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CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL: AN ATTACK ON ALL WORKERS

This autumn, the "mother of all parliaments" and staunch defender of our freedoms, will enact the most repressive item of peacetime legislation since the anti-combination laws of the early 19th century - the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill.

The contents of the bill amount to a wholesale criminalisation of wide areas of working class activities as well as the more publicised activities of various marginalised elements such as travellers, squatters and other whose lifestyles are anathema to the small minded cretinous values of "middle England". A brief look at the provisions of the Bill reveals an intention to crackdown upon almost every form of non state sanctioned activity.

Trespass: In many cases trespass will become a criminal offence for the first time in English law.

Trespassory Assembly: Assemblies held without the permission of the landowner, or assemblies on a highway which may result in a "serious disruption to the life of the community" can be banned by the Home Secretary. An additional clause grants the police powers to stop people believed to be travelling to a banned assembly. This effectively puts the legality of all demonstrations at the discretion of the government.

Squatters: Landlords may apply to the courts for an order to evict occupiers of premises without the occupiers being allowed an opportunity to be represented in court. Whether they are squatters or not, occupiers will face criminal charges if they do not vacate within 24 hours of being served with an eviction order. No doubt this will be used by landlords to get rid of lawful tenants as well as squatters. Occupiers will only have the right to challenge an eviction order after they have been thrown out onto the street.

Travellers: The Bill will increase police powers to break up traveller's encampments whilst at the same time the duty of local authorities to provide travellers' sites will be abolished. Increased harassment of travellers is inevitable.

Festivals: Outdoor festivals and raves may be banned or broken up at the discretion of the police and people believed to be travelling to a banned event can be stopped. The police will also have powers to seize vehicles and sound equipment.

Stop and Search: Northern Ireland comes to mainland Britain. Under the pretext of "prevention of terrorism" a police commander can authorise the stop and search of any person or vehicle for a period of 28 days, irrespective of whether there are any grounds for suspecting a person of terrorist activity. Failure to co-operate with stop and search procedures will constitute a criminal offence. The new law also increases police powers to obtain intimate body samples, use force to obtain non intimate samples and reduces the right to request the destruction of samples and fingerprints when there is no prosecution.

"Right to Silence": Courts will be able to infer guilt where a suspect has remained silent when arrested by the police. The implication for some cases will be that the prosecution will no longer have to prove its case: it could rely merely on a suspect's silence to obtain a conviction. If confession evidence is now seen to be "suspect"

how much more convenient it is to condemn someone for remaining silent!

The Real Target

Government propaganda tells us that the purpose of the Bill is to counter the activities of "anti-social groups" such as travellers, hunt saboteurs, squatters and tripped-out rave goers. In reality these marginalised groups are only minor irritants to a handful of bourgeois individuals and pose no objective threat to the capitalist system. In the time honoured tradition of the ruling class, the government has created easy scapegoats for public vilification and bolsters its own shaky esteem amongst its own neanderthal supporters.

Furthermore the public targeting of new age travellers and suchlike serves to disguise a far more generalised attack on the whole of the working class. As we have seen, the provisions of the new law can be used to prohibit just about every form of organised protest from demonstrations to pickets. The bourgeoisie have taken advantage of a period of low class combativity to beef up their legal armoury against workers in future struggles.

The "Labour Movement" and Capitalist Oppression

The campaign against the Bill has been led mainly by an amalgam of anarchists and Trotskyists. Unlike the latter we are not in the least bit surprised or dismayed that the Labour Party has washed its hands of the whole affair. After all what else can be expected of a party which since the First World War has been a pillar of the capitalist state, supporting its imperialist wars and breaking workers resistance. Labour is the "people's party" only in the sense that it has the ability to con workers into accepting what they wouldn't from the Tories. Remember Labour has used the Army to break strikes fourteen times since World War Two. The Tories have only dared to do that twice. Today, in a period of class retreat no great mystification is demanded from Labour, so it is desperately trying to outdo the Tories in banal reactionary statements about "law and order".

It is even less surprising that the trades unions have done nothing but issue the occasional platitude. The trades union movement has demonstrated its role for the state in keeping workers divided. If the unions will not even call

upon train drivers to support the signal workers, they are hardly likely to defend a group of crusties and squatters even though the same laws will be used against the whole of the working class. In short the official "Labour movement" is not too dismayed about the passing of a Criminal Justice Bill which is aimed at limiting independent working class action.

How not to Fight

Unfortunately the existing campaign against the Bill is seriously flawed. From the radical bourgeois liberals of "Liberty" obsessed with abstract notions of "human rights," to the mythical folksy nonsense about "Freeborn Englishmen" beloved of ex-Stalinists, and the Trotskyist infatuation with

"defending democracy", there exists a common and erroneous thread. All these tendencies share an assumption that there is a good thing called democracy which is somehow suspended immaculately and immutably above the squalor of the capitalist realpolitik.

Moreover they believe that workers or people in general have an interest in defending this pristine democratic icon against the ravages of authoritarian capitalism. This is nonsense; democracy is not some abstract notion of rights and freedoms which somehow remains aloof from the state but rather, the material form of capitalist class domination. The Criminal Justice Bill is not some fascist aberration but the product of a lawfully constituted and democratically elected parliament. Therefore the defence of democracy is completely illogical as it is the democratic system itself which is perpetrating the oppression.

The extent to which the working class have rights and freedoms within capitalist society is a function of the balance of class forces at any given time and nothing to do with the so called principles of democracy.

Communists must clearly voice their opposition to oppressive legislation such as the Criminal Justice Bill but at the same time we must not become obsessed with the legal forms of capitalist class rule. The struggle against the Bill should be part of a generalised class struggle against falling wages, unemployment and increased rates of exploitation. In the absence of a vigorous class opposition, the ruling class will use their democratic state to do as they please. That is why the key to pushing back the bourgeois offensive is class struggle and not demonstrations in defence of democracy. When class struggle

occurs the real issue becomes the balance of class forces and the anti-capitalist consciousness of the working class rather than the contents of the bosses statute books. It will not be settled in our favour unless we reject any notion of begging reforms from the democratic totalitarian state. PBD

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SIGNAL WORKERS AT THE END OF THE LINE?

It goes without saying that the ruling class and their allies have always used various weapons against our class. But the older capitalism gets, the more sophisticated are its weapons and the more brutal its attacks. The signal workers have already been through a whole range of dirty tricks dredged up by the bosses to demoralise them and break their strike. They've seen it all, from bribes (the offer of a £700 payment to break the strike) to tricks (the offer by Hatchet Horton to donate the difference between his and Knapps salary to charity) to straightforward threats (they warned in July that they'd sack workers if the strike continued and that they'd lose pension entitlements, and BR boss Reid threatened strikers with a "much more dangerous solution").

Other sections of the ruling class are coming out of the woodwork to express their disgust at the strike, especially since they all thought it would have collapsed before now. The CBI is bleating on about compulsory refresher ballots as a way to break future strikes and the Institute of Directors wants the state to ban strikes from all essential services (ie whichever is on strike at the time).

Facing the State...

The signal workers have also found themselves face to face with the State from a very early stage, when it intervened to withdraw the offer of 5.7%. Had this offer gone ahead the state would have found it impossible to hold the line over public sector wages. Despite the fact that MP's have found the money to give themselves another 5% pay rise, they know that an attack on public sector wages is necessary if they're to get public spending below £263bn. Once again workers will pay directly out of their own pockets for the failure of the capitalist economy.

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Global State Debt means there is no Real Recovery

Announcing the raising of interest rates on September 12th the Chancellor of the Exchequer boasted that it was all because the British economy was doing so well. This was a blatant lie for two reasons.

A recovery?

The first is that the figures used by Clarke to highlight the wonderful recovery don't add up to much. On Channel 4 News he pointed to declining unemployment, an inflation rate that was at a 25 year low, exports were up 10%, economic growth was 4%, investment was up 6% and even manufacturing was up 5%. Superficially this all sounds impressive until you actually realise that he means compared only with the year before. If we remember that negative growth figures were established in 1992-3 then the boast begins to take on a different perspective. Production levels are still at or below those of 1990. If we look at long term British economic growth rates we can see that they have declined from the 3% per annum of the post-war boom up to 1967 to the present average of 1.3% since 1989.

Talk of rising investment, a real sign that a recovery would be on the way is equally exaggerated. In the mid-1970s investment was 9% of GDP (and that was considered disastrously low!) whilst today it is 1.5%. A 6% rise on an average rate of 1.5% of GDP doesn't add up to much by anyone's arithmetic. It is certainly insufficient to begin the cycle of accumulation again. This is a "recovery" only in the immediate term. It is not the end of the long slow decline which, apart from short booms as in the early 70s and mid-80s, has seen near stagnation in the accumulation process. We are, as we have argued many times in **Workers' Voice** at the end of the third cycle of capitalist accumulation.[1] Neither Keynesian nor monetarist policies have managed to get round the fundamental problem of a lack of global profitability.

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Signalworkers Strikes

There's another reason why it's worth riding out losses of £10m per strike. The Government is desperate to ensure that privatisation goes ahead smoothly, and this means that workers have to be beaten into accepting ever worsening pay and conditions beforehand. This is worth the difference between the £5m it would cost to settle the strike and the £500m it has cost industry so far. This is how much the ruling class cannot afford the working class to be militant.

...and the Unions

The number of signal workers has been reduced drastically in the past ten years with help from the very union which now claims to be leading signal workers to victory. As part of the deal done with rail bosses to increase productivity, 1,500 signal staff have lost their jobs. To cut costs even further for the bosses the RMT persuaded those left to accept worse working conditions so that in many cases the general workload has increased tenfold. As if this wasn't bad enough the RMT managed to prevent any action by signal staff by persuading them to trust the management and wait quietly for them to offer the promised increase in pay. The RMT managed to string workers along with this nonsense for five years before they could no longer control the anger of the strikers. Although dismayed by the prospect of militant workers, the RMT has made sure they have done everything they can to ensure that the strikes have as little impact as possible and cause the minimum of disruption.

The first thing they did was to call strikes only once a week. This serves an extremely useful purpose in giving the bosses plenty of time to prepare for the next strike both by recruiting scabs and building up anti-strike propaganda through the "impartial" press. But the bosses really would have been lost without the RMT who have used their own members to scab on the strike, causing bitterness and division amongst railworkers as a whole. Rather than calling out

Global state debt

But the fact is that the interest rate rise was not caused by fears of inflation in eighteen months time, as Clarke maintains in an effort to polish his self-image as the prudent Chancellor. This is his second lie. After twenty years of stagnation with little mini-booms to lighten the capitalist gloom the single most frightening factor for the international bourgeoisie is the dizzying growth of state debt. In France state debt has risen from 30% of GDP in 1981 to over 50% and still rising today. For Italy the figure is even more alarming, having gone from 60% to 115% in the same period. Even "prudent" Germany has gone from 36% to just under 50%. The US Government whose colossal debt is now one of the major factors in global economic stagnation has seen its debt rise from about 36% of GDP to nearly 70% of GDP over the last fifteen years.

The British case is slightly different. For most of the 1980s British state debt actually fell, largely due to the receipts from selling off state assets through the privatisation programme. But since Thatcher was unceremoniously forced out by her Party, public debt as a percentage of GDP has begun to rise from about 35% to almost 50% today. And with real taxation levels now higher than in 1979 the Government has few options but to cut spending and raise interest rates. And this was the **real** reason for Clarke's action in increasing interest rates. British interest rates have recently tried to keep at a higher level than Germany and US rates. With the US interest rates going up in June to bring them close to British levels, Clarke was under pressure from the Bank of England to respond. The *Financial Times* let the cat out of the bag a few days after Clarke's tour de force of self-publicity

For the British public the emphasis here is, no doubt, well-judged politically. It is more logical, however, to fit the increase into a global pattern in which US dollar interest

rates have been rising for some time and some rates in Europe - in Sweden and in Italy, for instance - have gone up already. (17.9.94)

The Consequences

Global state debt is adding to the stagnation of the system in two ways. In the first place the state, unlike in 1945, is not in a position to act as lender of last resort to kickstart any new cycle of accumulation. In the second place, state indebtedness is affecting the demand for credit. By pushing up interest rates constantly, global state debt limits private investment in international markets. The percentage net interest on global debt is increasing faster than wealth production. This means that all talk of a "recovery" is at best relative. The structural crisis will not go away and is poised to get worse. Who says so? Well, not just internationalist communists. A few days after Clarke's interest rate rise the *Financial Times* informed us that we were in "a period of foreign exchange crisis and securities market instability" and as a result "words such as 'correction' and even 'crash' are beginning to crop up in brokers' literature".

Of course, such a crash might only be like that of October 1987 and its consequences may be equally phased out by the joint action of the big four state banks in Germany, Britain, Japan and the USA. However the difference today is that state global indebtedness is so much greater that even the phasing in of financial measures by the international cooperation of the big four, as has happened so regularly in the past, may no longer be possible. In 1977 we wrote in our pamphlet *The Economic Foundations of Capitalist Decadence* our view of the development of the capitalist crisis. We stated that

As the crisis deepens, the tendencies towards equalisation will be stepped up by the stronger capitals (USA, Japan etc.) in order to prevent political and economic consequences like autarky or defection to

capital investment they think will bring the greatest return. They are not going to spend this money on strikers and they will fight to save their own profits and the whole profits system to the death. That includes sacrificing their own members, which they do on a regular basis. But not paying strike pay is also a very effective way of weakening any strike before it's even begun. Workers now face a strong and wealthy enemy class, and unions always make sure that workers start any dispute from poverty. The signal workers have seen their pay and conditions get steadily worse over the past ten years; they've gone on strike because they can no longer survive on what they earn, and what does the union do? It calls useless, drawn out one-day strikes which have cost each signal worker on average about £1,000 so far. Like the NUM before it, the RMT argues for strikers to curb any militancy in order to stay within the crippling confines of legality because they are so terrified of having their funds sequestered. Since workers are never going to see the money they have paid to the union then it makes no difference whether assets are sequestered or not. To borrow a phrase from Marx, you cannot take from workers what they do not have!

Given all this it's a bit of a sick joke to hear groups like the SWP calling for the RMT to "step up" the action and call everyone out. It's not just that there's absolutely no chance of the RMT doing this. The point is that all unions, including the RMT are working to a completely different agenda to the working class. The argument that the unions are militant really but that they've all been systematically hi-jacked by bureaucrats is beginning to wear a little thin. After all the only function of a bureaucrat is to protect the interests of the organisation and the union leaders do this very well. But it is the function of the union which determines the reactionary nature of the bureaucracy, not the other way round. But none of this worries the SWP who trot out the same old phrases about workers defending the unions from Tory attacks. Revolutionaries can only answer this nonsense by calling for the defence of workers from Union attacks. The unions have lived off their reputation as workers organisations

the Eastern Bloc. But as the crisis "bottoms out" the surplus value will no longer be available for such measures and that stronger powers (in order to keep their own economies afloat) will be forced to repudiate the measures of "equalisation" which have mitigated the basic imperialist relationship, and will be forced to implement autarkic measures, linked to the creation of a war economy. In this period will be posed the stark alternatives of war or proletarian revolution. But as yet we are a long way off from such a situation. (op. cit Money Credit and Crisis p.74)

Today the collapse of the autarkic bloc in the East has, in a sense, further postponed the day of reckoning but it has also clarified what the economic interests of each of the former members of the Western bloc are. The conflicts of interest have already been reflected in moments of friction between Germany and the US in former Yugoslavia, between the US and Japan over finance for the Gulf War, between Britain and France in Rwanda etc).

Up to now the relationships between the debt-sodden imperialist states have been kept in a state of uneasy stability. The GATT and other trade treaties, as well as meetings of bodies such as the G7 and European Union are aimed at maintaining that equilibrium. As the length and depth of the economic crisis extends the tensions between the respective states and emerging blocs will become more apparent. Sooner or later these tensions will tear apart the economic consensus heralding a new period of outright inter-imperialist competition. J

Footnote

See, for example **Workers Voice 72** *The Political Bankruptcy of the Capitalist Order*, **WV 71** *Making the Working Class Pay for Capitalist Crisis* and **WV 69** *Class Struggle for a New Society!* The International Bureau maintains that under imperialist conditions the economic cycles of the last century have been converted into cycles of boom and bust with only a war being capable of devaluing capital in sufficient quantities to restart the accumulation process.

for far too long. By peddling this myth the SWP helps keep workers locked in the union framework, facing defeat after defeat after defeat. As if this weren't enough, the SWP has as usual launched off into a flight of fancy by begging the TUC along with the Labour Party to support the strikers. They do this every time there's a strike and funnily enough they're always disappointed. How many times do the Labour Party and the TUC need to spell it out? They are not interested in defending workers interests. But above all workers have no interest in following such loyal defenders of capitalism. For Marx the working class would have to learn how to take control of its own destiny using political tools, and as he stated: "Every class struggle is a political struggle".

The defeat of the signal workers is not a foregone conclusion by any means, but in order to win this battle the whole framework of this present series of strikes must be rejected and new tactics used. At present if the strikes continue to be controlled by the unions, the result will be defeat. In fact as we go to press the unions are busily negotiating an end to the strikes. After several months enthusiasm is beginning to wane and the threat of the loss of part of the pension fund will break the resolve of the signal workers still further. The unions, as usual, will dress up defeat as a sensible compromise and once again workers will have been left worse off than when they started thanks to the manoeuvrings of their union. It seems there will have to be further defeats like this for the working class, before it recognises that fighting in sectional isolation and 'leaving it to the unions' is a guarantee of failure. R

Important - New Address

Please note new Sheffield address on p.7. In future please use this address for all exchanges, correspondence etc. as we are closing the London box.

Clinton sends the troops into "Our Backyard"

US Imperialism and the Misery of Haiti

Not even the US population believes its own government when it tells it that the invasion of Haiti is about bringing "democracy" back to a land where government-inspired terror has led to thousands of deaths. After all, if that was the case why didn't they take up the sword in defence of the elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, when he was overthrown nearly two and a half years ago? The truth behind the reasons for the US invasion are extremely complex. What we can be certain of is that questions of principle are not dominant amongst them! The history of the US Government's invasions in the Caribbean this century reveal only too clearly the strategic significance of this area for the United States, "Our Backyard" as Clinton repeated in his justification speech on US television. In fact there is no country in this area which has not had to face invasion by the US this century, and some (like Cuba) have been invaded on three or four occasions. The one exception are those colonies and ex-colonies run by the US' staunch ally, Britain. Even here Reagan invaded the Commonwealth country of Grenada in 1982 to overthrow a leftist regime and only told the British Government after the invasion was underway.

Nor is this the first invasion and occupation of Haiti by the US. In fact many of the present problems facing the Haitian working class are a legacy of nearly two centuries of imperialist domination of the land which was nominally the first in which black people freed themselves from slavery and colonialism. It was also only the second revolutionary republic (after the US) to be declared in the Americas.

A Sorry History of Imperialist Interference

This year is in fact the 190th Anniversary of the Haitian Declaration of Independence. Unfortunately for the descendants of the ex-slaves who made that Declaration the entire history of the country has been dominated by imperialism in one form or another ever since. The United States refused to recognise that blacks could govern themselves (a position they maintained until they freed their own black slaves in 1863) whilst the indemnity the Haitian state agreed to pay to the French to get rid of them lumbered its shattered economy with a national debt before it had even come into existence as a nation! The indemnity was not paid until 1883 and by then endemic mass poverty was already one of the national hallmarks.

However, as capitalism entered into its monopoly stage imperialism began to show even greater interest in subjugating Haiti. German and British governments both threatened Haiti with invasion unless it bowed to their demands in the late nineteenth century but German finance capitalists were the most active. They repeatedly funded revolutionary groups to overthrow the government. Haiti had only had ten different leaders in the first 63 years of its history but it now experienced a violent change of government on average every three years until a US invasion in 1915.

At first US imperialism was not really interested in Haiti (and next door San Domingo) in the same way as it claimed interest in Cuba and Puerto Rico (both of which became actual or virtual US colonies in 1902 after the defeat of Spain). At the beginning of the century US investment in Haiti was only \$4 million compared with over \$220 million in Cuba. However the theoretical basis for the 1915 invasion had long been prepared. In 1823 President James Munroe had announced his famous Doctrine which prohibited further European colonisation in South America and the Caribbean. In 1904 Theodore Roosevelt added his Corollary which stated that the US

would intervene in any Caribbean country should that country be likely to default on its debts to a European power (which would then want to invade). In other words the Caribbean was now for the US, "our backyard".

The US Occupation of Haiti

Uppermost in US government minds was Germany which now controlled 80% of Haiti's commerce. Once the First World War started the US was only waiting for an excuse to oust the Germans. A bloody riot which overthrew President V.G. Sam gave the perfect excuse. Not for the first or last time US troops entered a Caribbean country to "bring order and progress". What they brought was murder as 1,800 Haitians were killed in a three year revolt sparked by the US use of forced labour (slavery at the hand of the white man) to build roads. The US also imposed a constitution on the country which allowed non-Haitians to buy land. The immediate result was the expulsion of many peasants who had been tolerated as squatters on state-owned lands. By the end of the invasion (with F.D. Roosevelt's announcement of the "Good Neighbour Policy") in 1934 the US imports to Haiti had leapt from about 2% to 75% of the Haitian total import bill.

The roots of the present conflict in Haiti were also created during the US occupation. Until 1915 the ruling class had been dominated by the well-educated, Catholic, French-speaking mulattoes of mixed race origins. However the mulattoes were seen by the US as 'uppity niggers' who, according to the senior US officer in Haiti

Down in their hearts ... are just the same happy, idle, irresponsible people we know of.

quoted in H. Schmidt The United States Occupation of Haiti 1915-34

African Nationalism and the Haitian Ruling Class

Such racism led elements of the Haitian ruling class towards African nationalism and to reject the French colonial, Catholic and European heritage. Black intellectuals (from Stalinists to conservatives of the ultra-right) now founded an *noiriste* (or 'negroist') movement which praised the African origins of the slaves, reclassified voodoo as a progressive religion with its own valid theology and elevated Creole as the Haitian language at the expense of French. It was from this group that a new ruling elite emerged within the Gendarmerie (which became the new Army) that the US occupiers created. Ultimately this movement gave birth to the regime of a local doctor, François Duvalier (better known as "Papa Doc"). Once in power he created his own organisation known as the *Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale*. They were a secret police

which history now knows as the Tonton Macoutes (or "uncle bogeymen"). The descendants of the Tontons, the Fraph, are still today terrorising the population of Haiti on behalf of Cedras' military junta.

"Papa Doc" instituted one of the most terroristic regimes in the history the Americas and when he died in 1971 he handed the regime over to his son Jean-Claude (inevitably know as "Baby Doc"). When Jean-Claude's corruption finally lost him the support of the Army he was overthrown in 1986. After almost three decades the Duvalier legacy was horrendous. Three out of four could not read, a fifth of all babies died before they were five, and the per capita income was barely over \$300 a year, making Haiti one of the poorest countries in the world. Not surprisingly there were spontaneous riots against the regime when Duvalier fled into exile in France. The riots frightened the ruling class and elections were repeatedly annulled with much bloodshed. The election of the populist priest Aristide terrorised not only the Port-au-Prince élite but also the US. "Papa Doc" had always voted loyally for the US in every UN vote in return for political support, and aid and trade. Aristide, with his liberationist ideas, was seen



1915 not 1994. From the US paper the St Joseph News-Press The original caption stated "I'm in for something now!" Racism and imperialism clearly have not changed much.

by some US politicians as nothing but another Castro, and this distaste for Aristide helped undermine him and led to the installation of the military regime now led by Raoul Cedras. The Haitian élite gambled that the US would stand by and they were almost right.

Problems of US Imperialism

So why have the US invaded? The most obvious reason is that US policy has suffered a series of setbacks. With the November Congressional elections coming up Clinton needed some success to ensure that his Democratic Party were not humiliated at the polls. Haiti was a soft touch in that a US victory with few (and as it turned

out no) casualties was badly needed. The invasion though shows the US to be significantly weaker. Its budget deficit stubbornly refuses to go down and it can no longer afford the adventurism of the Reagan-Bush years.

Furthermore the US now cannot take its former NATO-bloc allies' support for granted. It is significant that the UN (and 226 soldiers from other Caribbean countries) were brought in to disguise that this was simply an invasion by 10,000 US troops. This fits in with the regional defence strategy that the Clinton administration keep talking about. This states that the UN should be used as a figleaf in any regional dispute but the main initiative will be taken by the power which for historical or geographical interests has the greatest interest in the area. But this is a policy which assumes that only one power is involved in only one region. In today's highly globalised imperialist set-up what happens to this policy when there is a conflict of interest as in, say, Bosnia?

Bosnia

Here the interests of the powers have shifted like a kaleidoscope as the war has evolved. Germany was the first power to signal that it had its own imperialist agenda in the area by steamrolling through the EC the recognition for Croatia and Slovenia which opened up a very tense situation in ex-Yugoslavia into a full-scale war. The breezy push of Chancellor Kohl to re-establish a German-dominated Mitteleuropa ended with the costly gamble on reunification. Germany abandoned its policy in the Balkans (though not its long-term hopes) and left the rest to squabble over how to deal with Serbia. The US backed Serbia for a long time as the best hope of re-establishing stability in the area and even formed an alliance with the USSR to try to bring the Serbs on board the US world order. Although this has brought Milosevic towards the US it has not solved the issue and the US now risk breaking with Britain (and the UN), France and Russia through their latest threat to arm the Bosnian government. No wonder Haiti seems a less dangerous place to operate, especially after the humiliation at the hands of the Mogadishu warlords which led to the disastrous retreat from Somalia.

More invasions, more misery

The invasion of Haiti also sends a signal to other regimes, most notably that of Castro in Cuba. Both countries migrants have been a severe embarrassment to the "land of the free and the home of the brave" which can no longer afford to support a few thousand refugees. But the use of the naval base at Guantanamo in Cuba in the invasion of Haiti will also be a reminder to the besieged Castro regime of the power of the US military.

As it has turned out the shoddy deal worked out by Carter and Colin Powell has ensured that the US can determine the internal regime in Haiti once again. If Aristide refuses to toe the line he will be discredited and the alternative bourgeois faction of the military will be refurbished in time for a new election. US imperialism has done it in the past and it is still capable of doing it in Haiti. Another victory for democracy? Another defeat for the victims of imperialist history.

Jock

Rwanda: Imperialist Battleground

In our last issue we made a fairly lengthy analysis of the situation in Rwanda (*Behind the massacres stands international capital*). Since then the massacres may have lessened but with one million estimated to be dead the general legacy of misery remains. Today at least half of the population of Rwanda is either dead, or is in exile. But as we wrote in that issue, despite appearances

This is not a tribal war. It is a war for political and economic domination ... But who is behind this power struggle? It is the imperialist bandits of the West ... the real

tragedy of Rwanda and elsewhere lies in the way the imperialists constantly intervene and play upon the ethnic divisions of the local population. (Workers' Voice 73 p.1)

French Imperialism Defends Mass Murder

We went on to show how and why French imperialism continued to support the Hutu government militia who were carrying out the majority of the carnage whilst the British, Belgian and US governments were supporting the Tutsi-led Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPR).

The latter were armed and given bases inside the frontiers of the British client state in Uganda. It was from there that they launched their attack on the capital, Kigali.

The RPR's sweep towards the capital and the collapse of the former Hutu-led military dictatorship, which had lasted twenty years, provoked French intervention. As usual the motives were claimed to be of the highest order - to save lives - but as everyone knew from the beginning the aim was to prevent a clearcut RPR victory. To do this they created a "safe haven" in the south-west of the country so that those

Communists and Anti-Fascism:

With the publication of this third document in the series devoted to commemorating the foundation of our sister organisation, Battaglia Comunista (PCInt.), we come to a key political question: the relationship between anti-fascism or a struggle for democratic government and the struggle for communism. This is by no means an academic question, a matter of revolutionary archaeology. On the contrary, in the current political climate where incidents of neo-fascist racist attacks are a daily occurrence fringe groups of the ‘far Left’ joined by more respectable figures from mainstream parties are indulging in anti-fascist campaigns aimed at mobilising principally young workers in campaigns to defend or improve ‘democratic rights’. In doing so, nostalgic references are made to the Popular Frontism of the 1930s: differences between Labour and Communist party members subsumed in comradesly battles fought in Brick Lane to defend Jews against the Fascists; idealistic militants volunteering to fight for the Republican side in the war in Spain. Visions of the holocaust are used to remind us of the dangers of not uniting to resist the new fascist threat. The Second World War is turned into a struggle between good and evil, fascism versus anti-fascism, totalitarian dictatorship versus democracy, instead of being recognised for what it really was - a fight between imperialist blocs for the control and re-division of the planet. If we forget for a moment the cynical way in which ‘anti-fascist’ rallies, festivals and the like are being used as recruiting grounds for Trotskyist and semi-Trotskyist groups, we can see that the whole thing functions as a populist diversion from class politics to the politics of reviving support for a dilapidated and shabby parliamentary democracy. Campaigning alongside anybody and everybody for an end to the ‘injustices’ of the present system will do nothing whatsoever to alter the fact that **this** is a system based on the ruthless exploitation of one class by another and where racism is endemic. Democratic or otherwise, the present system is in deep economic crisis and the prospect before the working class is lower wages and living standards, more unemployment, with all the accompanying increase in brutalisation, racism and eventually war. This is not because of the moral failings of our rulers or the shortcomings of the legal system. Moreover, in today’s ‘free market democracies’, with the media defining the parameters of political debate and given all the sophisticated mechanisms of social control in the hands of our rulers the working class is experiencing totalitarianism in an unprecedented way. Quite simply fascism - at least in the form it took in the Thirties - is not on the agenda because the ruling capitalist class in general has no need of it. They already have a subdued and suitably brainwashed workforce. This is not to deny the existence of neo-Nazi groups or their racist thuggery. But in the first place racist violence is not limited to these groups. (As we have pointed out before, the democratic state is responsible for more racist killings than the fascists.) In the second place, the significance of fascism as a political system goes beyond the death camps and anti-Semitism. The regimes of both Hitler and Mussolini had their origins in the counter-revolution, in the armed gangs who roamed around murdering and intimidating workers during the revolutionary struggles that followed World War One. As the capitalist class in first Italy and then Germany lost confidence in the power of democracy to provide social peace in the shape of a compliant working class that would accept massive increases in exploitation fascism became an attractive option to capital. Fascism, as the Italian Left communists said right from the very beginning, was just the other side of the capitalist coin and the two contending ideologies - fascism:anti-fascism, national socialism versus freedom and democracy - were used to mobilise workers all over the world to kill each other in the interests of one or other imperialism. And just as the Stalinists and Trotskyists elsewhere in Europe had pedalled popular frontism and played their part in rallying workers to the side of the Allies before the War, now in the divided Italy of 1944, the Italian Communist Party of Togliatti urged that the workers “must today defend the Italian nation” with the aim of creating “a progressive democratic regime”. On April 1st 1944 - to the astonishment of thousands of CP members, many of them amongst the Party’s 50,000 or so anti-fascist partisans - Togliatti announced the PCI’s readiness to join the Badoglio government,

The PCInt. and the Italian Partisans After the Downfall of Mussolini

whether or not the King was involved. (Stalin had already done a deal with the British and Americans and recognised their puppet regime in March.) Many Communist Party members, still under the illusion that there was something socialist about Russia and something revolutionary about Togliatti who had spent the best part of the last twenty years there, could not believe what they were hearing. Often it was concluded that this policy of alignment with clearly non-working class and out-and-out reactionary forces was simply a manoeuvre to enlist support for the anti-fascist resistance before the CP would go on to lead the working class in the struggle for the Italian Soviet Republic. The upper echelons of the CP hierarchy had to continuously demand that the real meaning of Ercoli’s (Togliatti’s) directives be explained at local level.

However, the Internationalists of the PCInt. were under no illusions, either about what Russia had become - state capitalist and imperialist whilst Togliatti was a mere pawn in Stalin’s carve-up with Anglo-American imperialism - or the anti-fascist partisan struggle. From the outset the PCInt. had warned against workers joining a partisan struggle simply to be drawn into sacrificing themselves for Allied imperialism and well before the formal link up between the CLN (National Liberation Committees) and the Allies in December 1944 the pages of *Prometeo* explained why.

Our attitude towards the partisans is based on precise class reasons. Born out of the disintegration of the army, the armed bands are, objectively and in the intention of their animators, instruments in the English war machine. The democratic parties are exploiting them for a dual purpose: to reconstruct a fighting potential on the occupied territory and to ward off the threat of mass proletarian struggle by throwing the working class back into the furnace of the conflict. [February 1944]

In other words proletarians in the partisans were being used as pawns by imperialism at the behest of their so-called Communist leaders. In June 1944 ‘Order no. 8’ from the Garibaldi assault brigades’ Command (PCI) couldn’t put it more clearly:

The Anglo-American armies are advancing in Tuscany, while hundreds of thousands of men are disembarking in France. The Soviet army which has already beaten the Germans in hundreds of battles is about to open its last overwhelming offensive. The hour has come for the general attack of all the partisan formations, for all patriots and for all Italians.

Against this blatant nationalism the Internationalists called for a struggle of class against class and while the PCI was helping to prolong the war the PCInt. argued to an exhausted and war-weary proletariat that “... workers have not one but a hundred reasons to go on strike. They can all be summed up in the fundamental demand that this terrible war be finished and with it there be an end to hunger, police persecution and terror. Against the PCI’s emphasis on the partisan movement the PCInt. reminded workers that the way for the working class to struggle was collectively, not via acts of individual sabotage or terrorism but first of all in the factories and workplaces. The task, therefore, should be to “.. fight the war at the workplace, unify in class struggle, organise ourselves compactly and not make ourselves the individual focus of capitalism’s repressive apparatus.” (October 1944)

Yet many would-be revolutionaries remained inside the partisans.

The tragedy is that the armed bands have become a focus of attraction, first for misguided workers who believe they are taking up a rifle not to hunt down one imperialism in order to allow another to

come in through the window, but to prepare for the proletarian revolution (in the mountains!). Second, there are young and old revolutionary militants who are trying to escape from real or imagined persecution. Finally there are the poor soldiers who quite simply don’t want to sell their skin to the bourgeoisie any longer. [Prometeo, February 1944]

What was the PCInt.’s strategy towards these proletarians in the partisans? If the influence of internationalism was going to grow the PCInt. had to win over proletarians away from the influence of the PCI. The following leaflet is part of the attempt to do this. It involved individual comrades joining particular partisan groups and putting forward the revolutionary viewpoint. Their aim is clear in the leaflet: get the armed militants to fight for the revolutionary cause by abandoning the democratic imperialist front and preparing to support mass proletarian insurrections in the cities with the aim of establishing proletarian political power in the face of all factions of the capitalist class. We might add that some were killed for their efforts - not by Nazis or Italian fascists - but by Communist Party partisans under orders to assassinate these interlopers who were obviously having some success in undermining the PCI’s strategy of putting workers’ lives at the service of ‘democratic’ capitalism.

To proletarian partisans To all workers

Proletarians:

When Italian capitalism dressed in fascist garb infected you with war fever, telling you that all your sufferings plus a standard of living that couldn’t meet even your basic needs were due to the absence of living space it was deliberately lying. How was it possible to speak of living space and the necessity for territorial conquest when on the national soil itself the level of capital accumulation was only matched by the depth of misery of the masses? What was the point of talk about a war of conquest while the wealth produced by the sweat of proletarians was accumulated in the coffers of the private capitalist and thrown into the whirlpool of arms production? What was the point when the wealth you created was used to maintain a parasitic bureaucracy and a network of spies which extended beyond national frontiers, continuously swallowing up the gold which betokens your sacrifices? What was the point of a massive police force? Or, again, of a permanent army which was really and truly a bloodsucker on the whole body of Italy’s proletarian masses? Even so the class enemy provided itself with a single representative, a man whose proletarian political past gave him the necessary credentials for overseeing the interests of a bourgeois class who preferred to embark on the course to war. In other words, a course towards even further destruction, as indicated by the war economy and the whole panoply of bureaucratic and repressive military apparatus.

Proletarians:

If, in fascist garb, Italian capitalism has preferred to destroy the potential for national wealth rather than increase the standard of living of the population it has done no more than carry out its task of maintaining its own class domination. The fact that this domination rests on the misery, on the blood, sweat and tears of the workers is a completely normal part of the political policy of the bourgeois class. How could anyone suppose that capitalism will spontaneously let go of power and get rid of its system of exploitation? Whoever believes in such a utopia is an enemy of the proletariat because experience

shows that the enemy prefers to create chaos than relinquish power to the progressive class, the proletariat.

On the other hand, the notion that if Italian capitalism had had a democratic, “progressive” government it would have avoided the war, or that if it had been linked with the Allies the outcome of the war would have been different, must also be rejected. This wouldn’t have altered the fact that the dilemma for Italy remained the same: either war or revolution. While the Italian proletariat found itself absolutely unable to counteract the war with revolution it was easy for the enemy to use imperialist demagogy to spur on the masses into criminally taking part in their own massacre. What becomes clear is that it is in capitalism’s interest to make war since it really has only one enemy and that is the proletariat. Capitalism needs to divert this proletariat from following its own class interests. Once Mussolinian demagogy about living space wasn’t enough it turns to the bemedalled Badoglio, flanked by the Savoy scumbags,* and in the name of antifascism (a weapon of their own creation) they presented themselves as republicans and socialists so as to be able to draw proletarian youth into the deadly game. But if this youth begins to detect the capitalist monstrosity behind the social republic then a new formula will be put forward which is more acceptable to confused proletarian minds. This will be termed the “progressive” Republic, even socialism, but behind the facade there will be hiding another war - one that aims at the economic and political death of the proletariat, its exploitation, the collapse of its class independence, of its historic role, of its revolution.

Proletarian partisans:

In one sense you could become the key element in the proletarian struggle since, for the most part, your intention is to struggle in the next stage alongside the proletarian class without collaborating with the enemy which will no longer be fascist but which will be no less capitalist for that. This struggle will not be for a pseudo-workers’ government but will be aiming at the supreme goal of the proletarian state based on its own class dictatorship. This has nothing to do with the totalitarianism depicted in counter-revolutionary propaganda.

However, your role as advance guard, of revolutionary combat, can only be realised on one condition and that is that you become aware of the extremely dangerous position you are in at the moment. You, who having understood the need to desert the fascists’ war have put yourselves in the vanguard of the struggle to transform the war into revolution, must now avoid being drawn into other pitfalls which will be disguised in various ways. The first: a manoeuvre of the class enemy to make you supporters of the attempt to refurbish the power and authority of capitalism with the democratic face-lift. This would turn you into an instrument for the preservation of bourgeois power. The second: believing in the illusion that it’s possible to rise to power by counter-posing your own army against the occupation armies. Apart from the fact that revolutionary marxist thinkers have already refuted the possibility of the proletariat a priori creating its own army to counterpose against the enemy, this illusion has cost proletarians in the Greek partisans dear. First the illusion was drowned in blood, followed by capitulation and then finally compromise.

This experience demonstrates yet again that although the assault on power is the task of the proletariat this can only come about in given conditions. These conditions can only be recognised by a leading body; a body which does not come about by chance but which during an epoch of betrayals and defeats has been able to generate the tools required for revolutionary victory.

As regards the mass of the proletariat, the fundamental task of this body will never be to delude itself with the demagogic and criminal illusion of creating an army before the main task of the insurrection has been resolved by the party and brought to a conclusion by the class seizing power. What sort of body is this? Perhaps one of those parties which was responsible for drawing the proletariat into the war, thereby

The Working Year and the Working Day: An Article for Discussion from Kamunist Kranti [India]

CWO Introduction

Today, when the very idea of human beings organising their own society on a rational basis is dismissed as impossibly utopian, it falls on Marxists to challenge what is after all no more than a comforting piece of ideology for the bourgeoisie. It is not always that we agree with Kamunist Kranti. In the past we have disagreed, for example, over their Luxemburgist view that capital accumulation is dependent on the existence of pre-capitalist markets. However we do share their preoccupation with putting forward an explanation of the basis of exploitation in straightforward terms. Perhaps the single most important aspect of Marx's economic investigations was to reveal the material basis of the exploitation of labour power through the ages. In doing so he showed how the struggle for socialism was not a moral or a religious crusade but grounded in the material development of capitalism itself which would provide the economic infrastructure and a class of capitalist "gravediggers" able to turn the world upside down. Whilst we might quibble over the accuracy of describing class societies as "hierarchic social formations" and would question the usefulness of explaining increased exploitation only in terms of dead labour rather than mentioning surplus value, we can appreciate the attempt to avoid complications. At a time when the CWO is involved in trying to get more people to think about the economic foundations of capitalism and class society we offer Kamunist Kranti's document to our readers as a genuine contribution to discussion.

The Working Year: The Working Day

Accumulated labour, i.e. dead labour, has the capacity to make living labour productive or more productive. Accumulated labour can take the form of knowledge, material goods or a combination of them. Knowledge of animal movements, their strengths, weaknesses and habitats; the bow and arrow and archery, are examples of accumulated or dead labour. Other examples might be construction know-how for dams, canals and irrigation systems and knowledge about water flows, currents, winds, geography and astronomy. Ships, maps and compasses are also examples of accumulated/dead labour as is science itself, along with the steam engine, the electric motor, the nuclear reactor, the computer and engineering technology in general. Hunters, gatherers, horticulturists/farmers, slaves serfs, yeomanry/peasants, artisans/craftsmen, wage workers have been and are living labour.

The relationship between accumulated/dead

betraying the revolution? Certainly not. Whoever incites the working class to war will remain a collaborator with the enemy even when the situation is overwhelmingly favourable to the proletariat seizing power. Conversely, the body which offers the best guarantee of revolutionary leadership can only be the party whose ideological and tactical basis has allowed it, not only to avoid falling into interventionist treachery, but which during the storm indicated the way to struggle out of the terrible trap fallen into by the Italian and world proletariat.

Long live the seizure of proletarian power!
Long live the Italian revolution!
Against every kind of interventionist manoeuvre, all power to the proletariat!
Not a man, not a soldier for the war!
All the general demands of struggle - desertion, revolutionary defeatism - must be united to form one single slogan: Revolution!

The Turin Federal Committee of the Internationalist Communist Party.
November 1944

* The House of Savoy, or the monarchy, which had supported Mussolini's regime but now that this had collapsed hoped to revive itself by aligning with the anti-fascist resistance.

labour and living labour has been and can be friendly-helpful-complementary, or antagonistic; or it can be an admixture of the two. In egalitarian social formations the primary function that accumulated/dead labour is employed for is to help living labour improve its life. In hierarchic organisations with egalitarian pockets and roots the relationship between accumulated/dead labour and living labour, whilst being predominantly antagonistic, also has a visible complementary side. As hierarchy spreads it tentacles the relationship between accumulated/dead labour and living labour becomes increasingly antagonistic and whatever complementarily remains is merely an incidental spillover.* Any improvement in the living conditions of living labour is either incidental or it is a prerequisite for further exploitation of living labour. Knowledge, skills, tools and implements improved the lives of hunters/gatherers, cattle rearers and peasant/artisan communities in egalitarian social formations. Knowledge, weapons, cattle, land, metals, tools and implements in the hands of slave owners and feudals were the means to exploit and control slaves and serfs. Gains of independent artisans and peasants in slave owning society and feudalism were of secondary and minor significance.

Today science, machines, weapons, technology are the means to exploit and wield control over wage workers and to increase that exploitation and control. The increase in spatial and social mobility of living labour; the questioning of patriarchal values, caste, religion; universal literacy; the possibility of a better material life and more leisure for all; the increasingly feel need for a new egalitarian social formation are either incidental spillovers or they are a means to make exploitation and control over living labour more effective.

The growth of accumulated/dead labour is dependent on the productivity of living labour which in its turn is dependent on the amount of accumulated/dead labour at its disposal or whoever is in a position to dispose of living labour. In hierarchic social formations living labour is at the disposal of controllers of dead labour. In these formations, increasing productivity of labour, increasing accumulation of labour, adds to the strength of dead labour vis-a-vis living labour. This is reflected in the length of the working year and the working day of living labour. Confining our discussion to material production, we can say that the increasing strength of dead labour is clearly reflected in the lengthening of the working day of living labour. The increasing strength of dead labour is also reflected in the increasing intensity of work for living labour.

Under feudalism, in areas where irrigation systems were not available the working year for the serfs was 3-4 months, but where the controllers of dead labour had dead labour in the form of dams and canals at their disposal the working year of serfs was 6-8 months. This further increased the strength of dead labour. But for a long time a major portion of dead labour went into building forts, temples, pyramids and not much of it went into means of increasing the productivity of labour and hence channels that could accelerate the amount of accumulated labour which is the strength of dead labour. As a result, the strength of dead labour vis-a-vis living labour increased but not at a rapid pace and so for a long time the length of the working year for living labour remained in the range of 3 to 6-8 months.

Long distance trade in particular increased the mobility and concentration of accumulated labour in certain pockets and led to a situation where it was in the interests of dead labour to make forceful attempts to increase the productivity of labour and lengthen the working time of living labour. The 3-6 months working year was replaced by the 12 months working year for living labour in branch after branch of material production. Brute force was the means to discipline living labour in accepting the 12 month working year. Month long festivals soon

became things of the past for living labour. As a corollary the hierarchic social formations associated with a 3-6 months working year disappeared.

Besides stretching the year to the full, the increasing strength of dead vis-a-vis living labour also focused on the working day. The length of the day from daybreak to sunset was increased by artificial light and living labour was forced to work up to 18-20 hours a day. Resistance from living labour grew. Science and technology along with force were employed as sharp weapons in the hands of dead labour as it contended with living labour. Exploitation of living labour was increased by increasing the productivity and intensity of labour by the use of science and technology. In this way the exploitation of living labour was increased even when the number of hours of work in a day were being reduced due to the resistance offered by wage workers.

Though beaten flat in the case of the working year, the struggle of living labour against the lengthening of working time has continued, as it had to do. A significant event in this struggle was the demand for an 8 hours working day. Though coloured by patriarchal notions, living labour in the form of male wage workers demanded and fought for wages that for 8 hours work per day would be adequate to rear a family. For those mobilised on this issue in Europe and the USA the family consisted of grand parents, parents and children with the wage worker male/father as the head and breadwinner for the family. The struggle between the controllers of dead labour and living labour sharpened and it was some time after the 8 hour working day demand had been raised that the working day of living labour reached a trough.

However, exponential growth in the amount of dead labour was made possible by unheard of increases in the productivity of labour that science and technology brought about. This substantially increased the strength of the controllers of dead labour and then there began a major increase in the length of the working day of living labour. Besides brute force, illusions and deceptions also played a significant role in this massive step of dead labour towards increasing the length of the working day to unprecedented lengths. The first and the most visible aspect of this was the transformation of an 8 hour working day into an 8 hours shift. Whenever and wherever the 8 hours was implemented - knowledge-producing institutions, laboratories, factories and their transmission lines - they all hailed this as a great victory for living labour. Wage workers were being battered and ideology declared that they were on the march to victory.

The mounting mounds of dead labour, the increasing strength of those who controlled it, was translated into the lowering of wages for workers. Lower wages made it impossible for a man to meet the expenses of the family with 8 hours work. Wage workers became "selfish" and "economistic". Men started working overtime and doing part-time work after doing 8 hour shifts to meet the expenses of the family. But no! Price rises and taxation and so forth would simply not allow them to make ends meet. Grandparents and children became a nuisance. Shouldn't motherly sacrifice for the family also extend to women working for wages to meet the family expenses?

Like month long festivals, grandparents were dumped into dustbins. Two children, one child,

no children, became the norm. Traditional patriarchal notions and ethics were then dealt another hard blow with women in ever-increasing numbers becoming wage workers.

The increase in the strength of dead labour vis-a-vis living labour is visible in the shrinking domestic unit and lengthening working day for its maintenance. As the 20th century has progressed the working day for a domestic unit has become:

8 hours wage work of man + 8 hours wage work of woman + 6-8 hours overtime/part-time wage work of man + 4-6 hours of overtime/part-time wage work of woman + 4-6 hours of wage-work by children = 30-36 hours.

Even today there are only 24 hours in a day but the working day of living labour has become 26-36 hours duration.

Domestic work is on top of this.

And leaders thunder for a 35 hour week! Jokers chime in with 4 hours a day.

This prolongation of the working day began in Europe and the USA and is taking place in front of our eyes in countries like India. While the exploitation of living labour in Europe and the US was increasing in leaps and bounds and the working day expanding beyond 24 hours wage workers there were being called the aristocracy of labour, sharers in the loot. In a similar situation, wage workers in countries like India today are called the privileged ones and asked to sacrifice.

Lengthening and intensification of the working year and the working day is a consequence of the increasing strength of dead labour vis-a-vis living labour in hierarchic social formations. This has taken place in zig-zags, twists and turns and at varying paces in the face of stiff resistance from living labour. But all the same, the result of the increasing strength of dead labour in hierarchic social formations has been and can only be this. However, the struggles of living labour have not been futile and it is as a result of those struggles that today we have no alternative but to pose the problem thus:

It is not more or less science and technology, further increases in labour productivity or reducing it to peasant-craft levels; more efficiency and less wastage or less efficiency/more wastage; more or less planning, that provide a way forward for living labour. Rather what is needed, and in fact the only way, is to turn upside down the relation between dead labour and living labour. Dead labour has to be controlled by living labour for its own betterment. Making dead labour friendly, complementary and helpful to living labour is a necessity for the high level of productivity of labour to be used for providing the means for a better material life and more leisure for all. An egalitarian formation in place of the present hierarchic social formation is what's needed. It is the means of getting out of this insane, increasingly misanthropic situation that living labour finds itself in.

July 1994

Kamunist Kranti can be contacted by writing to: Majdoor Library, Autopin Jhuggi, Faridabad - 121 001, Haryana State, IND

Footnote

* To make it easier to read, we may sometimes refer to 'dead labour' instead of 'controllers of dead labour'. However, we do not intend to imply that dead labour has a volition or dynamic of its own.

Sheffield Revolutionary Study Circle

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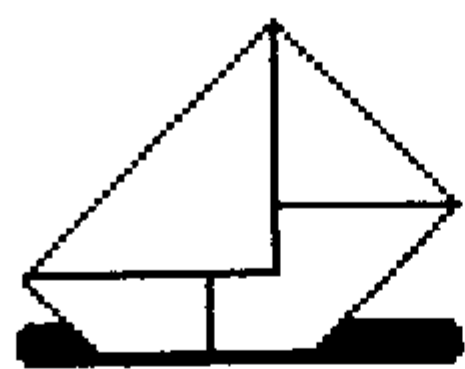
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Letters



should be addressed to the CWO
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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. We ask that letter be no more than 2 sides of A4 (longer than this and we reserve the right to edit them) and priority will be given to those which are sent on disk (AppleMac or ASCII formats).

The Road to Socialism Parliament versus Workers' Councils

From the Socialist Party

Dear CWO

Your report of the two debates between the CWO and the Socialist Party (see *Workers' Voice* 73-CWO) is rather biased. It is accurate enough in saying that we say that workers should use the existing electoral machinery in the course of the socialist revolution. It is also true that we were never taken in by the Bolshevik coup and do not regard the Russian Revolution as in any way a model to follow.

But you just distort our position when you claim (1) that we see the emergence of a socialist majority as being the result purely of a one-by-one conversion of individual workers by socialist propagandists, and (2) that we say that all workers need to do to get Socialism is to put an X on a ballot paper for a socialist candidate and then leave it up to a majority of Socialist MPs to legislate capitalism out of existence.

You make these two inaccurate claims despite the fact that both of them are specifically repudiated in chapter 7 of our pamphlet *From Capitalism to Socialism: How we live and how we could live* which you have seen since you refer to it in your report.

"Capitalism itself causes workers to learn," we say on p. 45. In other words, we are saying that socialist consciousness emerges out of workers' experiences of capitalism and how it fails to meet their needs; the task of socialists being to speed up this process as much as possible by campaigning for socialism amongst the working class generally.

You are entitled to regard this campaigning for socialist ideas amongst the working class as futile (because, for some reason, you think a majority of workers can never be won over to socialist ideas before the "revolution" breaks out), but honesty should compel you to recognise that there is a difference between saying that campaigning for Socialism creates socialist consciousness purely by its own efforts (as you claim we say) and saying that it speeds up a process that spontaneously occurs under capitalism (as we actually say).

As to your claim that we say that establishing Socialism demands no more from workers "than just putting a cross in the right box on a ballot paper and then relying on the Socialist party to pass laws outlawing capitalist forms", this is absurdly dishonest. It is refuted on p. 46 of our pamphlet:

The parties formed by socialists will be thoroughly democratic: their policy and all their activities will be under the active control of their members; they will have no

leaders. In this they will be completely different from existing parliamentary parties or Leninist 'vanguard' parties. Being the actual movement of the working class to establish socialism they will reflect, as far as is possible under capitalism, the organisational forms of socialism, namely democratic control and popular participation. And far from being parties which seek to lead workers with attractive slogans, they will merely be the instruments workers can use to win political power once a majority of them have become socialists. Such parties will of course have to elect candidates to contest the elections for public offices. But those appointed will simply be mandated delegates from the working class socialist majority. The position will be the exact reverse of that in existing parliamentary parties. Instead of the party outside parliament being essentially vote catchers for the parliamentary leadership, socialist MPs and councillors will merely be messengers of the socialist working class outside parliament, democratically organised in their socialist political parties. And, naturally, the aim of sending socialist delegates to parliament will not be to form a 'socialist government' (a contradiction in terms) but to abolish capitalism as smoothly and peacefully as possible.

What could be clearer? You are entitled to disagree that workers should use the vote in an anti-capitalist way in the course of the socialist revolution, but once again honesty ought to compel you to recognise that this is not all we say they ought to do.

We have always said (as, in Clause 5 of our Declaration of Principles, that the emancipation of the working class "must be the work of the working class itself") that it is the workers themselves who alone can establish Socialism by actively organising and participating in the movement for Socialism. This "movement" in fact is essentially a mass, popular extra-parliamentary movement involving democratic self organisation by workers both in the places where they live and in the places where they work.

In a sense voting is the least important part of the socialist revolution. It is a formality which we do indeed say this mass, popular movement for Socialism should comply with in order to try to ensure that capitalism is abolished with the least possible bloodshed and loss of life for workers. It is not even absolutely essential since if the last capitalist government were to abolish

it (which you argue is bound to happen and which we say is conceivable but very unlikely) this would only delay, not prevent, the democratically self-organised and participating working class from establishing Socialism.

What is absolutely essential to the establishment of Socialism, however, is the existence of a mass, popular self-organised movement of workers who want Socialism and who are organised and determined to get it. Once that exists, literally nothing can stop the establishment of Socialism.

Your real disagreement with us is not over compliance or non-compliance with the mere formality of voting, but over the possibility of such a majority movement emerging under capitalism. You follow Lenin and say that, because of capitalist conditioning, it can't and that the most that can be achieved (apparently despite capitalist conditioning) is a mass "trade union consciousness" and a minority vanguard party. We say it can.

So our disagreement with you is much more fundamental than that we would have with some anarcho-communists and anarcho-syndicalists - over how such a majority movement should proceed once it emerges, e.g. general strike, or popular uprising, or the sort of political action we advocate. We're discussing tactics with them, but with you its basic principles. As you say we are in different camps. The policy you advocate of a Bolshevik-style insurrection simply could not lead to Socialism, only to some form of state capitalism - as it did last time. **AB**

CWO Reply

Dear AB

The Socialist Party believes in the parliamentary road to socialism. It believes in taking over the bourgeois state and using it as the instrument to bring about socialism.

We have several times referred to the necessity for the workers to gain control of the machinery of government. ..(it is)... necessary for workers to obtain control of parliament before attempting to uproot the existing foundations of society. (Questions of the Day p. 29)

These aims are declared throughout your publications and it is to this purpose that the SP fields candidates in bourgeois elections.

All the talk about unstoppable mass extra-parliamentary movements is, we consider, in contradiction with your parliamentary aims. If your aim is to capture control of parliament how can voting be "not essential" as you state in your letter? How do you propose to capture control of parliament? Or is it perhaps not necessary to capture control of parliament at all? The SP wants, on the one hand, to capture control of the bourgeois state by means of parliament, ever so democratically, and on the other hand they wish to have an unstoppable mass movement which would ignore the bourgeoisie's laws, and its violent opposition, and introduce socialism anyway - but, of course, without violence. It is not for us to explain the contradictions in your politics. We will attack those sections of your politics which we consider are dangerous to the working class, i.e. bourgeois. We do not accept that this is dishonest.

The simple point which we tried to impress on you in the debates is that the bourgeois parliamentary circus is a weapon for breaking any autonomous mass movements of the working class. It is the bourgeoisie's means of defeating and destroying such movements. Bourgeois elections atomise the working class. They split the mass movement into isolated "citizens" where they are subject to the full weight of bourgeois ideology while they put their X on the ballot paper. Throughout this century they have been used time and again to break class movements; one of the most significant recent examples being that in France in May 1968. When the SP enters the bourgeois electoral charades it accepts the bourgeoisie's rules for

the game. It is no use pretending otherwise. If, for example, the SP finally wins the famous seat of Islington, will your candidate become the "mandated delegate" of the socialist proletarians of Islington? Can his mandate be withdrawn if he votes against the wishes of the Islington workers? Of course not! He will be the 'right honourable SP member for Islington' elected for 4 years, taking the loyal oath to HM the Queen, and not subject to the slightest control of the Islington workers. His election, far from being useful to the workers, would be useful to the bourgeoisie who will use him to prove that workers should put their trust in parliament, that they should have patience and if they don't like what they get to vote again in 4 years time. The SP will only be able to change this when they have an overwhelming parliamentary majority.

As we have pointed out to you again and again the bourgeoisie itself does not have the slightest regard for parliamentary democracy, and if the SP ever appeared likely to pose a real threat it would soon discover just how much parliament was a figleaf for the class violence of the capitalist class. Any successful Socialist Party would be treated in the same way the state capitalist regime of Allende was in Chile in 1973. Your parliamentary candidates, far from expressing the mass movement of the socialist majority would at best be paralysed, at worst, the enemies of this movement, the agents by which such a movement was destroyed.

We are aware that the SP demands that the overwhelming majority of the working class become committed conscious socialists before it takes action to abolish capitalism. We have pointed out to you that this will never occur under capitalism since, as Marx argued,

the ruling ideas are in every epoch the ideas of the ruling class.

and the bourgeoisie will remain the ruling class until it is overthrown. Consciousness, and this includes the consciousness of the working class, has a materialist basis not an idealist one. You do not accept this because to accept it would be to completely undermine your parliamentary illusions.

We do agree that the working class must express itself democratically and argue that the workers councils such as existed in Russia from 1917 to the start of the civil war are the vehicles for such democratic expression. The consciousness of the working class is a collective one and needs to be expressed collectively in organisations restricted to workers. Delegates elected to the councils will be subject to immediate recall, as will be those elected from the councils to higher bodies, should those workers who have delegated them lose confidence in them.

The consciousness of the working class is, however, a heterogeneous one because of the divisions which capitalism imposes on the class and the differing penetration of bourgeois ideas. It is for this reason that we advocate the leadership of those workers with the most developed understanding of the need for communism and how to achieve this.

This is not to advocate a revolutionary putsch as you state in your letter. You only ever refer to the October Revolution as a Bolshevik putsch - an interpretation which puts you in the reactionary company of Richard Pipes, Norman Stone and Leonard Schapiro, for whom this assertion is central to the bourgeoisie's need to deny that there never has been a successful proletarian revolution anywhere. In fact the final insurrection is one you should find interesting since the Bolsheviks had 80% support of the workers in Russia's cities they had little need to fire a shot (compare the 5 killed in Petrograd in October to the more than 1,000 in February 1917). But then the one thing you studiously avoid discussing is the soviet - an alternative form of workers' democracy which has nothing to do with your wretched parliamentary schemas.

You are well aware (or should we use your favourite phrase "honesty should compel you to admit") that we advocate that revolutionaries

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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 Internazionalista** (*Battaglia Comunista*).

Appeal to Readers

Twenty 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 mentality.

Addresses for all correspondence

CWO
PO Box 338, Sheffield S3 9YX

Il Partito Comunista Internazionalista,
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!

Publications

The Platform of the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party

This is now available, in an updated version in English, French and Italian, and will shortly be translated into Spanish, German and Farsi. Each price £1.

Internationalist Communist Review

is the central organs in English of the IBRP. Each individual issue is £1.50. Back issues are available. **ICR12** is the current issue 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

Internationalist Notes

in Farsi

Prometeo

Theoretical journal of the Internationalist Communist Party (Italy)

Battaglia Comunista

Monthly paper of the PCInt (Italy)

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

Pamphlets

South Africa - The Last 15 Years

A compendium of articles from Workers Voice since 1980. £3

CWO Pamphlet No. 1

Economic Foundations of Capitalist Decadence £1

CWO Pamphlet No. 2

Russia 1917 £2

New Pamphlet in Farsi

The Origins of Trotskyism £1.50

Meetings

Readers' Meetings

Sheffield

The Sheffield section of the CWO meets at 8.00 p.m. on every third Tuesday of the month (next meetings October 18th, November 15th) in Moseleys Arms, West Bar Green (opposite the Fire Museum). All welcome.

London

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

Bureau Pamphlets in French

Approche a la question du Parti

Le bordiguisme et la gauche italienne

La conscience de classe dans la perspective marxiste

Les origines du trotskysme

All 15FF (postage included) or £1.50 from the Sheffield address

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Subscription to **WORKERS' VOICE** (6) and **Internationalist Communist Review** (2): £5.50 UK/Eire, £6.50 elsewhere.

Supporter's subscription (entitling you to leaflets and news from our internal publications): **£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 \$9 out of the first \$10 for doing this).

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Rwanda: Imperialist Battleground

guilty of genocide could escape the advancing RPR. The French forces allied with the Hutu militia which had committed most of the mass murders. French and ex-government soldiers encouraged Hutus to retreat with them to the south-west by spreading lurid tales of RPR massacres in areas they had taken over. And when the French eventually disbanded their occupation of South-west Rwanda they ensured that all the ex-government soldiers in their "safe zone" had been able to get over the border into Zaire.

The head of the United Nations peacekeeping force in south-west Rwanda complained

I don't think the French troops were bothered about the murderers. They let them escape. (Guardian 27.8.94)

A New Bloodbath?

But it was more sinister than that. The French were not simply providing shelter for murderers. They were taking them, and their weapons, by

the busload into Zaire in order to regroup for a renewed attack on the RPR. Not surprisingly the United Nations military personnel reported a few weeks later

...men in military fatigues, with guns and supplies, crossing the border into south-west Rwanda from neighbouring Burundi and Zaire. (Guardian 9.9.94)

Thanks to the French (and Zaire's bloodthirsty dictator Mobutu, who opposes the RPR as puppets of the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni) the old government forces are regrouping. They may try to carry out guerrilla warfare but they also have plenty of heavy weapons including at least 4 helicopters and anti-aircraft guns. According to the Reuters newsagency these troops have also been mysteriously paid four months in advance.

Capitalism Means War

All this means that the cycle of war and massacre

is not ended for the Rwandan people. And, as elsewhere in the world it is the hand of international imperialism which provides the means for the misery to continue. Revolutionaries do not take sides in these inter-imperialist conflicts however much all kinds of leftist charlatans will shout about one side or another being more "progressive" than the other. Both factions in Rwanda are the tools of different factions of international capitalism and both are therefore enemies of the working class. What is significant about Rwanda is that it is reminiscent of the proxy wars of the cold war epoch. The difference is that different parts of the former western alliance have already indicated their separate and rival interests. Rwanda may be a small country but it is rich in natural resources and, more significantly, is strategically placed in the heart of Africa. What is happening in Rwanda today is a preview of the kind of conflict which is going to happen in many more places before long. It is a sign that new imperialist alliances will inevitably be formed. At the moment these are still ad hoc it will take some time before they become firmer. Above all the events in Rwanda only underline the fact, now being witnessed in at least 26 different places around the planet, that under the capitalist mode of production there can be no peace dividends. Capitalism means war.

Jock

Other Correspondence

Several letters of a serious political nature, some of which arrived as we went to press, have been held over for the next few issues. We would ask all correspondents to include an address to which we can write in order to give them a speedier reply than awaiting our next publication.

Communist greetings,
CP for the CWO

Ireland's version of "Pax Americana"

The IRA ceasefire has been heralded as a great step forwards by almost all shades of bourgeois opinion in Britain and Ireland. The only dissent has come from sections of the Loyalist/Unionist parties whose ideological and political positions were enshrined in the political settlement of the early 1920s. There is a very simple ingredient which the imperialists hope will end 25 years of instability and enable the normal conditions for capitalist exploitation to be recreated. That ingredient is the promise of millions of dollars of American (and European Union) support for the settlement.

Democratic exploitation - Imperialism's preferred solution

At the end of last year we wrote

The more clear sighted bourgeois fractions wish to establish as normal a capitalist solution as possible. This would involve some form of democratic state solution, safe for capitalist exploitation. Apart from freeing up a sizeable chunk of the British armed forces it would establish a far more secure home for investment of capital. (Workers' Voice 69).

That intention was embodied in the declaration signed by the British and Irish governments last December. The obstacle standing in the way of that "normalization" was the presence and activities of the armed gangs, Republican/Nationalist and Loyalist/Unionist, whose leaders feared that their own power-bases would be eroded by such a process.

Since then a series of meetings (some open, some semi-secret and doubtless others whose existence is known to only a few in the state and terrorist apparatus) have taken place. Alongside the regular talks which have continued between the British and Irish Governments it is clear that discussions (either directly or through intermediaries) also took place involving the Republican leaders and representatives of both governments.

The negotiations which have taken place between the British Government and their self-proclaimed mortal enemies in the Republican movement are nothing new. Over the last 25 years there have been other talks where both sides have attempted to stabilise the situation thus allowing more favourable conditions for capitalist 'investment' i.e. exploitation. Until this year those efforts at political settlement, all of which are, of necessity, entirely within a bourgeois framework, have not come to fruition.

The new factor is that both the IRA and the British state have had their heads knocked together by the US since it is now in the US' interest to establish a more stable world order for it to dominate. It was therefore no accident that the Major/Reynold's Declaration of last year followed the British Prime Minister's visit to Washington or that the IRA ceasefire came after the visit of President Clinton's special envoy and old chum who was able to persuade all concerned that Uncle Sam's dollars were worth a lot more than the traditional enmities.

US Imperialism - the Real Orchestrator

The intervention by the U.S. was as clear and concrete as its recent military demonstrations in Somalia or Haiti. Its imposition of a solution to what was once an intractable problem for the British state - not least because of the military and financial support the IRA got from the US - is another example of the increased power of U.S. imperialism now that its Cold War rival is out of the way. Without the need to ensure that the Irish nationalists aren't going to drag a part

of the U.K. Inc. into the sphere of Russian imperialism the financial taps for weapons supplies have been promptly switched off. Instead the Ulster bourgeoisie is offered a 'peace dividend' and the British government's main preoccupation is how to save face, not only over the fact that they have been talking to the terrorists throughout but over how much it is clearly in tow to the U.S.

Underlying the U.S.'s willingness to bankroll the settlement lies the machinations of imperialism and the development of blocs and alliances. For the last half century Britain has been the U.S.'s most consistent European ally. That role is reflected in both NATO and the European Union where Britain plays the role of European representative for U.S.A. inc. as a counterweight to any emerging pro-German European alliance.

While developing the settlement in Ireland the U.S., British and Irish governments have all acted as partners, albeit with a degree of tension. That partnership, and the possibility of a long-term settlement, is a major triumph for the U.S. in its trans-Atlantic relations. Primarily, the special relationship with the British Government has been even more firmly cemented. The Irish bourgeoisie, which is almost totally dependent on turning Ireland into a high skill low wage paradise for multinational capital, has long seen which side their bread is buttered on.

The future of the ceasefire

Clear confirmation that millions of dollars were on offer was received not only from the United States but also from the meeting of the European Foreign Ministers in September. Of course any available capitalist investment will be aimed at making a healthy profit given the relatively low-wage economy and the massive available pool of unemployed workers - the Government's own *Employment Gazette* in September 1993 showed adult male unemployment in Northern Ireland (excluding those on schemes or barred from benefit) at 18.5%. At the time of writing (September 25th) it seems that the IRA's ceasefire will probably survive the immediate period.

Indeed it may well acquire the permanence which both war-weary workers and the imperialist investors and governments both seek - for entirely different reasons.

The workers want to be free from the terror of the gunmen and racketeers who add an extra layer to the everyday horrors of deprivation and exploitation in Northern Ireland. The bosses seek conditions where profits and exploitation can thrive from the toil of others. As Marxists have always known, the bosses' accounts don't differentiate between profits squeezed from workers of differing religious denominations, cultural backgrounds or other ideological quirks. Despite the promised investments there are still problems which could hinder the normalisation process or entirely subvert it.

Loyalism and Republicanism - Jokers in the Bourgeois Pack

It remains to be seen how far the new bourgeois consensus will succeed in disarming (both ideologically and literally) all the strands amongst the Loyalist and Republican armed gangs. The promise of the U.S. dollars and the more detailed information which they are doubtless privy to has encouraged the Official Unionist politicians to adopt a public wait-and-see attitude which fits in with the Anglo-American strategy. In a peculiarly complementary way the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, Ian Paisley, has been allowed to play his accustomed role of aggressive buffoon. Significantly, as yet, there is insufficient opposition amongst the Loyalist/Unionist politicians to deliver the type of street demonstrations which they orchestrated against the Anglo-Irish Accord in the mid 1980s.

A big problem for the politicians is how far the Unionist's sulk acceptance will be accepted by the UDA / UVF / UFF / Red Hand etc. Loyalist terror gangs. There is certainly no guarantee that these groups will fade into the background automatically. Further complications will also arise for State machine since there has been regular and consistent evidence of direct overlap between sections of the official Army/Police and sections of the Loyalist armed groups. This strength is however a two-edged sword which becomes a source of weakness once the British state stops turning a blind eye to this type of collusion.

On the Republican side it is also possible that some of the armed groups will not play the game that their leaders have chosen. This could result in realignments and splits with sections still preferring the bullet to the ballot. But again the

long-term infiltration by the State forces leaves all sorts of possibilities. Although uncontrolled elements may try to set their own agendas there has to be serious doubts about their capacity to sustain any campaign. Another complication for the various bourgeois parties is the presence of the politically-badged racketeers and mobsters in the very pores of economic life in the six-counties. Not only will the godfathers need to be absorbed into mainstream economic activity - a simple operation successfully carried out numerous times across the globe - but their underlings will need to be bought off or physically removed - likely to prove more problematic.

United Kingdom or Irish Republic - Same bosses, Same system

The big unanswered question for the various ideologues is what the mainstream bourgeois call the constitutional question, although their leftist hangers-on prefer to call it the national question. The emerging consensus amongst the power-brokers seems to be that, with or without referendums, plebiscites etc., Northern Ireland will remain in the United Kingdom for the immediate future.

However there seems to be plenty of straws in the wind, not least from Albert Reynolds the Irish Prime Minister, that a longer game is being played. With a fair degree of naivety and a high degree of confidence that capitalism will grind on forever, they seem to have set an underlying agenda stretching well into the next century. The scenario is based on stabilising capitalism within the framework of the evolving settlement. That is coupled with demographic assumptions about population shifts which would leave a democratic Catholic/Republican majority in Northern Ireland in the future. At that stage the states would redraw their boundaries creating a single Irish state. The creation of the new united Irish State whether in 1995 or 2025 would be a direct result of the machinations of the imperialist powers.

Such a development would fit in precisely with what we have always said about the British state's preferred option for Ulster. It confirms the Internationalist Communist analysis of the reactionary nature of the would-be revolutionists who lead workers into the blind-alley of support for this or that national liberation struggle. Like all modern nation-states the new bourgeois united Ireland won't be much different from the old bourgeois divided Ireland. The new Ireland would only be a creation primarily of the US existing entirely within the imperialist nexus.

National Liberation or Proletarian Internationalism ?

The leftist national liberation mongers regularly worship the icon of James Connolly, the De Leonite revolutionary. For them, of course, it is always Connolly's confusions and concessions to nationalism which are elevated above his commitment to proletarian revolution. Nevertheless, they could do worse than consider his writings of 1897,

If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic, your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her landlords, through her financiers, through her army of commercial ... institutions.

100 years on the nationalists and their phoney-socialist cheer leaders deliberately mislead with their recipes for revised democratic capitalist solutions. The history of the 20th century has shown that "liberated nations" are nothing more than cogs in the imperialist machine. No national solution is in the interests of the working-class. The presently emerging settlement may be aimed at hoisting the green, white and orange tricolour over Stormont in twenty or thirty years time. It certainly seeks to ensure that imperialism will continue to rule through its "landlords, financiers commercial institutions" and the rest of its economic and political framework. **KT**

September 18th, 1969

Socialist Worker supported troops being sent to Ireland

Leftist support for reactionary nationalism continues

The Trotskyist Left are usually straightforwardly reactionary when it comes to Ireland. They simply applaud and defend every IRA action. For them murdering workers in Birmingham, Belfast or Warrington is a great blow against British imperialism.

More mealy-mouthed is the SWP. When troops were sent to Ulster in 1969 they trod the most populist line. As the cutting shows they supported sending in troops though in calling for "Troops Out" today they now deny this. It is true that from time to time they will condemn IRA violence against workers but only as a "mistaken tactic". At the time of the Warrington bombing their headline informed us that this was "The Bitter Fruits of British Imperialism" in Ireland. That was a great comfort to workers!

IRA murder of workers is not an accident. The IRA are programmatically anti-working class. For them the important point was that those who died were "Brits" not what class they belonged to. The childish misuse of the term "imperialist" in Northern Ireland gives a progressive-sounding gloss to Irish nationalism, as reactionary an ideology as is Unionism. Both are bourgeois ideologies which have tragically swept up the working class. True, the oppression faced by Catholics in the old Orange state was greater than that of the Protestants but the massive exploitation of Protestant workers hardly made their lives a model existence either. Revolutionaries do not create a hierarchy of good and bad workers. We reject all nationalist ideologies and seek to unite the working class against the bourgeoisie of both sides. We reject concepts such as "the nationalist community" and the "Protestant people" as attempts to falsely suggest that workers can have anything in common with their respective dominant class.

But the signs are that these poisonous and divisive ideologies were wearing thin, even before the so-called peace process began. Civil servants and postal workers have struggled against redundancies and bus drivers struck against sectarian violence. At Harland and Wolff Protestant workers came out on strike when a Catholic comrade was murdered. This is the beginning of a return to a tradition of unity which has broken out sporadically in Northern Ireland working class history. Those who support the IRA, however timidly, are part of the bourgeois barrier which will have to be torn down in the process of uniting working class struggle.

