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INSIDE

Zimbabwe

Iran/Iraq Meeting

Towards another 1929?

Italy

Water Workers

S.W.P.

207

PEACE TALKS TO DISARM WORKERS

"When the leaders talk of peace war is already being prepared" Brecht

Over the last few months both Moscow and Washington have issued a barrage of arms reduction proposals. Each proposal has been denounced by the opposite camp as an attempt to get a military advantage, and a demonstration that they are not really "peace loving." The energy with which the two imperialist blocs are canvassing their schemes for arms reductions at present signifies nothing apart from preparations for world war three. The discussions between Reagan, Andropov and the rest, are not as the bourgeois pacifists would like us to believe, signs that the "peace movement" is forcing statesmen to take heed. Before the last two imperialist wars this century political leaders found it convenient to pretend they were for peace. Before WW1 the Czar of Russia patronised the Hague Peace Conferences, and before WW2 Mussolini and Hitler participated in the Disarmament Conferences in the early 30s. These "peace moves" are simply propaganda moves to rally the home population behind the national interest, re-assure allies who fear they are being too easily sacrificed, and to out manoeuvre the enemy. Fifty years ago Hitler was up to exactly the same sort of tricks as Reagan and Andropov are today. At the 1933 Geneva Disarmament Conference he proposed that a first step to real disarmament would be if Britain and France reduced their arms to the same level as Germany. When his "zero option" was turned down he was given his excuse for rearming. As the two imperialist blocs prepare for what will be the third worldwide confrontation this century, it is well to look to the past. Before the first and second world wars, as tensions deepened and imperialist war seemed likely, mass "peace" movements broke out amongst the populations of the rival camps. Before WW1 it was the 'Neutrality League' and before WW2 the 'Peace Pledge Union.' These movements, which were composed largely of the middle class, believed in the possibility of peaceful capitalist development if only arms spending could be reduced.

Arms spending is, however, a symptom of rivalry not a cause. The root cause of imperialist rivalry is the capitalist crisis which springs from the inherent contradictions in the capitalist mode of production. These peace movements, failing to understand this, remained nothing more than bourgeois reform movements which spread illusions in the working class and actually opposed the only force which could stop war - the workers revolution.

Those parties which were supported by the European working class, the social democratic parties before WW1 and the Labour and so-called "Communist" parties before WW2 tail-ended the liberal-pacifist campaigns for peace. When war broke out the peace movements all supported the war and the social democratic, Labour and "Communist" parties followed suit. Today the stage is being set for exactly the same performance.

The motley crew who make up today's peace movement, the church, the Labour party, the "Communist" party and the Trotskyist groups all supported WW2 and they will do the same tomorrow. Today's Labour party is the same party which supported both previous wars, supported the bombing of Hiroshima, developed Britain's atomic bomb and is responsible for the deployment of all the present generation of nuclear missiles in Britain. Labour's support for the Falklands war shows what they will do tomorrow. And the type of propaganda CND uses today also shows its totally reactionary nature. Whilst Thatcher is happy simply to say

that we need Cruise and Trident missiles "to defend the British way of life" (i.e. the property and profits of British capitalism) CND's chauvinism knows no such restraint. The January issue of "Sanity" exhorted us to "Stop Cruise and Trident missiles being based in this great country of ours". What unites all the factions in this smokescreen which passes for a debate is that they all claim to be "saving the country" or rather saving capitalism. It is the task of the working class to save humanity and this can't be done by debating just how exactly capitalism intends to kill us in the next imperialist war.

The only way in which imperialist war can be prevented is through the overthrow of capitalism - the cause of imperialist war. This can only be achieved through workers revolution and the establishment of communist production worldwide. Today's peace movements reject this and therefore are the enemies of the real struggle for peace which is the struggle for communism.

The struggle for communism demands, not only an exposure of the capitalism's war preparations and their feeble minded critics in the peace movement; it demands that a class party of the working class is built to give a communist lead in tomorrow's struggles. In particular it demands that communists begin laying the bases within the working class for the adoption of revolutionary defeatism in the face of imperialist war, and the transformation of such wars into civil wars for communism.



Communists have to oppose pacifism as an ideology which "objectively disarms the working class in the interests of the bourgeoisie" (Lenin), and those who try to spread this ideology within the working class.

IRAN-IRAQ WAR

(Meeting in London)

The turmoil in the Middle East is at present the greatest single running sore on the body of imperialism, although the latest successful Iranian offensive seems to open the way for a settlement favourable to Iran - that is, control of the Gulf oil fields and waterway. Given the importance of the issue of war the CWO organised a public meeting where the war could be debated by revolutionaries, both inside and outside the region, with a view to organising a communist intervention on the issue. The meeting attracted members of the International Communist Current (ICC), Supporters of the Union of Communist Militants (SUCM), and a group of Iraqi revolutionaries, as well as non-committed individuals.

The CWO introduction emphasised that the framework for a communist position on the question of war today was based on the fact that capitalism was no longer a progressive system of production. Unlike in the nineteenth century, when the creation of Italy and Germany came about through wars which the working class could support since they led to an expansion of capitalism (and thus increased the working class which could prepare for its own revolution), so-called "wars of liberation" in the twentieth century do not expand capitalism - they merely change one set of exploiters, one set of imperialists, for another. Communists can give no support to these so-called wars of liberation but must instead treat them like all imperialist wars and adopt the tactic which Lenin in 1914 called "revolutionary defeatism".

The response of the SUCM was to read out a leaflet called "Communists and the Invasion of the Capitalist Regime of Iraq" which linked the worsening of living standards in Iran to the war and called on workers not to be deflected by the Leftists (Tudeh, Fedayeen, Mojahadeen etc) from struggle "under the pretext that the regime is at war with imperialism". It further called on workers to rely on their own strength, to create their own class organs and to defend living standards. However, the leaflet mentioned was written in the early days of the war and represents a line that the Unity of Communist Militants in Iran later abandoned as having "deviations to the left". In an article entitled "About the manifesto: The Invasion of the Iraqi regime and the tasks of communists" they reject their earlier position for a more defencist one,

"Here the revolution is being attacked by methods which the regime of the Shah proposed and adopted and the proletariat can and must, by taking in to account the mentality of the masses in the occupied areas, agitate and organise various forms of forcible resistance against the Iraqi invasion"

This ignores Lenin's own struggle for a revolutionary defeatist policy, in particular his statement of the basic task of the workers in the event of war,

"A revolutionary class in a reactionary war cannot help wishing the defeat of its own government, it cannot fail to see the connection between the government's military reverses and the increased opportunity for overthrowing it." (Collected Works Vol. XVIII 1930 p.234)

The SUCM argue that the Iraqi "invasion" has the main aim of destroying the remaining "gains" of the February '79 rising against the Shah. Yet when asked to describe what these gains are for the workers the SUCM can only say that they no longer exist. So, the SUCM calls on workers to defend gains which have long since disappeared, by fighting Iraq. But even had we agreed that the Iranian workers had made "gains" after 1979 (which we do not), we would still not base our policy on the "defence of the gains" of such a revolution. Lenin did not call for the defence of the gains of February 1917 (which were real gains for the Russian workers). On the contrary he called for greater intensification of the struggle against the February regime. At the time of Kornilov he wrote, "It is my conviction that those who become unprincipled are people who...."

slide into defencism...or into a bloc with the SRs into supporting the Provisional Government. Their attitude is absolutely wrong and unprincipled. We shall become defencists only AFTER the transfer of power to the proletariat...only afterwards." (Collected Works 1966 ed. Vol 25 p.285)

The CWO concluded its criticism of the SUCM by saying that the latter, by becoming a prisoner of the "democratic revolution" strategy (for a critique of this, see WV 9 "International Conference Report") had failed to draw the connection between the class struggle against the Islamic regime and the fight against the war. For example, "in the intervention in the strike of the Isfahan steel workers in May 1982, the Central Committee of the UCM avoided any mention of the war that was raging! Imagine the Bolsheviks intervening at Putilov in 1917 without mentioning the war!"

The ICC's contribution was predictably sectarian and lacking in seriousness. Largely ignoring the issue of the meeting, just as they have ignored the war in their work, they launched an attack on the CWO's "opportunism". The actual basis of this charge was because we held an international conference with a "non-communist group" (the SUCM), despite having previously published in their press a text of the SUCM which they introduced as a text by Iranian communists. The ICC now argued that the SUCM wasn't communist because it supported "national liberation" struggles and held a bourgeois conception of democracy. However, the CWO pointed out that the ICC had argued for the inclusion of groups in the previous series of International Conferences whose position on the national question was undoubtedly less communist than that of the SUCM (i.e. Nucleo and the International Communist Party (ICP)). The SUCM actually stated in the meeting that they no longer supported the so-called "national liberation struggles" in Vietnam and Korea as they had once done because they now recognised the idea of state capitalism. The first ICC comrade then stated that the SUCM were "not communist" for another reason - their roots were in Maoism so they didn't understand the programmatic acquisitions of the Communist Left (as ICP and Nucleo did). He also made the astonishing assertion that the SUCM's position was also more dangerous in that they were a "third world" group hence they would actually put their erroneous position into practice. It was not so serious, the ICC argued, for "European" groups to err on the national question. Aside from the fact that the ICP had put their views into practice in Algeria, it is a strange argument that groups who know of the communist left tradition and have rejected many of its positions should be regarded as better than a group which has shown itself willing to relate to that tradition and learn from it. The object of discussion with all these currents is to show them that the degeneration of Russia etc occurred over half a century ago and not in the last ten years. Without compromising our theoretical acquisitions, debate not denunciation can lead to clarification. Not only did the ICC reveal its sectarianism, but also its bankruptcy in that it had NOTHING to say about the war or the tasks of communists in areas like Iran and Iraq except "carry on the class struggle", their standard empty phrase.

The Iraqi comrades present argued along the lines of their leaflet reprinted in WV 9 - that the war was a reactionary one on both sides, and called for class struggle and opposition to both regimes. The CWO pointed out at the meeting that this is necessary but insufficient. The task of transforming spontaneous opposition into anti-war understanding and of leading the proletariat to a revolutionary attack on the state requires the

formation of a communist party which can sink roots in the factories and in the army and elaborate slogans to strike an echo in the feelings of the masses. It is precisely this point that the Iraqis with their blanket denunciations of "Marxist-Leninism" (which amount to a councillist position) fail to recognise.

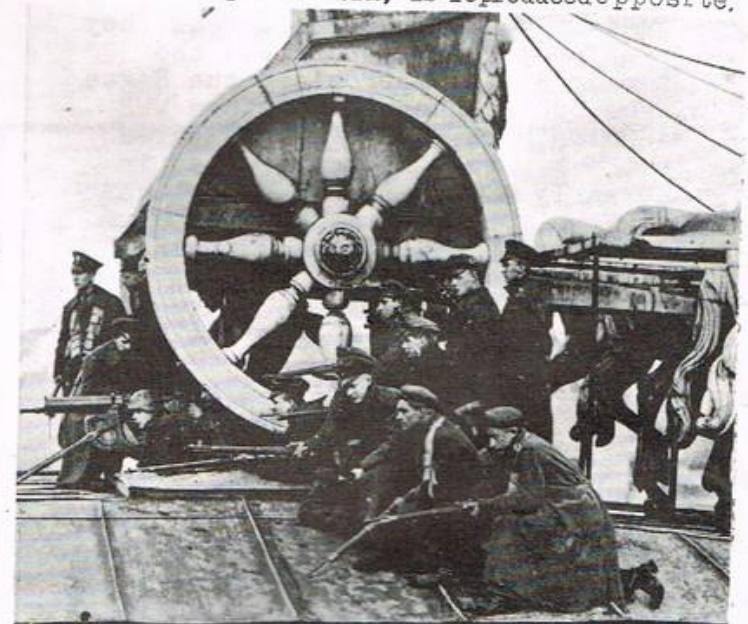
Many other contributions were made from the floor of the meeting, which was the best attended of all our public meetings. This shows that there exists a recognition of the seriousness of the war, in contrast to the Eurocentric and disdainful attitude of such as the ICC. There is a recognition also of the importance of the issues raised by the war and the tasks of debating with communists from the region.

In conclusion, the CWO pointed out, 1. Revolutionary defeatism begins today with the struggle for better living conditions and refusal of the workers to make sacrifices for the national war effort. This was in fact the starting point of our campaign over the Falklands issue. 2. Revolutionary defeatism involves agitation against all the restrictions imposed by capitalism at war as the basis for a mass mobilisation against the ruling class. 3. Wherever possible secret agitation amongst the armies of both countries must be attempted. In any future insurrection the guns wielded by those forced to the fronts will be a decisive factor in the balance of power in the class war. In future tasks will include,

"Universal propaganda, extending to the army and the theatre of military operations, for the socialist revolution and for the necessity of turning one's weapons, not against one's brother, the hired slaves of other countries. Unconditional necessity to organise illegal cells and groups in the armies of all nations for such propaganda in all languages." (Lenin, Coll Works Vol. XVIII pp44-6)

4. No concessions must be made to the anti-imperialist lies of either regime and the first principle is to avoid any suggestion of defending any aspect of the social relations of either country. Whatever the outcome of the war, the real losers will be the proletariat of Iran and Iraq.

At the end of the meeting the CWO announced the production of an international initiative on the war and invited all those present whether as organisations or as individuals to participate. The final product, which was produced in poster form, is reproduced opposite.



Revolutionary workers turn the imperialist war into a civil war: Germany 1918

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See:

*"Death to the Shah, or Death to Capitalism?" in Revolutionary Perspectives 12 50p

*"The Imperialist Struggle in South East Asia" in Revolutionary Perspectives 16 50p

*"Iran/Iraq War: a Jihad for Capitalism" in Workers Voice 9 30p

The following statement, signed by international communists in Europe, arose as a result of the CWO public meeting on the Iran-Iraq war in January.

THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR — A JIHAD FOR CAPITALISM

"A revolutionary class in a reactionary war cannot help wishing the defeat of its own government." (Lenin)

For two and a half years Iran and Iraq have been at war in the Persian Gulf. Thousands of workers are being murdered in the interests of capitalism. Communists must take a clear revolutionary stand against this war.

The root cause of the war is the world economic crisis of capitalism. Both Iran and Iraq are sinking into economic chaos with inflation and unemployment at massive levels. Their rulers see the Gulf oil fields as essential to their survival. The bourgeoisie of both countries also see the war as a way of deflecting working class discontent into a patriotic frenzy.

Both Iran and Iraq claim to be "anti-imperialist", but both imperialist blocs, the USA and the USSR have intervened in the war by arming and giving loans to both sides, and both are trying to use the war as a way of establishing control of this area. "Anti-imperialism" unless it is also anti-capitalism is simply nationalism in disguise.

However, despite mass executions of workers and communists in Iran and Iraq this war has been opposed. Thousands have deserted the armies of Khomeini and Saddam Hussein, or have been exiled for refusal to fight. Workers in both countries have struck against wage cuts and tax rises to finance the war. In Suleimania strikers chanted "neither Saddam nor Khomeini". Communists in Iran and Iraq have opposed the chauvinism of the official "Communist" Parties and leftist groups, and called on workers to carry on their fight for their own interests in opposition to the war.

WORKERS, COMRADES

- * No support for the "anti-imperialist" lies of the Iraqi Ba'athists or the Islamic Republic. Both are equally anti working class.
- * No to any sacrifices to pay for the war! No to taxes or wage cuts. Link the struggle against the crisis to the struggle against the war.
- * Resolute defence of proletarian organisation. Mobilisation against any emergency decrees, e.g. curfews, bans on press, assembly etc.
- * Carry the fight into the armies. For agitation amongst the soldiers in order to paralyse the military machine.

Capitalism in crisis offers us only war or revolution. The tasks of communists in Iran and Iraq today are the tasks of communists everywhere tomorrow: to turn the bourgeois war into a civil war for the overthrow of capitalism and the end of all wars.

February 1982: Communist Workers Organisation,
Partito Comunista Internazionale (Battaglia Comunista).

BORDIGISM: THE CRUMBLING MONOLITH

Many in the revolutionary milieu will be aware of the recent crisis in the International Communist Party (ICP), which publishes the review *Communist Programme* in English. According to *Le Proletaire* No. 367 Dec 82, the entire Algerian section of the party, which published *El Oumami*, and many of the leading militants in France and Germany have left the party. The occasion of the split was the political crisis provoked by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the tasks of communists in response. To understand the split and its lessons, a brief account of the evolution of the ICP is necessary. The ICP was formed in 1952, as a split from the International Communist Party (PCInt.) with which the CWO has close relations today. Rejecting many of the lessons of the period since the Russian revolution defended by the PCInt, the ICP went back to many of the earlier positions defended by the Communist Left of Italy, specifically on the national question, and the issue of the trade unions. They argued for a policy of working within the trade unions, seen as proletarian organisations, and of the possibility of support for national liberation struggles. In this they had the support of Bordiga, one of the original founders of the Italian Communist Party in 1921. The Bordigist positions of the ICP, with their claims to invariance and infallibility were in marked contrast to those of the PCInt, which while basing itself on the concrete acquisitions of the Italian Left, was

willing to advance in the light of historical experience. In particular the PCInt have argued that communists can no longer work within the unions, and that the era of national wars is closed. Though the ICP grew quite markedly in the 1970s, this growth was not unaccompanied by opportunism and political degeneration. Recently the ICP expressed their support for the bourgeois Solidarnosc in Poland, and on the national question also their confusions and concessions have continued.

Originally the ICP's position on the national question was to support the struggle against imperialism, but not the bourgeois organisation leading the struggle. But in the present epoch liberation from imperialism and national development are impossible. The difficulties involved in their position led the ICP to make more and more contortions and capitulations, and these surfaced with a vengeance over the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. *Le Proletaire* called for military support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) against the Israeli forces. Although this was a clear capitulation to a bourgeois group, the ICP still held fast to their opposition to all the established Arab ruling classes in the Middle East. This was too much for *El Oumami* (and presumably also for the others who left as well), who accused the ICP of "ignoring the factor of Arab nationalism" in the Middle East, and the possibility of "progressive nationalist wars" in the region. In the Sept 82 issue of *El Oumami* they ask, presumably rhetorically, "Let's imagine for an instant the invasion of Syria by the Zionist Army. Should we remain indifferent, or worse still call for revolutionary defeatism, on the grounds that the Syrian state is a bourgeois state which must be overthrown?" And their answer was given in their leaving.

WATER WORKERS STRIKE

3

In Britain the political initiative remains firmly in the hands of the ruling class, and the strike of the water workers is a confirmation of this. Having manoeuvred most sections of the working class into accepting wage settlements in the region of 5%, the government felt confident that the challenge of the water workers could be isolated and defeated.

A relatively inexperienced group of workers, the water workers came out solidly enough for their 15% claim, but left the struggle in union hands. The unions played their role as undertakers of the class struggle. Workers in the GMBATU were divided from those in NUPE in time honoured fashion and not all the workers were called out on strike (e.g. at the time of writing there is still no strike in Scotland). In most places, token pickets decorated the water works gates, while management and white collar workers scabbed inside and directed supplies to industry rather than to homes and hospitals, and the strike has remained a water workers only struggle, with no attempt at generalisation to other workers like the miners, as happened in the hospital strike. The miners' own reluctance to struggle, while misguided, is understandable and is in turn conditioned by the unlikelihood of support from a class which is slowly, sector by sector, being ground down by the government and its accomplices in the Labour Movement.

Although the nervousness of the bosses over a strike which, waged successfully, could have a disastrous effect on British industry, was shown by the inquiry into the dispute recommending an offer of 7-8%, a settlement at that level will hardly justify the effect taken to achieve it. The British working class continues to remain imprisoned in its economic and sectionalised straight-jacket, as this strike shows.

The lessons of the split

The ICP has responded to the crisis by a series of unusually frank texts in *Le Proletaire* nos 367 and 368. For an organisation previously incapable of self-criticism, it is positive that they can publically discuss their failings to really centralise their organisation, or to elaborate a concrete strategy for intervention on the national question. For an organisation which believed itself infallible it is a step forward to say,

"A party which doesn't make mistakes doesn't exist ... the party which is right is the one which makes the least mistakes."

But however welcome this is it is not enough. What conclusions have the ICP drawn from the "most profound crisis since that which gave birth to our party in 1952"? Instead of criticising the reactionary positions of those who have left the ICP, they talk instead of their reaction to the crisis as understandable, and argue that the issue could have been resolved by debate within the organisation. And *Le Proletaire* continues, "The Arab bourgeoisies in the context of world imperialism opposed to the non-Arab bourgeoisies, raise the demand for a national Palestinian state, which corresponds to the present interests of the Palestinian and Arab proletariats. We thus have two forces, objectively mortal enemies, which are obliged to pull together against the common exterior enemy". (No 367). This is an enormous concession to the idea of the "factor of Arab nationalism" and the possibility of "progressive nationalist wars". Indeed the split and the response of the ICP shows that the contradiction involved in their position on the national question eventually had to work themselves out. Our pessimism about the ICP leads us to believe it unlikely that they will avoid being explicitly within the camp of social chauvinism in the next large scale imperialist confrontation in the Middle East or elsewhere.

For a fuller account of the history of the Italian Left, see the text in *Revolutionary Perspectives* 19, "The Italian Left and the Permanent Need for the Party", 75p inc p&p from the group address.

ALGERIAN COMMUNISTS FREED

We are glad to inform our readers that comrades Benkhallat and the other members and supporters of the ICP imprisoned in Blida jail in Algeria have been released on the 20th anniversary of the end of French rule in Algeria.

The CWO had publicised the plight of these comrades, and supported the campaign for their release. While the Algerian bourgeoisie celebrates the anniversary of its coming to power, let us celebrate their release.

FINANCIAL CHAOS: Towards a New Capitalist Collapse?

In the past months the attention of the international bourgeoisie has switched from the lengthening dole queues to the international financial markets. As country after country plunges into debt repayment difficulties, and currency exchange rates see-saw crazily, the spectre of another crash like that of 1929 when Wall Street collapsed, has begun to haunt the financial bankers and their spokesmen the world over.

Our rulers rely on short memories. In 1973 they told us the economic crisis was caused by rising oil prices, in 1983 they tell us it is caused by falling oil prices. A decade ago when Britain was on the verge of collapse, the reason given was the fall in the value of its currency. Today, as it sinks deeper into the mire, we are told it is because its currency is over-valued. Like stone age man the bourgeoisie take the shadows on the wall for reality. Only Marxists can unravel the mystical dream-world of high finance and reveal the rational kernel of the crisis which lies in the relations of production of capitalist society, and show that the crisis can not be solved by financial manipulations:

"It would then have been self-evident from the outset that the evil of bourgeois society is not to be remedied by 'transforming' the banks, or founding a rational 'money system'." (Marx, *Grundrisse*)

Money and Credit

To explain why the crisis takes the form of a monetary crisis, it is necessary to explain what money is. Like all the products of capitalist society money is a commodity; but it is the universal commodity, which allows the exchange of all the others to take place. In the classic period of capitalist ascendancy - up till about 1914 - a pound sterling, for example, was exchangeable at any time for a pound of gold. Let's say a pound of gold took 1 hour on average to mine and a railway engine 1,000 hours of average social labour to produce, then,

1 railway engine = 1,000 pounds of gold,
i.e. £1,000

Throughout this period of the rise of capitalism a pound was literally "good as gold", and countries limited their currency in circulation to the amount of gold reserves held. The period 1815-1914 was thus one of price stability, in fact prices fell as productivity increased - e.g., if it took only 900 hours to produce that railway engine, its price would fall to £900.

This has made many of today's capitalist commentators nostalgic and they have called for a return to the "gold standard" as a way of killing inflation. That it might do, but it would take capitalism with it in a final cataclysmic crisis. Although the gold standard could prevent inflation, it could not prevent the ever-increasing crises that Marx showed resulted from the tendency of the rate of profit to fall - crises such as those of 1846-50, 1857-59, 1879-96 and the "great crash" of 1929-33, which finally led to the overthrow of the gold standard.

In previous crises, as the rate of profit began to fall, the demand for credit from the banks grew and their ability to meet it declined. Failure of banks to be paid interest led to a bank crash and then an industrial crash. Many argued that the banks could have avoided the crash if they simply printed more money and extended credit. Marx commented on this in the *Grundrisse*:

"The bank would not have increased the wealth of the nation through a stroke of magic, but would merely have undertaken a very ordinary operation to devalue its own paper." (p.122)

However, in the depth of the crisis of 1929-33, the bourgeoisie gave its ear to those, like Keynes, who argued that the gold standard should be buried and governments should "manage" the economy by printing money and expanding credit. Thus the state would spend more than it collected in taxation (called deficit financing) in order to boost demand and restore industrial expansion. By such "strokes of magic" capitalism would be restored to permanent prosperity, Keynes thought. For about twenty five years after the Bretton Woods meeting, which laid the basis for the post-war international monetary system, there seemed few reasons for the bourgeoisie to doubt this.

The ending of the gold standard meant that there was no limit to the money the central government could print and pump into the economy via the commercial banks (which are indirectly controlled by them). Keynes knew that this would mean inflation, but he felt that by eroding wages, pensions etc (and increased production) this would more or less pay for itself. However, although inflation spreads the cost of government-induced expansion over the whole of society and over a long time, like a narcotic it gradually kills the patient who initially felt better. To begin with at 2-3%, inflation rose to around 5% in western Europe by 1960, to near 10% by 1970 and in the mid 1970s reached 15-20%, threatening the whole fabric of the capitalist economy.

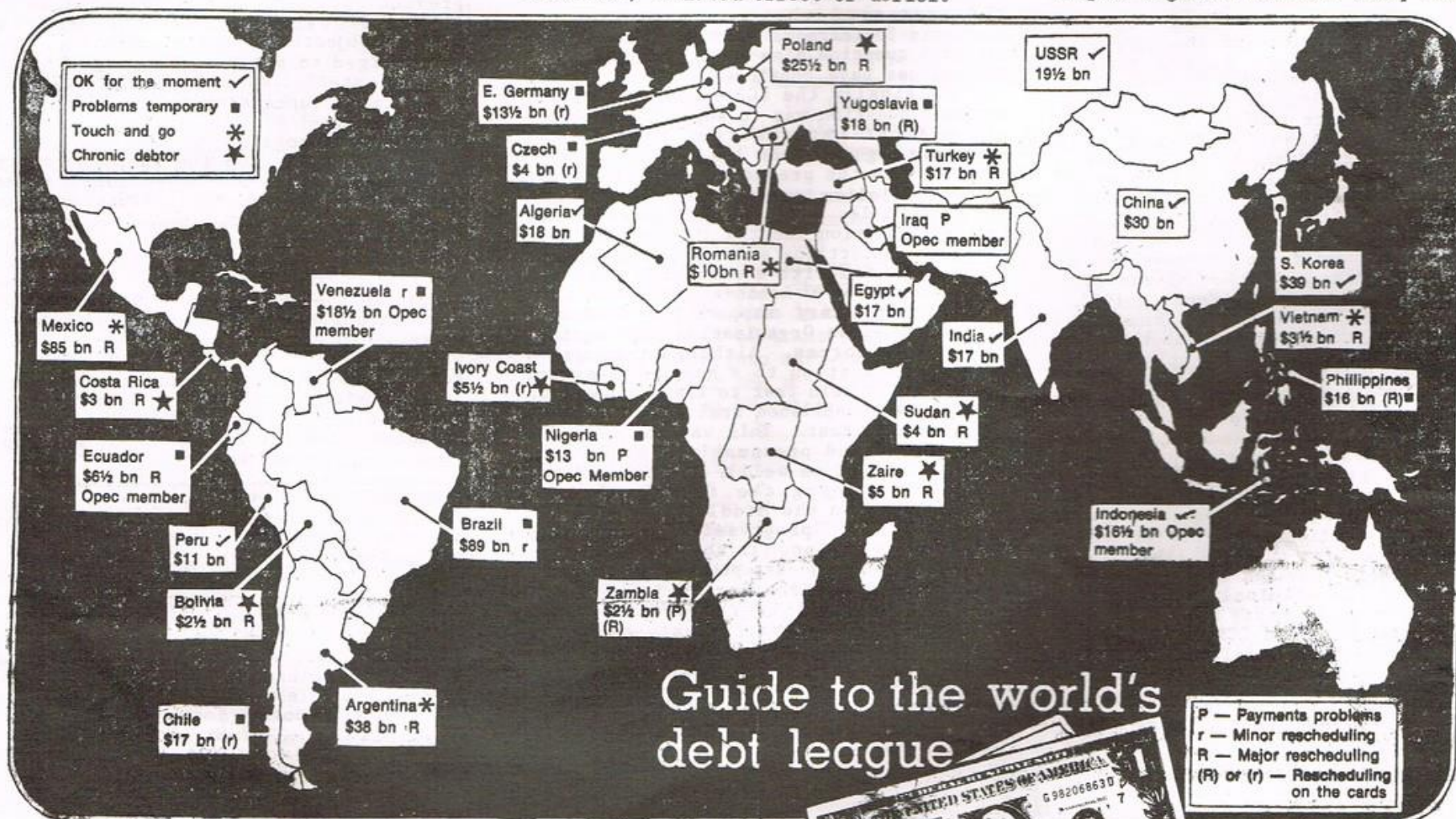
The other, related effect of deficit

financing and inflationary expansion is currency chaos. In the nineteenth century currencies were - except in situations like war - largely stable: the pound sterling was worth 20 marks from 1871-1914. The abandoning of the gold standard meant that currencies were no longer indexed to gold: at first they were directly indexed to each other, but as different states progressed (or regressed!) these no longer reflected the "real" values of the various currencies. Countries where the crisis was deeper, and where therefore deficit financing was greater, found their currencies becoming over-valued and hence their position on the world economy declining. This led to an import surge, and threatened bankruptcy as reserves declined - a situation facing Britain in 1973 and Italy in 1974. Italy's borrowing requirement of 1.6 billion dollars in 1974 is minute compared with the sums required today by the crisis ridden economies (Brazil's debts are 80 billion dollars), showing just how the stakes have risen in the debtors game in ten years.

The Role of the State

The role of the state today means that the economic crisis takes a different form (though its content, the fall in the rate of profit remains the same) from what it did till 1929. With the experience of the past before them, governments will bale out key industrial concerns, even if they are unprofitable (e.g. British Leyland) and meet their losses out of state funds. Similarly, the "bad debts" of the financial institutions (banks etc) will be written off by the state or the institution itself nationalised, if there is a fear that its fall could lead to a chain reaction throughout the national economy as a whole. But there is clearly a limit to how far the worst hit countries can solve or even postpone their crises out of their own resources, and this brings us to the role of international credit.

In the old, free for all days, when several rival imperialist powers existed (before 1945), the policy of national governments was to defend the national economy by withdrawing foreign loans (which US banks did in 1929) or raise tariff barriers (Britain's "Commonwealth Preference" in 1932). While the various countries may be yet driven to this, the existence of two gigantic imperialist blocs and the experience of the last crisis in 1929 means that, for as long as possible, such policies will be put aside for a policy of equalisation of the crisis. Despite signs of wear and tear, the General



Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) remains in force and tariff barriers are still lower than at any time since 1914. And the US-backed I.M.F. is still, though with decreasing resources, pursuing a policy of "bailing out" any capital where collapse threatens to throw the whole international world economy into chaos. Of course, this bailing out is not charity, but to further and maintain imperialist domination.

It is this combination of factors which has led to the form in which the present crisis is expressing itself; a much slower rate of decline of industrial activity, and rise in unemployment than in 1929, with fewer bank collapses; but, on the other hand, chaos in the international monetary system and growing indebtedness of national capitals. Just as the deficit financing of the national capitals is not the creation of real new wealth, so the bulk of the international loans, or at least those organised via the IMF, are simply fictitious capital, creating further inflation, though over a long period. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) of the IMF created \$27 billion of fictitious capital in 1971-73, and has continued to do so since.

As long as the countries in debt can pay the interest on their debts, they can continue to receive loans - and thus compensate for the pressure on their reserves caused by currency depreciation following upon deficit financing. For example, Britain could bail out Rolls Royce, EL etc in the mid 1970s, since the economy was still generating enough surplus value to pay the interest on IMF loans, which allowed the reserves to be stabilised, and bankruptcy avoided, even though the British currency was losing its value. Although some of the worst-hit countries, like Zaire and Peru had to make further borrowings or postpone (i.e. reschedule) their debts, the majority of debtor countries were able, in the earlier stage of the crisis, to meet repayment schedules. Today this is no longer the case and only the most advanced capitalist countries (US and Western Europe) are able to do so. In 1982 twenty two countries had to reschedule their IMF debts. The gradual grinding to a halt of the world economy and the continuing fall in the rate of profit means that repayments are becoming increasingly difficult, especially for three sectors of capitalism.

- The state capitalist bloc, which borrowed heavily as its own growth slowed down, in an attempt to "modernise" and break into the western market. The failure of this to materialise has led to serious repayment problems and more dramatically to the virtual collapse of Poland which owed 25 billion dollars in 1981. The collapse of Poland would have meant the fall of the West German banking system and a rescue package was cobbled together for the rescheduling of Polish debts.

- Certain third world countries tried to break out of underdevelopment in the 60s and 70s and in the process ran up huge debts, that were to be paid off by the profits from development. The failure of this development to occur in a crisis-stricken world economy has led to repayment problems for countries like Brazil, the world's largest debtor to a cool \$89 billion (450% up on 1977).

- Most ironically of all the OPEC countries, which were once seen as the cause of capitalism's problems, are now seen to be merely a symptom, as falling oil revenues mean that their own ambitious development programmes are grinding to a halt and they are having difficulty paying for their own loans, imports etc. Nigeria and Indonesia have seen the oil boom run out of steam, while Mexico collapsed spectacularly in August 1982 owing \$85 billion (425% more than what it owed in 1977). The threat of disaster for many US banks led to a renewed credit facility. The threat of a country defaulting on its loans is now a widespread fear, and it would have repercussions. It could lead to the fall of US or European Commercial Banks, or to a chain reaction repudiation of debts by indebted countries. A fear of a Polish default led to a frantic selling of German marks, a fall in oil prices leads to a selling of the pound sterling (as Britain's survival as an economy has been based on oil production). Rumours of a devaluation of the franc sent it plummeting on the international markets.

Thus the bourgeoisie is still applying a policy of credit and expansion on the international level, while at the same time most of the advanced capitalist countries are applying Keynesianism in reverse - i.e. through "tight" monetary policies. Taking effect for cause, Reagan, Thatcher and Co imagine that inflation

is at the root of capitalism's problems and that bringing down inflation is the key to economic recovery. But a reduction in inflation today signals nothing more than an intensification of the crisis and further decline in economic activity, and not a cure for it. Thatcher's delight at reducing inflation to 5% is unfounded. The drop in inflation is not a sign of recovery but a sign of the abject state of British capitalism, because it is impossible to reduce inflation without a fall in industrial output. The real verdict on the state of the British economy was given by the financiers who sold their holdings of the pound at the news of the OPEC split and the oil price reductions.

If several of the larger debtors were forced to reschedule simultaneously, it is doubtful if even the combined forces of the IMF, European and US banks could cope with extending further credit, and the international financial system would be like a nuclear pile in a critical, melt-down stage leading to a disaster.

It is impossible to say when all this hyper-tension in the international monetary market will explode; but it is certain that meeting the threat of default with new loans cannot go on forever, since you cannot print surplus value! Then the pack of cards will crumble and the crisis will be laid bare for what it is, a crisis of a system which can no longer produce commodities profitably enough to ensure its own further expansion. If not before, then certainly at that point will the alternatives world war or proletarian revolution be on the agenda. It is because Marxists have this understanding of the catastrophic nature of capitalist development that they are revolutionaries, and argue within the working class for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.



This is a summarised view of an article "Money, Credit and Crisis" published in Revolutionary Perspectives 8. Although that issue is now out of print, a photocopy of the article (costing £1) is available from the group address. Please send money with order.

• CLASS STRUGGLE IN ITALY •

We are publishing here a leaflet given out by our fraternal organisation, Battaglia Comunista, both at factories in the Milan region and on the workers' demonstration of January 18th. The leaflet was primarily the response to a wave of class struggle which engulfed the Italian working class at the beginning of the year. The immediate cause of this renewed level of class activity was the announcement of cuts by the new Christian Democrat (i.e. Conservative) government, led by Fanfani.

The measures will seem familiar to workers in Britain - cuts in sickness benefit, pensions and the dole. This led in Italy to a wave of spontaneous strikes and demonstrations of protest "outside of, (and sometimes against) the union organisation". (BCno.2, 20/1/83) It is in this context that the leaflet was distributed.

**The harder they attack,
the more we must
fight back**

The cuts announced by the Fanfani government have been revealed as particularly vicious. The PCI and the unions oppose the attacks saying that it mustn't only be the workers who pay for the crisis. But in fact it's the unions who:

1. Recently negotiated a reduction in the scala mobile and gratefully accepted the swindle of the fiscal reform which will leave us with around 20,000 lire a month extra while the government will collect about 100,000 through the new taxes.
2. Have imposed cheating contracts on teachers to keep wages below the level of inflation, to increase 'productivity' and to erode professional standards.
3. Continue to call useless strikes over contracts which don't affect production and which only serve as safety valves to let off steam against the government and as smokecreens round the working class.

The government and the unions are each playing their part in the same comedy: reducing the national debt, containing wages, rationalising industry, increasing productivity and layoffs.

As always the PCI, which loudly protests against Fanfani, is in favour of reducing the national debt and revitalising the national economy. But in a period of capitalist crisis it's just a fairy tale to maintain that it's possible to revitalise the Italian enterprise by sharing out the sacrifices "equally". Improvements in the national economy can only be made at the expense of the workers. This is demonstrated by the French experience where, despite election promises, the left (Socialist and Communist Parties), once in power, have blocked the sliding scale of wages and increased taxes.

Workers and comrades,

The false oppositions of the PCI and the self-styled left only confuse the workers and delay the one final solution which can serve the interests of the workers: THE OVERTHROW OF CAPITALISM.

All the parties, unions, the newspapers, etc. are calling and seeking for "collaboration", democratic discussions, agreements. But democratic solutions, agreements and contracts proposed by such organisations are posed in the framework of the capitalist crisis and only spell defeat for the working class. Now is the time to counter-attack with an intransigent defence of workers' interests - first among them, defence of jobs and wages. SMASH THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE UNIONS IN THE FACTORIES, RE-LAUNCH THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

REJECT FANFANI'S MEASURES, THE MANOEUVRES WITH THE SCALA MOBILE AND THE CHEATING CONTRACTS. LET'S ORGANISE AUTONOMOUSLY AND EXTEND THE STRUGGLES BY EFFECTIVE STRIKES TO DEFEND WAGES AND JOBS.

Against the economic crisis, against the war which nationalists of both left and right are preparing, the working class must pose its own programme in every country: ANTI-CAPITALIST STRUGGLE UNTIL THE FINAL OVERTHROW OF THIS SOCIETY OF EXPLOITATION.

Partito Comunista Internazionale
(Battaglia Comunista)

ZIMBABWE: INDEPENDENCE TO NORMALISATION

ZIMBABWE UNDER THE HAMMER OF THE BLACK SMITHS

Recent attempts to restore bourgeois order in Zimbabwe have re-emphasised the anti-proletarian nature of so-called "national liberation struggles". In late January a curfew was introduced in Matabeleland; anyone further than 50 yards from their home is liable to be shot. A few weeks later Army units went on an orgy of killing in the area. Thousands of people have been imprisoned under the infamous "Emergency Powers Act" inherited from the Smith regime by the new rulers of Zimbabwe. For the workers and peasantry the situation is identical to what it was under Ian Smith.

When the ZANU party led by Mugabe came to power and Zimbabwe was granted independence in April 1980, the British bourgeoisie didn't bat an eyelid over ZANU's supposedly "Marxist" nature. In the first year after independence, over £800 million was lent to the regime, and capital flowed into the country hand over fist. While the British Left hailed Mugabe as a socialist and anti-imperialist, Lonhro and Rio Tinto Zinc embarked on a massive investment programme. And Mugabe revealed what he meant by socialism by breaking a wave of strikes immediately after independence. In October 1981, police baton-charged striking teachers, and arrested 1000 of them as "enemies of the people". In January 1982 250 striking locomotive firemen were arrested and sentenced for "disrupting a public service", and in March 82, 1000 bus drivers were arrested for the same crime.

While the illusions of the proletarians who felt that independence would mean an improvement in their wretched lot has been shattered, the members of the new ruling class have set about feathering their nests. Luxurious houses, expensive cars and high living are the order of the day. As we pointed out in 1980, the coming to power of ZANU would only mean that capitalist repression could now be administered by men with black faces. The situation in Zimbabwe can only be properly understood in the context of the deepening crisis of world capitalism. For most African countries this has meant plummeting raw materials prices, which have led to economic chaos, shortages and rationing (1). This has resulted in a spate of coups, crises, and civil wars.

In the last 18 months there have been coups or attempted coups in Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Angola and Ghana, and civil war in Ghana, Ethiopia and Chad. Oil rich Nigeria has in the last weeks expelled some 2 million foreign workers as its economy is hit by falling oil prices, and unemployment rockets.

In Zimbabwe the collapse of tobacco and mineral prices, coupled with drought, have led to drastic austerity. All struggles of the working class to protect their living standards against the effects of the crisis have come up against the resistance of the new administrators of Zimbabwean capitalism, Mugabe and ZANU. When Smith was in power, the class struggle was diverted into racial channels, now the workers

are discovering that capitalist exploitation knows no colour bar. And with the crisis in Zimbabwe, the new rulers are looking for further safety valves for discontent; ZANU is trying to divert responsibility for Zimbabwe's ills on to the rival capitalist opposition ZAPU, and foment hostility between rival tribal groupings. (ZANU is based on the Shona tribe, while ZAPU is based on the Ndebele). The struggle brewing between ZAPU and ZANU is between two capitalist factions, both of which are anti-working class.

When Smith was in power, we denounced the struggle of the up and coming black bourgeoisie for power, pointing out that national liberation could offer nothing to the working class in Zimbabwe or elsewhere. Today it is the task of communists in and out of Zimbabwe to attack ZANU and ZAPU, to try to gain the leadership of struggles which are occurring, and to lead them in an anti-capitalist direction. The most pressing task, in Zimbabwe as everywhere, is the formation of the kernel of a communist party, able to unite all workers, black and white, in a struggle for communism.

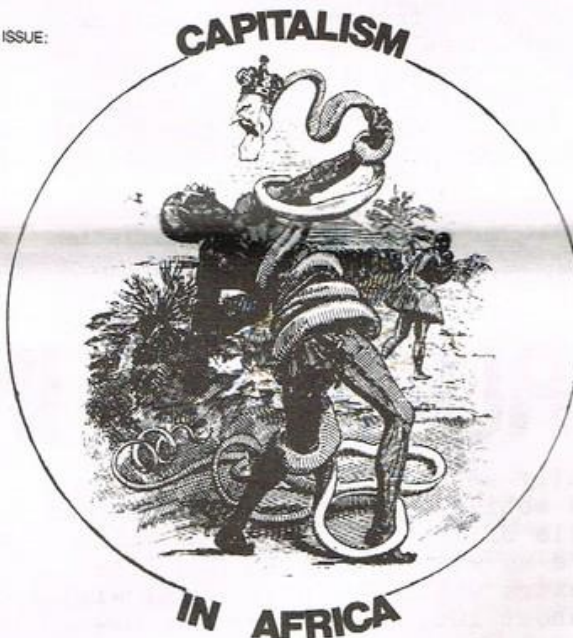
(1) For an account of the evolution of capitalism in Black Africa since 1945, and an explanation of the specific nature of its crises, see "Capitalism in Black Africa" in *Revolutionary Perspectives* 6, available from group address, 50p inc. p & p.

REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES

6

JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST WORKERS ORGANISATION

THIS ISSUE:



RUS

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INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that the Socialist Workers Party and the various Trotskyist groups contain many elements who are subjectively attached to the cause of the working class. Nevertheless, the CWO has consistently argued that these organisations are objectively counter-revolutionary; indeed, the ability of these organisations to turn emotional commitment to the proletariat into activity which is opposed to it is what makes it important to unmask them.

The SWP & LABOUR

Socialist Worker makes depressing reading these days. Its mostly concerned with the 'downturn' and the fact that the SWP is 'on the retreat'. This is because it considers itself part of a "Left" which includes the left wing of the Labour Party:

"Recent events have followed a predictable pattern, as we have been saying for months. The fact that our predictions are being proved right shouldn't give us any pleasure. Right wing dominance of the Labour Party is a defeat for the left as a whole, and will help strengthen the right in the unions as well.

We still believe the best course which genuine socialists inside the Labour Party should take is to leave trying to reform a party which cannot be reformed, and join with us in building a genuine workers' party which can present a challenge to capitalism which is only talked about in the Labour Party."

Socialist Worker 18th September 1982, p7, on the witchhunt of Militant. (We leave aside the question of the unions for the moment).

The second paragraph of this quote gives the impression that the problem with the Labour Party is that it only talks about a challenge to capitalism - its an ineffective socialist party. But elsewhere, in their women's magazine *Women's Voice*, they point out the capitalist nature of all factions of the Labour Party.

"When the crunch came Foot behaved as all Labour darlings of the left always have. He worked flat out to convince us that our interests were the same as Thatcher's. She could never have done it without him.

The difference between Foot's activities over the Falklands and Ernest Bevin's over Germany is one of degree: Bevin had the blood of millions on his hands."

(*Women's Voice* July 82 p. 17: "The Second World Warmongers").

The article adds how important the Labour Left is to the ruling class in persuading workers to join imperialist wars "to preserve democracy and freedom". "Their role was to reassure us of the importance of the war effort". Why then is the defeat of the Labour Left such a disaster?

Even though the SWP seems to realise that the Labour Left is an enemy of the working class, they moan about its defeat. Even though it has the blood of millions on its hands, they talk as if its defeat is a defeat for the working class.

Every week, SW trots out the same tired old lie, that the Labour Party is somehow less capitalist, less chauvinist, and less anti-working class than the Tories. The radical left's mindless anti-Toryism can only help reinforce the Labour Party's image as a worker's party, whereas the role of revolutionaries is to reinforce the present widespread disillusionment of workers with Labour. Instead of this, SW makes out that Labour can solve the capitalist crisis, and by saying that the Tories are the cause of the present attack on the workers, tries to make us forget that it was prepared and begun by the last Labour government. Take the front page of SW 30 October for instance:

"Another five years of Tory government?"

Another five years of rising unemployment, of savage attacks on the health service, of squeezed welfare services and soaring arms spending, of deteriorating inner city areas, of the installation of Trident and Cruise? The prospect is almost too frightening to contemplate."

As if these things don't happen under Labour. Labour is just as guilty of all these things as the Tories, and a revolutionary party must never cease to point this out. Unlike the SWP, we call on workers to smash the Labour Party, not vote for it.

The SWP are adept at taking the ideas of left-wing communists and using them to tart up their own soggy reformism. A review of the book on the German Revolution by SWP leader Chris Harman in *Socialist Review* puts forward most of the arguments we developed some years ago in *Revolutionary Perspectives* 7. It correctly says that the lessons of the German Revolution are basic to an understanding of the problems the working class will face in a future revolution in Western Europe. One of these lessons is that all wings of the social-democratic parties (e.g. the Labour Party) are enemies of the working class who will stop at nothing to paralyse and physically smash the revolution if allowed to by workers. Although the review, in *Socialist Review* 47, skillfully avoids the other main lesson of the German Revolution, that the trade unions are also implacable enemies of revolution, it does go some way towards explaining that social-democratic parties are counter-revolutionary. This surely raises the question - why does the SWP support Labour?

They attempt to answer this question in a text on Rosa Luxemburg in *Women's Voice* July 82. This article talks about the United Front with a party which they have already described as essential to the ruling class in mobilising workers for war. Another lesson of the last revolutionary wave is that the United Front means confusing the interests of the working class with those of the bourgeoisie. But groups from the Trotskyist tradition seem incapable of learning the fundamental lesson that the reformist parties aren't right wing workers parties but have long been the left wing of capital's political apparatus. Reformists working inside workers struggles defend capitalist politics and therefore the interests of the capitalist class. "Pushing reformists into struggle alongside revolutionaries over common class aims" (*Women's Voice* p 11) is therefore impossible, as the working class has no interests in common with the capitalist class. The other argument for working inside or alongside the Labour Party, that it keeps revolutionaries in touch with the masses is also wrong - as Luxemburg belatedly discovered, failure to sharply identify the reformist parties as the class enemy can only lead to workers being confused about them, with disastrous consequences. Revolutionaries do not in any way help Labour to refurbish its image as a workers party.

The present witch-hunts and convulsions within the Labour Party are of no interest to workers. Whatever face the Labour Party presents to the workers, revolutionaries relentlessly expose its totally capitalist nature. We need to build a revolutionary party which is totally independent of Labour, which calls for workers to attack it, which argues the need for workers to take power against parliamentary parties. This will happen when workers consciously reject reformism as the enemy. Then we'll carry out our own witch-hunt.

TRADE UNIONISM

The SWP defends the position that the trade unions are basically organisations of the working class, whose "betrayals" are caused by bad leaders. A particularly revealing quote from a member of the bourgeoisie, Bonar Law, in 1922, gives us a far more accurate view of the role of unions in this epoch. On 6 November, SW quoted Prime Minister Bonar Law as follows:

"Trade union organisation was the only thing between us and anarchy, and if trade union organisation was against us the position would be hopeless."

These are the words of a very class-conscious capitalist, who recognises and emphasises the role of trade union organisation in controlling the workers. But the SWP's interpretation of this statement is slightly different.

"The government was also learning that the trade union leaders could be relied on most of the time to keep things under control".

(SW 6 Nov p 10).

Thus although they are in favour of revolutionaries organising the working class, they think it should be done through the unions. With rank-and-file pressure, they say, the unions will defend workers interests

"If this is done, then we may see a rank-and-file organisation strong enough to force union leaders to call real action next time there's a national dispute" (SW 13 Nov 82) they comment on the health workers dispute.

But trade unions can only act in the interests of the bosses. Trade unions exist to negotiate, and since capitalism is a decadent social system which can no longer offer reforms to the working class, they can only negotiate sell-outs, wage-cuts and redundancies. That this is no abstract theoretical truth, but reflects the real movement of history, can be demonstrated by thousands of examples, including the British General Strike of 1926 and the steel strike of 1980 (when the ISTC union warned the bosses months before the strike, divided the issues of redundancies and wages, divided the state and private steelworkers and directed the pickets to two or three firms, while steel was being freely transported throughout Britain). Nor is this confined to the UK. In Germany several years ago, the unions called off engineering strikes just as they were beginning to bite, and in France in 1979 union stewards helped riot police contain militant steel-workers on a march in Paris!

This is just as true of shop stewards as it is of other officials. In March 1980, SW wrote that BL shop stewards were

"with a few exceptions, arguing exactly the same as management; no more money in the kitty, must increase production, no alternative to mass sackings and nobility of labour".

But as usual the SWP saw this as some kind of accident, because they continue to put forward their own members as shop stewards.

At best, these stewards encourage the workers to enter the cul-de-sac of pressurising the union bureaucracy: at BL, in the strikes of 1981, they pushed the bureaucrats into "our position - two weeks too late. The result was that a large section of the plant was not touched by the first two weeks of the strike". (*Socialist Review*, 11, p13).

However, these stewards are rarely at their best: as we pointed out in *Workers Voice* 9, trade unionism inevitably leads the SWP to greater betrayals of the workers, e.g., in July 1982 SW called for scabbing in the Wandsworth dustmen's strike - again, in order to keep trade union organisation intact, it says, it is necessary to cross picket lines. Precisely. This is why trade unions don't defend the working class, and this is why revolutionaries don't stand for office in the unions, but call for mass meetings of all workers outside of union divisions, to elect revocable strike committees to run strikes outside and against the unions. It is of course necessary to go to union meetings and argue against them, especially when unions are forced to call mass meetings, but revolutionary propaganda must ceaselessly expose the role of all levels of the union bureaucracy in sabotaging workers struggles.



HUNGARIAN WORKERS CONFRONT RUSSIAN SOLDIERS. 1956. The SWP's politics support nationalism in the working class movements of Eastern Europe.

NATIONAL LIBERATION

Internationalism and National Liberation

The SWP's slogan, "Neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism" is a lie. The SWP's predecessor once took a revolutionary position over the Korean war, but later supported the interests of Russian Imperialism in Vietnam. Now they support the interests of Washington.

In an earlier edition of his book *State Capitalism in Russia*, published in 1964 under the title *Russia: a Marxist Analysis*, Tony Cliff, a leading light in the SWP, wrote:

"Were the backward countries isolated from the rest of the world, we could say capitalism would be progressive in them. Revolutionary Marxists however, take the world as our point of departure, and therefore

conclude that capitalism, wherever it exists today, is reactionary ..." (p 130).

Today this clarity, which lay behind IS's position on Korea, has been replaced by support for national liberation, which, no matter what "socialist" rhetoric it is hidden behind, is based on the lie that an "independent" capitalism can be progressive.

Nowhere is it more clear how the SWP's views support imperialism than in their position on Poland. When the SWP call for Solidarnosc to take power, they are simply calling for the management of Polish capital to fall into the hands of an openly nationalist organisation, which enjoys the support of Reagan, Thatcher and the Pope! What's more, Solidarnosc, like unions everywhere, has since its foundation stopped more strikes than its called; and its still doing it! When it does call a strike, its just a token one-day or one-hour stoppage to demoralise workers - just like the TUC in Britain.



But Solidarnosc is not just an appendage of capitalism like the TUC - its undoubtedly more ambitious. According to SW 13 Nov, some of the more radical Solidarnosc leaders are preparing for an eventual insurrection. But what would the role of Solidarnosc be in an insurrection? It would be to lead it in a nationalist direction, in other words away from becoming a proletarian revolution which could link up with the workers in other Eastern European countries.

An article on the Hungarian uprising (SW 30 Oct) puts forward in a nutshell the SWP's program for Eastern Europe -

"an armed insurrection against Kadar and the Russians".

There is not a word in this article about the need for Eastern European workers to fraternise with their Russian class comrades in uniform. The SWP supports Polish and Hungarian nationalists against Russian workers. If elements like the SWP were to gain the upper hand in future uprisings in Eastern Europe, they will become nationalist bloodbaths, and the only interests they will serve will be those of Washington, not international socialism.

Occasionally, the SWP does manage to support neither side in a bourgeois war, but only by retreating into pacifism. In the Falklands war, they adopted a clearly pacifist position by supporting neither side without calling for working class action against the war. About the only time they talked about working class action was their editorial of 16th April 82:

"The last time this happened, over Suez in 1956, the result was a fiasco which destroyed the Tory Prime Minister.

The Tories' disarray could be the opportunity for the working class movement to fight back over the government's real (sic) crimes - unemployment, the anti-union laws, cuts and fare increases.

Its a disgrace that instead of rising to these issues, the Labour leadership of Foot, Healey and Silkin are joining calls for war".

Its a disgrace that imperialist politicians support imperialist war! As well as spreading disgraceful illusions about Labour, taken in conjunction with their silence over working class action against, rather than after the war, the above quote can only mean the war was a question for all "decent" people rather than the working class.

A similar populist conception lies behind SWP support for the CND. The CND argues that capitalism can get rid of nuclear weapons if enough people demonstrate against them. The SWP's participation in this political dustbin of vicars, Stalinists and middle-class liberals spreads this lie in the working class. Revolutionaries argue that capitalism cannot be disarmed: it can only be smashed and replaced by a dictatorship of the proletariat based on workers' councils, as the first step towards communism. This is the position of socialists and its totally incompatible with the ridiculous position of CND. We have to oppose pacifism as an ideology which "objectively disarms the working class in the interests of the bourgeoisie" (Lenin), and oppose those who spread this ideology in the working class.

As the crisis deepens, the lies of capital's left wing become more transparent. It is one of the tasks of Communists to convince militants who are in or influenced by the SWP to seriously examine its politics, and compare them with the revolutionary communist alternative.



WORKERS VOICE

MARX'S CENTURY 1883-1983

Karl Marx died one hundred years ago, and ever since then the bourgeoisie have been trying to bury his political legacy. The paid academics of capitalism have been announcing that Marx's ideas are outdated, wrong and so on in a ceaseless cacophony. But against all these pygmies, we assert that the events of the last hundred years have shown with stunning clarity the truth of what Engels said at the graveside of Marx a century ago, "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of the development of human history".

It would be stupid to expect to find a fully elaborated programme in the works of Marx, given the period in which he lived and his theoretical tasks; such a programme has been elaborated by subsequent writers (in particular, by Lenin) in the light of the evolution of the class struggle. But Marx provides us with a theoretical foundation and certain key pointers to our tasks. The first of these is historical materialism, the realisation that it is in the concrete, and particularly material, circumstances of their existences, that men's ideas are formed about the world. As Marx said,

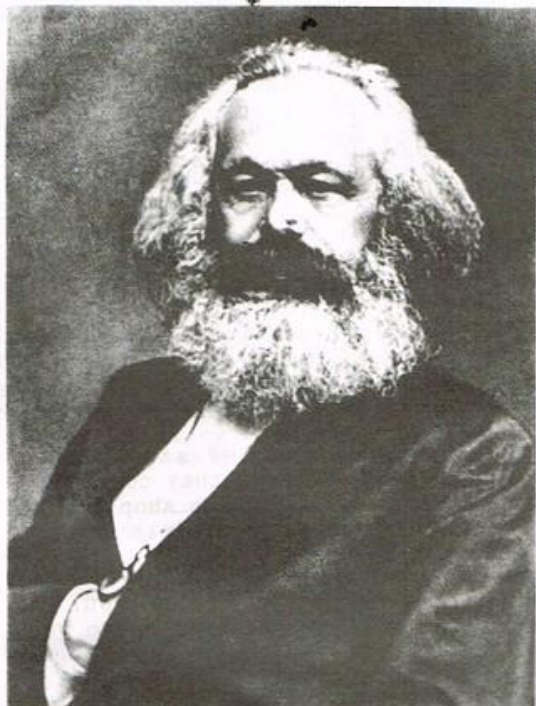
"The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." (from the Preface to *The Critique of Political Economy*)

Marx's advances over bourgeois materialism consisted not only in showing that it was man's social, rather than biological, existence that shaped his consciousness, but also that this took place in a context of class-divided society. This expressed itself in the class struggle, the key to historical development. In the famous words of the Communist Manifesto,

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.... Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat."

As Marx made plain, he did not invent, he only discovered the class struggle, in his search for a class "with radical chains" with the power to transform society. This class was the proletariat, or the working class. The material condition of existence of this class in bourgeois society drove it, as a product of associated labour, to unite in a struggle for its existence, and ultimately to the construction of a new society of associated producers. It was forced to do so because of the contradictory, crisis ridden nature of the capitalist economy, which, through ever deeper crises would force the proletariat to revolt,

"Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself." (*Capital* 1 p.715)



In order to achieve its tasks, the working class had to organise on the economic and political level, and in particular to form its own working class political party; at that time this meant on the trades union and social democratic level.

The transition to socialism could only come about by revolution, through which the working class could rid itself of all the "accumulated rubbish" of class society. This revolution would be a raising of class battles to fever pitch, and take place through a violent and repressive transformation:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the REVOLUTIONARY DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT." (Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* p.27-8)

The result of the failure of the proletariat to achieve its tasks would be the "common ruin of the contending classes", or, as Engels said, "socialism or barbarism". How has the general scheme of Marx withstood the assaults of a century?

Crisis confirms predictions

Marx's predictions about the catastrophic nature of the development of the capitalist economy have been demonstrated in the century since his death. After the virtual collapse of the capitalist economy in 1929 had led to a war killing 50 million people, there was an illusion in the 1950s due to the post-war boom that capitalist prosperity had been reborn. Today, with the world economy again in disarray, the pygmies have to swallow those claims that modern capitalism was a crisis free system. Marxists know that this crisis will in the fullness of time make that of the inter-war years seem mild by comparison. And the class struggle, whose infant stirring Marx saw in the 1840s, has not been made to disappear. Since his death, struggle burst out in Russia in 1905, then throughout Europe and even further afield in the years of upsurge following on the First World War. With the beginnings of the greatest counter-revolutionary period in history the class struggle was swamped and muted from the 1920s onwards, only breaking out in spasmodic and confused form in Spain and Hungary. But with the onset of the economic crisis, the proletarian sleeping giant began to stir once more in the late '60s

and '70s in France, Italy, Britain, Argentina, Poland and elsewhere. And Marx's contention of the necessity of a violent rupture with capitalism, elaborated as the proletarian dictatorship for the first time in the light of the Paris Commune, has been vindicated by the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the only successful working class revolution in history. The failure of revolutions where the working class sought other ways to its emancipation than dictatorship and revolutionary violence also proves Marx to have been correct.

The century since Marx's death has been a century of the validation of his political views. Let us work towards making the next century that of the triumph of the proletarian revolution and the socialist world order, so that "real human history" can begin, a history that starts at the point where class divided society ends. And this means not simply recognising the validity of Marx's historical, economic and philosophical views, but also recognising that those were inextricably bound up with his revolutionary practice, in forming the Communist League and The First International, and in the revolutions of 1848 and 1871. The union of Marx's theory and practice is the weapon of proletarian emancipation.



PLATFORMS OF THE C.W.O

