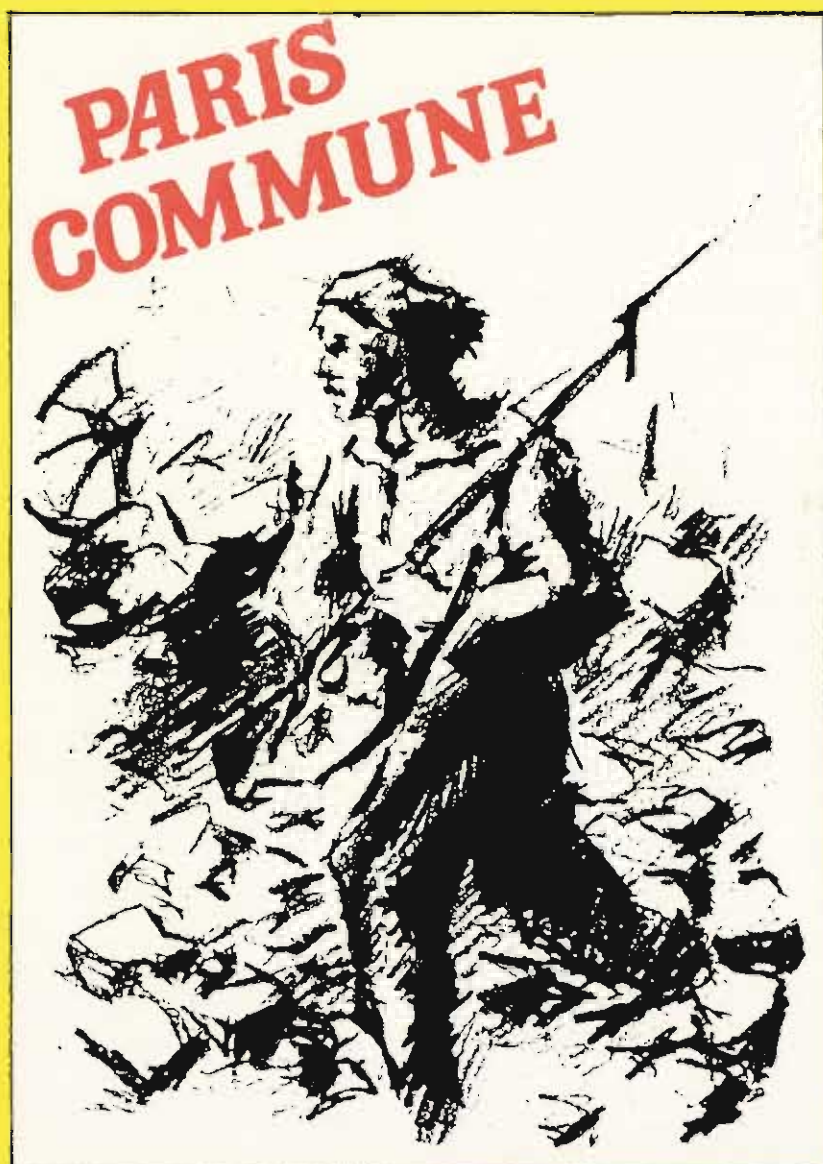


# ARM YOURSELVES WITH KNOWLEDGE



**THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871 -**  
French workers united to defend themselves when Prussian soldiers attacked Paris.

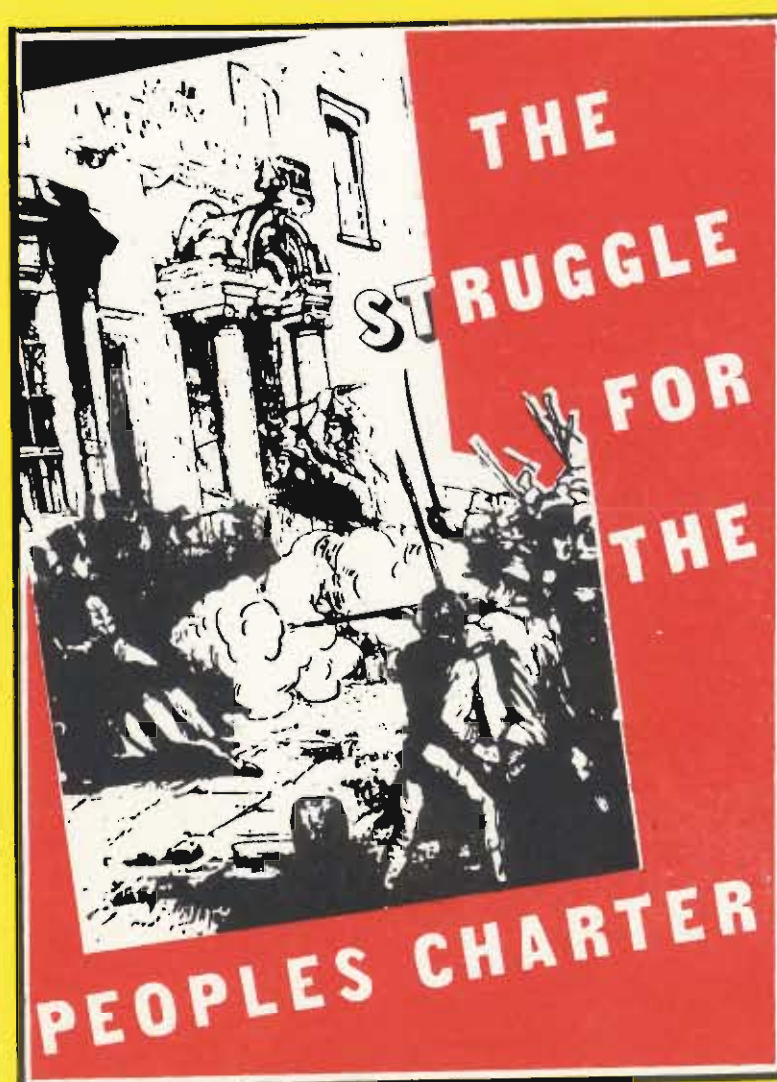
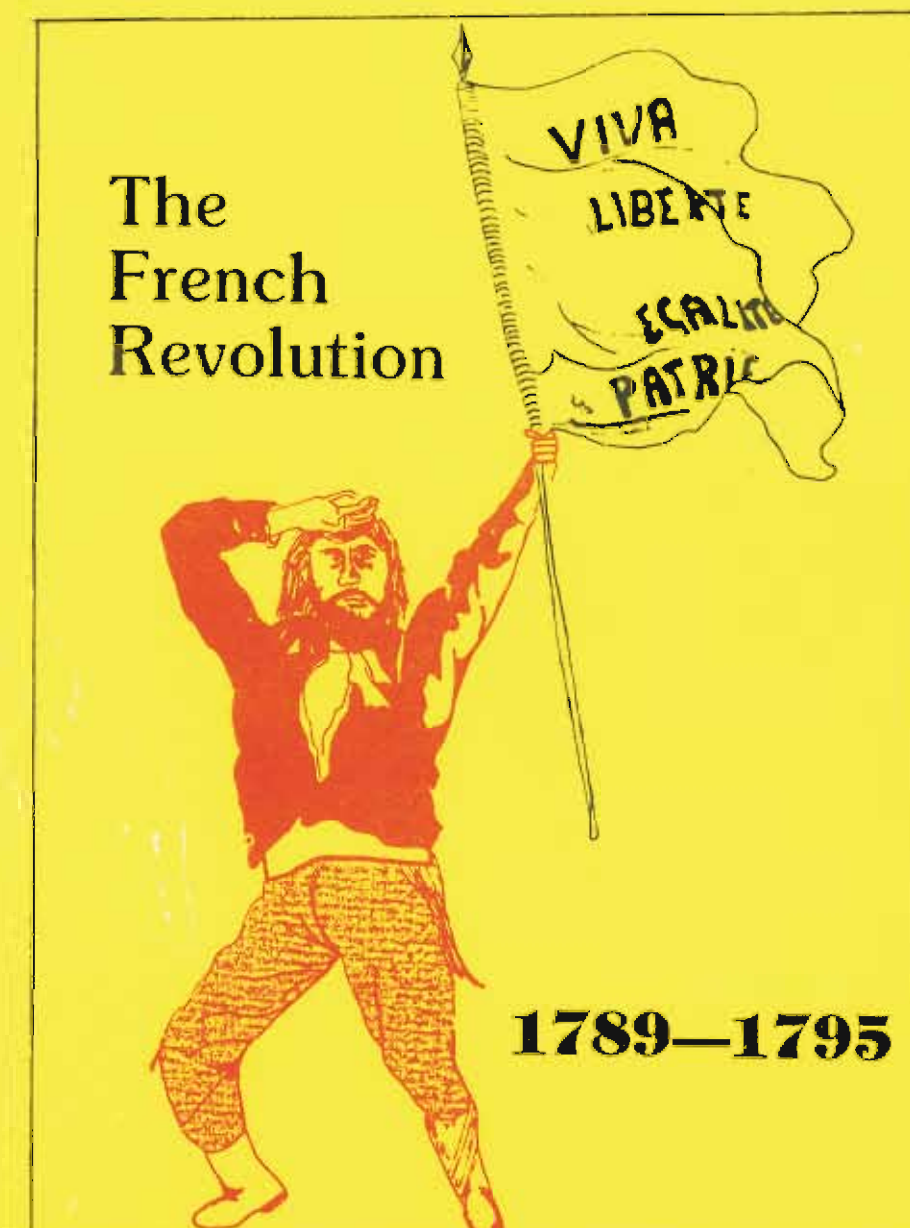
Out of these battles in the 1870s the Paris Commune was formed. For three months working class men and women took control of production, the army and the administration of Paris.

Workers battled for the survival of the Commune against incredible odds. Although the Commune was crushed, it is still remembered in the struggle of the working class.

**THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**  
With the growth of capitalism, a new class of merchants and capitalists grew. This new class, the bourgeoisie, resisted the power of the monarchy.

After six years of violent struggle, the power of the monarchy was destroyed forever. The struggle had depended on the numbers and strength of the working classes.

The bourgeoisie then took control of France, but the working people were still oppressed and exploited.



**THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PEOPLES CHARTER**  
Between 1830 and 1850 workers in Britain faced many hardships.

They lived in overcrowded and unhealthy conditions. Men, women and even children were forced to work long hours in the factories, for low wages. Workers were prosecuted for organising trade unions. Also, workers did not have the right to vote.

Workers united and formed a political organisation to fight for an end to the oppression and exploitation of the working class.

This was the Chartist Movement. The Chartists struggled to build a more democratic society in Britain. But they were eventually defeated by the government and the bosses. This booklet tells us about the struggles of the Chartists.

**STRUGGLES FOR DEMOCRACY**  
Throughout the history of the world, different classes have struggled to take control over decisions which affected the running of society. With the growth of capitalism, the capitalist class was able to take control of society through controlling parliaments and the economy.

But the working class have also tried to advance their own class interests. Through forming democratic organisations like trade unions, worker co-operatives and political parties. Workers and their allies have often resisted the power of the bosses and governments of Europe.

This booklet discusses the idea of democracy briefly, and then gives an overview of workers struggles in Europe after 1830.



**WORKER CO-OPERATIVES**  
In the early 1820's, workers formed co-operatives. They hoped that by organising together and sharing their resources, they could make a living independently of the bosses and government.

Although some co-operatives began to build small pockets of democracy, they could not challenge and control the way that all goods in a country were produced. They could not provide jobs and security for all. They were not powerful enough to compete with the capitalists.

The co-operative movement helped workers to think of ways in which the capitalist system could be brought to an end, and of what kind of society would take its place.

**CIVIL WAR**  
For nearly three years the Spanish people fought the bitter battles of a civil war.

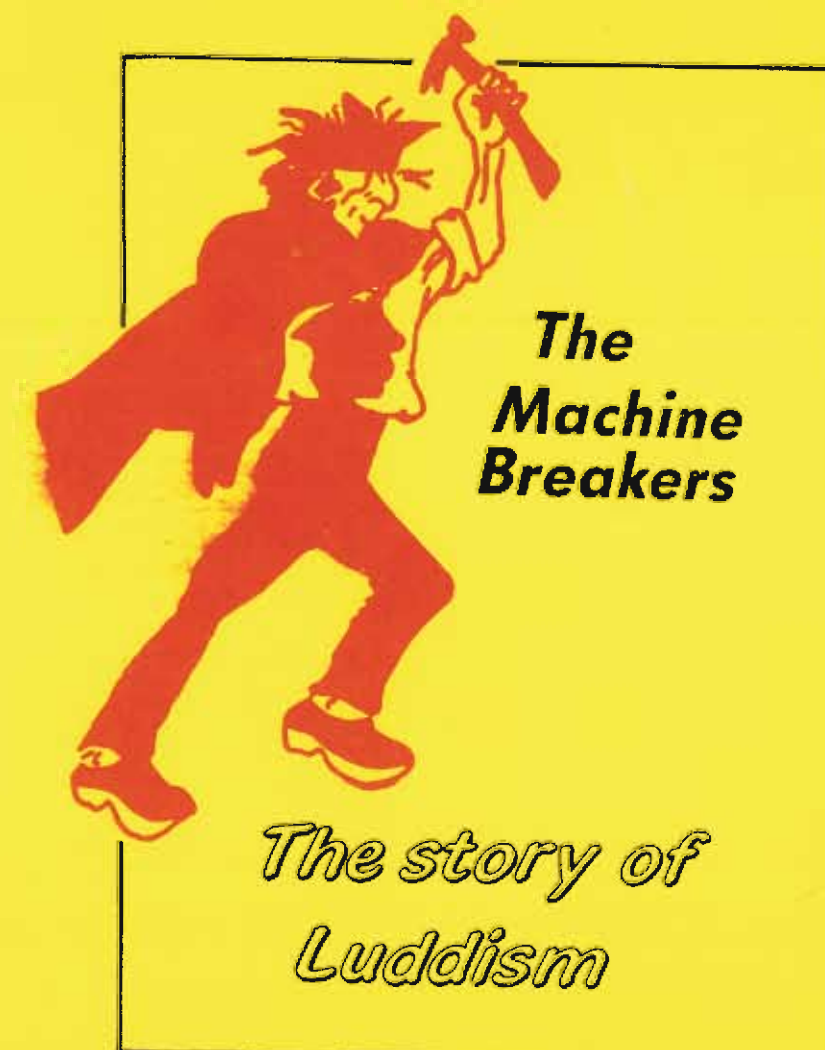
For some the battle was against Facism. But for many working class men and women, the war was a struggle to build and defend a socialist society.

This book tells the story of those struggles.



**THE MACHINE BREAKERS**  
When the first factories and machines were built in Britain and Europe, workers resented the changes this brought to their lives. One of the responses was to lose their jobs.

Those involved in smashing machines were called LUDDITES. This booklet discusses the struggles of the LUDDITES.



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