But on the other hand, the absenteeism, drunkenness and sloppy work of the Soviet workforce, however admirable and

necessary they may be, must do without any exaggerated self-reliance. We were impressed by the Soviet workers who used sabotage to press collectively for increased bonuses. Here we have a linkage of action with demand that is **subversive in its implications**. The most important of these implications is that class struggle is not something to be invented, institutionalised or given rights. It exists because proletarians exist. The logic of its dynamic is both collective and extra-legal (or "autonomous"). This is really nothing other than a call for proletarian autonomy to become public.

For Gorbachev, the main problem is the working class, as we have tried to show by looking at the history of 20th century class struggle in the USSR. For the working class, the main problem in the next few years will be how to launch an offensive recomposition of the class without succumbing to institutionalisation. We are not all in the same boat.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) From here on I have refrained from using inverted commas around the word 'Soviet'. This is purely for the sake of readability; when referring to the 'Soviet Union', no connection is implied with the insurgent soviets of 1905 and 1917.
- 2) For a general history of Russia, see L.Kochan and R.Abraham, The Making of Modern Russia, second edition, Penguin, 1983.
- 3) K.Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism: a comparative study of total power, Vintage Books, 1981 (first published 1957), p.202. There are a few interesting bits and pieces in this book, but the author concludes by calling upon the West to make use of a "new insight" to fight and win World War Three.
- 4) Ibid., pp.219ff.
- 5) K.Marx, Secret Diplomatic History of the 18th Century, ed.L.Hutchinson, Lawrence and Wishart, 1969, published together with The Story of the Life of Lord Palmerston. Crucial reading, but very hard to get hold of. The former text is also included in K.Marx and F.Engels, The Russian Menace to Europe, ed. Paul W.Blackstock and Bert F.Hoselitz, Glencoe, Illinois, 1952. The original was published in part in the Sheffield Free Press (1856), and then in full in the Free Press (1856-57), which was owned by a Tory politician whose Russophobia views Marx saw as "objectively revolutionary" (!) Marx's own "Russophobia" is often used by leftists to obscure what he actually said about Russia. When they see only Lenin and his categories of "populism", "economism", "Marxism", etc., they conveniently forget that Marx explicitly supported the terrorist faction of populism and denied such support to the Russian so-called "Marxists", whom he called "defenders of capitalism". Guess which tendency gave rise to Lenin! See T.Shanin (ed.), Late Marx and the Russian Road, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983, p.13.
- 6) See B.Grancelli, Soviet Management and Labour Relations, Allen and Unwin, 1988, pp.7-8.
- 7) Ibid., p.20.
- 8) The films of Eisenstein are hardly an accurate description of the Russian working class. In 1900 the number of sales and clerical workers (2½-3million) was greater than the combined total of factory-workers and miners (2.4million). The former group tended to work at least three hours longer than the factory-workers' maximum of 11½ hours per day. See V.Bonnell (ed.), The Russian Worker: life and labor [sic] under the Tsarist régime, Univ.of California Press, 1983, pp.2, 194 and 198-201.
- 9) See L.Haimson, The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905-17, in Slavic Review XXIII, No.4, Dec.1964, pp.639ff.
- 10) Although of course we are not confusing the proletariat with the workers, the vast majority of proletarians in Russia at this time were workers, and not unwaged housewives, prisoners, long-term unemployed people, etc.
- 11) See the Scorch Publications pamphlet, The Experience of the Factory Committees in the Russian Revolution, Cardiff, 1984, pp.11-19. This text has recently been translated into Farsi. (Box 15, 138 Kingsland High Road, London, E8 2NS).
- 12) M.Brinton, The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control, Black and Red, 1972 (86pp). For a much longer account, see Voline (Vsevolod Eichenbaum), The Unknown Revolution, Detroit/Chicago, 1974 (717pp).
- 13) The activity and power of freemasons increased from 1912 onwards. There is sufficient evidence for us to say that they were in control of the ship of State by July 1917, when they completely monopolised Kerensky's cabinet, having been involved in various coup plots prior to the abdication, implicating army officers, leading industrialists, future Bolsheviks and many top people from most political parties. See L.Haimson, op.cit., and R.Abraham, Alexander Kerensky: the first love of the revolution, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987. The atmosphere at the top of the State cannot have changed much between July 1917 and Lenin's last days...
- 14) M.Brinton, op.cit., p.36.
- 15) I.Mett, The Kronstadt Uprising, 1921, London, 1967, p.32.
- 16) Most of this information comes from W.J.Chase, Workers, Society and the Soviet State: Labour and Life in Moscow, 1918-1929, Univ.of Illinois Press, 1987, ch.1.
- 17) Ibid., p.45.
- 18) There was in fact a single "Bolshevik" faction which espoused the Kronstadt

- rebels' cause, namely Miasnikov's Workers' Group, which split from the Workers' Opposition on this very issue and was soon forced into clandestinity before entering into relations with the German anti-Bolshevik communists, with whom it found common cause. On top of this, literally thousands of revolutionary sailors walked out of the Party in the early months of 1921.
- 19) We have not gone into the Petrograd strikes and the Kronstadt revolt in any great depth. For a full account, see I.Mett, op.cit. Also see A.Ciliga, The Kronstadt Revolt, 1938, a short article published in Anarchy magazine, volume 1, number 2 (second series) (the Kronstadt issue).
 - 20) A.Nove, An Economic History of the USSR, Penguin, 1969, p.68.
 - 21) W.Chase, op.cit., p.158.
 - 22) For more information on the period 1928-41, see D.Filtzer, Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialisation: the formation of modern Soviet production relations, 1928-1941, Pluto Press, 1986. This book is packed with facts about working class struggle, despite the author's "Ticktinist" line on the "absence" of abstract labour and capitalism in the USSR.
 - 23) This information comes from E.Buca, Vorkuta, Constable, 1956, an excellent account written by an instigator of the July 1953 Vorkuta revolt. Edward Buca was a Pole imprisoned for fighting with the Polish Home Army, which had resisted the Soviet invasion after the eviction of German forces. He was not himself a blatnoy, but his account of the blatnye has a far greater ring of truth than that of Solzhenitsyn (The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956, 1974, Collins Harvill, 1986). In pt.3 ch.16 Solzhenitsyn says "The urka ... who adopted the Chekist faith [i.e. collaborated with the security forces] became a bitch, and his fellow thieves would cut his throat." He follows this by worrying that "People will object that it was only the bitches who accepted positions while the 'honest thieves' held to the thieves' law. [We have seen from Buca what this law consisted of.] But no matter how much I saw of one and the other, I never could see that one rabble was nobler than the other... No, you'll not get fruit from a stone, nor good from a thief." In view of Solzhenitsyn's Christianity and right-wing views, this is probably based on his own experiences after getting up the noses of the blatnye for treating them as common riff-raff.
 - 24) E.Buca, op.cit., p.59.
 - 25) Ibid., p.171.
 - 26) Iztok, Notes sur l'anarchisme en URSS de 1921 à nos jours, Le Vent du Ch'min, 1983, p.24.
 - 27) See M.McAuley, Labour Disputes in Soviet Russia, 1957-1965, Clarendon Press, 1969, pp.43-58.
 - 28) Ibid., pp.160-162.
 - 29) For information on strikes and riots since 1959 see B.Grancelli, op.cit., pp.184ff.; M.Holubenko, The Soviet Working Class: Discontent and Opposition, in Critique, Issue 4; Bernard L., Trente Ans de Lutttes Ouvrières en URSS, 1953-1983, pubd. Organisation Communiste Libertaire, 1985; V.Haynes and O.Semyonova, Workers Against the Gulag, Pluto Press, 1979; and Le Feu Souterrain, Editions Ad Hoc, Jan.1984.
 - 30) See B.Grancelli, op.cit., pp.144-152.
 - 31) For "Italian strikes", see B.Grancelli, op.cit., p.185, V.Haynes and O.Semyonova, op.cit., p.14, and Le Feu Souterrain, op.cit.
 - 32) Trente Ans..., see note 29.
 - 33) For a factpacked account of strikes in the 1970s and especially between 1979 and 1981, see B.Gidwitz, Labour Unrest in the Soviet Union, in Problems of Communism, Nov.-Dec.1982.
 - 34) M.Holubenko, op.cit., p.8.
 - 35) See Iztok, op.cit. pp.29-34 and 63-65.
 - 36) For sources on the NTS, see Volya 17; J.Bloch and P.Fitzgerald, British Intelligence and Covert Action, Junction Books, 1983, pp.33 and 66; and, by authors "close to British intelligence", N.West, The Friends, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988, pp.66ff., and R.Deacon, A History of the Russian Secret Service, Grafton Books, 1987, pp.307-8 and 354. Also see texts of the Association for a Free Russia, which is close to the NTS, and The Times, 12/10/88. The Ukrainian Peace News of Spring 1988 exposed a bungled effort by the NTS in the Ukraine. We wonder whether the falling influence of SMOT in the Ukraine is in fact a result of the NTS's Russophile influence.
 - 37) Soviet Weekly, 16/1/1988.