

# Wildcat

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Issue No 11

Monday 4 January 1988

Former minister attacks 'over-the-top' PM ● Whitelaw to return

## Euphoric Thatcher says Britain is cured



THE INDEPENDENT Saturday 9 January 1988

## strike by pitmen spreads

Ford faces indefinite strike

Seamen stay out at Dover

ing they are bull markets. So you get a series of quite good get away without another early rise in rates they will try to do point, it would be quite absurd to liken this little bout of labour not the jobs at Dagenham, but the jobs in the dealing rooms.

Gloom fuelled by worsening industrial relations and the strike at Ford

## Striking ferry crews ready to defy injunction



CAR WORKERS striking for the NHS in Liverpool last week

## First strike by nurses at Barts

Thorn-EMI to issue £45,000 writs against shop stewards who backed health action

Martin Linton

FOUR Manchester shop stewards are each to be served with a writ for £45,000 for leading their workers out in support of the nurses. Thorn-EMI has given notice

Ford walk-outs

Ford plants were disrupted by sporadic walk-outs and absenteeism yesterday despite acceptance by union negotiators of a pay settlement

HOSPITALS in South London look set to be hit by a series of strikes — with more disruption on the way.

## Renault plant shut by strike

Simon Beavis  
Labour Correspondent

DISRUPTION in the motor industry spread yesterday to Renault Trucks' plant at Dunstable, where 700 assembly workers brought production to halt at the beginning of a strike over pay.

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Strike threat by 20,000 at Vauxhall over pensions

## Ford faces new strike threat Land Rover workers start all-out strike

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# Labour SCUM



Senior National Officer David Hughes  
 Organisation Director Steve Gould  
 Campaigns and Communications Officer  
 Peter...  
 Policy Director...

Throughout the country, Labour councils are implementing government cuts; sacking hundreds of workers, closing nurseries, cutting house-building, and all the other things that Thatcher's policies demand. Camden's council has gone one better than the rest of Thatcher's Labour lackeys, and started repatriating Irish and Bangladeshi homeless workers. Socialist Worker calls this "organised racism".

What does SW advocate as the best way of dealing with the organised racists of Camden council? How is the vanguard party organising the fight back?

Tony Dykes is the leader of the council. SW supporters recently went to a Labour Party benefit in Kings Cross. "Once inside, a number of members of Kings Cross SWP started



talking and arguing with a number of Labour lefts about the need to challenge Tony Dykes on this position." (SW 12.87). Trying to get the left to challenge the racist leaders of Camden council is only part of the SWP's strategy for working class defence. The SWP supported a "lively lobby" of the Labour group meeting on 16 Nov 87. They have also organised a petition calling on Labour to reverse their position. What a load of wailies!

Stamford Hill squatters have a different way of dealing with the labour scum. The council is trying to evict them. The first thing they did when they heard about it was burn a few barricades and make it clear they wouldn't go quietly. Then they invaded a council meeting and "lobbied" the councillors, one of whom needed medical attention afterwards.



## Deaf to Democracy

Lambeth engineers fought more flexible working introduced as part of the Labour council's cuts strategy by going on strike, picketing the depot, turning back petrol lorries and trying to picket the town hall workers. There have been loads more struggles in Lambeth and in Labour and Tory councils up and down the country. There have been regular disruptions of council meetings, and strikes to stop councils sacking militants in libraries and mentally handicapped homes. Extending this struggle means breaking with any illusions in Labour. It also means breaking from the unions. In Lambeth, a one-day strike was organised on the day the council was due to vote for cuts. There was a picket outside the Town Hall. NALGO shop stewards were there trying to make the picket ineffective. Militants on the picket line succeeded in stopping some councillors from getting in the town hall. The NALGO hacks asked for union cards. Then they said their position as picket organ-

isers was the result of a democratic decision by NALGO members. Instead of pointing out that this was a lie, the council militants said they don't believe in democracy. Finally, they said the police were coming. Someone shouted out "who needs police when you've got union bureaucrats?". Once inside, the pickets shouted at the councillors from the public gallery. They passed the cuts under a torrent of abuse and missiles.



## Punch-up in the town hall

A COUNCILLOR was recovering today after he was beaten up by a mob of squatters during a meeting at Hackney Town Hall last night.

A gang of around 15 youths kicked and punched Labour councillor Bryley Heaven after they stormed past security guards and burst into the town hall chamber. Five people were arrested.

## WE'VE GOT NOOSE FOR LABOUR



The next day, the engineers went on strike against a lockout. Militant council workers argued for all council workers to join the strike, since the cuts affect everyone. A leaflet was produced arguing for breaking down union divisions and going for a united strike. They called for links with hospital workers who were just beginning their fight against governments cuts and low pay. What they failed to do in this leaflet was state loud and clear that the unions are against this unification every step of the way. NUPE officials did everything they could to persuade their members to cross the engineers' picket lines. Union hacks will do everything to make pickets ineffective, delay strikes while a ballot is organised, hold back militant minorities on the grounds they're undemocratic: every trick in the book to hold back working class struggle. Revolutionaries and militants have to clearly point this out.



## Some Fraternal Criticism....

LETTER FROM THE GCI.

This is part of a letter from the Internationalist Communist Group criticising our article on the Labour Party in Wildcat 10, followed by our reply. The GCI can be contacted by writing as follows, WITHOUT WRITING THE NAME OF THE GROUP B.P. 34, BRUXELLES 31, 1060 BRUXELLES, BELGIUM.



The whole "perspective" of the article "Support the Labour Party..." does not define the Labour Party as an integral and necessary part of the capitalist State; on the contrary it rather reflects the point of someone who's trying to show, through concrete examples, that after all the Labour Party is not what most people thought it was! The article remains locked up in the realm of "the idea", "the consciousness", trying to convince those who might still have illusions in the Labour Party, how wrong they are! This should never be our starting point. Our starting point is not what such or such proletarian is thinking, nor what the different individuals or parties in bourgeois society say about themselves.

From our point of view, the Labour Party and social democracy in general does not cheat or betray the proletariat; its very existence - expressed through its programme - from the outset, is a pure negation of the proletariat. The Labour Party claims and defends the development of capitalist society, the reinforcement of the State (and if necessary, we can give the reader such or such example to prove this assertion! but this example should not replace the argument), the sacred defence of the Pound and the Union Jack! Hell, what other practical evidence do we need! AFTER GENERATIONS AND GENERATIONS OF PROLETARIANS HAVE PAID WITH THEIR BLOOD AND WITH THE BLOOD OF THEIR CHILDREN >>

THE TERRIBLE LESSONS THAT HISTORY HAS TAUGHT US (on the nature of social-democracy, on the real meaning of civilisation - misery, wars, ...) WHAT OTHER ARGUMENTS DO WE NEED?

To know "the real Labour Party" we don't have to know it reacted to a speaker who tried to defend gays at a Labour Party meeting! The whole historical experience of our class testifies to the full bourgeois nature that determines British Labourism to - not only not to defend workers (sic!) or gays - but to exploit and oppress and massacre our class! And to hell with leftists who try to defend gays at Labour Party meetings! The general impression one finally gets from reading the article (and in spite of such assertions as "the Labour Party will have to be destroyed by the working class ...") is that the Labour Party is just an obstacle for the working class to achieve its goals (cfr. "it is debatable whether Labour is of any use to the ruling class. It is certainly of no use to the working class."). The article does not clearly define the Labour Party as an enemy of the proletariat. This is due to the fact that the arguments that are put forward in the article, derive mainly from immediate reality and experiences, and not from the general worldwide determinations of bourgeois society and class struggle.



# South Africa



From the recent press coverage of events in South Africa the casual observer might be forgiven for thinking that even the liberal media had been taken over by Pretoria. News stories have, more or less, just repeated the official S. African government line on whatever has been going on. Almost all manifestations of class struggle in the townships has been described as political faction fighting. A recent article in the Independent, about the KTC squatter camp near Cape Town, is typical. It speaks of the "South African governments devastating success in subduing the anti-apartheid resistance by the simple tactic of keeping its most competent and popular leaders locked up under the State of Emergency laws. Deprived of the organisers who in the past were most successful in achieving black unity, radical groups across the country are- perhaps unsurprisingly - displaying increasing signs of anarchy."

The press may whinge about how difficult journalists' jobs are becoming because of the State of Emergency but there is none of the "fearless" investigative reporting that journalists become capable of when it suits the interests of the bourgeoisie. It should be remembered that S. Africa is a lot less dangerous for foreign journalists than, say, El Salvador or the Lebanon. The worst that is likely to happen to them is that they get slung out of the country.

The reason for them taking this line is quite simple. The level of class struggle in S. Africa remains high by international standards despite the successes of the State and rightwing black vigilantes in ending the school boycotts, undermining the rent strikes, crushing resistance on the streets and locking up militants. At the same time the possibility of major liberal reforms on the part of the state, an option supported by the ruling class almost everywhere as a means of heading off the class struggle, is becoming less and less likely. The recent byelections won by the extreme right Conservative Party are just one indication of how narrow the State's margin for manoeuvre is, given its continuing almost total reliance on white voters.

Last year saw more working days "lost" through strikes than any previous year. Almost all sectors of industry were involved. High points included:

- \* A national strike in OK Bazaars at the beginning of the year which lasted ten weeks, the longest ever in the retail trade in SA.
- \* A 12-week rail strike involving 16-20,000 workers which ends on June 5 after the South African Transport Services had lost over R50m in earnings and damage to property.
- \* In the post office there were two major strikes, the second one in June turned into a national strike involving

Thank you for your letter. We can reply very briefly by saying we accept most of your criticisms. The Labour Party article was derived from an earlier pamphlet produced by the old Manchester Wildcat. This basically argued that trying to use Labour to fight for the working class is a waste of time! The article in the last issue was an attempt to produce a more "hard hitting" version of the pamphlet. Let's say it was part of our historical baggage.

We still have differences with the GCI about how to approach issues like this. We believe in explaining things so people can understand what we're saying. Phrases like "general worldwide determinations" are just jargon, and we feel that many of your arguments are written in an obscure language which makes communist ideas more difficult than they really are, because in reality, they are simply an expression of the needs of the working class. Noone is going to be convinced by your arguments by reading about "the historical arch which relates primitive communism to full communism".

You say "the example should not replace the argument", but arguments without examples are mere assertions. It's no good stating that social democracy is the negation of the proletariat, we have to show what the Labour Party is doing to fuck the workers over. That is one of the aims of "Labour Scum" on the previous page.

16-20,000 workers.  
\* August 9 saw the start of the biggest strike in SA history when more than 300,000 miners went out. It was called off by the union after three weeks and resulted in 30,000 sackings.

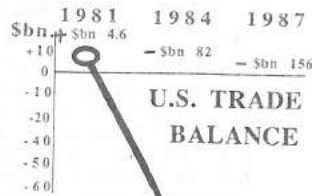
At the same time there are still many major townships, notably Soweto, where a large proportion of tenants haven't paid any rent for over a year. Evictions have been violently resisted. The State has succeeded in bringing back the township councillors in many areas but these, and other 'collaborators', still live in fear.

In the last year or so over 400 people have died in Natal in the war waged by Inkatha against the class struggle there. The fact that a fair proportion of the deaths have been on the Inkatha side shows that the struggle is far from crushed. This war is usually depicted as a faction fight between Inkatha and the UDF, as if it were a political disagreement. The UDF is a cross-class "popular front" type of organisation, which certainly has a lot of influence both in township and work-place struggles. But it does not control them, anymore than the Labour Party controlled the miners' strike in Britain. Inkatha was set up by Gatsha Buthelezi in 1974 to provide him with a means of consolidating his power in KwaZulu and combatting the rising tide of class struggle. It played an important role in organising scabbing and repression during the uprisings and strikes in 1976. More recently its presence has provided the State and local black bourgeois with a ready-made instrument of terror in many townships in Natal and the Transvaal. In other parts of the country they have had to rely on more ad hoc forms of vigilantism. In both cases the policy of the State has been to turn a blind eye to vigilante activity when not actively assisting it.

The strategy of the State has not been based solely on repression, though. It has also tried to integrate the township populations more closely into the State through "upgrading" programs to improve housing and roads and make running water and electricity more available. These are partly concessions to working class and partly an attempt to strengthen the local petty bourgeoisie (including gangsters) who will administer these schemes- a strategy similar to the "inner city" policies in Britain. But even this more flexible approach has proved difficult to implement because anybody who cooperates with the police or white municipal authorities for any reason whatsoever is likely to be seen as a collaborator.

If the state cannot crush the class struggle through repression it is even less able to introduce the social reforms that would be needed to integrate non-white people of all classes into civil society. All the indications are that S. Africa will remain a seething cauldron of class antagonism for the foreseeable future. ○

# RETURN OF THE CRISIS



You don't need a yen for economics to see the dolorous state of the world economy. On Black Monday October 19th 1987, Wall St suffered its greatest ever percentage drop. The crash reverberated around the world in minutes. The next day was even worse. Since then, there has been no recovery.

What does it mean for us? The stock market reflects the real world. Equities are shares in industrial companies. If the value of a share in a given company plunges from £3 to 72p in a fortnight, this is because stockbrokers think the whole company is worth a lot less than they used to. Why should companies suddenly be worth less? Because the world economy, on which their profits depend, is heading for a catastrophic recession.

The most obvious reason for this is the US economy. Reagan's economic boom, based on sucking investment capital out of the rest of the world and spending it on non-productive sectors of the US economy and financial speculation, was bad enough for the rest of the world. But the failure of this boom, and the accompanying fall in US imports from the rest of the world, will be disastrous. The US consumer market is worth \$2.7 thousand billion: almost half the total consumer market of the leading 7 industrial nations. World production is hooked on this market. When it goes down, world capitalism goes down with it.

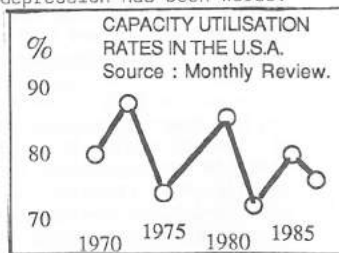
In the immediate future, either the dollar falls, and the world's exports to America fall with it, or US interest rates rise to stabilise the dollar, in which case America will rapidly slide into full-scale recession, dragging the world's exporters with it. In such a no-win situation, it's not surprising that Reagan fiddles as Wall St burns.

The economic gurus of the Reagan administration argued for massive tax cuts to spur productive investment by corporations. But an ostensibly industrial firm doesn't have to spend its tax cuts on machinery. They spent them on the most profitable areas, not the productive ones. The Economist has reported on a New Orleans conference of private investors which concluded that gold hoarding was safer than equities. The sensational rise of art treasures is another sign of the lack of confidence in productive investment. US GNP is approximately \$3000bn. p.a.. Financial centres speculate this amount every 20 days, starving productive sectors. The accompanying graph of manufacturing capacity utilisation in the USA indicates how each recovery has been weaker than its predecessor, and how each depression has been worse.

## Ceausescu admits to grim economic woes

By Michael Simmons  
In an unusual public avowal, the Romanian President Mr Nicolae Ceausescu, yesterday said his country faced complex domestic problems and that "new orientations" were needed to solve the crisis.

lithic support that he claims he has held in the past. He stopped short of offering radically new solutions of his own — a move which the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, would like to see, as he indicated in his...



## Pounded By the Crisis

What makes us confident that this coming recession is going to be the worst since world war II is the sheer scale of the parasitic methods used to generate the recovery of '83-'86. The most dramatic indicator of this is US debt. Although government debt was sometimes greater in the 1945-60 period than it is now, measured as a percentage of GNP, this was the result of economic boom. The growth of public debt from 1982-86, during which the US changed from the world's biggest creditor to its no. one debtor, was calculated to generate a boom. The greatest debt in history was needed to finance a recovery which lasted all of four years. A vast chunk of the world's productive resources has been sucked into a parasitic expansion in one country, which has now failed. The trade balance also indicates how unproductive the Reagan years have been, and dependent the other countries are on the USA. The news cutting about malnutrition in the USA brings home what Reaganism means to the working class. These statistics are the product of a four year boom.

Why did the governments of the West adopt right wing economic policies in the first place? Because the left wing solutions of the seventies failed, leaving high inflation and world stagnation in their wake. Now the right have failed as well. There are those in the EEC who want to go back to the good old days of expansionism, as though printing money could restore capitalism's health. They want to per-

suaide Japan and Germany to expand their economies, and drag the rest of the world out of the mire. This would involve getting these conservative governments to adopt Keynesian policies, and persuading their populations to take the place of the Americans as import eaters. Ever tried selling manufactured goods to Japan?

It hardly needs pointing out that the remainder of the world's economies are in no fit state to act as locomotives for the world economy. From Bucharest to Buenos Aires, from Chingleput to Chingola, the bosses of the debtor nations are openly talking of economic collapse and contemplating default rather than face the proletariat's response to austerity measures.

## Dog Mattick

What causes capitalism's crises? One explanation can be found in a classic work of Marxist economics, "The Permanent Crisis" by Paul Mattick, a neat mathematical model which reduces all the problems of capital to one underlying law, the Falling Rate of Profit Tendency. It is true that one of the reasons for capital's flight from manufacturing into wasteful speculation is the falling rate of profit, which is caused by the growing disproportion of machinery to labour in value terms in increasingly automated enterprises. But this is only one factor. It is not the underlying tendency, and will not lead to "the final collapse of the capitalist system" as Mattick maintains. Only the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the working class will abolish it: this depends on subjective will as well as objective factors.

## Random Fluctuations

The right wing solutions to the downturn of '82 were not based on monetarism as is commonly believed. On the contrary, they were based on a massive extension of credit to American capital backed by unprecedented borrowing from the rest of the world. Reagan and his fellow, er, thinkers, in Britain Germany and Japan have managed to disguise the fragility of their contrived recovery by pointing to the conquest of inflation. Part of this success has been the result of reducing public spending, i.e. attacking living standards. But another reason for it is the same reason that the right wing recovery has stoked the fires of crisis; the decline in productive investment. The sluggish growth of manufacturing has kept the world awash with raw materials looking for buyers; hence low prices. This in turn has led to capital moving out of peripheral areas like Cornwall, and concentrating investment in geographically and demographically smaller and smaller areas of the world. This has left no state untouched as evidenced by the growing armies of hungry Californians and homeless Londoners. Again we emphasise: this has been a boom.

## Frank Speaking

Only the most blinkered and arrogant of bourgeois (Mrs. Thatcher) could avoid seeing the coming crisis. How fast will it happen? We can find clues in the OECD Outlook. In the December '87 edition, these economists foresee a very slow slide into depression. The basis of this view is an understated and idealist analysis of the October crash. They say everything depends on the effect of the crash: as though the crash was a cause of the crisis rather than a symptom. But as we explained earlier, equity prices reflect the real world. Note how they separate business confidence from finance:

"Until the financial crisis, business confidence in 1987 had clearly picked up in Japan and the US, but less so in Germany, following the Louvre accord. Evidence of the state of confidence following the October crisis has been sparse, but it may well have weakened somewhat."

Apocalyptic stuff. But perhaps their caution is justified, and the recession will unfold slowly. The ruling class still has an elastic credit system, as the imaginative schemes to write off parts of Latin American debt show. We may expect a slow descent, with mini-recoveries. But any return to Keynes or a re-run of Reaganomics would cause the same problems as before, only more so. The fact that the bosses and all their economic advisers can't find policies to stop the crisis surely shows the inherently unstable nature of their system. If it were able to afford its slaves some security, they'd have found out how to do it by now.

The OECD believe that productivity, the real basis of economic growth, is about to rise. They say that more capital input should result in productivity growth, due to technological progress. But they admit that in reality, "for almost 2 decades, productivity growth in most OECD countries has been slowing."

## WAR AND PEACE

In the past, we have rather simplistically talked of the crisis driving the bosses to war, a view derived from the Falling Rate of Profit analysis referred to earlier. But the argument that the bosses go to war to devalue capital, as FRPers maintain, fails to explain most of the wars this century. The current crisis is actually leading to a relatively peaceful period in international relations. Gorbachev has conceded a missile treaty which allows Star Wars to go ahead, but which has certainly led to East-West detente.

In the Gulf, the fleet of Russian, American, Italian, Belgian, British, Dutch and French warships and mine-sweepers is part of an attempt to impose imperialist peace on a situation which was getting out of hand. (See the article on the Iran-Iraq war in Wildcat 10). Every day Iran seems more isolated, and she could be forced to finally give in. The USA no longer needs the war to keep oil prices down: the recession will do. Russia is proposing formal cooperation between its and the Western navies in the Gulf. The only major conflict between US-backed and Russian fighters in the world is Afghanistan, and the Russians want out. Central America is closer to peace than for years. Reagan has just cut defence spending.

The world's rulers have enough problems already without preparing for major wars. Barring accidents, the peace process begun by Gorbachev will continue. Inter-imperialist war is not on the immediate agenda.

### Millions of homeless and jobless suffer malnutrition epidemic

## US doctors discover starvation on increase

From Christopher Reed in San Francisco

A group of doctors in the US has produced a shocking report claiming that 20 million Americans now go hungry in an "epidemic" of malnourishment now afflicting millions of the working poor.

The Physician Task Force on Hunger in America has produced the report, "Hunger Reaches Blue Collar America", as a sequel to two previous annual studies on the spread of malnutrition in the US.

that real wages are lower now than in any year of the last decade. Over half the jobs created since 1980 pay less than the poverty level, and the number of working poor grew by half between 1978 and 1986. Of all those officially living in poverty, 41 per cent have jobs.

In California, of some 36 million poor, more than half are children, the report found. Over 500,000 people in the "Golden State" work for the minimum wage, earning less than \$7,000 a year, 40 that one



## Yugoslavia faces economic disaster over foreign debt

YUGOSLAVIA faces "total economic collapse in the immediate future" unless foreign creditors grant a reprieve, deputy premier Jansa Zornjarski bluntly told yesterday's plenary session of the party central committee.

### Big fall in US shares

From Alex Brummer in Washington  
Share prices on the American markets moved into sharp reverse last night after the US Government reported that housing starts plunged some 16.2 per cent in December, projecting a potential slowdown in economic activity.

## US recession inevitable.

## PERSPECTIVES FOR CLASS WAR

The crisis almost automatically provokes class struggle. In the 1930's, the workers had been irreversibly politically defeated by social democracy and the Comintern. Nevertheless, the onset of the Depression brought about a massive explosion of class struggle on an international scale. These struggles, from the unemployed riots in Britain to the proletariat's last stand at the Barcelona telephone exchange, were doomed to defeat because most of the militant workers still had faith in social democracy and Leninism. Although the workers of today are far from revolutionary, they have one crucial advantage over their grandparents: they haven't been politically defeated. Many struggles since the 60's have ended in defeat, but these defeats have been qualitatively different to those of the 20's. The struggles of the 30's were overshadowed by the political defeat of the revolutionary wave of 1917-27, which made it impossible for all but a few dozen workers in the whole world to see the need to break with the Communist and Socialist Parties and the unions. The defeats of the current period, in which workers are more cynical about their so-called leaders, give minorities the chance to learn the lessons of each defeat and prepare to apply them to the next struggle. This is a slow process. It seems incredible that American soldiers should have gone through four major wars before beginning to rebel, but rebel they did, as the graveyards of some of their officers in Vietnam testify.

In spite of the international suppression of news of class struggle, it is clear that the world has seen a wave of struggle for some years. The struggles of violent minorities in Britain are more like those of the last century, before the Labour Party tamed the British working class. What happened in the miners' strike, in Toxteth and Tottenham, would have been unthinkable even during the highest points of the class struggle in the 20's. In parts of the world where illusions in reformism have never been strong, the ruling class confronts a desperate proletariat. The unemployed of Tunisia and Morocco and factory workers in Rumania and Korea have found it easier to win victories than the beneficiaries of Western democracy. Even in West Germany, steel workers have specifically stated their determination to learn the lessons of the piecemeal defeats of British workers, and forge a united fightback against redundancies.

The slow pace of the developing world crisis has given and continues to give workers time to learn lessons. To really shake the bourgeoisie will take united struggles of several sectors of workers. This happened in Poland in 1980, when a mass strike was provoked by food price increases which affected everyone. As the recession deepens, such all-out attacks on the whole working class will be unavoidable, opening up the long and difficult road to conscious international class struggle. The next decade could be an interesting one.

## Strikes sweep West Germany



Mutinying American soldiers at the PACE firebase in Vietnam in 1971. A detailed account of how the class struggle helped sabotage the US war effort can be found in Wildcat 8.

### NEW ADDRESS

Wildcat can only be contacted at the following address  
**BM CAT, LONDON WC1N 3XX, UK.**

Do not write 'Wildcat' on the envelope, otherwise your mail will not be answered.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

£3 for 4 issues (approximately 2 years). £5 for 4 issues plus any pamphlets produced in this time. £10 buys an ordinary share in Wildcat plc.. These are non-voting shares, since we do not believe in democracy, but entitle the shareholder to help distribute the journal in his or her area. DO NOT SEND CHEQUES - SEND POSTAL ORDERS OR MONEY ORDERS. Most back issues are still available. Price 50p inc. p&p, except issue 10, which is £1 inc p&p..

# DEMOCRACY

*The Constitution is paper, but bullets are steel -*  
Old Haitian Proverb.

## Introduction

Wildcat's original Basic Principles contained a commitment to common ownership and democratic control of the means of production by the working class. This position reflected the origins of our tendency in the social-democratic wing of the counter revolutionary self-management group Solidarity. Partly as a result of discussions in the Intercom journal in Britain, partly through contact with the GCI, and as a result of involvement in the miners' strike, Wildcat abandoned workers' democracy. The last issue contained articles clearly stating this, which had been agreed by the members preceding publication. It has to be admitted that most of Wildcat's members had kittens when they realised the implications of what they'd agreed to, and dropped out.

Rejection of all forms of democracy is now a precondition for involvement in this journal. However it's not a simple issue which can be reduced to a two sentence Basic Principle, and discussion on democracy continues. The following was written by a comrade in London, and represents the clearest response so far to what we said in Wildcat 10. There is one contradiction in this article. In one place it says no relations of force must exist between minorities and "the mass of workers". In a footnote, it says that a minority could fight even a mass of workers in a situation where the masses were reactionary, e.g. Northern Ireland. But generally the comrade is right to say it is impossible for a minority to intimidate large nos. of workers in the right direction, and even if it were possible, you cannot intimidate people into building communism. For the benefit of our critics, let's make it clear once again: only the conscious activity of many millions of proletarians can create a classless society.



## WORKERS' DEMOCRACY AND MINORITY ACTION

### I. Limits of Workers' Democracy

1. The notion that workers' councils are by definition revolutionary is clearly false; if workers have reactionary ideas, organs of workers' democracy will reflect this. For instance the Ulster Workers' Council (1) which coordinated the 1974 Protestant workers' strike was formed to oppose 'power-sharing' with Catholics in Northern Ireland, an action motivated not by a desire to do away with bourgeois democracy but by a wish to see the oppression of the Catholic minority continue.
2. Workers do not all become revolutionary simultaneously, and indeed in most episodes of the class war there tends to be a division (at least initially) between a militant minority and a more passive majority (2). If a revolution is to succeed such divisions need to be broken down, but in the meantime it's no use pretending they don't exist. Obviously in such situations workers' democracy, as a reflection of the ideas of a passive majority, would act as a dampener on the class struggle, and the minority would be quite correct to maintain its separate existence and to resist attempts to restrict its activity. For instance, if in the miners' strike a majority of miners had indicated that they opposed hit squads and violence against the police, it would have been right to argue that the militants should carry on regardless in their attempts to increase the effectiveness of the strike.
3. In a revolutionary situation there are many ways in which a minority might advance the struggle towards communism by such actions as initiating the free distribution of goods or the socialisation of housing (e.g. homeless people taking over Thatcher's Finchley manor). The argument that such actions amount to substitutionism (i.e. a small minority substituting themselves for the class) is based on the assumption that the working class either moves as a whole or not at all. Such a view completely ignores the reality of class struggle - the miners who went on strike in 1984 did not all spontaneously walk out at one and the same time. It was a small minority of miners,

those at Cortonwood colliery, who took the initiative without waiting for a ballot, after which the strike spread nationally. A minority can only be said to be acting in a substitutionist manner when it believes that it is sufficient unto itself, that is that by its own actions alone it can bring about revolutionary change.

4. The revolutionary minority cannot be identified with any single political organisation. The minority of workers fighting for the destruction of capitalism at any one time may be organised in a variety of ways - political groups, mass assemblies, strike committees, etc.. For many such workers the question of whether or not they constitute a majority hardly arises, they just get on with what needs to be done: "The workers themselves decide, not because such a right is given to them in accepted rules, but because they actually decide by their actions." Pannekoek, in Workers' Councils.

5. At the same time as the revolutionary minority does not seek approval for its actions by ballots or other democratic procedures, it also constantly works to expand its base and do away with the separation between minority and majority. It seeks to persuade other workers to participate both by the force of its arguments and the argument of its actions: "It may happen that a group cannot convince other groups by arguments, but then by its action and example it carries them away." Pannekoek, *ibid.*

### II. Limits of Minority Action

"All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority." Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto.

1. The revolutionary critique of democracy must clearly distinguish itself from the Leninist view. Lenin held that a minority, organised in a party, must seize state power for itself 'on behalf' of the proletariat. (For example, in On Compromises he states: "Our Party, like any political party, is striving after political domination for itself."). His views were shared by the Italian Communist Left ("the rule of the class can only be the rule of the party" - Bordiga, Party and Class Action) and are now articles of faith for a whole horde of latter-day leftists.

2. A seizure of state power could be carried out without the active support of the majority of the working class: Trotsky estimated that only 30-50,000 people took part in the October 1917 insurrection. However unlike previous revolutions (which have just involved the transfer of state power from one group to another), the communist revolution cannot be carried out by a small minority, no matter how far-sighted, wielding the state machine. Communism cannot be imposed from above or implemented by decree, it is a social revolution which must transform social relations at all levels. That is why "the emancipation of the working class can only be the task of the workers themselves."

3. It is not only the question of the practical tasks to be accomplished in the communist revolution that requires the mass involvement of the working class; it is only through mass struggle that the consciousness of the necessity of these tasks, of the need for communism, arises:

"Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, in a revolution; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew." Marx, German Ideology.

4. Forms of organisation alone do not guarantee a revolutionary content; nevertheless some forms of organisation have more revolutionary potential than others. For instance if a group of striking workers take control of their dispute from the unions and run things from regular autonomous mass assemblies this can be a significant and positive step in itself, both as a practical critique of unionism and in so far as it allows the collective action and confrontation of ideas from which revolutionary consciousness emerges. (Here form and content are not two completely separate categories - the change in form from a bureaucratically run 'stay at home' strike to mass assemblies itself implies a change in the workers' ideas, the content



# TUFFIN NEEDS A DUFFIN'

A contribution from comrades in the Post Office.

The past year has seen an unprecedented attack on the conditions of postal workers. The annual pathetic pay rise coupled with cuts in overtime and the increased casualisation of the workforce. However what the management didn't expect was the extent of the fightback, wildcat strikes have been breaking out through out the country especially in London. On average out of every six strikes in the country one is a postal strike.

The Union of Communication Workers (UCW) have attempted to sabotage the struggle at all levels, from General Secretary down to branch secretaries. In May workers at SWDO were told to cross picket lines and handle scab work by 'Marxist' branch secretary Ted Lewis (the only Marxist magistrate we know). In June Mike Hogan (UCW District Organiser for London) told workers at West Central to get back to work - they told him to 'fuck off' as did workers in other offices he tried to dissuade from coming out in solidarity. Examples like this are numerous but we feel that two quotes from General Secretary Alan Tuffin and one from a Grimsby postman sum up the unions' attitude. First Tuffin at a mass meeting in Manchester :

"Management attacks to provoke you, you must not react but await instructions from your union."

The second is from an article in the UCW paper praising the union and moaning about the management being mean... at Christmas!

"Our branch officials were run ragged at Xmas trying to avert confrontation ... the branch officers were more concerned about the Xmas mail than the management."

Whilst this was going on the UCW was going through its usual motions of talking about a shorter working week. Most postal workers work a six day, 43 hour week and this is an issue which has been knocking about for years. The workers strikes were at the same time beginning to hurt the Post Office and worry the union. Every letters office in London was involved in industrial action, if not strikes then work to rules, overtime bans, etc.. All of these disputes were won.

The union failed to control the strikes time after time, despite union-management talks on stopping the wildcats and despite an intensive propaganda campaign by management ('Wildcat strikes cost jobs') the strikes continued. The UCW then set about to retake control of the workers mounting a campaign around a three hour reduction which nobody was interested in and back into the official channels. They know that most postal workers didn't want to be drawn into a prolonged strike. They knew that most postal workers already made three hours or more on the job & finish system, why strike for something you already have? They also knew that a lot of people depended on the extra money from Christmas for decent presents for their kids and next years' holiday.

The strikes continued and the ballot approached. The ballot was won and the union 'held the nation to ransom' to quote the bourgeois press, while in reality they desperately tried to avert a strike.

"The secret talks have been a farce, why are the EC wasting our time negotiating anyway. Our demand is simple, 3 hours off the working week nothing less. It doesn't take two weeks of talk for the management to say yes or no. And why have we been kept in the dark over the talks. We could tell you ourselves, but we thought you might like to hear it from Tony Clarke, Deputy General Secretary : "The Post Office have got a reputation in recent years of saying the most outrageous things in negotiations and that would be rather silly if those sort of things got out to our members. We don't want any spontaneous reaction." From an LBC radio programme, November 23rd 1987. (Taken from Communication Worker 6, get it from BM 3644 London WC1N3XX).

The union in its desperation to keep the workers under control issued a circular (Appendix to SBC P37/87) telling members to scab, to handle black work and not to strike. In fact it was a whole list of the things which had caused strikes in the past year. Fortunately most workers just laughed at it.

"The ballot was won by a majority of 55%. The UCW went into negotiation. In the offices we were told nothing by the union, the papers and the Telly said there was going to be a deal, then next day the strike was back on and so on. Gradually the time within which the union was legally able to take action was running out. The deadline for negotiating was extended for another week. The press, MPs, the management, the union and every other fucker were talking about the tragedy of losing the Christmas mail. The mood on the floor was fuck the Christmas mail. On the 4th December negotiations broke down and Glasgow and Southend were ordered out on a 24 hour strike. A couple of hours later Tuffin had made up with the management and was on the TV telling them to go back to work - they didn't! At 10 pm, SEDO came out. Next day everyone at work was talking about it, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Penzance, London CCS and Luton were out and Tuffin was still saying go back to work. The radio kept reporting more offices going on strike. 3, 4, 5, 6000 out against the union. We were going to have a meeting to come out the next morning, then it collapsed, we'd been fucked again!" A London Postman.

For those who didn't know what was going on behind the scenes, including virtually all postmen and women, it must have seemed that the union was out of control. However a different picture has since emerged. After walking out of the negotiations, the union decided in the lift to go and see Brian Nicholson, new PO Chairman. At this stage action had already begun. While in Nicholson's office Tuffin looked out the window and saw Buckingham Palace. He later reported to the London District Council that "I felt inspired by this, and I decided then that I would not let my members and their families suffer at Christmas." Although union bosses claim to be inspired by some strange things at times, this takes some beating. Then Tuffin

'dragged the Post Office back to the negotiating table' but while this was going on secret phone calls were made to Branch secs at offices due to come out telling them to carry on with the action to put pressure on the PO regardless of what he said on TV. There were seven offices out on this 'official wildcat'. Other offices were out over local issues, e.g. Luton, and possibly others just walked out in solidarity though we can't confirm this.

When Tuffin got the deal and the strikers went back to work, postal workers were incensed. At the time nobody knew the full details of the deal, but that didn't matter 1½ hours wasn't enough. One UCW branch sec said "I don't want to walk onto the floor and have half my membership trying to lynch me".

## LETTER WORKERS SPEAK

Wildcats (real ones this time) broke out against the union. Brent Cross came out for 24 hours and held a demonstration outside UCW headquarters in Clapham. A brick was thrown through a window and one of the unions' assistant secs. said to the press "the union is willing to talk to any members about the deal but in a proper disciplined manner, not out in the open with three hundred angry people". That night Bristol walked out for 24 hours and the next day it was Birmingham. At present the union is balloting on the offer and trying to scare people into voting yes by saying if they don't accept the deal there'll be a strike and we'll get stuffed like the miners did. The day after the union promised that the Christmas mail was safe at least 24 offices were taking unofficial action. As the Guardian reported, "Post office chiefs are to meet union leaders in a fresh attempt to curb the rising number of wildcat strikes which have disrupted postal services in the past year." Postal workers are prepared to fight, the task of the militants in the industry is to prevent the struggle from falling into official channels which always lead to defeat. Workers from Brent Cross demonstrating outside UCW house were still within those official channels. The unions are not our organisations, they belong to the bosses. There is no point in trying to change the rule book, make it more democratic etc.. The rule book must be ripped up! Instead of demonstrating outside union HQ, we need to spread action via flying pickets. Those who lead us to put faith in the unions are leading us to defeat. Ultimately the unions must be destroyed.

## POST SCRIPT

The offer was accepted in the ballot, after the union let the issue drop for about 2 months, to us it was a dead issue by then. We knew we had lost that particular struggle whichever way the ballot went. Since then strikers in Bristol, Leicester, Edinburgh (in support of health workers), High Wycombe, all over London and various other places in the provinces have shown that postal workers are not defeated. ○ ○



# CLASS WAR - THE PAPER THAT SUPPORTS OUR BOYS.



Class War is the media's favourite group. Sensationalist articles in the press and on the TV have promoted these anarchists' self image as uncompromising extremists dedicated to the destruction of everything the rich hold dear. In reality, Class War defends all kinds of reactionary ideas. The clearest example was in Class War 25 : "My dad fought in the war and I was proud of him. Remember the working class won that war....".

Class War believe that the second world war was fought in defence of the working class by the working class. It's not often today that left wing groups defend such views with the clarity and stupidity of Class War. But during the war itself, left wingers were among the most rabid supporters of the war drive, urging the imprisonment of strikers as agents of Hitler. Today the heirs of this tradition are organised in Anti Fascist Action, a popular front of liberal schoolteachers, anarchists and Labour supporters, which organises demos against the remnants of the National Front, etc..

We're all in favour of fighting fascists. But fighting racism means fighting Labour and the Tories as well. Camden's Labour council are actually implementing the racist policies the NF merely talk about. Unlike Anti Fascist Action, we do not march to the Cenotaph to commemorate the victims of fascism, but not those of British imperialism.

World war two was not won by the working class. It was an imperialist war. Britain went to war because Germany threatened her economic interests. During the war Nazi atrocities were matched by Allied ones. The bombing of Germany and Japan was every bit as barbaric as Auschwitz. In February 1945 the British and Americans massacred the population of Dresden in Germany. This town had no economic or military value. However it was largely made of wood so it burnt well. It was packed with refugees fleeing the tender mercies of the Russian Army. So bombing Dresden caused maximum civilian casualties. It was a straightforward act of racist mass murder.

Today, the ideology of anti-fascism, the idea that democracy must be defended against fascism, is wearing a bit thin. But during the Falklands war, one argument was that it was a war against the fascist government of Argentina. Class War was thrown out of Anti Fascist Action. But the quote from issue 25 above shows that it defends their ideas. It is as reactionary as any other leftist group.

My dad fought in the war and I was proud of him.



Remember the working class won that war...



Piles of bodies after the bombing of Dresden.

## HEROES OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION. No.1: NIKOLAI BUKHARIN

Nikolai Bukharin has just been rehabilitated in the Soviet Union, 50 years after his execution by Stalin in the Moscow Trials. He is back in favour because his support for the New Economic Policy, which gave Russian peasants freedom to produce for the market, vaguely resembles the new right-wing economic policies which are taking Russia towards liberal capitalism.

Prior to NEP, Bukharin was the main theoretician of the Bolshevik Left. In 1915-16 he opposed Lenin's support for national liberation movements, arguing that the development of modern imperialism meant that national liberation was a myth. Imperialism was a world system from which no nation could break free. Here Bukharin misses the point : whether or not a nation state can free itself from the imperialist system makes no difference to the irreducible antagonism between capital and labour in that country. The Bolsheviks' failure to see this led to the promotion of alliances between classes in the colonies against the common enemy, imperialism. The result was the massacre of workers in the colonies by the Bolsheviks' bourgeois allies.

Bukharin opposed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk of 1918, where the Bolshevik government signed a peace treaty with German imperialism. Practically, he said it would prolong the war, and hold back the revolution in the West. More importantly, he and the Bolshevik Left opposed the deal in principle : revolutionaries do not sit around a table with the butchers of the working class, trading areas of land and their inhabitants in return for peace. Bukharin's allies among the working class were not only Left Bolsheviks, but opponents of the treaty in other parties like the Left SRs and some anarchists. The "revolutionary party" was not the Bolshevik Party, but the revolutionary elements of several parties and none. However, after losing the debate on Brest-Litovsk, Bukharin stayed within Bolshevik discipline and the democratic decision of the Soviets to ratify the treaty.

The Civil War led to another major error on Bukharin's part. The militarisation of every aspect of economic life, the collapse of the currency, together with the introduction of rationing, led him to describe the economy as "War Communism". It



DON'T HANG AROUND - BUY A SHARE IN WILDCAT!

was nothing of the sort. The law of value still operated through the black market, the currency was replaced by barter, and tentative socialist projects in the Ukraine were crushed by the Red Army in the interests of the emerging capitalist state.

The end of the Civil War and the absurdity of War Communism led to Bukharin's dramatic lurch to the right in 1921 when he supported NEP. By this time the Bolshevik Party was unequivocally capitalist, and the debates which took place at the 10th Party Congress, at the same time as the suppression of the Kronstadt uprising, were debates about how to run capitalism.

It made no difference to the working class which Old Bolsheviks presided over their exploitation. We do not mourn Bukharin, but try to learn from his fatal programmatic errors.



WILDCAT plc announces the issue of ORDINARY SHARES at £10 each. These entitle the shareholder to a DISTRIBUTION FRANCHISE. A bundle of Wildcat journals will be sent for distribution to bookshops, factories and other proletarian concentrations in your locality. See page 5 for our address.

# WHY THE THIRD WORLD

## DOESN'T EXIST

The idea of dividing the world into a 1st and 2nd world on the one hand and a 3rd world on the other has its origins in 19th century ideas of inevitable and rightful "progress". These beliefs reflected both the rapid accumulation of capital in Europe and North America and the need for competing capitals to expand into pre-capitalist areas of the world. This need was crudely justified by the ruling class in the form of "civilisation vs barbarism". This view was taken at face value by most of the "Socialist" movement. It was generally believed that each part of the world had to become fully capitalist before it was possible to struggle for socialism in that area. This is a nationalist approach.

By the 1940's and 50's when capitalism had spread almost everywhere and the colonial system was crumbling, bourgeois ideology had become slightly more sophisticated with the notion of underdevelopment. This category was supported by the emerging national anti-colonial ruling classes as much as by the leading imperialist bourgeoisies. The latter saw it in terms of some countries being unfortunately backward, while the former saw it more in terms of unfair terms of trade, dependency etc.. They thought that the "advanced" countries were deliberately preventing the 3rd world from "developing". This is wrong: it is the logic of capitalist exchange itself which leads to a widening gap between capitals of differing organic composition, not an imperialist conspiracy.

### Capital punishment

I'll briefly explain this point before going on to contrast development ideology with the real world.

The organic composition of a productive unit or commodity is the ratio of dead to living labour in it. In other words, a highly automated production process has a higher organic composition than a less automated one. In order for a capital of lower organic composition to catch up with one of higher composition, it would need to achieve a higher rate of profit. But the rate of profit (which is not the same as the rate of surplus value, the difference between what workers produce and the cost of their maintenance) tends to equalise throughout the different branches of capital. Assuming an identical rate of surplus value,  $s/v$ , this means that in an exchange between a commodity produced with a high organic composition,  $c/v$ , and one with a lower composition, the commodities will not exchange at their values. The one with the higher composition will exchange at more than its value, and the lower will exchange at less than its. Accordingly, there will be a constant drain of value from capitals of low organic composition to those of high. Geoff Kay explains this more lucidly on p108 of Development and Underdevelopment, MacMillan 1975.

This can be summed up more simply. The capitalist system works on "unto him that hath it shall be given". It is therefore difficult for a poorer capital to break into the world market unless it uses some drastic method of primitive accumulation to get started, or unless it can become a valuable investment area for foreign capital.

To return to the imperialist and the national bourgeoisies, both categories of vermin clearly identified development

## Introduction

A contribution from a comrade in the Thames valley on international capitalism and class struggle. It was originally written as an introductory talk for a communist discussion group. It assumes a fair knowledge of basic communist arguments, and presupposes the interdependent nature of international capitalism, the capitalist nature of all states, and the irreconcilable enmity between the capitalist and working classes. Any correspondence on these and other points will be passed on to the author.

with industrial capitalism and the reproduction in the "underdeveloped" countries of the kind of affluence experienced in the "developed" world.

The truth is that development does occur but capitalism develops a proletariat and commodity production, and not necessarily a Western standard of living for the former.

Development ideology is often uncritically reproduced in the attitudes of so-called communists. This can take the form of the crude Eurocentrism of some of the left communists, who take the view that class struggle is only of significance in Europe and America. The rest of the world is known as capitalism's "periphery". Sometimes they assume that there was no significant revolutionary struggle outside the "heartlands" of capital, nor communist tradition. The GCI are a welcome exception: their publication Communism No. 4 contains an article on the revolutionary struggle in Patagonia. I have heard of a revolutionary tradition in Iraq, and it's likely that there's other examples that we've yet to uncover.

Some think there's little class struggle outside the Northern Hemisphere, just endless bourgeois faction fights. Where class struggle is partially recuperated it is assumed that the movement for democracy completely dominates events. This approach led the Parisian cafe intellectuals of La Banquise to state that there is no class struggle in South Africa, only a struggle against apartheid!

### CENTRES OF ACCUMULATION

It is not denied that some parts of the world are richer than others. Capital tends to have definite centres of accumulation. There have been different centres at different times: for example the decline of Spain and Portugal from the 16th to the 18th centuries, and the contemporary emergence of the Pacific region. Neither am I denying that the prospects for class struggle are different in various regions of the globe, or that the class struggle takes different forms. However, dividing the world into developed vs underdeveloped regions is no good as a starting point for understanding the world-wide disposition of class forces.

### WORLDS APART

The term "3rd World" is not used entirely consistently but is usually taken to mean: the whole of Central and South America, the whole of Africa, the whole of Asia apart from Soviet bits of it, usually China, the Caribbean, most of the Pacific islands and most of the Middle East. This vast conglomeration of nations supposedly have a whole series of things in common which set them apart from the "developed" countries of the Western and Eastern blocs. The most obvious thing they are supposed to have in common is poverty. If you look at a published league table of income per capita you tend to find 1st and 2nd world countries near the top and 3rd near the bottom. On the other hand, Libya has a higher standard of living than Britain, and Argentina, Uruguay and Iran all have higher standards of living than Portugal, Hungary and Poland. Venezuela has a standard of living comparable with Spain and Ireland, though the latter are both in the EEC. The economist's concept of poverty is in any case misleading since it ignores the role of subsistence production which significantly contributes to the liveli- ➤

hood of large parts of the world population. This is not a uniform feature of Africa and Asia. In some parts the process of destruction of indigenous agriculture in favour of cash-cropping is more advanced than in others, with devastating consequences, e.g. Ethiopia.

Another supposedly common feature of 3rd world countries is largely peasant populations. It is undeniable that most countries known as 3rd world are less urbanised than Britain. But so are most of Russia and Eastern Europe, certainly Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. The clearest example is Poland, where 30% of the economically active population works in agriculture, and most of these are peasants. The degree to which there are rural proletarians rather than peasants is highly variable. There are lots of peasants in Africa and India, and not so many in South America, though precise figures are hard to come by, since economists don't usually classify the population by class. It can be safely said however that almost every country in the world is more urbanised than Russia was in 1917 and hardly anywhere is as overrun with peasants.

Political instability is another stereotypical feature of the 3rd world nations. This is another dodgy concept because it fails to distinguish between the ability of a state to rule effectively over faction fights within the bourgeoisie, including unresolved national questions and so forth, and ability to control the class struggle. The bourgeois media try to present these two sources of political instability as the same: "there is unrest because they don't know how to create a popular government". In terms of the first type, bourgeois instability, it is true that the poorest countries, particularly those in Africa, often have military governments which is usually a sign of weakness on the part of the state. But the concept of the 3rd world also includes states which are very stable such as Mexico. Zimbabwe how appears to have achieved a fair measure of stability. The old Rhodesian state was more or less taken over wholesale by the current regime, with the expert assistance of British imperialism.

Bourgeois instability is not infrequently faked as a way of dealing with proletarian instability, the class struggle. Witness the endless government crises in Italy, or the supposedly world-shattering deposing of Marcos in the Philippines, which basically consisted of one bourgeois family leaving the country.

## Revolutionary Travel Guide

The most interesting parts of the world might be expected to be those where both kinds of instability coexist. In other words, those where is a lot of class struggle but the local bourgeoisie can't "get there act together" to

deal with it. An example might be Argentina, or Yugoslavia. The danger in this sort of speculation is that one can lose sight of the need for class struggle to internationalise. But it is fair to ask about the prospects for class struggle in different parts of the world.

At first sight it might appear that in the very poorest countries such as Ethiopia class struggle is almost impossible because the proletariat is so crushed by starvation. In reality it is the other way round. The working class is starving because of lack of struggle. Even in dirt poor countries like Zambia and places like Tunisia and Morocco the working class has been able to resist austerity. Even in Ethiopia there were large-scale workers' struggles in Addis Ababa in 1974.

Obviously a strike in Chicago has more implications than one in Chimalapa. However industrial concentration isn't the only important factor; the mass strike in Poland was important because of Poland's strategic value. In more industrialised countries the proletariat may be "physically" stronger and have a long history of struggle, but the bosses are also stronger. This is almost true by definition since if the bosses have accumulated more they must have "won the class war" for longer. The working class in these areas may be more sectionalist because efforts by sections have been able to win concessions.

I must reiterate that in the long run no section of the working class can win on its own. You can no more have communism in Britain than communism in Tibet. Even if the proletariat seized power throughout North America the priority would be to spread the struggle. Even if the Polish mass strike had not immediately been prevented from going further by respect for nationalism and Catholicism the struggle would inevitably have reverted to some form of nationalism if it proved impossible to generalise the struggle across national frontiers.

A brief look at the recent history of mass strikes in Europe shows what a powerful barrier to revolution nationalism is. This looks particularly disheartening when you consider how small Europe is. I would suggest that any struggle that openly spread across national frontiers would have an electrifying effect on the class struggle. But I would also expect that this is not likely to happen without the development of strong links of solidarity across national frontiers before major struggles break out. We can expect these links to be made between proletarians who have an immediate need of them, dockers, ferrymen and people working for multinational companies for example, as well as the minorities who consciously know of and fight for communism. These latter must always use their knowledge of the history of the class struggle to point out the crucial necessity of internationalising the struggle and find concrete ways of doing it. □

# NAILING RELIGION: THE POPE AND DEMOCRACY



A leaflet produced by the communist group Workers' Emancipation during the Pope's visit to Argentina.



"A youth on crutches, a veteran of the Malvinas war, was knocked to the ground by jets from the police water-cannon lorry. They later drove it into the crowd. Youths with bloody faces were taken prisoner, sometimes dragged across the ground by their hair..." You might suppose that these scenes took place in Chile, or under a past military government, but NO, THEY HAPPENED FIVE DAYS AGO, HERE IN ARGENTINA.

A peaceful demonstration against the pope and what he represents, held on Friday (3.4.87) near the Obelisk, was disrupted first by unknown people who threw a smoke bomb from a car, then 15 minutes later by the police. Their threatening behaviour, with their guns, batons, helmets, vehicles, an armoured car (later more arrived), soon TURNED INTO THE OPEN VIOLENCE THAT WE EXPECT FROM THE RULING CLASS.

This showed us once again that under democracy there is liberty... to do what they want us to do, to say... what they want to hear and are prepared to tolerate. Clearly, three days before the arrival of the Pope, they couldn't allow a gathering that was shouting, among other things "CHURCH, SHIT: DICTATORSHIP"; and, showing that despite everything people haven't lost their sense of

humour, scandalised some hypocrites by taking up the cry: "WE WANT TO FUCK, WE WANT TO FUCK."

"Welcome to your spiritual home" said a poster which showed John-Paul II in a can of deodorant [ we don't understand this bit either ] . "The Pope has come to bless genocide" said another. But the government couldn't put up with this for long. While the crowd was still growing (people were just beginning to come out of work) it gave the order to charge. Some fled rapidly, but most stayed, shouting slogans against the police, against the church, against the Pope. There were sit-downs, there was tear gas, there was brutality meted out to stragglers and people cut off from the crowd, without respect for age, health or sex. Result: more than 100 arrested, 30 injured. Today those arrested are free, but their cases are pending - in the face of a conspiracy of silence by all those who profit from democracy.

But thi is not the only result. IT SHOWED THAT WE CAN'T BE INDIFFERENT. IT SHOWED THAT OUTSIDE OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES - left and right, all electoralist, all ultimately defenders of the rule of capitalism - THERE EXISTS AT MINIMUM THE CAPACITY TO ORGANISE OURSELVES. And MOST IMPORTANT: WOJTYLA, the whole world doesn't love you, nor is everyone prepared to follow your call to submit to repression and exploitation. In the messenger of peaceful exploitation, to the representative of the millenarian church in the service of power and money we say GO HOME! - knowing that in Italy also there are those who say, GET THEE FROM ROME AND THE WORLD OF LABOUR. Amen.

# Wildcat

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## THE BRITISH DISEASE IS BACK - LET'S MAKE IT FATAL.

No sooner had Thatcher announced that the British disease had been cured than the biggest wave of industrial discontent since the miners' strike began.

The importance of these strikes is not just that many different sections of workers have been involved, but also the genuine possibility of them linking up in a united struggle. Car workers, seamen, postal workers, council workers, civil servants, miners, nurses and many others have struck in defence of their interests. But the most exciting development is the number of strikes of workers in defence of other workers. The most important of these has been a series of strikes against cuts in the National Health Service. Miners at Frickley, Vauxhall workers, Thorn-EMI, postal workers and others have come out on one-day strikes to support nurses. Nurses have joined the picket lines at Fords, with banners saying "Health Workers support you". A few coachloads of nurses could bring out millions of workers, close down the country and force Thatcher to her knees.

### ALL OUT

The reason for this is not the sentimental idea that nurses deserve a better deal, but the obvious fact that cuts in the NHS are an attack on the whole working class. When capitalism is forced to make all-out attacks on us all, the danger of an all-out working class response is obvious. This is what happened in Poland in 1980 when the government announced food price rises. The current strikes in

Britain clearly point the way to a similar development here.

### UNION SABOTAGE

Any attempt to link up the current strikes into a mass strike will be opposed by the unions. The T&GWU told Ford workers to accept a "historic deal" from the company including flexible working. The workers wouldn't have it, and after a week of a strike which halted production in Spain and Belgium as well as Britain, got a better deal out of Ford. The NUS took control of the ferry strikes and then ordered the men back when told to by a judge. They got most of the ferry workers back, leaving the P&O (aka Townsend Thoreson) workers at Dover isolated. However these workers



have been organising links with other workers, and disputes around the ports continue. The NUM called off its overtime ban just as the current strike wave started, and just as the pit deputies struck. Dividing workers into small sections and defeating them is what trade unions are all about.

The unions' interest is in the continued maintenance of stable capitalist production. Our interest is exactly the opposite. The Tory government is launching an all-out attack on our working conditions, our health and safety, and our living standards. The only way to stop them is a massive wave of strikes outside union control.

That's only the beginning. After the strike wave of 1974, they brought in the Labour Party to attack our class. All governments are our enemy. Only the destruction of all states by a worldwide revolution can solve our problems once and for all. In the meantime, strikes should be taken as far as possible. Workers should form united strike committees with demands based on the needs of the working class. They should refuse to return to work until all other workers demands are met.

MORE MONEY FOR THE NHS. A LARGE FLAT RATE PAY RISE FOR ALL NHS WORKERS - PORTERS, CLEANERS, NURSES, THEATRE STAFF, ETC.. No new disciplinary codes (such as the ones for nurses and miners). Immediate strikes in support of any workers dismissed, suspended or deployed to a job they don't normally do. NO TO UNION DIVISIONS! NO TO MODERATION!

Spread the strikes!

Wildcat's

## BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. We are for the abolition of capitalism by communist revolution on a world scale. We are for the destruction of the money/market/wages system which exists in every country in the world, and its replacement by a classless society, in which goods are distributed according to needs and desires. We will abolish the division between work and leisure. The role of revolutionaries is to actively participate in escalating the class war toward this end.
2. We are against all forms of capitalism; private, state and self-managed.
3. We are actively opposed to all ideologies which divide the working class, such as religion.
4. We are actively opposed to all divisions in the working class whereby one section oppresses another, such as sexism and racism.
5. We are against all expressions of nationalism, including national liberation movements such as the IRA.

6. The working class (wage labourers, the unemployed, housewives, etc.), is the revolutionary class; only its struggle can liberate humanity from scarcity, war and economic crisis. We support independent working class struggle, in all areas of life under capitalism, outside the control of the trade unions and all political parties.

7. We are against trade unions because they are part of the capitalist system, selling our labour power to the bosses, and sabotaging our struggles.

8. We totally oppose all capitalist parties, including the Labour Party and other organisations of the capitalist left. We are against participation in fronts with these organisations.

9. We are against participation in parliamentary elections; we are for the smashing of the capitalist state by the working class and the establishment of organisations of working class power.

10. We are against sectarianism, and support principled cooperation among revolutionaries.