

WORKERS VOICE

-CONTENTS-

Communique on CPIran	p2
Philippines	p3
Marxism and Nature	p4
French CP	p5
SWP and the Miners	p6
S.Africa	p8

COMMUNIST WORKERS ORGANISATION

July/August 1985
No.23 20p.50¢

THE MASSACRES IN THE LEBANON

Three years after the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon, their troops have withdrawn to a strategic corridor in the south. They have left behind a country which has been 'balkanised' into private fiefdoms of competing paramilitary organisations, and where a central bourgeois state authority has all but ceased to exist; a country cannibalising itself.

This was not the aim of the Israeli bourgeoisie and their US masters when the invasion began. Then they intended to deal a humiliating blow to the position in Lebanon of the pro-Soviet Syrian leader, Assad, and to establish an Israeli client state in Lebanon based on the Christian Maronite minority. Aside from East Beirut and some minor areas, the Lebanese Christians now control hardly any of the Lebanon, most of which has fallen to Druse, Shi'ite and other Moslem groupings.

But the invasion has succeeded in its other objective, that of delivering a body-blow to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which had been using the Lebanon as its main base for operations against Israel before 1982. The organisation of the PLO has been dealt a stroke from which it can scarcely recover, and in the process the masses of Palestinian proletarians in refugee camps like Sabra and Chatilla have been subject to massacre after massacre by Israeli, Maronite and now Shi'ite forces.

US imperialism still bases its Middle East strategy on the defence and preservation of Israel, 80% of whose budget is paid by the USA. The Americans feel that the Arab world can gradually be won round to accepting both the existence of Israel and the dominance of the USA in the region, and that a stable pax americana can be built. Thus, despite the chronic nature of the Israeli economy (1000% inflation) and the soul searching about the atrocities committed in the Lebanon by the Israeli authorities, US support will not be pulled away from Israel in an effort to stampede it into a settlement of the Palestinian 'question'. But US imperialism is pursuing a chimera: even if pro-US regimes emerge (e.g. in Egypt) their stability is by no means guaranteed.

Syria's Aim

Although the Israeli bourgeoisie has achieved some of its objectives in the Lebanon, for Syria also events there have brought some comfort. The Syrian leader Assad, like the rest of the Syrian ruling class, regards the Lebanon as part of 'greater Syria', and has never accepted its 'independence'. Syrian policy is to establish a position of influence in the Lebanon, which would lead to its eventual annexation. Aside from its value as a means of deflecting the Syrian masses from their misery, the claim to the Lebanon is a claim to an enclave that is the entrepot of the Middle East, and the terminus of both the Iraqi and Saudi Arabian oil terminals.

Such a policy has two necessary pre-conditions. First, the Lebanon must be kept so divided

internally so as to prevent the emergence of a stable government, which could oppose Syrian plans. Thus, the inter-sectarian strife between Christian, Druse, Palestinian and Amal groups serves Syria's divide and rule interests. Assad wishes each militia to be at each other's throats, and at the same time competing for Syria's 'favours'. But prevention of the emergence of a stable Lebanese regime is only one aim. Assad knows that Syria can never become the dominant force in the Lebanon (or even regain the Golan Heights, annexed from Syria by Israel) without the defeat of Israel in a mini imperialist war. Thus, Syria is part of the 'rejectionist' camp (with Libya etc.) which opposes all talk of a deal with Israel for a compromise solution of the Palestinian question. The Arafat tendency in the PLO, which favours the Jordanian plan endorsed by Reagan, for a mini-Palestinian state on the left bank, linked to Jordan, was thus a threat to Syria's expansionist schemes.

So, for opposite reasons, both Syria and Israel wished to frustrate the peace initiatives in the Middle East, and to use the vacuum created to destroy the PLO: Begin because he imagined that a Palestinian mini-state would be the beginning of the end for Israel; and Assad since he saw this as the beginnings of a peace settlement that would frustrate the ambitions of the Syrian bourgeoisie. Thus, in 1982 the Israelis forced the evacuation of PLO fighters from Beirut, and in 1983 Assad backed the anti-Arafat mutiny in the Palestinian ranks, and forced him into exile. The latest massacres, by the Shi'ite Amal militia are the 'final solution' to the problem of the Palestinians posing any threat to Assad's ambitions: they can only exist if they subordinate themselves as an 'unofficial' military wing of the Syrian state. The Palestinian rival to the PLO, the PFLP, has already done this, by standing aside as the Amal turned Sabra and Chatilla into contemporary versions of Auschwitz.

Like all the ruling classes in the region the Syrian one will sell itself to the highest bidder. Hussein of Iraq tried to convince the USA in 1980 that it could become the super-power on the Gulf by attacking Iran, a move which failed. Assad similarly would like the Americans to see him as a force for stability in the region. At the moment Syria is aligned with Russia, from where it receives the bulk of its weapons, the majority of its loans, and with whose bloc is the largest part of its trade. Assad is keeping his options open: if the opportunity to switch blocs (as Egypt did) emerges, he will take it; if it does not he hopes to establish a position of force from which he can achieve some of his sub-imperialist aims in a future war.

Assad, too, has his problems. The cutting of the Iraqi pipeline to the Mediterranean has lost valuable oil revenues, and the cost of the Lebanese occupation is expensive. As elsewhere; plans for economic 'development' have faltered, and the economic crisis has led to social upheavals. So far, unlike in Iran, these seem to have been largely sectarian,

such as the uprising in 1981 in Homs by the Muslim Brotherhood. The ruling elite in Syria is of the Alawi sect, only 10% of the population while the mass are of the Sunni sect. A continuing but controlled crisis in the Lebanon is one of the means Assad uses of stabilising the regime.

Class War not National War

The crucial economic and strategic importance of the Middle East means that it is impossible for imperialism to patch up any lasting solution to the ever-recurring crises. Regimes are vulnerable to military coups aiming at the switching of camps, or can be toppled by the explosion of the social discontent of the masses, as in Iran. Thus, instability, fluctuating alliances and civil and national wars will be the pattern in the years ahead.

But the mass of proletarians and semi-proletarians of the area are not simply passive observers of the carnage; or helpless victims of it. Although subject to Zionist, Islamic or Christian fanaticism they have on several occasions taken action against their own rulers and demonstrated the tendency towards class unity.

- * In 1973 before the outbreak of the Egypt/Israel war, there were mass strikes in both countries against austerity and food price rises, and sporadic upheavals have continued in both Israel and Egypt since.
- * Since the outbreak of the Iran/Iraq war in 1980, there have been recurring mass demonstrations, strikes and uprisings against the war in both countries, with calls for fraternisation and opposition to both Hussein and Khomeini.

In the Lebanon the total pulverisation of the economy and the working class which has occurred over the last 10 years has meant that class unity and any opposition to the war has been non-existent. But in Israel there have been stirrings, most notably in the airline workers strike, and in the mass mobilisations, albeit dominated by middle class pacifists, against the Israeli war machine.

It is in the deepening and generalisation of such struggles that a front against the machinations of imperialism and its local allies can be built in the Middle East that will one day put an end to the seemingly endless sequence of massacres and barbarities like those recently in the Lebanon. To the proletarians and semi-proletarians of the region we say:

- * Down with the imperialism of the super-powers!
- * Against the expansionist ambitions of "Greater Israel" and "Greater Syria"!
- * No to "national reconciliation" in the Lebanon or elsewhere! For class war in the Middle East!



IBRP Communiqué on the CP of Iran

The document we are publishing here by the ex-Italian section of the OSCPIA is a condemnation of the CPIran's dissolution of its supporting organisations. The appearance of the document is no accident: it is an attempt to open discussion within the CPIran and amongst its supporters on those issues which the CPIran's Programme is incapable of giving a response to; above all the concrete issues which have been posed in Iran by the war (e.g. the Iran/Iraq war itself, the democratic revolution). The issues themselves, originally raised by the PCInt and the CWO and later the IBRP, were taken up by the comrades who, as far back as the founding Congress of the OSCPIA, reflected our criticisms by expressing their reservations about the CPIran's Programme.

The reason for the present bureaucratic Stalinist manoeuvre on the part of the Iranian Party is clear. It is an attempt to prevent political discussion inside the Iranian organisations on fundamental issues for the international communist movement; discussions which have been demanded and shown to be essential by the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party and other international forces. Ever since the 4th International Conference the organisations that today adhere to the IBRP have been highlighting the issues and problems which the organisations who would later form the CPIran either did not reply to or else replied to in an opportunist way:

- an evaluation of the last sixty years of the history of the communist movement, including an appraisal of the counter-revolution in Russia and the degeneration of the 3rd International;
- an examination of imperialism as a stage in the life of the capitalist mode of production and of its expansion and domination throughout the world;
- consequently, an evaluation of the forms of capitalist domination and its operation in the peripheral countries;
- an assessment of local wars, particularly the Iran/Iraq war;
- an evaluation of the nature and content of the communist programme.

The response to all these questions by the UCM and Komala and later the CPIran, even if differing formally from the classical repertoire of Stalinism and Maoism [from which these forces originated] was still inadequate and included dangerous backward positions. In particular, the failure to break with 3rd Internationalist ideology (by making a serious critical analysis of it) was justified in terms of the formal Leninism behind which all opportunists hide.

Their formal break with Maoism, their initial move towards communist positions as a result of the profound ideological and political crisis of Maoism and classical nationalism in a peripheral country which for decades had been cut off from political debate with left communists, all this led the forces of the IBRP and the Bureau itself to open a frank discussion with the SUCM, with the prospect of seeing a positive development in the process of political maturation then beginning in Iran. In order to influence this process our tendency developed its work, particularly concentrating on the qualitative leap required on fundamental aspects of Stalinism and the democratic revolution. The present CPIran did not reply to any of this. The Party was formed before the issues were positively resolved and hence its weaknesses and opportunist positions have been crystallised. Inside it there can be found various elements in search of a political orientation and we must continue to direct the serious criticism of the internationalist movement towards them.

PUBLICATIONS IN FARSI

As well as "The Democratic Revolution - a Programme for the Past", the following texts are now available in Farsi in pamphlet form:

* Letter from PCInt to SUCM [published in English in *Revolutionary Perspectives* 21]

* IBRP Statement on the Iran/Iraq War [published in English in *Workers Voice* 18, in Italian in *Battaglia Comunista* 12, year 42, and in French in *Revue Communiste* 2]

Send 50p per item (or equivalent) to any of the IBRP addresses. [CWO address for the UK]

Also available in photo copy form

"Money, Credit and Crisis" [originally published in *Revolutionary Perspectives* 8]
Send £1.00 as a contribution towards copying and postage.

On the basis of its political evaluation, which has never been hidden, the IBRP and its constituents have insisted on openly posing to the Iranian movement - which after all claims to be communist - the problems and solutions defined by today's communist movement. Letters were sent, first to the SUCM, then to the OSCPIA and the CPIran; articles and discussion documents have been published in our press (some translated into Farsi and circulated in the Iranian milieu abroad). In order to develop mutual understanding and discussion direct contacts were made with representatives of both the OSCPIA and the CPIran. At the same time the reasons for our criticising the CPIran were growing. It has not responded publicly to any of the documents of our tendency, just as it has refused to reply to the internal documents of the Italian section of the OSCPIA.* Representatives of the OSCPIA and the Party have postponed replying year after year, without ever taking up the task. At the same time, however, the Programme of this party has been translated into various European languages; a programme which does not contain a single word on such a fundamental issue as the Iran/Iraq war and only confirms its opportunism.

Now it is clear that the CPIran does not want to develop the discussion inside its own organisation. It does not want its militants to be aware of the letter and substance of our criticisms. It is this recognition which has prompted us to publish more of our documents directly into Farsi. With the help of Iranian comrades abroad - inside and outside the OSCPIA - we aimed to force internal discussions inside the organisations - at least in those outside of Iran. Thus the politically correct attitude which our organisations have maintained has drawn the attention and goodwill of different Iranian comrades, especially in Italy where there has been regular contact and deepening discussions with the PCInt. It is comrades from the ex-Italian section of the OSCPIA who recount the facts below.

We can now state therefore that the first phase of our relations with the CPIran is over. Our work has met with some success and changes the whole situation. Even before the situation which we predicted would lead to a political crisis arose, the CPIran had definitively confirmed its opportunist positions and showed that the debate was closed: a further step in its development towards confrontation with left communism.

On the other hand, notwithstanding its unwillingness to discuss, the debate amongst the Iranian comrades grew and led some of them to overcome the old schemas and to link up on the basis of an internationalist standpoint on the important problems which remain outstanding. The leap which the CPIran has not made has now been made by comrades outside of this party. Nobody intended to block discussion inside the organisation which calls itself Iranian communist: neither the IBRP organisations nor the Iranian comrades who are now outside it. It is the CPIran's bureaucratic manoeuvre, typical of Stalinism, that has put them outside. And thus the CPIran has dictated the conditions for its own definitive break with the internationalist movement.

In the introduction to the first Farsi pamphlet of the CWO we have already said that our aim is the formation of a tendency inside and outside the CPIran, in order to positively influence the development of a communist force in that country. We meant by this that such a development could take place either way: by the evolution of the CPIran itself or by its break up and creation of a political reference point and communist organisational alternative.

Now the Iranian party has decided for us. The reorganisation of the internationalist communist movement in Iran will have to be outside and against the "Communist" Party of Iran and will include elements from it with others, both inside and outside Iran. The substance of our previous criticisms remains valid and is the basis for further documents at present being written and translated into Farsi, particularly the point by point criticism of the CPIran's Programme. These will also serve to widen the discussion to other potentially internationalist forces in that country. Thus, by extending our solidarity to the ex-Italian section of the OSCPIA and condemning Stalinist methods of resolving internal differences in an organisation which aims to be communist, we are taking up once more the task of contributing with all the means at our disposal to the political and organisational development of the Iranian comrades. Our perspective is that they will solidly adhere to internationalist positions and share in the process of the reconstruction of the International Party of the Proletariat.

International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party: 2.6.85

* Their criticism, written in March 1985, is available in Farsi from the comrades. Write to: G.K. C.P. 11-221, 00041 Roma Montesacro, Roma, ITALY.

Statement of ex-Italian section of OSCPIA

Recently we received a letter dated 15th April from the Communist Party of Iran's Committee Abroad. In it they communicated their break with us, the ex-supporters and present critics of the party.

By revealing these facts we are declaring to everyone, particularly to communist internationalists, the CPIran's opportunism which threatens the communist and workers' movement. It is essential that this travesty of Marxism be smashed!

After the compromise between the UCM and Komala and their unification into a party which called itself communist they have gathered their respective sympathisers abroad into a single unit: a collective organisation but with individual ideologies; a single organisation but containing different class interests.

In September 1984 the 1st Congress of the OSCPIA [Organisation of the Supporters of the CPIran Abroad] added a new episode to its list of opportunism. Without any discussion or theoretical debate (with the excuse that we are all supporters of the Party's Programme and have accepted it) they lumped together heterogeneous persons and suffocated even the smallest further protest and any reasonable proposal with the ill-fated motion of Vartan Shahomian [Secretary of the CPIran's Committee Abroad]: "The discussion is closed". Thus the "glorious and victorious Congress" was concluded.

On 21st January, after a series of internal discussions, the supporters of the CPIran in Italy collectively put forward their criticisms of the fundamental positions of the CPIran and decided to present these positions in writing to the leadership of the OSCPIA and the Party after 2nd March. This was done without delay. Meanwhile the EC of the OSCPIA, knowing the issues which we were discussing and criticising, wrote an article in the Internal Bulletin signed by Amir Daneshgar which upheld two points:

1. Some people want to "politely" abandon the struggle and follow a path outside the movement.
2. We are waiting to find out the positions of these comrades in order to give a reply.

The second point is a formal covering for the first: i.e. it presents a dirty bureaucratic move in a red halo.

At the same time the 3rd Plenum of the Party ordered a change in the form of the organisations abroad and thereby dissolved from above an organisation which had its own Congress, its own statutes and its own resolutions. In order to extend the bureaucracy of the CPIran amongst the sympathisers anyone in the apparatus with authority was integrated into it as a representative of the Party while the others remained as workers in its service. On 31st March - before the ink of our criticism was dry - we were confronted with a letter from Taghi Dabiri [of the EC of the sympathisers] who wrote:

"Given the present change in the organisation, we cannot publish your article in the Internal Bulletin. You yourselves can send it to whoever you want ..."

Thus our criticism failed to reach any comrade in the organisation and as yet nobody knows what we are saying or the Party's response. We have been thrown out by means of a Stalinist operation. It was enough that the Stalinist Committee of the Party abroad and its GPU of an EC in the ex-OSCPIA should know of our positions for it to close the debate and free itself from "abuse". Thus, without even a minimum process of theoretical and political struggle and without a reply to our criticisms, we found ourselves thrust aside and our voice hasn't been heard by anybody apart from those who give opportunist leadership to this opportunist current.

► Our criticism is a revolt against the CPIran's deviations in the philosophical, economic, political and organisational fields which make it incapable of replying to our discussion. It would require an immense qualitative transformation for the CPIran to be able to reply and this would mean either ridding itself of such deviations or having to openly yield to the bourgeoisie.

Our arguments (we are publishing our new documents as soon as possible) against the CPIran are the same arguments that have been made already by the communist internationalists in the international arena. And to these arguments neither the UCM nor the CPIran have given a reply - after more than 3 years!

Our document is based on a critical re-examination of the deviations of the Comintern starting from the 1920's. It deals with the process which gave way to Stalinism by continuing the deviationist theses of 21-22 and evaluates the CPIran as a residue from these deviations. We have taken the Marxist position on the Stalinist counter-revolution as our fundamental principle and for it the CPIran accuses us of opportunism. It will never be possible to examine the defeat of the proletarian dictatorship and its metamorphosis into imperialist dictatorship within the terms of the CPIran's Programme. The examination of such a process leads rather to a realisation of the failure of the CPIran's Programme. Communist criticism, which has been pursuing this party from abroad, now has to be confronted from within and this does not please the CPIran which is now in deep ideological and organisational crisis. For this "simple" reason the order has been given for us to

be thrown out. Now we are waiting for the communist internationalists to make this counter-revolutionary and bureaucratic action known amongst themselves and others and for them to protest and openly condemn the CPIran. Our questions concern not only part of an organisation, but refer to two different class standpoints. From inside the organisation as a whole one part has used organisational means to stifle the revolutionary standpoint of the other. We communist internationalists, ex-members of the Organisation of the Supporters of the CPIran Abroad, affirm that there has never been an opportunity for a theoretical-political battle inside the CPIran and its sympathising organisations abroad and that every dissenting voice gets derided, repressed and eliminated.

Since no opportunity exists for an ideological battle and since the minority exists under the heel of bureaucracy and is unable to organise any protest, we now turn our appeal to the dissenting comrades who remain inside the CPIran's sympathising organisations and call on them to abandon this opportunist whole and join with us. Certainly our "whole" will not remain solely Iranian, but will be an organisation of comrades of every race, colour, nation or country; an organisation which will throw the nationalism and bureaucracy of the CPIran and suchlike onto the same rubbish heap as Stalinism.

This is the way we are going. The crisis of the CPIran is deepening day by day. We invite the comrades who share our point of view to come towards us and not to immerse themselves in this crisis. We are looking to our internationalist comrades and are not organising ourselves alone but with them,

because we have the same aim and we are travelling down the same road. And that aim and that road require ONE political organ.

For the rest of the communist internationalists as well, the moment has arrived for deciding that "the discussion is closed" with the CPIran and for condemning it as an opportunist organisation.

Proletarian Internationalism

Ex-Italian Section of the Supporters of the CPIran.*

12th May, 1985

انقلاب دموکراتیک

برنامه‌ای برای گذشته



'THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION' - A PROGRAMME FOR THE PAST

U.K. 50p
U.S. \$1.50
France FF10
Italia L2.000

Translated from REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES No. 20 Theoretical Journal of the Communist Workers Organisation C.W.O., P.O. Box 145, Head Post Office, Glasgow

PHILIPPINES-

A DORMANT VOLCANO

INTRODUCTION.

The past decade has seen untold social convulsions in the semi-developed periphery of capitalism. The impact of the crisis has led to huge upheavals in countries like Iran, Brazil and South Africa where movements of a multi-class nature contain a large proletarian admixture. The latest country to be affected by mass strikes, riots and social mobilisations is the Philippines.

Little about the events in the Philippines makes the news in Britain. What the bourgeois media does inform us about concerns mainly the unending inquiries into the death of Aquino, one of the main 'opposition' figures to the rule of President Marcos. Aquino was shot on his return to the country in August 1983, clearly by government agents, but Marcos has put the blame on 'communists'. The trial is an attempt to defuse domestic opposition and keep Marcos's 'democratic' credentials in order with his masters - U.S. imperialism. As Bush said to Marcos, "we love your commitment to democracy".

THE PHILIPPINES: FIEF OF US IMPERIALISM.

The Philippines has been a fief of U.S. imperialism since 1898 when it was wrested from Spain in a colonial war that marked the emergence of the US as a world power. Despite a brief period of Japanese occupation in the Second World War, and the granting of 'independence' in 1946, this it remains. The US has 70,000 troops in the country and the \$400 million a year rent it pays for its military bases helps keep the client regime of Marcos afloat. The islands contain America's biggest military facilities outside the US itself, the Subic Bay and Clark naval and air bases, which have assumed crucial importance since the Russians took over the old US base in Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, in 1979. The US is the main supplier of arms to the Philippines and it is the loans that have increased

debts from 1.4 bn dollars in 1975 to 16 bn in 1982. Although Japan's share has risen recently to 20%, the vast bulk of foreign investment in the Philippines is US owned. According to the *Financial Times*, "Between 1970 and 1980 direct US investment in the Philippines totalled \$752 million, or 49.5% of the total." (8.2.1982)

This investment was traditionally centred in the plantation and raw materials sector - copra, citrus fruits (Del Monte and Dole control 99 % of the citrus industry in the country). But since the mid 1970s Marcos has tried to attract foreign investment into manufacturing, by setting up 'export zones', like these at Bataan, where US and Japanese multi-nationals can super-exploit local labour (wage rates in micro-electronics in Bataan are 40 cents an hour) without paying taxes. This led to a mushroom growth of a largely female industrial proletariat in the 1980s. The US also dominates Philippines trade taking 31% of its exports and providing 23% of its imports. There are few countries in the world today where the classic features of neo-colonialism are seen so clearly as in the US relationship with the Philippines. Even the largest bank, Citibank, is US owned. Its military and economic importance to US imperialism dwarfs that of any other Asian country except Japan, whose sea-lanes to Europe and the Middle East the Philippines protect.

MARCOS' REGIME AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS.

Marcos came to power by a coup in 1965, and the country has remained a pseudo 'democratic' dictatorship, an Asian pineapple republic, where the main basis for his rule has been the Armed Forces, 160,000 strong. Widespread social unrest led to the imposition of martial law in 1972 and almost a decade of overt terror, before civil rights became fashionable and, blessed by a papal visit, the country reverted to 'democracy' in 1981. Farcical elections

were held which, surprise, surprise, provided a huge mandate (88%) for the 'father' of the Philippines people. But all the window dressing and help from the US, such as increased rent for the bases and re-scheduled loans, has been unable to deal with the near collapse of the Philippines economy.

The traditional plantation products and raw mineral (e.g. copper) production have been hit by low demand and falling prices, leading to increasing rural under and un-employment, as well as reduced foreign exchange earnings. The boom in the enclave development of hi-technology has also proved short lived, as the multi-nationals go onto short time, or withdraw from the free trade zones. US aid apart, what has 'saved' Marcos is the export of people - up to 500,000 are engaged in contract labour in the oil states of the Middle East or as domestic servants abroad, and their remittances have given the regime a breathing space. This 'export' is organised along the most humiliating and semi-slave conditions.

The worsening balance of payments led to increased borrowing to cover the deficit, and to finance the repression of the regime. And increasing debts lead to an ever increasing burden on the economy as a whole. The extent of unemployment is vast: estimated at 25-40% of the population. Malnutrition is rife: average intake is 1,600 calories a day, compared with a recommended minimum of 2,100 a day. Plantation agriculture means that the country has to import food - the ancient rice terraces of Luzon, once an economic wonder of the world, are now in decay.

THE OPPOSITION TO MARCOS.

The terrible conditions of poverty and exploitation of the Philippine masses mean that a social explosion of huge dimensions is not far off. However, Marcos has also succeeded in alienating most of the bourgeoisie itself. The corruption of his regime and the amassing of huge personal fortunes for himself and

MARXISM AND NATURE

The Acid Rain Issue

The Marxist critique of capitalism centres on its fundamental contradiction, that is its inability to overcome its economic crises - except by means which ensure that the next crisis is even deeper. It further shows that the only way out of these self-destructive crises is the working class struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. The petty-bourgeois or utopian "critique" of capitalism on the other hand concentrates on the secondary manifestations of capitalism's basic contradiction, takes them as primary and argues that by challenging these capitalist relations can be overthrown. Thus the petty-bourgeoisie marginalises the anti-capitalist struggle from the class front to the areas of sexuality, disarmament, racialism, and environmental issues. It is thus marginalisation which unites all varieties of petty-bourgeois utopians, from their 'revolutionary' wing who argue that these struggles can be 'linked' with the class struggle, to the outright reformists, who see their task as the humanisation of existing economic relations, and who often explicitly reject the working class as chauvinist, racist and consumptionist, the unholy trinity of the 'radical' petty-bourgeoisie. The growth of a tertiary petty-bourgeoisie, a salariat in modern capitalism, divorced from the traditional petty-bourgeoisie (peasants, shopkeepers etc) who are traditionally ultra-conservative, has given a social basis for the growth of political movements based on marginalism, notably the 'Greens' in West Germany, and led to the development of political crises, e.g. in the EEC, over the issue of 'acid rain'.

The fads of the petty-bourgeoisie are short-lived. Yesterday's feminists who rejected becoming baby machines are today's matriarchs, and join hands with the ultra-right in their attitudes to sexuality. The environmentalist, or ecology movement, shows a similar tendency to planned obsolescence in its crazes. The death of the Great Lakes, and the rape of Amazonia (whatever happened to the ozone layer?) have been replaced in the nightmares of the petty-bourgeoisie by the all pervasive paranoia over the issue of acid rain.

COMMUNISM AND NATURE.

Communists are often accused - and indeed sometimes give the impression - of being indifferent to the questions posed by the petty-bourgeois critics of capitalism, such as the environmentalists. What will be the use, they ask, of a proletarian revolution if the life sources of the planet are destroyed beforehand? Not only are communists not indifferent to the pollution of the planet, but they are the only ones who can propose a radical solution to the question, i.e. a socio-economic system, communism, where man can exist in a beneficial symbiosis with nature.

In Capital Marx noted, in the face of the vast indifference of the bulk of the 19th Century bourgeoisie, the tendency of capitalism to cause pollution and environmental destruction. For example, he contrasted the ecological use of human excrement by the Asiatic Commune with its harmful use in the Victorian city. He similarly criticised the development of capitalist farming techniques in the last century:

"Capitalist production... disturbs the circulation of matter between man and the soil, i.e., prevents the return to

the soil of its elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; it therefore violates the conditions necessary to lasting fertility of the soil.... Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility... Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth - the soil and the labourer." (Vol.1, p.474-5)

It was precisely Marx's ability to realise, in contrast to the bourgeois thinkers of the last century, that 'Nature' as such did not exist in the form of a changeless constant, utilised by man, but that man not only "made himself" through his social relations, but made the 'Nature' which confronted him as an apparently objective fact. Marx made this point not only against bourgeois materialists like Feuerbach, but even against Hegel, who argued that nature had no history.

In the Anti-Duhring, Engels pointed to some of the characteristics of communism that would lead to a more harmonious relationship with nature, such as economic decentralisation. But the main factor would be the elimination of the profit motive by the elimination of competition. It is the existence of economic rivalry in the market place, and the cost of pollution removal that makes the capitalist unwilling and/or unable to reduce the problem to controllable dimensions. Eliminate the profit motive, and most pollution can be eliminated. Most, since the earth itself is not guileless: background radiation from rocks rivals that from nuclear power stations, and acid rain from natural causes (e.g. volcanoes) amounts to half of world totals. Yet, since these are spread around the globe, they do not have the impact of man-made pollutants, where toxicity is increased by their high concentration. Communism would also greatly reduce dependence on private transport, and massively favour the development of 'public' transport systems, which are less pollutant and consume less resources. The elimination of the waste of capitalism (e.g. military, advertising, bureaucracy) would also allow society to reduce its fuel consumption in the heartlands, though it would undoubtedly be increased in the periphery to overcome economic retardation. Uses of wind, solar and tidal power would also help limit fossil fuel consumption. Yet, since communism does not intend to return to primitive communism, even then an element of pollution will have to exist as a price society is willing to pay for its material existence. Even breathing is polluting, since it emits carbon dioxide; no one would suggest suffocation as a price worth paying for pure air.

Thus, communists argue that there is no way that capitalism can be forced, or reformed, into reducing pollution to a socially acceptable level. In the interests of profit it will continue to kill and maim vast numbers of human beings by environmental atrocities, just as it does daily in its factories and wars. Against the ecologists, Marxists also argue that capitalism will not destroy the planet either. Once the problems of pollution are

perceived, (and here we have one of the functions of the environmentalists for capitalism, as a sort of ecological litmus paper) capitalism, through its state, will enforce measures on the anarchy of the competing capitalists to keep the problem within 'acceptable' limits (acceptable that is for capitalism, not for humanity). If one capitalist introduces anti-pollution measures, he risks bankruptcy; if the state enforces it on all capitalists, the penalty is equalised. The fashionable issue of acid rain is a prime example of how capitalism will neither solve its secondary problems root and branch, nor on the other hand allow them to get out of control to the extent that they threaten the accumulation process itself.

WHAT IS ACID RAIN?

Rain described as acid contains quantities of dilute sulphuric and nitric acid (generally in proportions 70 sulphuric: 30 nitric). It is produced by the burning of fossil fuels in power stations, where sulphur dioxide is a gaseous waste product, and in car engines, where half the pollutants are sulphur dioxide and half nitrogen oxides. It is estimated that the amount of sulphuric and nitric acid deposited in Western Europe annually is equivalent to the loads of 66,000 30 ton lorries. Only 50% of acid in rain is man-made, yet in Eastern USA and in Western Europe the total is 95%, leading to phenomenally high concentrations.

Quantifying the effect of acid rain is difficult. Some low-polluted areas with granite rock are heavily affected since granite does not absorb the acid; other heavily-polluted limestone areas are little affected since limestone does absorb the acid. Prevailing wind direction increases the problems of quantification. Britain, which produces 60% of Europe's sulphuric acid rain, 'exports' most of it to Scandinavia and Germany, just



as Canada imports most of her acid rain from the USA. But broadly the effects are as follows:

- * a high level of acidity (PH6 or less) makes lakes, rivers etc sterile, killing most fish, insect and plant life, due to increased absorption of metals, promoted by high acidity. It is estimated that 25% of Sweden's lakes are sterile.
- * acidity changes soil structure, especially thin sandy soils, which become incapable of sustaining their most usual crop, coniferous trees, which die. 34% of West German forests are affected, at an annual cost of £13 bn.
- * high acid rain corrodes buildings, especially sandstone, and leads to structural faults and increased maintenance costs.
- * effects on health are difficult to estimate, but it seems that a high acid rain causes increased respiratory problems and pollution of water supplies.

Leaving aside the 'quality of life' loss due to dead rivers and forests and corroding architecture, the total cost of acid rain damage is enormous. According to the OECD, it amounts to roughly 5bn dollars a year in the Eastern USA and a similar amount in West Germany alone. In a rational economic system, i.e. communism, society would simply calculate the cost (in labour time) of removing the problem and allocate the labour to do so, on a global scale. But capitalism is not 'rational' in that sense, and can only stumble to an ad-hoc, unsatisfactory 'solution' to these and other problems.

Contrary to what the ecologists tell us, capitalism can, and will reduce (though not solve) the acid rain problem. In relation to car emissions, e.g. both the USA and Japan now have mandatory anti-pollution control on new cars, though not on old. This means that as cars are scrapped, emissions will be gradually

reduced. These countries have adopted compulsory catalytic convertors to cars, which reduce emission levels by about 75% and are very cheap (c. £50 per car). For the EEC countries, with several national car industries, measures have been more difficult to agree to. The mass producers of cheap cars, like FIAT, favour the convertor method, while environmentalists favour the lean-burn engine, which reduces emissions by about 90% and also increases fuel efficiency consumption. This is costly, and thus opposed by the cheaper car producers, and their governments. The rise of the Greens in Germany forced their government to get the worst of both worlds: a long term commitment to lean-burn, combined with an immediate introduction of convertors on all new cars. Countries which refuse to comply face discriminating import legislation from those which have. Behind all the muddle one thing is clear: by the end of the century the problem of acid rain producing emissions from cars will have been massively reduced.

Achieving such rates of clean-up is more difficult in power stations and more expensive. Basically, some anti-acid agent like limestone is introduced into the power station, either in the furnace or in the flue-lining, and the sulphur dioxide comes off as a slag, instead of a gas. But the costs of this process are enormous - estimated at 10% of electricity generating costs, and have been opposed, especially in Britain which exports its pollution to the continent anyway. British capitalism hopes to avoid anti-pollution costs, to increase its competitive position; but EEC economic pressure will eventually be brought to bear on the CEEB. However, even where resistance is fiercest, new power stations are being built with anti-pollution checks, and thus, as old stations are demolished, emissions will decline. Germany on the other hand has again taken the lead with a compulsory conversion and accelerated closure programme. In some areas the solution is simple: the GDR discovered that burning lignite at a lower temperature in its power stations reduced sulphur dioxide emissions by a large amount and saved fuel. In West Germany power stations were able to recoup part of their expenses by reprocessing the waste slag as gypsum. By the turn of the century the reduction of acidic emissions from power stations could be in the region of 90%. And for capitalism as a whole the cost of 'managing' the acid rain problem is not an intolerable burden

"a study carried out for the European Commission estimated that the cost of a 25-50% reduction in SO₂ and NO_x emissions would be of the same order as the cost to environmental damage thereby avoided to forests, lakes and materials." (OECD OBSERVER 129, July 1984 p.14)

It is quite clear that corruption, the manoeuvres of individual capitalists, and the rivalries between capitalist states will limit the possible technical/economic potential of capitalism to reduce the problem of acid rain. It is doubtful if the EEC directive to reduce SO₂ emissions by 60 % in ten years will be achieved. But it is also quite clear that the ecologists' claim that capitalism will destroy human life through a global environmental disaster is unfounded. In fact, the ecologists, like other marginalists who see themselves as so radical, are simply, in the end of the day, the personification of another of capitalism's counter-tendencies to the rate of profit to fall. Ecology is now big business: nearly ½ million workers are employed in Germany producing anti-pollution equipment. Once anti-pollution is itself mass production, the costs will fall and be outweighed by its direct and indirect economic advantages. Environmental catastrophe is not capitalism's real crisis, nor are the ecologists its real critics: its real crisis lies in its inability to produce profitably and its real enemy, which it attacks as a consequence, is - the working class.

NOW AVAILABLE: CWO PAMPHLET No.1

**THE
ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS
OF
CAPITALIST DECADENCE
&
MONEY, CREDIT AND CRISIS**

COMMUNIST WORKERS ORGANISATION

£1.00

THE PIROUETTES OF THE FRENCH C.P.

After three years of participation in the government, the French Communist Party (PCF) has gone into reverse gear and announced that it was in disagreement with the policies pursued by the Socialist Party (PS). The declarations of the PCF leaders have been constructed to give to this event the appearance of a real turning point. Has the PCF really decided then to turn its back on decades of betrayal of working class interests, or rather is it simply a question of a manoeuvre permitting it to exercise its influence more effectively?

THE UNION OF THE LEFT AT WORK.

The tactic of the union of the Left carried out over many years by the PCF found its triumph in the coming to power of the Left in May/June 1981. The alliance of the PS/PCF at last enjoyed the political power and the control of the national economy. However, hardly had the artificial enthusiasm generated by the democratic mechanism disappeared, hardly had the slogans on posters vanished from the walls of our cities, than the crisis necessitated the new governmental team to put into operation a set of policies in every respect similar to that of the preceding right wing governments. This was the policy, in the east just as in the west, of a pitiless attack against the material conditions of the working class.

The role of the PCF as a loyal servant of the national capital did not change for one instant. This was to elaborate and execute the measures necessary for an improvement of the competitiveness of the French economy in the world market and to protect the strategic interests of France at various points on the globe. There was not an anti-working class project which it did not support nor a military operation (Lebanon, Chad) which did not find its patriotic approval. In parallel with this was the slogan which the PCF made its own, "Produce French, Consume French". Today the PCF is reduced to denouncing reaction from the right as it tries to rebuild its social base. It cries Wolf in the face of the growth of the most conservative fractions of the French bourgeoisie. It reserves its most critical comments for its ex-allies of the PS only to try to make us forget that it itself has nothing to learn on the question of reactionary policies. Let its record speak.

As early as October 1981, a few months after the installation of the new government, strikes broke out at Air France, at SNCF and at RATP, sectors for which the Communist Fiterman was minister for transport. Fiterman, in the name of the public, took upon himself the restoration of normal working with the same efficiency as his right wing predecessor. The interests of the workers were thus subordinated to the interests of the national economy.

The following spring the government's attacks upon the workers became more systematic. The few meagre concessions which had been granted on the governments assumption of power were swamped by the measures of the first austerity plan. This imposed a wage freeze for three months and reduced the numbers entitled to unemployment benefit. In the sectors in which they controlled, the PCF ministers were the most rigorous in putting these measures into effect. Thus, Le Pors got rid of several thousand employees in the public works department and opposed all wage demands.

These policies which official propaganda claimed had nothing to do with austerity as practised by previous governments, received the support of the PCF and its central organ L'HUMANITE which ceaselessly used all its arsenal of confusion to pretend that these measures were really in the interests of the working class. They launched incoherent attacks against the wicked bosses undermining the rule of the Socialist /Communist government. They organised a national campaign for the increase of coal production to make France

independent in its energy needs, supposedly the key to its industrial recovery. It is necessary, said the good patriotic party, that what is consumed in France should be produced in France.

During this time, the CGT (the trade union wing of the PCF) was in charge of transmitting to the base the slogans and directives coming from on high.

In 1983 the attack intensified with the second stage of the austerity plan. Salaries were de-indexed in relation to prices and national insurance contributions were increased. A tax of 1% was also imposed upon wages to finance the "struggle against unemployment". In the name of rationalisation, successive waves of lay-offs were imposed in ever wider sections of the working class: car industry, ship yards, building etc. Once again the communist ministers voted for these budgets and the plans for lay-offs. Even if Marchais was already talking about the need for a change of policies and the party press was becoming more critical, faced with the rising discontent of the workers, we shouldn't conclude that the PCF had become cool about its experience in government and its relations with the PS. As is known it had not been necessary to hold a pistol to the heads of the PCF ministers to obtain their consent to all the anti-working class measures previously passed.

Staying in the government for a whole year more the PCF continued to support policies whose consequences for the working class they pretended to deplore. They agreed with the presence of French troops in Chad and the Lebanon until the re-establishment of the interests of French imperialism; they accepted the necessity for the modernisation of the industrial apparatus: thus the PCF considered as a positive step the lay-off of 1,900 workers at Talbot, under the pretext that they would have the possibility of re-employment thanks to professional training.

All this rhetoric of conditional support thus served to disguise the direct collaboration of the PCF with policies totally against the interests of the workers and those without work, whose numbers continue to grow ceaselessly. The few months after that that they remained in the government saw the pursuit of streamlining in the automobile industry (Citroen, Renault) and also the putting into operation of a plan which foresaw the suppression of 25000 jobs in the steel industry. The engineering industry did not escape (Creusot-Loire), neither did ship building or the mines. The hard blows which fell with increasing frequency in the first quarter of 1984 were discussed, decided upon and applied once more with the support of the communist ministers who equally shared responsibility for the police repression against the workers' struggles.

Thus until the last moment the PCF defended the interests of the national economy against those of the workers and it would be necessary to have a very short memory to pay the slightest attention to its present declarations of repentance and to the possibility of a change of direction in its policies.

BOURGEOIS RADICALISATION AND SOCIALIST PHRASEOLOGY.

After having given three votes of confidence to the government the PCF took the opportunity of a ministerial re-shuffle to end its participation. The party which, through the mouth

of its secretary general, had declared itself ready to assume all the responsibilities of government after the elections of May 1981 thus letting its PS allies know that it was impatient to get a share of the government cake and which in no uncertain fashion took up these responsibilities, now moved into reverse and distanced itself from its former comrades of the PS. Once this step had been taken it was given out that it was in order to pay more attention to the working class and its real interests.

continued on page 7

SWP AND THE MINERS STRIKE

Major turning points in the class struggle serve to highlight more sharply the gulf that exists between the theory and practice of leftism and that of marxism. The miners' strike has been precisely such a juncture in the post-war history of the British working class. At a time when communists, nationally and internationally, are attempting to evaluate its significance and assimilate its lessons, the SWP are busily undermining the possibility of drawing a balance sheet that would define a positive perspective for the coming period.

Behind the 'critical' veneer, the book's essential political motivation is in providing a left radical justification and cover for the bourgeois practice of trade unionism. By concentrating their attack on the union's bureaucratic leadership they open up a space for their platform of rank-and-filism. Marxism on the other hand begins from the premise that the officialdom of the unions is but a natural corollary of organisations whose primary function in decadent capitalism has become that of the unloading of unemployment, the enforcement of austerity, the participation in 'rationalisations' and speed-ups, and, as was demonstrated in the miners' strike, the channelling of workers minds and energies into confines that could be of no real threat to the capitalist system or state.

To operate under the assumption that the unions today are capable of and necessary for defending the working class against the ravages of the crisis and that their political expression, the Labour Party, is a workers' reformist organisation and not an integral part of capital's political apparatus, is to render impossible a scientific analysis of the subjective or objective role of these organisations, the meaning of their internal divisions, their manoeuvres in the face of rising class struggle and so on. From a communist perspective, however, it has become axiomatic that these institutions, whatever their posture of left phrasemongering, play an indispensable role of sabotaging the class struggle from within, that effectively they have become arms of capitalism's state. We feign no great surprise at the 'treachery' and 'hypocrisy' of the leaders of the 'labour movement', or at the "...strange schizophrenia of the Labour Party during the miners' strike - the despicable part played by its leader and the magnificent support given the miners by many party activists". (p.247)

The first part of the book is taken up with a survey of developments in the class struggle in the pits since 1926 and an examination of changes in the union structure. Again, blame is continually laid at the door of the union leadership when the entire organisation had become an integrated part of the running of the industry, co-opted into elaborate structures of joint conciliation and consultation with the NCB; in effect a sub-management and a useful means of policing a militant workforce. Since nationalisation the NUM has presided over job losses running into hundreds of thousands; both Scargill's stalinist predecessors, Horner and Paynter, insisted that decisions to close pits were the 'prerogative of the management.'

Perhaps one of the central lessons of 1984 was the demonstration that the tactics so conspicuously successful in winning the '72 and '74 strikes had become outmoded. Two quotes from chapter 4 show how much difficulty the SWP are having in waking from a triumphalist nostalgia:

"In other words to win victory in 1984 they had to use the methods of 1972..." (p.83) and

"...by defending their own conditions then (i.e. 1974) the miners had made it more difficult for the Tories to attack those of workers in other industries - including steel. The same applied in '84." (p.88)

Time and again the authors stress the paramountcy of mass picketting and although these

are always necessary defensive measures, under changed conditions where coal no longer played the same critical role in energy production and where the state had been making concrete preparations for a confrontation at least four years in advance, the exclusive practice of this tactic could only be a recipe for the continuation of the miners' isolation. Revolutionaries argued from day one of the strike that the key to its success lay in its extension and generalisation to other sectors of workers - a strategy which at the same time would lead to the questioning of the nature and function of the unions themselves. By instilling the illusion that the strike's extension could be co-ordinated by the union machinery itself, and by insisting that complete solidarity was necessary in one sector before it could be spread, the SWP were serving to freeze a potentially disruptive movement of the miners within the essentially capitalist logic of trade unionism, contributing to the myth, itself a factor in the defeat, that the miners on their own could win:

"The miners could not expect to win support of other workers unless they were seen themselves to be massively picketting." (p.234)

The tactical futility of picketting in and for itself became more and more evident when, after Orgreave (where a mass picket of over 5,000 was broken up by riot squads) picketting tended to degenerate into set-piece confrontations with the cops, thus sapping workers' morale and combativity. To help 'aid' the picketting of the steel plants the SWP sent an open letter to the union boffs calling on Mick McGahey "to come clearly and publicly with the statement that from now on no coal beyond the minimum required to maintain furnaces at Ravenscraig will be officially sanctioned." Such was the SWP's concern for the future profitability of BSC.

A CWO intervention at this juncture called on steel workers to solidarise with the miners by joining the strike and raising their own demands and refusing to use any coal whatsoever.

A clear confirmation of the SWP's state capitalist programme comes from an examination of their treatment of the two dock strikes of the summer of '84 which shared an underlying dynamic with that of the miners: a movement against redundancies. When real possibilities existed for the generalisation of the struggle with the opening up of a second major strike front, the SWP had their dragnet well prepared:

"The trouble was that the unregistered dockers were on strike to defend a scheme of which they were no part. The only way to ensure their solid support was to make the central demand of the strike the extension of the Dock Labour Scheme to all ports."

This was an echo of the TGWU who at the time were desperate to point out that the dockers' strike had nothing to do with that of the miners.

On the question of class violence, a superficial reading of the SWP account would lead the credulous to accept their credentials as bona-fide revolutionary militants, albeit within the 'honourable' tradition of trade unionism:

"... the real arguments against 'hit squads' and attacks on individual scabs... is nothing to do with upholding the rule of law, nor is it that violence is 'alien to the British trade union movement' as Kinnock said... the real argument was that they were not the way to win the strike."

Fair enough, and tactically sensible. But why does one have to comb through the book in vain for any mention of those actions of the miners' militant vanguard which blew a hole through the image of both legal and 'illegal' trade-unionism - the numerous acts of sabotage of NCB property, the virtually unprecedented ambushing of police vans in the middle of the night and, very importantly, the spontaneous riots and attacks on police stations

by miners, youths and unemployed in the northern villages? These are significant silences on the part of the SWP, and can only be seen as part of their campaign to paint a portrait of the striking miner of '84 as valiant and heroic but ultimately decent and respectful of the laws of his 'own' union. This was borne out at interventions of the CWO at SWP meetings during the strike when they shook their heads in disbelief at the mention of such unknown quantities as miners' 'commando groups'.

"In many ways, the women's action groups, the food kitchens, the delegations and fund-raising trips, the logging teams who got wood to keep the striking communities warm, the struggle to keep the strike alive during the autumn and winter of 1984 were the most inspiring parts of the strike... and hinted at what might have happened in the strike if these qualities had been channelled by the union from the start." (p.182)

This was precisely what the union managed to do from the start. The perspectives of the miners' self organisation never really breached the union framework and although we pay tribute to their great tenacity and self-sacrifice, they were duped by a union machine which in putting forward imitation forms of passive and moral solidarity, in making great show of their financial contributions, were in effect prolonging the miners' agony and ensuring their real isolation from the rest of the class.

Throughout the book, the Labour Party is never, despite the verbal attacks on its right wing, identified as a representative of capital, which together with the Tories, SDP and Liberals is merely another faction of the ruling class, all of whom share the same policy of the enforcement of ever growing austerity. While failing to show that the struggle of the working class is against the whole of the capitalist system and not just against one one of its state-parliamentary manifestations, the SWP's tendencies to adulate Scargill, heroicise the miners together with a eulogistic attitude to Benn are fully consonant with its function as a critical appendage of Labour leftism.

The NUM had already been instrumental in sowing divisions among the miners during the preceding period, region by region. The lynchpin of this policy were the infamous productivity deals of '77, drawn up by a department of energy headed by Tony Benn, whom the SWP describe as "unequivocally committed to the miners' cause". (p.249) These deals were implemented over the heads of the miners after being rejected in a ballot. Only rarely in the book, and then never as part of a consistent method, does the SWP attempt to step out of its nationalist backyard and the miners' strike as part of the international struggle of the class, which since the lull after the set-backs inflicted on the Polish working class in 1981, has been that of an ascendant curve. In their attempt at a bilan in the final chapter "What Went Wrong?" their well-worn political philosophy for all seasons - rank and filism - is married to a bastard form of councilism where the nationalist anti-proletarian Solidarnosc of Poland '80-'81 is uncritically equated with the Russian soviets of 1905 and 1917 and the German workers councils of 1918:

"Through such bodies, councils of workplace delegates elected by and accountable to the rank and file, workers can overthrow the existing state and create one of their own (i.e. without the agency of the revolutionary party - CWO) based on the most thoroughgoing democracy." (p.251)

As a charitable gesture we might say that "The Great Strike" is salvable for its informative content but this is so marred by distortions and perversions of an anti-marxist nature that we can only recommend you to consign it to that burgeoning pulp-heap marked "leftist leftovers".

Philippines

continued from page 3

his allies, often at the expense of other capitalists (Marcos seized the private wealth of Aquino, himself a millionaire) mean that the Philippines face a Nicaragua-type, rather than an Iran-type situation. The bulk of the bourgeoisie proper opposes Marcos, as they did Somoza in Nicaragua, whereas in Iran they supported the Shah.

Aquino was a leader of the liberal bourgeoisie of the United Democratic Opposition (UDO) which finds support from elements within the powerful Catholic Church. The strategy of the liberal bourgeoisie is to put pressure on Marcos - by civil disturbance (e.g. tax strikes) and peaceful demonstrations - hoping to persuade him to retire, or to persuade the army to depose him and allow the restoration of democratic forms of rule. While continuing to back Marcos, the US keeps a foot in the opposition camp as well, and would undoubtedly ditch Marcos if the alternative was untold social convulsions. For the moment, however, they prefer the 'devil they know'.

But the opposition of the liberal bourgeoisie is not all that Marcos faces; he is waging two wars of attrition of a military nature which are costly and exhausting for the armed forces. Although the Philippines is Asia's biggest Catholic country, in the southern island of Mindanao, there is a substantial Moslem minority, which has been in a state of semi-insurrection for over a decade. Fuelled by stark poverty, this insurrection has been recuperated by the Muslim petty-bourgeoisie into a religious Jihad, led by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which seeks 'autonomy' for the region.

While this was Marcos' only opponent he could remain secure, but the last five years have seen the growth of a guerrilla war in the northern islands, led by the New People's Army (NPA), military wing of the banned Communist Party. Formerly Maoist, but in some ideological crisis due to China's 'new turn', the NPA now has about 10,000 guerrillas in the field, and has grown in strength as the economic situation has worsened. There have been talks of a united front between the NPA and the MNLF, while both retain links with the 'democratic opposition', which hopes to use them to destabilise Marcos, and ease themselves into power. This opposition which could mobilise 1,000,000 at the US Embassy to commemorate Aquino's assassination is still confident it can 'ride the tiger' both of the guerrilla groups and of the Philippines' masses of proletarians and semi-proletarians who swell the ranks of the anti-Marcos mobilisation.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE WORKING CLASS

The wretchedness of the Philippines workers beggars description. Half the population suffers chronic malnutrition. Hundreds of thousands of women are crowded into zones like Bataan, exploited and abused, paid \$5 a day, and cast off at 30. In the plantations underemployment and payment in kind are endemic, while the millions for whom there is no work at all swell the ranks of the lumpen-proletariat. Manila is the world's most violent city, with the highest crime rate.

The ending of martial law in 1981 led to a rash of strikes, 250 in number, among workers in the Philippines, which were brutally repressed. Last year 30,000 workers struck in the Bataan export zone, blocking off the area with barricades, to protest against sackings of militants at one factory. This followed a successful strike against layoffs in 1982 at the Japanese Interasia plant, when 10,000 women textile workers struck. Active amongst the women proletarians are feminist groups like Makibaka, whose leader called for "the need to define a programme to allow women to play a greater role in the national democratic struggle," that is, to harness the struggle of the proletariat to the struggle for the replacement of one form of exploitation by another.

Many other bourgeois leftist groups flourish in the universities of the Philippines, which have a strange autonomous status even Marcos has not crushed. While the death squads massacre on the streets of Manila, student 'marxists' engage in debate safely on the campus. The only elements which are remotely positive are those connected with the US.

"News and Letters" group of Dunayevskaya. But while this group is clearer on the state capitalist nature of Russia and the NPA, they still remain committed to support for "a genuine social revolution that involves class, women's liberation, indigenous people (and) changes the very foundation of Philippines society." In addition, they criticise the concept of a vanguard party which they claim is contrary to Marx's "really humanist thrust towards non-elitism." (News and Letters 11/84 p.8)

But humanism is no alternative to Stalinism. Marx himself abandoned humanism from the mid 1840s as bourgeois ideology, and devoted his efforts towards the construction of a working class party. Today communists know from historical experience that this can only embrace a minority of the working class, and is thus, in a real sense, a vanguard. (1)

These few elements which have the beginnings of a genuine analysis, need to break firmly with their links with the ideology of the bourgeois left, and ruthlessly criticise it as it goes into crisis, while at the same time intervening in the growing struggle of the Philippines working class. The increasing instability of Marcos' regime and the depth of the economic crisis point to an inevitable social explosion in the years ahead, and the vital necessity for an organised communist minority in the Philippines.

(1) For an extended account of Marxist views on consciousness and their implications for party organisation, see "Class and Class Consciousness in the Marxist Perspective" in Revolutionary Perspectives 21 £1 inc. postage from the CWO address.

The Pirouettes of the French CP

continued from page 5

The PCF is carrying out this change of line to try and trick the workers. The recent shock experienced on the occasion of the European elections when the PCF share of the vote fell to 11% increased the necessity to construct a different image of the party. If the PCF wanted to remain a force it had to recover a certain credibility which could come about only through recuperation of the discontent with the policies of the government. The party could thus rebuild the minimum social basis necessary for it to demand access to a share of state power which has always been its objective. Thus the manoeuvre of renouncing its ministerial places in the government, while at the same time judging "generally positive" (Marchais) the balance sheet of three years of participation in government and announcing "we are ready to work in collaboration, including collaboration with our socialist comrades" (Fiterman). Marchais announced "numerous similarities between the government and right wing opposition" and recalled that the fundamental role of the party "is to always be in the ranks of the workers".

At the fete of L'Humanite and in the work for the preparation of the XXV Congress the cosmetic operation of the PCF was continued. The party indulged in self criticism, took on a democratic look and talked about currents of renewal. In brief, everything was done to create the image of a party repenting of its faults and ready to devote itself body and soul to the service of the workers.

And here precisely is the danger for the working class - a PCF which opposes the policies of the PS will have a greater ability to betray the interests of the working class and channel them into a dead end. The PCF is preparing itself for the conflicts of tomorrow where it will try to control popular discontent while at the same time laying claim to its governmental aspirations.

Despite the decline of the PCF of which the European elections are the most recent manifestation, Stalinism is still full of menaces which revolutionaries cannot take lightly. While it retains a breath of life Stalinism will be an obstacle in the path of the proletarian revolution and will continue to serve the interests of the only master it has ever had - capitalism.

(Translated from Revue Communiste 3 Spring '85)

South Africa

continued from page 8

western influence and interests in the region. Consequently it has supported and armed the ANC. Despite this its influence on events was small until after the Soweto uprising of 1976, which brought hundreds of fresh recruits to the organisation. After the independence of Mozambique and Zimbabwe the ANC was able to open up supply lines to S.A. and enjoyed a brief period of military successes. This has been checked following the closure of these supply routes and the accommodation of both regimes with Pretoria. Today the ANC strategy is to pressurise the regime by all means at its disposal to achieve a negotiated settlement which will bring it to power.

The history of African nationalism shows that it never had a class understanding of society or supported the interests of the working class. The class who will gain from its victory is the rising african bourgeoisie who will administer the state and the state capitalist economy. The nationalists' support for the workers is simply a tactic to use their strength as the force to propel them to power. On the other hand the organisation is for sale to the highest imperialist bidder. If they succeed militarily it will be because such success is in the interests of Russian imperialism. If they succeed by negotiation it will be because western imperialism has decided to ditch the apartheid regime and back them. The interests of imperialism will determine the outcome of the struggle unless the working class intervenes independently.

The Way Forward

The S.A. working class, despite its enormous potential power, is divided and unconscious of its real interests. The present subordination of the class struggle to the nationalist one, together with the racial divisions in the class, could well be used by the capitalist class to precipitate the most horrific bloodbath. It is vital that the working class separates itself politically from the nationalists and struggles independently for its own interests. This means a rejection of all fronts with the bourgeoisie, including the african nationalist bourgeoisie, a total condemnation of nationalism and a struggle for the UNITY OF THE WHOLE WORKING CLASS regardless of race.

A first step in this direction would be the formation of a communist political organisation within S.A., linked to International Communists. This organisation would set itself the immediate aims of:-

- * struggle for the abolition of apartheid, migrant labour, job reservation and all the bosses laws which divide workers on the ground of race,
- * formation of groups of communist workers in the mines and factories to take the lead in the class struggle and give it a communist direction,
- * giving a communist lead to the mass movement against the present regime.

Today the only change which can bring real benefits to the working class is the communist revolution and the establishment of a worldwide system of production for need. The struggle for this must follow the same programme worldwide - the communist programme.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

CWO READERS' MEETING IN LEEDS

CLASS STRUGGLE IN BRITAIN

AFTER THE MINERS' STRIKE

Time: Wednesday, 17th July at 8.00 p.m.

Place: Leeds Trades Club, Savile Mount, Leeds 7



WORKERS VOICE

South Africa

CLASS STRUGGLE NOT NATIONAL STRUGGLE

Over the last two months mass resistance to the South African regime, accompanied by police carnage, has continued without interruption. According to the minister of law and order 140 people have been killed, since the Langa massacre, in the Eastern Cape alone.

Within the townships popular ferment is steadily destroying the administration structures imposed by the government. Members of the town councils and africans recruited to the police have been forced to resign or killed. In a recent election for the town council of Lekoa, which controls Sharpville and Sebokeng, not a single candidate could be found. Throughout S.A. 375 vacancies now exist on town and community councils. At the same time there have been fresh outbreaks of class struggle which pose a more serious threat to the regime.

Strikes in the Mines

A wildcat strike erupted at two gold mines in April after shop stewards were forced to leave the mines at gunpoint. This strike, like most in S.A. was illegal and met with the usual violent repression. It was defeated by the sacking of 1600 strikers, flushing them out of the mine hostels, which they refused to leave, with tear gas and rubber bullets and bussing them back to their so-called "homelands." The bitterness amongst miners is shown by the fact that this strike erupted despite the massive repression which the bosses have always used, (last September 9 striking miners were shot dead) and despite the fact that with today's 25% unemployment it is fairly easy for them to recruit fresh workers. Throughout the goldfields miners are demanding a 40% rise and there is a mood of seething discontent, however, despite this the miners union, the NUM, didn't lift a finger to protect its members against this outrage. This is a further illustration of how the new unions are already acting against the workers.

A successful strike on the mines could, however, bring the regime to its knees in a matter of weeks. In what follows we wish to look in more detail at the relationship between the class struggle and the nationalist forces at work in S.A. and the way forward for the working class.

The Real Conflicts

In Workers Voice Nos 19 & 22 we pointed out that the fundamental conflicts in S.A. are class ones and showed that today's intensification of struggle stemmed primarily from the deepening of the world capitalist crisis. The key forces at work within this struggle are:-
1) The local needs of capitalism in the country
2) The global interests of imperialism and
3) The resistance of the working class to deteriorating conditions.
Firstly, the S.A. bourgeoisie and western imperialism need urgently to scrap the outdated and costly organisation of capitalist exploitation (apartheid and the migrant labour system), in order to increase profit rates and stabilise the situation. However, to do this without transferring power to the african nationalists will be extremely difficult.

Secondly because the area is of vital strategic importance to western imperialism the global interests of imperialism play a major part in determining events. Since the african nationalists are backed by Moscow their coming to power would mean increased gains for Russian imperialism in the region. This is something the west will not tolerate & consequently it backs the regime.
Thirdly the working class struggle against the effects of capitalism is politically unformed and is at present subordinated to the broad nationalist movement. It is, however, the movement's real source of strength and an important factor determining the actions of both the nationalists and the S.A. bourgeoisie.

The African Nationalist Movement

The african nationalist movement has, from its foundation, been petty bourgeois. The African National Congress, the oldest and largest nationalist organisation, was founded in 1912 in response to the exclusion of blacks from the post Boer war settlement which resulted in the Union of S.A. in 1910. This settlement was designed to enable capitalism to expand freely and in particular to provide a supply of cheap labour. This meant destroying the remnants of the tribal economies and driving africans off their land and into the cities where they would become wage labourers. This was done by taxing them and taking their lands from them. The "native land bill" of 1913, for example, took all the land in S.A. from the blacks apart from the reserved lands (7.3% of the country). To accomplish this the capitalist class required the exclusion of africans from political power. Resistance to this process led to the formation of the ANC, and its original support came from the tribal chiefs. It aimed to reverse these attacks by securing a voice in parliament and attempted to accomplish this by exerting moral pressure on the government. In the early years it sent deputations to the British king and to Westminster begging British imperialism, which was making enormous profits in S.A., to honour its promises and take up the african cause.

As more africans were integrated into the capitalist economy as workers the basis of the

ANC support changed, and in the early 20s trade unions became linked to it. Also attracted to its standard were liberals and the S.A. Communist Party. Both have remained uneasy bedfellows ever since. The ANC's aims, however, remained those of liberal reform, and the tactic of moral pressure was, during the 20s and 30s supplemented by collaboration in government created structures such as the "Native Representative Councils."
The second world war clearly revealed the anti working class consequences of the ANC's petty bourgeois politics. The organisation supported British imperialism and urged workers not to strike and to support the war effort. A tragic result of this was the demoralising defeat of the African mineworkers strike in 1946. Instead of striking during the war, when the bosses were weakest, as the miners wanted, the African Mineworkers Union, which was created by the ANC, postponed the strike until the war was over and the bosses were prepared.

In the reconstruction period following the war the organisation's influence began to increase once more. Impressed by Ghandi's success in India, the ANC organised a series of passive resistance campaigns over apartheid and the pass system - the system of identity documents which all africans were forced to carry. These campaigns, which lasted until 1961, met with progressively harsher repression, and proved utterly ineffectual.

In 1955 the ANC crystalised its aims in the "Freedom Charter". Liberal aims such as equality, freedom, democracy etc. were spiced with a few state capitalist ones, such as, nationalisation of the mines, monopoly industry and the banks. However, impatience with the liberal pacifist leadership of the ANC had been building up and this led in 1958 to a split which saw the creation of a new nationalist grouping, the Pan African Congress (PAC). This group saw the failures of the past as having been caused by the organisation's association with whites. This organisation was openly racist, being not only anti white but also anti Asian and aimed to achieve liberation by relying on the African race alone. The black consciousness organisation and the Azanian Peoples Organisation are derived from this split. The PAC pursued similar defiance campaigns to those of the ANC but with more vigour. The PAC promised to achieve liberation by 1963! These campaigns resulted in the Sharpville massacre of 1960 and the subsequent banning of both the ANC and the PAC. Following the banning both organisations launched military sections, however, the only organisation which has had any success is that of the ANC "Umkhonto we Sizwe" and this is because of the support it has received from Russian imperialism.

The ANC's relationship with the SACP, the local tool of Moscow, has always been an uneasy one. The SACP started its life by supporting the white miners strike of 1922, and coining the infamous slogan, "Workers of the world unite for a white South Africa." However, despite the various purges of the SACP from the ANC, the SACP has always retained a foothold in the organisation. By the early 60s Russian imperialism saw this organisation as a vehicle for destabilising

Continued on p. 7

SUBSCRIBE

I would like to:

Find out more about the CWO ☐

Help with the activity of the CWO ☐

Subscribe to WORKERS VOICE. I enclose £2.50 for 6 issues. [£3.00 or equivalent for readers abroad.] ☐

Take out a full subscription to WV, REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES and COMMUNIST REVIEW. I enclose £5.00 [£6.00 for readers abroad.] ☐

Take out a supporters subscription. I enclose £10.00 ☐

Name

Address

.....

.....

Send to: CWO, PO BOX 145, HEAD POST OFFICE, GLASGOW, UK.