

WORKERS VOICE

50p.

February/March 1995

No. 76

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Zhirnovsky's Liberal Democratic Party or the former Stalinists. Yeltsin has severed many of his links with his former supporters like Gaidar and Chubais to create a government made up of security personnel or simply those loyal to Yeltsin (for example the Foreign Minister Kozyrev, has resigned from Gaidar's Russia's Choice Party in order to stay in the Government). Even two members of the ex-Stalinist (and now even more Great Russian chauvinist) Communist Party are now in the Cabinet.

Yeltsin has come to rely more and more on the Security Council and less on the constitutional forms of so-called Russian democracy. The attack on Grozny was precipitated by the FSK the new security service which has taken over from the KGB. It had organised a coup attempt on November 26th, using "Russian mercenaries" to try to overthrow the increasingly unpopular Dudayev regime. But the coup was bungled and the complicity of the Russian regime was revealed. The attack on the Russian equivalent of New Year's Eve that followed was to try to hide this embarrassing revelation. Central to both operations was the head of the FSK, Major-General Alexander Korzhakov, Yeltsin's right-hand man since 1985. He organised the storming of the Russian Parliament Building in October 1993.

Korzhakov has been meddling in economic policy, insisting the Prime Minister, Chernomyrdin (who is also intimately connected to Gazprom, the state-owned gas enterprise) doesn't free the oil quota system which the old state-run industries depend on. To free these would lead to massive price rises inside Russia. This is one of the key conditions for the new IMF loan of \$6.25 billions (which was supposed to be granted in January). Yeltsin's invasion of Chechnya has led to a collapse of the rouble (to 4000 to the \$) and should, by any economic logic, have also scuppered the IMF's aid offer.

The West in a Cleft Stick

The old NATO allies have not only been reticent in their condemnations of Yeltsin on the war front, they have also hesitated about how to handle the economic situation. Basically they have invested everything in Yeltsin maintaining stability, both politically (in what is still the world's second nuclear power) and economically. One "US official" quoted in the *Financial Times* pointed out

Everyone agrees that democratisation and the free market should develop in Russia and that Western money should be used to support those ends.

Roughly translated this means that Yeltsin will not be criticised too much over Grozny since he is the best hope for achieving stability in an area which is about one sixth of the world's surface. This stability will allow the restructuring which the West, through agencies like the IMF, are demanding. The aim here is to make Russia a profitable area for exploitation. At present, given the parlous state of the global economy, there is no way that private capital en masse is going to risk investing in Russia.

But Yeltsin is already turning out to be the monster they fear. His increasingly authoritarian

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Neither Moscow nor Grozny - The Workers have no Country

Democratic Barbarism in Chechnya

Russia itself. So decrepit has the economic crisis made the Russian Empire that even some of the Russian ruling class wants to abandon it! This not only underlines the severity of the economic crisis in the East but also that the local bourgeoisie have not been slow to find ideological baggage to win support. By playing on the cheap appeal to national sentiment the likes of Yeltsin (an opportunist by any definition of the word, who will make alliances even with Stalinists to get into power) hopes to prepare the way for the much-needed attack on the working class.

Yeltsin's slogan to national minorities in Russia in 1990 was "take what sovereignty you want". This in itself was no threat to the Great Russians. It simply meant that Belarus and the Ukraine could become nominally independent in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) but in reality they have limited autonomy given their total dependence on Moscow for their electricity, oil and gas. Not surprisingly they are still both in the "rouble zone". Sovereignty was not however intended for those areas seen as integral parts of Russia itself. Chechnya, which had only been finally conquered by the old Tsarist Empire in 1864 was not on the list.

At the time of the August 1991 coup against Gorbachev the followers of ex-Red Army General Dudayev seized their chance. They overthrew the Stalinist government of Chechnya (which had supported the coup against Gorbachev) and then went on to hold an election which Dudayev won. This was the cue for him to declare Chechen independence in October 1991 saying: **"We will make Chechnya the Kuwait of the Caucasus"**

"We will make Chechnya the Kuwait of the Caucasus"

Yeltsin has turned it into the Iraq. For four or more years the Yeltsin regime ignored this declaration of independence (although it has created some misery in Chechnya by cutting all central government allocations to Grozny). This situation could not however last for ever. Chechnya commands an important junction in the Russian oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian as well as being on the best road to Baku (where the Azerbaijani oilfields which are to be redeveloped by an international consortium are centred). Control of these routes is central to the Russian economy and the dominance of the Kremlin over the other nationalities on the edge of the old empire. Strategically Chechnya also straddles the route into the Northern Caucasus where there are already wars between Ossetians and Georgians. Abkhazians and Georgians, and

longest-running of all, Armenians and Azeris. Indeed it was the success with which the Russian state had manipulated these conflicts in the Caucasus that probably encouraged Yeltsin to gamble on a rapid victory over the Chechens whilst most Russians were celebrating New Year.

The greatest victory that they achieved was in Georgia where the Georgian bourgeoisie was split. Gamsakhurdia, the populist nationalist Georgian leader was the only Caucasian state leader to support the Chechen cause. he was soon struggling against internal oppositions in Ossetia and Georgia itself, which were quietly backed by the Kremlin. Eventually he was overthrown and replaced by the former Soviet foreign minister, Shevardnadze. Shevardnadze at first refused to bring Georgia back within the CIS so the Abkhazian separatists in Western Georgia suddenly found that Russian weapons and "mercenaries" were available to support their cause. Only when Shevardnadze agreed to sign up to the CIS did the supplies to Abkhazians dry up. As Stanislav Lakoba, Vice-President of Abkhazia so bemusedly recorded

Sometimes the Russians seem our friends, sometimes not. We don't know what their policy is, but I suppose we are just little fish designed to catch big fish ... The Russians have a policy of divide and rule in the Caucasus.

There couldn't be a more graphic description of how there are no real national struggles anymore. Those which do operate act as tools of the imperialist interests of one or more of the great powers that dominate the world market. The Kremlin's triumph in Georgia undoubtedly provided a seedbed from which the idea of a quick defeat of the Chechens germinated.

Economic Disintegration

Several other factors combined to provoke the present massacre in Chechnya. Underlying everything is the continuing economic disintegration of Russia. Russia's foreign debt is now £70 billions, its industrial output in real terms has fallen to only 55% of what it produced at the end of 1991 and the budget deficit is £12 billions (10% Of GNP) of which £4.3 billions is made up with foreign loans. Inflation which had been reduced to 48% a year has also risen dramatically since the crash of the rouble in November and stood at nearly 200% as the Russian tanks began bombarding Grozny.

There is some evidence that the timing of the attack on Grozny is part of a battle within the split ruling class inside the Russian regime, with nationalism in the ascendant. Yeltsin has heeded the warning of the victory of the neo-fascist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and seems determined to appear an even more rabid Greater Russian than



Blood-spattered Chechen children surrounded by those torn to pieces by ball bearings from cluster bombs

It only seems a short time since the US President Reagan was denouncing the imperialist adventures of the Stalinists in the Kremlin. Today as 300,000 Chechens have become refugees, and as the Chechen capital Grozny is being reduced to a pile of rubble, as an estimated eighteen thousand of its citizens have fallen victim to an unseen death caused by vicious cluster bombs, the one outstanding fact is the feebleness of the international denunciations of the brutality of the Yeltsin regime. The world's leading statesmen, once so vociferous about "human rights abuses" in the USSR have seemingly lost their voices.

In fact the Western states are accomplices to the massacre. Whilst the German Chancellor Kohl can call it "madness" he also claims that it is simple an "internal problem" for the Russians. The other leading states have been very coy in voicing any opinion but Clinton finally echoed the Kohl line and stated it was "an internal Russian affair" The nightmare that the West has is that it might spill over into a general Central Asian war involving the Islamic unity of disparate Asian and Middle Eastern states. Even here the French ruling class reveal their own hand by condemning Yeltsin more strongly than all the other governments. With a smaller stake in Russia and a bigger interest in the Arab world such a stance does them no harm at all. The *Financial Times* attempted to understand what the British ruling class thinking was by wishing away the whole issue.

The painful truth is that there is little the West can do to influence events in Chechnya or in Moscow. This is a Russian problem that requires a Russian solution. January 6th

This Pontius Pilate attitude is just what Yeltsin wanted and is in stark contrast to the Cold War. The reason for this is that Yeltsin represents the best hope the West have for some stability and ultimately some economic gain from the shambles of the collapse of the old USSR. Yeltsin however has already begun to realise some of the worst nightmares that the West has about the new Russia. In *Workers Voice* 52 (June 1990) we wrote about the direction the imminent collapse of the old USSR might take in the following terms

One answer is the nationalist movement. And by this we don't mean the Baltic and Caucasian republics but also within

Clause IV debate - Defend Socialism! Scrap Labour!

To secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service." Clause IV, Part 4, Labour Party Constitution.

Fabianism at its most erudite !

The "new model" Labour Party will hold its debate on Clause IV in April. The capitalist press of all varieties has provided the usual rag-bag of Labourists (parliamentarians, Trade Union bosses, constituency activists etc.) with ample opportunity to display their respective credentials as part of the bosses' reserve party of government. The advocates of traditional left labourist state-capitalist solutions were handed a sop with the parliamentary victory around the precise details of the reorganisation of the postal service. Similarly the obvious idiocies around the reorganisation of the railways have supported those arguing for the retention of a nationalised structure. The state may have provided a pathetic and frequently "rationalised" rail service but at least it was easy to buy a ticket !

In the other Labourist camp, the groupings around Blair and his parliamentary cronies have pushed forward with their "modernising" campaign as they seek to build on the support emerging from the bourgeois establishment. The permanence of such support is somewhat doubtful as the same commentators also increasingly speculate about the future of John Major and the option of a change of Tory leader before the next General Election.

Both sides of Labour's debating society claim that their policies can somehow provide a future of social progress, together with, in their wilder moments, promises of some sort of increased prosperity. Both sides peddle illusions that the British economy can leap out of the worldwide economic crisis which has been continuing for more than twenty years. All that is needed is for

voters in thirty or forty constituencies to replace their inherently nasty MP with the blue rosette with an inherently nice MP wearing red and yellow, or whatever shade suits the New Labourists.

The grand illusion that capitalism can work in the interests of all if only the most clever and well-meaning group of people sits in parliament is at the core of Labour's beliefs. It is a vision which is, of course, shared by all the other parties who are part of, or who want to be part of, the joys of the Westminster gravy train.

Labour's adherence to parliamentarianism and to all the other state-capitalist forms, from the maintenance of the obviously repressive armed forces to the apparent concessions of the "welfare" state, guarantees its value as a tool of the bosses in keeping Labour's working class supporters permanently mesmerised by capitalist illusions. Its historic verbal commitment to socialism has powerfully increased the value of the mystification so that state intervention and corporatism is presented as socialism and the boundaries of socialism are deliberately drawn to preclude any independent working-class action.

Labour's two souls

Within Labour's overall adherence to parliamentary progress there have regularly been tensions about the right mix of policies which are necessary to maintain capitalist efficiency at any particular time. This has been true in times of relative capitalist expansion as well as in times of crisis but the differences become more marked when the quack solutions have to confront crisis rather than merely maintaining capitalist normality.

For example, during the last major pre-war slump the Labour Government (1929-31) was committed to the then (and now) economic orthodoxy of restricting public spending to try to allow conditions for renewed capitalist accumulation. There was however a minority position amongst the Labour parliamentarians - an opposition based around increased state intervention and other measures which

anticipated the later Rooseveltian New Deal in the USA and the economics of John Maynard Keynes which was to become the world-wide bourgeois orthodoxy after 1945. The primary exponent of that minority view was Oswald Moseley before he made the, far from illogical, move towards Fascism with its parallel commitments to state intervention and corporatism.

During the quarter of a century after the end of the Second World War the role of nationalised industry and of the semi-nationalised or municipalised utilities was barely challenged. Both parties accepted the principles of the mixed economy and although there were boundary issues, such as road transport or iron and steel, the main orthodoxies were almost unanimously accepted both within and beyond the Labour Party.

The roots of the current divisions amongst Labour's ideologues can be traced back to the abandonment of Keynesianism and the adoption of IMF monetarism by the Callaghan government in 1976. That version of "new" Labourism set the trend for policies of restricting state spending and reducing the nationalised and municipalised sector which the successive Tory governments implemented.

Following the temporary and partial ascendancy gained by the Bennite and other state-capitalists in the Labour Party in the early 1980s the power of the "modernising" leaders, Kinnock, Smith and Blair have held the upper hand. Their theoretical underpinnings have reflected the mainstream economic trends embodied in such terms as "freedom of choice", the "social market" and "rolling back the state" (never, of course, any of its functions of repression and social control). As such, a new inter-party consensus has begun to emerge. That process of "new thinking" is planned to reach a new watershed with the reworking of Clause IV as a central part of the "new" Labour Party.

The unreconciled state capitalists

During the last 10 years the Labour leaderships have spent a lot of time "getting their house in

order". Leftist dissenters have been excluded where necessary, new and mutually-beneficial relationships have been developed with the Trade Union *mafiosi* and every effort has been made to present Labour as the most efficient party for capital.

However that process could not be 100% successful. Both in terms of people and in terms of residual shreds of ideological fetishes complete homogeneity was not achieved. The debate around Clause IV has brought together a coalition of the old state-capitalist forces (inheritors both of traditional Fabianism and its uglier younger sibling, British Stalinism) with disgruntled Trade Union bosses, remnants of Labour's left activists (and their SWP and fellow Trotskyist cheerleaders) and assorted lobbyists on behalf of the "public services". It was the first of those groups who upset the Blair loyalists when the "left" Labour MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) placed their political declaration/advertisement in *The Guardian*..

In the finest traditions of tales "full of sound and fury signifying nothing" battle will be joined and the April Conference will come and go. It seems likely at this stage that the well-oiled Party bureaucracy will get its desired outcome in time for the May municipal elections. It is certain that the run-up to the event will be punctuated by massive publicity and media attention as the great joys of democratic debate within Her Majesty's loyal opposition is displayed for all to see.

Pick up any of the leftist papers (*Morning Star*, *Socialist Worker Militant* etc. etc.) and Clause IV will probably eclipse other cause celebres, even the campaigns for other such topical diversions such as animal rights or reform/abolition of the monarchy. Workers will be urged to re-enter the battle for Labour's soul.

Clause IV - our response

Unlike the leftists we hold no brief for any of the trends in and around the Labour Party. They all start from the fatally misleading premise that capitalism can be changed to offer workers prospects of a better life.

The approach of a future Labour Government to the ongoing crisis will not be altered one jot by the retention or otherwise of chunks of Fabian claptrap. All the Labourist ideologues know full well that whatever desperate steps need to be made to restore capitalist profitability will be carried out irrespective of "respected principles"

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Chechenya

regime has adopted more and more the policies of the neo-fascist Liberal Democrats of Zhirinovsky. The latter are the only solid supporters Yeltsin has in Parliament over his Chechen policy (with Yeltsin's old adversary Ruslan Khasbulatov, a prominent clan leader in Chechenya opposed to Dudayev ironically shouting support from the sidelines). More worryingly for Western capital the ditching of liberals like Gaidar and Chubais indicates that Yeltsin is retreating from liberalisation of the economy. His new head of privatisation, Polevanov, has already declared that some industries may have to be re-nationalised whilst many peasants who tried to set up independent farms have been forced by economic collapse to return to the state collectives.

As it is the IMF, EU, EBRD and all the other potential donors of capital are caught in a cleft stick. To undermine Yeltsin could pave the way for someone worse, but to support him is no guarantee that their investment (both financial and political) will be returned. And whatever the policy they choose we can state quite categorically that the attack on Chechenya demonstrates what we have said all along. The collapse of Stalinism has not created a more "civilised", or more "democratic" world order. History has not ended (a stupid idea if ever there was one) but has opened up a new chapter of bloodshed and barbarism. This will only get

worse and develop into generalised imperialist war unless the working class internationally starts to fight for its own programme of communist revolution.

The Working Class Response

The economic condition of the Russian working class is becoming increasingly desperate. So much so that it is now calculated that three times the minimum wage is required just to buy the most basic of necessities. For many workers wages are in fact academic since they have not been paid for months. Most of the strikes at the end of 1994 were over wages that had not been paid for months. Just to illustrate that there is no end to the effrontery of capitalist demands in one such strike of Siberian coalminers in December the workers were told that there demand to be paid was "selfish"! Given this situation it is not surprising that life expectancy in the old USSR is plummeting.

So far however the collapse of a system that claimed to be "proletarian" and "communist" has left the Russian working class disoriented. In the present confusion they could be an easy prey for some nationalist demagogue and this is probably not a hundred miles from Yeltsin's own calculations. His utterance that: *Not a single territory has the right to withdraw from Russia*, not only threatens any other minority from trying to copy Chechenya but also appeals to a narrow chauvinism at home. As Thatcher, Reagan and Bush showed in the 1980s this can also draw in

the most backward sectors of the working class.

The working class has absolutely no interest in supporting any nationalist movement, including that of the minority. When Yeltsin and Dudayev exchange the epithet of "bandit" we can at least say they are both telling the truth. There is nothing "progressive" about supporting a repentant Stalinist nor a feudal clan leader. Both are capitalist racketeers responsible for the deaths of thousands. When leftist papers like *Socialist Worker* tell us that the Chechen fighters are "heroic"(no.1426) or the more honest *Workers Power* tell us that

Workers everywhere must support the right of the Chechen people in their struggle against Russian domination and oppression...(January 1995),

they are both reactionary and anti-working class. In a situation in which confusion reigns over the consciousness of the working class it is the primary responsibility of revolutionaries to provide a clear political response. This is clearly apparent in the Chechen issue. Despite all the reactionary miasma around the working class there are still sparks of class consciousness even amongst the victims of nationalism. One Chechen fighting against the Russians told *The Independent* that he and his friends were "not fighting for Dudayev" and then added,

We don't blame the Russian soldiers. The city is littered with their dead bodies. Its the government - boss classes - who

are to blame. This is being done by Yeltsin - the 'democrat'. We will fight to the end.

The Independent 19.1.95

For all its confusions this shows a lot more class consciousness than the leftists here. However it is not surprising that Trotskyists continue to support national struggles. They have supported inter-imperialist wars for 60 years. For the working class the old formulae of 90 years ago no longer apply. As Rosa Luxemburg pointed out the national question for communist was resolved by the beginning of the First World War. By then all national movements had become mere tools of imperialism and the events in the Caucasus fully confirm this (see the example of Abkhazia above). Nationalism may sometimes have been a progressive ideology in the last century but today it is the most solid ideological basis for war mobilisation. In today's imperialist epoch Marx's slogan that "workers have no country" has never been truer. Our only programme today is proletarian internationalism and the independent struggle of the working class free from all capitalist programmes. In the present context this is not an easy option which is why we must carry out the patient work of fighting for the communist programme. This also means giving it an organisational basis so that as capitalism spirals towards ever more barbaric forms of genocide the working class can begin to make the necessary preparations to pose its alternative - world revolution.**AD/C**

Animal Rights or Human Liberation?

There is a section of the British middle class which becomes militant when its hackles are raised over certain moral issues. The latest example are the protests over the transportation of live animals abroad. Always eager to defend an idealised view of a decent British way of life, middle class, (often Tory voting) protesters have been forced out onto the streets in disgust at the inhumane treatment of animals. Of course it isn't just the inhumanity they're angry at. They're also furious that it's taking place in their back yard. As befits the middle class psyche they shed crocodile tears for numerous causes but become angry militants when the horrors of capitalism are landed on their doorstep. Cruelty in farming is nothing new; to the capitalist farmer animals represent money and sentimentality has never featured too strongly in the drive for profits. But the blue-rinse protesters have only become really incensed following the switch in transporting animals from the large ferry operators (who feel the need to dump such trade now they have to compete for passenger trade with the Channel Tunnel) to the smaller ports and much loved areas of the elderly middle class. With the environmental and road construction protests their motivation only arose once things started to become unpleasant for them or, worse, once property prices were threatened. With animal welfare issues they can also do something to salve their liberal consciences.

The single issue campaigns of today's reformists have really taken off since the Labour Party doesn't even pretend to be a radical alternative to the Tories. Labour's grey suit image has many of those who saw it as an umbrella for single issue

campaigns looking elsewhere for their action. Protests against motorways and environmental concerns are all that these individuals focus on, ignoring that they all have a common cause. The existence of a totally irresponsible social system.

The greatest crime in all this is the massive diversion away from the real human horror of capitalism and the barbaric atrocities committed on a daily basis by the bourgeoisie. On a global scale capitalism has been the biggest mass-murderer throughout history and the operation of capital in its ever more desperate drive for profits continues to prematurely end the lives of millions of workers every year, many dying after short lives full of misery. In fact a system which needs war in order to survive is quite normal and acceptable to the middle class. None of this bothers them in the slightest. The animal rights lobby has no desire to attack capitalism. For these middle class activists the lives of millions of workers can never be as important as the lives of a few thousand sheep. They are the staunchest defenders of capitalism because they want to reform it to an ideal which never has or can exist



Marxists know full well that capitalism can never be a humane system and that as long as it exists cruelty to animals can only be surpassed by the cruelty it is capable of inflicting on people. But the animal rights lobbyists have no interest in the future of the working class and have no desire to minimally question the existence of capitalism at all. It's hardly surprising,

then, that the extreme right wing, including the BNP have seen animal rights causes as very fertile campaigning grounds. Although it is often mentioned that Hitler was a staunch vegetarian and animal lover there is a serious point to be made since the extreme right have tried to exploit the fact that historically many furriers are Jewish. It is no coincidence either that the German Green Party has harboured ex-Nazis looking for a safe political home.

In Britain animal rights activists are only too eager to become part of the political system which causes the suffering in the first place. One of the first actions of the Political Animal Lobby was to present large financial donations to the three main political parties. The fact that MPs are now desperate to get in on the act shows how

safe an issue it is for capitalism. If it had ever posed any kind of a real threat the state would have used the Criminal Justice law to crush it (as it is the worst effects of the law will be kept for workers when they mobilise to defend themselves against the increasing attacks of the state.) This type of protest could go on forever and still make absolutely no difference to capitalism and no real difference either to the levels of sickening cruelty throughout the world. As Lenin said

Reformism means nothing more than concessions on the part of the ruling class, but not its overthrow; it makes concessions, but power remains in its hands. (Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?)

For Marxists, any freedom which does not bring liberation for the world's working class is a complete fraud, and any movement which tries to divert our attention away from this goal deserves the widespread opposition of workers. The single issue moral crusades of the British middle class in an historical epoch where the whole future of humanity is at stake is just a useful way of letting off steam which capitalism can perfectly tolerate - especially when it underlines the wonders of this democratic society. Those who are seriously in search of an environmentally sustainable and humane world should recognise that it can only come about through the destruction of the profit system which creates the mess in the first place. RT

And for the designer campaigner a CWO contact offers some guidance...

Political Consciousness: A Guide for the Muddled Classes

For those of you un-initiated in the field of radical political activity, here are a few tips that will help you guide your way to the kind of political realisation that will so enliven the dinner party. It is not a polemic, and recognises the rich melange of opinion sadly lacking in certain other sections of the community.

Tip 1: It helps if you can focus all your attention on one issue only. This conveniently stops you having to worry about the rest of the world and it means you'll never have the embarrassment of wondering about all those poor, starving, or endangered people. You need to have a sense of proportion, can one really compare the fate of a few billion or so grubby wannabees, to that of innocent and rather cuddly animals, who after all haven't done us any harm. In any event, so-called exploitation may well be a daily horror for the great unwashed, and we're dreadfully sorry, but it really is going too far when fluffy calves are transported past the very houses we paid fortunes for.

Tip 2: You're busy, we're all busy, another important point is to get involved in something that will immediately make you feel as though you have done something worthwhile without having to do very much at all. Demonstrating is good because you can shout rude things at policemen, and because you're financially unchallenged, you'll probably get away with it. This is especially satisfying if you've recently had the BMW clamped. Try to make sure you don't get mistaken for a "Working Class" person

because in this dire event, the police tend not to understand your natural high spirits, and unless made aware of your status in life, they are liable to arrest you.

Tip 3: In these days of increased efficiency, economy, (and don't forget ecological responsibility!) it is a good idea to combine your protest to something you're really interested in, like shopping; that's right, political awareness can be thrifty and fun. So try to persuade your friends, or even complete strangers not to buy anything that may have had an unhappy life.

Tip 4: Food is a traditional hotbed of radical thinking, and an excellent way of displaying your enlightenment. For example, before you order veal, make sure the waiter can prove it was shown due consideration in it's regrettably short life. If your conscience really gets the better of you, and you decide to give up meat; ensure that those around you understand the importance of your cause. There can be few greater causes of genuine self-satisfaction than the admiration of your peers of the personal sacrifice you're making

Tip 5: For the more adventurous enthusiast, one now has the fashionable option of turning your new political concern into a "lifestyle". Informed purchase of the appropriate car, clothing and furnishing, combined with the correct career is the passport to a world of caring. In this way you can get away with a minimum of effort, as your new insight is usefully channelled into taste

and therefore can be budgeted over a period of days or even weeks. Acquaintances appreciate your virtue, and envy your ability to hold deeply cherished beliefs, but still be "a good laugh".

Tip 6: Try not to "go on" too much about the causes of the issues you may be required to discuss. Firstly, we pay taxes for people to sort these things out, and secondly you can run the risk of boring the wrong people. If your particular area of current interest causes you to feel emotionally charged, fight fire with fire and charge a donation for the most appropriate charity to your credit card. In this way you're actually doing something! And ensuring that it won't be you who's seen as the "Bolshie of the Bolinger".

Tip 7: For those who relish the outdoor life, you cannot beat a bracing march, which allows you to vent your feelings on the "Establishment" and also improves your physical well being. For those who really wish to shine at these events (with the certainty of being featured on that night's local television news), your trusty stalwart is the banner. Here a note of caution is advised, you will of course be in the public domain, so your reputation may be open to some degree of scrutiny. Thus it is vital that whatever your banner says, it must be delivered with wit. In these circumstances, meaning comes a poor second to a neat little pun, and raising an affectionate chuckle in the bellies of your televisual audience can work wonders. Just imagine what progress would have been made

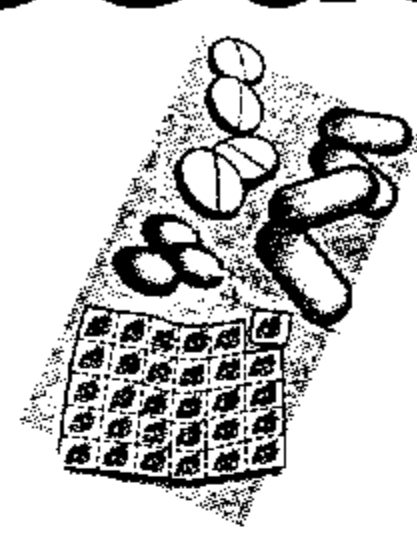
if dear Oscar Wilde had been an M11 protester.

Tip 8: Do not do anything precipitous, we all have our gripes, but the law is there to protect us all! A good way of avoiding unpleasantness is to get involved in something that does not disturb the even tenor of the everyday lives we have built for ourselves. Something like the "Hunt Saboteur" movement is an ideal diversion for those who wish to express their deeply felt dissatisfaction with the ills of our society. This can have tangible benefits, thus if as a result of "Hunt Sabbing", fox hunting is banned, these large landowners are sure to be shamed into allowing the rest of us to ramble till our hearts are content.

Tip 9: The crucial point to consider when embarking on the winding road of protest, is to be careful about the company you keep. The largest faux pas of all, is to become associated with those "Working Class" people (you'll recognise them from their inarticulate grumblings about the "National Lottery"). At a "Ban Live Exports" protest, you may have occasion to stand near them, and run the risk of being thought one of them. However this is easily remedied, simply wear some item of particularly distinctive and expensive clothing that those around you could not possibly afford. On cold winter nights, what could be more appropriate than a cosy pair of Harvey Nicholls genuine padded calve skin gloves. Just the thing!

MC

Drugs: Capitalism needs more than a fix



From being the pursuit of a dissident sub-culture a few decades ago, and for some therein even an emblem of 'radical rebellion' (sic!), the consumption of illicit drugs, of whatever type, for whatever reason, has become the daily habit of millions across the world. This, naturally, has fed the growing alarmism of a ruling class increasingly concerned about the putrefaction of the decomposing social body that surrounds it.

Drugs were suddenly deemed to be "the most serious peacetime threat to our national well being". Enter St. George the Dragon slayer. In the mid 80s, Reagan launched a "war against drugs on all fronts", and this has been, since then, the central thrust of the bourgeoisie's policy, with modifications to suit particular local conditions for US imperialism's junior partners and client states.

In relation to the explosive growth and widespread

and continuing use of drugs, the battery of domestic laws and international treaties, the whole complex institutional network set up to deal with the problem, appears as little more effective than a King Canute exercise. Despite posers of academic researchers, social workers, church ministers, experts and do-gooders of every description, despite the all pervasive mouth of the media and the dribblings of the yellow press, the bourgeoisie has as much prospect of solving the 'drugs problem' as it has of solving its own economic crisis. To expect this class to adequately address, let alone tackle this issue in a rational way, would be as realistic as expecting it to abolish commodity production itself.

Why? Quite simply, because drugs themselves are amongst the most lucrative commodities on the world market.

Drugs: indispensable to capitalism's economy

By the end of the 80s, a trend intensified in the 90s, drug consumption had reached such proportions that it had become the third biggest market in the world. At an estimated turnover of some \$500 billion, it was about the size of the world's electronics market, i.e. twice as big as US dollar circulation or just about half the GNP of the former West Germany. The world drug market is bigger than the GNP of 150 out of 170 countries. The fact that this is 'illicit' is neither here nor there. 'Black' or 'white' market, the commodity at the end of the day obeys only one law: the law of value.

After the slump in the prices of raw materials in the late 70s, the production and export of narcotics became the main source of income for many of the so-called 'third world' countries.

The revenues of Mexico through drug exports are reckoned to exceed those for its oil. In Bolivia, half a million people live from drug production. Without the drug trade, principally in cocaine, the economy of a country like Colombia would collapse: 80% of its foreign revenues and 15% of its working population depend on it. In Peru, 60,000 families grow coca in the Huallaga valley from whence it earns 60% of its export earnings.

It's not only for the peasants and agricultural labourers of the underdeveloped countries that the drug trade has become a major source of revenues. In the industrial countries themselves, drug money is often a decisive source of funds e.g., for investment in the building industry. In California alone, the revenues out of the marijuana crop are higher than those from soya beans, or lemons and oranges, running just after wheat. Marijuana/cannabis is now the most common illicit drug in the world today, the financial returns from which it is impossible to estimate. The drug trade then, is not some shady operation that occasionally hits the headlines due to some well publicised customs seizure, 'Operation Self-Congratulation'. It is an integral, indispensable and growing component of the fabric of the capitalist economy, and its disappearance is inconceivable. Although its distribution obeys patterns peculiar to its clandestine and shifting nature, it has at the same

The Health of Capitalism v. the Health of Humanity

FBI - Healthcare Professionals

The FBI arrested two dangerous criminals in the middle of December. These men, Subrahmanyam Kota and Vemuri Bhaskar Reddy, stood to gain \$300,000 by selling the cells and information necessary to produce the hormone human erythropoietin (EPO) to a "Russian spy" who turned out to be an FBI agent. EPO increases the body's output of red blood corpuscles and is used to treat anaemia induced by kidney dialysis or by chemotherapy for cancer or AIDS. The danger posed by Kota and Reddy was not to those suffering from kidney failure, AIDS or cancer, but to the interests of a well-integrated part of American monopoly capitalism, Amgen, which holds US and European patents on EPO. According to the New Scientist (double No. 1957/8, 24th/31st December 1994), Amgen's sales of EPO brought it \$587 million in 1993 and the world market for EPO is \$1 billion.

If Kota and Reddy had succeeded in selling their wares to a genuine Russian, Russian production could have started with an initial investment of \$1 million instead of requiring more than \$100 million. Correspondingly, EPO could have been produced with a lower sale price, and not just in Russia, as competition forced the price down. Then more people needing treatment could have received it (but by no means all of them would have got it, as Russian production would have still been for profit). Kota and Reddy's action would have contributed towards EPO selling for its costs of production plus profit, instead of for its costs of production plus Amgen's superprofit. But, despite the massive propaganda about it, "free trade" only exists in pockets in today's capitalism, and then, only when it can be used by monopoly capitalism to further its interests. And in this case it is definitely not in Amgen's interests, so monopoly capitalism uses the artifice of "intellectual property" on the ideological plane, and the full force of the FBI on the physical plane, to suppress it.

Monopoly capitalism, speaking through the US Attorney for Massachusetts, Donald Stern, would have you believe that its concern is for the jobs threatened by the transfer of technology abroad

(but it has shown no such worries in the past), and Amgen itself says "The big concern is purity and quality control", as the patients are already seriously ill. But you only have to think of thalidomide or the spreading of the AIDS virus through blood products to feel concerned about the quality control of the pharmaceutical industry worldwide. No, the overriding preoccupation of Amgen and its allies in the US state apparatus is the protection of their profits, for, as Amgen's spokesman says, "there are people with kidney failure all over the world", and Amgen is going to make sure they squeeze as much profit as possible from that fact.

But this is very far from being the only instance where capitalism's health is in direct competition with the health of humanity.

Poverty, Hunger and Malnutrition

By far the greatest example is the poverty, hunger and malnutrition caused by the capitalist system. It has been estimated that, of the roughly four billion human beings living, one billion actually suffers from hunger, while a large proportion of the remainder is malnourished. It is not a question of resources being too limited, as food producers destroy food to keep the price up - the poor are too poor to buy what they need at a price that capital is willing to pay. In Britain, an indication of growing poverty is that even the government's statistics show (even if the Prime Minister refuses to admit it) that the poorest 10% are getting poorer. Oxfam has stated that a third of children live in households below the poverty line, which usually means they do not get enough of the right kind of food. And if you are malnourished, you are in a real sense permanently ill, which means that your resistance to other diseases is reduced. On top of that, if you can't afford to eat properly, you can't afford medicine (in Britain, there are people who are both poor and ineligible for free prescriptions; across the world, there aren't any free prescriptions) and you have to choose between hygiene and eating at the level you do.

All of this means, without taking into account the weakening of immunological defences

caused by the stress of poverty, both directly and through the "recreational" drugs, illegal and legal, that the poor take to relieve that stress, that there is a reservoir of ill people. For an infectious agent to survive, it has to be able to infect that minimum proportion of the population which allows an infected individual to pass on the infection before they die (not necessarily of the infection) or fight it off, on the fairly safe assumptions that the agent cannot survive indefinitely outside of a host(1). The larger the reservoir of already ill people is, the less likely the susceptible proportion of the population is to be below the minimum needed for the survival of the pathogenic organism, and so its dying out is less likely.

In addition to the effect poverty has in making it less likely that diseases die out by themselves, it also encourages drug-resistance in the disease organisms. For this resistance to emerge, it is necessary for the organism to come into contact with the drug and for the organism's population to remain large enough to retain sufficient genetic diversity to develop that resistance. This is precisely what happens when a drug is used to treat part of the human population(2): those that can afford it. Capitalism exacerbates this by exposing microbes to not just one drug, but to a haphazard selection of them, based not on clinical necessity but the anarchy of commercial competition.

An example of this is tuberculosis: new, resistant forms are spreading from the periphery to centres of capitalism, and from the poor to the better-off.

Death to Disease - Death to Capitalism

A socialist society would replace production for profit by production to satisfy human need as decided by humanity itself. This would mean that the hungry would be fed and that poverty and malnutrition would be part of the past. This would be the single biggest step towards defeating disease.

But humanity would also be free to make rational

decisions regarding the use of drugs and other measures against disease. For example, if an antibiotic was found to be effective against a disease, all those suffering from the illness would be treated with the same drug, excluding only those who exhibit allergies and, subject to considerations of public safety, who refuse the treatment. For those cases where the drug was not successful, a second string treatment would be used just as comprehensively as the first was used for the general population. In this way, diseases like TB may well have been made extinct(3). But while capitalism persists, such choices are not available.

Like socialism, the defeat of disease is in the interests of the whole of humanity. But the present ruling class is unable to bring the immense power of human intelligence to bear on the problem of disease, precisely because that power is hamstrung by the social system whose creatures they are. Only the working class can liberate humanity, because only the working class is compelled to fight the system as a whole (rather than fighting against part of it in a competitive battle) if it wants to defend its material interests, only the working class is compelled to fight collectively if it wants to fight at all, and only the working class has the power to win.

Notes

1. Of course this is a bit schematic, as, for example, where population density is high, this proportion will be lower, nor does it take account of the possibility of nonhuman species acting as hosts for the pathogen, but the overall argument holds.

2. It also happens when an individual starts a course of antibiotics without finishing it, which is one of the reasons why doctors are insistent that you don't do that!

3. Of course capitalism itself has made smallpox extinct in the wild. But don't expect a repeat, as: a) capitalism's crisis is worse, so there is less money for "charitable" medical projects; b) competition between monopoly capitalism is fiercer; c) smallpox is less dependent on poor hygiene than many other diseases; d) the campaign against smallpox was dominated by the vaccine: there are no rival treatments.

time mirrored developments in global capital as a whole. From ostensibly being under the control of the national capital, it has increasingly paralleled the orbits of global finance capital through its organisation in international criminal networks.

Production determines consumption

From the rabid howlings of the yellow press and their demonisation of drugs and their creation of the 'drug fiend', through to the more 'sophisticated' analyses of its squads of intellectual labourers, the bourgeoisie has managed to create a great deal of confusion surrounding the drugs question. From the campaigns against the 'evil drug peddlers' and/or their 'barons' through to the psychologists' discovery of an 'addictive personality', all sorts of pseudo notions and ideological gibberish have been pushed forward in a vain attempt to get to the 'root causes' of an engulfing problem. A method whose premises are from the outset defective, can only be fruitless. It is not consumption that produces the drug problem. It is production that consumes the consumer. In a society where production is carried on for production's sake, and not for the satisfaction of human need, the dynamic of all social problems and ultimately their solution, can be located, theoretically and practically, in production itself. Marx articulated this over a century ago:

...production produces consumption 1. by providing the material for consumption; 2. by determining the mode of consumption; 3. by creating in the consumer a need for the objects which it first presents as products...Only the most essential point is emphasised here, that production and consumption, if considered as activities of one subject or of single individuals, appear in any case as phases of one process whose actual point of departure is production which is accordingly the decisive factor. Consumption, as a necessity and as a need, is itself an intrinsic aspect of productive activity; the latter however is the point where the realisation begins and thus also the decisive phase, the action epitomising the whole process.
A contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.

A few disparate examples of how production is the ultimate determinant of consumption: A large proportion of the flow of drugs that had been oriented mostly towards the US is now being directed towards Europe. This is because the former is becoming a 'saturated' market i.e., the rate of profit is declining and new markets must be sought out and exploited. This can be seen in the veritable 'export offensive' of the South American Medellin drug cartel to western Europe and the percolation of drug products through society right down to primary school playgrounds.

At the height of the cocaine consumer boom in the US in the mid 80s, every day an estimated 5000 people were trying it for the first time. Following the decrease in demand in many western countries, the marketing of tobacco is now being pursued with a vengeance in capitalism's poorer countries. The same is true for certain pharmaceuticals. The dominance of production is also reflected in the bourgeoisie's change of orientation in the containment of the social side-effects of drug consumption. A policy of outright penalisation with severe criminal sanctions has given way to a strategy of demand reduction with a 'multi-disciplinary' approach, involving educational, medical and social services.

It is estimated that world opium production has increased by over 50% since 1980, despite national and international attempts at control, crop eradication and substitution. Gross trade for heroin at the end of the 80s was in the region of \$250 billion (B. Whitaker 'The Global Connection'). The two major areas of illicit opium cultivation are the 'Golden Crescent', spanning Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, and the 'Golden Triangle', hill tribe areas covering

Thailand, Laos and above all Burma. Other main producers are Mexico and Lebanon. In 1985, for example, the two main areas produced between 150 tons of pure heroin. To place this figure in context, it is likely that 20 tons went to Europe and 10 to North America. This pattern of consumption is partly geographical, there being traditional routes from opium production areas to Europe, cocaine being easier to transport throughout the Americas. There is, relatively, a far greater consumption of cocaine and its derivatives in the Americas, thus depleting the effective market for opium derivatives, morphine, heroin and the like. A market, of course, had to be found for the rest.

In fact, most of what is produced in Asia is consumed by the producing countries themselves - one third is exported, mainly to North America, Europe and Australia. The 1970s and 80s have seen major changes which have had far reaching consequences in terms of both production and domestic patterns of consumption. The trend in both South Eastern and South Western Asian regions from traditional rural production and consumption of opium to the more youthful urban pattern of heroin addiction seen in many western countries. In a continent where heroin use was almost unknown in the years following the war, there are now well in excess of one million heroin addicts in major cities, like Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Manila, and a similar number, if not more in the cities of the 'Golden Crescent'.

One of the factors in stimulating this increased consumption has been a move towards integrated production i.e., rather than exporting morphine base for refining elsewhere, laboratories, workshops and so on have been set up indigenously. This, of course, is an attempt by elements in the bourgeoisie of the peripheral producer countries to stem the flow of profits to the metropolitan areas.

Super-profits

As the heroin poppy and the coca leaf have grown in significance - the latter threatening to become a virtual monoculture in some areas - they have replaced other crops in the producer countries. In turn the economic activity linked with growing, processing, refining, marketing and so on, has drawn in a wide variety of participants from notable local political and military figures, right down through a long chain of corruption and parasitism in administration, police and customs. The closer one gets to the consumer and the final realisation of surplus value, the more multiplex become the channels of distribution. So that today, drug dealing has become one of the last avenues of 'free enterprise' open to thousands of lumpenised youth in the bleak de-industrialised landscape of the urban jungle.

To buy cheap and sell dear is the law of trade.

But from the moment when men... made their subsistence dependent on the exchanges they could make, or on commerce, they were forced to adhere to a different estimation, to exchange value, to value which results not from usefulness but rather from the relation between the needs of the whole society and the quantity of labour which was sufficient to satisfy this need, or as well the quantity of labour which might satisfy it in the future.

Marx quoting Sismondi, *Grundrisse*, p.860.

But certainly no 19th century merchant ever dreamed of a future where they could profit from a 'mark-up' of such scale: the price of drugs increases from the producer to the local sales dealer by more than 10,000%; one million dollars often turns into five billion dollars. There is nothing in the history of commerce remotely comparable with this.

The gigantic amounts of money which accrue this way, involving a whole series of middle-men and their hangers-on shifting various magnitudes of capital, all this requires being transferred. This is done only on a small scale by the smaller carriers. However, it is the banks, a whole network who prosecute this, with a variety of 'money laundering' methods. The

'black' market shades imperceptibly into the 'official' market, and the various press scandals that leak out, e.g., the Banco Ambrosiano affair, are probably just the tip of the iceberg. The model administration of this being the Italian government, which at any one time little more than the mafia in 'respectable clothes'. No bourgeoisie launders its government more regularly!

Covert operations

The size of the turnover from drugs has opened the door to another highly lucrative behind-the-scenes activity: gun-running. During the Vietnam war the opium producing and heroin refining capacity of the Golden Triangle expanded considerably to meet the growing demand from the GI's, but equally important was the need to finance covert operations and to buy the allegiance of local anti-Vietcong groups. More recently the Afghan war stimulated production on both sides of the border as a means of financing the armed struggle. With the 'Irangate' affair, the interchange of drugs profits for 'illegal' arms surfaced once again.

Drugs, arms sales and smuggling, which in many 'third world' countries is still of considerable importance, are increasingly interlinked and are important economic sectors, with the ruling cliques of the state apparatuses pulling the strings and benefiting most from this. Whole echelons of the state apparatus are up to their necks in this, viz., former president of Panama, Noriega; in Paraguay, ex-president Rodriguez; and in Cuba, the ex-minister of the Interior and the former chief of the army. It is highly unlikely that the secret services of all the major states are not only well informed about the drugs trade, but also in one 'sub-contracted' form or another, heavily involved in it, not the least because it gives them an opportunity to arrange all kinds of 'unofficial' arms deals and secret operations.

A phony war

Because so many interlocking aspects of the bourgeois social class's ongoing activity are involved, at a military, economic and political level, the much publicised 'war against drugs' has a hollow ring to it. Hypocrisy is no longer a spurious activity of wayward individuals, it has become a veritable institution for the ruling class. For example: ex-president Bush promoted himself as a stern opponent of the drugs trade. Before taking office, Bush was the boss of the CIA. It is unlikely that any major shipment of drugs goes unnoticed by the latter, or that it is not in some way involved in it.

There are perhaps more sinister political motives behind the 'drugs war' in South America. The drugs mafia in countries like Colombia, for example, is becoming an obstacle to American imperialism's political perspectives for Latin America, especially in its efforts to set up 'democratic' governments, so-called as a means of containing mounting social unrest. At the same time the US needs to gain the tacit support of its population for military intervention in that zone, hence the fanfare of publicity surrounding the affair.

Whatever the motives, a real fight against the drugs trade is out of the question. Too many depend on it, either as producers, distributors or consumers. It has assumed too great a specific weight in the global economy of capital. The present offensive of the US government will not tackle the roots of the problem any more than the call to legalise drugs now coming from some elements of the ruling class and echoed in other sectors of society.

Legalisation

Should communists have a position on the legalisation of drugs? Other than as private individuals, no. The change in juridical status of a commodity has nothing to do with social change that will lead to the challenging of the social relations of commodity production. If anything, legalisation may conceivably be the green light that points in the direction of a Huxleyan 'Brave New World' type scenario, a situation wherein to stand Marx on his head, 'opium becomes the religion of the masses'. The question of legalisation from being a fringe

issue suggested by certain elements in the bourgeoisie, to being a seriously realistic option for that class, will only come about when the conditions for the mass production and consumption of drugs are ripe. 'Legalisation' in this sense would probably mean 'monopolisation'. Given the levels of mass consumption of cannabis, for example, why doesn't the bourgeoisie go ahead and reap the economic benefits therein? Steps towards its decriminalisation in several countries and US states might suggest this as an inexorable tendency, notwithstanding the British bourgeoisie's decision to penalise it more strictly. There is already a considerable small scale petit bourgeois sector in the Netherlands, for example, and a burgeoning 'grow it yourself' sector.

For the moment these tendencies will remain limited and exploratory. Why? It is simply that the legalisation and subsequent mass production of cannabis would mean an enormous plummeting in price, to a level economically corresponding to its actual costs of production. For the legions of parasites et al. who reap enormous and inflated profits, the whole pack of cards would come crashing down. It is in the interests of the bourgeoisie, therefore, to keep this sector of production and distribution under the control of the criminal networks. **AS**

To Be Continued.

continued from back page

Unions against Workers

raising their own demands.

Despite the erosion of the strength of the unions during the Thatcher years, the unions still remain a major force for the containment of class struggle. It should be remembered that the Tories' anti-trade union legislation was mainly directed at the actions of militant workers such as picketing, rather than the actual structure and legality of the unions themselves. Legislation requiring strike ballots and enabling firms to sue the unions for losses incurred in disputes was designed to increase union discipline over their members, a role which the unions have accepted with relish.

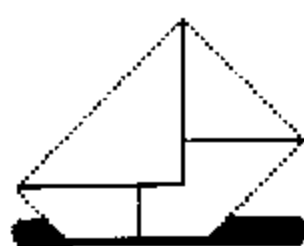
Whilst the Conservatives have reduced the influence of the unions on a governmental level, at an industrial level the unions remain indispensable to the bourgeoisie. Thus we see the implementation of single-union deals at firms such as Nissan and Toyota, where the unions have an overtly cosy relationship with management and are used to implement company policies on the shop floor.

So we have seen that the unions are now agents of capital in the workplace and part of the obstacle workers have to overcome as much as we have to overcome the bosses themselves. As revolutionaries we need to be in a position to influence the actions of workers in the workplace. Whilst we consider that permanent economic organisations (no matter how radical their origins) must inevitably capitulate to the reactionary politics of trades unionism, we see the need to establish political organisations within the workplace. Such organisations would denounce the cynical manoeuvrings of the unions and attempt to win away the more militant workers from trades unionist politics. In times of struggle the workplace groups would organise outside of and against the unions and formulate demands and slogans to extend and unify the struggle. Outside of overt periods of struggle the groups would be in a position to conduct educational and propaganda work to raise the level of class consciousness.

In this political work we have to start where the class is and not where we would ideally like the class to be and we must recognise that many militants are still in the unions. It is therefore facile to make abstract denunciations of the unions or to regard all shop stewards as conscious agents of the bourgeoisie. Instead we must expose the unions by concrete example and convince workers that the future lies in mass action outside of and against the unions if the class is to seriously challenge this rotten system. **PBD**

Letters

should be addressed to the CWO
PO Box 338, Sheffield S3 9YX



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 SWP and Theories of State Capitalism

Dear Comrades,

I appreciate your letter in reply to my interest in your organisation. Keeping all these tendencies straight will prove to be rather difficult, but the greater communications we have the better I will, at least, come to know you and your tendency and its distinctive characteristics from other groupings, etc.

In your letter you mention that your tendency, in its conflict with stalinist elements, developed an analysis of Russia as a state capitalist society. I believe in my first letter that I mentioned that I follow the theory of state capitalism as proposed by say Tony Cliff. So my first question would be, could you please explain what difference there is, if any, in your analysis of state capitalism vs. that propagated by the SWP in Britain?

Best wishes!
C

Our Reply

Dear Comrade
Thanks for your letter ...

You are right in thinking that we have differences with the SWP/Tony Cliff analysis of state

capitalism. At a theoretical level our principle objection is that Cliff sees the impetus for capitalist relations, or the operation of the law of value, inside the old USSR as coming from outside the Russian economy itself. Although he recognises the existence of wage labour in the Soviet Union he argues that when the state is the sole employer this is no longer a symptom of capitalist relations of production. (What else it is he doesn't explain.) Cliff uses the analogy of Russia as one big factory with the state as the single factory owner to deny the intrinsic existence of the law of value which, he argues, came to the Soviet Union from without, specifically from the need to compete militarily with the West. Not only does Cliff confuse capital accumulation and the operation of the law of value with competition (when, as Marx, said it is accumulation which begets competition not the other way round) he also confuses state planning with the absence or commodity production. Moreover, Cliff and the SWP did not even consistently hold to this 'drive to accumulate because of the military threat' hypothesis and at the same time maintained that it was the need to ensure accumulation and avert economic crisis that was the cause of the war economy. (This theme of the permanent arms economy was developed by Kidron, a favourite SWP economic theorist.)

At the level of practical politics, it is undoubtedly

the case that the 'Neither Washington nor Moscow' stance of the SWP made it an attractive political option to many during the Cold War and its state capitalist view of Russia and the Eastern bloc has cushioned it against the devastating impact of the collapse of that bloc on more conventional Trotskyist analyses. The trouble is that even Cliff's confused attempt at a Marxist critique has had little to do with the actual politics of the SWP which veer from social-democratic to simply liberal democratic with them jumping onto just about every populist handwagon going. During the Cold War the SWP supported national liberation struggles throughout the globe, and implicitly or explicitly depicted Russia's role in them as progressive rather than imperialist. Neither the SWP nor its forerunner, International Socialism, existed in the 2nd World War but given their support for united fronts and modern-day versions of the popular anti-fascist fronts, they undoubtedly would have cheerfully lined up alongside Allied imperialism. (Contrast the activity of the newly-formed PCInt. as against the PCI in Italy during the Second World War - see 'Communists and Anti-Fascism' in the latest issue of *Workers Voice*.) In similar style they portray the collapse of the Eastern bloc as a "great advance" because there is now a "democratic opening" in eastern Europe which workers can use to build up a social-democratic labour movement whose role of defending workers' interests they confuse with defending the "democratic opening". (See Mike Haynes article, 'Class and crisis - the transition in eastern Europe' in *International Socialism* Spring 1992.)

By contrast, our view of state capitalism is drawn from the critique developed in the late Twenties and Thirties by the Italian Left Communists who went on to form the Internationalist Communist Party (PCInt.) in 1943. These comrades had already criticised Russia as imperialist during the Spanish Civil War and during the Second World War itself, which they opposed as an imperialist conflict for control and redivision of the planet which had nothing to do with the working class. Unlike Cliff's 'external pressure' explanation for state capitalism in Russia the Italian Left saw the establishment of a peculiarly centralised form of state monopoly capitalism as an integral part of the isolation and degeneration of the Revolution which could be traced right back to the NEP. This was originally regarded as a step back by Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders, a retreat which would be reversed when the world revolution came to the aid of the ailing soviet bastion. This did not happen and, given that capitalist relations could not be abolished in Russia alone (The Italian Left never accepted the possibility of socialism in one country), the Russian state proceeded to consolidate itself on the basis of the already existing capitalist economic relations which had been modified,

statified but not eradicated during the revolutionary upheaval. From this perspective it's not a question of the law of value imposing itself from outside but of a capitalist economy having to survive in a capitalist (and imperialist) world and as it did so the political policies of the Russian state changed accordingly. From Stalin's adoption of "socialism in one country" through the so-called bolshevisation of the Parties of the 3rd International and the latter's reduction to the proverbial arm of the Russian state and eventually the popular front policy and injunction to defend the Soviet Union and its alliances in the lead up and during the 2nd World War, these are not policies imposed on a non-capitalist state by the threat from outside but are part of the inexorable logic of survival of a capitalist power in an imperialist world. Similarly, the Five Year Plans and forced industrialisation were not the sign of the elimination of the law of value or the "formal" nature of wage labour in the USSR but of the complete subjection of the proletariat to the needs of imperialism. In short, we do not accept that state capitalism is a "partial negation of capitalism" (Cliff) and there is no basis in the analysis of the Italian Left for support for nationalisation and state control of national economies to be seen as progressive steps as with Cliff and the SWP.

Hopefully this potted summary provides an answer to your question. The whole issue of state capitalism is very complex because it cannot be divorced from an analysis of the Russian Revolution and its demise. In the Fifties, when Bordiga broke off relations with the PCInt. one of the points of contention was the nature of Russia. Bordiga kept changing his mind about how far it was capitalist and imperialist. Originally the CWO followed the analysis of the German Left Communists (KAPD and Gorter) who, like the Italian Left, traced the beginnings of state capitalism in Russia to NEP but whose legacy (in council communism) was to see this as the culmination of a bourgeois revolution. The great strength of the PCInt's analysis is that it was developed as part of a political battle against counter-revolution which never lost sight of the proletarian nature of the October Revolution but at the same time never compromised with the idea of socialism in one country.

If it's still available I'll enclose a copy of *Revolutionary Perspectives* 19 (the previous theoretical journal of the CWO) with an article, 'Theories of State Capitalism' written in the early days of the CWO but which for the most part still holds good, certainly as regards Cliff and the SWP.

I look forward to hearing from you.
Revolutionary greetings
ER
ppCWO/IBRP

Mexican Peso Crisis Adds to Global Debt Burden

We have been told by so many "experts" that we are coming out of recession. Part of that message has been that NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Association, will lead the way, the US at its heart, later bringing in the rest of the Americas. We have been told that there are 'emerging markets' which are acting and will continue to act as a major factor in world recovery. This is only credible if you believe in the tales of the Brothers Grimm.

The exchange rate, peso to dollar, has fallen dramatically from 3.5 to 5.45, being devalued by 40% on December 19th. It is now beginning to rise again, some sort of recovery is taking place. But at what cost? The US immediately agreed \$9 billion, along with Canada, the other NAFTA member, providing \$1 billion, \$5 billion coming from a Bank of International Settlements consortium, with others the whole package amounts to \$18 billion. One Mexican

economic commentator saw the speed and size of the response as frightening. Beyond this up to another \$40 billion has been agreed.

Mechanics of the Crisis

Zedillo, the new President brought in as a compromise by the PRI ruling party (1), has inherited a parlous situation.

The peso had been held at an artificially high level, 3.5 to the dollar, also the trade deficit has grown, particularly with the increased penetration of US goods. Many shops had opened specialising in US goods, high-price consumer articles for the affluent market. By the end of 1994 there was a \$28 billion trade deficit, draining much of Mexico's previously hoarded foreign reserves. Zedillo allowed the peso to float, his hope was that this could be controlled, forcing the price of foreign goods upwards, so improving the

balance of payments deficit. There was no control, the peso immediately nose-dived. On top of this, the increasing links to the dollar economy of the US encouraged people to move out of CETES - peso linked bonds, and into TESOBONOS - dollar linked bonds. Most of the latter are short-term issues, there being \$29 billion due this year. The Mexican treasury does not have the currency reserves to meet them. There had been reserves of \$25 billion in mid-1994, they are now \$6 billion.

To shore up this breach in the dam the government has attempted the continued attraction of foreign capital, at one of the weekly bond auctions \$883 million of tesobonos were offered, only \$64 million were taken up, even at 19%. Stability and growth in the Mexican economy relies upon the continued import of foreign capital to roll-over its growing debts. Zedillo's aim has been to restructure this debt, converting it from short-

term to medium-term. He is failing. To stem the tide of credit bought imported goods, interest rates have risen to over 40%. It comes as no surprise that the stock market has fallen steadily, between 4% and 10% daily.

Workers, Employers, Middle Classes

Mexico City witnessed a curious sight on 12th January. Rich housewives marched on the presidential palace. Dressed well, designer sunglasses, cell phones, servants carrying placards, they were broken up by riot police. Their grievances were their loss of living standards, interest rates having risen their credit card bills were to high for them to suffer. High-price consumer goods reached 30% inflation. Employers are also being squeezed as their interest rates on capital loans have gone up. (2)

Workers are being forced to lower their own

continued on page opposite

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. ICR13 is now available and contains articles on:

**The Nature of the Working Class today(2)
The Material Basis of Imperialist War
Capitalist Restructuring after the Cold War
Gramsci's "Marxism"**

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)

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Public Meeting Sheffield

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Animal Welfare or
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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).

living standards, many being reduced to eating tortillas and beans. Wages will be allowed to rise by no more than 10%, whereas the prices of many staples are rising by as much as 20% and may rise further. Inflation is generally running at around 8%, it is forecast to reach double that. The price rises in basic goods, foodstuffs included, have been denied by the government, people know different (3). This runs counter to the Unity Accord, the pact between employers, unions and government, whereby large retailers promise to keep prices of such items down, by not purchasing above a certain price, on pain of fines and closure. That frequently renewed agreement is now threatened.

30,000 workers demonstrated in Mexico City on 12th January. At their head was the presidential candidate of the leftist PRD (4). They wanted some sort of protection for workers and an assurance that two of the major state enterprises, the oil and gas giants, Pemex and CFE, would not be privatised, i.e., laid before the US as offerings.

Captain America to the Rescue

There is a general fear throughout Mexico that the price of these loans, credits and guarantees will cost them dear. Speculation has it that certain industries might be handed over to the US, or perhaps large quantities of oil revenues. It is certainly true that the Americans will earn from this package, a fee goes with any payments made

by them. One big fear in the US has been the prospect of a flood of migrants. More pressing and more to the point, for US capital, though, is to protect the NAFTA agreement (5). The failure of the Mexican economy would be a catastrophe for them, considering the size of US banks involvement in Mexico, let alone the quantity of exports there, hence the size and speed of response. This whole affair has had its repercussions - the stock markets of Brazil and Argentina both falling by well over 20%, in addition there have been falls in many other Asian and Latin American markets, the importance and the already weak dollar is further undermined by the huge debts now contracted to bail out the system.

However, what we must recognise is that this is not the crash heralding the end of the whole system. This is no - THE END IS NIGH - written in red across the world economy. Although pressures are being put on employers (especially small and medium sized) and workers (through the medium of the unions) to make sacrifices for the whole of Mexican capital and its international backers, those self-same backers have shown they will not allow this house of cards to fall. Although capitalism is at the end of a cycle of accumulation (and has been since the early seventies) the capacity for capitalists to manage this crisis has not yet been exhausted. The fact that Mexico has been bailed out yet again proves this. However, there is a limit to this power. The already indebted US, suffering record trade deficits itself, has an even heavier

burden to carry. The collapse of the Mexican peso is just one further indicator of a global economic crisis from which capitalism cannot escape without plunging the world into barbarism. **Clastré**

Notes

1. PRI - the Institutional Revolutionary Party, has exercised power effectively for most of this century, as the head of a one-party state.

2. 30% of small firms, employing 65% of the workforce are said to be likely to go under in a matter of months.

Some banks are already bankrupt. They don't have the resources to meet their payments, and the only way they will be saved is through foreign investment. - a senior Mexican banker.

3. Serafina Soleano, health volunteer, quoted in *The Guardian*, 14th January.

The picture the government paints is one thing, the reality is another....I don't know why it should be, but we poor people always seem to suffer when there's a crisis.

4. PRD - Democratic Revolutionary Party, social democratic opposition, lost in recent elections amid usual vote-rigging hullabaloo.

5. US exports are threatened with a drop of 0.5%

Just Published!

Socialism or Barbarism

An Introduction to the Politics of the CWO

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group address**

continued from page 2

Labour's Clause IV

or the cost to the working-class.

The Clause IV circus will be used to try to rehabilitate Labour in the eyes of many workers who do not personally remember the attacks carried out by previous Labour governments. Part of our revolutionary duty is to ruthlessly expose the past, present and future lies of the Labour Party as a wing of capitalism. The road to socialism is not via Clause IV, Labourism or any other Parliamentary illusion. Only the working-class through its fully conscious self-activity can emancipate itself and force the whole paraphernalia of capitalism, Labour Party and all, into the dustbin of history. **KT**

Trades Unions: Agents of Capital in the Workplace

CWO Public Meeting in London

Many workers still regard the trades unions as organisations which act in the interests of the working class and therefore must be supported. The banners of the trades unions often proclaim such fine slogans as "workers of the world unite" and "unity is strength". However when we look at the reality of trades unionism we see a different picture.

Remember the signal worker's strike only a few months ago. The RMT to which the signal workers belong refused even to request support from the train drivers in ASLEF. The unions blocked the potential for solidarity with a group of workers in the same industry who themselves were facing similar attacks from the rail bosses. In the end the signal workers ended up accepting a miserable union negotiated deal which did not defend their living standards.

This is just one example of the way the way the trades unions defuse workers' militancy. Going back a little further in time we witnessed one of the greatest union debacles in recent history.

It is exactly ten years since the miners were defeated. The miners strike of 1984-5 was highly militant but the insistence of Arthur Scargill and other trades unions leaders that this was an NUM dispute ensured the miners remained isolated and ultimately defeated after a bitter and hard fought year long struggle. They gave the British ruling class their greatest post-war victory and broke working class confidence to such an extent that ten years on the class has still not recovered. During the miners strike there were also strikes by other groups of workers such as dockers who briefly raised our hopes by threatening to strike alongside the miners. They were told by the TGWU that they should not strike and a deal with the Ports Authority was patched up in order to deny miners the vital solidarity of a ban on fuel imports. The outcome may have been different if workers had broken through the barriers of trades unionism and unified their struggles.

So why do the unions behave in this manner, ensuring that struggles are sectionalised and therefore unusually defeated? The unions were once fighting organisations of the working class, so what has gone wrong. The answer is that in many ways nothing has gone wrong. Rather, whilst the function of trades unionism has essentially remained the same, the nature of capitalism has significantly changed. The basic function of trades unionism is to negotiate the terms of sale of labour power. In other words that unions are the wage brokers of capitalism. In the 19th century when capitalism was historically progressive in an economic sense, it was possible for unions to obtain for their members an increasing share of the wealth produced by capitalism. In this sense the unions were genuinely working class organisations advancing the material well being of the proletariat. Yet even at this time it would be a mistake to think that the unions embodied any revolutionary political challenge to the system. Indeed, in Britain the political leanings of the unions were often towards the bourgeois Liberal Party. The function of the unions was recognised by Marx as early as 1865 when he wrote in *Wages, Prices and Profit* that the unions were "centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital" and "limit themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system." So whilst Marx clearly identified the important defensive role of the unions within the capitalist system, and even hoped that they might act as "schools of socialism" he also recognised their political limitations.

Nevertheless, through their struggles with

The text below is based on a presentation given to our recent public meeting on trade unions in London. After the presentation we opened up the meeting for discussion on the issues raised. Among those present were member of the ICC (International Communist Current) another left communist group who share our view that the unions play a reactionary role in this epoch. The first part of the debate was constructive. An ex-member of the ICC present raised the issues of the increasing fragmentation of the working class and the consequent sense of isolation that many workers now felt. This is an issue we have addressed in the last two issues of *Internationalist Communist Review* (Nos. 12 and 13). The meeting thus discussed ways by which links should be forged between the revolutionary political organisations of the proletariat and workers in the workplace. We were somewhat surprised to learn that the ICC did not think that re-structuring of capital which has led to the break up of large concentrations of workers has no impact on the way workers organise in struggle. For the CWO it seems self evident that the tendency to small workplace units has serious implications as to how workers organise in this period. However the ICC did agree with us that workers will have to organise for struggle outside of the workplaces as well as within and we discussed in the light of recent experience in Italy and France the potential for territorial organisations (linking workers within a geographical area) and unemployed workers groups which of necessity take on this form.

One member of the ICC found the exchanges on this important issue rather too cosy and changed the direction of the discussion by criticising our economic analysis of why the unions are reactionary. For the ICC the unions are reactionary because they are part of the state and not because of their economic function which we have outlined above. We agree that the unions have become largely integrated into the state in the metropolitan countries. Our comrades in *Battaglia Comunista* made the following analysis nearly fifty years ago.

In the present period of the decadence of capitalist society the unions are called upon to act as tools for the preservation of capitalism and therefore the clearly take on the exact functions of state organs.

1947 Conference on Unions of the Internationalist Communist Party (reprinted in *Strumenti di Battaglia Comunista 3, Lotte economiche, spontaneismo e autorganizzazione. L'intervento del partito di classe*

But it is clearly not the case in many countries where unions are banned and union leaders imprisoned. Yet in these countries the unions disorganise the working class in the same way as they do in the capitalist metropolises, but they clearly do not do so formally as part of the state apparatus. For the ICC it seems that every agency that functions in the interests of capital is part of the state. It is a view that explains everything but explains nothing and fails to differentiate between bodies as diverse as the army and police on the one hand and McDonalds and the Disney Corporation on the other. The unions are anti-working class and act in the interests of the capitalist state but their precise relationship to the state is no as clearcut as the ICC would have us believe. By the end of the discussion the comrade who started the debate was maintaining that if we did not accept tout court that the unions were part of the capitalist state then the alternative was to not accept that there was something working class about them. Making due allowance for verbal exaggeration in the heat of an argument this is still an absurd argument. Sadly we have become used to this kind of response from the ICC over the years. Such schematic and idealist thinking should have no place serious revolutionary politics.

capital, the unions played an important part in the development of the working class and, through collective action enabled workers to see regard themselves as part of a class rather than as a collection of individuals. In this way the unions facilitated the development of class consciousness, even if the political goals of trades unionism were anchored firmly within the sphere of reformism.

As the 19th century progressed the old artisan based craft unions gave way to the new unionism of unskilled and semi-skilled workers such as the dockers and gas workers, so bringing larger groups of workers into the trade union movement. The last quarter of the 19th century saw the establishment of legal trades unions throughout most of western Europe. Even at this stage the more "progressive" elements of the bourgeoisie recognised the role of the unions in preserving the social peace. In the 1890s the Royal Commission on Labour reported that...

Peaceable relations are upon the whole, the result of a strong and firmly established trades unionism".

As the unions grew so did their assets and the number of full time officials with a vested interest in preserving the union structures and thus the very nature of wage labour itself.

From this perspective it is not surprising that when class lines became clearly drawn, the unions sided with capital. The first definitive manifestation of this trend emerged on the outbreak of the First World War when the unions throughout Europe followed their political

counterparts in the Labour and Social Democratic parties and called a halt to the class struggle in support of the war effort. In each country the unions effectively called upon workers to massacre each other for the benefit of the bosses. The unions were rewarded by being brought into consultation with the bosses and government over the running of industry. In Britain, some unions were even delegated the power to exempt certain essential skilled workers from military service.

The outbreak of the First World War is of profound significance in that it represents a fundamental turning point on the development of capitalism. Prior to this time, capitalism, despite its viciousness was historically progressive as it broke down feudal relations, created a mass working class and rapidly expanded the forces of production, thus creating the historic possibility for socialism. The imperialist conflict of World War I showed that the means of production could not be expanded indefinitely without coming up against the limitations of the relations of production. In other words the system became decadent in an economic sense as capitalist production could only progress subject to a deadly cycle of war, reconstruction, crisis and war. This is borne out by the advent of the Second World War and the massive prolonged economic crisis we have experienced since the late 1960s when the period of post-war reconstruction came to an end.

It is against this background that communists have concluded that reformism cannot sit

simultaneously with revolutionary politics in this epoch. This does not of course rule out the possibility of reforms but, whereas in the 19th century reforms tended to represent permanent gains for the working class as whole, in the present period reforms tend to be short lived or conceded to one group of workers to the detriment of others. For example the welfare system, once regarded as a great achievement of "liberal



capitalism" (even though it was largely paid for from workers' taxes) is now being seriously undermined. We also see a tendency for real wages to fall and workers having to work harder for their pay as the rate of exploitation is increased as bosses try to offset declining profitability. Even in the majority of the most developed economies we see the phenomenon of permanent mass unemployment. All this shows that despite the massive expansion of the productive forces this century, the development of capitalism has been achieved at the cost of war and the increasing impoverishment and exploitation of workers throughout the world. In 1847 substantial groups of workers in Britain won a ten hour day. Nearly 150 years later in 1995 the prospect of a real 8 hour day is still anathema to the ruling class. The age of reformism is truly dead.

However the unions have not learned and cannot learn from this lesson. The unions today are doing basically what they were doing 150 years ago, that is, campaigning for "reforms" and negotiating the sale of labour, but now within a framework which effectively precludes substantial improvements for the working class. Whilst it is true that the unions are bureaucratic and more or less integrated into the state apparatus, these manifestations stem from the basic function of the unions which is to negotiate the price of labour within a historically unfavourable market. It is certainly true that as an outcome of this function the trades union bureaucrats have a vested interest in preserving the system of wage labour and that the unions have vast financial assets which they are not prepared to risk in confrontation with capital.

Where internationalist communists differ from the Trotskyists of the SWP and other left wing apologists for capital is in our insistence that trades unionism is an outmoded form of organisation for the working class that guarantees only division and defeat. For communists rank and file unionism is merely a radicalised version of official unionism with the same narrow perspectives and the same prescription for defeat. In the recent signal workers strike, the last word in militancy according to the SWP and their rank and file supporters was to collect money for the strikers from other trades unionists. In other words their aim was to keep the signal workers isolated from effective class solidarity; that is other workers joining in the struggle and

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