

ECHANGES

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

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

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

Correspondence and money can be sent either to:

FRANCE: Echanges et Mouvement B.P. 241-75866 Paris EEDEX 18 (ccp La Source 31708 40F)

GREAT BRITAIN: Janet Jacobs-Simon 29, Troutbeck, Albany Street, London N.W.1. (from September)

HOLLAND: Daed en Gedachte - Schouw 48 -11 - LELYSTAD

The sudden death of Joe Jacobs on 29th March meant the loss of someone who had contributed the most to the clarification and elaboration of the themes around which we have been trying to work together in Echanges. The liaison which he provided for those in Great Britain will be taken up again at the same address (see above) as from the autumn. Joe left a number of writings whose publication we hope to achieve in the near future.

DOCUMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

INTERNATIONAL MEETING (Strasbourg 9th, 10th, 11th, April 1977)

About 50 people came from France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, Great Britain, Australia. This provided for many useful contacts but hardly helped the debate proper the organisation of which was severely criticised for its traditional form (a question for future meetings?) There will be no general, complete account of the discussions, only a very brief résumé (given below). The main themes dealt with will be the subject of separate pamphlets for each theme to be sent to all subscribers as and when they are produced. These pamphlets will include the texts circulated before the meeting, the discussions at the meeting themselves and later contributions. We are adding to the résumé given below some critical impressions of the meetings and the decisions taken concerning the functioning of the bulletin Echanges. All texts and discussions are but the beginnings of a discussion which we hope will be continued by all whether they participated in the meeting, or not.

Brief résumé

Saturday 9th -Morning Content and method of discussion. Despite the circulation of texts beforehand, despite suggestions to break up into small groups, the "normal" routine triumphed with the beginning of a general debate about Italy - at a very general level which was supposed to include all particular levels of interest.

Afternoon - Continuing from Italy the debate ended up discussing struggles under modern capitalism in a very partial and separated way. (see future pamphlet on Italian discussion)

Sunday 10th Morning and Beginning of Afternoon: The functioning of the bulletin (see below)

Afternoon: Discussion of Saturday afternoon taken up again until an impasse was reached and the comrades from Berlin exploded against the informal domination of the meeting by "leaders" It was decided to continue discussion in small groups on: 1) Germany 2) The Unions 3) Refusal of work. (see future pamphlets on these three themes)

Monday 11th Morning and beginning of Afternoon : Continuation of groups, then big main session again on: -

- 1) The report of the debates of each group
- 2) A discussion of the ambiguity of certain forms of struggle and their "recuperation" or not
- 3) A report of the strike at General motors -Gennevilliers (Paris suburbs) following contacts established by workers at General Motors - Strasbourg .

The Strasbourg meeting - a point of view

In the Strasbourg meeting contradictory desires were met in one place. The desire to meet people, to talk, to exchange news and views showed up very clearly at mealtimes and in the evening, but this gave way to weak inertia when the meeting proper got under way.

In order to understand this collective behaviour, we must first avoid posing non-problems such as those relating to certain individuals whom we could make responsible for our lack of satisfaction. In my opinion this has much deeper causes. There are several aspects to be distinguished in the complex situation of that meeting. Here are some of those which seem essential to me. Firstly, the problem of expressing oneself in a group of 40 people. In such a group, discussion which concerns essentially events exterior to the individual, talk about social phenomena (economy etc.) becomes the most important to the detriment of talk about the individual himself (problems of everyday life, mores etc.). Secondly there is the problem of theory. The inertia dominated the collective sessions did not only come from an uneasiness resulting from the contradictory wants and needs of the participants. It seemed also that those who expressed their opinions on the present situation did so with much less conviction than they would have done several years ago. Perhaps the lack of dynamism was provoked by a lack of theoretical perspective: new facts and events are constantly recorded without producing new forms of understanding. Thirdly, the problem of hope. Some came to the meeting to exchange theoretical points of view, but everyone hoped to find new elements to resolve the problem of his own lack of satisfactory understanding of reality.

The last point seems to me crucial, because it is also important for the functioning of Echanges (it was confirmed in the fact that at times when the meeting went right off, very few people left). This hope leads to submission and also to inactivity and just waiting. The hope that "it will be better if we are several people than alone" is the same sort of thing as the security of a "group" and I do not think we have escaped this tendency inside Echanges (and in "Echanges/Paris"). In this sense the new organisation of the bulletins etc. as discussed at Strasbourg seems a good idea to me because it may create greater autonomy for each individual and tends to reduce the organisation to the dimensions of a simple instrument.

Functioning of Echanges et Mouvement as decided at the Strasbourg meeting Easter 1977

The bulletin is solely an organ of information and liaison which gives references of texts with brief comments (and information on how to obtain such texts directly) and information in summary form. The length of each item should not be more than half a page in typed characters. Texts for publication should, if possible, be sent in both English and French (to avoid a few being submerged by translating work). No one is against the collection of material in greater detail, which can be sent to either of the three addresses given at the beginning of each bulletin. At present the bulletin put together in Paris and partly typed there, the rest of the typing, duplicating and sending out is done in Holland, but any one person or group could take over one or several of these tasks.

Texts (one or two pages supplements or pamphlets) can be initiated by one or several participants to Echanges and those interested who want to take part in the project should contact the initiators directly. A collective thus formed for a specific project will then produce their own text, translate (or arrange for it to be translated) into English and French themselves, and take on the typing, duplicating and diffusion of what they have agreed to study and publish themselves. The diffusion can be limited only to subscribers to Echanges or can be more widely distributed (as was done for the pamphlet on the United States).

Financing of this new practice was not discussed in detail. It was recognised that the low subscription rate of 10 FF would lead to a very frequent demand for renewal if the number of separate texts and pamphlets grows (unless the costs are covered in another way, e.g. sale of pamphlets in bookshops).

The aim of this structure is to decentralise all the various tasks and to let people use their own initiative without the control of an "editorial" centre.

Texts being prepared

- The account of discussions at the Easter meeting
- Italy (2 texts written separately and the discussion at the meeting)
- The unions (several texts written before and after the meeting plus the discussion)
- Refusal of work (texts centred around the work of a group of dutch participants)
- Germany (the work of comrades from Berlin)

Projects for texts and pamphlets

- On Italy (Michel Desblancs, 153 rue de Menilmontant, 75020 Paris)
- Additions to the U.S.A. pamphlet (Michel Besson, 3 rue de St. Honoré, 06200 Nice)
- On Spain (Michel Besson, address see above)
- On surplus value (Alain Cnaillat, 28 Ave. Laumière, 75019 Paris)
- On Great Britain (Henri Simon, 34 rue de St. Sébastien, 75011 Paris or: 29 Troutbeck Albany street, London NW 1)
- On organisation (Henri Simon, address see above)
- On recent struggles in France, especially: Roth in Strasbourg, Verteries Mécaniques Champenoises in Reims and LIP in Besançon etc.

A circular for information is attached to the present bulletin which will be addressed to all the contacts we have made over the last few years, during the summer. Those who want some copies to give to those they know, can write to the three addresses given at the beginning of this bulletin.

About the revolt against work: we have already pointed out to subscribers that the publication of the pamphlet "Organised labour versus the revolt against work, the critical contest" by John Zerzan (in English by Telos and Solidarity/London)(in French by Echanges) has provoked a serious debate.

A first reply to the critical article by C. Reeve (in the French review Spartacus, Aug.-Sept. 1976) has been published in the American paper "Fifth Estate" under the title "Anything new in the revolt against work" subheading "sabotage and absenteeism differ today". The reply is by Peter Rachleff (photocopies and french translation from Echanges). The original article by C. Reeve remade and completed is used as the preface to a new edition of "Droit à la paresse" by Paul Laforgue (Spartacus, 5 rue St. Croix de la Bretonnerie, 75004 Paris).

All the articles by J. Zerzan on unions and the refusal of work already mentioned in Echanges have been put into one pamphlet "Creation and its enemies, unions against r Revolution (\$ 2,- published by Mutualist books, Box 1283, Rochester, N.Y. 14633 USA). A french translation of these texts is on the agenda.

Struggles and analyses

Poland: "Poland 1970-1971 Capitalism and class struggle" from ICO. Partial English translation of the book published in French by Spartacus (address above) from Black and Red, P.O. Box 9546, Detroit, Michigan 48202, \$ 1,-. A limited stock available directly from Echanges, in London from Compendium and Rising Free Bookshops. We remind you that the follow-up to these events is the subject of the pamphlet published by Echanges "Le 25 juin 1976 en Pologne" (the 25th June 1976 in Poland) by Henri Simon, 6 FF, available from Echanges.

U.S.A.: passages of our pamphlet "USA a changing reality" (copies in English and French from Echanges) have been reproduced in the dutch paper Spartacus (Reinier Claeszenstr 40 hs, Amsterdam 1014) no. 4 and 5. The French version of the pamphlet has been reprinted and is available for larger distribution, price 3 FF. A suggestion has been made to reprint the English version (in London?) with the photos etc. as a more substantial pamphlet. The first article is to be printed in "Fifth Estate".

The translation in French of the Black and Red pamphlet Wildcat Dodge Truck June 1976 (grève sauvage Dodge Truck Juin 1976) is nearly finished and will be available by the time you receive this bulletin (price 4 FF from Echanges).

A film Harlan County USA tells of a struggle by miners in Kentucky, which lasted 13 months in 1973/74 to obtain the conditions guaranteed by the miners' union contract. They won in the end, but this strike was only a stepping stone towards the large wildcat miners strikes of the summers of 1975 and 1976, this time against the union bureaucracy allied to the miners companies. The film by Barbara Kopple describes particularly well the atmosphere of violence in which struggles take place in the U.S.A.

(USA continued)

"Letters of insurgents", from Black and Red, 831 pages, a "novel" written in letter form between "insurgents", one in an Eastern block country (Yugoslavia/Czechoslovakia) the other in the West (mostly USA), full of moving insights and thought-provoking discussion on revolutionary upsurges, communication, unions, left groups, "politics", personal and sexual liberation etc. Much of it is based on the author's personal experiences in Yugoslavia, the USA and France in May '68. Available from Black and Red, P.O. Box 9546, Detroit Michigan 48202 or from Compendium books or Rising Free in London.

Japan: Toyota - l'usine de désespoir (factory of despair) by Kamata Satoshi, published in French by Les Editions Ouvrières (English version?). Kamata is a left wing journalist and wrote the book after 6 months as a temporary worker on the assembly line at Toyota. It dispels the myth of the Japanese "miracle" in new management, revealing that Japanese expansion and ability to flood the market with cheap products is based on appalling exploitation. Conditions described show men pushed up to and beyond the limit of human endurance. There is much individual grumbling, absenteeism and an extremely high turnover, but little or no collective resistance according to the author. The book is not set in a general context and is silent on many things but is valuable for its description of working conditions.

France: "Quand l'armée se dégrade" (When the army downgrades itself), on the army and its evolution in France, Lutte de classe, March-April 1977 (R. Tognny, B.P. 620-09, 75421 Paris Cedex 09).

A works group has been formed at the printing presses of the newspaper "Le Monde", which hopes to discuss conditions at work, the strategy of the union and restructuring of the industry, the manipulations of their newspaper (for copy of their circular in French and contacts, write to Echanges Paris).

A post office group (Central Telephones Inter archives Paris) have left the CFDT union to form a group with an anti-capitalist perspective, quoting in their first leaflet from Pannekoek "The working class must look beyond capitalism whereas the unions are entirely confined within the capitalist system." (for more info. JF Pennanguer, 36 rue Gabrielle, 94200 Charentou).

Note recent struggles: Roth (Strasbourg), Verreries Mécaniques Champenoises (Reims) LIP (Besancon) etc. possible project for a longer text.

Australia: Echanges possessessome documents, newspapers etc. concerning Australia (write to Echanges for details).