

# WORKERS VOICE

COMMUNIST  
WORKERS  
ORGANISATION

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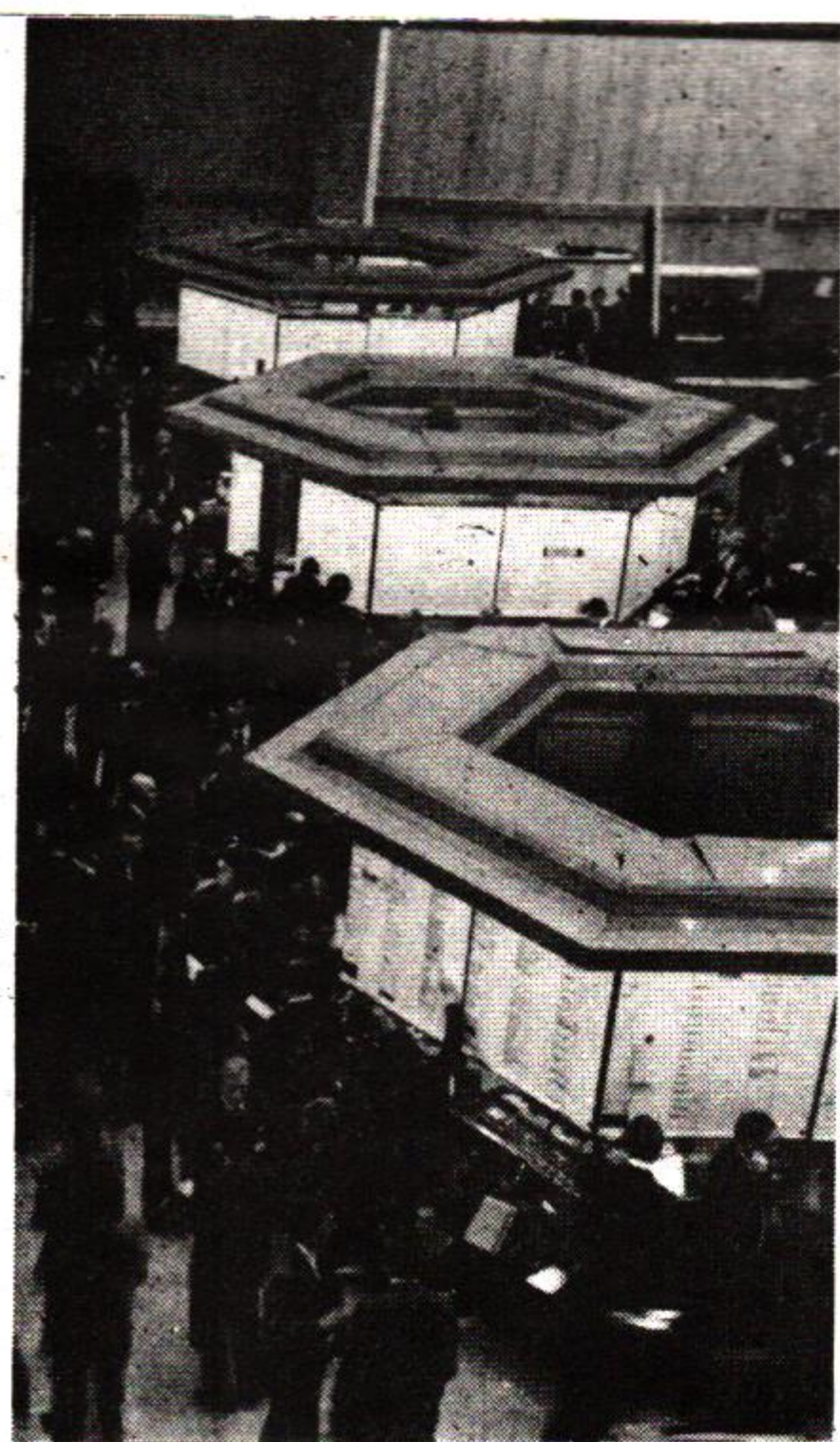
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1987

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## CAPITALIST OFFENSIVE CONTINUES

The confidence of the capitalist class in almost every country continues to grow. All the ruling classes have so far survived and even prospered despite their inability to solve the problems created by the present economic crisis. Whilst we cannot make mechanical connections between the level of crisis and the level of class struggle the extraordinary feature of the present situation is that in the face of the profundity of the crisis and the fact that the capitalists in every country have not spared the working class any attack, their has been such an inadequate response on the part of the workers.

Despite the struggles of public workers in Belgium, railway workers in France and more recently shipyard workers in Spain during the last fifteen months there has been no concerted threat to the ruling class in any country. As we predicted during the British miners strike in 1984-5 the defeat of that movement would have momentous consequences for the class struggle. This was certainly the case in Britain since that defeat gave an enormous boost to the attacks of the capitalist class. In the pits 80,000 jobs have gone since 1985 and many more will go in the wake of the six day working scheme which will be imposed on the miners despite their continuing guerrilla campaign of one day strikes in individual pits. Similarly British Rail and British Steel have used the crisis and the threat of more redundancies to discipline their workforces. And as a reward for their acceptance of worsening working conditions they have been laid off in their thousands. British Steel can today boast that it is making profits for the first time for years but it fails to explain that this is on the basis of a decimated industry. British Rail promised 9,000 more redundancies this week.



"Booming Britain" for the few...

### THE ELECTION ENSURES THE WORKERS WILL PAY

As evidence of the confidence of the ruling class in Britain we need only to look at the result of the election. For the first time this century the same party was returned to

rule alone for a third term. There was no need for the capitalists to ensure that the safety valve of the Labour Party would be brought into office since there is at present no danger of the working class being in a position to turn the tide. Revolutionaries cannot even take consolation in the fact that the working class ignored the election (as they did in great numbers in 1983). Labour's increased vote on four years ago was almost entirely accounted for by more workers being drawn into electoral participation this time.

The way is now set for more measures to make the workers pay for the crisis. The new poll tax will be immensely popular amongst the well-heeled burghers in places like Surbiton since they will live in virtually untaxed opulence whilst the workers who live in overcrowded accommodation will now have to pay more for their misery. VAT, a purchase tax on the poor, is to be doubled and introduced on new categories of goods. Since 1979 the number below the poverty line has doubled to 12 millions and with the above features hitting the poorest sections of the working class hardest we can expect this to go on increasing, as will the quarter of a million homeless and the 4 millions of those living in homes that don't reach adequate public health standards.

### THE RENTIER ECONOMY

At the other end of the scale the number of millionaires in Britain has tripled to 20,000 since 1979 whilst amidst unemployment of over 3 millions the stock market has climbed by nearly 50% in the last year. Indeed the two facts are connected since they are indices of the most radical restructuring of the British economy since the war. Whilst the manufacturing base of what was once "the workshop of the world" has been eroded so that last year Britain actually produced 4% less than it did in 1979 (and this was, according to the CBI, a "year of growth") there has been an enormous growth of the banking and service sectors. Whilst the gross domestic product of the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan relies on manufacturing for 30% of their wealth, in Britain manufacturing has fallen to 20% of GDP. At the same time Britain has become second only to Japan as a source of international finance so that what it earns in services (tourism, insurance banking etc) has risen from 3.8 billions to 5.4 billions (pounds sterling) in the last five years. As "The Economist" of 13.12.86 concluded Britain is "A rentier nation once more". This is not however a sign of renewed strength as even the supporters of the present regime realise since it is a situation which has only been reached due to the once and for all bonanza of North Sea oil and has made Britain dependent on the health of the world economy than never before previously.

Overstretched financial institutions are no substitute for wealth-creating basic industries. The danger signs are already there. As Brazil is on the verge of passing Britain in terms of quantity of industrial output the British banking firms are beginning to grow nervous at the prospect of having to write off the bulk of their loans to what they call "less developed countries". Already the Midland Bank has had to float

shares simply to give it enough capital in the event of more South American defaults.

### THE TASKS OF COMMUNISTS

Whilst the scenario in Britain and the USA has some resemblance with the situation in the 1920s when everyone was making money from goods they expected others to produce, and where there was a great deal of speculative financial movement this was in a situation of very static markets with a colossal degree of protection between national boundaries. A better analogy would be to look at the Great Depression of 1873 to 1896 which was a long period of depression which was characterised by small and partial waves of economic resurgence. In this period too working class resistance, whilst often vigorous and spectacular (e.g. 1886 unemployed riots in Trafalgar Square) was generally isolated. It was in this period too that Bernstein and the revisionists put forward the notion that the working class was becoming integrated into society and that talk of the class struggle was outmoded. All this strikes a familiar chord today especially when there was the same gulf between those in work and those out of work, a gulf which was reflected in the Bakuninist denigration of the working class as too respectable to make a revolution.



...Increasing austerity for the working class

Besides fighting against those who today claim that the working class doesn't exist as a class or that it is not the agent of revolution communists must also face up to the fact that there is no straight line towards the acquisition of the necessary class consciousness to overthrow capitalist society. They have to look at reality instead of inventing what they would like to see taking place and they have to base their strategy and tactics on a clear understanding of the nature and development of the present crisis. The CWO has begun to address these issues (with the publication of the Theses on Thatcherism in our last issue - rejoinders to it will be published in our next. See also the Reply to the CCA in this issue) but we need to deepen these analyses to examine all aspects of the crisis, including the effect of the micro-electronic revolution on the restructuring of modern capitalism as well as the effect it has had on the increased proletarianisation of the capitalist periphery. Only on the basis of such work will we be able to defend communist principles and provide a clear programme for the future.



# REPRESSION IN ARGENTINA

## ARGENTINIAN REVOLUTIONARIES AGAINST THE POPE

For communists in the advanced capitals the question of religion is largely one of individual faith which we do not need to attack. However, this is not to forget the role which the Church (or the Mosque) plays from time to time in the class struggle. This is especially true in the peripheral countries where social conditions and the previous historical development of these areas makes the role of religion a more important ideological means for attacking the working class.

Wojtyla, the present Pope, has been a particularly good ambassador for western imperialism over the last seven years; not only defending Polish nationalism in his homeland but sound the virtues of submission and fortitude to the masses of Africa, Asia and Latin America who face all kinds of dictatorship and super-exploitation.

We are reproducing here a leaflet showing the proletarian response to the Papal visit to Argentina produced by Emancipacion Obrera (Workers Emancipation), a group which unquestionably belongs to the proletarian internationalist camp.

They have told us of the repression against those who demonstrated against the Pope and those he represents. The leaflet reproduced here was one of several given out in thousands in Rosario and Buenos Aires and which adopted the slogans of the mass demonstration against the Pope. EO also gave out another leaflet entitled "Why, in the midst of so much hardship and unemployment in the world, does the Church waste so many millions of dollars in Papal visits?" The text begins with a denunciation:

The cost of the journey to Argentina is not much talked about but it is about \$70m, equivalent to a wage of 500 australes for more than a quarter of a million people. But it is not a waste, it's an investment ..."

There then follows a precise and well-substantiated denunciation of the role of the Papal visit and of the role of the Church as a whole, including full and accurate references to the activities of Solidarnosc in Poland and of the discreetly reactionary activity of its priests, bishops and cardinals responsible for the worst kinds of exploitation, speculation and repression. Any readers who wish to have photocopies of the full document should send £1 plus postage costs to our address. The money will be passed on to the comrades of Emancipacion Obrera to contribute to the expense of maintaining their communist work in the face of extreme weakness and harsh repression.

**SI CRISTO ES EL CAMINO EL PAPA COBRA EL PEAJE**

Si en BsAs se reprimió ferozmente para impedir  
a una concentración contra el Papa, aquí en  
Rosario, retomemos la consigna que cantamos allá:

**IGLESIA, BASURA, VOS SOS LA DICTADURA**


**REPUDIEMOS A QUIEN  
VIENE A PREGONIZAR LA EXPLOTACION EN PAZ**

Y RECORDEMOS QUE:

**BAJO LA SOTANA, LA IGLESIA TIENE LA PICANA**

**EMANCIPACION OBRERA**

10-4-87



The translation of the leaflet reproduced above goes something like:  
"If Christ is the Way, the Pope will collect the toll. If there is fierce repression to prevent demonstrations against the Pope in Buenos Aires, here in Rosario we will revive the slogan which they chanted there -

The Church is Rubbish  
IT is the dictatorship.\*  
We reject those who come to preach peaceful exploitation  
And remember:

Under the cassock the Church carries the stick."

\* To translate the meaning of this slogan we have lost its rhyming force!

CCA continued from page 6

proletariat, whom we must know how to orientate and organise them.

To sum up the task of revolutionary communists (internationalists) is above all to work, now and at all times, towards the construction of the internationalist party of the proletariat, rooted in the class and capable of becoming the reference point for the entire class, and its political instrument.

There are those who lose sight of this primary objective, even whilst proclaiming it in words, in order to direct all their forces towards propaganda and agitation for things which the class will have to do and which the class certainly will do: widen its struggles, generalise and extend these. These comrades turn an elementary task, obviously fulfilled by communists, into the exclusive and characteristic element of their intervention. They are mistaken in this, and they voluntarily put themselves outside the camp of those forces which, although starting from a condition of great weakness, have finally begun to act once again within the heart of the proletariat towards the reconstruction of the political instrument of the class.

We do not believe we are mistaken when we attribute this attitude to the comrades of the ICC. Today, under the pressure of lessons stemming from their direct and practical intervention, the ICC comrades are entering into contradictions with this basic attitude of theirs. This leads them to assign to the class as a whole, a supposed spontaneous, programmatic maturation of consciousness, the tasks which belong to the Party.

But this attitude is consistent with their theoretical and methodological positions on consciousness, on Party/class relationships, and on the Party. In BC Nos 2 and 3, we have already begun to discuss the ICC's methodological errors, showing how their exultation of present struggles way beyond reality is derived from these same errors.

Well comrades, it seems to us that you suffer from the ICC's influence in that you overestimate the struggles in Europe. We also gain the impression that you suffer from the ICC's influence in the last section of your document, where we find no indication of what you think it necessary for revolutionaries to do within the situation you have described so well.

To "outline the global tendencies and perspectives for the class movement" is one of our first tasks. But it is certainly not enough in itself. The perspectives and tendencies of the class should be the basis from which the Party cadres advocate the advance of the struggle. The possibility of extending the movement to other sectors, no matter how clear, will not become reality in the absence of the vanguard's organisational work aiming to remove the room for manoeuvre of the bourgeois forces which actively oppose this extension by means a thousand tactics.

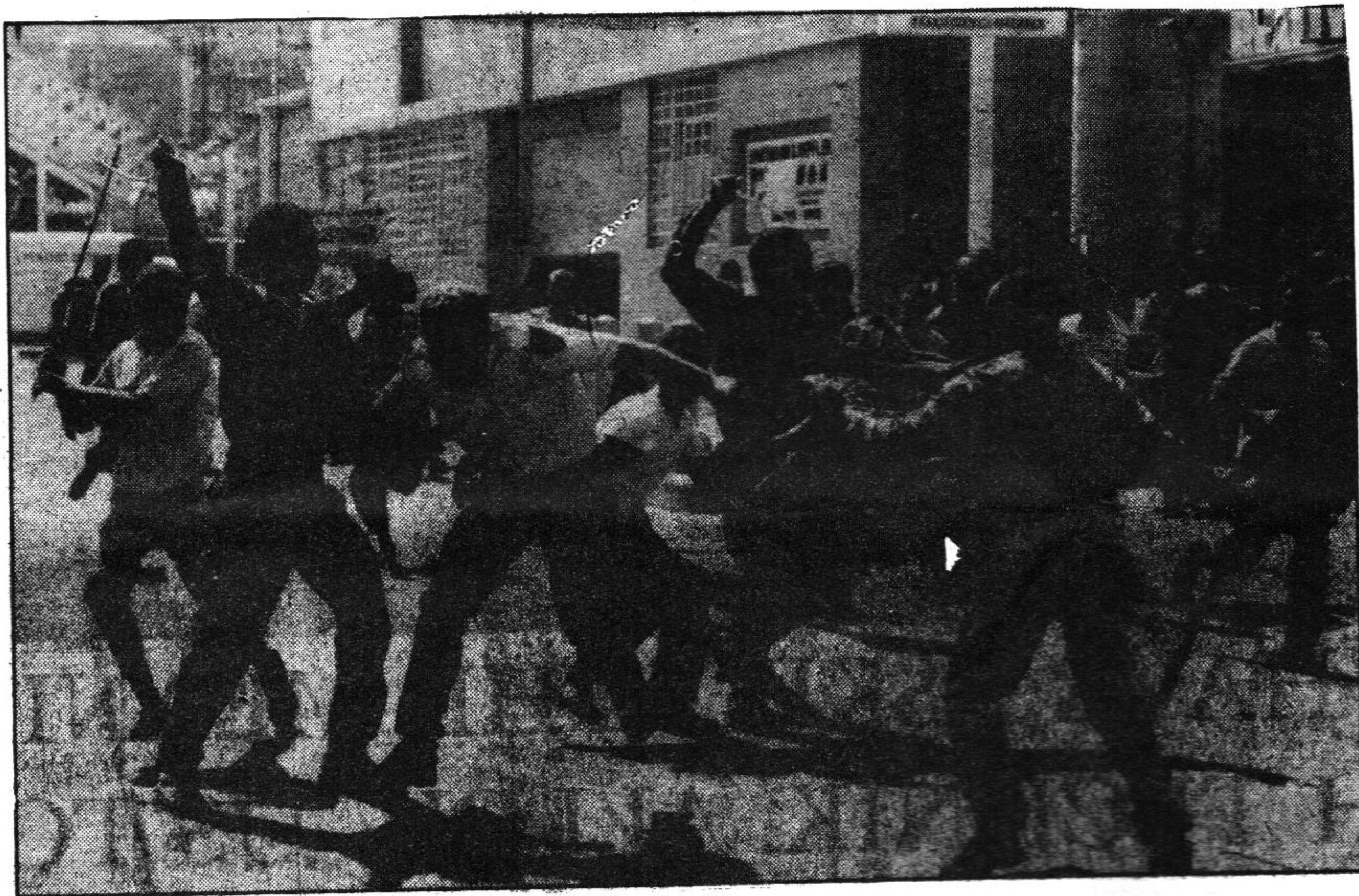
In Europe too, the facts show that even the smallest workers' struggle (if it is genuinely in the interest of the class) happens outside and against the unions. Starting from this fact, from this tendency which is now clear, communists should organise the future action of the Party. Here and now we call upon the most conscious workers to organise themselves in order to

- 1) sustain and deepen this tendency
- 2) give themselves the means to struggle against those who stand in their way. Thus we call upon the vanguard to join with the Party in the work of agitation, propaganda, and, above all, for the formation of cadres who can return to the class all the strength, ability and certainty that only a firm theoretical, political and organisational platform can give.

If we are successful in this work we can hope that the next real wave of workers' struggle will reopen the way for a revolutionary revival. If we do not succeed in this work of forging militant cadres, of implanting these in the class, and organising them around the vanguard strata of the class, then it is still possible that an insurrectionary situation with massive conflict will emerge, but the bourgeoisie will drown this in blood, either directly or through a war of extermination.



# SOUTH AFRICA RAILWORKERS WIN VICTORY



Railworkers beat up police after being teargassed

16000 railworkers who were sacked at the end of April after a solidarity strike have all been reinstated and most of their demands have been met. The courage and determination of these workers has won a significant battle, despite savage repression which included shooting 6 workers dead, and despite manoeuvres by the unions. Despite the fact that this strike was as usual racially divided with only the black workers striking the development of the struggle has showed in reality the unity of the interests of black and white workers.

The railworkers struggle started as a solidarity strike amongst black workers for a victimised colleague. Once the black workers had struck the bosses promptly used the white workers as scabs forcing them to do extra duties. The objection of white railworkers to this forced the bosses hand and they issued an ultimatum return to work or get the sack. There was no return to work and when the sacked workers held a demonstration the police shot them down. An explosion of anger then brokeout with sabotage of trains and the burning of stations and attacks on scabs, 5 of whom were killed. Despite the fact that three workers were actually shot in the union offices and the offices bombed, the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), to which the workers union SARWHU belongs did not respond to these atrocities on the battleground of class interests. Instead they called a 2 day strike to protest against the whites only election. This was

an attempt to divert the class struggle into the swamp of the nationalist struggle and although a strike against the election did take place this was in fact useful to the regime. The workers won reinstatement by their own refusal to return on the bosses terms. After the election was safely over the workers were reinstated with the right to permanent status - something previously only for whites- and without loss of benefits. The regime used these events to boost their standing and win votes in the election. In fact their subsequent capitulation shows that their previous policy of setting up trade unions to police the class struggle is still being followed. One of the agreements at the reinstatement was that workers had the right to "elect their own union representatives" to put their grievances to the management.

The unions have used the events to strengthen their position in the S.A. labour hierarchy and as controllers of class struggle. Although both the regime and the unions used the events to align white and black workers behind the banners of Afrikaner and African nationalism the fact that white workers objected to being given extra work as scabs points to the fundamental unity of white and black workers against the bosses. The gaining of permanent status by the black workers is a significant step towards equalising the conditions of black and white workers and in the longer term is also a step towards unity of the working class.

# BRITAIN MINERS STRIKE AGAINST BOSSES DISCIPLINE

At the time of going to press, 32,000 Yorkshire miners are set to come out on strike in support of 5 sacked colleagues from the Frickley pit in South Yorkshire, and one from the Stillingfleet colliery in Selby. The disciplinary action taken against the 6 is part of British Coal's continuing offensive against its workers.

For miners everywhere conditions have steadily worsened after the defeat of 1984. As British Coal increased its confidence it also stepped up its attacks. The 5 men in Frickley were suspended after allegedly having finished work early on the day of the pit's annual holiday, and the miner in North Yorkshire was disciplined for having advised miners not to cut coal during



1984 strike: despite high levels of militancy, the miners were unable to win alone.

## positions of the C.W.O.

- \* Every country in the world today is capitalist - including the so-called Communist states (for example Russia and China).
- \* Trade unions and shop stewards cannot defend the interests of the working class.
- \* The struggle for communism cannot be waged through Parliament, but must be carried out through workers' councils with recallable delegates.
- \* The working class can only come to power through the creation of its own political party: the international communist party.
- \* The capitalist system is in crisis and irretrievable decline. It can only offer inflation and unemployment and it cannot be reformed. The only choice for the future is war or revolution: BARBARISM or COMMUNISM

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BM CWO, LONDON WC1N 3XX

All political correspondence should be sent to our Glasgow address (see back page).

overtime. Traditionally this period has been left for maintenance work. For British Coal, however, increased productivity is far more important than safety.

The dismissals come as British Coal toughens up its disciplinary code. Even though they claim the actions against the miners would have occurred under the old code of conduct, new disciplinary

action is so far reaching that miners can be dismissed even over their conduct outside the workplace. This would also include police prosecution brought during industrial action, but even where miners were found not guilty of alleged offences they could still face the sack.

The action against the miners comes only weeks after the NUM's discussions on British Coal's desire to implement a 6 day week as part of its attempts to increase output. British Coal would like to encourage the divisions between miners fostered by union leaders in Scotland and South Wales (who were in favour of the 6 day week) against those in Yorkshire who opposed the motion.



# TOWARDS PROLETARIA

## 4. THE KORNILOV AFFAIR MOBILISES THE MASSES

As we saw when looking at the July Days the Bolsheviks were able to survive the post-July repression because of their firm roots within the working class. However for those looking for easy lessons for today, a warning. It has to be remembered that this would have not availed them anything if it was not for the relative strength of the Petrograd workers in their own concentrations in the Vyborg and Petrogradsky districts. This turned these areas into proletarian fortresses which could not be easily entered by the State.

Added to this was the chronic weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie which had failed at every turn to overthrow the Tsar but was now in 1917 trying to constitute a state which depended entirely on the level of consciousness of the working class. They were only able to pretend to power so long as the workers did not realise where their own class interests lay which meant as long as the Mensheviks and SRs still could claim an increasingly fictitious majority in the Petrograd Soviet. For the bourgeoisie the fall of the Tsar meant the removal of the greatest obstacle to winning the war against the German bourgeoisie. The proletariat thus faced continued privations throughout 1917 and could only turn to the one party which had opposed the war since its beginning. Even by early August when the vote for the City Dumas showed an increase in Bolshevik strength of 14% on the May figure, it was clear that the July Days had resulted only in a brief check to the Bolsheviks' hopes. And as the Russian proletariat increasingly united itself behind the Bolshevik Party the cracks in the bourgeoisie burst wide open.

### THE "KORNILOV SCHINA"

The apparent defeat of the Bolsheviks in July had at first given new confidence to the bourgeoisie. Stiffer measures were introduced in the army including the return of the death penalty in an attempt to restore discipline. Prince Lvov yielded to the Social Revolutionary, Kerensky as Prime Minister since it was felt that he alone had the support of the majority of the Soviet and the will to destroy the Bolsheviks. However when it quickly became clear that Kerensky was only prepared to pursue Bolsheviks and not reverse the ascendancy which the Soviets had gained since February they immediately began to cast around for a real Napoleon figure. Egged on by the British and French ambassadors who constantly promoted the cause of General Kornilov, the party of the Russian bourgeoisie, the Constitutional Democrats (known as the Kadets) now threw its weight behind a military dictatorship. Capitalists formed a "Society for the Economic Recovery of Russia aimed at financing the Kadets' plans and, as if to underline the change in the tactics of the bourgeoisie, the Kadets opened their ranks to the semi-fascist ex-members of the Tsarist Black Hundreds which were famous for their pogroms of Jews and workers under Nicholas II.

At the same time the disaster of the June Offensive forced General Brusilov to resign and Kerensky, under pressure from the Union of Officers and the Allied Ambassadors, was forced to appoint Kornilov as Commander in chief of the Army. The latter had brought himself to the attention of the British because he was the first to call for an end to the offensive so that measures could be taken to restore the officers to full control in the army. He had already carried out this policy in his part of the front by dissolving units that refused to fight, disarming over 7,000 soldiers, shooting deserters and dispersing soldiers' meetings by force. Kerensky concluded that he could save the war effort and the revolution and announced that "Kornilov, whose views are similar to those of the Provisional Government, is the man to save the situation".

Once Kornilov was appointed the active scheme against the revolution gathered pace. Riga was deliberately yielded to the Germans in order to bring Petrograd within the front line zone and therefore under military rule and this signalled the start of the crisis. We leave to bourgeois historians the task of analysing the degree of Kerensky's complicity in the early moves in the Kornilov affair. Our task is to look at the very significant turning point in the consciousness of the proletariat which came about as a result of Kornilov's actions.

To illustrate the difference let us quote at length from the only Western historian to have had real access to Russian archives.

"In previous crises, in April, June and July, the spontaneous initiatives of Bolshevik and anarchist soldiers had caused street demonstrations. The leading elements in the Bolshevik Party had been forced, in the end, to assume responsibility for a movement launched by the young men of the military organisation. As the cinema films show, there were considerably fewer workers than soldiers or sailors.

In the Kornilov affair, when the action was defensive, the reverse happened. The proletarian districts were the first to mobilise, recruiting 40,000 men and arming 25,000 from the factories through their committees or from weapons left by the Kronstadt sailors during the July Days... A further difference was that since the disappearance of the anarchists as a motive force, the militant grassroots and the higher echelons of the Bolshevik party came closer together. They remembered the effects of the lack of discipline in July, and were prudent with action which might provoke hostile action; the authority of the party leadership which had been perspicacious in July, was greater. As the party requested no demonstrations took place on 27 August. However the grassroots militants were ready for action; they responded instantly to the organisation's appeal against the Putsch because, unlike Lenin, who was preoccupied with questions of overall strategy, they were not "taken aback" at what happened, because they analysed things differently. Thus it was possible for the Petrogradsky district committee to organise defence by 23 August, four days before the appeals issued by Kerensky, Chernov, the Soviet and the Bolshevik party. Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Skorokhodov, this committee co-ordinated its actions with the other committees of the capital, planning for cars to go round to maintain communication, guarding factories, arranging information briefings at set times and the like... The people were mentally prepared, and the means for defence were made available, such that when the organisations appealed, every citizen, tree, house and stone was set to oppose the advance of Kornilov, whose telegrams failed to arrive and whose locomotives got no water. The ground crumbled under his feet." (Marc Ferro THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION - A SOCIAL HISTORY (1980) pp.56)

We make no apology for quoting this passage at length. First it reveals a new step forward in the consciousness and organisation of the working class. No longer is the running made by impetuous sailors but by the carefully considered actions of greater masses of workers. Resistance to Kornilov also sees the arming of the working class on a wide scale for the first time. It is now that the Red Guards link up with the soldiers of the Petrograd garrison and it is also at this time that tolerance of the antics of Kerensky and the Mensheviks and SRs in the Soviet comes to be replaced by greater suspicion.

Second it once again shows the Bolsheviks caught unawares by another sudden shift in the situation. However, as on earlier occasions, the Bolsheviks in Petrograd responded quickly and decisively by making it clear in their declarations in the press that they were opposing Kornilov without offering support for Kerensky. This was significant since it meant that the Bolsheviks were once again de facto legalised and more importantly could take up 3 of the 8 seats on the new "Committee for Struggle against the Counter-revolution" set up by the Soviet. The fact was that the Soviet needed the Bolsheviks more than the other way round as Sukhanov testifies

"The committee, making defence preparations, had to mobilise the worker-soldier masses. But the masses insofar as they were organised, were organised by the Bolsheviks and followed them. At that time theirs was the only organisation that was large, welded together by an elementary discipline and linked with the democratic lowest levels of the capital. Without it the committee was impotent" (from Rabinowitch p.132)



Petrograd 1917:  
Workers take over their own districts

### BOLSHEVIK TACTICS

Lenin, who was still in hiding in Finland, was taken more by surprise than the other Bolshevik leaders. This was because he recognised that the failure of July had given the bourgeoisie the opportunity to roll back the revolution towards a military dictatorship. However he assumed that the bourgeoisie had found their dictator in Kerensky and that though he was only a caricature of a Bonaparte he would probably survive for some time. He was clear however that Kerensky would not last.

"The Russian Bonapartism of 1917 differs from the beginnings of French Bonapartism in 1799 and 1849 in several respects, such as the fact that not a single task of the revolution has been accomplished here." (SELECTED WORKS VOL.25 p.221)

Foremost amongst these tasks was the settling of the land and war questions. Even though Chernov, the leader of the Social Revolutionaries, the supposed peasant party, was Minister of Agriculture, the land seizures of the peasants were resisted by force because the provisional Government and its Soviet allies had no wish to break with the bourgeoisie and landowners. The latter were demonstrating their gratitude for this by looking for a general to sweep aside the Soviets. This is why they committed suicide by opting for the Kornilov adventure. It was this



# AN OCTOBER

that caught Lenin by surprise. Once he saw what had happened he had no hesitation in supporting the actions of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd. Indeed this episode rather undermines the picture given by both bourgeois and Stalinist historians (as well as a few Trotskyist writers like Tony Cliff) that without Lenin the Bolshevik Party was incapable of acting. In this case Lenin's contribution was to frame the proletarian response to a dilemma which an event like the Kornilov affair poses for the proletariat.

In a letter "To the Central Committee of the RSDLP" (i.e the Bolsheviks) he wrote

"The Kornilov revolt is a ... downright unbelievably sharp turn in events.

Like every sharp turn, it calls for a revision and a change of tactics. And, as with every revision, we must be extra cautious not to become unprincipled.

It is my conviction that those who become unprincipled are people who (like Volodarsky) slide into defencism or (like other Bolsheviks) into a bloc with the SRs into supporting the Provisional Government. Their attitude is absolutely wrong and unprincipled...

Even now we must not support Kerensky's government. This is unprincipled. We will be asked: aren't we going to fight against Kornilov? Of course we must! But this is not the same thing; there is a dividing line here, which is being stepped over by some Bolsheviks who fall into compromise and allow themselves to be carried away by the course of events.

We shall fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, just as Kerensky's troops do, but we do not support Kerensky. On the contrary, we expose his weakness. There is the difference. It is a rather subtle difference, but it is highly essential and must not be forgotten...

...we must campaign not so much directly against Kerensky as indirectly against him, namely by demanding a more and more active, truly revolutionary war against Kornilov...by drawing the masses in, by arousing them, by inflaming them (Kerensky is afraid of the masses, afraid of the people)..."

(SELECTED WORKS VOL. 2 pp.168-70)

Lenin quickly added a footnote congratulating the Bolsheviks in Petrograd on having already carried out the policy he was advocating. However the stance taken by the Bolsheviks needs some discussion if we are to explain its real significance, particularly since the tactics adopted have been used on numerous occasions since by those who claim to be proletarian to justify opportunist and counter-revolutionary positions.

The tactics adopted by the Bolsheviks during the Kornilov Affair have often been cited as the precursor for the united front of 1921 or the anti-fascist slogans of the 1930s. However as Lenin (and Marx) often pointed out the key to any understanding of political action is to locate it within its specific historical context. If we do this we can see why the last two are expressions of defeat for the working class whilst the former was correct because it was concocted in an entirely different situation. In August and September the Petrograd masses were already moving forward in a confident fashion, as the quotation from Ferro above shows. In this context it was possible for the Bolsheviks to fight alongside the Mensheviks and SRs but without compromising their political independence. Not to have acted thus would have been to turn their backs on an opportunity to demonstrate their capacity and resolution in practice. In 1921 and in the 1930s the tactic of the united front and the anti-fascist alliance were totally different because they took place in a situation when the working class was in retreat. The net

result of these policies was to legitimise the forces of social democracy as proletarian (whereas the Kornilov Affair was dragging these forces further towards revolution than they wanted) and to associate the defence of the workers' interests with the defence of capitalist democracy. In the Kornilov Affair the defence of Petrograd took place under the aegis of the workers' own organs: the soviets, so there was no danger that the defenders of capitalist democracy would gain from it. Indeed the logic of the Kornilov Affair was for the Soviet to take over from the Provisional Government immediately to prevent any further plotting by Kerensky and the Right.

## "ALL POWER TO THE WORKING CLASS"

This was not a step that the Menshevik or SR leaderships could take. After six months of support for a coalition with the bourgeoisie they were not prepared to abandon that policy now, however treacherous their erstwhile allies were. However, factory after factory was now coming round to the view that only the soviet could be relied on to defend the revolution. On the day after Kornilov was defeated workers in the machine shop of the Petrograd pipe factory declared that "all power must be transferred to the soviet of workers, soldiers and peasants deputies" whilst the 8000 workers at the Metallist factory approved a motion of no confidence in the socialists who co-operated with the Government. These declarations were followed in all the larger Petrograd factories and were soon echoed in the garrisons, even of those regiments which had suppressed the July Days. Three days after the defeat of Kornilov the Petrograd Soviet endorsed a resolution proposed by Kamenev that the government should be replaced by one composed only of workers' representatives. It was the first time that a Bolshevik resolution achieved a majority in that body. What was clear was that the Kornilov affair had led to an enormous leap forward in class consciousness.

"The soviets, now distinctly more radical in outlook, emerged from the crisis with their popularity amongst the masses immeasurably enhanced. Revolutionary Russia was more widely saturated than ever before with competing grassroots political organisations and revolutionary committees. Workers had become more militant and better organised, and significant numbers of them had obtained weapons. At the same time, democratic committees in the army, by virtue of their leading role in organising soldiers against the Kornilov movement, were rejuvenated. Within the Petrograd garrison, control of many regimental committees passed from more moderate elements into the hands of the Bolsheviks." (Rabinowitch p.166)

Lenin at this point once again raised the possibility that there could still be a peaceful development of the revolution if the Mensheviks and SRs would allow the soviets to take power.

"By seizing full power the soviets could still today - and this is probably their last chance - insure the peaceful development of the revolution, peaceful elections of deputies by the people, and a peaceful struggle of parties inside the soviets" ("THE TASKS OF THE REVOLUTION")

Lenin also spelled out why soviet power would be fundamentally different to the other governments that had appeared in 1917.

"The slogan 'Power to the Soviets' however, is very often, if not in most cases, taken quite incorrectly to mean a 'Cabinet of the parties of the Soviet majority'..."

..."Power to the Soviets" means radically reshaping the entire state apparatus which hampers everything democratic ... i.e the organised and armed majority of

the people - the workers, soldiers and peasant. It means allowing the majority of the people initiative and independence not only in the election of deputies, but also in state administration, in changes." (SELECTED WORKS VOL. 2 pp220-1)

The above passage not only gives the lie to those who keep quoting "What is to be Done" to show that Lenin only saw the masses as there to be manipulated but in clearly formulating what soviet power meant put the the so-called democrats of the SRs and Mensheviks on the spot. They could not bring themselves to abandon the Provisional Government since they, like Kerensky feared the actions of the masses. As they still clung to Kerensky the latter tried to put down the tide of popular agitation by issuing decrees dissolving all ad hoc revolutionary committees (including the Committee for Struggle against Counter-revolution). The fact that the Bolsheviks were the only party to consistently support soviet power now began to tell in their favour. By early September the Bolsheviks had won control of the Petrograd Soviet with 4 out of the 7 seats on the Praesidium going to them. Trotsky once again became leader of the Petrograd Soviet. Six days later Moscow went Bolshevik followed by Kiev, Kazan, Baku and many other industrial centres. It was a similar story in the Army where in units like the Moscow garrison a June majority of 70% was turned into a 90% vote for the Bolsheviks in September. More stories could be told for Bolshevik advances in local councils (in Moscow their representation rose from 11 to 475), in trade unions and even in sickness cooperative boards which as Ferro argues "was the evidence of a very large-scale movement which came from the depths of society" (op.cit. p.58).

At the same time the lack of revolutionary will on the part of the Mensheviks and SRs saw the break-up of their organisations. Whilst a split in the SRs resulted in the formation of the Left SRs which generally acted with the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks became a rump as many of their delegates flooded into the ranks of the Bolsheviks. However this increase in popular support did not automatically mean victory for the proletariat. Soviet power could not come about by making speeches or passing resolutions about it. First the old order would have to be pushed aside and for this the proletariat would have to find its instrument. It found it in the Bolshevik Party. (TO BE CONTINUED)

## REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES

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## IBRP LETTER TO CCA (MEXICO)

In WORKERS VOICE 35 we published news of strikes in Mexico provided by the Communist Collective of Alptraum (Mexico City). Lack of space forced us to cut some of the theoretical premises to that article and we confined ourselves to a single line criticism in which we stated that the comrades of the CCA seemed to have "some illusions about the level of class consciousness of workers in Europe". We are taking this opportunity to publish the reply which the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party (to which the CWO is affiliated) sent to the CCA to clarify the political perspectives on which our practice is based.

Dear Comrades

We have also received your document on Mexico, which our English comrades have already translated and published in the news section of WV35. The IBRP meeting in Paris greatly appreciated your initiative in writing such a document and in sending it to all revolutionary organisations, and we appreciated the accuracy and comprehensiveness of your account. Indeed, this account of events in Mexico further confirms our positions and perspectives. Let us examine its significance.

1. An objective tendency exists for broad sectors of the proletariat to enter into struggle under the pressure of the political and economic effects of the crisis (or bourgeois economic policy).

2. The union and bourgeois political forces within the heart of the working class (the unions and the bourgeois left) continue to be capable of containing and diverting the class pressure from below in order to conduct it into the sphere of "compatibility with capitalism".

With regard to the first point, events in Europe show that the pressure to struggle is not directly linked either to the gravity of the crisis or the severity of the attacks on the proletariat. Just look at the facts. In the course of seven years (since Poland 1980) we have witnessed the intermittent breakout of discontent and workers' struggle in sectors of the class which have then remained predominantly isolated from the rest of the class. We do not however think that the frequency and extent of these flames of struggle indicate - so far, at least - a tendency towards progressive development. For example, after the struggles of the British miners, the Belgian public sector workers and the French railway workers, we have in Italy the strange situation in which the agitated strata are those of...the petit bourgeoisiel! (Doctors, air pilots, magistrates, medium and higher state functionaries and, now, teachers).

It should be said here that various tendencies are emerging in the teachers' disturbance, which is still under way as we write. If it is right not to regard teachers as proletarians, it should nevertheless be recognised that there are some "proletarianised" elements which have not failed to assert themselves on this occasion. Anyway, we enclose the document which we have widely distributed in schools in various cities, as an analysis of the basis for the orientation and intervention of the proletarianised elements and their vanguard. On the other hand, however, the industrial proletariat and the unemployed, who are undergoing severe attack, remain for the moment passive, almost resigned.

You write that "this situation has given rise throughout the world to mobilisations of broad proletarian strata, principally in Western Europe. The development of these movements behind these demands has signalled proletarian resistance and a proletarian answer to the conditions which capitalism is attempting to force upon the proletariat." Comrades, we do not agree. Capitalism is not attempting to subject the proletariat to conditions even worse than those of the past - it has already succeeded in doing this. And the workers response, as yet, has quite failed to reach the same level as the blows they have sustained.

You may have been influenced by the emphasis laid by the ICC upon the episodic workers' struggles in Europe - an emphasis out of all proportion to reality - and perhaps by the newspaper reports in your country. Reality is however more complex: alongside episodes of heroic struggle (in terms of duration and sacrifices made by the workers) such as that of the British miners, we see the passivity of all other sectors of the class in Britain and other sectors in Europe. The flaring up of workers' rage and exasperation is indeed a result of the crisis, but at a level far below what would be "proportionate". There is no point in concealing this reality. The point is to explain it.

To explain the relative passivity of the class and its inability to reply to the attacks stemming from capital, it is not enough to look for scapegoats (the unions, the parties etc). The power of persuasion of the parties and the unions is not the cause but the manifestation of the essential phenomenon which is the real domination of capital over society. In other words, the ability of the left parties and the unions to control and divert the elementary pressures on the struggle of the working class expresses the proletariat's submission to capitalist logic (especially in the metropolises). An example: when two years ago the union left and some of the parties here caused a referendum to be held on a law which actually cut wages, the unions were divided. In the end, the decision was to cut wages. Yet, in many factory referenda when the workers were called upon to vote (isolated as individuals) for or against this contract/fraud, "the ayes had it", which meant the self-defeat of the class.

The equilibrium upon which bourgeois society rests still exists. It has been consolidated in Europe over almost two centuries, and a powerful, material class movement is required to break it. This is a massive confirmation of Marx's "foresight" in The German Ideology, notably in the paragraph on the "ideology dominant in society".

The more capitalism's domination becomes real, the more that this expresses itself in the superstructure, reinforcing social equilibrium in such a way that the more it crystallises, the harder and more violent will be the process that breaks it.

The isolation of the revolutionary vanguards of the class should also be interpreted in this way. This isolation grew between the wars and during the reconstruction period, so that we have become extremely sparse minorities. This is the consequence of the extraneity of revolutionary thought to capitalist society's economic, social and political equilibrium. The issue of revolutionary perspectives coincides with the issue of the revival of the revolutionary programme as a reference point for the class. When and how will this happen?

If it is now evident that, as Marx indicated, it is the material process itself which destroys the bourgeois equilibrium and reopens space for the revolutionary programme in the heart of the working class. Such a material rupture of this equilibrium lies within the bourgeois dynamic itself (this is fundamental to the materialist dialectic). We, the revolutionary vanguards, can only have a very limited, almost non-existent, influence on this process, precisely because we are still outside the material dynamic of society.

This is the focal point of a historic debate between revolutionaries and of an even more historical polemic between communists and attendists (i.e. those who would just do nothing but wait-and-see). In fact the question is: why should revolutionary minorities intervene in the class if it is not in their power to push the class towards struggle? We answer: because the class struggle will not by itself lead to communist revolution. Workers' struggle can spontaneously reach the point where it breaks the social equilibrium and even breaks the social peace: this has often happened in history and recent history (Poland). But if it does not transform itself into a revolutionary attack on the basis of a communist programme, capitalism will retain

its capacity to re-establish the equilibrium (perhaps on a different, more advanced basis, but still on a capitalist basis). Revolutionary intervention by the Party is necessary to defeat any bourgeois influence, in any form, in order to make possible the passage from protests and demands to a frontal attack on the bourgeois state. The concrete experience of class militants, moreover, confirms that in certain circumstances the active intervention of revolutionaries facilitates and accelerates the organisation of struggle, including struggles around demands, even in periods of "stagnation".

It is thus in a moment of rupture of social equilibrium, through the working out of a "vertical Crisis" in society, that the revival of the revolutionary programme as a reference point for the class becomes possible: that is, only then is it possible for the class to reappropriate its historic programme. We say possible, of course: it is neither inevitable nor mechanically determined. And it is here that the "reaction of the superstructure on the structure" comes into play - the return of the power and will of men over the great social processes. And even of a few men, if they have known how to work well! and beforehand!!

The condition for the victory of the revolutionary programme within the proletariat is the defeat of what we have defined as the bourgeois influences on and in the class. Such influences are represented, or rather materially exercised, by the political and union forces organised in the heart of the class. The defeat of such bourgeois influences means, in the first instance, the defeat of the bourgeois and petit bourgeois political forces organised within the class.

Defeat (or victory) will be the result of a more or less hard struggle, depending upon the forces, weapons and tenacity of the contenders.

This political battle, which should develop in the working class between forces which aim to keep it tied to the conservation of capitalism or to programmes which help this conservation and revolutionary forces, cannot be conceived as a battle of ideas lasting a few days, which will be won by the better ideas. Instead, the revolutionary forces should be able to fight on every terrain - theoretical, political and organisational - against the enemy forces. We will need cadres, and theoretical, political and organisational weapons which cannot be forged in a day or in the brief period during which the situation is objectively insurrectionary.

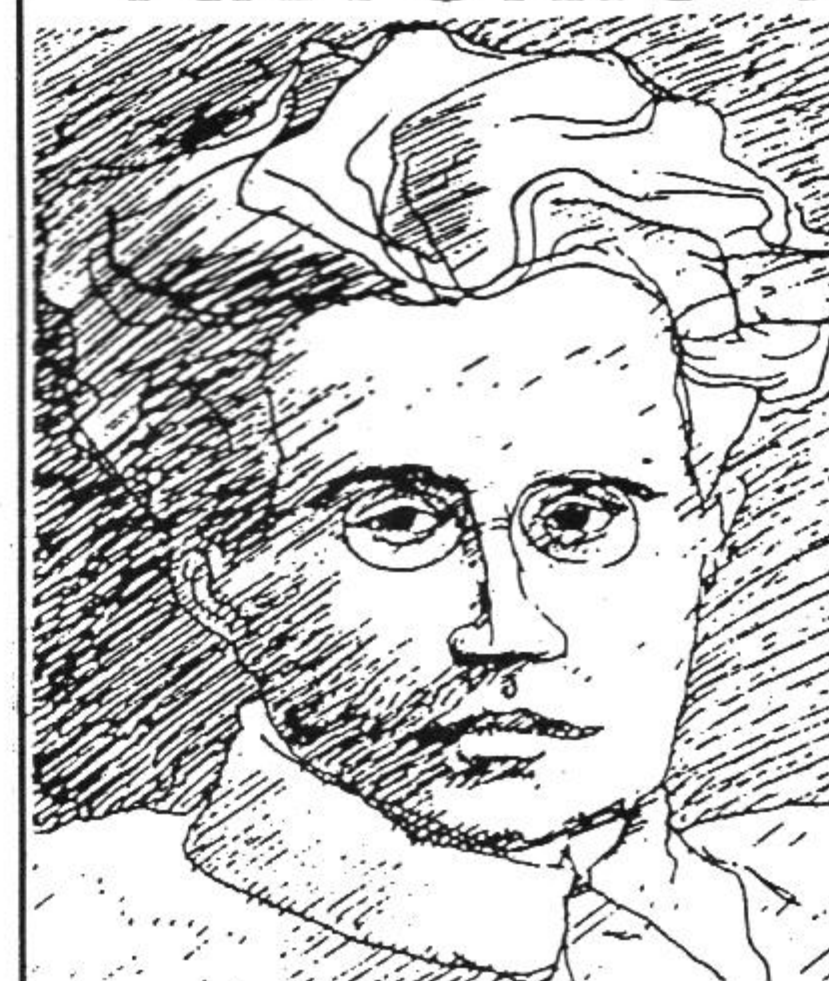
From these simple observations emerges the necessity for the arduous task of constructing the international party of the proletariat. We must create cadres for the conflict, who will be formed by the very struggle which they should carry on well in advance of the revolutionary assault. We must develop and extend tactics of political struggle, and these too will emerge from the experience of organised militancy. We must acquire the weapons of organised political battle, consisting of the advance guards of the

continued on page 2

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# REVIEW 'THE STRUGGLES FOR POLAND'

## CHANNEL 4

### THE USE AND ABUSE OF HISTORY

The use of television for historical analysis is a very problematic issue technically, and the Channel 4 series on Poland in the Twentieth Century, due to end in early August, fails to avoid certain obvious pitfalls. In the first place, there is the use of historical newsreel material - fascinating in itself - but which tends to detract from the spoken word, and leave behind an image, rather than an analysis. Further, the limitations of commentary in television, (the entire series used less than 7,000 words - an undergraduate essay), means that drastic oversimplification is unavoidable, and then becomes a shield the producers can hide behind. To cover a hundred years in about 10 hours was a mistake. But the flaws in this series run much deeper than oversimplification and trivialisation.

The series was made by a combination of West German, U.S. and British T.V. companies, with collaboration from emigre Polish forces, such as the Sikorski Museum, and inevitably, despite attempts at "objectivity", reflects the views and interests of Western imperialism, and its aspirant client forces, within and without Poland. Actually the "objectivity" is paper-thin; at the time of writing, just over half way through the series, the only Stalinist interviewed (tedious interviews, where the interviewee recounts mundanities of personal experience, constitute about one third of the screen time) is one who turned coat in the 1950's. And of course, there is no room for any analysis with the representatives of the -admittedly weak-forces of real communism in Polish history, or recognition of their existence. This is the tragedy of "democratic" Poland as seen by western imperialism, as its natural claim to "nationhood" is thwarted by German and, of course much more so, by Russian grand designs.

The early programmes idealised pre-partition Poland as a land of culture and freedom, when in fact it was an area where the enslavement of the basic producers was harsher than anywhere bar Russia, and where the Polish nobles amply demonstrated their incapacity to rule. The "liberum veto" meant that all decisions in Poland's aristocratic parliament had to be unanimous, leading to chaos. The only time there was unanimity was when they were bribed to accept the partition of the country by Prussia, Russia and Austria! So much for "independent Poland".

1846, and massacred them, when promised their lands by the Austrians! The feebleness of Polish nationalism stemmed not only from the Holy Alliance against it, but from the lack of a social class capable of leading the national revolt.

Poland's greatest socialist, Rosa Luxemburg, does not figure in this series, and her words written before the imperialist holocaust, sum up the reality, rather than the romance of Poland under foreign rule,

"Poland is bound to Russia with chains of gold..The recognisable direction of social development has made it clear to me that there is no social class in Poland that has at one and the same time both an interest in, and an ability to achieve, the restoration of Poland".

Indeed, a restored Poland came into effect, not as the result of a mass uprising, but due to the machinations of German imperialism, which allowed the ex-leader of the Polish Socialist Party, Pilsudski, to restore an independence eventually recognised at Versailles. The Poland today idealised by emigres, and western interests was a military dictatorship behind a parliamentary facade, especially after Pilsudski's coup of 1927. Harsh repression was meted out on Germans, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and above all Jews, seen as a threat to "Catholic Poland", and suffering apartheid (Poland had the last ghettos in Europe) and pogroms.

The Polish state behaved not like an eagle, but like a jackal, attacking and seizing territory from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania and Russia in the years after 1919. These mini-imperialist successes could allow the Polish bourgeoisie to parade in the stolen garb of a great power for a decade, but with the recovery of Russia and Germany in the 1930's, a choice had to be made of masters. Contrary to the picture of "gallant little Poland" struggling to maintain its freedom against the imperialist powers, the Polish bourgeoisie opted for Germany. In 1934 Pilsudski made a non-aggression pact with Hitler, and later discussions for an alliance were held by his successors Smigly and Beck. However, they overplayed their hand thinking they were indispensable to Hitler. Refusing to hand back any German territory taken in 1919, the Poles in addition demanded their

free reign to their anti-semitism and anti-Russianism, and the Polish resistance movement was pretty feeble, apart from the doomed Warsaw Uprising of 1944, which was aimed militarily at the Germans, but politically against the advancing Russians. The latter left it to its fate, to remove a potential rival for power. "Shame" cries the narrative, but remains silent on the Polish Home Army's inertia during the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943. Lack of space, or selective amnesia?

With the series well underway, one can chart fairly confidently the outline of the remaining chapters. A long series of denunciations of the wickedness of Russian imperialism and paeans to the representatives of the "real" Poland, struggling to be free, represented by the Pope and Waleska. But we communists need no hypocritical cataloguing of the crimes of Stalinism, just as we give no support to the forces which seek, in vain, outwith a world war, to place a national-catholic and "democratic" Poland in the western camp. The real testimony to the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism is the fact that it has driven the Polish working class into the arms of some of the most reactionary social forces on the planet. But this series is not from our perspective, nor does it advance our message.

(The second part of this review will appear in the next edition of "Workers Voice").

#### MINERS continued from page 3

Moreover, if the strike was defeated it would greatly help British Coal in its attempts to close Frickley pit. This is what British Coal want and they have

pinned a notice to the NUM building inside Frickley declaring: "This pit is closed indefinitely". The 16,000 miners in South Yorkshire have also been issued with a letter telling them that strike action was a "serious breach" of their contract and that the result could be dismissal. British Coal have had serious doubts about the profitability of the pit and look more favourably to dismissals, rather than having to pay out for redundancies.

Leaders of the NUM in Yorkshire are extremely anxious to avoid a fightback. The Yorkshire Miners president, Jack Taylor is hoping to be able to sit down with British Coal to work out a disciplinary code which the unions would be better able to sell to its members. The NUM nationally has decided to call for a ballot on other areas on the issue, with the chance that by the time the results have been collected, the Yorkshire miners will remain isolated and the issue will have blown over. Other areas will be asked whether they will support some kind of industrial action, and token solidarity action seems most likely. In the meantime the Yorkshire NUM is putting out feelers to British Coal in the hope of accepting a compromise before other areas are consulted.

British Coal and the NUM have both been surprised by the level of militancy amongst Yorkshire miners and both will have to take into account the strong feelings of miners against the disciplinary codes. The level of militancy has shown that the miners are still a force to be reckoned with, but if the offensives of British Coal are to be pushed back effectively both now and in the future, sporadic localised fights will have to develop into a broad based fightback. Unity with other miners is essential, and this will involve fighting against all union attempts to maintain local issues on a local basis. The problems faced by the miners in Yorkshire are faced by miners everywhere, and attempts by the bosses to increase exploitation and redundancies are currently being faced by most other groups of workers. Unity with other sectors of the working class is essential. The attacks on all workers are the same; the fightback will have to be a unified one if the miners are to succeed.



1905 NATIONALIST UPRISING

Under foreign rule, conditions for the Polish masses got no worse; indeed in Prussia serfdom was abolished, which the Polish nobility had long opposed. With acquiescent peasant masses and a Jewish German or Russian bourgeoisie, the national movement in the Polish speaking area was led by the nobility, and had a very narrow social base, as opposed to the picture of an entire people yearning for the restoration of nationhood, as was painted on our screens. Indeed, the Polish peasants in Austria turned on their nobles in revolt in

"historical" lands in the Ukraine, which Hitler had planned for German settlement. None of these sordid manoeuvres of the Polish bourgeoisie were even mentioned on the screen - lack of space? No, such myths about Poland's past are necessary to enroll an idealised inter-war state as the "legitimate" Polish tradition, against the Russian "usurpation".

Much more could have been made of the widespread collaboration during the war with the Germans. Many Poles were delighted to give



# WORKERS VOICE

## NORTHERN IRELAND:

Ulster's annual summer festival of ritualised confrontation - the marching season - has always been used by ruling class strategists as a barometer of the extent to which sectarian tension has eased in the province, and as a measure of the chances of "normalisation" of capitalist exploitation. The British Government in particular has a special interest in seeing if its sundry constitutional initiatives - attempts to placate both "communities" - are gaining an echo within the population, the practical result of which is assumed to be a decrease in violence, allowing a corresponding decline in security commitment.

Social democratic and even leftist groupings in the province have also taken a peculiar interest in the decline of the fortunes of old sectarian ideologies, as they openly state that liberalisation is a prerequisite for their more conventional roles in bourgeois political life.

The communist attitude to sectarianism shares nothing in common with any of these strategies which see a return to capitalist normality in Ulster as a gain for the working class. On the contrary we see the destruction of these false divisions within the class only as a first necessary step in the destruction of all capitalist social relations. Not that the fight against sectarianism should stabilise social life in Ireland, but that it should unify workers - Protestant and Catholic, North and South - in a struggle to destroy a crisis ridden social system which doles out austerity to its victims, no matter what their historical origin.

### ANTI-SECTARIAN SUCCESSES?

Since the first imposition of direct rule from London in March 1972 the central strategy of the ruling class has always seen the dismantling of sectarian Unionist practices as the means by which the UK's most troublesome region could be pacified. Indeed in many ways this was only a continuation of the attempts by the "liberal" Unionist higherarchy to curb the most embarrassing aspects of the operation of the Northern Ireland state in the Sixties.

The idea was that Catholic workers could be won away from the IRA by demonstrating that major restructuring of the state was taking place for their benefit, while Unionism, denied direct power would negate its traditional character, allowing the liberal wing to split and become the party of government in cooperation with Catholic representatives. The problem for the British state was that such was the identification of Protestant security with a particular type of close local political control of the forces of repression that it was the populism of those

## FIGHTING SECTARIANISM

such as Paisley rather than Unionisms "reasonable men" that were encouraged by Direct Rule.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement of November 1985 must be seen as a reaffirmation of the main London strategy, with its formal recognition of the 'Irish Dimension' and its encouragement to nationalists to strive for reforms within the existing constitutional set-up. And once again it was the populist Unionists who benefited from the hostility to the initiative, with all that this implied in terms of the return of widespread Loyalist intimidation of Catholic workers, and generalised sectarian strife.

However as the CWO predicted in its original assessment of the Agreement, faced with the opposition of the Thatcher administration firmly embedded and self-confident the Unionists have cracked, abandoning their abstentionist line and proposing talks which would eventually lead to a form of effective power sharing with Catholics. Policies which create potential further sectarian confrontation such as strikes and illegal marches have been discretely ditched by the Unionist mainstream.

The bourgeois "normalisers" have also apparently been more successful in the workplaces with the Protestant workers being relatively unresponsive this year to calls to strike for the right to display sectarian flags and emblems, the workers at the Belfast aircraft makers Shorts being particularly notable in this respect. Added to this there has been a resurgence of strike activity in DHSS offices in response to sectarian threats. In Lisburn and the Shankill for example all workers have struck in defence of their Catholic workmates.

### THE LEFT

The sectarian dispute at Shorts has been notable in that the unions virtually become the mouthpiece of the management attitude and clamoured to call for normal working so as not to alienate customers! This is however indicative of a host of reformist groups, whose enthusiasm for recent developments has been almost indistinguishable from the state itself.

The CWO has previously welcomed workers self-defence in Ulster, while warning against the dangers of "anti-sectarianism" becoming an ideology in itself, which is completely acceptable to the ruling class. Elements such as the Irish Congress of Trades Unions and the so-called Workers' Party are classic examples of how a purely pacifist attitude to the question of sectarianism leads the working class back on to the bourgeois terrain of conventional social democratic activities.

The Workers' Party, the highly active all-Ireland Stalinist group, have undoubtedly been the most vociferous in their call for the abandonment of sectarian ideology and the taking up of "class politics". Their own origins as the Official wing of the IRA and Sinn Fein in the early Seventies have made their Northern section particularly sensitive to charges of residual nationalist leanings, and they are now the loudest defenders of the Northern Ireland state (if it is "reformed") of all the basically Catholic parties.

We leave it to the right-wing Unionists to discredit the sincerity of the Workers' Party in wanting to put class before nation. For us it is the nature of their much vaunted "class politics" which objectively ally them with the ruling class and not political dishonesty. No worker with experience of this party's activity in the South can doubt that not only are they no menace to the capitalist status quo but that they are in fact essential in drawing militant workers back within the orbit of bourgeois politics in a country with an obviously hopelessly reformist Labour Party. Their principle activity is the defence of the considerable Irish state capitalist sector, concerns which have been in the forefront of attacks on the living standards of the Southern workers. It is only the absence of "normal" bourgeois politics in the North which disguises their essentially social democratic and reformist character there.

### AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

Not only is it futile to attempt to reform away particular repulsive aspects of capitalist domination (such as the divisions it throws up within the working class) without challenging directly the system from which they come, it is also positively dangerous. As we have seen on the sectarian issue groups which claim to represent the working class end up fighting shoulder to shoulder beside the capitalist state for the restoration of "normal society".

The CWO stands for an anti-sectarian workers unity which is forged in the class struggle and which resolutely defends working class independence not only from nationalism but from social democracy as well. Only in the class fight will Irish workers realise not only that Protestants and Catholics have a common interest in the destruction of capitalism but that all divisions within the class are based on false premises.



A festival of reaction:  
Orangemen parade through Belfast

Hence it is not the purely passive resistance of those such as the Shorts and DHSS workers which we applaud most loudly, but the as yet more numerically limited instances, such as the militant Abbey Meat dispute outside Belfast, where real workers unity is forged in the defence of living standards. The strike over a pay freeze and flexible working agreement has given the best possible answer to the Ulster workers supposed respect for "legality", with the centrepiece of a plant occupation and refusal to be led into a union compromise. Although the main weakness of the strike has been a failure to link up beyond craft divisions to neighbouring factories facing redundancies the workers did take the highly significant step of travelling to occupy a sister plant in Cork, an action which provoked an immediate response by the Republic's state to isolate them from their Southern comrades. The spectacle of predominately Protestant workers making common cause with Southern Catholics is something we must see more of as material reality increasingly displays our common identity. Working class unity is an absolute prerequisite for the political project of socialist revolution in which the CWO is involved.

\* \* \* \* \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

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