

WORKERS VOICE

50p

April/May 1995

No. 77

Schools, Hospitals, Ambulance Service, Midwives, All Public Services TO WIN WE MUST FIGHT TOGETHER

The present attacks on public services shows that any idea of a supposedly civilised society is on the way out. Fifty years ago Sir William Beveridge promised that "ignorance, idleness (i.e. unemployment), squalor, disease and poverty" would become things of the past. Today, at a time of "renewed economic growth", with profits reviving and fat cat directors raking in outrageous salaries, capitalism can't even provide a decent livelihood for millions of its 'citizens'. In the age of the micro-chip the "leisure society" is further away than ever as unemployment mounts and wage workers are obliged to work more intensively for less pay. The National Health Service is being dismantled as some hospitals report 130% bed use! In schools per capita education spending has been in decline for a decade or more. Workers in all the public services have been suffering declining standards of living for years and are now being fobbed off with pay rises which once again fall well short of inflation.

At stake is not just this or that cut — an increase in class size here or a hospital ward closed there. Now that manufacturing workers have been shattered and shat upon it's the turn of service workers to feel the brunt of these attacks. From schools, hospitals and health care through the fire service, libraries, recreation facilities... you name it, it's being CUT and people doing useful

jobs are being SACKED. Those left in jobs are underpaid and find there's no way they can deliver the service that's needed. And why? To reduce costs. To turn everything into a commodity subject to "market forces". What we're facing is the wholesale dismantling of everything that used to make the advanced capitalist world relatively more humane.

We Have no Choice but to Fight

But let's face it, this has to be a different kind of struggle from in the past. For a start it's no good relying on others to do our fighting for us. Labour councillors shed crocodile tears but are busy implementing the cuts. Labour blame the Tories, of course but Labour councils have millions in reserves which they won't touch because it would undermine the bit of power they control. Labour councils have been cutting the rent support of those on the dole and prosecuting the poll tax poor. Blair's Labour Party represents the same politics as the Tories except it will come with a nice smile. Even Labour left-wingers like Dennis Skinner are saying that we can only win by waiting until the next election and voting Labour.

Nor is there any point hoping that petitions, town hall and parliamentary lobbies, token strikes and one-off demonstrations will do the trick. We're

talking about a serious FIGHT. There is no way we can move the powers that be by a pressure group campaign. The government is quite prepared for that.

The unions are supposed to defend their members but they have proved incapable of doing so. They have negotiated away literally millions of jobs in recent years and tell us that they have been very successful in negotiating redundancy audits to sack workers. The unions have also disorganised the struggle so far. National ballots have not been held and such local efforts that have been made have been met with hostility by the union apparatus. The NUT leader McEvoy (salary £76,000) even came out to condemn the March 25th demonstration as an extremist plot!

On top of this union membership divides us rather than unites us. Each section of workers fighting on its own is just what the Tories want. An all-out sectional strike is not the answer. It would be stupid for teachers, nurses, firefighters or whoever to imagine they could win by 'going it alone'. (Surely nobody needs reminding what happened to the miners ten years ago.) If there is going to be an effective fight it has to be a united one and an active one which clearly refuses to accept any cuts or sackings or the latest divide and rule tactic of local pay settlements. The working class have been fragmented enough and this has allowed the last decade of defeats to take

place. Our only strength lies in our collective ability to act together to withdraw our labour.

No More Ritual Struggles!

Practically this means running our own struggle. It means first of all holding regular meetings of the whole workforce — from porters, kitchen staff, office workers, caretakers, teachers, nurses, doctors ... whoever. (Some workplaces are doing this already). It means democratic elections of delegates to help carry on the momentum of the struggle, to broaden it by linking up with what's going on in other workplaces. Above all it means mass participation and mass refusal to go along with cuts. No negotiated deals behind closed doors to accept 'just a few' job losses or local pay deals. Chancellor Clarke has already stated that even more savage cuts are to come over the next two years. Ultimately the question comes down to what kind of society we want to live in. Since the Second World War capitalism in every major country has boasted that it could give greater freedom and better living standards than any other society in history. Today that is a hollow sham as the Criminal Justice Act only reinforces an increasingly totalitarian state and the bottom fifty per cent of society face real declining incomes. These facts alone explain why this fight has to be united. Let's start having a say in our own future, because it's as plain as day that capitalism isn't working.

Capitalism Isn't Working



The British Government is boasting, and has been boasting, for more than 2 years that "the recovery is here". It points to booming exports, lower inflation, slightly falling unemployment and weak credit growth to underline the point that this is a more substantial "recovery" than any in British post-war history.

The Reality

All this ignores the reality faced by millions of workers. A ruling class glimpse into our world was revealed by the findings of the Joseph

Rowntree Foundation Inquiry. This is hardly a radical body since the inquiry team was headed by Sir Peter Barclay and included Howard Davies, the head of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). The basic findings of the Rowntree Report are that

- the gap between the rich and poor is the greatest since the Second World War
- since 1977 the number with an income less than half the average has trebled
- the richest 10% of the population owns half the country's wealth
- the poorest 50% of the population owns 8% of the national wealth.

These findings apparently came as a shock to the well-heeled inquiry team but it is no surprise to anyone from the working class. Despite all the fake statistics, massaged by almost 30 changes in the system of calculating who qualifies for the title "unemployed", the system has "functioned" on massive, long-term unemployment for almost two decades. Even in distorted Government figures 32% of unemployed men and 21% of unemployed women have been out of work for twelve months or more (figures which are four times higher than the equivalent percentages in the USA). This massive expulsion of workers from the labour force has not "priced workers back into a job" as the Tories promised. What has happened instead is that profit margins have risen whilst more have gone on the dole. British Steel is now a profitable firm but 90% of its old workforce were sacked. It was not so much a "restructuring" as a destruction of the industry. Even the most successful privatisation of all, the forerunner of all privatisations, British Telecom (BT) has failed to achieve the Governments hopes. Privatised and deregulated in order to be free to play a fuller role on the world stage BT fell from 5th to 6th place in the telecommunications world players league. Still, with £2.31 billions profits, it was by far the most profitable. The sacking of 16,000 workers to achieve this superb result was of course of minor significance and Ian Vallance, the Managing Director, was well worth his whacking pay increase.

Contents

Labour and the Workers	2
Baring the Costs	3
Drugs: Capitalism's Fix?	4
Review: Larina's Bukharin	5
Correspondence: Democracy,	
State and Revolution	6
Life of the CWO	7
Issues: Animal Rights/CJA/M77	8

Parasitism and Speculation

In fact the British economy is in a classic crisis situation. Investment is low because the actual level of economic activity is fairly stagnant. In 1993-4 BT was not alone. British firms had a 40% increase in cash surpluses but given the uncertainty about the future this was used neither

continued on page 2

Clause IV - Labour woos finance capital

British and global capitalism remain in deep crisis. The Tories don't know which way to turn. The pro-US and pro-European elements are fighting each other openly. Against such a backdrop the Labour Party is being moulded to take over the reins of government. When Lord MacAlpine, the ex-treasurer of the Conservative Party publicly announces that the Tories should go into opposition, and former Thatcher boss Lord Sterling says he can work with Labour, it is a signal that Labour has already done enough to win the confidence of the capitalist class. With the ditching of Clause IV it is being equipped currently with the necessary blandness to satisfy the role of a capitalist party in office. This is not to say that the Labour Party has been anything other than a capitalist party. Arthur Scargill may be right when he says that the new model Clause IV could have been written by Jeffrey Archer, but he is trying to mystify when he adds that it makes "mockery of Labour's 80 year old socialist commitment". The Labour Party remains a party without a programme for the working class only a programme for its own election.

Socialism mocked

The Labour Party has never been a socialist party. Its history is littered with examples of just how far it always has been from such a possibility. Since 1945 the Tories have used troops twice to break strikes, the Labour Party has used them 14 times (mainly in the immediate post-war government). It was the Labour Party which introduced nuclear weapons to Britain. It was the Labour Party which unilaterally decided to commit troops to the Korean War in defence of

the US interests. It was the Labour Party which began the rationalisation of the whole mining industry in the 1960s with the wholesale closure of Durham pits. Are these the credentials of a socialist party? No, they are the hallmarks of a natural party of capitalism! Clause IV was introduced by the Webbs, Fabians of the worst paternalist kind. They worded a text not around the notion of 'socialisation' but 'nationalisation'. This was done as part of a response to the Russian revolution and the echoes and solidarity it received within the British working class. It is little wonder that these were the same people who were to be perfectly comfortable in the political company of Stalin at a later date. (See *Workers Voice* 76)

The new Clause IV

Lets have a look, for what it is worth at the latest formulation of the Labour Party on Clause IV.

1. The Labour Party is a democratic socialist party. It believes that by the strength of our common endeavour, we achieve more than we achieve alone so as to create for each of us the means to realise our true potential and for all of us a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many not the few, where the rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe, and where we live together, freely, in a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and respect.

2. To these ends we work for: a dynamic economy, serving the public interest, in which the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition are joined

with the forces of partnership and cooperation to produce the wealth the nation needs and the opportunity for all to work and prosper, with a thriving private sector...

O.K. you've suffered enough!... it continues in the same vein. The combination of socialism with the market economy is a transparent contradiction. A market economy is run by those who have access to private property, the means of production etc. Socialism is about the abolition of all private property. To pretend that it is simply about reforming capitalism and making it more "equal" is to deny any meaning to the idea of "socialism". The description of the Labour Party as a democratic socialist party is both a simple sop to the leftists in and around it, and it is a continuation of the lie that bourgeois democracy holds anything for a class other than the bourgeoisie. It is the later statement which holds the truth of the matter. The Labour Party is and remains a capitalist party. Now it wants to be even more so. Its vocabulary - market enterprise, public accountability, equality of opportunity, the private sector - these are all the natural forms of expression of the naked capitalist.

The Left

Against this new wording stands the motley crew of the Left. By left we mean the left wing of the capitalist class. Their vision of socialism extends no further than giving more power to the capitalist state. They pose against Blair's new moralisms and community spirit the old dogmas of integrated state capitalism (nationalisation), welfarism and egalitarianism. None of this is actually anti-capitalist. Labour has been in power four times since 1945. It has had seventeen years to transform the economy and society. It has not done so. It has not even defended the programme that it adopted from the Liberal Sir William Beveridge in 1945. Instead it has always allowed the capitalists to dominate the agenda and the old Fabian idea of "the inevitability of gradualness" has been revealed by the latest crisis of capitalism as a utopian one. Labour's notions of nationalisation, full employment, further rights for minorities are either the wild flights of fancy of nostalgic social democrats or simply compatible with a

system which periodically returns to vicious and direct attacks on the working class. The opposition of the Left, both inside and outside the Labour Party to Blair and his crew merely disarms and diverts workers by getting them to focus on the internal machinations of a capitalist vote-catching apparatus. This fixation with the Labour Party not only affects the Trotskyist entrust organisations like Workers Power or Socialist Organiser it also extends to outfits like the Socialist Workers Party. For years the SWP has turned somersaults at every election to find a new slogan to get workers to vote Labour. After they told us to "vote Labour for the last time" as long ago as 1974 it has required a great deal of creativity (and an even greater dose of amnesia) to come up with a new line. Today one SWP leader has developed the idea that, however reactionary Blair and the Labour Party are, they "represents the aspirations of millions of people" (Alex Callinicos in *Socialist Worker* (25.3.95). This is a stupendous piece of sophistry. The point about the change in Labour's basic principles is that it is part of a policy to win a capitalist election. It has to have a capitalist programme. The issue is to recognise that the parliamentary charade has nothing to do with our aspirations but everything to do with maintaining capitalist class rule. The supposed tactical idea of supporting Labour today only to turn against it tomorrow is part of the Trotskyist method of deception. Because people are today not revolutionary we should get them to support the most progressive bourgeois party and then tell them they were wrong! With such a method of developing class consciousness capitalism is safe until the sun burns out. But as the SWP is actually a believer in state capitalism (i.e. that nationalisation is a step to socialism) it is not surprising that they are happy to support such policies. The working class will need to look for a revolutionary alternative elsewhere.

Working class interests

And this will not be to Labour or its left hangers on. As we said in WV76 -

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

Continued on next page

Capitalism Isn't Working

continued from front page

for investment for the future nor to cut prices to increase market share. Why build up capacity if a new downturn is just around the corner. Profits can remain high without new investment simply by increasing exploitation of the remaining workers and laying off "surplus" staff. The consequence of this is that British manufacturing output has risen only 3% between 1978 and 1992 compared to Germany's 30% and Japan's 65%.

The Labour Party has constantly screamed that the City of London has not invested in industry but in fact it has never historically done so. It has always preferred international activities (insurance, merchant banking etc.) to the poor (at least in the short-term) returns from investing in manufacturing. Over the last twenty years the banks have financed only 3% of investment in manufacturing. The other 97% comes from internally generated funds of the various manufacturing firms. Indeed with the deregulation of the City the problem has been in reverse. Manufacturing firms no longer invest in their own basic manufacturing activity. In 1993 only 13 British companies appeared in the list of the world's top 200 spenders on Research and Development. Even they invested only 2.29% of their sales compared with the world average of 4.85%. Instead British firms use surplus funds to speculate on international currency markets or invest in US (or any other) Government securities. No wonder that in the 1980s profits in manufacturing rose 6% but dividends to shareholders rose 12% against only a 2% rise in total investment. Parasitism is thus endemic to British capitalism.

None of this is so new. Speculative activity is the sign of a global overproduction of capital. This is not to say that globally there are not

millions of needs to be satisfied but that there is insufficient profit to be generated from trying to satisfy them. This is what Marx meant when he said that capital itself becomes a barrier to its own self-expansion. There is no shortage of capital around but there are shortages for profitable uses of that capital and the capitalists are more concerned with defending existing capital values and profit rates than satisfying human need. This problem is not confined to Britain but is part of a global crisis caused by the end of a cycle of accumulation. This crisis has now lasted twenty years. During this time it has been managed but not solved. All kinds of new strategies have been tried to recapitalise industry from privatisation of state industries at giveaway prices to deregulation of industry and investment. The results have been less than spectacular with a series of minicycles of boom and bust but growth rates globally have remained low. In the Thatcher years, despite all the boasts of having turned the British economy around, growth rates averaged only two thirds of the previous forty years.

The Working Class

For the British working class there has been little evidence of restructuring of industry more a destruction of jobs in industry. In the last 12 years 4 million full time jobs have gone to be replaced largely by an increase in low paid, insecure part-time work. One in every four adult males is today jobless. And even with this growth of an increasingly impoverished working class the crisis continues. Throughout the Seventies Government ministers and capitalists talked about the workers who demanded wage increase to match inflation as "pricing themselves out of job". After years of real wage cuts and the lowest level of strikes this century (and that includes

World War Two!) this excuse to explain the high level of unemployment has long sounded hollow. The truth is that capitalism is forced to expand or die but expansion has to be profitable. Capitalist enterprises cannot simply be profitable in the sense of making a money profit. The firm has to be profitable enough to lower the cost of its commodities below those of its rivals. In the last few years growth has remained stagnant but profitability has increased enormously. This has been achieved by expelling workers from the labour force (as our example of BT showed but we could have picked a host of other examples in the private and public sectors.) The truth is that continuous long-term unemployment is a necessary condition for continuing capitalist functioning at this point. For those who remain in work there has similarly been a rapid decline in working conditions. They often have to work overtime to make up for a poor basic wage and the rise in productivity has been achieved by progressively more appalling working conditions. This has recently reached obscene levels in privatised British Gas where the Chairman, Cedric Brown, after awarding himself a pay rise of £750,000 has told the workers that they can only have a pay rise if they take a cut in holidays!

Unemployment is not caused by new technology. The problem is the way that technology is applied. Capitalism long ago created the conditions for all of us to work less and all of us to make meaningful contribution to producing for society's needs. In any sane society the work would be shared by all the workforce. But capitalism is not a rational system. It is governed by a law of value which demands that production is for profit rather than need. The Tories have insisted for the last fifteen years that the market is the most efficient decision-maker on needs. But in fact this has largely been ideology since the market is politically determined. Nowhere

was this clearer than the 1992-3 campaign against the coalminers. The pits we were told were unprofitable but they had only become so because the Government has rigged the energy supply market in favour of natural gas and nuclear power rather than coal. Not surprisingly this provided the case for the further closure of "uneconomic" pits.

Is there a solution? In capitalist terms, no. The Labour Party is now talking (again!) of a "socially responsible capitalism" on the German (or even, Japanese) model where the state takes on a greater role in directing and planning national economic goals and where firms don't just pay out super-profits as dividends to shareholders but invest at higher levels. But this fails to note that the crisis is as bad in the European economies as it is in Britain. If Germany has 8.1% unemployment as against the British 8.5% (these are both official understatements of the real figures) it is difficult to see what the difference is for the working class in either country. The truth is that Labour has no credible alternative programme to that of the Tories. Labour seeks to simply be a little more redistributive in tax terms and for the rest it will be the mixture as before.

To the left of Labour the Trotskyists all scream for nationalisation and greater equality which they claim the Labour Party has betrayed and which they alone defend in the name of "socialism". But socialism is not about nationalisation of capitalist industry or fairer distribution of money. It is about the destruction of the law of value, of the profits system and money. It is not about a Big Brother nationalising industry but about the workers internationally taking over the industries and producing for global needs and not financial targets. This is the only real long-term solution to the impasse of capitalism today.

Jock

Barings

Global Finance Capital..... the Costs of Speculation

An understanding of the global nature of capitalism today is essential. The crisis which marks the end of a cycle of accumulation has now lasted twenty years. Capitalism has had to respond with significant changes. The days of the undisputed economic sovereignty of the state are over. Even the most advanced capitalist states at the centree of the system have to take account of the demands of financial speculation. Daily \$20-25 billion are traded in goods and services, but \$800 billion is traded purely in currency speculation in one form or another(Joel Kurtzman, The Death of Money, 1994). Events like the Barings collapse reveal something of the role of finance capital in the attempts to get out of the crisis of accumulation.

Barings

The whole sorry story developed into something of a soap-opera. With around £600 million lost, scapegoats, smears, conspiracy theories and much more were all soon doing the rounds. But Barings was only a small player in these markets, especially when compared to the giants like Salomon Bros., who regularly trade in billions daily. From its grand beginnings, once numbered as the equal of the European states, a grand pillar of the establishment, banker to the queen. Barings was bought for a pound by the Dutch group, ING. Despite being a pillar of conservative banking, providing funds for wars among other things Barings was not to be bailed out again by the Bank of England. As it faced increasing marginalisation in today's markets it had turned to the speculative markets and a place alongside the big players by the acquisition of a small business based in the Far East. Leeson, as one of many, traded from the Singapore Simex exchange, trading in a variety of options. He attempted, on the one hand, to exploit slight differences in the prices of the Nikkei 225 index between Singapore and Japan. On the other hand, the volume of business he was doing (around five times the other big traders) was an attempt to bully the market into performing the way he expected. The Kobe earthquake was the event which exposed these actions to all the risks and dangers implied by speculation.

The markets

These markets have quite a history. 'Derivatives' is the catch-all term used to group a variety of different financial exchanges. They are called so because they are derived from other commodities and so on. Options give the right to buy or sell stocks, shares, bonds and the like, at a particular price over a specific period of time.

They arose out of 'privileges', an informal practice going back a long way. Futures arose out of commodities contracts, where a crop, for example, would be bought at a particular price before harvest. Originating in Chicago, it is the reason why the Chicago exchanges are the biggest in the world. Futures give the right to buy at a particular price within a specific period. In each case they are a means of speculating on the performance of something without paying its whole price. The right to buy or sell costing only a fraction of the commodity, share or bond itself.

Their history is marked by the date 15th August 1971. With Nixon's decision to close the gold window, to float the dollar and ending the Bretton Woods era, world capitalism moved from some sort of stability to an increasingly volatile situation. In 1973 OPEC quadrupled oil prices, other commodities were to follow suit. The world then had no safe bench-mark currency upon which it could rely. The dollar being freed from its pegging to gold at \$35 per oz. OPEC had seen its dollar holdings endangered by the effective devaluation of the dollar, so it saw that it had ample reason for the price hike. An inflationary spiral set in as other producers emulated this example. Cartels were set up in such commodities as bauxite, tin, tea, coffee and rubber. Alongside this independent trading by producers took place. As Helmut Schmidt was to say later this was a "floating non-system". In such situations of instability the capitalists looked for ways to hedge their bets.

In 1973 the Chicago Board Options exchange was opened. By the 80s New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Montreal, Toronto, London, Tokyo and more had joined the list. Beginning as a means of insurance safeguarding investments, they quickly became a means of speculation. Where there is a means of making a transaction, there is a means of taking a profit. Such trading was to become ever more heated and frantic.

The more acute and frequent such revolutions in value become, the more does the automatic movement of the now independent value operate with the elemental force of a natural process, against the foresight and calculation of the individual capitalist, the more does the cause of normal production become subservient to abnormal speculation, and the greater is the danger that threatens the existence of the individual capitals. These periodic revolutions in value therefore corroborate what they are supposed to refute, namely that value as capital acquires independent existence, which it maintains and accentuates through its movement...

Marx. Capital Vol III p.109

Even the development of the global financial markets over the past two decades, the bankruptcies and now the immeasurable velocity of capital circulation can thus be understood within the framework of marxism.

Acceleration

Together with this instability breeding speculation, we have seen the huge growth of rootless currency fuelling its fire. By this rootless currency we mean such things as Eurodollars. They originate out of dollars secretly deposited in European banks by the Russians and the Chinese after the second world war, but they were added to by the actions of the Americans themselves. By running budget deficits from 1958 on and then the banking measures of the

60s, dollar capital flight became the norm. With the creation of petrodollars following the 1973 oil price rise this situation was exacerbated. All of these dollars had to be banked as they could not be repatriated, after all what was there buy?

This money-capital was the well from which the debt crisis drank. It was also the source of much of the speculative money-capital now in circulation. These Eurodollars are the currency of international commerce, banking and international speculation - money can not sit idly by losing value, in the eyes of the capitalists. The liberalisation and general deregulation of the 80s was a response to this situation. Governments looked to attract capital from a sector over which they were struggling to manage any effective control. Part of this effect was to increase the sale of government debt, as in such things as bonds and other such financial instruments. Here again, though, they are the stuff of speculation. They become one of the only means, alongside interest rates, of effecting any control of the value of their own currencies. By loosing onto the financial markets such huge sums, and here the US is the great example, not having the capacity to regulate such matters outside their own borders, they have handed over to global finance capital the means and the manner of their own impotence. No government can adequately challenge the forces in operation in these fields, they simply do not have the financial muscle. If all central bankers were to attempt to play significantly on these markets they could muster around \$14 billion, which is small potatoes next to the \$800 billion traded daily by the institutions.

Two economies

What we have are, in a sense, two economies which intersect only at certain points. Capitalist production must take note of interest rates in assessing any future or continues operations within the production of goods and services. They must note carefully the exchange rates, particularly in the setting of today's internationalised production. With the general rate of profitability being so low within the majority of the capitalist core and the highly volatile nature of the markets, they often have to become players on these markets themselves. Some, indeed, abandoning their previous production to become financial institutions in their own right - as in General Electric, American Can (which became Primerica) and the weight of such bodies as the Ford Credit Corporation within Ford as a whole.

We must however, remember these two statements which remain true -

Capital exists as capital in actual movement, not in the process of circulation, but only in the process of production, in the process by which labour-power is exploited.

Capital Vol III p343.

But it is clear that in spite of all the revolutions of value, capitalist production exists and can endure only so long as capital-value is made to create surplus value...

Capital Vol III p108.

Whatever profits are made within these speculative markets they actually produce nothing, they add no surplus value and so must become a drain upon the productive process eventually.

There have been many spectacular bankruptcies over the past few years, where institutions, firms and others have attempted to make equally

spectacular killings on these speculative markets. Orange County, the municipal body, attempted such speculation and ran into massive difficulties, losing \$1.5 billion on the bond market. In different ways Metalgesellschaft, Kidder Peabody, Salomon Bros. and Kashima Oil have all had similar experiences. Speculation carries huge risks, particularly in this high speed 'electronic' economy. As a capitalist form it carries the chance of profit but it also carries the chance of catastrophic loss. There is no sure thing especially where this area of the whole economy is increasingly influenced by computer programmes operating on a statistical level. What we see here is simply another stage in the decomposition of the current crisis of accumulation. Indeed, it was the beginning of the end of that cycle in 1971 which largely set the scene for the 'electronic' economy of speculative money-capital and the massive mountain of state debt which threatens to engulf the whole system. **Claestre**

Animal Rights

continued from back page

bourgeoisie confronts us with another political eunuch - the movement of the citizens (or "Middle England"). The issues for them are really unimportant - the environment, motorways, animal rights etc. The important thing is to present them as the latest way to really get at the system. Hypocrites like Melanie Phillips writing in the *Observer* will even throw in a sentence to claim that the illegal nature of the some of these demonstrators actually presents a real threat to the system. Such publicity contrasts dramatically with the news blackout that takes place when workers go on strike. Strikes get no coverage at all (In February Newcastle and Lambeth workers had large one day strikes on strike. Did they get any coverage?) Why is that veal calf exports get covered so extensively? Because the system is confident that these are entirely containable issues (unlike the Poll Tax or opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill which directly attack the working class and just might provoke a collective response). We don't doubt the sincerity of the young people who get involved in these movements against motorway devastation or inhumanity towards animals. Nor do we doubt their capacity to recognise that single issues can be handled by the capitalist state one at a time. What we need here is that the young people who sincerely hate the system recognise that it cannot be overthrown through issues which the system is happy to advertise (even if it feels as though "at least we are doing something"). Their anger is being directed into a cul de sac. The path to liberation for humanity may be a longer road and less satisfying than punching a copper at a demo but it is the only serious road. What we need are not capitalist style wars but proletarian class wars.

Only by removing the capitalist system can we allow humanity to rekind its natural self. In so doing it will also create a classless society which obliterates sexism, racism and dare we say it also the commodity trade which encourages cruelty to other species. The animal liberators may not agree with this message and if they are just animal liberators we have little further to say to them, but we address ourselves to those who think that animal liberation is a radical act. What we have tried to show is that those who think this are standing reality on its head - the conscious political struggle by the working class for a new society is the only way forward. This requires a constant dialogue between all those who would be revolutionary. **Jock**

Clause IV *continued from page 2*

itself and force the whole paraphernalia of capitalism, Labour Party and all, into the dustbin of history.

As capitalism becomes increasingly vicious and as the gap between the workers who produce the wealth and those who dispose of it increases the working class will be forced to come to terms with a system that offers only increasing misery. For it to arrive at a revolutionary programme it will have to recognise that Labour is part of a state apparatus which tries to reduce every struggle to a question of legal reform within the existing system. A rejection of Labourism is the first step on the road to rejecting our continued servitude to capitalism. **Claestre**

Drugs: Capitalism Needs More than A Fix

Part 2: Drug Wars

In so far as drugs, like so many other of capitalism's sugar-coated commodities, lead not to satisfaction but to restless re-consumption, the "drugs question" generally resolves itself into the simple formula: "Have you got any more where that came from?" Unfortunately for the Marxist, life is never quite so simple. "The Drugs Question", under the decadent social relations of pre-millennial capitalism, is a multi-faceted phenomenon - social, political, economic, psychological. Its worldwide effects today, whether peripheral or immediate, leave few strata untouched. In the second part of this discussion article we shall attempt to further unravel some of the complex inter-linkages of a significant late 20th century socio-cultural change that demands more than a sensationalist gloss. In the third part (to be published in *Workers Voice* 78) we will complete this task as well as take up the issue of drugs and a communist society.

"War on Drugs": A Failure

Launched by the American bourgeoisie as a panacea for all social ills, the 'war on drugs' is now from some reports acknowledged to be 'unwinnable'. Over a six year period a mere \$60bn has been thrown at it - cheap at the price compared to a 'conventional' war like the Gulf War! From the standpoint of global capital this requires to be seen as an economic 'faux frais' on the overall profit rate, a rather unnecessary one for a mere 'propaganda hit', but a 'natural' product of a mode of production riven with irrationality. As usual with any State-promoted disaster, the cost at the end of the day is borne by the producer class.

From the standpoint of the Mafia this constitutes a temporary victory over an embattled State bourgeoisie. According to the U.N.'s International Narcotics Control Board, the economic and political power of the drug cartels is still rising, a view echoed by the U.S. State Dept which bemoans "an explosion of Russian criminal gangs" involved in smuggling heroin from Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. (*Guardian* 21/5/94).

Global production of heroin rose 5% last year whereas cocaine production fell slightly. Higher profit possibilities have led to a boom in poppy cultivation in Colombia, but however this did not prevent cocaine reaching new markets in Russia, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. According to the U.S. watchdog:

Since 1990 more coca has been eradicated than ever before in history, yet new cultivation is even greater... There have been more arrests and seizures than ever before, yet even more cocaine reaches the U.S. and the price on the street is not significantly changed.

Annual State Dept surveys have become tacit admissions of failure. Clinton has proposed a 9% rise in funding for anti-drug programmes to \$13.2 bn. There are no new ideas, however, only a change of emphasis. Under Bush, 70% of funding was allocated to tackling the 'supply side', 30% to 'demand side' programmes. The split is now 59/41. This amounts to a tacit recognition of the power of the drug cartels and a further affirmation of the thesis we advanced earlier that the dynamic of production is the final arbiter in patterns of consumption, distribution and the legal-political forms that codify these processes.

The overall strategy, nevertheless still relies

heavily on hitting supply. The theory is that by eradicating crops in the Chapare region of Bolivia or Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley, that this will have an impact on the availability of cocaine and crack on the streets of Western cities. The underlying assumption is that if you have a nasty looking bunion, a surefire cure is to shoot yourself in the foot! (Evidently Uncle Sam hasn't yet heard about the efficacy of the hypodermic syringe!) Both strategy and assumption are proving to be painfully misconceived.

Between a rock and a hard place

Faced by demands from their U.S. paymasters to 'clean up their act', regimes such as Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Venezuela find themselves in a cleft stick. Unofficially dependent on the drug trade, their continued clientelage of the American Empire revolves around them being seen to carry out the global dictates of Uncle Sam. Continued U.S. 'aid' in the form of huge capital loans and investment which is indispensable for them to shore up their tottering economies, is predicated on them stamping out drug trafficking and cleaning up their 'human rights' records i.e. executing their victims silently.

A war of subterfuge and counter-claim is underway, wherein the room for manoeuvre of the client states is partly determined by the specific weight of the commerce in drugs within their capital formations. In Brazil, for example, where an estimated 70% of the police personnel at all levels are actively involved in corruption, 16,500 troops have been called out in readiness to enter Rio's teeming shantytowns in which the drugs barons control as virtual private fiefdoms. A State prosecuted civil war funded by rival capital factions would have the backing of the middle classes terrified by the interminably rising crime associated with the drug trade.

In states such as Bolivia, Peru and particularly Colombia, it's much more doubtful whether such a course could be realistically pursued. In contrast to Brazil, the latter relies much more heavily on the drug commodity. It's barely conceivable that Colombia could dispense with the drug trade without dis-embowelling itself economically. Before he was eliminated by the CIA, Escobar, leader of the Medellin gang, was on the verge of establishing a political voice within the State. Historically this is the pattern for all monopoly capital.

In order to appease the U.S. and buy time, the Colombian authorities have been busily publishing some impressive statistics: 40 tons of cocaine seized in the first six months of '94; 7,000 hectares eradicated; plans to wipe out all marijuana, coca and opium poppy cultivation over the next two years(!) As a consequence there have been marches, occupations of airstrips and strikes by peasants. These now have guerrilla backing and protection from the so-called Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) who are also engaged in producing and smuggling. (It should be noted that Escobar while on the run was given shelter by the "Marxist" Sandinista regime of Nicaragua).

With the perceived failure of the 'war on drugs', new alternatives are being considered at every stage from cultivation to production to consumption. This is partly an effort by the gangsters to achieve a respectable image, but more a response to the U.S. offensive and the implications of its putative success. The presidents of Peru and Bolivia, for example, have been lobbying the U.N. to remove coca

from its list of narcotics. The argument being pursued is that it is the mode of consumption, not the substance, that is addictive. Coca in the form of tea or the chewing of leaves - a daily practice of millions in the Andean region - is eliminated naturally by the body. A growing number of pro-coca lobbyists believe a market niche can be found with alternative coca products such as chewing gum, toothpaste, tea etc. Such products however, have little capacity to absorb anything but a tiny proportion of world production. Even the multi-national giant Coca-Cola uses only 1,000 hectares for its worldwide production and there are at least 200,000 hectares under cultivation in Peru, Bolivia and Colombia alone.

Once Again: Legalisation

The failure of the 'war on drugs' has brought to the fore the issue of legalisation. A regular media feature, police officers and judges in W.Europe now speak publicly in favour of deepening the 'debate' about decriminalisation and legalisation. Is this because they're suddenly concerned about the welfare of Joe Joint or Jeremey Junkie? From a class that consigns thousands daily to premature deaths - hardly!. No, like everything that really concerns the bourgeoisie, this question is economically driven.

Drug related crime is believed to account for half of all property crime in Britain - said to be worth around £2bn a year. Comparable figures are available for all the metropolitan centres, with the U.S. leading the league table. The costs of policing this crime is astronomical adds a considerable tax on the dwindling pools of surplus value available to the State machines.

Research indicates that cannabis is used by one million people in the U.K. each year and in any one year, 3 million people (6% of the population) take an illegal drug. In the face of these new patterns of consumption, the only realistic long term option for the ruling class will be to legally codify the existing state of affairs.

Some are half way down this road, others are dragging their heels. Within Europe a patchwork of legal sanctions exist, from darkest Greece to the semi-legality of Europe's biggest cut-price supermarket - Holland. Once again Tory neanderthals are determined to continue advertising U.K. Ltd as the sick man of Europe most in need of a fix. With the Home Secretary's recent announcement that the maximum fine for cannabis possession is to be raised from £500 to £2,500 the likelihood of early legal change appears remote. In practise the police see the higher fines as irrelevant. Cautioning is now routine. Even the right wing think-tank the Institute of Economic Affairs is poking its ugly face out of the cave with a publication entitled "Winning The War on Drugs: To Legalise or Not?"

In the meantime the government announced a more 'liberal approach' to its anti-drugs programme. This includes drug education in both primary and secondary schools, a health advertising campaign and extra money for teachers engaged as ideological watchdogs. But just in case this pill may have been seen to be too sweet, a much tougher attitude to drug abuse in prisons was launched. Random drug tests in the latter are now revealing the tip of an iceberg. With the recent riots in a Yorkshire jail due to the stemming of the normal flow of drugs to the inmates, one doesn't have to be a genius to work out that the regular availability of illicit substances in these hellholes is one of the few things that

keeps the lids on them.

Despite the variety of local and particular factors involved in determining the make-up of any one national capital's legal framework, serious pressures would be brought to bear if any one of them, e.g. Holland, stepped too far out of line. The heavy hand of the U.S. superpower can be detected here, model State for its subordinate partners and supplicants. At bottom is the matter of social control, of who rules society and the globe. But at what price?

A Potted History

A new thought came to Zeus-born Helen; into the bowl from which their wine was drawn she threw a drug that dispelled all anger and banished remembrance of every trouble.

Homer's *Odyssey*

Drugs of all kinds have been used since earliest recorded history, for pleasure, as medicine, for religious purposes. The value of the juice of the white opium poppy was recorded in Sumeria more than 6,000 years ago. The cannabis plant was used in Central Asia as early as 3,000 B.C. and tea was known in China around the same time.

The outlawing of some drugs however, is a modern development. Until the late 19th century opium could be bought freely over the counter. Writers, artists and a variety of malcontents used it to increase energy and creativity, as a stimulant - (Would *Das Kapital* have seen the light of day without it?) Imbibation by the propertied classes was called 'luxurious' use - today one can only use it 'recreationally' which isn't quite the same. It was widely used medicinally as a sedative by the urban masses and was a common antidote to alcohol hangovers.

The British Government was, of course, not averse to stimulating the spread of the drugs trade at this time. By first growing the opium poppy in India and then when a little balance of payments problem arose with the Chinese (the British bourgeoisie were keen on Chinese silk and porcelain but the Chinese ruling class did not want anything British in return) they further extended "free trade" by gunboat. The Opium Wars (1839-42 and 1856-60) forced the Chinese Empire to open treaty ports where very soon the British were advertising "Opium on Sale, very cheap — an opportunity not to be missed". "The great unproductive consumption of opium" (Marx — *Revolution in China and in Europe*) did however soon reverse the flow of silver bullion from China back to the British Empire.

However what was justified as perfectly good for Chinese coolies was soon seen as a menace to the working class in Britain. To a background of increasing concern about the working class doping itself for pleasure and hence sensing all the more acutely the horrors of alienated labour, the 1868 Pharmacy Act placed restrictions on who might sell opium and how they might do it. This marked the inauguration of an era in which as drugs were progressively excluded from acceptable social roles, they came to acquire the magic aura of forbidden substances. The idea that the law could punish simply *having* was still a long way off.

Despite a Royal Commission of 1893 which condoned a modest degree of 'luxurious' drug taking - it was revealed that opium was used unexceptionally as a medicine in imperial India and discreetly as an intoxicant - policing

continued opposite

Book Review

This I Cannot Forget

(the Memoirs of Anna Larina Bukharina)

Lenin created NEP, ... Bukharin became its greatest interpreter and defender “the Pushkin of NEP”, as one opponent contemptuously dubbed him. He did so first in alliance with Stalin against a series of oppositions ... — the Trotskyist Left, then ... Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev, then ... Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev. And he did so finally, with ... Rykov and Mikhail Tomsky, against Stalin in 1928 and 1929.

Defending NEP as the only acceptable road to modernization and socialism in backward peasant Russia, Bukharin developed programmatic ideas and policies that anticipated those of anti-Stalinist reformers decades later. Regretting his own extremist views during the civil war, he now warned repeatedly against the abuses of power inherent in the Party’s political monopoly and ideological zealotry — great leaps beyond people’s wishes, warfare actions against society, administrative hypercentralisation and rampant bureaucracy, elite privilege and economic decay. He advocated instead conciliatory, evolutionary policies that would encourage both the private and state sectors to “grow into socialism” in mutually beneficial conditions of market relations and civil peace.

Bukharin called his program “socialist humanism”. Like all Bolsheviks, he believed in the need for state planning, industrialization, and some kind of large-scale collective farming, but insisted that “our economy exists for the consumer, not the consumer for the economy” — or as he put it elsewhere, “the bureaucrat for the people, not the people for the bureaucrat.”

Stephen F. Cohen, Introduction to *This I Cannot Forget*

Nikolai Bukharin believed, according to Cohen (author of *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography*), that market relations and civil peace could be mutually beneficial and even grow into socialism. And Cohen is accurate. So why is the CWO reviewing the memoirs of Anna Larina, Bukharin’s widow, rather than those of any other survivor of Stalinist repression?

The answer is that, before Bukharin was on the right, he was on the left of a Bolshevik Party which itself was light years to the left of the CPSU of 1929. Lenin, who argued for the New Economic Policy and its favouring of private capitalists as a temporary retreat, rather than as a direct route to socialism, called Bukharin the “favourite” of the Party. So what links these two Bukharins, how did the one become the other?

The most important part of the answer to these questions must be found in the great historical events which unfolded at that time: the Russian Revolution and the defeat of the revolutionary wave.

What split Russian Social Democracy in 1917 was their attitude to the problem of whether Russia was developed enough for a socialist revolution. The Mensheviks were unambiguous: Russia was not ready and Marxists, in their opinion, should support the bourgeois government resulting from the overthrow of Tsarism until capitalist development made Russia ready for socialism. The Leninist wing of the Bolsheviks realised that the level of

proliferated. Monopoly capital and a centralised State required a controllable proletariat. But the question now was not whether inebriates merited closer control than they hitherto had done. The Society For the Study of Inebriates argued that opium intoxication was a disease akin to insanity and therefore belonged to the realm of medicine. The disease model of addiction has remained ever since (See *Narcomania* Marek Kohn) Oddly enough the same period gave birth to the ‘homosexual’. (Foucault).

With the refinement of morphine out of opium and the advent of the hypodermic syringe, medicine produced another new phenomenon: morphinism. A social typology followed quickly in its wake. Middle class Victorian drug addicts were neurasthenic; working class ones were merely degenerate. Not to be outdone in the refined uses of eloquence, across the Atlantic, they became known as ‘dope fiends’. The demonisation of opiate use was seriously underway. As the map of pathological psychology was gradually stitched up, to derive pleasure from drugs was no longer simply immoral leading to a dilution of the ‘moral senses’ and hence deserving compulsory detention: it was now *scientifically abnormal*.

AS
To be continued

development of Russia could not be considered in isolation from a world capitalism which was rotten ripe for overthrow — a world revolution could start in Russia, although it could not survive there unless it was echoed throughout the world. (Incidentally, Stalin was for a long time on the Menshevik side of this argument, which is a fact that all his later scissor and paste work has not succeeded in eradicating — when Lenin arrived in Petrograd in April 1917, Pravda, edited by Stalin, was supporting the Provisional Government).

When the Russian proletariat, whose political leadership all belonged to the Bolsheviks, made their own revolution and took power in the October Revolution, Bukharin not only shared Lenin’s perspectives; through his book, Imperialism and World Economy, he had helped lay the theoretical basis for Lenin’s ideas, and his statement

The Russian revolution will either be saved by the international proletariat or it will perish below the blows of international capitalism.... Everything depends on whether or not the international revolution is victorious.

makes his position at that time clear.

But the Russian revolution was doomed to remain isolated, despite the strenuous efforts of the Bolsheviks to spread it internationally in conditions which were crying out for the transformation of the first step into the final victory. In every other country the bourgeoisie was able to prevent the proletariat from emulating its Russian sisters and brothers, and then it succeeded in stabilising its situation after the upheaval of the First Imperialist Slaughter¹.

Faced with isolation, and worse still, imperialist intervention and civil war, what could the Bolsheviks do? The first thing they had to do was win the war. Here they were successful, but at a heavy price. In 1917, the proletariat had possessed vigorous Soviets which had had the potential to become a true proletarian “semi-state” (and were encouraged by the Bolsheviks to do so). The isolation meant that the revolution remained primarily a political revolution, the proletariat could take no great steps to free itself from the daily tyranny of wage-labour and all its debilitating consequences for the energy needed for administrative and political action, and, after the decimation of the proletariat in the civil war and the economic disruption springing from it, the life-blood had drained away from the Soviets. Politics, of necessity, had to be once more the special preserve of politicians.

All of this represented the revolution in retreat. The NEP was a further step in this retreat as famine demanded the restoraton of the market to supply the state.

All of these retreats, however, could only end up in a counter-revolution in the absence of an international revolution which would have enabled the steps backwards to be retraced and the forward march to be resumed. The

administration of capitalism necessarily has to be the administration of the exploitation of the proletariat, which, by itself, would be enough to eventually tear the most dedicated of revolutionary parties away from its revolutionary programme, without even taking into account the attraction that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union began to exert on careerists and other anti-proletarian elements. The CPSU became the core of a new bourgeoisie.

Because of the peculiar circumstances of its birth, this new bourgeoisie had a strange ideological inheritance: Marxism. Like good bourgeois, they turned this to good account. As the Russian proletariat was still enthusiastic about socialism, the new capitalists were able to use the theory of the emancipation of the workers to better enslave the workers. But first they had to transform the revolutionary theory of Marx and Lenin into a conservative ideology. And it is here that we finally meet Anna Larina. Although she has forgotten that her husband was once a Left Communist², this is far from meaning that her book is valueless. Her description of how Stalin used terror to effect that transformation by disposing of the last shreds of intellectual freedom as well as of the people who might have had the slightest possibility of using it to the benefit of the proletariat is especially telling. She reveals how poorly equipped Stalin was to use any other weapon (not quite literate, ranting on about “freethinks” — meaning freethinkers) and how natural the use of the means he did employ was to him. Stalin terrorised his own wife into committing suicide (that is, if he didn’t kill her with his own hand) seemingly on a whim. In this climate, Marxism could not operate as such — as a tool for collective understanding of the world, it needs to advance and test hypotheses, those in the collective need to debate and to convince each other on the basis of comprehension. Instead, it was transformed into a quasi-religious ideology, into “Marxism-Leninism”, or Stalinism. Although Stalinism corresponded to the objective needs of the new Russian bourgeoisie, and its emergence was “natural” (Larina talks about what were the first stages of this:

Many years later, Ilya Ehrenburg analysed the situation accurately in a conversation with me: “Lenin’s closest comrades made a colossal mistake. After his death, they made him into a god. Stalin took advantage of this deification, ingeniously charging everyone else with heresy to the cult of Lenin.”)

but things could not be allowed to run at their natural pace.

With the advantage of hindsight we can marvel at why people like Bukharin remained at their post, unaware or unwilling to be aware that they were no longer heading towards socialism in any sense at all, but were part of a capitalist Russia preparing to take its part in the world imperialist framework. Undoubtedly, Bukharin stood for a “kinder, gentler” capitalism than Stalin, but capitalism’s kindness and gentleness has always largely been in the imagination. When the Russian bourgeoisie decided that it had had enough of the NEP and needed to speed up industrialisation and “collectivise” the farms, it did it with brutality, and used Bukharin’s opposition as an excuse to get rid of him.

In March 1938, Bukharin was put on trial charged with being the inspiration behind the “Anti-Soviet Bloc of Trotskyists and Rightists”, an entirely fictitious organisation. Most of his co-defendants were totally unpolitical doctors (probably selected for their Jewish ancestry). The substance of the charges was that he was plotting terror (!) against Stalin and had been plotting terror against Lenin as early as 1917. Vyshinsky, the prosecutor, even appeared to imply that Bukharin had been conspiring against Soviet power before it existed, and that being imprisoned by the German, Russian, Swedish and Austrian police meant that Bukharin was in their pay. In short, the charges were a total fabrication, or, more accurately, a grotesque fantasy.

Needless to say, after a show trial in which he and his co-defendants appeared to accuse each other and themselves of things they could not possibly have done, probably as a result of torture and blackmail regarding the fate of their relatives³, Bukharin was found guilty and executed.

After Bukharin’s arrest, Larina was also arrested

and their thirteen month old son was put in an orphanage, where he was systematically neglected until he almost died, when his grandfather was allowed to take care of him. Later, he was kidnapped by the state again, but eventually had a career as an engineer.

Larina describes the brutal and mad world into which she was plunged as a *chesir*, or “family member of a traitor to the motherland”. For example, she describes how another woman was called a chesir, despite the fact that her “traitor to the motherland” had abandoned her and their children years before. Larina’s marriage to Bukharin was called a sham, despite the existence of their son. Her real relationship with him was that she had been his contact with a counter-revolutionary youth organisation, and she was “encouraged” to confess to this by being held in a subterranean cell whose walls were covered in green mould and whose floor was underwater. A light bulb was permanently lit, and she had only rats for company (the four-legged ones were later joined by a secret police spy). She subverted this by making a fur-covered friend. She also faced fake executions, to which she responded by asking to be allowed to die. Although she confessed to nothing, she was sentenced to eight years in a camp and then to more than twelve years exile. All of this without seeing a judge, for she was always tried in absentia!

What Larina could not forget was Bukharin’s testament, addressed as a letter to a future generation of Party leaders. When he knew he was to be arrested, he asked her to memorise it. She recited it through her prison and exile years, writing it down and then destroying it several times as she thought it might be discovered.

In this letter, Bukharin contrasts the uprightness of the Cheka under Lenin with the degeneracy and dissoluteness of Stalin’s NVKD, which resorted to any slander or crime to achieve its ends. He then asserts his innocence of the slanders that the NVKD directed against him and runs over his life of service to the Party. He concludes by expressing the certainty that history and a new honest generation of Party leaders will vindicate him. He finishes:

Know, comrades, that the banner you bear in a triumphant march towards communism contains a drop of my blood, too!

But, for all our respect for Bukharin the man, for the Left Communist that he used to be, we have a problem with the way he claims his innocence, a problem which must outweigh that innocence itself. He says:

These days the newspaper with the hallowed name Pravda prints the most contemptible lie that I, Nikolai Bukharin, wanted to destroy the achievement of October, to restore capitalism. This is an unheard-of obscenity.

It is true that it was a contemptible lie that Bukharin wanted to restore capitalism to Russia. But, beyond his subjective wishes, there is the objective truth that the economic system in Russia was already capitalist, based on the accumulation of capital stemming from the exploitation of wage-labour. No-one can destroy the achievement of October, but that achievement was not the overthrow of capitalism, but the demonstration that the first step in that overthrow, the proletarian seizure of political power is possible. The history of Russia after October is just a strong a demonstration that revolution must spread, or counterrevolution is inevitable. That said, *This I Cannot Forget* can be recommended, despite the total absence of our politics from its pages. It is a record of the consolidation of a counterrevolution.EDL

Notes

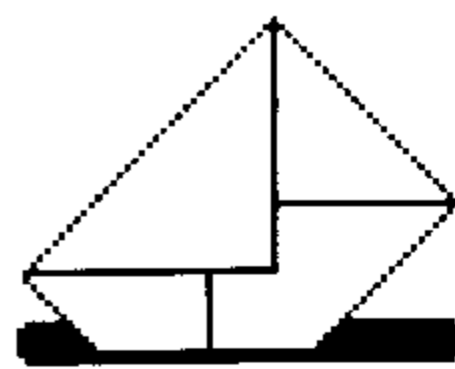
1 This does not mean that the Russian proletariat was wrong to try to start a world revolution: a class, just like an individual, who refuses to struggle unless success is guaranteed is doomed to never win. The objective conditions were right — a capitalist world in flames, and the possibility of workers immediately transforming their own lives for the better.

2. This edition of her book mentions this, but it is not from her. V.I. Epifanov, in a letter to *Literaturnaya Rossiya* (where *This I Cannot Forget* was first published), says “Believe the people know well that N.I.[Bukharin] was a Left Communist, and in a difficult moment quit the CC....”. But Epifanov’s hostility doesn’t stop with the facts: “Once the Great Patriotic War began, these people put on the fascist uniform. They became policemen, agents, began to mock the Soviet people.”!!!

3. Arthur Koestler alleges they did this as a last act of loyalty to the Party, but others note that Bukharin did not actually confess to any criminal act.

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).

Democracy, the State and Workers' Revolution

Dear Workers' Voice,

You would look a lot less foolish in your polemics with the Socialist Party if you argued against what we actually stand for rather than against what other people tell you we stand for or what you would like us to stand for.

The Socialist Party's basic political positions are summarised in the *Object and Declaration of Principles* adopted at the Party's foundation in 1904 and published every month in the *Socialist Standard* since that journal first appeared in September of the same year. Article 5 of the *Declaration of Principles* states that the Party holds the emancipation of the working class to be the work of that class itself. As a means to that end the Socialist Party has always maintained that the working class can and must make use of parliamentary structures wherever these exist, and it was to provide the working class with a political instrument to do this that the Socialist Party was formed.

The Socialist Party does not hold, and never has held that a socialist revolution will result from parliamentary activity alone, something our literature makes abundantly clear:

"The workers must prepare themselves for their emancipation by class-conscious organisation on both the economic fields, the first to gain control of the forces with which the masters maintain their dominance, the second to carry on production in the new order of things." Socialist Standard, July 1915.

You are also referred to Socialist Standard May 1966, Socialist Principles 1975, the article 'The Socialist Party and Economic Organisation', Socialist Standard November 1937, and the Executive Committee statement published in the Socialist Standard of August 1955. That should satisfy your demand for consistency and illustrate that any change in our political position has occurred purely in the realm of the CWO's own imagination - lame though that may be. The Socialist Party does not ridicule the suggestion that the bourgeoisie might attempt to counter a socialist revolution, on the contrary our strategy takes full account of such a possibility. What is ridiculous is the way the CWO and other leftist dilettantes present the threat of counter-revolution as an argument against parliamentary activity and in support of revolution solely through the medium of workers' councils, as if the bourgeoisie would act militarily against socialists working within the existing constitutional framework, thereby running the risk of undermining their own legitimacy and provoking generalised disorder, but be unable or unwilling to act against workers' councils. It is surprising that the intellectual titans of the CWO who pride themselves on their ability to interpret history on behalf of us lesser mortals have never noticed that on every occasion so far that workers' councils have appeared they have been suppressed by the capitalist state. This should surely make clear just how vital it is for the working class to unite consciously and politically to take the state out of the hands of the capitalist class; an action which entails stripping their parliamentary representatives of political legitimacy. You have obviously encountered a great deal of difficulty in understanding this, even though you yourselves inadvertently come close to the truth of the matter when you say that: "*parliament is the fig leaf covering the naked dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.*" Though the analogy is a bad one this statement alone in an otherwise pitifully confused tirade stands out like a diamond ring in a cowpat.

The bourgeoisie are the ruling class by virtue of their control of the state. This control is not direct, but through the medium of political hirelings who, in parliamentary 'democracies', are elected to office by the working class, thereby effectively ruling on behalf of the capitalist class with working class consent. They thus appear as the elected representatives of the whole of society and are seen as having the legitimate right to make laws and enforce them with the coercive machinery of the state. If a revolutionary movement, whether majority or minority, attempted to overthrow the state by force they could and would be portrayed as enemies of society as a whole, the full power of the state would be used against them with 'defence of democracy' providing the justification for doing so and serving to rally the support of non-revolutionaries who, even if they are a minority, could still number many millions. This is essentially what happened to the Spartacus Rising, in which, incidentally, a founder member of the Socialist Party was killed.

It is absurd to suggest that a mass movement of workers who have committed themselves to the task of establishing socialism - the most revolutionary act history has ever known - would be unwilling or unable to organise the relatively safe and simple procedure of replacing capitalism's political representatives with their own, thus breaking the link between the capitalist class and the state, and making clear to the non-socialist minority that socialism is the democratically expressed desire of the majority and that capitalism can no longer claim any legitimate right to exist. It is difficult to understand how anyone, even you lot, could equate socialist candidates, who stand solely for the abolition of private property, with bourgeois ones who seek to defend it.

Once the state is taken out of their hands it is conceivable that the bourgeoisie could still attempt some sort of counter-revolutionary action but in the circumstances outlined above the difficulties would be immense: on what basis could they organise support? 'defence of democracy' would be out of the question and 'defence of wage slavery' would, we suspect, prove somewhat unpopular. Even if we assume that they could somehow assemble an armed force how could this be kept equipped, supplied and mobile when revolutionary workers organised on the economic front are in control of the means of production, distribution and communication? Any attempt at counter-revolution would be immediately isolated and swiftly dealt with.

It is with typical irony that you use a quote from Marx and Engels to attack the Socialist Party for holding political positions identical to Marx and Engels' own.

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

As was made clear by quoting directly from *The German Ideology*, the 'ruling ideas' are: "nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one." Marx and Engels give us an example of what they are talking about here when they point out that: "in an age and in a country where royal power, aristocracy and the bourgeoisie are contending for mastery and where, therefore mastery is shared, the doctrine of the separation of powers proves to be the dominant idea and is expressed as an 'eternal law'". Thus: in an age or country where different factions of the

bourgeoisie compete for power and can only attain power with working class support, and maintain it with working class consent and acquiescence, the ruling ideas are the doctrines of pluralism and political legitimacy, reflected in the sophistries of political 'scientists' and finding their legal expression in the constitutions of the parliamentary 'democracies'. Hence the 'ruling ideas' are, quite literally, the ruling ideas, the constitutional framework, not simply capitalist propaganda, and it is in this sense that the working class are subject to them.

Being subject to the ruling ideas, therefore, does not prevent a majority of the working class from becoming conscious of the need for revolutionary change, and this consciousness is derived

CWO Reply

Dear IS

You would look a lot more credible if you actually addressed the points we made rather than merely chanting your Socialist Party Koran. The examples you cite don't affect our argument one way or another. All they add are even more confusions (e.g. you call on socialists to join trades unions which today are totally reactionary agents of the capitalist state (see the article in our last issue). We don't say that you do not have views about the social transformation of capitalism. We credit you with understanding that socialism can come about only through the abolition of the economic laws of capitalism. This is something that separates you from the leftists. But that is not the issue. The issue is about how the working class obtains power. You ducked both of the simple questions to which we demanded unequivocal answers (in the correspondence in *Workers Voice* 75) so we repeat them

We are entitled to demand consistency in your arguments, and pose two simple questions to which we require unequivocal answers:-

- 1) Does the SP believe it is necessary to win a socialist majority within the bourgeois parliament in order to establish socialism? Yes or No?***
- 2) Does the SP believe that socialism can be established by any route other than through a parliamentary majority of SP candidates?***

If the answer to the first question is NO we request a statement saying that your previous position which you supported in the debates you conducted with us has been abandoned. We would also welcome some explanation of the new position.

These questions are not, as you are trying to imply, based on erroneous assumptions about your politics. Not only did we cite your texts (*From Capitalism to Socialism* p.44, *The Socialist Party and the War* p.73, *Questions of the Day* p.25) but we also stated that these contradictions were apparent in last year's Chiswick and Sheffield meetings. In the Chiswick meeting so inadequate and confused were your comrades in defending this essential position that they lapsed into silence until your chair asked "is no-one going to defend the SP?". Your comrades' response was to change the issue from discussing your views on the parliamentary road to power to a debate about violence and the Russian Revolution. A wise debating strategy but hardly a road to socialist clarity. In the Sheffield meeting we seemed to be more amongst "the modernisers" of the SP who were more sympathetic to the idea that the working class road to power might not after all be through winning a parliamentary majority first. For them parliamentarism was more a means of propaganda to spread the word. They seemed to actually agree with us that the capitalist state would have to be overthrown. So what is it to be? Is winning a parliamentary majority an essential step to socialism (which is what we think you stand for) or is it (as it is for the Trotskyists) a tactical arena to be used or not as need arises?

Your latest letter reveals some further conceptual confusions. When you state that

primarily from critical reflection on the material world, not from the ideas of a self-styled political elite. This does not preclude active intervention on the part of revolutionaries to aid the development of socialist ideas, but that does not give those minorities the authority, moral, intellectual or otherwise, to set themselves up as the leadership of the working class. The emancipation of the proletariat *must* be the work of the proletariat themselves; how could it be otherwise? They who would be free must strike the blow.

Yours for the Revolution,

IS

(a member of the Socialist Party - see WV75)

The bourgeoisie are the ruling class by virtue of their control of the state. This control is not direct, but through the medium of political hirelings who, in parliamentary 'democracies' (sic - we don't know why you put the quotation marks around them since you believe they are democratic), are elected to office by the working class, thereby effectively ruling on behalf of the capitalist class with working class consent.

This seems to equate the state with parliament or the government. But they are not the state. The state is the whole apparatus of repression which waits behind the parliamentary curtain. Intuitively you know this because you argue that anyone attempting to overthrow parliament would then meet "the full power of the state". The question that we are really debating is "how does the proletariat break the capitalist state so that it can create its own democracy (the dictatorship of the proletariat) which would be fundamentally different from that of capitalism?"

Your idea is that it can only be done through the very procedures that capitalism has adopted to ensure its continuing class rule. In the present period it must be obvious even to incurable parliamentary fundamentalists that this is a perfect instrument of class rule. At a time when the majority of the proletariat have been victims of declining living standards and unemployment on a colossal global scale why is it that, almost everywhere, even more draconian anti-working class governments get elected? Whilst the old SP mantra "because they aren't yet ready for socialism" might work for you, we seek a more materialist analysis. The present response of the working class in most advanced capitalist countries is to shun parliamentary elections (only 38% of the registered US electors voted in last November's elections) and this is because of their experience that it can bring them no benefits. This is not entirely healthy even from our point of view since it also shows a profound cynicism and defeatism about politics in general - a result which the ruling class are quite happy with so long as the workers don't seek other solutions.

And in this situation you want to drive the workers back into focussing on the capitalist parliament as the chief lever of political change. The fact is that under capitalism only a capitalist programme will get a hearing and the working class can only choose between exploiters. Whilst you say (not entirely correctly) that there are no examples of workers councils overthrowing the bourgeois state you have omitted to notice that the same can be said of the working class' use of parliament. Indeed all the old Social Democratic Parties which began, like the SP in seeking genuine power through parliament only achieved that power by gradually abandoning the socialist programme to become the defenders of the capitalist system. The other danger that faces your strategy is if you ever did get elected (a somewhat utopian but not entirely impossible project). If you did have a number of MPs they would be required to take the loyal oath. What do you do then? Indulge in a spot of parliamentary compromise or a socialist gesture which would ensure that you would not be elected again? If workers elect you they will expect you to do something here and now about unemployment and the other evils of capitalism. But you know already that such problems have no solution under the capitalist system you would be operating. These dilemmas will be insoluble.

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.

continued from opposite page

To escape from the deadend of your own politics and the issue of consciousness the SP pose a false dichotomy. Your comrades in Chiswick did something similar and you have repeated it in your letter. Your last paragraph is the key one. Here you state that

consciousness is derived from critical reflection on the material world, not from the ideas of a self-styled elite.

We agree. But who carries out this "critical reflection"? It is the revolutionary elements of the working class. Where are they to be found? In the organisations of revolutionary minorities. Are they elites? No, they are not a new ruling class in embryo. Are they a vanguard? Yes, in the sense that they are already arguing for the communist programme wherever they work and live. Your basic principles state that you are the only socialist organisation (a more elitist statement we cannot think of). We, and the other revolutionary minorities, see ourselves as precursors of a still greater body which the working class itself will have to form as part of the process of its coming to consciousness. And it is over this question of process where we have no dialogue. For you the working class surrounded as it is by all the panoply of capitalism will vote capitalism down before creating a new set of socialist organisations. For us this is utopian and absurd.

The precise shape of how the proletariat will make the revolution in the future is a complex one and we can make only a tentative suggestion

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!

about the broad lines of its development. The history of the working class offers us only negative guidelines, nevertheless they have to be considered.

Broadly speaking we do not see the proletariat of today creating large socialist parties as it did in the past. It will create an international proletarian party but the number of workers adhering to this will be a small percentage of the working class. The working class revolution is likely to arise out of some severe internal crisis to the capitalist system (not excluding war) which would weaken and divide the ruling class. The workers would take advantage of this to fight against the existing system and in the process would have to create class-wide bodies which would unite the mass movement (which given the legacy of capitalist rule is still likely to involve a minority of the working class). In these class-wide bodies the communists would be active seeking to do two things. One is to push for the further extension of these organs of representation, drawing in wider and wider layers. The second is to fight for the communist programme. At the stage the workers impulse will be to form alternative organisations. these will begin as organs of struggle because, as Trotsky wrote "they can no longer go on living in the old way". Gradually they would have to assume more and more the shape of an alternative to existing capitalist power structures. But they would still have to adopt a socialist programme. Those capitalist elements who were still not demoralised would obviously try to impose some new version of a "socialist" programme

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 £2.00. Back issues are available. ICR13 is the current issue. It contains articles on:

The Nature of the Working Class today(2)
Aerospace:The Final Frontier?
The Material Base of Imperialist 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**)

Pamphlets

Socialism or Barbarism

An introduction to the Politics of the CWO. £2

South Africa - The Last 15 Years

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

CWO Pamphlet No. 1

Economic Foundations of Capitalist Decadence £1

CWO Pamphlet No. 2

Russia 1917 £2

which would be likely to take a state capitalist direction. The socialists would have to fight against this and the outcome of this struggle would settle the fate of the revolution. Only after the establishment of a new workers' power structure would the workers be firmly on the road to dismantling capitalism (whatever interim steps had been taken as the struggle unfolded). The question of violence cannot be ducked. It is unlikely that the bourgeoisie will give up without a fight although this is not impossible. Describing the October Revolution the Menshevik Sukhanov wrote that there was not a single death as the Provisional Government was overthrown. The reason for this was that the vast mass of the working class (80% in the August Soviet elections) were already behind the Bolsheviks whilst the ruling class was divided and indecisive. History is unlikely to be so kind to the working class a second time and we do not face a bourgeoisie which has never seen working class self-organisation before.

The problem for the SP is that you accept the lies that the bourgeoisie have peddled about the October Revolution. This, for all its mistakes (like the Bolsheviks and Left SRs setting up the Council of People's Commissars, a body which was only indirectly responsible to the Congress of Soviets and which paved the way for Party rather than class rule), was an occasion when the working class did successfully overthrow the capitalist state. The fact that they did not go on to establish socialism is more to do with the isolation of the Russian workers. The world revolution did not spread. The subsequent

Meetings

Public Meeting
Leeds
Marxism and
Working Class Revolution
Swarthmore Centre,
Woodhouse Square
7.45
All Welcome

Bureau Pamphlets in French

Approche a la question du Parti

Le bordiguisme et la gauche italienne

La conscience de classe dans la perspective marxiste

Les origines du trotskysme

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

New Pamphlet in Farsi

The Origins of Trotskyism £1.50

Subscription rates

Subscription to **WORKERS' VOICE** (6 copies): £3.00 in UK and Eire, £5.00 elsewhere.

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

Supporter's subscription (entitling you to leaflets and news from our internal publications): **£10**

Cheques should be made payable to "CWO Publications"

Back issues of most publications are available. Please send local currency OR if writing from abroad **INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS** (within the sterling area postal orders are acceptable). We regret we cannot cash ordinary cheques as the international banking system takes \$9 out of the first \$10 for doing this).

imperialist war on Soviet Power cost the lives of 3 million of the most class conscious proletarians (to which we could add a further 5 millions who perished of influenza and other diseases as a result of war) and as a result, although the Bolsheviks formally won the war, soviet power was one of its victims. As Rosa Luxemburg (as well as Lenin, Bukharin and Trotsky) all said

The problem could only be posed in Russia; it could not be solved in Russia.

The problem for you is that you refuse to even consider this rich episode. It directly contrasts with the attempt that you quote of Liebknecht et al. to carry out an unprepared coup in the Spartakist Rising of January 1919. The Spartakist Rising was a caricature of the October Revolution - a fact recognised at the time by Rosa Luxemburg. Nothing could be further from how we see the development of the proletarian revolution. The important issue is to understand that until we have wrested power away from the bourgeois state we will not have created the conditions under which a mass socialist consciousness can develop. In the final analysis it is only through the mass action of the working class that a new mode of production and ultimately a communist consciousness can come about. The **first** blows, however, will be made by the class conscious minority (by which we mean more than just the political groups) not by the working class as a whole.

Communist greetings

AD for the CWO

C.W.O. Public Meeting, Sheffield

Animal Rights or Human Liberation?

We are publishing here the introduction to a public meeting we held on the animal rights issue alongside one of the various leaflets we have given out at protests against the Criminal Justice Act. The one here was produced by Scottish comrades of the CWO for a demonstration which coincided with the attempts to prevent the extension of the M77.

It would be impossible to understand even minimally what the CWO says about single issue politics without understanding the basic framework we use.

The CWO is an internationalist and revolutionary Marxist organisation. To many people used to years of hearing counter-revolutionaries like Trotskyists using similar formulations such labels need deeper explanation.

Lets begin with the Marxist bit. Marxism is the historically discovered, scientific method, of the working class. Marxist theory explains why the working class is the revolutionary subject. It is the class which alone is not only oppressed by capitalism but more fundamentally is exploited. As we are dealing with the animal issue here we thought we would also begin by looking at what Marx had to say on the subject. According to Marx what differentiates human beings from animals is that we have the ability to transform the natural world around us. However such transformation has historically ceased to be liberating since it has become distorted by exploitation. Exploitation is not a moral concept. The working class is exploited because it produces value over and above the value of reproduction of its own labour power. The products of the worker are alienated from her/him by those who own the means of production. This alienation is critical to the denaturing of the human as a species-being. Marx put it better in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* in 1844

The animal is immediately at one with its life activity. It is not distinct from that activity; it is that activity...Man makes his life activity itself an object of his will and his consciousness.He has conscious life activity...Conscious life activity directly distinguishes man from animal life activity....Animals produce only according to the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man is capable of producing according to the standards of every species and of applying to each object its inherent standard: hence man also produces in accordance with the laws of beauty.

It is therefore in the fashioning of the objective that man really proves himself to be a species-being...Through it nature appears as his work and his reality... The object of labour therefore appears as the objectification of the species-life of man ... In tearing away the object of his production from man, estranged labour therefore tears away from him his species-life, his true species-objectivity, and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his organic body, nature, is taken from him.

(In *Early Writings* Pelican Marx Library pp. 328-9)

In other words because the product of human labour is alienated from the labourer exploitation denatures humanity. Not only does exploitation rob the labourer of the control and use of her/his product but it also robs the labourer of much that makes her/him human.

However the important point about exploitation under the capitalist system is that it is systematically carried out on the backs of an unpropertied class of labourers who collectively face capitalism. They, and they alone represent the only real possible opposition to capitalism

because they alone produce its wealth and it is only through their collective acquiescence that any capital accumulation can take place. Our hope of revolution isn't based on the fact that a future moneyless, stateless, violence-free society of freely associated human beings working in harmony to ensure that all the people of the planet enjoy the fruits of our collective labours is a set of fine ideas (and I'm sure that you'll agree that this society would be a fine idea!). No, the Marxist insistence is that we must work in the real movement going on inside capitalism i.e. that only that class which has absolutely no stake in present society, the working class can make the revolution.

This brings us to the revolutionary bit. Although the working class is always an exploited class it is not at every moment of its history that it is revolutionary or even potentially revolutionary. The class struggle is not synonymous with the Victorian idea of progress - it experiences all the vicissitudes of history i.e. that humanity's progress is sometimes thrown back centuries. At each phase in the class struggle Marx, in the *Communist Manifesto*, alluded to either the overthrow of the existing order or the common ruin of the contending classes.

Why is the working class, that historically determined adversary of capitalism, not always revolutionary? Marxism has an explanation for this too. In every epoch of history the ruling ideas are those of the class which controls the means of production because these means of production also includes the media, the means of reproduction of ideas. Working class consciousness although materially based faces enormous obstacles on its road to self-awareness. Not only has it opposition from the capitalist media but also the problem of maintaining the lessons it has learned in one experience into another. The working class has therefore always created vanguards (i.e. organisations of those workers who were more aware of the future tasks of the class as a whole). However vanguards can only lead the way - they do not make the revolutionary movement. That, as Marx said, is the task of the working class itself. The selection of vanguards has not been a static phenomenon either. The whole history of the revolutionary workers movement has been a constant selection and rejection of false paths towards a proletarian mode of production.

Social Democracy once promised to organise the whole of the working class into such a huge body that it would irresistibly take over the capitalist state and legislate socialism. but in its fixation with parliamentary methods it began to go over to the capitalists a fact that was fully confirmed by the massive support Social Democracy gave to imperialism in World War One. It was left to the revolutionaries inside Social Democracy to go on to found a truly revolutionary International in 1919. However as the workers only seized power in Russia this International gradually reduced its revolutionary vision to the defence of the USSR. A fact confirmed by the victory of Stalinism by the late 1920s. Our ancestors (the Internationalist Communist Left) at this point left the Communist International to conduct an open struggle for a revival of the revolutionary policies of 1917-21. In this we might have expected help from the Trotskyists who were expelled from the Comintern at the same time. But Trotskyism always tried to immediately forge a mass base in circumstances in which this was not possible. As a result Trotsky himself abandoned the independent programme of the working class and supported the struggle of the bourgeois Spanish Republic in the lead up to the Second World War. Even anarchism which had once been a genuine workers movement became compromised by participation in government in Spain and never recovered its proletarian base. Anarchist practice today has no criticism of working in capitalist bodies like the trades

unions. None of these movements represent anything but obstacles to the working class on its path to liberation today.

On top of this capital has also transformed or created organisms which were intended to prevent the emergence of an opposition which was really revolutionary. Labourism in Britain formed by the trades unions is the classic example here, but this has been aided and abetted by other more historically limited movements like anti-fascism which had its origins in the imperialist mobilisation for World War Two. By opposing fascism the anti-fascists became the most ardent defenders of democracy(although it was originally also linked to the imperialist ambitions of Stalinism). But there have been

many others which have been dreamed up which have a progressive tag but which are actually designed to fragment working class opposition - the womens movement and multiculturalism or anti-racism have been two of these. On the basis of oppressions which capitalism plays on and uses, these movements seek to get workers to identify with gender and race rather than with each other as workers so that the common issue of their collective exploitation is obscured.

In the present phase though all talk of class against class has been smothered under the welter of lies that the working class has ceased to exist or that communism was Stalinism and, of course, we don't want that. Now that the working class has "ceased to exist" the

continued on page 3

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT! WHO ARE THE REAL CRIMINALS? THE RULING CLASS, THEIR PARTIES AND THEIR UNIONS!

The most repressive item of peacetime legislation since the anti-combination laws of the 19th century - the Criminal Justice Act - is now law. At the flick of a switch this peaceful demonstration can be made illegal and subject to the full force and brunt of the State. A wholesale criminalisation of wide areas of working class activity is now under way as well as those more publicised diversions of various marginalised elements such as travellers and squatters. The intention is to crack down on almost every activity unsanctioned by the State.

Why must the ruling class attempt to control every inch of social space? Any slight interruption to the process of capital accumulation through the daily exploitation of millions of workers, leaves them vulnreable in the remorseless war of global competition.

Is this a measure of a class confident of its position in society? Despite an appearance of political and economic ascendancy: No! Only a profound retreat in the class struggle since the defeat of the miners, ten years ago, together with a radical economic restructuration, aided and abetted by the unions, has created sufficient space for them to pile this extra shit onto the statute books.

AN ACT AIMED AT THE WORKING CLASS

Government propaganda tries to sell us the idea that the purpose of the Act is to counter the activities of 'anti-social' groups, ravers, anti-hunt saboteurs and the like. But they well know these marginal elements are only a minor irritant and pose no serious threat to the system. So what is the ultimate objective of this legislation? The public targetting of New Age travellers and the like merely serves to disguise a more generalised attack on the working class as a whole, as the provisions of the new law can and will be used to prohibit evrything from demonstrations to pickets.

Furthermore, with closer legal ie political control, the State can exercise a greater degree of selectivity for its own propaganda purposes. For example, when the anti-veal brigade could no longer have its bleeding liberal conscience caged within a confined social space, this was presented as 'the acceptable face of protest'. Social movements of this type are thence 'tele-guided'. Protest is co-opted by the State in order to reinforce the apathy of the masses.

HM LOYAL OPPOSITION

The campaign against the Act has been led by an amalgam of anarchists and Trotskyists. Unlike the latter, we are neither surprised nor dismayed that the Labour Party, in effect, despite its mouthings, supports this Act. What else can be expected of a gang of reactionaries who are trying to outdo the Tories as the 'real' bastions of capitalist law and order? We are even less surprised that the trade unions can issue little more than tepid 'criticism'. The latter are an indispensable cog in the political machine of capital. With workers once again restive, the unions are busily engaged in keeping all potential or actual struggles - whether of teachers, nurses, postal or bank workers - in separate and isolated compartments. This is the very recipe of demoralisation and defeat. These orgnisations ceased to be proletarian a long time ago and are as much defenders of HM realm as the most Neanderthal Tory.

REAL SOLIDARITY ACTION

Expect nothing but false friendship from the 'labour movement' and its 57 varieties of leftist supporters and apologists selling revolutionary rhetoric. Like the M77, their politics and tactics are the 'road to nowhere'. We must take our struggles outside of and against all political frameworks imposed by capital. By bursting out of the regime of the school factory to join the protest, the 200 youths from the working class ghettoes of Nitshill/Corkerhill began to show what was possible. "Capitalism is suffocating us!" they are saying. "No more shit!" At this point 26 Wimpey security guards walked off the site in immediate sympathy. Workers reduced to a status of low-paid docile hirelings were saying "Enough is enough! You can push us no further!"

DOWN WITH DEMOCRACY AND 'HUMAN RIGHTS'!

The existing campaign against the Act merely serves to re-inforce its underlying terms. From the radical bourgeois liberals of "Liberty" obsessed with the stupid dogma of 'human rights', to the mythical sentimental nonsense about "Freeborn Englishmen", through to the Trotskyist infatuation with the 'defence of democracy', there exists a common and erroneous thread. All these tendencies share a false assumption that there is a priceless commodity called 'Democracy' which is somehow suspended immaculately and immutably above the squalid commerce of realpolitiik.

Moreover they believe that workers have an interest in defending this holy icon against the ravages of 'authoritarian' capitalism (theirs being a much 'nicer', more 'user-friendly' version). Democracy, however, is not some abstract notion of rights and freedoms which somehow remains aloof from the State, but is rather: **the material form of class domination**. The extent to which workers enjoy 'rights' and 'freedoms' is a function of the balance of class forces in capitalist society and has nothing to do with the hallowed principles of "Democracy".

WORKERS, FRIENDS, STUDENTS, YOUTH! ONLY A UNITED CLASS STRUGGLE CAN PREVENT CAPITAL FROM ENCROACHING ANY FURTHER ON OUR LIVING SPACE

Youth! For those of you who can't find dead-end jobs at slave-labour rates, capitalism offers you unemployment and homelessness. The Green movement is as bad for your political health as the electoralism of Militant. Both will consume your energies in shoring up a rotting system. Neither address the real problems of our class.

Students! Capitalism offers you roses and feeds you shit. For those of you who don't 'make it', yours will be the 'lifestyle' of lumpenisation. Virtually the entire service sector would collapse without your labour. Use the only real weapon at your disposal and link your demands to those of the class struggle. Friends! Capitalism denies, stunts and thwarts ALL our needs. It can neither satisfy our need to travel quickly and safely NOR our need to breathe clean, unpolluted air. Naive anarchist utopias motivated by single issue reformism, such as the "Pollock Free State", given the present balance of class forces, can be bulldozed into political and physical oblivion as and when the State thinks opportune. **THERE CAN BE NO AUTONOMOUS EXPRESSION OF THE POLITICAL NEEDS OF OUR CLASS WITHOUT THE ORGANISATION OF ITS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY.**

Workers! Opposition to this motorway, defeat of this Act, cannot be undertaken separately from a defensive struggle against falling wages, unemployment or increased rates of exploitation. The pre-condition of any minimal pushing back of the offensive of the enemy class in the present period, is the taking of our struggles out of the union straitjacket, their mutual interlinking and their generalisation to include ever broader sectors of the class.

WORKERS! THE BATTLE CRY RINGS AS TRUE TODAY BUT TWICE AS URGENTLY AS AT THE TIME OF MARX: YOU HAVE A WORLD TO WIN! AND ON THE LONG AND DIFFICULT ROAD TO THE CONQUEST OF THAT WORLD YOU WILL BE TRAMPLING INTO THE MUD A PIDDLING LITTLE ACT CIRCA1995!

IT'S YOUR TURN TO SPEAK, YOUR TURN TO ACT!