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## Bosnia

# Behind the "Peacemaking" lie the Manoeuvres of the Great Powers

The use of NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb targets and the subsequent hostage-taking of UN personnel by the Bosnian Serbs is only the latest twist in the complicated saga which has engulfed ex-Yugoslavia since 1990.

### The Origins of the Crisis

Let's first recall how the collapse of Tito's state capitalist creation, the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRJ), came about. The initial impetus came from the world capitalist economic crisis. Yugoslavia, unlike the rest of Eastern Europe was integrated into the world market dominated by the United States. But at the start of the 1970s the post-war boom of the world capitalist economy began to give way to economic crisis. It was most clearly symbolised by the double devaluation of the dollar (1971 and 1973) the bedrock international unit of exchange since 1945. The oil crisis of 1973-4 which followed severely hit those areas which were dependent on outside fossil fuels. Yugoslavia was one of these. Inflation and indebtedness now stalked the world economy and hit those economies particularly dependent on overseas markets and once again this included Yugoslavia.

could find any conceivable interest in supporting the Kosovans. Military suppression was thus enough to keep Kosovo Serbian.

Croatia was a different matter. Supported by Austria and the Kohl Government in what was then the German Federal Republic (i.e. West Germany) the Croats under an ex-Communist Party of Yugoslavia general, Tudjman, began to demand a greater share of the division of Yugoslavia's wealth. Serbs in Croatia were attacked, lost their rights as citizens and their jobs. When this provoked an equally nationalist response from the Serbs who elected an ex-Communist Party of Yugoslavia bureaucrat, Milosevic on a rabidly nationalist platform the Croats, with German backing, seceded from the federation.

However the majority of the armed forces' leaders and the vast bulk of the heavy weapons were in Serbian hands. Equally the Serbs could also count on allies amongst the Great Powers. most notably they had the support of the two largest military powers in the USA and Russia. For the Russians the issue was simple. They share an alphabet, a religion (Orthodoxy) and Slav ancestry with the Serbs and Serbia has been seen as a Russian protectorate since the early nineteenth century. For the USA the reasons for supporting Serbia were more complex. At the time Bush was President and was determined that the USA should enjoy the spoils of its victory in the Cold War. This demanded that there was a "New World Order" (with the emphasis on the last word). Where direct US interests were affected such as the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, US troops directly intervened. Where that interest was not so directly involved the policy was to support the status quo as much as possible. Thus Serbia had the support not only of the USA but also of Britain, France and Russia. With this backing and the fact that the Croats started the fighting the Serbs were able to unleash a war of frightening devastation which, after it spread to Bosnia, killed almost a quarter of a million people, the vast majority non-combatants. It was a demonstration of how a minority of any local nationalist bourgeoisie can create carnage amongst a people which had lived peaceably cheek by jowl for decades and who were reluctant to shatter that peace. "Ethnic cleansing" as the press sanitised the new genocide has almost been forgotten by the international media but its

effects still haunt ex-Yugoslavia.

The impact of a bourgeois minority can be seen in the way the war between Croatia and Serbia spilled over into Bosnia. Here the population was the most "religiously" mixed in Yugoslavia. We say this because the religions are the only coherent labels that the bourgeoisies of each group have been able to use as a means to separate the working class. Most people in Yugoslavia belonged only nominally to a religious group. The Bosnian Muslims are in fact only the descendants of those Serbo-Croats who embraced Islam under Turkish rule to get out of the oppression of being Christian feudal serfs. As a historical consequence of this most of the "Muslims" live in the towns surrounded by rural Serbs. The Bosnian nationalist group around Itzabegovic thought that they could take advantage of the Serb-Croat war in Krajina to declare their own secession from Yugoslavia. They assumed that "the international community" would come to their aid too. This only unleashed an even more bloody chapter of the war as the Serbs quickly surrounded the "Muslim" communities and raped and murdered their way to greater control of territory. Such atrocities actually benefitted the Itzabegovic faction since it enabled them to use Islamism as a means to forge a Bosnian nationalism. Those Croatian and Serbian Bosnians who fought alongside the Islamists soon found themselves sidelined.

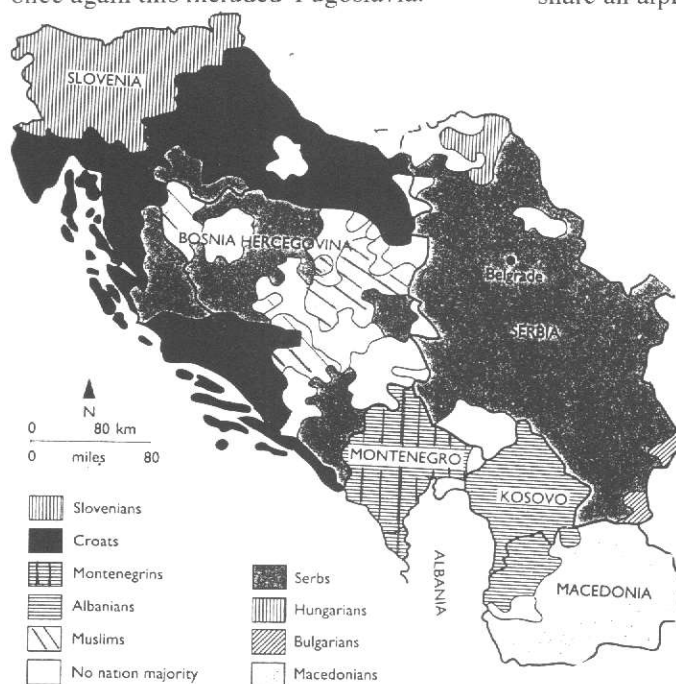
Meanwhile what had happened to the German plans? The German bourgeoisie thought that reunification was the first step towards a reassertion of German dominance of Europe. Already Germany had (in 1987) passed the USA as a trading nation) and the greater Germany created by the reunification process was supposed to be the next step. However the cost of reunification actually (as we, and the more perspicacious of the bourgeois commentators, had predicted) intensified the economic crisis in Germany itself. The Germans no longer were in a position to make the running in ex-Yugoslavia although they continued to support Croatia. The

other great change came in US foreign policy. This was largely due to a new perception that Yeltsin in Russia was not in a position to curb a new Russian nationalism or to control the Serbs. As the Russians are key players in ex-Yugoslavia the US thought that it could rely on Moscow to do the policing. However Georgia (see *Workers Voice* 69), Chechnya and the increasing Russian domination over the Ukraine and Byelorussia have shown the US that Russian imperial ambitions remain despite the collapse of both the USSR and its economy. Gradually the slogan in the US has become more and more "America First" and the Republicans have pushed the Clinton clique into a more pro-Bosnian position. As *The Guardian* wrote over a year ago this put the US on Germany's side against Britain, France and Russia.

*...although the international community is trying to paper over its differences on Bosnia, it is also clear that Britain and France, in an alignment inconceivable in the days of the Cold War, stand alongside Russia on the Bosnian crisis in opposition to the US. (20.5.94)*

Although there has been much hesitation in foreign policy positions amongst the leading powers since the old certainties of the Cold War have ceased to apply this split over Bosnia has hardened over the last year. The use of NATO air strikes was the result of US pressure. The British and French were marginalised over this decision (over which the French Government, of Chirac and Juppé, still claims it was not consulted). The US did the striking and the UN troops that were the victims were British, French, Russian and another 18 different nationalities. No wonder the *Financial Times* could summarise the whole incident in an article "United front splinters". It concluded that

*Bosnian policy is being renationalised, as each of the outside powers involved in the conflict thinks first about the safety of its own soldiers and then its own interests.*



Long before 1990 the economic problems provoked by the crisis caused regional strains in Tito's federal edifice. Croatia (along with Slovenia) had long been straining for a better deal from the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav government in Belgrade. Nationalist-inspired clashes also broke out between the increasingly oppressed Albanian minority in the Serb-ruled region of Kosovo in 1988. Kosovo was only held in the federation because no outside power (apart from the equally crisis-ridden Albanian state)

backing and the fact that the Croats started the fighting the Serbs were able to unleash a war of frightening devastation which, after it spread to Bosnia, killed almost a quarter of a million people, the vast majority non-combatants. It was a demonstration of how a minority of any local nationalist bourgeoisie can create carnage amongst a people which had lived peaceably cheek by jowl for decades and who were reluctant to shatter that peace. "Ethnic cleansing" as the press sanitised the new genocide has almost been forgotten by the international media but its

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This too is a mystification. The Bosnian operation has always been "nationalised" or dominated by national interests. That's why the troops are there. The fig-leaf that they are there to prevent ethnic cleansing or ensure humanitarian relief is a fiction (why are they not in East Timor, for example preventing the Indonesian genocide of the local population there?). Troops are sent where strategic or economic considerations dictate. The fact that the British and French use the UN for their cover and the US uses NATO as theirs illustrates only the depth of the divisions



## Postal Workers Strikes

# Fighting the State and the Unions

Although the present period of class quiet is one of the worst this century class struggle still continues on a daily basis. Even nurses and midwives, after decades of "professionalism" have voted for more combative strategies in the face of the Government's attempts to divide them by making a derisory pay offer plus "local negotiated rates". They know this is the road back to ever lower wages. They have been joined by school and bank workers as well as other health workers.

However the bosses can always count on the trades unions to help them out of difficulty. Created to unite working class resistance to capitalist attacks today they more and more act as a shadow of the management in the workplace. The recent strikes by postal workers in Newcastle and Scotland show how unions will try at every stage of a strike to limit its effects and bring it to an early end. Any challenge to social peace, even on the level of a strike, works against the interests of the bosses who need a subdued workforce as a precondition for increased exploitation (which at present is the bosses only strategy to raise profitability in the hope of managing the economic crisis).

The strikes in both areas came as a response to attacks by Royal Mail on working conditions with threatened cuts in jobs. In Scotland workers also came out to defend the May Day bank holiday. Previously this has been hi-jacked by the Labour Party and the unions to celebrate their state capitalist agenda but this year the entire capitalist class united to hi-jack it in the name of celebrating the imperialist slaughter of World War Two (see article on page 5 of this issue).

The State, with its pliant media, found it easy to keep news coverage of the strikes in both areas to a minimum. When local bulletins did cover the strikes the usual sad figures of strike "victims" were trotted out to an accompaniment of condemnations about the strikers' "selfishness".

### The Union's Fight ... Against the Workers

Strikers were probably not too surprised to hear their own union (the Union of Communication Workers or UCW) representatives condemn the possibility of a lengthy strike which would harm Royal Mail and make customers turn to competitors instead. And true to form the Union did everything it could to sabotage the strikes in both areas. Its main tactic was to keep strikers isolated from other UCW members wherever

*continued from front page*

## Bosnian Manoeuvres

between the Great Powers rather than their unity to deal with the problem. In an age of imperialism no leading power can afford to opt out of this race for influence even if they are not immediately sure what the long-term gains are. Thus the British and French are now colluding on Bosnia (*Le Monde*, the leading French newspaper called Chirac and Major "brothers in arms" in its June 9th issue. The French have sent an aircraft carrier, the *Foch* to the Adriatic and the British have committed 10,000 troops to go to Bosnia in stages (thus tripling the British presence). More troops gives them the option of covering a pull-out or responding to Serb attacks. In addition a new Anglo-French rapid-reaction force is being formed. Hitherto the British were largely dependent on US logistical support for such a force and it remains to be seen how the new force will function. As to Bosnia, the UN

there was a danger of solidarity action emerging. In Newcastle sorting and distribution workers were kept at work during the strike and the UCW instructed its members in other areas to handle strike mail. Any workers who threatened to strike were told that they could not do so without a ballot as it was illegal! The next time anyone says the law on strike ballots is "anti-union" remind them that the unions are working hand in glove with the state to preserve capitalist social peace. Naturally the delay in waiting for a ballot on action only dissipates workers' anger and ballots also remove one of the classical strengths of the working class - its capacity for collective discussion and action. By reducing us to individuals the capitalists hope that the fear factor will make workers agree to anything.

It was the later threat of unofficial solidarity action that did frighten the unions ... into speeding up negotiations. Although the strikers in Newcastle won some concessions the management felt confident enough to refuse to pay overtime after the strike to clear the backlog of mail (so much for their concern for the poor customer!).

In Scotland the UCW at first refused to support the strike but when it was clear that the workers intended to go ahead anyway without union control they helped management to victimise the organisers. However this was a little too blatant for the workers and their angry response forced the union leaders to suddenly change their minds and they subsequently backed down. However they had achieved their objective of containing the dispute to one locality (even if it was a big area). When postal workers all over their country are taking wildcat action the UCW has played its part for the bosses by keeping every section apart and thus weakened and divided the movement.

At the same time as the postal workers strike in Newcastle a similar situation also emerged at Parsons engineering in Newcastle. When white collar workers walked out there no-one suggested a solidarity action between the two sets of workers. In fact in a works which have a number of workers in leftist organisations they meekly followed union advice. The extent of the militancy was a half day strike against redundancies and new contracts. So far this action, not surprisingly, has had about as much impact as a strike during the lunch break. In fact it is worse since the workers have lost pay for nothing and thus the strike, like so many one day and half day token efforts by the unions, actually

acts as a factor to demobilise the struggle.

### The Fake Radicalism of the Leftists

The leftists who belong mainly to the Socialist Workers Party are accomplices in the union attacks on the workers. In some places they are the unions since they provide the active leadership at local level. They still identify the Labour Movement as "progressive" and thus seek to control it. It is not for them to undermine the unions or to suggest such radical ideas as elected and recallable strike committees controlled by the whole workforce (or even community). They criticise the unions only in terms of the leadership. They argue that if the SWP led the unions then everything would be alright and we would have a real defence of workers. This is of course rubbish. The whole history of trades unions shows that under the conditions of state monopoly capitalism the unions are no more than the management of the labour force at the national and local level. For the SWP this is no problem since they think that state capitalism is a step towards socialism but real revolutionaries can see that the whole history of capitalism has been to recuperate the unions as instruments to maintain social peace. You need look no further than no-strike promises of the two imperialist wars (1914-18 and 1949-45) to see what the real role of the unions is in defence of the national capital. Today with their multi-million pound investments (largely to pay for the bureaucrats pensions rather than strike pay) and their highly paid officials the unions only touch on workers' lives when there is a struggle to be stopped. The SWP's answer to this is a bit of radical rhetoric. In *Socialist Worker* (May 13th 1995) they called on the UCW to **support all action whether or not it is deemed to break the anti-union laws.**

But this is fake radicalism. The UCW are quite happy carrying out those laws which give it greater control over the membership. Nor are the SWP being naive. They know this perfectly well but in their own struggle for power inside the union they use it as a stick to beat the existing leaders with. The basic premise though is reactionary. They have a deliberate political programme intended to keep workers locked in the union gaol. It is the opposite of direct class activity. This was illustrated in the recent schools action. At a National Union of Teachers meeting in Rotherham, the usual one day strike was being proposed. A CWO member proposed an amendment that all schools form school assemblies to include all workers in the schools (not just teachers) and open them to the public;

and that these assemblies elect a committee to link with other workers both in schools and in other services. This was carried by over a hundred votes against five. The only opposition came from a lone SWP supporter who argued that "as a good trades unionist" he could not support anything which might cut across and undermine NUT actions and that the real campaign should be against the Tories.

What subsequently happened was that the only school to form such an assembly (it still exists) was isolated by union manoeuvrings to ensure that it prevented similar actions in other workplaces. Many of the executive of the Rotherham NUT are members or ex-members of Trotskyist organisations.

This example underlines the difference between the left-wing of capital (SWP, Militant et al) and the communist left. For the former controlling the organisations which prop up this rotten system of exploitation is the way to win power and influence. It has got nothing to with the real needs of struggles and ignores the fact that a socialist society cannot be built by manipulation or by changing leaderships. It can only be built by the activity of the working class itself. This will not happen overnight and it demands a long and patient effort by communists to ensure that lessons learned in one struggle are not lost to the working class by the time of the next one. That is why we have to build a class party which acts as the embodiment of this consciousness and this programme. It is also why the leftist organisations cannot simply be seen as mistaken socialists. Neither programmatically nor operationally do they in any way offer the working class a future. In fact their policies of manipulation and deceit only turn off generations of workers because the leftists are indistinguishable from the capitalist society which has spawned them. Only the autonomous struggle of the working class can marginalise them and consign their reactionary and obstructive politics to the dustbin of history.

### The Way Forward

Today many workers (including those in the UCW in Scotland and Newcastle) have learned the negative lesson that the union offers them nothing. What communists everywhere have to do is to point out the positive needs of workers in struggle that they should first of all not rely on the unions to do anything. This means they must then form committees, assemblies etc. which keep everyone involved and discussing what should happen. If workers retreat to isolation and don't keep in face to face contact it is easier for the state and its press lackeys to create splits in the ranks. Most importantly the lesson that the struggle cannot be won in isolation has to be hammered home. However well organised, however much sympathy there is on offer the only real power we have as a class is a collective one. Active solidarity must involve as many workers as possible across as many sectors as a possible. It is the only way to defeat the divide and rule policies of the capitalist state, policies happily carried out by their union stooges. The more the capitalists succeed the more they will attack our jobs and living standards. It is time to fight back. **RT/AD**

was told only afterwards of the British decision to send more troops and Major underlined more clearly what was at stake at the Welsh Conservative Conference in June.

*In the years before 1914, and again in the 1930s, Britain paid a heavy price for the mistaken view that events hundreds of miles away had no importance for us.*

Outright ar between the leading imperialist powers is, of course not yet on the agenda but speeches like Major's which are incapable of understanding different historical realities are part of the preparation. This is what makes all the more reactionary the antics of the various Trotskyist organisations like the Spartacists who support Serbia (on the grounds they are

more state capitalist than any of the other belligerents so they are the nearest thing to "a degenerated workers' state). If workers were to follow them they would be dragged into support for one capitalist faction against another as happened in the Second World War (see article on VE Day in this issue). No better are organisations like the Workers Revolutionary Party or Workers Power who with their support for such campaigns as "Workers Aid for Bosnia" actually participated in the carnage on the other side! This time it was in defence of the sacred right of the self-determination of nations. In fact both these positions are totally reactionary. There are no working class interests to be found in support for any bourgeois faction. Those anarchists too who urged support for "Workers' Aid for Bosnia" were equally deluded since their political ignorance meant that they only became

drawn into a capitalist cause, as their ancestors did in the Spanish Civil War, just for the sake of being able to say "at least we are doing something". But doing something for the capitalist system is an attack on the independence of the working class. The only way to start "doing something" for the international working class is to fight however we can against the endless ways the capitalist class finds to divide workers against worker. Class solidarity against universal attacks on the conditions of life of the proletariat not kowtowing to the spurious ethnic, national, religious, cultural or whatever divisions chooses to use to drag workers as cannon fodder into their tawdry battles. The real doing something is to participate in the fight of the internationalist communist left for the autonomous struggle of the working class against imperialist war and capitalist exploitation. **Jock**



## South Africa

# A year of multiracial democratic exploitation

It is a year since the ANC achieved its expected victory in bourgeois elections. In that time it has shown itself a dedicated servant of capitalism. As we have always maintained, the ANC is a political force with a capitalist programme seeking the advancement of an emerging black bourgeoisie within a multiracial capitalist society. In no way does it have anything to provide in terms of working class interests. All that it can provide are diversions, recuperations and where possible...bribes.

### Capitalism and Growth

The ANC came to power using as one of its major slogans - "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs". There are currently 4.7 million unemployed, 32.6% of the workforce, over half are under 30. \* Of the nearly half a million people who will enter the labour market this year, it is estimated that less than 4% of them will find official work. Every economy has to grow each year to accommodate such people. In the case of South Africa what is required are growth rates more akin to those of the high performing Asian countries, than those associated with an African economy. Tito Mboweni, Labour Minister, had this to say

*"To lower the present level of unemployment significantly and to accommodate the annual new entrants to the labour market, an economic growth rate of 8-10% is necessary."*\*

Such levels of growth will at best only keep pace with the problem, it will not begin to redress the imbalances of the past or the present. As it is the economy is not equipped for this. In 1994 the rate of growth reached 2.3%, in 1995 3% is expected. \* This is obviously not enough for capital to meet the needs of employing the unemployed black workforce.

Capital investment in South Africa throughout the 80s and early 90s was tiny. Over that period R50 billion (\$14 billion)\* departed the country. In addition the costs of maintaining the system of apartheid added to the burden. Capital stock is now old and run down. As we said in May 1994, foreign investment is required to boost the economy. Precious little has arrived. Such names as Apple, Microsoft, Pepsi, Procter and Gamble, AT&T, Seagram, Morgan Stanley have made moves to invest. Ford and IBM have bought back old subsidiaries. The levels of

investment are, however, small, and are often rather more focussed upon the wider southern african region than specifically upon serious investment in South Africa.

As a government commissioned report stated recently

*"We must not be fooled by the existence of new factories, offices and shopping malls into thinking that the underlying industries are globally competitive. Underneath the attractively painted body panels the engine is rusty and outdated."*

As the Financial Times has stated, investors are looking for higher productivity, a more flexible workforce and better management, before significant levels of investment are likely to turn up at the door. It remains the case that although South Africa has advantages within the continent, other countries worldwide continue to be more profitable avenues for investment. Unit costs of production are around twice that of Mexico, even though lower than countries of the capitalist core.\*

Financial and trade liberalisation are continuing but there is still likely to be an outflow of capital. Christo Liebenberg, Finance Minister, abolished the financial Rand in March. This was an unsuccessful instrument aimed at halting that capital drain. A further \$15-20 billion\* are likely to be invested abroad over the coming period as South African capital pursues its own need for diversification and speculation, in common with the rest of world capital. This means that the sums available for investment are going to be woefully short of what is needed for a wholesale overhaul of South African capital stock.

### Reconstruction and development

As we said one year ago, a massive programme of government spending would have to be undertaken. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was implemented. It could equally be called the recuperation and diversion plan. It was recently doubled to \$1.4 billion - for extra investment in health, education and housing. But figures on a piece of paper are not direct practical and material aid to those suffering. The late Joe Slovo's housing programme is technical rather than involving the actual building of homes. The working masses still await most of the first measures of the programme. Liebenberg, indeed, has carried unspent cash from the RDP over into this year's budget to aid his deficit. The major development of the RDP has been a crash programme by Eskom to lay in electricity supplies to the townships. The housing backlog is currently well over 2 million units, and growing by 200,000 per year.

The RDP as a whole is to be served by a massive programme of privatisation. Stella Sigcau, the government official in charge, performs a neat piece of semantic acrobatics on the topic. She calls it the 'restructuring of state assets'. This is privatisation with South African characteristics. All this is simply the ANC carrying out what international capital requires of it. They came to power at the behest of international finance capital, now they are seeking to provide a safe and good return on investment. Hence, the speculators and capitalists of the west are licking their lips at the prospects of \$18 billion worth of state assets

being made available. This would include Telkom (telecommunications), Eskom (electricity), and Transnet (transport, including the airline).\* The opponents of a straight British-style privatisation are the main union confederation - Cosatu. Privatisation would mean rationalisation and so lay offs, all of which would mean a diminishing role of the unions within the management of capital.

### The ANC and capitalism

The ANC has shown its capitalist credentials with undisguised clarity over the past 12 months. It is in their interests to create a disciplined and ideologically well-controlled proletariat. Mandela offered this pearl of wisdom for the black working class as a path for their integration into their own capitalist ideals

*"Not only do small businesses add wealth to our economy but they present an important source of pride and dignity."*

Similarly, Masakhana, the 'building together' campaign, to end the strike against paying rent and for services

*"Not paying today hurts the new South Africa....Who can be proud of not paying for housing and services now that we have a democratic government.."*

In other words be happy that the government is now controlled by the ANC, you may have petty bourgeois dreams (with an emphasis on the petty) but you have to pay the boss, the landlord, the government, black or white. As a black business magazine said recently "the control of the economy is the struggle of the future" - the promised land is something to come.

There are five black businesses currently quoted on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. The sixth is likely to be Thebe Investments, which is effectively an ANC company. It was built out of generous financing and foreign donations. Alongside this many unions officials have gone on from their positions to 'better things' in the business world. The pattern is this, workers are being shown that they must set aside whatever interests they have for the interests of capital. The political representatives of South African capital are allowed to reap the profits in the here and now.

### Class confrontation

Part of the ANC programme for capital is deliver up to it, as it were on a sacrificial altar, a disciplined workforce. Part of that has involved the creation of trades unions and their attempts to increase their ideological hold over the working class.

The past year has seen a series of strikes. Currently, in true solidarity, both black and white police are involved in a work to rule over a wage claim. The resultant crime wave is adding to social tensions. August and September of 1994 saw a five week strike by car workers. 25,000 from the National Union of Metalworkers struck at Mercedes, Volkswagen, BMW, Nissan and Toyota plants. They returned to work without resolving the dispute. The public, mining and engineering sectors have each seen their major battles over the past year.\* Cosatu, at one point last year threatened a general strike in the industrial heartland, but backed down after government assurances. Johannesburg sees regular demonstrations. The most pointed being that of the out-of-work who marched to City Hall

in April wearing T-shirts reading

*The unemployed masses of South Africa must determine their future.*

Indeed they must, as must all South African workers. But this does not lie in following the ANC or Cosatu banners.

The government is looking for approval for its Labour Relations bill this year. They hope that it will establish a Conciliation Commission under the economic development and labour body (Nedlac), to provide a labour court with the capacity to deal with both unfair dismissals and labour unrest. The days lost to strikes are around a third of those in 1991. The advent of an ANC government has satisfied the hopes of international and South African capital for greater industrial peace.

Cosatu want to establish compulsory centralised bargaining. Mboweni, the Labour Minister, does not see this as a suitable step for the present. Rather obviously the largest union body would like to take as much control of wage bargaining as possible. They may be allied to the ANC, but as a faction of the ruling class any extension of their political and economic clout would be welcomed. The ANC, of course, as good servants of capital, want to keep both hands on the reins of the economy. They have no wish to be held to ransom by their erstwhile allies Cosatu, or indeed any of the other union bodies.

Beyond this there are further measures in mind. Mboweni -

*The world tends to see globalisation in terms of reducing democratisation at the workplace and increasingly disallowing unionisation. We need to liberate productivity from that kind of perspective. We want to move more towards workplace forums where issues of work organisation, new technologies and industrial restructuring are discussed. We want workers to feel they are a part of the decision-making. Then one is going towards a different model of productivity.\**

But of course, between the unions and these forums, the ANC seeks to tame what is left of working class militancy and independence. Nedlac will decide which issues will be for joint decision-making and which for consultation. It is guaranteed that such forums will place no real power in the hands of workers. The so-called 'representatives' of the workforce will sit on toothless and impotent bodies. As with the process of unionising workers in alliance with the ANC, it may not reflect the pattern of the west in recent years, but it is a necessary step in providing that disciplined (ie., hamstrung, pliant and quiescent) workforce required by capital.

### Budget deficit

As we said in May 1994, the South African crisis is the classical contemporary capitalist dilemma. State spending needs to be controlled, even though a massive programme is required to overhaul the infrastructure and production. Liebenberg has brought the budget deficit down to 5.8%, from 9% in 1992. Nearly 20% of the budget will be spent on servicing debt. Public sector pay will take up 37% of the budget this year, against 39% last year. He is allowing a maximum of 3.25% in public sector pay increases. Inflation, though, is running at 10%.\* as one

## South Africa The Last Fifteen Years

This analytical chronicle of 22 articles from *Workers' Voice* is now a compendium with a new introduction available from the group address. It underlines the analysis we have always made and predicts the present situation in South Africa

The collection contains articles from *Workers' Voice* 72 *South African Elections - A Victory for Capitalism through Democracy and Proletarian Massacres* (WV69) and *ANC - Shield of South African Capitalism* (WV66) to *Mass Strikes in South Africa* (WV1) which was written in 1980.

44 pages £2 plus postage



# Drugs: Capitalism Needs More than A Fix

## Part 3: Radical Needs

### A POTTED HISTORY (continued from the last issue)

As long as opiate addiction in America in the third quarter of the 19th century meant middle class ladies and civil war veterans dependent on morphine, there was as yet no question of opiate drugs being magically invested with 'wickedness'. As drug demography changed the law changed accordingly. The 1909 Smoking Opium Exclusion Act concentrated two significant factors: it introduced the notion of a forbidden substance as part of a more general offensive against 'social pollution'.

This century the U.S. has been the country most pre-occupied with international drug control largely because drugs have been so widely used by U.S. citizens. By 1915 there were an estimated 170,000 opiate users in New York alone. As befits a super-power concerned about the health and welfare of its wage slaves, the American ruling class has been the spearhead of practical and legislative repression against drug use. The U.S. was the motive force behind the International Opium Convention of 1912, the first multinational attempt to control the drug trade, and during the First World War, opium and cocaine were made illegal amidst growing fears of drug use among soldiers.

The 'war on drugs' is nothing new but part of a longstanding crusade in American social history. Today it is cocaine and heroin, in the 1920s it was the Prohibition on alcohol. As capitalism lurched into its decadent period, control of access to the pleasure centres of the brain became a central feature of political action and moral dialogue. It is a common misconception however, that Prohibition was an American speciality. There was similar legislation in Austria, Belgium, U.K., Finland, Iceland, Norway and Russia (in 1923 half the prisoners in Moscow's jails were there for illegal alcohol trade).

After 1921, with the new law in place, it was discovered that the various social ills attributed to alcohol, crime, premature death etc, did not decline. Attention focussed on heroin, a substance wielded by a foreign government to 'deprave and weaken the American social system'. Later a very similar charge was laid against opium wielding Chinese communists after 1948.

During the 40's in the U.K. the only opiate users were doctors and middle class housewives. Social concern about drug use began to intensify with the spread of 'youth culture' in the late 50's and 60's. The latter was a cultural harbinger of the first great shake up of the post-war social order that erupted in 1968. Under the 'Misuse of Drugs Act 1971', all drugs were categorised according to strength and danger; just as there were classes of citizens, now there were classes of drugs. Opiates as usual enjoyed a senior rank in the hierarchy of social evil.

On the surface this may appear to have more than a little validity. Heroin abuse evokes images of a miasma of physical decadence. The problems commonly associated with 'hard' drug, however, are partly a consequence of their mode of

consumption and little to do with the natural properties or effects of the substance in itself, the misplaced focus of bourgeois media hysteria.

Before the 70's illicit drug use was an emblem of 'deviant' sub-cultures. The dissident lifestyles of the latter, however - and this is the fate of all romantic radicalism - were gradually neutralised, co-opted and eventually commodified by the all devouring Mammon of capitalism. The universalisation of drug use since then cannot of course be seen in isolation from the social and historical context to which it is a response: the pervasive spread of an atomised and alienated social life and its attendant despairs, in short a social decomposition that affects all human relations.

### Myths of Addiction

'Addictus': a citizen of ancient Rome who had built up debts that could not be repaid and was therefore delivered up to the courts into slavery under his creditors. The modern day addict has built up 'debts of pleasure' that can only be repaid by a slavish compulsion to consume a single commodity.

When it published its findings in 1926, the Rolleston Committee pronounced that addiction was

*a condition that must be regarded as the manifestation of a disease and not a mere form of vicious indulgence. In other words the drug is not taken for the purposes of obtaining positive pleasure but in order to relieve a morbid and overpowering craving.*

As noted earlier this 'disease' model had its origins in the 19th century.

Less than ten years later one, William Burroughs, the thinking man's laboratory of the time, refuted this assumption, albeit from a standpoint of naive common sense:

*Drug addiction is at bottom a matter of supply... By and large those who have easy access to junk become addicts. There is no pre-addict personality any more than there is a pre-malarial personality, all the hogwash of psychiatry to the contrary.*

Experiments with animals confirm this position. If given access to psycho-stimulants they will self-administer these substances virtually to the point of exhaustion; the activation of pleasure pathways in the brain spark of a positive appetitive state. In an evolutionary sense this is the physical genesis of all new needs.

The repetition compulsion of craving is the result of the activation of memories of past stimulation of these pathways induced by exposure to environmental cues and not necessarily by ingestion of drugs. Studies of U.S. addicts demonstrate that it is more the ritualised behaviour of the lifestyle to which they are compulsively conditioned and not the extremely low doses of heroin which they consume. In other words no pre-existing physio or psychopathology is required for the activation of this particular system in the human brain, which is richly endowed with pleasure receptors.

Addiction theory, a virtual academic cottage industry, falls into three main categories: physiological, psychological and sociological. None can agree on an adequate definition let alone a comprehensive explanation. The first is perhaps the most limited as it deals with the physical in abstraction from the social body i.e. hypostatizes.

Accordingly:

*...withdrawal is a homeostatic re-adjustment to the removal of any substance or stimulation that has had a noticeable impact on the body.*

But in all cases what has been identified as pathological is a complex self-labelling process where the degree of suffering is a function of the setting, the social milieu and the cultural expectations which flow therefrom. Given that capacity for tolerance varies widely between individuals, pharmacological characteristics can only be properly understood as socio-psychological referents and not as 'things in themselves'. To impute addiction to an invariant bio-technical process - and this is the line of thought that runs all the way down from the World Health Organisation to the local G.P. - is to descend theoretically to a biological reductionism that omits crucial determinants. An external pharmacological agent is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition to bring about the state known as addiction. A large array of human activities become compulsive - jogging, stamp-collecting, playing computer games and so on - do not involve ingestion of any substance, yet fulfil the addictive sequence which in its logical pattern is indistinguishable from the arousal and satisfaction of the basic biological needs, hunger, sex, sleep etc. At the level of psychology, which like biology, freezes 'the individual' as an a-historical, isolated invariant, there is no qualitative difference between drug addiction and compulsive over-eating, T.V. viewing, gambling or whatever.

The failure to develop a comprehensive theory of addiction, together with its popular corollary, the media hysteria surrounding the issue, is a consequence, respectively of a) the bourgeoisie's conceptual myopia and b) their social paranoia. In its simplest form the latter runs something like this: if you can't understand something it must be a 'threat'. This fear is then projected onto a demonised 'Other'. (Capitalism's social history is littered with the victims of this regression to a magical form of thinking: blacks, homosexuals or whatever.)

A viable theory of addiction can be informed but not satisfied by images that filter through the opaque lenses of the bourgeois empirical sciences, which by method and objective can only deal with partial aspects of a many sided phenomenon. Only a marxist materialism can provide the groundwork for such an activity. To ignore the commodity form is to omit that which contains in embryo all the antinomies of capitalist society.

Commodity production, the profit induced compulsion to create an ever-expanding quantity of exchange values without limit, is the economic substrate and in a sense the prototype of all addictive behaviours. Obviously it does not produce addiction 'directly', but through specific

mediations and determinant conditions. The framing of working hypotheses around these would be the starting point for any fruitful theoretical investigation.

We shall leave the last and first word on this question to Marx who as part of an analysis of the psychological aspect of need, in an attack on Stirner in *The German Ideology*, said the following:

*Whether a desire becomes fixed or not... depends on whether material circumstances... allow of this desire being satisfied normally and, on the other hand, of the development of a whole mass of other desires. This latter depends, in turn, on whether we live in circumstances that allow all round activity and thereby the full development of all our potentialities.*

### Radical Chains or Radical Needs?

Despite the prodigious development of the productive forces since *The German Ideology* was written, we are further than ever from the "full development of all our potentialities". The highest level of enrichment of the species reached so far historically, is also, paradoxically, the peak of individual impoverishment.

All capacities, powers and human needs are in one way or another subsumed by and subordinated to the requirements of capital to fructify itself. Assuming the power of an extra-human force of nature over its denizens, capitalism quantifies the qualitative world of human needs, turns it into exchange value and renders it purchasable. All qualitative needs that can neither be quantified nor purchased are consequently inhibited.

With the virtual total elimination of any meaningful social framework for the cultivation or investigation of ecstatic experience(1) the flight into drugs has been in some respects a response to this inhibition, an attempt to re-empower the senses in a physical and social body radically de-eroticised by the manifold stresses of alienated labour. That drug use as a meaningful response to this process can readily be seen as a new form of 'radical chains' (2) is not in question i.e. as an agency in the re-inforcement of privatisation and political quietude and not as explosive of these, but in what sense can they be understood as expressive of the other side of the same phenomenon: as aspects of radical needs?

What do we mean by the latter? The concept has little to do with those various hierarchies of needs from the crudest to the most refined that have existed in all historical and pre-historical cultures. Radical needs are historically new i.e. are a specific product of labour within the capitalist mode of production. The idea that radical needs are constituted by labour runs like a thread through Marx's work, from the early anthropological humanism to the mature thought of the *Grundrisse* and other works. (3)

According to Marx, radical needs are intrinsic aspects of the structure of need to which capitalism has given birth. Moreover the radical needs of the working class are by definition different from the needs of any previous historic class, whose needs had to, by virtue of the mode of

*continued opposite*



continued from page opposite

production of the era, remain one-sided and limited:

*In general the enjoyment of all hitherto existing estates and classes had to be either childish, exhausting or crude, because it was always completely divorced from the vital activity, the real content of the life of the individuals, or more or less reduced to imparting an illusory content to a meaningless activity."*

(The German Ideology).

The consciousness of alienation, in other words, radical needs, is embodied by the working class because it has no particular, only general goals, no particular petty grievance but only a general grievance against its total abasement under capitalism. How is this new species of need engendered? The need for free time, for example, is created by its opposite, surplus labour; the need for universality is developed historically through mass, and today, global production.

The radical need to transcend capitalism is inscribed in the very existence of the class, an existence and project the supersedes particular interests of individual members or sectors of the proletariat. Radical needs cannot be 'eliminated' from the social body of capitalism because they are necessary to its very functioning. It is not the existence of radical needs that transcends capitalism, but their satisfaction. Those individuals for whom radical needs already arise are what Marx originally called in an Hegelian formulation, the 'collective Ought' - what we today understand as the revolutionary vanguard. Only the revolutionary strength of the collective subject, having become such by virtue of its radical needs and practice, can guarantee the creation of the future society.

*Theory is actualised in a people only in so far as it actualises their needs... A deep going revolution can only be a revolution in basic needs.*

The generation of a mass of addictive behaviors, of which drug taking is but one aspect, is at one and the same time a cry of despair in late 20th century capitalism, and a human statement about both basic and radical needs. Only in the society of associated producers will drug consumption cease to be a self-administration of individual euphoria within a condition of general unhappiness and come to have a positive social value - therapeutic, medical, aesthetic, aphrodisiac or whatever. It will be an element in the practical definition of man's species being,

*return become conscious and accomplished within the entire wealth of previous development."*

Marx.

AS (4)

Notes

1. For a fuller development of this see *Shamanism as a Key to the Secrets of Communism* Alan Cohen

2. This notion first appears in Marx's *Introduction to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*.

3. As of yet the rich potential of this concept has been given scant regard. For a reversal of this see *The Theory of Need in Marx* by Agnes Heller.

4. AS is a member of the CWO. This series of three articles (see WV 76 and WV77 for the previous parts) deals with an issue which we have not previously tackled and thus is offered for discussion and debate. Readers are invited to send their comments and contributions.



# World War Two Anniversaries Workers Have No Cause to Celebrate

It is difficult not to notice that this year is the 50th anniversary of the Allied victory in the Second World War. The whole year is providing an opportunity for nauseating bourgeois hypocrisy, triumphalism and cretinous nostalgia which reached fever pitch for VE day on May 8th. Yet even this great moment in the history of British imperialism has not been allowed to interfere with the bosses' profit margins; the workers' May Day holiday was cancelled by the government and turned into an orgy of crass jingoism one week later.

The Second World War is shrouded in mythology which has been specifically produced and propagandised by the ruling class for proletarian consumption. In the West the war was and still

garbage of their rulers and overthrew their bourgeois government. This remains the basis for a communist response to imperialist war in every conceivable circumstance. It is clear that workers have no interest in sacrificing themselves for their bosses in imperialist conflict. The Trotskyists have done their best to obscure this fundamental tenet of proletarian internationalism. From the Spanish Civil War to the Gulf War, Trotskyists always choose a "lesser" imperialist evil for workers to support.

## Anti-fascism is Anti-worker

Inherent in Trotskyist anti-fascism is the defence of "democracy" - i.e. the very same bourgeois democracy which ruthlessly exploits its

It is nothing short of the wishing away of competing and contradictory class interests, the ideological negation of the class struggle itself. The bunting, the parades, Vera Lynn and all the rest of the nauseous garbage are all constructed to make us feel part of the "great British nation". The images and messages employed are the same ones which they use to try to persuade us to work harder for less money for the sake of the national economy.

If you thought it was all over, watch out for VJ day on 15th August. Class conscious workers will treat such events with the contempt they deserve.

PBD



Allied bombers destroy Dresden  
February 1945

is marketed as a struggle for democracy against fascism. In the East it was a war for the defence of the "socialist" Soviet Union, a lie which has been perpetrated as much by the Trotskyists as the Stalinists.

## Communists and War

Stripping away the accumulated filth of bourgeois ideology we can see that the Second World War was nothing to do with the fight against fascism. The bourgeoisie of both East and West were not in the least concerned about the particularly brutal form of capitalism practised by the Nazis in Germany. In Russia the Stalinists were conducting pretty much the same reign of terror against workers, ethnic minorities and dissident intellectuals as were German Nazis. In the West, Hitler was admired by substantial sectors of the ruling class for the way in which the Nazis disciplined labour and eliminated all traces of Bolshevism. The war only came about when the competing imperialist ambitions of countries such as Germany, Britain and Russia could only be resolved by military means. Churchill had praised Mussolini's fascism for "taming the bestial appetites of Bolshevism". His opposition to Hitler was always based on the traditional foreign policy of the British which was to make sure that no power controlled the continent of Europe to the detriment of "the British Empire". It is not surprising therefore that once war came, most of the erstwhile admirers of Hitler became exponents of anti-fascism.

The communist position on imperialist war was first clearly expounded by Lenin and other internationalists during the first imperialist war of 1914-18. That position is known as "revolutionary defeatism" and calls upon proletarians to turn the imperialist war into a class war against their own bourgeoisie. This is exactly what the Russian proletariat did in October 1917. Workers rejected all the patriotic

own workers and dragoons them into an imperialist slaughter. Whilst no-one would not be appalled by the holocaust and other Nazi atrocities these events have to be seen in the context of a war where over 50 million died, many of whom were the victims of atrocities such as the bombing of Dresden which were perpetrated in the name of democracy. In imperialist war it is not for workers to choose the lesser evil, this is like asking someone to choose between cancer or AIDS. So-called socialists who call upon workers to suspend the class struggle in order to side with this or that imperialist power are in effect calling upon the class to destroy itself. These confusions are still propagated today by Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). They try to justify the Trotskyist support for the Second World War in terms of anti-fascism and the defence of democracy. Whilst accepting that Lenin's position was correct for the First World War, they deliberately confuse the question in respect of World War Two even though this war was the product of the same imperialist dynamic. By focusing on the specific and obvious evils of fascism, the SWP obscure the greater overall evil of imperialism which created the conditions for poverty, exploitation and war in the first instance.

Whilst the Second World War constituted a physical offensive against the working class its anniversaries are part of an ideological offensive which serves to legitimate the official bourgeois history of the war itself. Moreover, events such as VE day attempt to legitimate the existing social order by focusing on such concepts as national unity and sacrifice.

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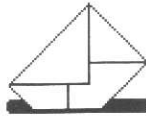
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# Letters

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).*

## Animal Liberation and Class Politics

Dear Workers Voice

Given that your paper often contains useful information combined with a fairly incisive analysis, I was all the more shocked by the appalling articles on the animal rights movement and the live exports campaign that appeared in the last issue (WV76 -Editor). Instead of a marxian critique of animal rights as an ideology, what we got was a series of outright lies, half-truths, and quite frankly glib, childish comments more characteristic of the bourgeois press than of a so-called "revolutionary" paper.

The debate about animal liberation as distinct from "welfare" (a distinction you consistently fail to make) is admittedly a very difficult one in certain respects but it is quite clearly not going to be helped by arrogant know it all writers who see fit to sneer at oppositional trends about which they know or care little.

First of all, let's get a few things clear about the animal rights movement:

1. The point that animal rights attracts people from all classes, and that this leads to various critical problems, is a point well taken. However, it should be pointed out that many of us are well aware of this fact and remain stubbornly class-conscious. In Sheffield, the majority of activists have strong working-class backgrounds, are active in a whole range of political initiatives, and hardly measure up to the stereotypes by which you so easily hope to discredit the animal liberation movement. That so many groups on the left are dominated by well-paid professionals does not appear to stop you from taking them seriously!

2. Likewise, the extent of hypocrisy on the part of those involved in animal rights and, in particular, the live exports issue is also a fairly salient point. Again though, it would be fair to say that the majority of people involved in the animal rights movement for any length of time could not have this charge levelled at them. That they are vegan, try as far as possible not to buy products from companies involved in animal abuse and have no illusions whatsoever about British factory farming is proof enough of this. That many people have failed to come to the logical conclusion that as long as capitalism exists, then so will some form of animal abuse is something to be fought against. But there again, criticisms on the part of those not even involved with the movement is hardly going to be taken seriously.

3. The last point is that to characterise the movement as reformist, middle-class, and ultra-respectable is complete and utter bollocks. There is a world of difference between "Compassion in World Farming" dickheads petitioning local MP's on the one hand, and the liberation of animals and destruction of property carried out by the militant, confrontational wing on the other. That the state is willing to spend so much time, energy and resources in criminalising activists and in monitoring their work, rather than keeping tabs on small "revolutionary" groups shows more than anything else where the ruling class perceive the greatest threat to be coming from. Finally, comments on the level of "Hitler was a vegetarian" are not only historically inaccurate, but also completely irrelevant. Hitler called himself a National Socialist and Stalin claimed to be acting as a Marxist but this doesn't appear to stop you from using such terms in a progressive fashion!

On a broader level, it would have been good to have seen some debate about what motivates many of us to get involved in such campaigns as live exports - namely, the understanding that sentient creatures have certain inalienable rights and that to define oppression simply in terms of reference to people is a completely arbitrary and prejudicial form of discrimination. The question as to whether people love or hate a particular animal is a non-starter to begin with. The really critical question is whether they respect it. If, like the rest of the dinosaur left, the CWO reject the notion of rights for animals on the grounds that rights are dependent on the fulfilment of certain responsibilities by all parties concerned, then how does this stand up to the communist ideal of treating all equally irrespective of age, ability/disability, gender and sexuality?

Finally, for me personally, the most offensive parts of the two articles were those pushing the idea that animal rights struggles acts as a distraction away from real issues of human suffering. Sorry, but being vegan doesn't take any longer than being a meat-eater, and involvement in and around animal rights politics can easily be complemented by involvement in other forms of politics, as indeed it should be for the emergence of a more integrated and holistic revolutionary vision.

In Sheffield there is considerable overlap in involvement in anarchist, anti-fascist and animal rights groups, and long may this progressive cross-fertilisation of ideas and values continue. The CWO may not like the nature and strategy of these various groups and may in fact even question the legitimacy of their concerns but the suggestion that people involved in such campaigns care, or do little for people would either be met by laughter or outright anger. That there has often been a continuum between concern for people and animals and that many people involved in early anti-racist, feminist and social struggles were also strong vegetarians and anti-vivisectionists is a point to be borne in mind here.

At the end of the day, if the CWO is seriously trying to recruit militants to its own narrow brand of class-struggle politics, it couldn't really be doing a worse job.

Yours in anger,  
Steve. Sheffield.

## Proud to be Narrow! Our Defence of Class Politics

Dear Steve

Thanks for your letter. It seems we cannot win with anarchists. If we write a sober piece of analysis we are condemned as "boring" but if we take the piss then that strikes at deep-rooted attitudes and we are condemned as "glib". As it happens we have also received criticism from

communists about the articles in WV76 as a departure from our usual approach. Both the writer of the article and the editor (who, as you seem to like subjective issues, both happen to be vegetarians) now think it was a tactical mistake. You are right in saying that our original target was the middle-class protestors at Brightlingsea and elsewhere rather than young people who were coming to political activity for the first time. This is why we addressed the issue

in a different way at the Sheffield public meeting which you were unfortunately unable to attend (see WV77 for the report).

However the fact that the pellets from the blast of WV76 seem to have stuck in the flesh of some anarchists I think says more about your politics than you care to reflect.

We'll leave aside some of your more heated accusations (we never lie though we may get facts wrong - in any event you don't prove a single assertion and you should re-read what we actually say about Hitler), we need to answer two things. These are your view of "class consciousness", and what is class activity.

Class consciousness is one of the most abused concepts amongst anarchists. We have found this repeatedly in our discussions with them. For them slogans like "Eat the Rich" or some such is enough to define class consciousness. But hatred of the rich is not enough. There has to be an understanding about what capitalist exploitation is and how this rotten system can be overthrown. The precise social origins of individuals is irrelevant at this stage (but even "well-paid professionals" are being proletarianised) although ultimately it is obvious that only the working class as a whole can transform society. In the last century anarchism for all its confusions did share this concern. And as an antidote to the Social Democratic movement that was more influenced by Darwinian notions of evolution rather than Marxist ideas of revolution it was a useful tendency in the workers movement.

Today however anarchism has lost all sight of the overarching need to destroy the capitalist state. Instead anarchists fragment social reality and get involved in campaigns on this or that issue. This is the "new reformism". Many anarchists advocate voting Labour (O.K. so other anarchists disagree, but that only further undermines the cosy notion which many anarchist are wrapped up in that there is "an anarchist movement"). On top of this many of these concerns are totally counter-revolutionary including one you cite, i.e. anti-fascism.

Anti-fascism arose out of the imperialist manoeuvres of the USSR in the run-up to the Second World War. It was part of the Stalinist Popular Front tactic announced at the Seventh Comintern Congress in November 1935 which aimed to win France and Britain into alliance with the USSR. Its common thread was "defence of democracy". It was justified to workers by turning historical truth on its head. It was stated that fascism had been used to defeat the revolutionary working class in Italy and then Germany. But this is not true. The working class movement had already been defeated (largely by the Social Democrats who still use anti-fascism as a cover for their bourgeois politics) in Italy in 1920 and in Germany by 1923 - before there was a real fascist menace. The disaffected bourgeoisie in both countries then turned to fascism as a means of preparing for a war of revenge and policing of the working class. Anti-fascism became the ideological cover in "the democracies" for marching millions of workers off to imperialist war in 1939 and 1941. This defence of democracy is what unites you with "the dinosaur left" (as it did in the Popular Front of 1936 in Spain). Today anti-fascism or anti-nazism is a slogan for mobilising people behind the SWP or the other state capitalist gangs.

The BNP has no chance of taking power since the bourgeoisie don't need it but it can make the lives of some workers miserable through racist attacks. The strategy here for communists is to encourage local self-defence groups and to attack capitalist democracy for failing to deal with the thugs. This is not anti-fascism but part of the fight for an independent proletarian alternative (see *Workers Voice* 63, 64, 67, 69 and 72).

And this brings us to the issue of what is class activity. We wrote about this at greater length in WV77 but we will put it slightly differently here. As you are well aware the trade in animals only proceeds because it is part of commodity production. The horrors of transportation of

animals are down to the system based on profitability. This also holds good for wars and all the other barbaric events visited on humanity world-wide. Torture, repression and state terror are on the increase as are the campaigns against them. But the nature of the campaigns themselves are part of the problem. They focus only on the immediate issue and not on the causes. It is like giving aspirin to cure cancer. It may kill the immediate pain (by giving the feeling that "at least we are trying to do something") but it gets nowhere near establishing the root cause and thus paving the way for the eradication of the whole disease. When you say that campaigning for animal rights is not incompatible with a more "holistic" revolutionary approach we beg to differ. Where **are** the more holistic movements which the animal rights issue links up with? On the contrary the single issue campaigns are entirely compatible with capitalism because they fragment the real experience of the working class. In short their demands are reformist - simply begging capitalism to alter the area for its exploitation. Your idea that animal rights terrorism gets more state repression and therefore must be more significant is entirely wrong. Leaving aside your naive idea that the communist left are not subject to state vigilance the fact that animal liberationists destroy property occasionally obviously means that they are an immediate nuisance to the capitalist state but terrorism is not a working class method of action. On the contrary it is the negation of working class activity since it is carried out by a Blanquist elite who consider they can act alone (because working class consciousness develops too slowly). Working class consciousness is an affair of the masses. Only when large bodies of the working class reject capitalist rule will we be at the beginning of an era in which ordinary people will begin to determine their own future. Terrorists only mirror the kind of elitist politics which the capitalists recognise as their own and know how to tackle. The antidote to terrorism is mass class activity but this will not come about if revolutionaries dash up every single-issue cul de sac offered by the present situation. As we said in WV77

***the conscious political struggle by the working class for a new society is the only way forward.***

We see no "cross-fertilisation" as you call it between the animal rights movement and a wider sense of what is the future for humanity. In fact what we are trying to do is shake those who believe that single issue politics offers anything for humanity. At best it is a sterile dead-end and ultimately it is a safety valve which prevents real class conscious activity on the part of those that are involved in them. To us the anarchist idea of activism is a mirror of the leftists who argue for this or that policy not because it leads towards socialism but because it might stir the masses (however capitalist the campaign).

You attack us for having a "narrow brand of class struggle politics". Actually we are proud of this because we think this is the only brand of class politics. We don't arrive at what you generously call our "incisive analysis" by accident but because we focus on what is in the long-term interests of the class as a whole. Indeed one of our political ancestors, the Bulgarian Tesnyaki's name means "the Narrows", a nickname they got for supporting the idea that the First World War should be turned into a class war rather than supporting pacifism. In other words they knew what was in the interest of the proletariat whilst so-called marxists and anarchists found reasons for supporting imperialist war.

However at the end of the day what the CWO (and other left communist groups) are trying to do is to get young militants coming to politics via these single issue campaigns to leave their own narrow brand of politics and take up the struggle for the initially difficult but ultimately rewarding task of developing the broadest struggle against the capitalist system itself. If we can first slay that dragon we will no longer need to run around trying to defend this or that lamb. We will have created the basis for an entirely new world.

Yours  
for communism  
**Jock** for the CWO



# Life of the Organisation

## Who are we?

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

Since 1984 we have formed part of the **International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party** initiated by **Il Partito Comunista Internazionale** (*Battaglia Comunista*).

## 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 Internazionale,  
CP 1753, 20101 Milano, Italy.

## Our Basic Positions

**1. We aim to establish a stateless, classless, moneyless society without exploitation, national frontiers or standing armies and in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all (Marx): COMMUNISM.**

**2. Such a society will need a revolutionary state for its introduction. This state will be run by workers' councils, consisting of instantly recallable delegates from every section of the working class. Their rule is called the dictatorship of the proletariat because it cannot exist without the forcible overthrow and keeping down of the capitalist class worldwide.**

**3. The first stage in this is the political organisation of class-conscious workers and their eventual union into an international political party for the promotion of world revolution.**

**4. The Russian October Revolution of 1917 remains a brilliant inspiration for us. It showed that workers could overthrow the capitalist class. Only the isolation and decimation of the Russian working class destroyed their revolutionary vision of 1917. What was set up in Russia in the 1920's and after was not communism but centrally planned state capitalism. There have as yet been no communist states anywhere in the world.**

**5. The International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party was founded by the heirs of the Italian Left who tried to fight the political degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the Comintern in the 1920's. We are continuing the task which the Russian Revolution promised but failed to achieve - the freeing of the workers of the world and the establishment of communism. Join us!**

## 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**)

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(Just published - see back page)

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continued from page 3

# South Africa - One Year of ANC Rule

economist has put it -

**Basically, both industry and government are overstaffed and underproductive. They need to cut payrolls in the short term to boost competitiveness and growth in the long term.\***

That overstaffing is used as a means of deflating possible unrest, at least for the short term. Those wages will be held down to keep that bill to a minimum, and as they hope to expand the workforce as the public works programme can be further implemented. Inflation will be used to enforce effective pay cuts, where wages rise at a lower rate than prices. In other words what will be sacrificed on the altar of South African capital are needs and interests of South African workers.

## Political stability

In February, Mandela spoke in the Cape Town Parliament. He warned public sector workers not to strike for a wage demand because there was no money to meet it. He spoke out against the various protests by students which had turned into riots. We have been saying for 15 years (see

the CWO pamphlet on South Africa) there is no 'democratic dividend' to come. In the same speech Mandela went on to deal with the question of corruption. What was being referred to was another scandal involving Winnie Mandela. She leads a populist current within the party. Having remained at large during the apartheid period, while most of the leadership were exiled or in prison, she built quite a following, acquiring the title 'mother of the nation'. From the position of that popular following, partly within the townships and the women's league, she feels able to pursue her own interests - as in the recent diamond scandal. She feels free to make scathing criticism of the government out of that standing. She preys upon the resentments the poorest section of society have as they feel passed over by the government as it pursues its 'bigger' plans and its wealthier allies. She seems only interested in her own self-aggrandisement, even if it involves murder, kidnap and so on. She has the image of martyr for the Soweto masses, living there (albeit in luxury) as she does. However, as a populist she may yet have a function to play for capital if the class struggle develops, being in a position to defuse and divert any movement which might threaten capital in some way.

In addition, there is also the question of Buthelezi, the leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). At present he is seeking international mediation over his demand for greater autonomy for Natal-KwaZulu, his power base. He is attempting to gain greater personal control over that area. Again he is using IFP sponsored unrest, including gun attacks close to ANC or government events, to force the issue. After all, the ANC rigged the elections in collusion with the IFP to give them a larger number of seats than they would have won. Now Buthelezi is accusing the ANC of using dictatorial and authoritarian policies, taking power away from the regions and giving it to the centre. Mandela has, in turn, threatened to stop government funds from reaching Natal-KwaZulu unless Buthelezi refrains from using such funds against the government. Such regional autonomy would form a dangerous loss of power for the centre and perhaps even endanger the unity and integrity of South Africa.

## The Perspective

The South African working class, like the working class everywhere, is in retreat. The levels of strikes are down and where demands are made and disputes ensue, they are ably contained by unions and government working

in tandem. The politics of South Africa is overhung by the promised 'dividends of democracy'. Those dividends are to be found in the struggles going on between the various rival factions of the bourgeoisie within and without the ANC. Those struggles are for the control of patronage, for elements of power within the economy and the political structure of the bourgeois state. The function of the ANC and those around it resides purely in this - to prevent the formation of any political opposition to capital springing up. But there are no dividends of democracy for the South African working class. South African workers will have to recognise this before they can enter the political stage to pursue their own interests. Given the mountains of mystification under which they are submerged this will not be an easy task but the continuing failure of capitalism, whether led by blacks or whites, will provide the material basis for a rejection of all the exploiters.

## Clastre

## Note

\* Figures and quotes from *The Financial Times* and *The Economist*.



# The End of World War Two in Italy - A Victory for Totalitarian Capitalism

Our ruling class invites us to celebrate their victory, fifty years ago, in the Second Imperialist World Slaughter. But the victory was all theirs. They got us to participate in the redivision of the world with the rest of the Western Allies and the "Soviet" Union. The working class in the victorious countries got more sweat, more tears as reconstruction proceeded. In the dark shadow of Nazi barbarity, Allied barbarity also did its short work: four million Germans died of starvation in the immediate post-war years, neatly demonstrating that the Nazis had no monopoly on mass-murder or the concept of collective guilt.

And it was workers who died. Denazification meant that postal and rail workers lost their jobs (Nazi Party membership had been compulsory in these sectors), while the CIA and the Russians were recruiting genocidal bastards like Klaus Barbie. As always, the bourgeoisie makes war, workers pay for it, and the bourgeoisie grabs the spoils.

Nor did the end of the war lead to an era of peace. Its outcome was the Cold War, which was only "cold" in the capitalist metropolises. Korea and Vietnam are only the most outstanding of the proxy wars between the Cold War blocs. In the Horn of Africa, Russia and America changed partners in a bloody waltz whose tune still echoes around the area, and all this is without mentioning the carnage in the Middle East since 1947.

And still, despite the end of the Cold War, capitalism's blood lust continues. The war in ex-Yugoslavia is not a hang-over from the past but the herald of a future in which the economic crisis sets capitalist nation against capitalist nation (see front page article in this issue).

Throughout the Second World Slaughter and the years leading up to it, the working class remained deprived of the organised political consciousness necessary to struggle for its own interests, and it is hardly surprising that it became prey to various reactionary ideologies, for which it paid a heavy price both on the battlefield (including the bombed cities) and in the factories.

But at the end of the second imperialist war there was a faint echo of what happened in Russia towards the end of the first imperialist war. In Northern Italy the working class began to move and there was the beginnings of a move to reject both the imperialist camps. As this was also reflected in the situation in France, militants of the Italian Communist Left decided that it was essential to found the Internationalist Communist Party.

This Party was the best response the working class anywhere produced in the war and it ultimately had a membership of thousands. However, as in the period

after the First World War the movement did not spread and the early strikes in Italy, France and Britain largely gave way to acceptance of the new welfarism of social

democracy. The Internationalist Communist Party thus remained small in relation to its tasks although it became such a thorn in the side of the Stalinists who were trying to insinuate themselves into the post-war capitalist order that they murdered two of its leading activists (for more on these see WV77). It was to commemorate their sacrifice and to denounce the lies of the capitalist left that Battaglia Comunista distributed the leaflet, translated and reprinted on this page, in this year's May Day demonstrations in Italy.

## What do Workers Commemorate from 1945?

Fifty years since "the liberation". Fifty more years to add to the previous century of capital's uncontested domination. First in its democratic and monarchical form, then in the fascist and now in its democratic and republican form, the bourgeoisie in Italy has exercised its power and its capitalist exploitation of the proletariat for nearly 200 years. What is there for workers to commemorate?

Certainly not their liberation from wage-labour. Certainly not an improvement in the balance of forces vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie, seeing that today the political forces which 50 years ago said they represented the working class have ended up completely denying that class's existence.

What happened 50 years ago? What happened was that the Second Imperialist World War ended with the defeat of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis. The Italian bourgeoisie had already realised a year earlier that fascism had had it and it brought about its fall. In this way their war against the debris of fascism and the German forces began, a war which guaranteed that they would not be treated as a defeated power at the so-called peace table.

What happened was that the Allies won the war alongside Russia, the country which had seen the first victorious workers' revolution. However its isolation led to its turning in on itself to become a new form of capitalism under the false name of "real socialism". The political forces representing Russian interests also presented themselves as proletarian class forces. And they participated in the war: not the proletariat's class war against the bourgeoisie, but imperialist war, the war of the bourgeoisie amongst itself divided along the lines of exclusively bourgeois interests.

And it was for the interests of the bourgeoisie (otherwise called the "interests of the nation" or of the people) that the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) and the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI) participated first in the war and afterwards in the reconstruction. What happened next was that the capitalist reconstruction of the Italian economy, battered by the war, began. All of the proletariat's interests, historical and immediate, were sacrificed to the military victory and the bourgeois reconstruction.

Social revolution? No, this was only the illusion of a large number of partisans; it was necessary to build a "new democracy". The struggle for work? No, this too was inconvenient for the reconstruction and the Minister of Justice, the "Communist" Togliatti, showed his loyalty to the capitalist class by sending the police against demonstrations by the unemployed. The militant internationalists Fausto Atti and Mario Acquaviva were also sacrificed on the altar of victory and reconstruction. They were assassinated by the Stalinists because they were genuine propagandists for class autonomy and the battle for communism, and organisers of the proletarian vanguard.

Neither Roosevelt nor Stalin, neither the USA nor the USSR, but for the working class's international unity against capitalism and exploitation was the slogan of the party of these internationalist fighters. For this, they were murdered to smooth the road to reconstruction. And everyone can see the results.

After 50 years: the fascists have returned to the government and yesterday's so-called communists today declare that the division of society into classes and the class struggle, has been superseded. The PCI were liars yesterday, when they adored Stalin, and are liars today, when, alongside the traditional bourgeoisie they are striving to lower the cost of labour, of wages: that is, they are striving to attack a working class which they deny exists.

Proletarians! We internationalists are not on the street to remember the birth of the "new democracy" (which today is even newer with Berlusconi and Fini), but our comrades Atti and Acquaviva, killed by Stalinism. We internationalists are here to affirm that classes exist, that today the bourgeoisie is on the offensive and that it is more and more urgent for us to return to class autonomy, to the anti-capitalist struggle and in the creation of its party.

**The Internationalists of Battaglia Comunista**

### New Pamphlet

## Platform of the Committee of Intesa 1925

**The Start of the Italian Left's Struggle against Stalinism**

This pamphlet is an important contribution to the history of the internationalist communist left. It is the first time that the Platform of the Committee of Intesa ("intesa" roughly means alliance) has been published in English. It was written by the leading members of the Italian Communist Left to counteract the degeneration of the Communist International and the Communist Party of Italy at that time led by Gramsci.

The Italian Communist Party owed its entire existence to the tireless work of the Communist Left led by Amadeo Bordiga who had led the split from the Socialist Party in 1921. However even then the formation of the Party had come too late. The counter-revolution was beginning to take shape in Italy and in the rest of the world. As Bordiga became increasingly passive in the face of this the battle to maintain a revolutionary kernel fell to others, notably Onorato Damen.

This 31 page pamphlet contains an introduction setting the document in context as well as Comintern documents never before translated into English.

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