

Capitalism Offers More Misery The Workers Have the Only Solution

The capitalist capacity for whistling whilst the world economy crumbles seems to know no limits. Leading the way in Micawberism is the British state which though finding a depreciation in its moral values is once again asserting the recovery of the material ones (yes, we know, the green shoots of recovery were supposed to have been sighted last year too!). It is true that inflation and unemployment are officially down but before we get too impressed we should remember that this is the first crisis in world history where mass unemployment has not led to a **fall in prices**. And unemployment is still running at record levels. Although the British state only counts those as claiming benefit as unemployed, a recent study at Cambridge University calculates that real UK unemployment is running at 4.01 millions. Even this admits to discounting 340,000 who are unemployed but have stated they don't want work. All the talk of recovery also discounts a budget deficit of £50 billions and the fact that current production in almost every area is still running at about 2% below the 1990 level (according to the *Financial Times* Economic Indicators).

Incredibly, after the longest crisis of accumulation in the history of capitalism, which, despite the short-term booms, has lasted more than twenty years, there are still leading bourgeois economists who can pretend that it has never existed. Latest of these is Nobel Prize winner, Paul Samuelson. He is currently telling audiences that "billions of people who live in East Asia and Latin America" will soon "qualify for good modern jobs". This may sound familiar. It has been the expectation of so-called "development economics" since the Second World War.

The facts speak otherwise. Argentina, Brazil,

Iran, Malaysia, South Korea etc. etc. have all been hailed in their turn as the next world economic superpower only for a re-assessment to conclude that most of their growth was foreign aid dependent and had been greatly exaggerated. Latest for the "now you see it, now you don't" school of growth has been South East China. Only eighteen months ago tales of astonishing growth rates of 12% were being relayed in the bourgeois press. Today inflation has led to "overheating" and the lay-offs so familiar elsewhere. We cannot deny that there have been enclaves of economic growth in some areas but these have been relatively small (Hong Kong and Singapore) or restricted to parts of a country only. This is not the "billions" that Samuelson speaks of.

As to the rest of the world the story is one of gradual and increasing misery. It is no surprise that Samuelson does not mention Africa at all. Real wages there fell 40% throughout the 1980s continuing a downward spiral which has seen African living standards (according to Oxfam) returning to the levels of the 1960s. And these are on averages which don't take into account the increase in the gap between the richest and the poorest in that time.

The same picture is true of the so-called metropolitan countries, if less dramatic in its consequences. In the United States the capitalist boast is that unemployment has been falling for a number of years but the cost of this has been that real hourly earnings of all workers in the private sector fell between 1979 and 1989 from \$8.17 to \$7.45 (calculated at a standard purchasing power equivalent to the 1982 dollar). The real hourly wages of young males actually fell much faster at a rate of 20% in absolute terms.

In Britain it is a similar story. According to the Low Pay Unit (reported in *The Independent* 17.12.93), more than 37% of the British workforce earn less than Council of Europe's 'decency threshold' compared with 28% in 1979. The same report also goes on to note that the gap between the highest paid and the lowest paid is now greater than when records began in 1886. One of the reasons for such a massive drop in living standards is that whilst most of the jobs that have been lost have been full-time and relatively well-paid they have been replaced by part-time low paid work. This doesn't matter for the state's statistics since anyone taking a part-time job counts as employed.

And the attacks are only going to get worse. The 1945-51 Labour Government did not set up a welfare state (which some forget that the working class have always paid for out of taxation) because they were socialists or represented the workers. They set it up because they feared a revolutionary wave after the war like that in Europe between 1917 and 1923. Today when the working class has been in slow but steady retreat for more than a decade the dismantling of the welfare state is the next target of a bankrupt capitalist state. So far they have hesitated to do more than tinker with the edges of this but now both Labour and Tory are looking at plans to cut benefits on a grand scale. Clinton's scheme to end welfare for the long-term unemployed is being looked at with interest. If he can get away with it the ruling class in Britain will come up with their own scheme. The theoretical justification has been voiced many times in the past - workers can't price themselves out of jobs. The latest version comes from the influential *Financial Times* journalist, Samuel Brittan. He argues that the restructuring of the capitalist

economy via "skill-based technical change" requires not just more education and training for workers but

There is also the need for more sensitive social security arrangements which will encourage people to stay in the labour market even on low or part-time pay.

Which means "you ain't seen nothing yet" compared to what capitalism has in store for the working class. Already we are faced with massive increases in fuel bills and (quietly not mentioned in the Budget) council tax but these may not be the last of the capitalist attacks in 1994. And those workers who a decade or so ago thought that if they bought the capitalist arguments about belt-tightening they would be alright in the long-term are now languishing on the dole. The truth is that capitalism is in deep structural crisis of profitability of the type that preceded the two previous world wars. At the present time the capitalists still think that a combination of monetarism and Keynesianism plus the restructuring of the finance capitalists will once again revive prosperity but the historical evidence is against them. The only class that is capable of producing a positive and global solution to the present misery is the world working class. It alone can abolish the law of value which dictates the necessity for capitalism's cyclical crises. Only a working class system of production for need and not for profit can guarantee an adequate standard of living for all the world's people. The ability of the working class to fight capitalist attacks in the years ahead will be the key to the future of humanity.

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NATO: FROM FEAR OF "FINLANDISATION" TO

THE FEAR OF "YUGOSLAVISATION"

NATO...

... everybody wants to join - Poland, the Czech Lands, Slovakia, Hungary (the "Visegrad Four"), the rest of the old Eastern bloc (East Germany excluded), the various bits that have fallen off the USSR in its metamorphosis into the CIS and less... Even Albania tried its luck (but was flatly rejected)! The "Visegrad Four" (along with every other state in Europe not already in the alliance) have now been offered the "long engagement", of the "Partnership for Peace", which they've accepted as better than nothing.

President Clinton declared, after his Prague meeting with Havel and Klaus, Goencz and Boross, Walesa and Pawlak, and Kovac and Meciar (Presidents and Prime Ministers of the

Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia respectively):

While the Partnership is not NATO membership, neither is it a permanent holding room. It changes the entire NATO dialogue so that now the question is no longer whether NATO will take on new members, but when and how. It leaves the door open to the best possible outcome for our [Prague is in the US's backyard?!] region democracy, markets and security [!] all across a broader Europe...

Record of Press Conference, 12th January 1994, issued by the White House.

But why would anyone want to join NATO, now? There is some bewilderment as to how this question could be answered. The Labour MP,

Bob Cryer, gave voice to this confusion when he asked the House what use NATO was, now that the threat, if threat it had ever been, from Russia was no longer felt, since this is what NATO had been built to combat. If you accept the idea that NATO was constructed to save freedom from the devilish Russkies, rather than to save Western capitalism's freedom from whatever was threatening it at a time when it had an overriding common interest, then you will be perplexed. At the time when Western imperialism really was threatened by Eastern imperialism, the distinction between NATO's real function (defending the West's interests) and its pretended one (defending the West from the social system of its competitor - laughably described as "communism") might have seemed a rather fine one, but real distinctions, even if

fine, have a habit of expanding when circumstances change.

Nowadays, the countries involved, both the NATO old hands and the aspirants, have a perceived confluences of interests, but even they are unsure whether there is a reality behind the perception.

The Romeos ...

The opportuning suitors of Visegrad lurking below NATO's balcony want to come up inside because they each fear that their own weakness of character and those of their fellows will catch up on them in the future. Just as in the past the weaker members of NATO, Norway and Greece feared that they would succumb to the "charms" of the East and be reduced to the status of Finland, perpetually worried about offending the Russian bloc, so now the new Romeos of the new order fear the Yugoslav phenomenon: they believe that NATO membership will restrain their

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MAJOR/REYNOLDS DECLARATION ANOTHER NO HOPER

In W.V.69 we denounced the anti-working class violence being carried out by the various factions in Northern Ireland. We also described how the longer term imperialist interests lay in attempted pacification and the establishment of normalised conditions for capitalist exploitation. Since that article was written "the word has become flesh" in the form of the joint declaration signed by the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic, Messrs. Major and Reynolds. Despite all the ambiguities and varieties of interpretation which have already been applied to the declaration it is quite clear that the governments of Britain and Ireland share a common wish to re-establish the norms of bourgeois order. Of course the problem which we described as "Imperialism's Conundrum" in W.V.69 will not be solved by scraps of paper signed by the two governments

IMPERIALISM'S TWO MONSTERS

Whereas the fictitious Baron Frankenstein only conjured up one uncontrollable monster the bourgeois factions have given birth to two many-headed monsters, one Republican-Nationalist, the other Unionist-Loyalist. Having spawned and nurtured their creations the ruling class politicians have had 25 years of torment as their

monsters have proved unwilling to play to their creators' rules. Needless to say it has been the working class, particularly in Northern Ireland, who have paid the price while the gruesome power struggles have taken place. The Major/Reynolds declaration is yet another in a long line of proposals which have been aimed at defusing the situation. It has no more chance of succeeding than any of the other panaceas which have been touted around since the 1960's. The impossibility of simultaneously satisfying the Republican Nationalist and Unionist Loyalist camps will, in a shorter or longer time span, ensure that the declaration goes the same way as the Sunningdale Agreement, the power-sharing executive, interment, the Assembly and the other products of desperation which the various Governments have tinkered with.

THE DUSTBIN OF HISTORY

The complexity of the political cross currents within the six counties make it impossible to accurately foresee the exact route which the declaration will take on its way to the dustbin of history. It appears likely that the very existence of the declaration as a new focus for discontent will increase the tensions in both the Republican and Loyalist camps. For the Republican

movement it is possible that some strands will be tempted to take the bait and move towards recognised capitalist politics, possibly similar to the Social Democrat/ Stalinist Workers Party which emerged from the Official Republican movement of the early 1970's. There is evidence that this will be a minority trend amongst the Republicans with a large element still committed to maintaining the military campaigns. That result would put an end to the current efforts of the spectrum of "legitimate" politicians, from John Hume to John Major, to draw the Provisional Republicans into the main stream. Within the Unionist camp there is already jockeying between the "Democratic" and the "Official" Unionists. Molyneux has cemented his alliance with the Tories by giving initial tacit support to the declaration whereas the Paisley-Robinson D.U.P. have preferred to retain their base with the most reactionary elements amongst the paramilitaries by being more openly critical. Neither of those positions is, however, set in concrete and they are liable to change as the situation develops. In particular the Official Unionists will constantly need to weigh up the different rewards to be offered by playing Parliamentary games with Major's administration as opposed to the risk of losing their populist electoral base to the Democratic Unionists.

MAJOR'S IRISH DIVERSION

For the British Government the talks with their Irish counterparts were a useful exercise as they searched around for success stories to set against the crumbling social provisions and increasing pauperisation in mainland Britain. As 1994 continues Major and co. (with the full agreement of the Labour Party) will struggle to keep the Downing Street declaration alive. Unfortunately for the Tory and Labour M.P.'s and the class structure which they defend historic developments cannot be overridden by pieces of paper. In a very short time, months rather than years, it is likely that the declaration will have no more real meaning than the existing Anglo-Irish Accord. One thing remains certain, Capitalism's Republican and Unionist Frankenstein monsters will continue to launch bloody attacks on the Irish workers until the workers themselves put paid to the system which created them. **K**

“Peace in the Middle East” Another Capitalist Mirage

After only a few months it is clear that the "Peace Accord" signed between Israel and the PLO is now in disarray. Whilst the bourgeois politicians and media have heralded this so called "historic peace" it comes as no surprise to socialists that peace in the Middle East remains an illusion.

The background to the September accord has been examined in previous issues of Workers Voice. Essentially, with the collapse of Russian Imperialism the proxy conflict between the US and Russia played out between pro US Israel and the mainly pro Russian Arab countries has lost its raison d'être. However the Palestinian question remains a thorn in the flesh of US imperialism which requires stability in the region.

Whilst the local protagonists, i.e. Israel and the PLO, had little enthusiasm for a peace which would inevitably compromise their respective nationalist interests and aspirations, the broader interests of imperialism held sway due to Israel's heavy dependency on US aid and the near bankruptcy and political isolation of the PLO.

It is clear that the plan for Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho is a solution that satisfies no one. The main purpose is to establish a Palestinian entity which will exercise control over the seething social discontent in these areas. Gaza in particular is a vast urban slum racked by poverty and unemployment. It is therefore not surprising that one of the few concrete proposals for the administration of these areas is the creation of a Palestinian police force.

Socialists should also be aware of the ideological

function of the accord. We have seen numerous speeches by capitalist politicians and articles in the press about peace "breaking out", not only in the Middle East but also in South Africa and now Northern Ireland. The purpose of these messages is to create the impression that capitalism is essentially a rational and reasonable system which is capable of resolving its conflicts once reasonable people (as opposed to terrorists and extremists) sit down and talk. This is pure propaganda given that national and imperialist conflict is an inherent feature of capitalism in this epoch.

Right now the peace plan is floundering ostensibly over disagreements about details of its implementation, such as the size of the Jericho administrative district, control of border crossings and the security of Jewish settlers in the Palestinian administered areas. Behind this is a certain amount of backtracking as both sides try to appease and contain their militant rejectionist elements. It should be remembered that the Israeli Labour government has a slender majority which could be threatened by a right wing backlash. There must also be fears as to how far the loyalty of the Israeli army can be guaranteed should it be called to exercise force against protests by armed Jewish settlers. The PLO is also concerned to establish its authority over its own rejectionist factions and the Islamic fundamentalist groups such as Hamas. Any further concessions to Israel could destroy Arafat's already dented credibility as a Palestinian leader.

Unlike various Trotskyist groups, real socialists should not fall into the trap of siding with the rejectionists because the Peace Accord does not

go far enough or create a real Palestinian state. Whilst socialists oppose all oppression of national minorities we also oppose nationalism and national struggles which merely substitute one gang of capitalist exploiters for another. In the present phase of capitalist development the concept of national liberation is a myth. Whilst states may obtain formal political independence, at an economic level they remain wholly dependant upon the interests of international capital. Whereas in the 19th century national liberation could accelerate the economic process by creating indigenous capitalist development, in the 20th century international capital ensures the permanent underdevelopment of most countries in the so called "third world". The role of these countries is to provide low value primary products such as foodstuffs to the capitalist heartlands. In these countries the production of high value industrial products only ever takes off where multinational corporations find it profitable to invest in order to take advantage of cheap labour. Invariably independent economic development does not occur on any significant scale. One only has to look at the vast majority of African countries submerged under a mountain of debt to western banks to see this process at work.

This is the why socialists do not rejoice in the creation of new capitalist states. The PLO (whose leadership contains several millionaires including Arafat) have a proven anti working

class track record. For example, when Palestinian migrant workers in Kuwait went on strike in support of the Intifada, Arafat went to Kuwait to persuade to strikers to return to work. This loyal service to the Kuwaiti bourgeoisie was repaid by the expulsion, imprisonment and

torture of Palestinians during and after the Gulf War. There is every reason to suppose that in whatever form a Palestinian state emerges, the main beneficiaries will be the bosses and the bureaucrats.

Whilst we do not support Palestinian nationalism we should also make it clear that we have no truck whatsoever with the Zionist state of Israel which for nearly fifty years has terrorised, expelled and murdered Palestinian Arabs and like any other capitalist state has ruthlessly exploited its workers be they Arab or Jew.

Nationalism cannot address the issues of poverty, exploitation, lack of health care and bad housing etc., as these problems stem from the very nature of capitalist production itself. Nationalist solutions serve only to the interests of the national ruling class.

In the Middle East it is the task of socialists to agitate and organise for a proletarian internationalist solution which ultimately requires the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of worker's power. **PBD**

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The Rising in Chiapas

A Despairing Rebellion of the Dispossessed

The last dictator before the Mexican Revolution which started in 1911 once stated that Mexico was "too far from God and too near to the United States". Certainly the Indians of Chiapas state seem to agree with the latter. The new year opened with an attack by the self-styled Zapatista Army for National Liberation on several towns in Chiapas. Chiapas is one of the remotest states in Mexico alongside the border with Guatemala. Most of the population are Indians, descendants of the Maya but the land is fundamentally controlled by *Ladinos* or mestizos who form the local ruling class, the *hacendados*. Most of these congregate in the main town, San Cristobal de las Casas which was the main target of the rebels.

Causes of the Rebellion

Chiapas, as the press never tire of telling us, is the poorest state in Mexico and the Indians of that region have, for the last five hundred years faced almost every form of exploitation known to humanity from slavery to peonage to today's wage labour which has left most of them without work for long periods of the year. The EZLN takes its programme and inspiration from Emiliano Zapata the peasant leader murdered seventy five years ago this April. He tried with some success to restore the traditional Indian lands to the community or *ejido*. However this was always resisted by the generals who led what eventually became the monstrosity that today



goes under the title of the PRI (the Party of the Institutional Revolution). This is why he was murdered and why today the *ejido* forms less than half of the cultivated land of Mexico. Under the current President Salinas' free market reforms more of the *ejido* lands have been bought up by private individuals and the peasants have been further impoverished. In Chiapas however the bulk of the population are landless labourers who work on the latifundia of the hacendados at wages well below the official agricultural minimum wage. In the last few years even these have fallen. Even workers in Mexico who are traditionally better paid have seen their wages

drop 40% in real terms in the Eighties (the second worst drop in Latin America) whilst the official minimum wage dropped 58%. Added to this 15,000 Indians in Chiapas have been expelled from the land by the caciques (or political bosses) of the PRI in the last few years. Their crime? Many of them have turned to Protestant evangelical sects which have encouraged teetotalism. As this hits the pockets of the PRI who control and tax the liquor trade the reprisals are savage.

Against NAFTA or Against Capitalism

At the same time Mexico is a country which contains the fourth highest number of millionaires in the world. Some of the papers have reported that the rising was timed to coincide with the implementation of the North American Free

Trade

Agreement

(NAFTA).

This may be

true for some

of the leaders

of the EZLN

but it is as yet

irrelevant for

most of the

Indians.

NAFTA, like

other trade

liberalisation

measures, is

intended to

make the rich

richer whilst

carrying out a

global assault

on the living

standards of the

working class everywhere. Only the monopolies and finance capital will benefit from a free trade which threatens to destroy small industries and create even greater unemployment.

The revolt in Chiapas was then a revolt of despair. As one of the participants stated they could do little else, "we literally have nothing". It is not a revolt against NAFTA but against the social system which has deprived them of almost every human need. How desperate the Indians are can be seen from many of their weapons. Wooden models of AK47s and single bore shotguns are hardly the stuff to take on the tanks and planes

of the Mexican Army. Carlos Salinas has had a hard time finding someone to blame for the rising. With the old Soviet bloc gone he has tried everything from "foreign guerrillas" to the Catholic Church largely because the latter is the only organised body which isn't actually controlled by the PRI. The truth is that the population are behind the guerrillas, a fact which the Army knows well as it carries out a reign of terror and systematic genocide. The guerrillas may have melted back into the bush but the villages can still be bombed and burned. The Indians of Chiapas seem resigned to this traditional response.

"National Liberation" is not a Solution

The outcome is as inevitable as the rising. It only underlines that the landless proletarians and peasants cannot win on their own. The idea of national liberation has also long since had its day. There can be no "national" solutions in the era of imperialism. Any isolated attempt at a socialist revolution by workers in any area would be crushed militarily. Only a revolution which paralyses the capacity of imperialism to act can create the basis for a new society. Today when the same policies are impoverishing workers in the United States and in Mexico as well as those in remote agricultural provinces, it is clear that they have a common global enemy in world capitalism. And it is world capitalism which is supplying the means to massacre the Indians of Chiapas. What is required is the working class of the towns, both in places like Mexico, and in those states which dominate the world economy to take the path of struggle. Only a mass strike would prevent the genocide of the Indians in Chiapas and only a mass strike would create the conditions for the growth of the consciousness of the need to destroy this system of capitalist barbarism.

Of course such a mass strike cannot appear because we will it. It has to arise out of the struggles of the workers themselves but the present new order of free trade agreements provides a common basis for agitation of workers in both the centres of capitalism and its periphery. These agreements mean only further impoverishment and misery - and desperate resistance. One day the proletariat will give its internationalist response.

J

CAUTION - ELECTORAL DIVERSIONS AHEAD

Every four or five years the political parties have a concerted period of bread and circuses as they try to con workers into electing 600+ charlatans into the Westminster Comedy Workshop. Most years, workers are submitted to smaller local variants when they are encouraged to vote for their local councils. All these charades serve to con workers into believing that they have a real interest in supporting one or the other set of solutions within capitalism. In the next few months workers will be presented with another variant in the electoral con tricks. May and June will provide a double dose of electoral game playing when elections will be held for seats in local councils followed by the European Parliament. All the parties will be spending massive amounts of money to build up the pre-election hype and to make sure that their own candidates stay on whichever gravy train they have managed to scramble aboard.

ELECTORALISM IN GENERAL

The electoral antics are a critical part of the democratic facade which the capitalist class have adopted as their preferred norm across Western Europe, North America, and Australia.

Elsewhere in the world electoralism is adopted or set aside according to the needs of the dominant imperialism or its local agents. Even in the imperialist heartland capitalism will amend its democratic practices or suspend them altogether if the need arises. The movement between democracy and other forms of capitalist rule in no way alters the fundamental nature of society in which the needs of capitalism always act as the yoke, exploiting and oppressing the vast majority of the population. Capitalism holds sway in Spain, whether Franco and his generals or Gonzalez' Social Democrats hold office. In Russia, elected clowns such as Yeltsin or Zhirinovsky are just as much agents of international and local capitalism as Brezhnev was the agent of the now decayed centrally planned structure. Workers have no interest in choosing one form of capitalist domination over another. Neither, once the local capitalists have opted for the democratic form should we be sucked into debates about who can organise our exploitation most efficiently, or even most kindly. Of course, capitalism will continue to present an ever changing menu for perfecting the democratic face of exploitation. In Britain proportional representation is touted as a way of strengthening democracy; in Italy the democratic institutions are to be saved by

moving to a system with an element of British style 'first past the post'!

LABOURISM IN PARTICULAR

Many workers, thankfully a decreasing number, still choose to vote for Labour candidates as an expression of long standing and repeatedly abused loyalty, often handed down over generations. For those workers their illusions in the possibility of something like 'socialism' from the archetypal form of capitalist rule remain. This despite the experience of every Labour Government and their local versions in local councils who have carried out every cut and attack on service provision dictated by both Tory and Labour Governments. Communists do not wash their hands of workers who have electoralist or Labourist illusions but consistently attack such ideas and seek avenues to explain how electoral activity is part and parcel of preserving the decaying and destructive capitalist structure. In fact, where a worker is prepared to discuss, electoralism may only be one amongst many manifestations (racism, sexism, religious belief, homophobia, etc.) of bourgeois ideology which have to be countered. The most pernicious agents of Labourism and electoralism are those

left supporters of capital from the various Trotskyist or Stalinist traditions who constantly encourage workers to keep hold of their illusion. Time after time workers will be called upon to support Labour candidates, sometimes "critically", sometimes less so, by Labour's camp-followers, particularly from the Trotskyist and "Euro" Stalinist organisations. On each occasion workers, lack of clarity is pandered to and reinforced rather than being combatted and challenged.

ABSTENTION IN GENERAL, COMMUNIST ABSTENTION IN PARTICULAR

Despite the best efforts of the political parties many people are not taken in by the electoral nonsense. In predominantly working class areas local elections will often result in a turnout of less than 40% of the registered electors. In addition to those 60% abstentions there are also the many, largely working class, people who disappeared from the electoral lists during the struggle against the Poll Tax. That degree of abstention is not of course because the majority in that area are conscious Communist militants (yet!). Nevertheless it reflects the fact that a large number of workers are not deceived by promises of one or another set of politicians that capitalism can offer a better future. A certain number of those workers may have been so ground down that no amount of argument will shake them from their current apathy. Only when others in the class move into activity will they see a way forward. Even having discounted the incurably apathetic, within Britain there are thousands and perhaps tens of thousands of workers who resist the appeals of the Labourists and their leftist hangers on. Amongst those elements of sometimes cynical, sometimes confused abstentionists there are many who would be receptive to the revolutionary and internationalist appeal of left communism. While the electoral circus rolls around our duty is to present a real alternative - Class Struggle and a Communist future!

KT

Seventy-five Years since the "Spartakist Week" in Germany

The River of Blood that Separates Social Democracy from the Revolutionary Working Class

Continued from the last issue

Christmas 1918 had not gone well for the Social Democrats and their Army allies. First, Noske's People's Naval Division, specially selected from the Majority Socialists sailors in Kiel and sent to Berlin to keep the working class movement in check, began to show signs of being infected by revolutionary ideas. When they were not paid on December 23rd they seized Otto Wels, the military governor of Berlin and threatened to shoot him. Ebert now called up the Horse Guards, the last crack regiment of the old Imperial Army commanded by General von Lequis who proceeded to set up artillery in the square in front of the Marstall palace where the sailors were based. The



Revolutionary Sailors of the People's Naval Division sent by Noske to Berlin from Kiel to end the revolution went over to the working class in December 1918

bombardment had actually induced the sailors to surrender when a huge crowd of workers, mainly unarmed, swarmed onto the square and prevented the soldiers from using their weapons. The result was that the soldiers threw down their weapons and arrested their officers. The German Imperial Army had suffered its final defeat and the Social Democrats could now rely only on 150 ex-officers in the whole of Berlin.

The SPD grip on Berlin was now extremely tenuous. The day after a huge crowd collected outside the offices of *Vorwärts* and listened to speeches by Spartakist members. They then stormed the building so that the Social Democrats did not even have a Berlin newspaper. On December 29th the Independent Socialists (USPD) having seen the compromise Ebert had made with the Army resigned from the government so that Ebert and Scheidemann and the SPD governed alone.

The founding of the German Communist Party (KPD)

One factor was on the SPD's side. There was no clear organisation representing the bulk of the revolutionary proletariat. Amongst the genuine revolutionaries there were a large number of divisions between Luxemburg and Leibknecht's Spartakus League and a whole host of mainly local left groups. The Bremen Left Radicals, the Hamburg Left Radical, then the German International Communists (the IKD) and Ruhle's group in Dresden all had different perspectives and tactical ideas. Partly this flourishing of oppositions was a result of the confusion in German Social Democracy after the betrayal of 1914. The USPD represented a centrist organisation which only posed opposition to the war in pacifist terms. In their turn the Spartakists acted inside the USPD so that there was no clear revolutionary focus for the working class to rally around - hence the flourishing of the local groups. The contrast

between the situation in Germany and that in Russia could not have been starker. Whilst the Bolsheviks had established a revolutionary pole of opposition as early as 1903 Rosa Luxemburg was still arguing for the unity of social democracy until 1916. Thus in December 1918 there was still no organised body which had a real life inside the working class in Germany. Typically the USPD once again refused to hold a conference with the Spartakists to form a revolutionary party supporting the Russian Revolution, so in December 1918 the Spartakists had to go ahead on their own.

This was undoubtedly correct but a body-blow to the proceedings occurred almost immediately when the Revolutionary Shop Stewards led by Müller and Daumig refused to take part. The dispute was seemingly trivial. Daumig and Müller (who later did join the KPD) wanted all reference to the Spartakist League left out of the new Communist Party because of its "putschist associations". This was in fact just a repetition of the slanders of the Majority Socialists and Leibknecht angrily rejected it. This was a disaster since it robbed the KPD of a proletarian base. Ironically, as we shall see, the KPD programmatically rejected putschism but the Shop Stewards were soon to become one of its chief advocates.

Only the Bremen Left Radicals (mainly due to the persuasion of Karl Radek who had returned to Germany a few days earlier) then helped to make up the 112 delegates from all over Germany who founded the KPD. According to Luxemburg's biographer, Frölich there was a great deal of tension between the cautious policy of the old members present who saw that the work of preparation of the working class had scarcely begun and those who believed that one final push could bring down the whole rotten edifice erected by Ebert and Co. It was the speeches of Luxemburg which united the delegates. She argued that

It was typical of the first period of the revolution down to December 24th that the revolution remained exclusively political. Hence the infantile character, the inadequacy, the half-heartedness, the aimlessness of this revolution. Such was the first stage of a revolutionary transformation whose main objective lie in the economic field, whose main purpose is to secure a change in economic conditions. Its steps were as uncertain as those of a child groping its way without knowing whither it is going; for at this stage, I repeat, the revolution had a purely political stamp. But within the last two or three weeks a number of strikes have broken out quite spontaneously. Now I regard it as the very essence of this revolution that strikes will become more and more extensive, until they constitute at last the focus of the revolution. (applause) Thus we shall have an economic revolution, and therewith a socialist

revolution. The struggle for socialism has to be fought out by the masses, by the masses alone, breast to breast against capitalism; it has to be fought by those in every occupation, by every proletarian against his employer. Thus only can it be a proletarian revolution.

Luxemburg then turned to the "putschist" wing amongst the delegates

The thoughtless had a very different picture of the course of affairs. They imagined it would merely be necessary to overthrow the old government, to set up a socialist government at the head of affairs, and then to inaugurate socialism by decree. Another illusion? Socialism will not be and cannot be inaugurated by decrees; it cannot be established by any government, however admirably socialistic. Socialism must be created by the masses, must be made by every proletarian. Where the chains of capitalism are forged there must the chains be broken. That only is socialism and thus only can socialism be brought into being.

And later in the same speech after stating that the first task of the party was to defend and extend the principle of workers councils she added

For us the conquest of power will not be effected at one blow. It will be a progressive act, for we shall progressively occupy all the positions of the capitalist state, defending tooth and nail each one that we seize.

All quotations from the article *On the Spartacus Programme* in the pamphlet *Spartacus* (Merlin, London 1971) pp. 19 and 26.

There is no doubt that Luxemburg was broadly correct but the truth of the matter was that the new KPD was numerically weak and politically inexperienced whilst at the same time the counter-revolution was already preparing. Indeed some KPD members thought that if the National Assembly was elected that would automatically spell the end of the revolutionary process. Luxemburg took a different line and argued that the elections for the National Assembly would arouse the expectations of the masses and give the KPD the chance to expose the Majority Socialists manoeuvres. The next stage in the struggle came on January 4th and found the KPD wanting.

Spartakist Week

Given the SPD loss of control in Berlin Ebert had thought of leaving the city but the Army High Command under Groener refused to let him. Noske was appointed Minister for War and the Freikorps, having sworn an oath of loyalty to Ebert, were now ready to march on the capital. Instead Ebert was persuaded to dismiss the USPD's Emil Eichorn as leader of the Berlin Security Force (which had been set up to replace the imperial police force in November). This provoked the biggest

demonstration in Berlin's history on January 5th. Eichorn refused to accept his dismissal and the USPD's left wing supported him. Now those staunch opponents of *putschism* the USPD and the Revolutionary Shop Stewards met with two KPD leaders, Pieck and Leibknecht to discuss what to do next. Despite the decisions taken at the KPD founding conference only a few days earlier these two KPD members voted with this motley assembly of 71 people to call a general strike, to support an armed attack on the government and 'to place Germany in the vanguard of the international proletarian revolution' 1.

This then was the origin of the so-called "Spartakist Week". That it was a provocation planned ahead by the Social Democrats there can be no doubt. Eugen Ernst, Eichorn's replacement as police chief stated as much, whilst the refusal of Ebert to negotiate during the conflict indicates that a showdown was the aim of the government.

The tragedy for the young KPD was that it was tied up with a set of confusionists and dilettantes in the USPD and the Shops Stewards. Leibknecht and Pieck had broken the party line. According to J. P. Nettl, another biographer of Rosa Luxemburg she did not even know that Leibknecht had signed the call for a "provisional government" for over a week. When she did find out she is supposed to have said "Karl how could you - and what about our programme?". But by then it was too late as the battle had been engaged. The rest of the sorry story was told by Paul Levi, the KPD leader who was to split the party later that year when he expelled its left-wing. After all the announcements about an assault on power the "revolutionary committee" did little practically to prepare for the coming attack of the *Frei Korps*. In Sept 1920 Levi wrote in *Die rote Fahne* that a crowd of 200,000 waited in the Alexanderplatz and Königplatz

The masses were standing from nine in the morning in the fog and the cold. Somewhere their leaders were sitting and conferring. The fog lifted and the masses were still standing. Their leaders conferred.

Noon came and in addition to the cold, hunger came. And the leaders conferred.

The masses were feverish with excitement. They wanted one deed, even one word to calm their excitement. But nobody knew what to do, because the leaders were conferring. 2



A demonstration against the murders of Liebknecht and Luxemburg

In fact the working class as a whole was not ready to take up arms against the government. It required a longer work of preparation as Luxemburg had argued. However she now recognised that the revolution was in danger unless it took adequate measures for self-defence. She repeatedly called for action in the party press (which she edited right up to the day before her death). But little was done. The War Ministry (which Noske had earlier abandoned) was not even taken. By January 8th troops loyal to the Majority Socialists

Continued on page opposite

had reoccupied Berlin's strategic points. On January 13th the Revolutionary Shop Stewards called off the general strike. Now Noske and Luttwitz could unleash the Freikorps on a wave of punitive actions in which hundreds of workers were killed. *Vorwärts* was hysterical in its attacks on the Spartakists and more or less incited the murders of Leibknecht and Luxemburg. These two had gone into hiding but did not leave Berlin. On January 15th 1919 they were betrayed to the Freikorps. Both were beaten up then had their skulls smashed in by a rifle butt and were then finished off before their bodies were disposed of. Luxemburg's remained in the Landwehr canal until the following May. *Vorwärts* was naturally the first to report the deaths stating that Luxemburg had been killed "by the people". This piece of hypocrisy was only matched when the West German Social Democrats actually issued a stamp to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Luxemburg's birth in 1970.

The Lessons of January 1919

In her last defiant text, *Order reigns in Berlin*, Rosa Luxemburg wrote that the defeat had occurred because of

the contradiction between the powerful, resolute and offensive appearance of the Berlin masses on the one hand, and the irresoluteness, timidity and indecision of the Berlin leadership on the other.

The subsequent months were to show that she was right for the revolutionary crisis did not end with the deaths of Luxemburg and Leibknecht and the majority Socialists continued to lose support to the USPD. The Independents in their turn were being forced to adopt more and more revolutionary policies and eventually split with about half joining the KPD. The problem remained one of coordination of workers resistance throughout Germany. Thousands of workers continued to take on the SDP's Freikorps. Whereas hundreds were killed in January, thousands were shot in March and the wave of strike intensified. But as one bourgeois commentator noted

*had the strikes in the early months of 1919 in the Ruhr, central Germany and Berlin occurred simultaneously, the government would have found it difficult to survive.*³

The lack of a communist party with a sufficiently developed network throughout Germany was an obvious failure. The contrast with the situation in Petrograd in October 1917 was stark. In the German situation the working class had to fight against a well-prepared enemy in a military sense whilst in Russia the military operation was almost a natural extension of a movement where the class conscious working class already controlled the bulk of the city of Petrograd. This, of course, poses another difference which Rosa Luxemburg saw quite clearly. Taking over Petrograd and Moscow meant that the proletariat took over Russia. The same could not be said for the relationship between Berlin and Germany. However the revolutionary crisis carried on. The Weimar Republic actually did not get off to a great start as the workers of Weimar initially disarmed and drove off the Freikorps sent to secure that city. What is clear is that the SPD created just enough confusion inside the German working class by their false protestation of socialism that they became the real gravediggers of the revolution. The German ruling class could not have survived unless they had joined with it against the proletariat.

The German experience shows that the creation of a party cannot be an affair of the last minute but has to be prepared in advance and organised as widely as possible inside the working class. It is a task which revolutionaries today have to take one stage further - our centralised party will have to be on an international scale.

Jock

Notes

- 1 R.M. Watt *The Kings Depart* (Penguin, 1972) p.285
- 2 op. cit. p.294
- 3 A.J. Ryder *The German Revolution of 1918* p.219

continued from front page

The Fear of ‘Yugoslavisation’

tempers when they are faced with the inevitable economic problems inherent in a capitalism in crisis. NATO will stop Slovakia from punishing its Hungarian minority for the crimes of economics, and Hungary's chauvinists from claiming "their" bit of Slovakia. If things really get bad, and the Czech Republic has social unrest or Poland finds that it has a workers' uprising, then NATO will come in useful there, too (Walesa, in particular, has vivid memories in this regard: without workers' militant class struggle there would have been no Solidarnosc to sell it out, and without Solidarnosc there would have been no President Walesa).

The fear of a new Russian imperialism exists, but it has no strong basis for the short and even medium term. In fact, Russia cannot return to its old position as the undisputed major power in a bloc. What it can and, as an imperialist, must do, is find allies tied to it by a common interest. A rejuvenated Russian imperialism requires a new Russia, one which has regained at least part of its old position and this, in its turn, requires a profound restructuring of the Russian economy. This is not to say that these processes are not already underway. Georgia was destabilised by Russian support for the Abkhazian separatists until it begged to be allowed back into the CIS. The Russia economy has at least been stopped from bleeding to death through the wounds caused by hyperinflation, by restricting imports, by restricting consumption and making its proletariat pay for its crisis. And there have been political successes too, such as the reassertion of control over Belarus to the extent that its Prime Minister, Kebich, said in early January that Belarus would join NATO only after Russia. Since then Belarus and Tadzhikistan have announced that they are returning to the rouble zone.

But all of this is very far from completion, and the new allies are only represented by vague possibilities for the present, so that we can take Clinton at face value when he prognosticates, presumably about Russian invasions/aggressions (in response to a question at the same press conference quoted above):

Reporter: My question is, in view of the lessons of World War II, is it conceivable that if any of these nations were invaded or aggressed against that NATO would not come to their aid?

Clinton: I think it is doubtful: that's right. I think your reading - our reading of history is right. But, frankly, I think none of us believe - I can't speak for the other Presidents except based on our conversations - that it is imminent.

Further East, outside the garden gate, another posse of hopeful, and absurd, Romeos waits. This includes Lithuania, which applied to join NATO on January 4th, and the Associates of the European Union, Rumania and Bulgaria. Here the rantings of the Russian fascist Zhirinovskiy might be expected to be more of a weight on the minds of the local bourgeoisie. Lithuania, like the rest of the Baltic states, is in a vulnerable position geographically, Rumania is already on the brink of full-blown conflict with Russia over Moldova. Bulgaria was once the politically closest ally of Russia outside of the USSR itself, precisely because of its fear of being trapped between Russia and Serbia led it to take Stalin's side against Tito's Yugoslavia most enthusiastically. For them, the nightmare of a Russo-Serb alliance is again tangible

But even in the Baltics, there is much concern about internal disorder. For example, Estonia's recent arms deal with Israel was mostly spent on Uzi machine guns which would be marginally effective against tanks but much more effective against civilians.

...and the Juliets

NATO, for those who are already on the inside peering over the balcony, is an organisation whose usefulness has changed, but not disappeared. Like a chamber pot which, if filled with the manure of a different animal, can hold flowers, its original function has altered (even

if it is still full of shit). Nowadays, instead of being a genuine military alliance, it is a diplomatic battleground with a military purpose. Its primary function is, like the UN, an arena in which the US tries to dominate its old Cold War allies. This is increasingly difficult for the US to keep up. Because of the disappearance of the Eastern bloc, the rivalry between the powers of the West is beginning to emerge as they each struggle to minimise the effects of the capitalist crisis on their own economies. At present, these powers believe that their best chance to manage this crisis is to work together. But, like thieves sharing out their loot, they are each eager to make sure that when two banknotes are stuck together, this double prize will land on their own pile. In short, the Western imperialists will continue to try to cheat each other, inevitably giving rise to tensions between themselves.

However, these tensions will not become decisive until these selfsame imperialists cease to believe in the possibility of jointly managing the crisis. Then, they will split. The tensions themselves may accelerate the coming of this moment, but the basic dynamic will be determined by the fact that the crisis has no solution within capitalism except for all-out war between the imperialists themselves. This is because modern capitalism is trapped in an inexorable cycle of economic crisis leading to war followed by reconstruction which in its turn leads to an economic crisis. The crisis emerges from the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, which, strictly temporary countertendencies aside, has no remedy but the destruction of constant capital. At first, capitalism's crises themselves wiped out sufficient constant value, but, by the First World War, the mass of capital that had to be destroyed was so great that it had to be eliminated by other means, such as by being run into the ground for war production, as well by direct war damage. World War becomes a necessity for capitalism, and this necessity comes about through the conflicts intensified by the crisis itself. Out of the destruction and devaluation of the slaughter, capitalism comes with a lightened burden of constant capital and a heightened rate of exploitation, which enables it to continue to amass constant capital as an inevitable by-product of profit, and from thence comes the new crisis.

No imperialism will want to leave NATO without taking the maximum of allies, hardware, software and military manpower. Leaving prematurely will not just mean abandoning these factors, but also bringing forward the day when a war comes in which you are in a weak position. This means that NATO has become an arena for imperialist manoeuvring.

One result of this is that the present NATO members want to have new members in the alliance, both because the resources and influence of any admissions will be brought into a game which the old members all believe they can win, and because they believe that bringing them in will stabilise the East and Central European region. But, at the same time they are concerned that recruits could destabilise NATO itself. Add to this the US desire not to undermine their sole Russian option, Yeltsin by giving grist to the nationalist mill if they let the Visegrad Four join NATO, and we have the present impasse.

But the area in which the murky manoeuvrings are closest to being perceptible is the "policy" over Yugoslavia.

There are Bodies in this Play

The war in the ex-Yugoslavia has its origins in the attempt by the various bourgeoisies of its Republics to make each other pay for the crisis. In this, it shows the rest of the world one of its possible futures. Croatia and Slovenia wanted to escape the Federation and leave Serbia and the rest in the lurch. German imperialism encouraged them to do this, as it had investment plans for these Republics and has invested there in fact. The US initially openly backed Serbia by withholding recognition from

the breakaway Republics, and later covertly, by insisting that the arms embargo be applied equally to well-armed Serbia and poorly-armed Bosnia. The development since the UN-backed NATO intervention of the "peace-keeping forces" has one of oscillation between threats of air-strikes against Serbia (which so far have been just threats) and whispers of withdraw. This paralysis actually fits quite well with the thesis of an organisation consisting of differing parts torn between maintaining stability (so as to operate jointly in the face of the crisis) and the individual advantage of those parts.

None of the contending sides in Yugoslav has anything to offer the proletariat except more bloodshed. This is as true of the local bourgeoisies as of the imperialists of NATO. Only the re-emergence of the working class as a class for itself, struggling for its own interest and, consequently, for communism, can provide an alternative to capitalism's continued butchery. If this proletarian resurgence will come too late for many Yugoslav workers, this is all the more reason to struggle for it as soon as possible, so that fewer proletarians will become victims of imperialist war in the future.

EDL

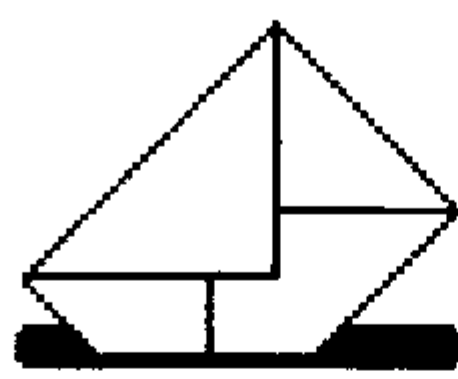
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Letters to the Editor



Political debate and discussion are the lifeblood of any organisation which wishes to be part of the formation of a revolutionary class consciousness. Workers' Voice appeals to all readers to become an active part of that process by sending in their comments and criticisms. All will be printed (with initials only) and where necessary replies furnished.

The Differences between the Communist Left and the Leftist Swamp

Dear Workers' Voice

many thanks for the copy of the Sept/Oct issue of WV (no.68) which contained the review of the pamphlet *Poor Lenin*. Obviously, the review contradicts my own opinion of the pamphlet but before going into that I'd like to thank you for pointing out the error in the introduction which referred to Lenin's ideas on 'the party'. Any future reprints will be corrected. As far as the fact that I quoted the wrong text proves that 'arguments against Lenin are usually founded on ignorance of what he actually wrote' well, such scientific logic - and in the hands of the "proletarian party"!

Now on the bulk of the review, which turns out to be an excuse to have a go at the Class War Federation, I'm writing as an individual member of the CWF, not on behalf of the Federation as a whole.

My reason for reprinting the text, taken from Bob Darke's *The Communist Technique in Britain*, basically comes down to my experiences as an activist within the Poll Tax campaign, various strike support groups and anti-fascism/racism organisations etc. When I came across the old Penguin edition the book I was surprised to find Darke described a party that I recognised, even though the old CP was thankfully about to declare itself dead. Practically all Darke's accusations of underhand tactics, and generally anti-working class behaviour were still used by the likes of the SWP and Militant. For example, while the anti-Poll Tax struggle was in full swing, I witnessed the complete destruction of a developing working class democratic political movement by various leftist groups. It is important that the tactics used by these left groups are understood. Thus the publication of the pamphlet in question is not meant to be a definitive critique of Trotskyists as you attempt to make out. Of course we know all about Trots and anti-imperialism, reformism and even that they are "just one more obstacle on the road to the working class attaining the consciousness of how it can destroy capitalism", but how are they doing this? *Poor Lenin* takes these abstract

questions and gives concrete examples of how, for example, the CP manipulated Trade Councils and trade unions in order to create an impression that the CPGB party line received mass support from the working class.

When writing the original introduction, my mind immediately focussed on the better known left groups, you'll have to excuse me I didn't think immediately about the particular contribution of the 'left-communist' or Bordigaist (sic) traditions. I'd quite forgotten they existed. I certainly don't make it my business to know much about the Communist Workers' Organisation at the moment. The pamphlet is directly related to the SWP and Militant etc.

Your cage was well and truly rattled by the assestion that 'Leninism' allows self-proclaimed revolutionaries to deceive their fellow-workers without questioning their own morality", in particular that I had the audacity to suggest that "most left wing parties owe some of their techniques to ...Lenin".(You are right to point out that I was referring to *Left Wing Communism* here, not the *April Theses* as I stated (oops). In particular I was referring to the passages about participation in parliamentary activity, to bring about a Labour Government which would disappoint the working class. In other words "vote Labour with no illusions!" From the formation of the CPGB, before Lenin's death, the Comintern was at work destabilising the communist movement in the Britain with a view to ensuring the supremacy of the CP, under the guidance of Lenin and the Soviet CP (see *Left Wing Communism in Britain 1917-21 ...an infantile disorder?*, Bob Jones.* The CP insisted on supporting the Labour Party, and the principle of democratic centralism. Sounds familiar?

Spot the statement that "Stalinism was all Lenin's fault" anywhere in there, or in the introduction to the pamphlet? I'm sorry I can't.

As I mentioned earlier the review is basically an excuse to have a go at Class War, in spite of my own membership of Class War not even being mentioned anywhere in the pamphlet.

And what a fine collection of misrepresentations that turns out to be (almost like the CP might have done!). I would have imagined that such astute politicians as the CWO might have noticed that Class War ceased to be an anarchist organisation some years ago, and as you know I am a member of the CWF, you might have known that I have not been an anarchist for at least 18 months (and the CWO knows that anarchists can become ex-anarchists, otherwise they wouldn't be sniffing around various anarchists in Sheffield). Therefore there has been no anarchist involvement in the production of this pamphlet. Still it seems a good insult in the pages of WV from time to time. Muddleheaded maybe, anarchist not.

That may be beside the point except for the fact that the CWO wants to accuse Class War of "calling for tactical votes for Labour in the past" and finds it can't. Class War has never done such a thing, but maybe the CWO has found some isolated incident of "anarchists" having done and, well, that's just as good. The Communist Workers' Organisation can see fit to tar the CWF with the sins of all and sundry anarchists, luckily Irate Press doesn't see fit to tar the CWO with sins of all and sundry "Communists". Nor does Class War "support trades unions" (See *Unfinished Business* for many examples of Class War's attitude to the TUs e.g. "Capitalism must, and will be fought in the workplace ... but the unions will not be the tool"). Further Class War members do not pretend they don't try and sell as many papers as possible, in fact the CWF is justifiably proud of the numbers of papers we do shift. Class War members draw the distinction that while left groups will continue to sell papers (and that is the main function of the rank and file) when real physical confrontations occur, the CWF puts the papers away and stands with the rest of our class.

These may seem like trifling points in the great scheme of things but it is at the root of the purpose of this review - to make snide, vague and untrue comments about Class War.

In fact Class War accepts absolutely the idea that the crisis for today's revolutionaries is one of class consciousness rather than leadership. Practically all our energy is directed towards promoting class consciousness. Now you might disagree with our methods, for example you might say that our paper is patronising rubbish, but to accuse us of not being able to attack the Trots on the grounds of not recognising that the "old Labour movement" is a capitalist movement, because we share their capitalist programme is bollocks.

I'm not writing this to have some kind of comradely debate. I know that when you print it you'll have answers to make me look daft. As its your own paper that's your prerogative. I don't kid myself that what I'm writing will be treated any other way than a springboard for further attacks on Class War, but as only a handful of people will see it I don't suppose it matters.

And finally I'd like to finish with a couple of questions. How come the various groups of the Communist Left see the working class as being unable to develop a revolutionary consciousness without a party when they can't even function in groups of about more than half a dozen? And when the time comes to decide which group is to be the proletarian party, and the 'liquidations' start, could you let me know how you get on? (my money is on Red Action).

Cheers

T.

Irate Press, c/o achilles balls, 52 Call Lane, Leeds 1.

*£1 from AK Distribution, 22 Lutton Place Edinburgh

Our Reply

12.1.94

Dear T

Thanks for your letter. Despite its cynicism and occasional sneering tone we welcome it because it asks questions which we in the internationalist communist camp cannot avoid or leave unanswered.

First lets dispose of the incidentals. Our intention was not to "slag off" or even criticise Class War in our review (we think this is obvious from the original review but then perhaps your reply is

aimed more at your own comrades than it is at us?). We would certainly have done this much more systematically had we wanted to. In our view Class War will collapse under the weight of its own political incoherence. Our target was the whole genre of stupid and sloppy politics of anarchist origins (but with a bit of left communism added on) which are knocking about today. The Bob Jones pamphlet which you quote is another example. Those who consider themselves heir to the left communist tradition in Britain think it is a derisory failure to write a pamphlet on Left-wing Communism in Britain before 1921 without ever mentioning Sylvia Pankhurst and her Workers' Dreadnought group (which after all founded the original Communist Party). We decided not to review it because it contained little of value and much of error.

Your letter excuses but doesn't explain why you gave the reminiscences of a 1930s Stalinist the title "Poor Lenin". As we said in the original review the method of argument (by amalgam) owes more to bourgeois journalism than serious proletarian politics. Bizarre indeed it is to argue that reprinting Bob Darke's memoirs stands in itself as a critique of the behaviour of the SWP and Militant in the Poll Tax movement today. How is it more concrete to argue by analogy with a different party in a different period than to come up with a clear analysis of the counter-revolutionary nature of the SWP today? It must have had all the impact of hitting them with a feather. The fact is that, unfortunately, your arguments against them would probably not amount to much. Leaving aside the question of "morality" for John Major and the Bishop of Durham to wrestle with, the truth is that SWP/Militant did use the Poll Tax campaign for their own ends of recruitment. They were able to get away with this because of that movement's weakness. Had it involved more than a fairly small minority of the working class, and had they been conscious of what they were trying to achieve, then all the manoeuvres of the manipulators would have been in vain. This makes it difficult for you to make a worthwhile criticism of their activities. But as we said, reprinting Bob Darke's wretched memoirs only adds to the anti-working class chorus of the bourgeoisie. What it induces is not criticism but apoliticism and this is what the bourgeoisie want. If politics is just full of cons then lets not bother with it - and the professionals can be left to rule. Your distaste for political argument also comes out when you call us "politicos". What does this mean? The CWO is made up of people who have to work to live and we volunteer our spare time for the organisation. We have no professional revolutionaries. We are political in the sense that we feel obliged to defend what we say and that we are clear about what we mean by proletarian politics. We do not, as you have done, deny our political origins without explaining what they are.

If Class War is not anarchist you might have told us what it was. However, we stand by our point about anarchists in general (and Class War in particular is anarchist to the people we meet who sell us it) that their critique of the Left groups is based on moral or organisational (to say the Left are not "democratic" is fine liberal stuff!) grounds and not on class criteria. The fact is that anarchism has always had a shaky class criteria. You attempt to avoid the issue by going in for a spot of populism. "...when real physical confrontations occur the CWF puts the papers away and stands with the rest of our class". But what does standing with the class mean? Most of the class read the Sun and the Mirror. Does that mean revolutionaries should? Of course we know you don't think so. The point is that you have made a class judgement. The same goes with physical confrontation. Not all physical confrontation with the state is a step forward for the working class. Sometimes revolutionaries must spot provocations or even denounce campaigns which are designed to prevent the working class fighting for its own interests such as the current anti-fascist campaign. CWF members take part with the capitalist left in anti-fascist campaigns but they abandon working class interests in doing so. The working class has an interest in defending itself against racist scum but this is different from joining in a campaign against one form of capitalist rule over another. Being anti-fascist means being in favour of the democratic capitalist state (which foments racism in the first place in order to divide the working class). Remember anti-fascism was the slogan under which workers in Western Europe were conned into fighting for King and Country in the Second Imperialist war in 1939. You say you know the difference between Trotskyism and working class politics but this

is disproved by the content of your letter, particularly the support you give to anti-fascism.

This ignorance about what is and what is not proletarian is further underlined at the end of your letter when you (albeit jokingly) say that “Red Action” is a group of the Communist Left. This is totally wrong. “Red Action” is an emanation of the Trotskyist swamp which supports the nationalists of the IRA (and of course prides itself on its anti-fascism). It has absolutely nothing to do with an independent working class programme nor is it in any way connected to the Communist Left.

Your statements about Class War’s clarity on trades unions also proves our case. It is not that unions will not simply “be the tool” of revolution, they will be a **barrier** to it and this is something which any class conscious organisation has to recognise. Yet not all Class War’s members even go as far as the official position you quote. Dave Douglass, CW’s very own NUM delegate defended the revolutionary role of the present unions in debate with us and other comrades in the Sheffield Study Circle a few months ago. It seems that there are more than one definition as to what Class War stands for. But we have no intention of taking up the cudgels against Class War. Far more important is to answer your facetiously and inaccurately posed question (the various groups of the communist left are substantially larger than you make out!) about the differences between the communist groups today.

First of all it is regrettable that there is more than one communist group today. This is a product of the failure of the Russian Revolution which in its defeat created a number of oppositions and tendencies inside the working class, all of them trying to understand what went wrong. The two most significant opposition tendencies were those of Trotsky and those of the Fractions of the Communist Left (there was also the councilists who continue to wield some confusing influence today). The Trotskyists passed over to the bourgeoisie with their support for imperialist war in Spain (see Internationalist Communist Review 12 - just published) which left the groups of the communist left. Today in Britain there are really only two groups of the communist left which can be said to have a real existence. One is ourselves, the other is World Revolution, section in Britain of the International Communist Current (ICC). Although we polemicise, from time to time, against what we see as each others errors, our relations are not those of the Trotskyists and Stalinists. We do not go in for trying to annihilate each other and even cooperate when it is necessary. For example in the last two years, we have sold ICC publications on our stand in the Fête of the French Trotskyist group, Lutte Ouvriere, because they have banned the ICC from having their own stall.

This has nothing to do with morality or democracy but does have something in common with the Bolshevik Party of Lenin, where open clashes of ideas were frequent and, we would argue, was one of the greatest strengths of that party. Lenin himself did not always win in debate but where he did it was because of his authority in argument, not because of any official position in the Party. This tradition was only undermined when the Bolsheviks became the state power and that state power had begun to degenerate under the weight of its isolation. Left-wing Communism was written during that process. But even after factions were officially banned in March 1921 they still existed with official cognisance until Lenin’s death. It is only in the last years of Lenin and especially after his death, that the doctrine of the monolithic party arises, as does Stalin’s cult of “Marxism-Leninism”.

We must not let the counter-revolution paralyse our activity today. The workers did not lose because they had a political party which tried to rule in their place. They lost because the revolution was isolated. The political party is not created by the will of a few revolutionaries but as the natural outgrowth of a revolutionary class where some reach class consciousness before others. The party is the natural place for such consciousness to initially take shape. But the party cannot make the revolution. Its task is to spread revolutionary consciousness throughout the class so that communist ideas will come to dominate the workers councils. The revolution cannot be made by decree of the party. It has to be constructed by the mass action of the workers. Today the party is more necessary than ever. First, because any revolution will have to be international so the workers need an international body to coordinate this and second,

we have to organise to fight all the leftist ideas that masquerade as the communist programme.

Our aim is not to make anyone look daft in debate. Our hope is that this correspondence has stimulated you to look behind the slogans and further into the real history of our class.

communist greetings
J.

Continued from back page

Fifty Years since Clandestine Prometeo

Togliatti and Scoccimarro.)

The Bulletin of the Milan Communist Federation directly urged the punitive squads of Togliatti’s “new” Party to physically eliminate the “traitor” Onorato Damen. This is after PCI members had already called for the “liquidation of O. Damen and his “followers”” inside the CLN [National Liberation Committee] without, however, obtaining the official endorsement. Unfortunately, though, the campaign of denigration, threats and incitements against the internationalists demanded and carried out above all by national-communism did obtain one of its objectives. In Italy two more names - the direct victims of Togliatti’s henchmen - can be added to the long and tragic list of victims at the hands of Stalin’s assassins strewn throughout the world: Comrades Fausto Atti and Mario Acquaviva were assassinated in March and July 1945. They were both victims of the technique of physical elimination of the adversary, a particular characteristic of fascism and Stalinism, as well as a feature of the bourgeois counter-revolution in general.

Slanders, persecution and criminal attacks were not enough to stop the internationalist communists of *Prometeo*. Half a century on from that far-off November in 1943 they have remained faithful to the traditions of the Italian Left and have carried forward the fundamental principles of that long, red thread which marks the Marxist, dialectical materialist interpretation of history.

In its first series Prometeo had been the mouthpiece of the Italian Left inside the young Communist Party of Italy. As the theoretical review of Marxist education headed by a patrol of the advance guard which the Party had created and which for some years had led the Party, it upheld ideological purity against the opportunism of the Right fractions. In its second series Prometeo was the organ of the Left fraction of the CP of Italy which had been formed at Pantin (France) in 1928 to continue abroad the work of ideological development to take stock of the pile of errors which had been committed and the defeats suffered by the proletariat throughout the world. Now Prometeo appears as the organ of the Internationalist Communist Party, the direct inheritor of that tradition and the vindicator of Imola and Livorno.

Its task is to become part of the terrible crisis that has devastated the capitalist world, with no other intention than to bring to a conclusion the task assigned to the Italian proletariat: that of being the sure guide in the social battles which are approaching, for the proletarian and communist revolution in Italy and the world.

Prometeo - whose name recalls the mythological hero who was chained on the Caucasus rocks for having stolen the fire of consciousness from the gods and given it to man - represents a tradition and a programme. It is the organ of the approaching revolution, the journal which Italian proletarians will consider their own.

From the clandestine Prometeo of 1.12.43.

**Bandiera Rossa* and *Stella Rossa* were Trotskyist groups who supported Russia’s role in the War, the former even welcoming U.S. victory as “a triumph for the forces of civilisation”.

Life of the Organisation

Who are we?

The Communist Workers Organisation has existed since 1975 but the political origins of our positions are much older. We regard ourselves as heir to a common tradition which goes from the Communist League of Marx and Engels through the First, Second and Third Internationals to, most recently, those left currents which were expelled from the Third International in the 1920’s as the process of Stalinisation developed. We have always been opposed to Stalinism, Maoism, Trotskyism and all the other counter-revolutionary distortions of Marxism.

Since 1984 we have formed part of the **International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party** initiated by **Il Partito Comunista Internazionale** (*Battaglia Comunista*). The Platform of this organisation can be found in the first edition of its journal *Internationalist Communist Review* (formerly *Communist Review*) (£1 from the group address) but our basic positions are at the foot of this page.

Appeal to Readers

Fifteen years of capitalist onslaught have left communist groups as tiny minorities compared to the tasks in front of us. Our resources are inadequate to fight the lies of the capitalists (both free market and state varieties).

We therefore appeal to all contacts, readers, sympathisers and subscribers to help in the struggle to give an authentic internationalist communist voice to the process of self-emancipation of the working class.

You can help by sending for bundles of leaflets or papers. The essence of political organisation is debate so you could also help by sending us letters (however critical), either about articles in previous issues or about your own experiences or ideas.

The continuation of capitalist rule depends on the passivity of the exploited class. Help us to break that cycle.

Other Publications

The Platform of the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party
This is now available, in an updated version in English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, and Farsi. Each price £1.

Internationalist Communist Review
is the central organs in English of the IBRP. Each individual issue is £1.50.
Revue Comuniste
in French (write to CWO address),
Internationalist Notes
in Farsi
Prometeo
Theoretical journal of the Internationalist Communist Party (Italy)
Battaglia Comunista
Monthly paper of the PCInt (Italy)

We also have publications in **Bengali, Slovene, Czech, and Serbo-Croat**. Please write to the appropriate address. (PCInt for **Internationalist Notes**)

Subscription rates
Subscription to **WORKERS’ VOICE** (6 copies): £2.50 in UK and Eire, £4.00 elsewhere.
Subscription to **WORKERS’ VOICE** (6) and **Internationalist Communist Review** (2): £4.50 UK/Eire, £5.50 elsewhere.
Supporter’s subscription: £10
Cheques should be made payable to “CWO Publications”
Back issues of most publications are available. Please send local currency OR if writing from abroad **INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS** (within the sterling area postal orders are acceptable). We regret we cannot cash ordinary cheques as the international banking system takes the first \$9 out of \$10 for doing this).

Pamphlets

CWO Pamphlet No. 1
Economic Foundations of Capitalist Decadence £1
CWO Pamphlet No. 2
1917 £2

Internationalist Communist Review 12

has just been issued and contains articles on:
The Nature of the Working Class today
The Rise of Hitler and Anti-Fascism
The History of the Italian Left
Imperialist War in Spain 1936-9

Price £1.50 from our address or in the bookshops mentioned on p. 5.

Internationalist Communist Review 11

is still available and includes articles on:
The War in Ex-Yugoslavia
Trotskyism and the Collapse of the USSR
Imperialism and the Working Class
Price £1.50 from our address or in the bookshops mentioned on p. 5.

Publication in French BC Inform No. 1

is available containing articles on the situation in Italy, a polemic with *Le Proletaire* and an editorial on the purpose of the publication. It will be sent free to any subscribers who request it. For others it is 50p per copy.

Meetings

Readers’ Meetings
Sheffield
Please contact group address for details of February Meeting.

London
These will be held regularly in Conway Hall. Write to group address for details.

Addresses for all correspondence

CWO
BM Box CWO, London WC1N 3XX.

Il Partito Comunista Internazionale,
CP 1753, 20101 Milano, Italy.

Our Basic Positions

1. We aim to establish a stateless, classless, moneyless society without exploitation, national frontiers or standing armies and in which *the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all* (Marx): COMMUNISM.
2. Such a society will need a revolutionary state for its introduction. This state will be run by workers’ councils, consisting of instantly recallable delegates from every section of the working class. Their rule is called the dictatorship of the proletariat because it cannot exist without the forcible overthrow and keeping down of the capitalist class worldwide.
3. The first stage in this is the political organisation of class-conscious workers and their eventual union into an international political party for the promotion of world revolution.
4. The Russian October Revolution of 1917 remains a brilliant inspiration for us. It showed that workers could overthrow the capitalist class. Only the isolation and decimation of the Russian working class destroyed their revolutionary vision of 1917. What was set up in Russia in the 1920’s and after was not communism but centrally planned state capitalism. There have as yet been no communist states anywhere in the world.
5. The **International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party** was founded by the heirs of the Italian Left who tried to fight the political degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the Comintern in the 1920’s. We are continuing the task which the Russian Revolution promised but failed to achieve - the freeing of the workers of the world and the establishment of communism. Join us!

Fifty years since the clandestine publication of *Prometeo* in Italy

Introduction

In August 1943, following the collapse of the fascist government in the wake of strikes in the north and the Anglo-American invasion of the south of the peninsula, Italy's gaols began to be emptied of thousands of political prisoners - most of them old Communist Party militants. If Mussolini's dictatorship had helped to silence political debate about what was happening to Russia inside the Communist Party, and amongst workers in general during the late Twenties and Thirties his prisons had proved to be veritable schools of revolutionary marxism. It was there that militants of the Left - comrades like Onorato Damen - developed their understanding of the capitalist nature of the Soviet Union. (After watching Russia take its place in capitalism's 'community of nations' and finally openly pursue its own imperialist interests during the War.) For these comrades release from prison or return from internal exile was not the signal to re-join the old party, or rather to contribute to the formation of Togliatti's "new party". The Italian Communist Party of 1943 had nothing in common with its 1921 predecessor. Its claim to revolutionary credentials rested on nothing more than support for "Russia". In practice it aimed to use the crisis of Italy's political and economic collapse to win for itself a legitimate place in whatever post-

war system was eventually established. Not for the new PCI, then, were calls for workers to oppose capitalism in all its forms, for the setting up of soviets or for international solidarity of workers against both imperialist war fronts. Instead, no sooner had the armistice been signed with Allied imperialism, then the PCI took up the banner of national unity, put itself at the head of the anti-fascist resistance, and insisted to its rank and file that:

The objective which we are proposing for the Italian people, once the war is over, is that of creating a progressive democratic regime in Italy ... We understand the extent of the destruction to the Italian social fabric and understand, therefore, that if we were to pose any other objective we wouldn't be fulfilling our duty to the nation. [Togliatti, soon after his return to Italy from Moscow, in April 1944.]

Against this Party which stood for the saving of Italian capital in communist guise, the militants of the Communist Left, joined by the majority of the Left Fraction who had been in exile in France and Belgium, formed the Internationalist Communist Party (PCInt.) in November 1943. Alone it stood for an independent proletarian struggle, for revolution against capitalism, not its democratic reconstruction. While the PCI both supported Russia and co-operated fully with the Anglo-American 'authorities' -

Therefore even struggles openly against the "partisans", the Committee of National Liberation and the Italian Communist Party.

The PCI leaders resorted to a massive campaign of political defamation, calumny and lies against the internationalists of *Prometeo*, a campaign which followed the logic of this capitalist power whose most advanced interests were represented by national-communism. Faced with the danger that the proletariat would independently move towards a political organisation with a class programme, every method was used by the bourgeois parties to prevent this. Repression and reaction - if necessary, up to the point of persecution and assassination of revolutionary militants - immediately rained down on this political and ideological reference point for the working class. As history shows, it is a task which the bourgeoisie prefers to confide to its faithful social democratic and national-communist servants, the latter above all having demonstrated their efficiency in weeding out "sectarians" from the workers' movement. Thus, as the moment gradually drew nearer for the official passage of power from fascist to democratic hands, Togliatti, Secchia, F. Platone and the whole of the PCI cried out against an extremism whose "goal is a progressive accentuation of political class struggles ... in a way which encourages complications and disorder." [National Council of the PCI, 7th April, 1945.]

Against the firm positions maintained and propagandised by the Internationalist Communist Party the national-communist response, as it had been already by Stalinism in the international field, was to accuse it of Trotskyist/Bordigist manoeuvres as part of its support for Nazism and fascism against the USSR and the Italian people. The internationalists were depicted as "notorious and filthy Leftists, Gestapo agents and servants of Hitler, provocateurs and spies in the service of the

not difficult, since both were against the Germans - the PCInt. called for working class unity against all capitalism's forces.

How to crush Nazism? To overthrow the war machine that oppresses the German proletariat, do not call on the aid of another war machine (Anglo-Saxon or Russian) but sow the seeds of fraternisation, anti-militarism and the class struggle among the ranks of the German troops. [Prometeo 4.3.44, in 'Death to the Germans or Death to Nazism?']

It is easy enough now to say that the situation was not revolutionary - because proletarian revolution did not happen - and to conclude that therefore the future proletarian revolution will not come out of the situation created by capitalist wars. Reality does not respect such facile schemas. When Italian imperialism collapsed in 1943 there was no absence of class struggle and thousands of workers, unfortunately, rallied to the PCI because they thought they were going to make a revolution. It is no exaggeration to say that it was this Party which prevented a revolutionary situation from developing in Italy. The fact that the revolutionary PCInt. could grow from nothing to a network of thousands in a couple of years is testimony to the revolutionary potential in the situation. But the PCInt. had to combat the prestige and strength which the PCI gained from its proletarian

past and from its links with Russia - still the homeland of the first proletarian revolution for many workers and now benefitting from the added prestige of having put paid to Nazism (Stalingrad). Later, with the successful outcome of the partisan struggle - in which the PCI played the biggest part - the PCI's prestige increased further. (PCI membership grew from about 5,000 in 1943 to 1.75 million by the time of its Vth Congress in December 1945, albeit on the basis of somewhat looser criteria than might be expected of a "communist" party. In April 1945 Togliatti quite bluntly stated, "We are not making adhesion to Marxist ideology a condition for entry into the party".) Thus, as well as agitating amongst the working class for concentration on their own class interests and to leave the multi-class anti-fascist partisans, the pages of *Prometeo* also had to explain the lessons learned by the Communist Left during the years following the isolation and defeat of the Russian Revolution. Above all, for those militants who went back to the old 'new' Party imagining that they were about to pick up the struggle from where they had left it in the Twenties, the difference between the Russia of Lenin and that of Stalin had to be spelled out. The PCInt.'s message, of course, was anathema to the Party of Togliatti with the consequences which the following tribute to *Prometeo* by our Italian comrades (on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary) makes clear.

From Prometeo

On 1st November, 1943 the first clandestine issue of *Prometeo*, the political organ of the Internationalist Communist Party (PCInt.), appeared in Italy. Eleven further issues appeared up until 15th October, 1944 when there was a break of five months due to the difficulties of the situation. Publication was resumed in April 1945. However, during the winter of '44-'45 leaflets, pamphlets and typewritten documents about the general situation, the war and Russia continued to be distributed.

The very first number of *Prometeo* had been in 1921 when it appeared as a corollary of Livorno [the founding Congress of the Communist Party of Italy which emerged from the split with the Italian Socialist Party ed.]. In 1924 it still carried the masthead of the Communist Party of Italy when it was being published by the Italian Left under the editorship of A. Bordiga. It was subsequently revived in Belgium where between 1928 and 1938 it was published as the organ of the Left Fraction there.

In their reports to Mussolini on the clandestine press, the fascist police were obliged to admit the "authenticity" of *Prometeo*, "despite the accusations inspired by Comrade "Ercoli" (Togliatti) coming from other communist papers"[Report of 14th April, 1944.] The fascist informers' evaluation of *Prometeo* was as follows:

The only independent journal. Ideologically the most interesting and the best prepared. Against any compromise; defends a pure communism, undoubtedly Trotskyist and thus anti-Stalinist. Declares itself without hesitation to be an adversary of Stalin's Russia whilst proclaiming itself a faithful fighter for the Russia of Lenin. Opposed to the war from every aspect: democratic, fascist or Stalinist.

Ovra(the Fascist secret police -ed.)", etc. In January 1945, in an article entitled 'Leftism', *Disguise for the Gestapo*, the publication of the Milanese Federation of the PCI, *La Fabbrica [Factory]*, denounced the provocative activity of:

... a group of renegades, disrupters, of traitors, enemies of the Soviet Union who, under the name of a pseudo 'Internationalist Communist Party', are launching an appeal to the proletarian masses inciting them to struggle against the Committee of National Liberation, against the Communist Party and against the people's war which the Italian populace is conducting against Nazi-fascism. ... These enemy agents, instead of encouraging the workers to develop the guerrilla war against the Germans, are inviting them to struggle against it. The Nazis and the Gestapo couldn't find more faithful servants. Their journals, Prometeo, Stella Rossa and Bandiera Rossa, do not say a single word against the Germans, against the Nazis; they do not call for immediate struggle against the Nazi Germans but, on the contrary, these filthy pages attack the Communist Party because all its effort is devoted to the struggle for the expulsion of the Germans from Italy ... The unscrupulous editors of Prometeo regurgitate their obscenities under the title, The Trap of Partisanism. According to them anti-German partisanism is a weapon which is useful to the bourgeoisie for blinding the worker; according to them the workers must refuse to join the partisans and should desert the war. And while the Germans have attacked the socialist countries with fire and sword, the Left gentlemen of Prometeo, of Stella Rossa and the pseudo 'Internationalist Party' have the audacity to proclaim that there is no need to fight the Germans, to preach abstentionism and to ask the workers not to go to the partisan organisations. ... They are doing all this in the name of the principles of Marx and Lenin. No, this is not the way of the Left. In reality they are following the path of the Gestapo. The criminal and disgraceful activity of these filthy individuals must be unmasked and denounced. It is an insult to and a betrayal of the heroic fighters. They must be pilloried; they must be*

treated as spies and traitors, as agents of the Gestapo. And their press must be burnt.

The PCI leadership was worried about a growing "dissidence" that was particularly spreading around Naples, Rome and Milan. In a letter of 14th December, 1943 Scoccimarro wrote: "As we move closer towards the Socialist Party we must avoid at all cost being outflanked by the rise of a pseudo communist party which is capable of representing a new splitting element in the working class." In one of his 'Intelligence Reports' of January, 1945 P. Secchia referred to the "liquidation of opposition groups which are managing to exist outside the PCI":

Signs of the old splinters of Bordigism who have finished up in the cesspool of the Gestapo and the counterrevolution are becoming increasingly rare, an apparition which consists of a few numbers of Prometeo ... spread in a manner which is clearly the work of the police.

One of the methods used by the PCI and its national Centre was, to blame the editors of *Prometeo*, and thus the Internationalist Communist Party, for the existence and sort of behaviour carried out by groups like *Stella Rossa [Red Star]* of Turin which were noted for containing provocateurs. The slander against us - against those "vulgar agents in the pay of the Gestapo" - and which made us co-responsible for the deeds and misdeeds of *Stella Rossa* - was part of another typical Stalinist/Togliattian political manoeuvre used at the end of the war. In fact there is a document deposited on behalf of the PCI Centre to the Commission for the Council. (See the acts of the Commission passed under the Esarchia Government [The interim government which was set up in 1945 until the 1946 referendum to legitimise the post-war Italian republic and in which the PCI played a prominent part.ed.] influenced by ministers