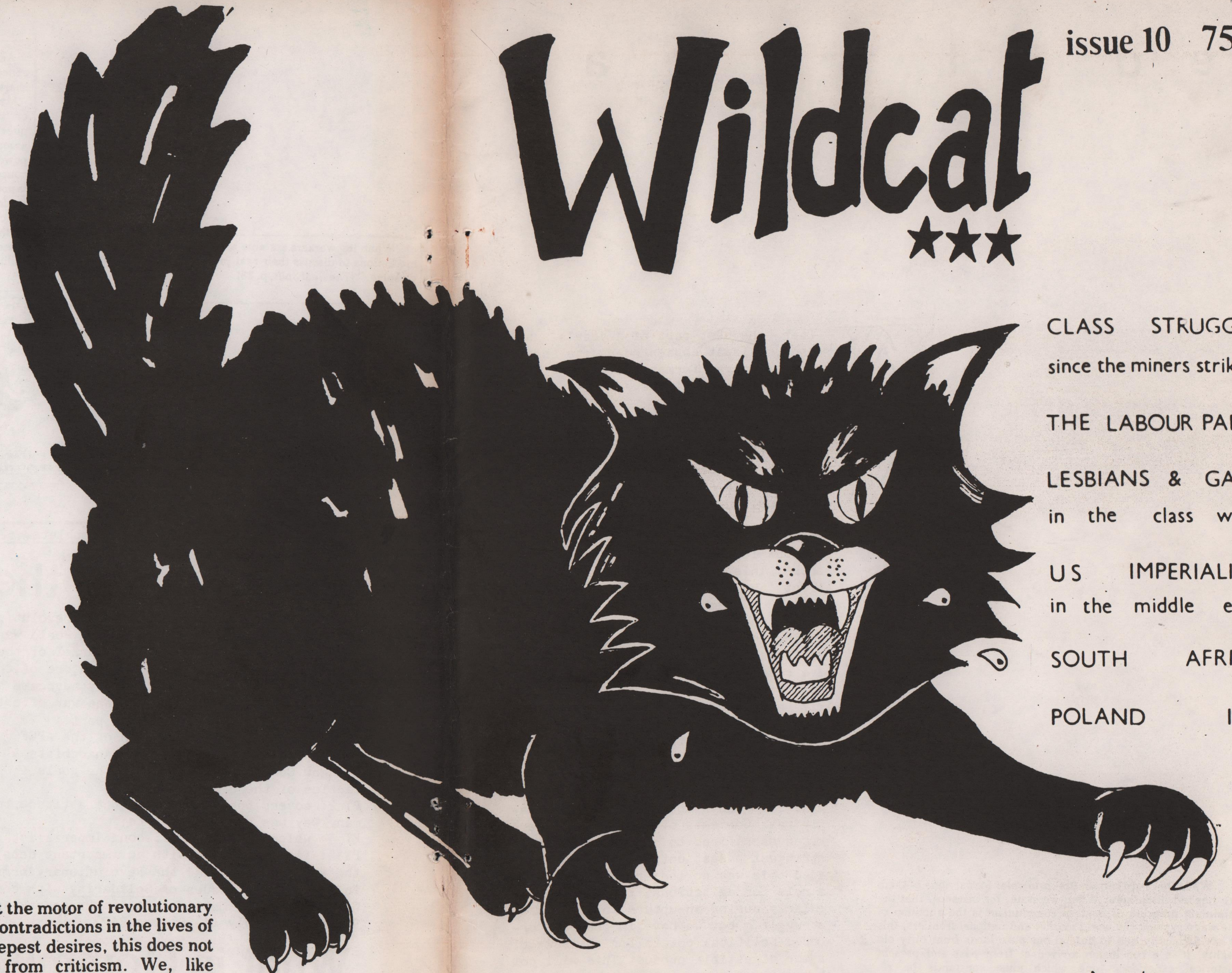


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issue 10 75p

Wildcat



CLASS STRUGGLE
since the miners strike

THE LABOUR PARTY

LESBIANS & GAYS
in the class war

US IMPERIALISM
in the middle east

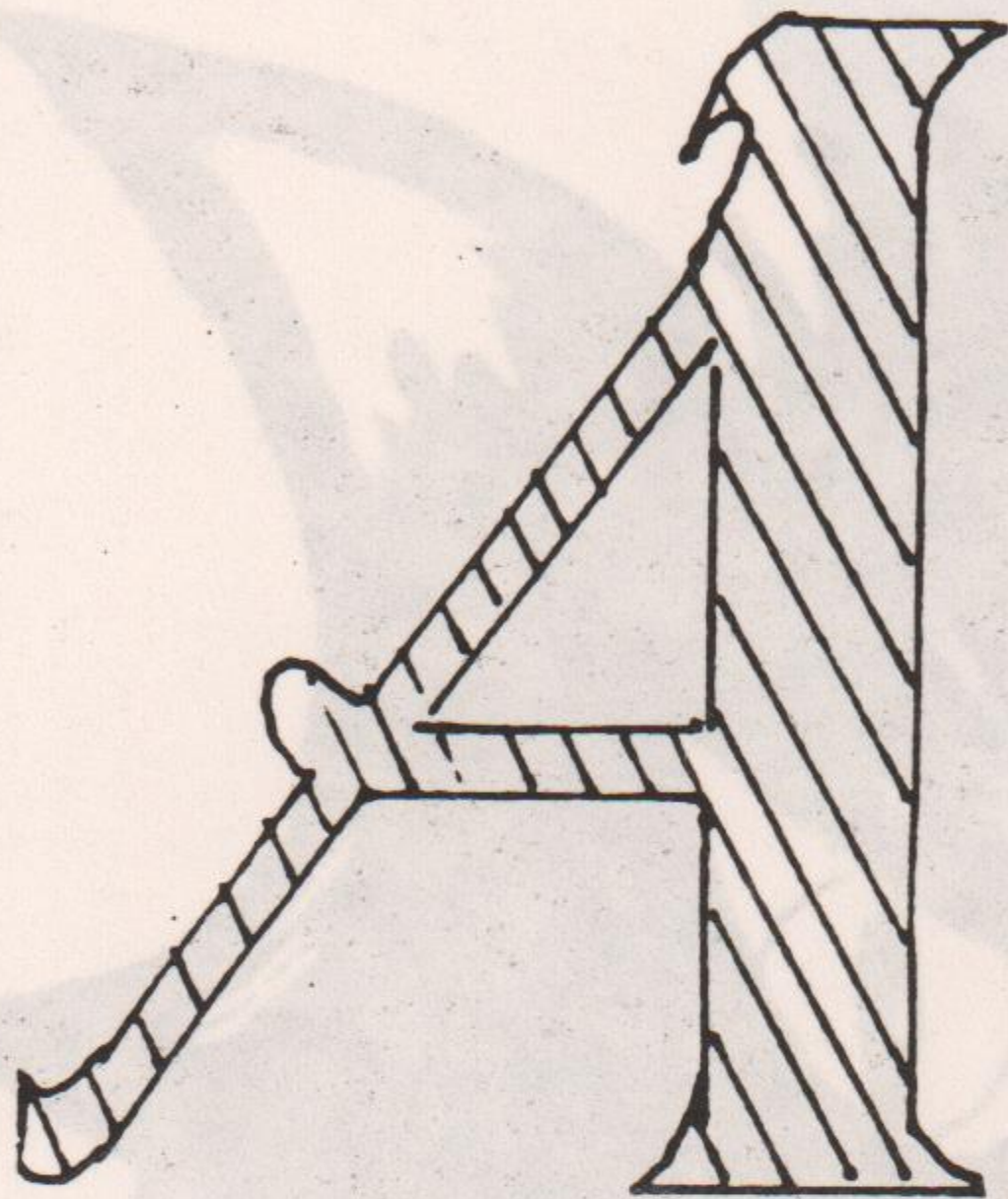
SOUTH AFRICA

POLAND 1981

Or again, when we assert that the motor of revolutionary activity is not "ideals" but the real contradictions in the lives of proletarians, as well as their own deepest desires, this does not exempt our lives or our desires from criticism. We, like everyone else, carry the virus of the counterrevolution in our bloodstream, ready to multiply at the first sign of weakness or self-deception. We are not interested in the endless repetition of "positions" and "lines". Such entrenchments have a way of suffering the fate of the French defenses along the German border in 1940 — and the counterrevolution is at least as fast and mobile as a Wehrmacht armored division. Let us leave mantra-mumbling to mystics and Maoists.

THE ENEMY OF THE WORKING CLASS IS 'ITS OWN' RULING CLASS-
REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATISM IN
THE IRAN IRAQ WAR

e d i t o r i a l



fter the best part of a year's absence, Wildcat again rears its head, with a changed format, and what we hope will be some new ideas.

We have not been inactive since the last issue; rather, we have directed our activity towards debates on the questions of democracy, class struggle and the role and nature of our interventions. Our members have also been involved in disputes and support groups in their areas and distributing various leaflets when the opportunity arose. This journal, we hope, will reflect the content of our discussions and throw them open to our readers. One of the problems we encountered in producing an agitational paper was that it had a tendency to produce a passive readership. Whilst this may pay the print bill (just!) this was obviously not what we aimed at but the result of the agitational approach; the further we went, the more we found our audience (sic) becoming separated from the life of the group. The format of the old style Wildcat reflected what its content could be and invariably was. Contents of articles were often sacrificed to an overwhelmingly stringent budget until finally we decided this was no longer on. There is a role for agitational papers, particularly during an upturn in the class struggle, but we have in the past dropped political points for the sake of a more digestible product. This will not happen in future.

Now we hope we can in some way throw open the cast iron doors of the Wildcat vault and encourage greater participation from our readers; exchange of ideas will result in a movement of all those taking part. In the past year Wildcat has been involved in discussions with communist groups, parti-

While there are certain first principles for us, none of them are beyond discussion. When we state, for instance, that the minimum program of modern communism is the abolition of the wage system, the world market and national frontiers, this is not a chastity belt to defend our pure ideas from dirty old reality. It is a conclusion arrived at from past and present historical experience—one which must constantly be re-substantiated and made meaningful in practical, strategic terms.

I N T R O



cularly in Europe. The most productive of these discussions has been with the GCI (Internationalist Communist Group) and has resulted, not merely in an exchange of independent sets of broadly communist ideas, but a genuine movement in the group, greater theoretical clarification vis-a-vis issues which were previously fudged in the interests of the mythical 'group unity', and a commitment to joint internationalist work. In accordance with this the GCI have produced a text on defeatism in the Iran-Iraq war, which we feel is a reflection of genuine proletarian action taking place in response to the slaughter of proletarians in a barbarous capitalist war. The events in Iraq in particular have shown once again how the spectre of communism definitively haunts capital. Iraq has been the scene of perhaps the greatest anti-war movement by the proletariat since the first world war. We have also responded positively to internationalists in Argentina, and attempted to produce a joint leaflet on the Falklands anniversary. This was unsuccessful for technical reasons. Discussions with Emancipation Obrera continue. A draft of the leaflet is reproduced in this issue.

Broadly, then, the aims of the journal are first and foremost to uncover, publicise, and criticise, with a view to further discussion/joint work, all elements of resistance to this miserable society. From an understanding of these rejections in both their form, and, more particularly, the quality of their content, we hope to discuss with other like-minded people with a view to developing communist theory. Communist theory isn't 'what Marx said' - as it would appear from reading much of the left-wing press - but an elaboration of the

struggle of the proletariat, our class: its resistance to this society's discipline in all its forms. You can sit at home reading Marx till the cows come home, but it won't make you a communist. The struggle of the proletariat takes place on the streets, in the home, and in the workplace, not in the musty pages of the Pelican edition of 'Capital' - theory only becomes worthwhile when it is realised in revolutionary practice, at which point theory will be in motion and the separation which appears to exist between it and practice will disappear. This is not to say that reading Marx isn't valuable, but that its value can only be assessed in its impact on the action of the reader. Having said this we don't expect you, the reader, to put down this issue of Wildcat and immediately go into the shed and fix yourself a Molotov cocktail before starting the revolution! Neither, however, do we expect you to toss it to one side like you would a copy of the Face and wait for the next issue to come out. We do expect you to get involved - tell us what you think, begin correspondence with us, suggest areas where we might work together if the possibility arises, and generally keep us informed of resistance in your locality.

ADDRESSES

WILDCAT BOX W, 180 MANSFIELD RD. NOTTINGHAM.
or BOX W, 75 PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER, M1 2BU.

GCI BP 54, BRUXELLES 31, 1060 BRUXELLES.

EMANCIPATION OBRERA can be contacted via Wildcat

CLASS STRUGGLE SINCE THE MINER'S STRIKE

Since the defeat of the miner's strike in March in 1985, there has been a downturn in the class struggle in Britain. The News International strike was defeated by a combination of hard-line management, police and union manoeuvres, leading to lay-offs in the print industry, following the mass redundancies throughout manufacturing and mining.

But the class struggle has not gone away, even in Britain, and if we look at the international situation, we can see no reason for complacency in the palaces and penthouses of our class enemy. Like the rich bastards who perished in the hotel burnt down by impoverished Puerto Rican strikers, our rulers should regard the smoke rising from the lower decks with some apprehension.

After a brief respite in the US recession, financed by a savage attack on living conditions in the poorer countries, the crisis has returned. The OECD has just revised its forecast of world growth in 1987 from 3 to 2.5%. Economists are becoming pessimistic about the precipitous state of the US economy. Wall St bankers are calling for international action to prevent a further collapse of the dollar's purchasing power, which could lead to a full scale economic crisis in America, leading in turn to recession in the Western world, which depends on the US for much of its export market. 75 US banks have had to be rescued so far this year, and the decision of Citibank and Chase Manhattan to take heavy losses against Latin American debts sent shock waves through the financial markets of the world. Each stock market fall is worse than the one before, and although international capitalism is more coordinated than it was in 1929, its ability to phase in the crisis is not infinite, as shown by serious fears of trade war.

The international working class will not be slow to defend its living conditions in the face of the deepening crisis. In fact, outside Britain, it hasn't stopped.

As soon as the miners' strike ended, a massive strike wave swept Denmark, starting with a call from the trade unions for a 24 hour token strike against national wage restraint and a demand for a reduction in working hours, it spread rapidly and spontaneously into an all out strike of major sections of the State and public services and began to draw in the private sector. Despite concessions from the government to the trade union demands, measures to prohibit strikes and constant appeals from the trade unions to return to work, the strikes continued for another 15 days until further negotiated settlements in different sectors began to sap the unity and solidarity of the movement.



In the following year from April to June '86 there was a second major strike wave in Belgium. There was a spontaneous coalminers' walkout in Limbourg which rapidly spread throughout the coal fields. At the same time there were struggles against redundancies in docks, steel and railways, joined by other public sector workers and then the private sector. The unemployed and school students joined in, and mass secondary picketing was organised outside the unions. Only after concessions were made by the government were the unions able to end the strikes.

At the end of December following the French government's climbdown on educational reform in the face of mass student and school student protests, a small group of railway engineers issued a leaflet calling

The great train coal rustlers

By Tony Heath

Police in South Wales are calling for reinforcements in their campaign to catch organised gangs of raiders who have hijacked more than £10,000 worth of coal this year from trains travelling down the Cynon Valley.

Chief Inspector Stephen Chapman, of the British Transport Police, says the 40 officers responsible for Cardiff and the South Wales valleys are stretched to the limit. "We are stemming the tide, but it is a question of when we are over-run," he said.

The thieves, who co-ordinate their operations with CB radios, lie in wait in a narrow defile for trains moving coal from the National Smokeless Fuels plant near Aberdare.

They have used trees, sleepers and on one occasion a signal gantry to block the single-track rail line. Once a train is halted the thieves converge and open the wagon doors. Coal spills out and is carted away in wheelbarrows, sacks, and even redundant prams.

Police believe that more than 100 people, including children aged as young as five, are involved.

In a novel move to catch the thieves officers have been riding "shotgun" on the trains, which run up to three times a day. They liaise by radio with colleagues patrolling the valley floor in unmarked cars, but the raiders are known to eavesdrop on police frequencies.

The police also face a daunting logistical problem. Chief Inspector Chapman's beat stretches from Fishguard to the Severn Tunnel: keeping an eye on such a huge patch with limited resources is not easy, and other priorities such as invasions of Cardiff Central railway station by football fans have to be taken into account in making manpower dispositions.

Much of the booty from the raids is rumoured locally to be sold at knock-down prices to the needy or given free to pensioners, although police maintain that the raiders are simply out to make money. They point out that coal from the plant can fetch £140 a tonne.

However, given the local groundswell of sympathy for what some regard as the valley's Robin Hood raiders, the officers face an uphill struggle in making arrests. Yesterday Chief Inspector Chapman appealed to the Cynon Valley borough council and the local community for help.

Recently, the raiders have developed a dangerous technique described by railway hands as a sort of Russian roulette. When a train slows to take a curve men run alongside it and pull open the chute levers to spill the coal out. Police fear that this adds to the possibility of accident, derailment and injury.

Chief Supt Chapman believes it is potentially lethal. Death or serious injury is only a matter of time, he said. "It is potentially the most serious matter I've dealt with in 20 years' service."

The Cynon valley and its immediate area have been devastated by colliery closures. Male unemployment is running at 25 per cent, and economists and sociologists have identified it as one of Western Europe's most deprived black spots.

for a mass meeting to discuss opposition to the employers' attempts to restructure the railways. This led to an immediate strike of Paris railway engineers, which spread rapidly throughout the rail network. The strike was organised outside union control. In the end though, the unions were able to regain control and the strike was defeated.

Since February this year, there has been a huge wave of strikes and riots in Spain against the attacks of the



Socialist government, reaching semi-insurrectionary proportions in the Northern steel towns. In Reinosa for example steel workers threatened with redundancies locked up their bosses, and together with other workers and unemployed, successfully fought off the police.

Although the recent struggles in Western Europe have shown a real suspicion of the trade unions and many have witnessed tendencies towards self organisation outside the union machinery, illusions persist. The independent workers' committees have looked to the unions for recognition, and have often elected delegates to negotiate with the bosses, retaining a trade unionist content in an autonomous form. Rank and file activists in the unions, less tainted with the smell of betrayal, have been able to lead the movements back to the treacherous terrain of trade unionism, and of course it's the workers' trade union mentality which allows them to be led.

to try to put out the
 nes. But he and another
 rry driver were beaten back
 by the heat.

16,000 attacks on policemen

By Our Police Correspondent

There were 16,000 assaults on police officers last year resulting in the loss of nearly 70,000 working days, according to a survey published yesterday.

In some areas, policemen have a one-in-four chance of being assaulted on duty, according to the survey of 28 of 43 police forces in England and Wales published in Police Review.

Passport

Today's Target

+ 29 EXACT

Today

KILL THE BILL: An international language as old as capital itself finds its practical expression in Spain (top) and Wapping (centre)

Even if workers are able to overcome these limitations, nationalism remains a serious barrier, as it was in the mass strike in Poland 1980-81. All the parties from left to right try to limit workers' aims to the management of the national economy. However, the direct linking of even ONE mass movement beyond its national boundaries (say if French and Belgian workers formed joint strike committees, a not unimaginable development) would have an electrifying effect on the whole workers movement.



Show of hands: Workers occupying the threatened Caterpillar factory near Glasgow yesterday voted by a majority of six to defy a court order and continue their 10 week protest — 369 voted to continue the sit-in and 363 voted against. The company said it hoped the Amalgamated Engineering Union executive would tell its members "to end an action which is in clear breach of law" when it meets today.

Its not just in Western Europe. From the prosperous countries of Scandinavia to the slum cities of Africa, Asia and Latin America, via the stagnant economies of Eastern Europe, the class struggle shows no sign of even temporarily halting. We know of recent strikes in Romania, Yugoslavia, India, Mexico and Bolivia, riots in Chile which have disarmed the police and burned down police stations, uprisings in Zambia and obviously struggles in South Africa, and many places in between. There have been massive battles against governments of the left and right, democratic and dictatorial, against the imposition of food price rises and other austerity measures demanded by the world's bankers as they shovel surplus value into the black hole of the American economy.

The reptiles of the international media have systematically suppressed news of this struggle. All we can be sure of is that the world class struggle is much more ferocious and widespread than we thought. For example, we have only just heard of the strikes in India, such as that of 600,000 government workers in Uttar Pradesh, and the resistance to the Iran-Iraq war featured in an article in this issue. It is encouraging to realise that people whom

we are taught to see as passive recipients of charity are able to win temporary victories when they fight on a massive scale, such as the N. African riots against food price rises. The state in the so-called third world countries is often weak, as shown in March '86 when the conscripts of the Cairo police rioted and the state had some difficulty suppressing them. It's not an unbridgeable gap between armed conscripts rioting and the collapse of state power.

Even in Britain, in spite of the defeat of major battalions of the class, rear-guard actions help prepare for more massive and conscious battles in the future. And there are small signs that hard lessons are being learned. Miners who worked in the national strike, and joined the UDM, which was specifically set up to divide the miners, have walked out at several pits along with NUM members against sackings and victimisations. When flying pickets of sacked miners picketed in Yorkshire, the local leadership colluded with branch officials to stop the action spreading. At Silverwood and South Kirkby the local officials recommended crossing picket lines. Few pits have been free of strikes since 1985.

Women who produce Laura Ashley lampshades in Scotland went on strike and joined the TGWU. The union then negotiated a return to work based on RE-ENGAGEMENT, without any of the benefits for women who'd worked there for years. So the women left the union, and continued the strike. Laura Ashley has been picketed in Europe and America, and in Britain management proudly stated that the women have been told to go back to work by the Labour MP, the Labour council and the union. The 90 strikers in the Trader newspaper dispute in the Midlands were told by their union leader to canvass for Labour in the election or have their strike pay halved.

The riots on New Year's Eve were a welcome start to 1987. There have been various disputes around the country this year, the biggest of which was the British Telecom dispute, again sabotaged by the union. Fightbacks against police repression continue, and solidarity between small oppressed sections of the class have grown out of riots, for example Broadwater Farm residents have supported lesbian and gay struggles in Haringey.



Sabotage

Heinrich Kley

The class struggle won't go away, and when the British economy follows the rest of the world deeper into recession, we can expect that there won't be enough water in the English Channel to quench the flames of proletarian resistance as they blaze around the world. Everywhere the working class faces the same problems and

fights the same enemy. Our aim as revolutionaries is to contribute to making the world class struggle consciously internationalist. We try to forge links with militant workers groups that have emerged from struggles, and with revolutionary political groups. Wildcat is attempting to play its part in the creation of a strong and united international revolutionary movement.

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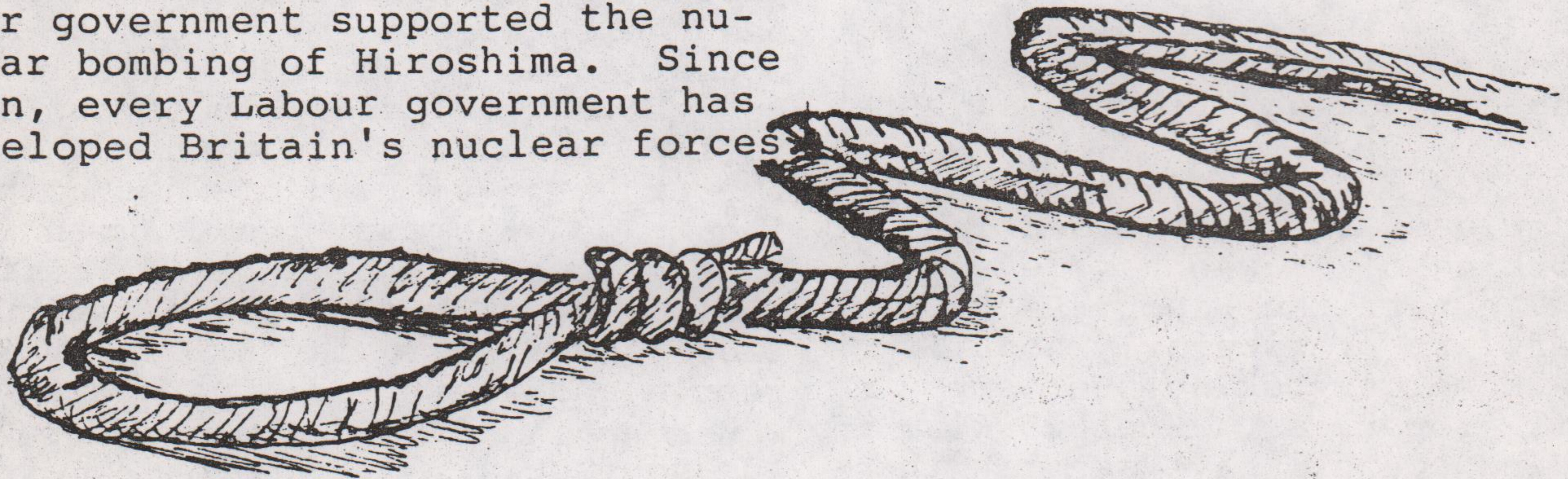
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- I am sending you £..... for the next issues.

PAYMENT BY CHEQUE/ PO PLEASE LEAVE THE 'PAY' SLIP BLANK, AND SEND TO THE MANCHESTER ADDRESS: See introduction.

Whenever the Labour Party has been in power, it has always acted ruthlessly against the working class. In 1945, five days after the election of a Labour government, it sent troops against striking London dockers. Troops were used against lorry drivers, power workers, gas workers and Buckingham Palace boilermen. Labour has never had any hesitation in using the army against the working class. In 1969, Labour sent troops into Northern Ireland. These troops were used to crush the Free Derry working class uprising.

Labour introduced the first racist immigration laws.

Labour always supports Britain's imperialist wars. The Falklands is the most recent example, but Labour enthusiastically recruited workers into the First and Second Imperialist World Wars. After it was elected in 1945, the left-wing Labour government supported the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima. Since then, every Labour government has developed Britain's nuclear forces.



In every way, on every issue, Labour has always been just as anti working class as the Conservatives.

How the Labour Party works

When Labour is in government the party is controlled by the parliamentary Labour Party, which in turn is controlled by the Prime Minister and the cabinet. In opposition, it is controlled mainly by the trade unions.

Trade unions are based on negotiating between workers and the bosses, on selling our labour power. Their very existence depends on the continuation of wage labour, of capi-

support the Labour Party



The working class will Lose!

talism. So they do everything in their power to defend it. When Labour is in government, the unions work directly with the government against the class struggle. Under the last Labour government, this was called the "Social Contract". The unions promoted a truce between the workers and their enemy, the capitalist state. When the unions failed to hold back the class struggle in this way, the Thatcher government brought in laws to force them to sabotage it more directly. They have generally gone along with this, calling off strikes when judges threaten their investments, and signing no-strike deals on the pretext of "realism".

Different Sections of the Labour Party

The trade union leaders form the core of the Labour right, the dominant section. The left are based on constituency parties. All factions of the Labour Party are equally reactionary.

It's ties to the trade union movement, a backward section of British capitalism, mean that it is impossible for Labour to be any better from the viewpoint of women than other parties.

Far from standing against the current surge of anti-gay hysteria, Labour has supported it. Kinnock leaked a memo saying that defending gays could lose elections. And so it could. A letter in Socialist Worker 16 May 87 complains that a Labour Party meeting in Liverpool howled down a speaker who tried to defend gays. This is the real Labour Party. The left's verbal diarrhoea about gay rights is just a cover.

The homeless are another section of the working class who have every reason to hate the Labour Party. The left are particularly hostile to the homeless taking over empty council properties. Southwark's left wing council have sent in the riot police to evict squatters. Manchester council's housing commissar launched a vicious attack on squatters and boasted that he'd evicted someone for getting into arrears (SW 23.5.87).

Another horrified letter in Socialist Worker from Brixton DHSS workers, (23.5.87) says how Lambeth's left wing Labour leader, Linda Bellos refused to pay out the full amount to claimants whilst the DHSS were on strike, claiming this would be strike breaking. The DHSS workers are obviously in favour of councils paying claimants whilst they are on strike, so as not to create divisions between themselves and claimants. Bellos and other left wingers perpetuate divisions using "strike breaking" as an excuse.

The Labour left want to nationalise

the major private companies. But this has nothing to do with socialism, it just means workers are exploited by state bosses rather than independent ones.

The left are more nationalist than the right - their aim of pulling Britain out of NATO is an archaic dream of an independent Britain. This would simply mean working class people dying in Britain's wars rather than America's, as we used to before World War Two.

There is no reason whatever why we should prefer the Labour left to the right. Neither side have anything to offer us.

The Labour Party Isn't Socialist

Socialism is the abolition of wage labour and commodity production, and their replacement by a free association of producers. This is not the common ownership of the existing means of production. The Labour Party's programme has nothing to do with socialism. Even if it was able to implement its official aims, such as the redistribution of wealth in favour of working people and their families, this would not take us one millimetre towards socialism. Suppose wealth was redistributed. Rapidly, it would concentrate in the hands of the cleverest and luckiest "working people", who would then become the capitalists and exploit the others. Ironically, the nearest thing to wealth redistribution in Britain has been the Tories' share offers. Most of the shares they sold in state companies ended up in the hands of the biggest investors.

In practice, the Labour Party's socialism is simply state capitalism. Workers are told they are better off working for the state, and not to strike against it. State capitalism offers us no benefits at all. Nationalised industry operates as an inseparable part of the capitalist economy. If the economy as a whole is in crisis, nationalised industries cut wages and make workers redundant just like any other business. Just ask

any unemployed miner or steelworker.

The Labour Party promises more new jobs and training places. These will be low paid, and will have the same aim as the Tories' training schemes - lowering the costs of hiring labour for employers (in the case of YTS, to virtually nil) - thus reducing the wages which workers can demand. Labour have promised a minimum wage, without saying what it will be. But the Tories have already introduced one.

Labour also promises more police. And it wants to restore the authority of the police by linking them with democratically elected police authorities. This is a desperate scheme to make people feel that the police are their servants, rather than hating them as they increasingly do.

Arguments For And Against Voting Labour

It may seem obvious from the above that no socialist would touch the Labour Party with anything less lethal than a chainsaw. But there are various fake socialists about who try to convince us to vote Labour for "tactical" reasons.

Revolutionaries in Western Europe knew from experience what Labour and its counterparts stood for. After World War One, a clear nucleus of revolutionaries emerged in many countries pledged to form communist parties which would fight uncompromisingly against all forms of reformist politics, trade unionism and parliamentarism. But Lenin argued that tactical support and even regroupment with reformists was justifiable. He was able to overwhelm the revolutionaries by supporting the creation of Communist Parties with a majority of "Centrists" - people who were supposedly halfway between revolutionaries and reformists. Lenin's authority won the day, and the Communist Parties adopted his reactionary and ill-informed views, forcing revolutionaries out.

It is debatable whether the Social

Democratic parties on the Continent were ever worth supporting. But the Labour Party was deliberately set up by capitalists and trade unions in order to prevent revolution. There has never been any reason for revolutionaries to support it, and there have always been revolutionaries who totally condemn



LENIN—he argued for revolutionaries to participate in elections

Labour. The First World War, in which Labour enthusiastically participated, showed that there could no longer be any debate about the issue. Since then, revolutionaries have not supported Labour in any way.

The Socialist Workers Party's Arguments

The Trotskyist method allows for supporting Labour on the grounds that once in power, the workers' illusions in it will be dispelled. In practice, this has led to supporting illusions which fewer and fewer workers have. Every election,

the Trotskyists support Labour by spreading lies which were widely believed fifty years ago, but which experience has largely eroded. For example, Socialist Worker defends nationalisation as a pro-working class measure, and supports the idea that the state can "discipline the bosses' wheeler-dealing" (16.5.87). The idea that the state is somehow neutral, and can be used by the working class to discipline the bosses, was demolished by Marx in 1871. The SWP has blamed Thatcher's government for everything ever since it was elected - Tories this, Tories that. This in itself spreads the illusion that Labour would somehow be better. Logically, some on the left have decided tactical voting is a necessary evil to get rid of the Tories - Vote SDP Without Illusions.

The SWP argues that those who vote Labour "identify with their class", so we've got to stand alongside them by campaigning for a Labour vote. But workers who think Labour is a working class organisation are wrong, and we tell them so.

Some SWP members argue against voting Labour, but their views are routinely crushed by the bureaucracy.

The SWP repeat Lenin's argument that Labour in office is harmful to the bourgeoisie because it enables workers to see through it. They say that putting Labour in power will enable Labour supporters to see that reformism is not in their interests. But you could equally argue that voting Conservative will enable Tory workers to shed their illusions.

A similar view is that the ruling class want Labour in opposition because if it was in power, the trade unions who support it, would be exposed as enemies of the working class because they would be associated in workers' minds with the party that is carrying out vicious attacks on them.

But most workers who vote Labour do so for just as consciously capitalist reasons as those who vote Conservative. They vote Labour be-

cause they think its best for Britain. Any worker who thought that Labour could bring about socialism as we understand it would probably be too stupid to be of much use to the revolutionary movement anyway. It's no more difficult to see that trade unions and the Labour Party are anti-working class when they are in opposition than when they are in government.

There is a widespread belief that state control equals socialism. But its easy to see that state ownership of the means of production is no use to the working class be looking at Russia and China. Anyone who wants this is just as reactionary as the Tories.

Of course we have fought alongside Labour supporters on picket lines, etc.. But equally, we fight with striking workers who vote Conservative. We point out to workers fighting against capitalism who support bourgeois parties the contradiction between their actions and ideas.

One of Labour's central delusions is the idea that Parliament is the means to achieve its ends. But it makes little difference who wins elections. The government has to do what capitalism wants. If they don't, they will simply be overthrown. Since the overthrow of Allende's government in Chile, most of the Socialist party leaders have realised this. There is plenty of evidence that the ruling class considered a coup against Wilson's Labour government. The Queen's representative endorsed the overthrow of the left-wing Fijian government which was considered harmful to the West's interests. Recent examples of left wing governments on the Continent have ignored their election manifestoes and simply gone ahead with the policies that capitalism dictates. Mitterand's Socialist government in France carried out the same attacks on the working class as Thatcher's in Britain.

The fact is that capitalism is responsible for our condition, not any particular government. There's no point in changing the government, the only solution is to overthrow capitalism.

Nationalism

It goes without saying that revolutionaries are internationalist. The workers of the world, the masses of unemployed, have an overwhelming interest in common - the need to fight against international capitalism. Anything which tries to make us think we belong to our own country, rather than our class, is our enemy.

Labour's view is accurately summarised by Neil Kinnock :

"And just as a family uses its combined spirit and resources to overcome crisis, so Britain can once again make common cause to achieve common good."

Although there is little difference between the major parties, perhaps the Tories have closer links with international capital. The left are proud of their record of patriotism, and during the Second World War were the most jingoistic of the capitalist factions. Recently a Labour shadow cabinet member lectured the City of London on its lack of patriotism. Labour's traditional patriotism may be appropriate during the collapse of the world economy, when nations

may attempt to go it alone. But this would be even less successful for a geriatric capitalist country like Britain than for others.

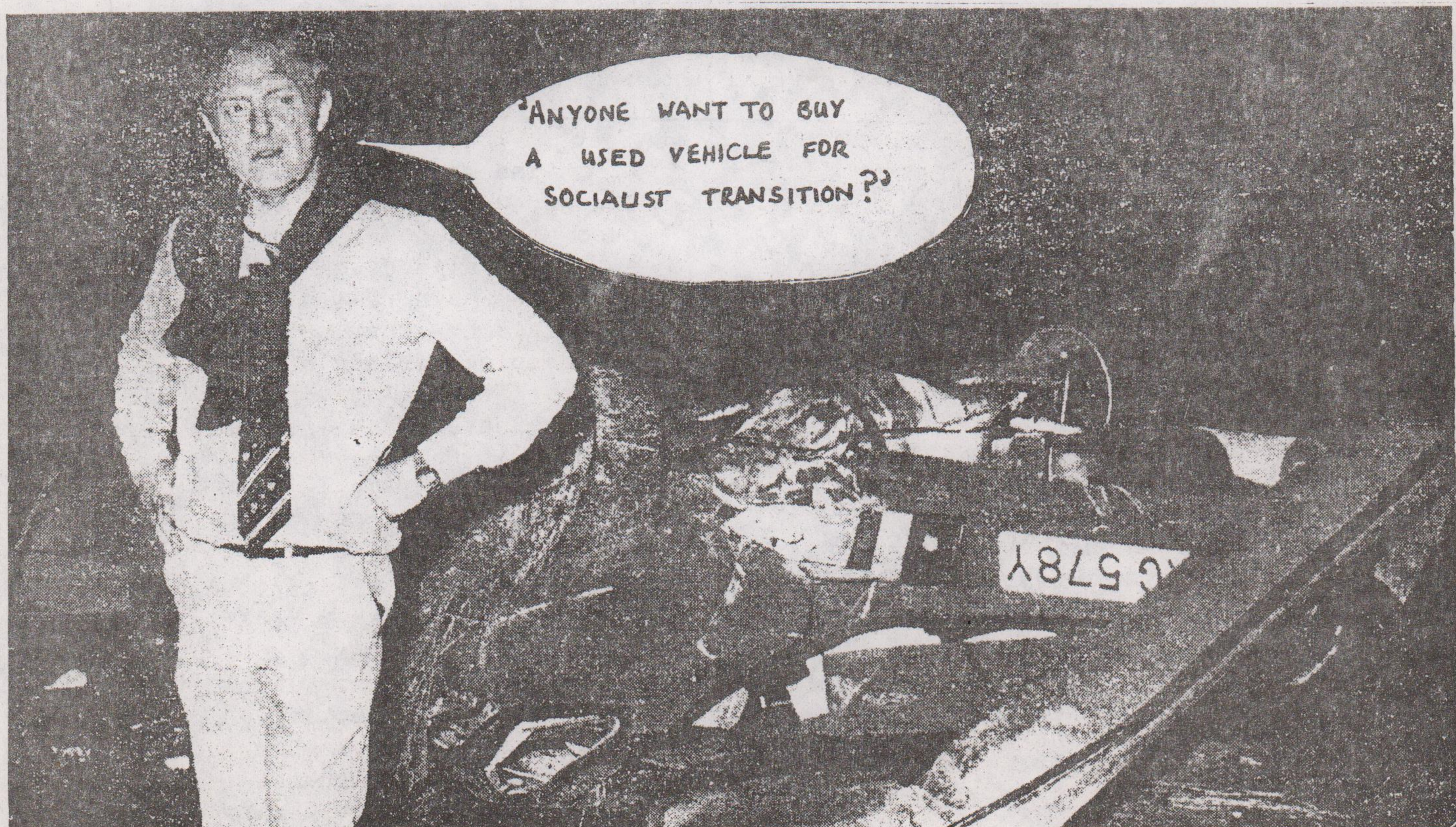
Perhaps during a revolution, Labour will have the same role as the Social Democrats during the revolution in Germany in 1918-19 - crushing the working class. However there is more cynicism among workers about the left now than then. We do everything we can to encourage such cynicism.

It is debatable whether Labour is of any use to the ruling class. It is certainly of no use to the working class.

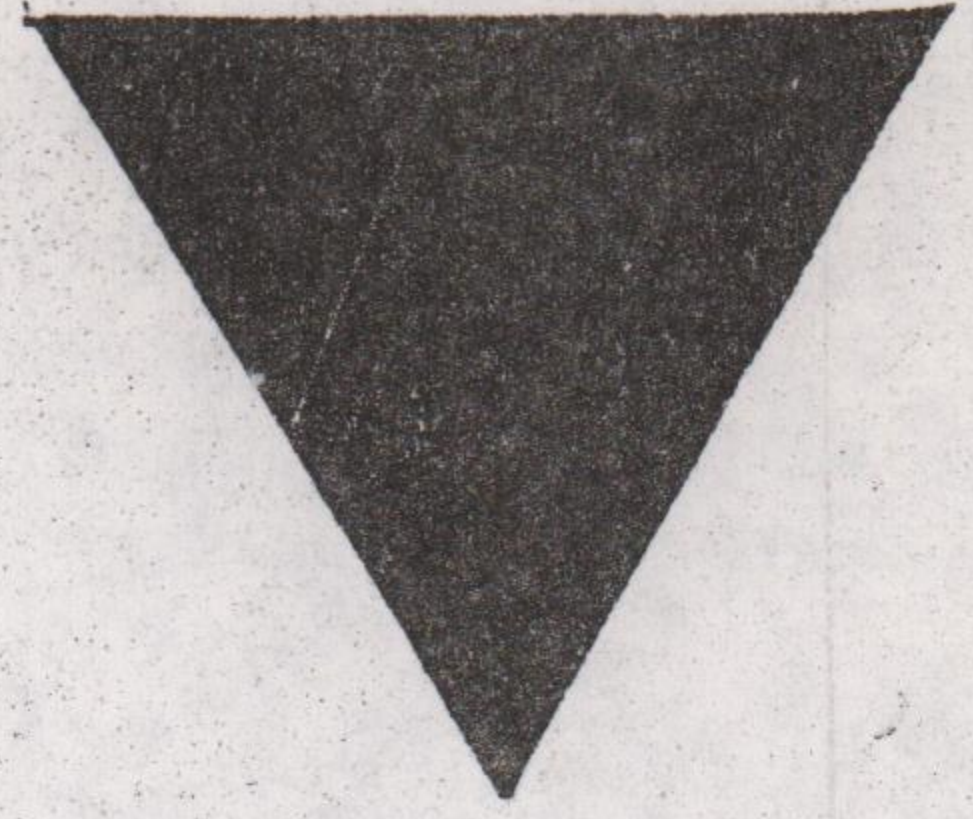
If we want to save ourselves from war and pollution, poverty and crisis, we'll have to unite with the rest of the world's oppressed in a class war against capitalism.

The Labour Party will have to be destroyed by the working class along with all other capitalist institutions. We echo Lenin's phrase "support the Labour Party ... as a rope supports a hanged man". But we mean it.

Wildcat, June 1987.



Lesbians & Gays in the Class War



**'The more you struggle,
the more we like it!'**

The following is a contribution from a member of Wildcat who is also a member of the new revolutionary lesbian and gay group, Lesbian and Gay Noise, summarising the current level of understanding and agreement within that group on lesbians and gays in the class struggle.

The increasingly hostile attacks on lesbians and gays over the last few years, whether encouraged by the rising tide of moral puritanism or AIDS hysteria, have been met with only a minimal response on the part of their victims. The Wombourne march in February against Councillor Brownhill's remarks that gays should be gassed, and against the imprisonment of 12 lesbian and gay activists for a week for protesting, demonstrated more than anything the weakness (or rather the non-existence) of a lesbian and gay movement capable of defending itself in the face of such an onslaught. Disorganised and ill-prepared we arrived angry but ineffective as we were herded and pacified by the mass ranks of the police and the so-called Revolutionary Communist Party.

At a time when we most need to be strong, we are weaker than we have ever been. But, although we came away demoralised, we also came away wiser. We have re-learnt an important lesson:- that while our enemies despise us, many of our self-styled 'friends' try to patronise and dominate us, using our struggle to recruit for their own obnoxious political ends. It is for this reason that Lesbian and Gay Noise has been set up - to provide a focal point for lesbian and gay militant activity independent of other political and party organisations. Having seen and experienced the anger (if not the activity) generated by events such as Wombourne, we feel it important to emphasise that the chief weakness of the response to lesbian and gay oppression is not

the lack of organisation, but the lack of a class perspective. There is no shortage of lesbian and gay organisations representing every brand of reactionary under the sun - from pink vicars to pink cops! It is not a unity based on sexuality that we seek, but a unity in struggle, and if this struggle is to develop, lesbians and gays must recognise the reality of their existence in capitalist society.

Moral crusades and AIDS 'crises' are not the causes of our oppression or of the renewed attacks against us. They are merely a convenient excuse. Our rulers have always had to wage war against us in order to defend and maintain their power, profits and privilege.

Today this is truer than ever. Bad housing, unemployment, low wages, cuts in benefit and increasing repression are all evidence of the system in crisis. As this crisis deepens, our bosses, both East and West, are intensifying their attacks on all sections of the working class. As workers, consumers, and cannon fodder, we are as useful as any heterosexual. But as homosexuals we are scapegoated in order to divide our class and bolster their institutions of social and ideological control: the family, church and the nation. Playing on fear, prejudice and ignorance, they divide in order to rule. Our weakness is their strength, and our division is our weakness. In this respect, homophobia like racism and sexism is as much a weapon in their armoury to be used against us as are the police, the army and the courts. This then must be the terrain of our struggle - the struggle of the working class against our bosses, the state and capitalism,, whose interests they serve. Social liberation is the only means of realising sexual liberation.

While we see the resistance to the criminalisation of our sexuality as as much a part of the struggle of our class as is resistance to redundancies wage cuts and persecution of class militants, we recognise that any call for 'liberation' without the revolutionary destruction of capitalism is merely a plea for toleration - perhaps the most insidious form of oppression. For this reason we oppose in principle campaigns that call for reforms of the system and see these as the climax of our struggle. Those who call for reforms fail to see that

changes in the law will only be made when it suits our oppressors, to create the illusion of progress and thus disarm our militancy without seriously challenging the basis of their power. Equality before the law is equality of misery. Those who already enjoy these 'rights' are not immune from poverty, unemployment, police truncheons, exploitation, pollution and the threat of war. These are the realities of barbarism, which is the only real equality we will ever share under capital.

As part of the struggle for social revolution, we seek to, and encourage, work with and within other revolutionary organisations against all aspects of capitalist domination - including capitalism's 'lefts' and 'radicals': the trots, vanguards, and all those who claim to lead or represent the working class or any part of it. However, we recognise that the foreseeable future, the reality of a homophobic society, require us to organise autonomously as lesbians, gays and bisexuals in order to guard ourselves against the danger of being dominated and marginalised by a heterosexist majority. This is not a separation we wish to maintain, but we can at present only foresee our integration taking place as rising class struggle and the process of revolution destroys traditional sex roles and exclusive sexuality along with the family and capitalist morality. Until such time we see our role as 1) uniting the struggles of lesbians and gays with the other struggles of our class. This is a unity that has already found (limited) expression in the actions of lesbian and gay miners' support groups during the '84 strike, and the support and solidarity received in return from miners - not a traditionally pro-gay section of our class - at Rugby and Wombourne. And 2) attempting to introduce the politics of social and sexual liberation into the lesbian and gay movement. This includes challenging traditional loyalties to the 'gay ghetto', and recognising that the management of our social activities by the 'pink economy' is a key factor in our subjugation by capital.

Lesbian and Gay Noise can be contacted at the following addresses:-

Box LGN	LGN
180 Mansfield Road	C/O 70 High Street
Nottingham	Leicester.

up shiite creek

For the last two years, the Western ruling class has been trying to build up anti-terrorist hysteria to get us to support its military plans in the Middle East, and ultimately its preparations for world war.

Today, its campaign lies in ruins. A number of Irishmen framed up for the so-called "seaside bombing campaign" in Britain were let off by juries, amid a growing realisation that many imprisoned IRA bombers aren't. The racist anti-terrorist campaign started by the French government last year (and ably assisted by whoever it was - State agents or otherwise - who planted bombs in Paris) fizzled out as students rioted, attracting widespread working class support. When police killed an Arab student, President Mitterand made political capital out of anti-racism, showing the ineffectiveness of the government's racism. Prime Minister Chirac's credibility continued to plummet when he gave in to the students, and railworkers, miners, dockers and seamen, encouraged by the students' success, struck after years of social peace. The class struggle took centre stage, and the ruling class's confidence was given its biggest blow since 1968. The railworkers tried

to organise outside the unions, raising the spectre of the mass strike of '68, which showed for the first time that revolution is possible in modern capitalism. Chirac didn't help the anti-terrorist campaign either by claiming that the Israeli secret service were behind the bomb found at Heathrow El Al check-in, which was an important part of Britain's contribution to the international propaganda war.

But the biggest cock-up in the campaign was perpetrated by the West's number one dickhead: Ronald Reagan. Reagan's anti-terrorist campaign has been made to look ridiculous. His government has been shown selling arms to a "terrorist" regime, Iran, to finance its own terrorist allies fighting in Nicaragua. The West's principled refusal to deal with terrorists, the justification for bombing Libya, propaganda against Syria and Iran, and ultimately for intervention, have been exposed as lies. The Iranian government have temporarily gained from the Irangate scandal, but the right wing of the American bourgeoisie have lost more, to the benefit of the Democrats, who favour a peaceful coexistence with Nicaraguan capitalism. More importantly, the scandal has weakened the power

U.S. Imperialism



of the bourgeoisie over the Western working classes, whom the capitalists need to engage in major wars. The Machiavellian manouvres of the capitalist class rarely look so transparent. Seldom is it so clear that the ruling classes of the world are simply terrorist gangs with suits and ties.

Although the anti-terrorist show has flopped, the technical preparations for war continue. The space shuttle programme is being re-launched. As we write, US and Russian nuclear tests continue, Star Wars research is accelerating, and Gorbachev's Neville Chamberlain impersonations are doing nothing to tame the US, French and British dogs of war. Britain has ordered Trident missiles for its submarines, and Labour's nuclear disarmament policy is a fiction.

In an episode reminiscent of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, which justified American entry into World War One, Reagan is using Iraq's accidental (?) attack on an American ship in the Gulf to justify warmongering against Iran. This may

sound illogical to us, but not to Reagan and his ungeographical acolytes. American ships gather like vultures, assisted by two British warships and a Royal Fleet Auxiliary. British marines and paratroops recently practiced a major exercise in Oman, and can move the whole Fifth Airborne Brigade there if required.

The ruling class will be looking for new ways get the working class to support their long and short term military plans. For the moment they seem to have run out of ideas. Racism is always worth a try, and at the moment Japan is on the receiving end. The idea that "we" in Europe and America should unite against unfair Japanese competition (in reality, Japanese tariffs are lower than the EEC's or America's) is obviously racist, whether it comes from Labour MP's or the *Sun*. We must fight this and whatever else they come up with.

Riots and strikes outside union control threw the French government's anti-terrorist drive into disarray. Only by shattering the social peace can we stop war.

Human community

against

DEMOCRACY

Yes, we survived yet another General Election and managed to avoid dying of boredom! The Parliamentary circus reaches its most nauseating 'high point' at election times. Everyone is encouraged to participate and give their consent to the maintenance of capitalist social relations. As well as the politicians crawling back into their boroughs to cadge votes for their brand of capitalism, we have every 'brand' of pseudo-revolutionary advocating their own variety of the 'tactical vote' if not just a straight vote for themselves or one of their 'fronts'.

We recognise that it is only an escalation of the class war which will practically criticise the democratic ideology of capitalism. However, over the last hundred years various communist groupings have opposed parliament and elections and we hope in the future to present an analysis and critique of a tradition which includes the likes of William Morris, the Socialist League, Anton Pannekoek and the German 'left-communists', Sylvia Pankhurst and the Workers Socialist League as well as the 'Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation' (see our pamphlet "Class War On The Home Front").

Elections are held up constantly as one of the prize exhibits in the showcase of liberal democracy, as occasions when all the rights and freedoms we 'enjoy' in the 'free world' are paraded for everyone to admire. In the British political system the democratic ideal is realised through certain 'inalienable' constitutional liberties, which come to the fore at election times. The freedom to associate with other like-minded individuals in forming political organisations; to openly debate the issues of the day and put forward policies for running the country; to choose between competing parties and programmes and have an equal say in the future of the nation... all of these things add up to give the impression that society is composed of millions of sovereign individuals whose wishes and decisions each have the same weight as everyone else's in determining the vital matters that affect us all.

The idea of democracy in the political sphere also has a counterpart in the realm of the economy, where everyone enters the free market on equal terms, at liberty to choose to sell between more than one buyer or buy between more

than one seller, whether the commodity in question is washing powder or labour power.

the origins of democracy

Democracy so far as most people are concerned just means: 'rule by the people'. The fact that it is a "buzz word" which has been used to legitimize countless wars, atrocities and all forms of dictatorship against the working class doesn't stop people from equating any criticism of democracy with an advocacy of the tyrannical rule of an 'elite' minority. To get to grips with why we don't just criticise "bourgeois democracy" or "representative democracy" but also "workers Democracy" and "direct democracy" it is necessary to go back to the origins of democracy. It first arose in the ancient Greek city states along with the destruction of primitive community in these areas and the birth of the atomised 'citizen' who pursued his own private interests. It is here that we saw some of the first use of coinage, the emergence of commerce, the commodity, banking, wars for profit and so

many of the things we associate with modern capitalism. It is here that politics and economics emerged as separate spheres of human activity and it is here that democracy was seized upon as the mechanism by which the conflicting interests of the 'citizens' could be reconciled for the general interest and the interests of the state. The system wasn't capitalist because the main producing class were slaves and it wasn't stable because there was no way of harmonising the conflicting interests of each city state and forging some kind of national unity. For this latter

After early attempts in the Ancient world, democracy did not arise again in a prominent form until the decay of feudal social relations and the Bourgeois revolutions which

legitimised the growing economic power of the rising capitalist class. The capitalists enlisted the aid of the peasants and the working class to overthrow the aristocracy. The most subversive of these lower classes were those who were fighting for their real needs rather than for those of the bourgeois republic with its abstract slogan: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. In the later revolutions of 1848 which swept Europe the working class played a more significant role which led to the demand of universal suffrage being met as a way of recuperating their struggle for real needs.

Women were only to achieve the vote later, largely as a result of increasing economic independence following World War I. This resulted in a movement for that particular demand (following in the footsteps of the Suffragettes), as well as the prominent role in the class war being taken on by women (eg following the February revolution in Russia 1917). The progress of modern democracy over that of the ancient Greek city states is that it allows the exploited and oppressed producing class to fully participate in maintaining its own exploitation.

class warfare against democracy

The evolution of capitalism as a global system has divided the world into two major classes. These two classes have antagonistic and irreconcilable interests. On the one side are the capitalists who seek to maintain this society of exploitation from which they profit; on the other stand the working class who have to struggle against the laws of this system in order to survive. No amount of bilge about participatory democracy can alter the reality that we the working class exist in a world which has not been created according to our own needs and desires.

It is a world shaped by capital and its most fundamental need: to expand and accumulate itself. To meet this need our needs and desires can be ignored or fashioned by school and the media. Our lives can be fragmented or destroyed.

When we talk of the working class (or the proletariat) we don't just mean 'the workers'. The working class is the dispossessed class, a class which was created by the violent expropriation of the peasants and artisans and the suppression of 'vagrancy'. They were forced into the position which we are today made to



believe has been eternal:- that of having to try to sell our labour power in order to survive, to the class which owns and controls the means of production. However, many working class women are not directly involved in wage labour but are forced (through economic dependency, social conditioning and norms etc.) into doing all the housework and childrearing essential for maintaining and reproducing the labour force.

It is also obvious that in times of capitalist crisis a larger section of our class are either unemployed or resort to crime or scavenging. This isn't always because jobs are 'unavailable' but also because those that are are even crappier than usual.

Despite all this, it is our class as a whole which produces all the value in this society. The capitalists may work, but they are working for themselves, to accumulate capital in a particular enterprise. When we work, we work for them, in return we receive wages which are a small fraction of the value we produce. They decide what it is profitable for us to produce, and they balance our safety against their profits. The surplus value they extract from us is spent not just on their luxurious lifestyles, but also on the state institutions which keep us "in our place", on renewing and expanding the means of production, and on armaments... one of the few 'booming' industries in times of generalised crisis.

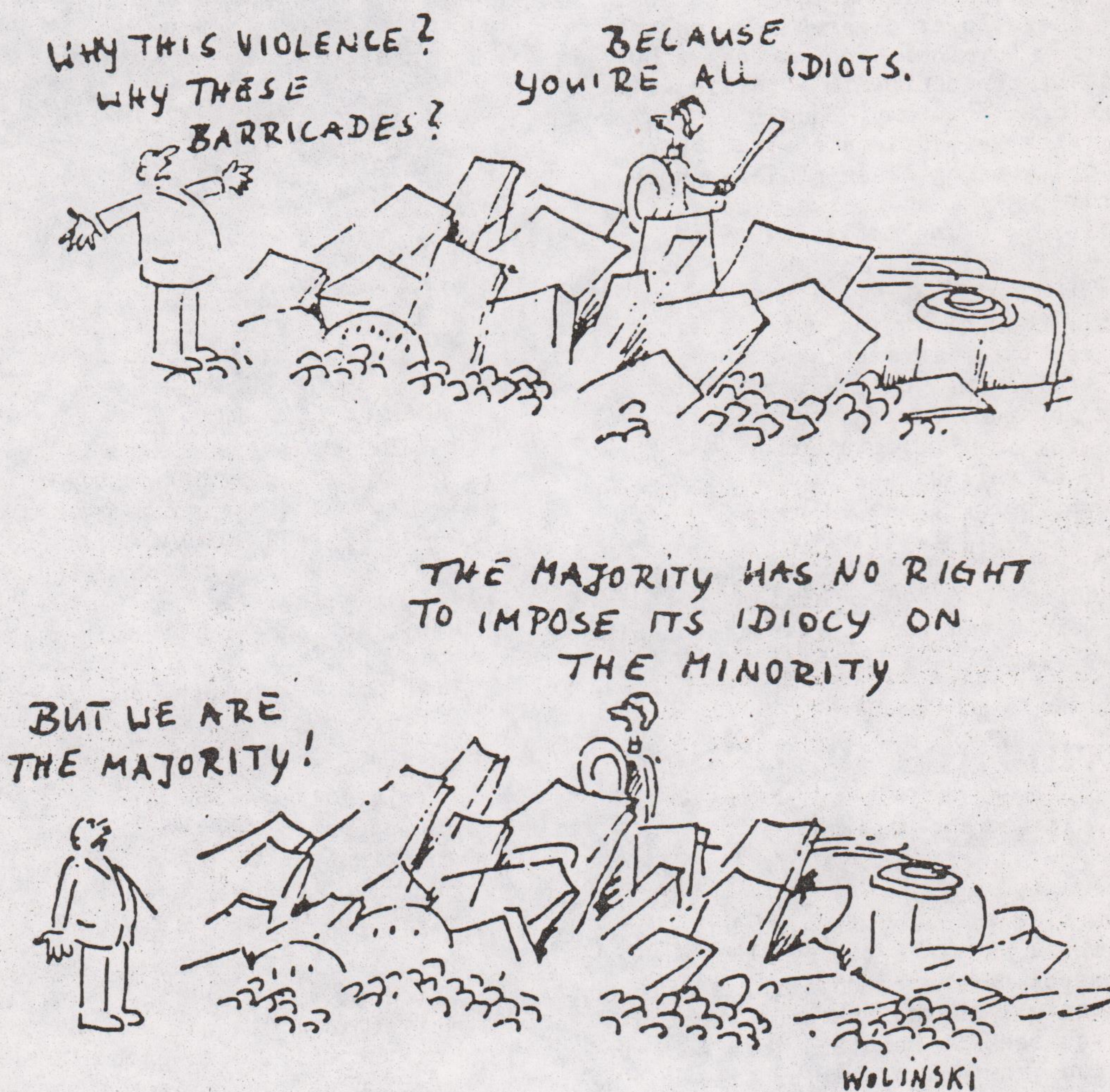
Wage labour is armed robbery. The cry of the state is a familiar one:- "Stay on your knees everybody, and no one will get hurt!" Unfortunately for anyone tempted by this course, Bank Robbers tend to be far more honest and caring than the state. You can stay on your knees all your life in this system and still get kicked

in the teeth... or worse. This is something many of the miners who scabbed in '84 are finding out.

At work we have no control over what is produced, how it is produced, or what it is used for. We can fight to make the terms and conditions under which we work slightly less unbearable, but as long as we remain separated from the means of production, then these are struggles over the details and not the fact of our exploitation. The early generations of working class militants who described their condition as wage slavery got it exactly right. Wage labour fucks us up in every way. It bores us, irritates us, exhausts us, makes us ill or crazy. And then, whenever the bosses decide that it's no longer profitable for them to employ us, even the 'privilege' of dragging out our days in this way can be removed from us at a moments notice.

What the aggregate of all these separate decisions will result in at the level of the world economy, nobody can accurately predict. the priests of the free market system rely on some mysterious 'hidden hand' to even everything out. But you only have to look around you to see that this doesn't happen. Thus capitalism lurches uncontrollably from booms to slumps, from gluts to scarcities, from armed peace to armed warfare.

Nobody can say for certain what things will be like next year, next month, or next week. In short, we have no security in this society, no material stake in it, no interest in the way it is organised nor in its continued existence. All this crap we're constantly fed about how lucky we are to live in a country where there are open elections and a multi-party system,



In or out of work, our supposed freedom under capitalism to as we like and satisfy our needs and desires is constantly restricted by money - or rather our lack of it. What we eat and drink, the clothes we wear, where we live, who we live with, how we pass our time, the places we can travel to - in all these fundamental aspects of our everyday lives our freedom and liberty goes no deeper than our pockets.

Despite the material benefits they derive from their ruling position in society, not even the capitalists are in conscious control of their own system. Under capitalism there is a constant competitive struggle for resources and markets. Each enterprise makes its decisions about what to produce, in what quantities etc in ignorance of how its competitors will act.

about how we must be ever vigilant in preserving or extending our rights, all the heated controversies about whether this or that party or pressure group has the right or wrong policies... all these things are little more than devices intended to smash the working class into millions of atomised fragments, to draw us into participating in this shitty society, and to con us into believing that we have a community of interests with our class enemies.

If you probe a bit further into the rights and freedoms we are granted under democratic capitalism it becomes obvious that they are no more stable than however secure the ruling class is feeling at any particular moment.

Whenever the interests of any capitalist state come under attack from outside - such as when the competition between rival factions of the capitalist class reaches the stage of armed warfare - rights and freedoms go by the board. You need only look at Britain during the Second World War. Parliament decided to do away with General Elections between 1935 and 1945. The main parties agreed not to contest each others' seats in by-elections. Ministers of State were empowered to act as necessity dictated without having to obtain parliamentary consent. Men, women and youths were conscripted into the armed forces, industry or civil defence under penalty of imprisonment. The press and radio were subject to strict censorship. Dissenting voices were suppressed and banned wherever they might have some impact. All-out production for the sake of the war economy rode roughshod over working conditions, wages and hours. Strikes were illegal. Militant working class activity was met with hefty fines and jail sentences. 'Aliens' were rounded up and interned or transported. Never had the trade unions, the bosses, and all the capitalist parties from the Conservatives to the 'Communists' been so wholly united as they were at the height of the war effort. "The state mobilised for war", wrote Fenner Brockway, "is the most totalitarian form which a state can assume." And all this in the name of a crusade against tyranny and dictatorship!

Similarly, when the interests of any capitalist state come under attack from within - through the militant struggles of the working class - there appears the same tendency for the dictatorial face of capitalist class rule to show itself. During the miners' strike in Britain 1984-85 such rights and liberties as freedom of movement (restricted by roadblocks and curfews), equality before the law, the independence of the judiciary and a fair trial (except for miners and their supporters whenever they appeared in court), the neutrality of the police force, and the impartiality of the media, were all exposed in their true light.

It should also be remembered however, that while the ruling class was tightening its grip around the throat of the class struggle with one hand, in the other it held out the poisoned chalice of democracy. With its constant harping on about the need for a ballot of all miners before the strike went any further, the ruling class sought to gain the upper hand to the majority - made up of scabs and the passive strikers who in the constant isolation of their own homes were easy prey to personal worries and the constant bombardment of media lies - and thus to neutralise the active militant minority which drew its collective strength and sense from the community of struggle.

The same aim also lies behind recent trade union and public order legislation: the requirement of advance notice of marches and demonstrations, the insistence on formal union membership ballots prior to any industrial action being taken, limitations on the number of pickets, the outlawing of secondary picketing and action in solidarity with other sections of the working class, and so on. Although portrayed as 'reasonable' and 'civilised', the intention is always to forstall

and frustrate any action, to lengthen the gap between decision making and activity, to give weight to the 'decent, sensible minded, moderate' majority, to isolate workers from one another, and to bind up the working class struggle hand and foot in legalistic rigmarole. Always the intention is to criminalise any effective spontaneity in the class struggle any actions taken by militant minorities, any occasion when working class people really get together and begin to communicate with each other, and any action which threatens to break down the passivity, isolation and divisions fostered by this society.

Democracy is also a tried and trusted weapon against the working class in states where the domination of the ruling class is enforced in a blatant authoritarian and repressive form. When the struggle of working class people for their own basic needs and demands reaches a threatening level, the idea that working class problems can be solved by a change in political regime is thrust into the foreground. Restrictions on political organisations are relaxed, competing parties and programmes are allowed access to the media, elections are held, the 'wicked' leaders disappear into the background, and a few fresh faces appear at the head of the state. But all these changes take place to ensure that everything stays the same. The fundamental relationship between the working class and the capitalists remains unaltered; capitalist society remains intact. Frequently the new democratic ruling faction is quickly forced to dust off and press back into action its predecessors' repressive tools against the continuing class struggle. But on other occasions these cosmetic changes achieve their intended aim, with the working class rallying round the state to prevent a return to 'the bad old days'.

What it all boils down to in the end, though, is that whatever political form it takes, capitalism is by its very nature a society in which all wealth, power, privilege and luxury accrue to the ruling capitalist class who will use every means at their disposal to keep things that way. For us, on the other hand, the right to work means the freedom to sell our labour power or the freedom to endure poverty or starvation. The right to vote means the freedom to choose which party will preserve our condition of exploitation for the next 4 or 5 years. The right to free speech, free thought, and the free press means the freedom to hold and express whatever opinions fit in harmlessly with the status quo or the freedom to be hounded, persecuted and gagged.

down with rights,

down with the

atomised citizen!

FROM THE **FALKLANDS** **WAR**

The following is the draft of a leaflet intended for distribution in Britain and Argentina on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the Falklands/Malvinas war. It was intended to be a first step towards giving a practical expression to the spirit of the 'International Proposal' for greater cooperation and centralisation of revolutionary forces formulated and distributed by the comrades of 'Workers Emancipation' (Argentina). However, this leaflet, drafted by Wildcat, was for technical reasons not distributed in Britain. The overstretching of our already very limited resources prevents us reproducing the 'Proposition' in this issue of Wildcat, but it has been reproduced in full in no.4 of the Internationalist Communist Groups english publication 'Communism', available from our Nottingham address (75p inc. p&p) or from the address of the ICG printed elsewhere in this issue.

Five years ago, the British Task Force attacked the Falkland Islands to evict the Argentine occupiers. The ruling classes of Britain and Argentina had long term interests in 'sovereignty' over the islands as a basis for the exploitation of the mineral resources throughout that region. However, the main reason behind the war was more immediate:- to control and maintain the exploitation of capitalism's most basic resource: the working class!

The Argentine government chose to invade the islands as a way of turning the attention of the the working class away from the deepening economic crisis and worsening living conditions. In 1976, mass strikes had forced the rulers of Argentina to grant huge pay rises to keep up with inflation. By 1982, these had been eaten away. Class struggle was growing again to which Galtieri's regime responded by murdering 30,000 people in six years. As soon as the war broke out, the Argentine left and the unions called on workers to fight and die and demonstrate for a regime soaked in the blood of the working class.

The war was also used by the British government for the same ends: to restore its credibility and attack the class struggle. The riots which tore through the cities of Britain in 1981 had once more placed the class war in the foreground. The conservatives badly needed an issue which could unite the nation and focus the smouldering hatred on an external enemy.

Labour supported the imperialist war effort as they have always done. The unions called off a dock strike and persuaded Hawker Siddeley workers in Bristol to end an overtime ban. The electricians union demanded more arm spending. The health service union denounced striking hospital workers. As always, the unions and the Labour party showed that they

are not just the bosses arse-lickers, but an essential part of the ruling class.

There was little resistance to the war in Britain, though Portsmouth dock workers refused to sail with the fleet. Few workers realised its real significance: an attack on their struggles and living standards. It was used to test weapons for NATO's war machine and to prepare the working class to support it. After the war, Thatcher used her victory to redouble her attacks on the working class. Workers who were unpatriotic enough to go on strike were denounced as the 'enemy within' and given the same treatment as the 'Argies'. There was more resistance and active sabotage of the war in Argentina and riots among the conscripts on the Falklands. The defeat doubled the problems of the Argentine ruling class as the avenging spectre of class struggle rose up once more. Strikes and riots had become an almost daily occurrence in an economy on the verge of catastrophe. That's why parliamentary government was brought in: to restore the ruling classes credibility.

In Britain, the Falklands victory was used to win the election, and we expect the Tories will use the anniversary for the same purpose. In both countries, the war was used to promote the idea of democracy, the idea that workers have an interest in a system which oppresses them.

As the capitalist parties of Britain and Argentina, left and right, try to use the Falklands anniversary to stir up nationalism among the working class, our message must be one of international solidarity. The working class has no country.... at the bottom of the South Atlantic, corpses from both sides mingle with each other. Capitalism means the same thing in both countries: bad housing, wage cuts, unemployment and war. In every country, workers are fighting back against our common enemy. Everywhere the unions attack our struggle. In every country the left and right wings of the ruling class try to make us abandon our class interests and unite with our class enemies.

Against the international war preparations of today, only the international class struggle provides serious resistance. Any class struggle throws a spanner in the works for capitalism. but a unified international struggle consciously directed against capitalism and its war drive will be the only way of stopping the bloodbath that millions of the working class are facing now.

DOWN WITH BRITAIN! DOWN WITH ARGENTINA!
FROM BRIXTON TO BUENOS AIRES - CLASS WAR FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION!

TO THE
CLASS **WAR**

MUM! DAD! your kids are in the street!

The following is the text of a leaflet produced by the 'Rogues' of LEP (a technical college) during the student demonstrations and riots of December '86. It was distributed at a local engineering factory in an attempt to generalise and change the nature of the movement which had shattered the long standing social peace in France. For us it manages to capture the spirit of revolt as well as pre-empting the later more wide-spread wave of strikes this year.

We are pupils of the Electronics LEP, within a bolt's throw of here, your sons. Today we are in the streets like the students, but not exactly for the same reasons as them. They are fighting against selection in the university framework. We are fighting against selection in school, but especially against social segregation, against poverty! At school they talk to us all the time about enterprise, they propose to us that we do courses in it, visits like to the zoo, as if it was somehow nice, natural and as if we had a choice. We've come to ask your advice, and to give you ours. So how are things in the factory, which they so nicely call 'enterprise'? Things alright? Nice? The pay's good? The machines quiet? The boss is cool?

Answer us! If not, we're going to imagine that you're all bored to death, that you're dying, that it's heart-breaking, disgusting...! And don't tell us the opposite, we won't believe you, we see how you are when you come home in the evening, you don't even look at us, you turn on the telly, you bolt your food down, you pant and puff a bit, you go to sleep. We're talking to you because a few years ago you were in our place, and these years - YOU ARE PAID TO KNOW HOW QUICKLY THEY'VE GONE BY! In one year, two, three, it'll be our turn, so we're educating ourselves so as not to be deceived later... So you don't want to come out? What's going on? You think everything's OK? Or maybe you don't have precise demands? Eh? Is that it? Here's a secret - nor do we! And really, that's THE BEST WAY! That's what shits 'them' up the most... cos there they can't fool us. What makes us angry is a block, you can't make out the detail! You say; 'it's irresponsible you won't gain anything' You are wrong- we've already gained- we have found each other, we have communicated amongst our-

selves, we have re-invented friendship for ourselves, fraternity, activity..... We had a good laugh, like we don't do often! It's terrific!

We are dangerous, we are getting intelligent! So, guys, gals, you don't want to come with us? It's in the air. You don't feel it? You don't hear anything? IT'S BECAUSE OF THE MACHINES. TOO MUCH NOISE. TOO MUCH SMOKE! STOP THEM! COME OUT INTO THE STREET!

The first factory to come out in support of the youth will be a shock! In ten years from now they'll still remember; "It's them! It's the first ones who came out!" You know what makes them angry; they are telling each other THEY'RE DOWNING TOOLS....THEY'LL NEVER TAKE THEM UP AGAIN.....

Because you don't say anything, they think you'll never say anything! That it's finished, that they've fucked you over! Show them that it's them who will be fucked by History!

Come out so that we can explain what we mean! We are on the other side of the wall, without bosses, without parties, without unions, free as wild horses. Come and talk with us. Otherwise we'll get arrested!

WE'RE WAITING FOR YOU!



TECHNOLOGY, CAPITAL AND WAR

This is the text of a leaflet produced jointly by Wildcat and some Anarchist Communists in Nottingham. It was distributed on the April '87 demonstration against Nuclear Power and weapons which was organised by CND and Friends of the Earth. Not surprisingly our predictions as to the ineffectiveness of the 'demo' were surpassed by the reality which didn't even go past Downing St. but satisfied itself with directing "boo's" in that direction.

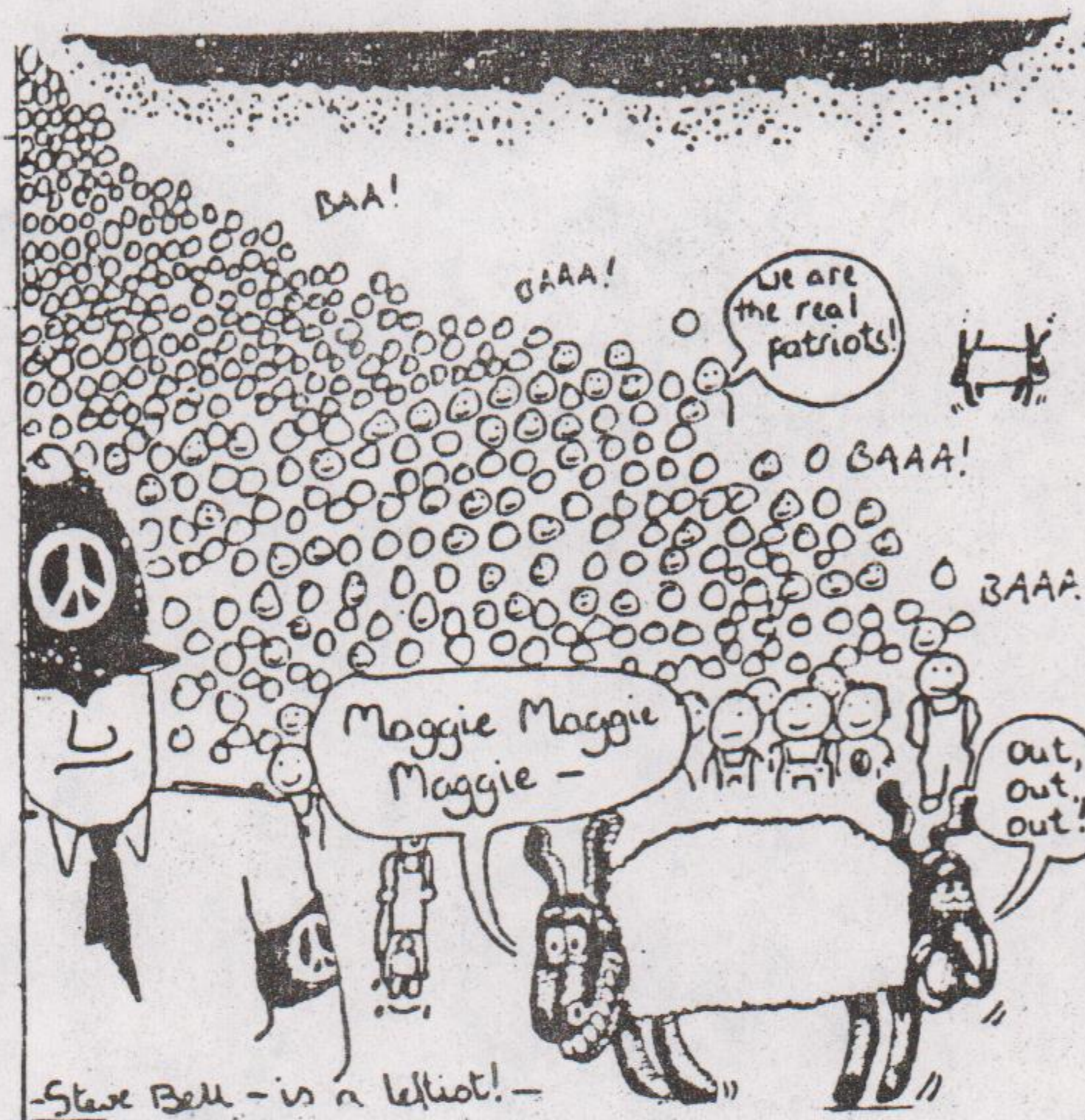
Capitalism has always bargained human flesh for profits. This global system of production and exploitation (which includes the laughingly named 'communist' countries) infests and absorbs every aspect of human activity. Science and technology are not some neutral products which reflect either the 'progress' or the 'fall' of humanity. They are totally linked to the development of capital which determines both their content and the way in which they are applied. It is for this reason that the main areas for research and the development of technology are:

1 MILITARY in order to 'protect' or expand the resources, markets and investments of each nation state.

2 INDUSTRIAL to increase the productivity of each worker. Competition between capitalists leads them to try and introduce newer technology than their competitors in order to produce goods more cheaply and grab a bigger slice of the market.. Even in such a period of reconstruction as that following WW2, this new technology led to greater exploitation of the workforce through speed-ups etc. In a period of crisis such as today this increasing exploitation is accompanied by wage cuts, massive lay-offs and permanent unemployment. Resistance to such attacks on our class have a long tradition, from the Luddites to Wapping.

3 SOCIAL CONTROL as resistance to this dehumanising society grows, we find ourselves surrounded by video cameras and telephone taps; drugs & the media are used to keep us pacified and misinformed. The latest gimmick from the US is an electronic 'tag' which will enable the state to keep us as prisoners within our own homes...as if they haven't been keeping many of us prisoners for years! On top of all this, the cops resemble killer robots more & more with every outbreak of riots or strikes. Of course since there is unlikely to be anything on this matter to disturb the social peace, we'll probably see nothing more frightening than some polite uniformed bobbies. They usually need only twenty or so to seal off Downing St., from these 'mass movements of dissent' We may even have the pleasure of seeing the 'friendly' police helping

the stewards herd people into a giant CND sign in return for all the help and cooperation CND stewards have given the police in the past. Who knows?



As well as the nuclear 'accidents' at Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and Windscale, each of which has been hushed up and blamed on individual human error or technical problems, we also have the Union Carbide leak in Bhopal, gas explosions in Mexico City, famines in Ethiopia (where people starve to death in the interests of profit, and fertile land less than 100 miles away is devoted to cash crops to pay off national debt) we have industrial 'accidents' and diseases...all of which demonstrate the violence and death which is an integral part of a system geared to the accumulation of capital.

IF YOU WANT PEACE.....

Perhaps the clearest demonstration that we have no interests in this system beyond its destruction is war. Not the threat of a future nuclear, biological or chemical war, but the everyday horrors of the more 'conventional' wars which are already a reality for large sections of the world's population.

The competition between enterprises and between nation states finds its natural extension in war. More than 20 million people have died in wars

since the end of the last world war. Nuclear weapons are a product of capital's perpetual dynamic towards war.

How does the 'peace movement' challenge this dynamic? It doesn't. The leaflet advertising this march says that people living near US bases in Britain were 'outraged at being used in someone else's war'. (!!) This is typical of the nationalist attitude behind CND... 'The True Patriots' according to its leader Joan Ruddock. When it comes to getting involved in 'our own' wars CND (alias Capitalism's Non-Nuclear Defenders) are at pains to make appeals to the ruling class and 'the public' that nuclear weapons are not an effective form of national defence.

Just look at this trash which appeared in the Guardian during the Falklands war:-

"The Labour Party, Liberal/SDP Alliance, many Conservative MPs and military experts have spoken out against Trident. Quite rightly, it's hardly the best way to defend Britain. Just look at the Falkland Islands."

This is consistent with their advocacy of a strong 'conventional' defence. This defence would no doubt have to include such nice weapons as napalm, poison gas, fragmentation bombs etc, just to compete with 'the nemy'.

The Falklands war was used by both sides to smother class struggle with 'national unity'. CND appeals to a similar 'unity of opposition' against one aspect of capital. This 'unity of opposition' includes politicians, trade union leaders, Catholic priests, 'military experts' and just about every other variety of capitalist toe-rag you could think of. What's worse is that most of these scumbags will be spouting drivel at the ever so predictable rally whilst the majority of demonstrators stand around like a mass of Steve Bell's sheep. All of which sounds like a reinforcement of the national unity and social peace which are necessary pre-conditions for a sustained effective war.

.....PREPARE FOR WAR!

No state will be persuaded to give up nuclear weapons or power on the basis of passive public opinion. The pretence that it may make democracy the most effective form

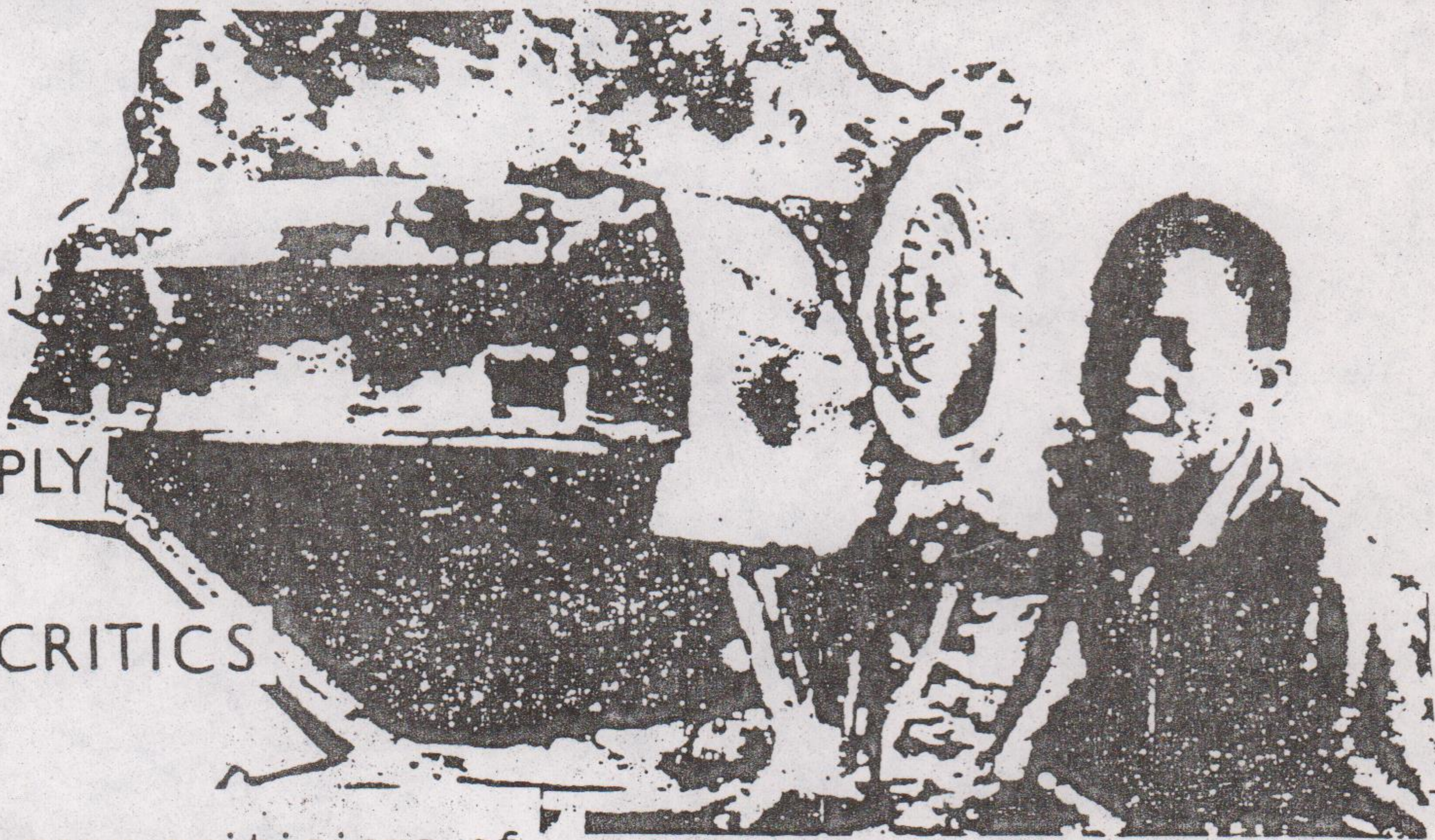
of dictatorship. By mobilising these demonstrations as a show of numbers the illusion of action is substituted for real confrontation. We are not against attacking single aspects of capital directly as in the case of the anti-militarist riots and actions against nuclear power stations which have occurred in Europe. We stress that a nation divided cannot make war.

It was the international wave of class struggle between 1917 & '21 along with massive mutinies and the pulling out of Russia after the October Insurrection that ended the First World War. It was the defeat of the class struggle in this period and later in Spain (the Civil War) which paved the way, along with the world crisis of the thirties, to the Second World War.

a war of total annihilation against capital,
wage-labour and all nation states -
THE REVOLUTIONARY CLASS WAR.

SOUTH AFRICA

A REPLY
TO OUR CRITICS



We have received many criticisms of our headline in Wildcat 9, Neither Botha Nor Mandela - All Power to the Black Working Class. Most of these criticisms came from leftists, who said we should support Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress leader, rather than denounce him as a capitalist bastard.

The fate of squatters in Zimbabwe and participants in the recent uprising in Zambia shows what black workers can expect from a black capitalist government - repression. The famine in Mozambique following food price rises imposed by the government at the IMF's behest, exposes the myth of "national liberation". As Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe said recently -

"We are more capitalist than socialist at the moment, and no one can ever say as we are today, Zimbabwe is a socialist state."
(The Independent, 17.4.87)

Of course some leftists do claim Zimbabwe is a socialist state. Others admit that African nationalist regimes are capitalist, but say that they help the working class by fighting imperialism. On the rare occasions when they do fight imperialism, the working class gets only repression and poverty in return for supporting its "liberators". The power of these regimes to crush the working class is increased by their socialist credentials, because the proletariat is prepared to give them a chance. "Marxist" Mozambique has found it a lot easier to introduce IMF price rises than more conservative African states. The left wing charities complain that the famine is caused by South African interference without pointing out the role of the Mozambique government in imposing capitalist austerity. Ethiopia lavished millions on lux-

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ury accomodation for world leaders while millions starved. Mugabe's regime had to "persuade" squatters to reverse their spontaneous land reform programme after the liberation of Zimbabwe. Leftists who support these regimes tell the working class to support its oppressors, and are our enemy.

The only way forward for the working class in SA is to overthrow, not only apartheid, but any ANC government which replaces it. There can be no national solution - a revolution in SA would have to immediately spread into the rest of the area and worldwide. In spite of the news blackout, which British journalists have been less than heroic in their attempts to circumvent, we know that struggles in SA continue. The courage and brutality of the township hit squads and the striking railworkers should be an inspiration and an example to the workers of the world.

As well as leftists, we have also received criticisms from within the revolutionary movement. A group based in Scotland called the CBG (1) were upset because we divided the working class by being somewhat scathing in our treatment of white workers. Our politics is based on reality, not the ideas of communists. White workers have consistently struck to prevent the bosses from abolishing racist policies in the mines, with full support from their racist unions.

"In 1979, the white Mine Workers' Union struck to protest black job advancement, while the National Party government sided with management." (SA Review 1) (2).

Far from being the dupes of the racist ruling classes, as the CBG try to make out, white SA workers have actively prevented reforms which the ruling class wanted to carry out.

A table published in SA Review shows the reaction of a sample of whites in four socio-economic categories to various liberal issues. We don't think the objection of working class whites to the in-

tegration of public transport reflects a healthy proletarian rejection of reformism. The results of this survey can be summarised simply: the poorer they are, the more racist the whites tend to be.

There are of course exceptions: grey areas where black and white working class people live alongside each other. But in general, the main obstacle to the liberalisation which the biggest white bosses want is the white workers, who swing to the ultra right parties at the slightest sign of reforms. What's so shocking about suggesting that a violent working class uprising in a country populated mainly by persons of African ancestry is likely to have a positive effect on the life insurance premiums of died-in-the-wool Nazi scabs?

Our headline was open to the interpretation that it is a black v. white struggle, rather than class against class. This made concessions to the capitalist media. The criticism could also be made that the headline failed to point out that revolution must be international to succeed - an insurrection in one country will only remain revolutionary if it is a step towards a world revolution. And its not only white scabs that have to be dealt with, but black ones as well. Since Wildcat 9 was published, striking railworkers have dealt with black scabs in a resolute fashion, by killing them.

These criticisms notwithstanding, our paper made a striking contrast to the hoardes of leftist papers with their uncritical nationalist garbage. As for the CBG, they can call for class unity in SA until the sun burns out. This has no practical implications for people who are concerned about turning the class struggle as it really exists into communist revolution.

1. Box CBG, c/o Boomtown Books, King St, Aberdeen.

2. SA Review 1, SARS, 1983. Ravan Press, PO Box 31134, Braamfontein 2017, RSA.

IRAN-IRAQ

CLASS WAR

AGAINST

IMPERIALIST

WAR

The following article is a contribution by the Internationalist Communist Group & is published in solidarity with them & all those militants opposing the war in the Gulf. As we go to print 'peace' initiatives by the UN are taking place in New York. It is possible that the US, having called for a cease fire will use Iranian attacks on Kuwaiti oil tankers bearing the US flag as a justification for further intervention, the outcome of which could be a generalisation of the war. Alternatively the peace initiatives could be genuine in so far as they would pave the way for social peace in the gulf; the precondition for reconstruction & the more effective exploitation of the proletariat.

Bearing this in mind we can only reiterate a theme which appears in the text itself; that the proletariat must oppose capitalist peace as ferociously as it opposes capitalist war....

IRAN-IRAQ

On the warfront or in the factory the enemy of the proletariat is "its own" bourgeoisie

The start of the war with Iran, in September 1980, compelled the Iraqi bourgeoisie to cement the sacred national unity as solidly as possible. This meant getting the population to show even more solidarity for the exploiters. Therefore, the terror on the warfront was accompanied by unprecedented repressive measures inside the country to force the proletarians to keep the war going by their labour. To make up for the shortage of workforce due the enlisting of 60% of all proletarians into the army, the state in Iraq turned to civil mobilisation aided by various "popular organisations" created and supported by the ruling Baath party:- 'Students' Unions', 'Womens leagues', 'Trade Unions', 'Defence associations'.... recruited students, women, schoolchildren and retired workers to replace the workers who had gone to the front. More than 50% of the salary is deducted to pay for the costs of war, as well as a brutal increase in work hours in the name of - of course - "the fight for the Arab nation" and "the defence of the national interest".

But defeatist actions suddenly appear in the face of this disorganisation of the workers, this attempt to physically wipe out the proletariat as a class. Inside the country these manifest themselves in the total rejection of social peace, the rejection of the "sacred union" and the rejection of the war by the struggle against work, against the fanatical exploitation to which the bourgeoisie aims to submit the proletariat.

In Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, Kuh, Sulainania and Amara proletarians have refused to accept state decisions and campaigns for "popular work" and have been in confrontations with the police. In Mosul, confrontations - triggered by students notably - have been particularly violent and have ended with injuries on both sides: the movement then became more extensive and spread to other towns in the region, Doukak among them. In the preceding months strikes had already been started by Public Works workers in Rania and Sulainania as a protest against governmental decisions to increase the "normal" shift by 4 more hours, forcing them to work 12 hours a day! Such struggles affect the national economy directly and cause a rift in the national consensus, used by the state to rally proletarians to leave for the front (and death). Therefore, the bourgeoisie cannot tolerate this and represses with even more fervor. In the episodes mentioned above, the police attacked the workers but still failed to make them give up the strike. They had to sack

them and mobilise "volunteers", through the campaign for "popular work", to replace them. To prevent further struggles, the Iraqi state passed a law which threatens workers refusing to take part in "popular work" with the death sentence.

As support for the repressive forces, the State has formed a civil army, a "popular army", supporting the regime and Saddam Hussein's riot troops. A quarter of these soldiers have been sent to the front (to the second line in order to control sensitive areas and prevent acts of sabotage committed by the defeatists) and the remainder has been kept inside the country to take part in the repression of social struggles and the ideological training of the population. In the schools, flags are raised every day in the presence of "Baath" militants whilst the pupils recite poems to the glory of Saddam Hussein, sing patriotic songs and praise Iraqi victories over the Iranians... But despite the hysterical determination with which the bourgeoisie attempts to seal the cracks appearing in the "sacred union" due to the class struggle, despite the fierce repression used against struggling proletarians, despite their ideological terrorism and despite armed terrorism, the state in Iraq has not managed to prevent thousands of workers throughout the country from fighting wage reductions, increases in working hours, worsening living conditions.... work. Iraqi workers are directly encouraging the decay of the national consensus right in the heart of the army by the struggle against their immediate exploiters and are thus spreading revolutionary defeatism.

Proletarians have only their "skin" to sell in order to survive in the capitalist system. Thousands can't manage and are dying everyday because their need to live conflicts with capital's need for valorisation. But when the monster is overflowing with capital, when its bloody need for valorisation can no longer be satisfied, when overproduction (in terms of its own needs, not human needs) violently shakes its whole being.... then comes, as a necessary condition for its survival, a period of ferocious destruction of a large part of what it created. And, more than just what it created, he must also eliminate in greater numbers than ever, those who produced, by their forced labour, the crystallised value of goods. Having sucked the sweat and blood of the working class to feed itself, the monster pitilessly massacres that part of the work force which has exceeded its needs. The bourgeoisie - capital personif-

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ied - who are the beneficiaries of this monstrous system then triggers of a war and sends innumerable proletarians to be butchered.

Peace and war are seen to be two distinct instants of the same human submission to capital's dictatorship. The proletarian - rebellious victim and revolutionary subject of social reality - is the organised being who attacks the bourgeois peace to as great an extent as war because it sees only a false alternative in the different instants

"work and die" or "march and die"! Through this understanding of the reality of what they are submitted to by capital, proletarians can fight against war, against work or, better still, in their fight against work they can fight dialectically against war. Conscious of this struggle, they recognise their enemy - not in

one or other of the presently competing bourgeois sides - but in their "own" country. At the front or in the factory, the enemy of the proletariat is its "own" bourgeoisie!

By encouraging defeat in "its own" state, by spitting on the nation, by turning their guns to point at "their" officers, by blocking production, it calls for class brothers and sisters to show solidarity against the common assassin - the world bourgeoisie. Proletarian internationalism is nothing other than this... whatever the "critical" journalists, anti-fascists (even when armed), 'third world' radicals or other "apologetic" patriots may believe, they are disguised assassins ever ready to support the "least bad" side, the "most just" war!

Revolutionary defeatism

The Iranian and Iraqi proletarians are currently experiencing capital's need for warmongering. It is not possible to quote figures of the enormous scale of human destruction organised by the rival bourgeois factions (we'll leave that morbid task to the cold statisticians of the various journalistic publications). Face with the horrors of imperialist war, the Iraqi and Iranian soldiers have been attempting to oppose it by defeatist action and fraternisation at the front.

In North Kurdistan, where the Kurdish nationalists are aiding the capitalist state in Iraq by imprisoning or killing deserters, a group of Iraqi soldiers in the front lines fraternised with the Iranian soldiers. In the same way, during the "battle of Fouka" the majority of Iraqi soldiers refused to obey orders and planned to organise fraternisation with soldiers of the "opposing" side. Having completely lost control over the soldiers and terrified by the idea of them forming solidarity links with the Iranian soldiers, the military commander purely and simply ordered the bombing of his own positions - the Iraqi positions! Artillery fire, ground-to-ground missiles were used to put down the insurgents! The "battle" lasted less than 2 hours and claimed 8500 victims. This information was obtained from soldiers who survived the massacre.

Whilst deserters and insurgents from the town met up in the Kurdish mountains and the marsh regions to organise defeatist activities, the repressive forces increased their measures of intimidation: searching houses and suspects, checking identity cards, the imposition of a curfew... it has been common to see deserters hanged for "high treason" or acts of "cowardice" in Iraqi towns: these men were mainly soldiers who refused to obey orders or organised defeatist actions. In Kut, in May 1983, 500 proletarians were charged with "crime against the nation". The increase in proletarian arrests has obliged the Iraqi government to create new prisons in every region. These are real torture centres where the alternative is between the

death sentence and being sent back to the front! In Baghdad and certain other towns, Sudanese, Pakistani and Egyptian police - in parallel with the employment of an immigrant workforce from these countries - have come to help the local repressive forces. World capital ensures that order is maintained!

In Amara, defeatists blew up an arsenal near to the town. A group of soldiers claimed responsibility for the explosion, as a supportive action for the struggle of the defeatist militants opposed to the war in the marsh regions. A similar attack took place in Kut. During spring 1983, the marsh regions were shaken by a series of defeatist actions. Acts of sabotage were organised by thousands of soldiers who had left the army or fled "popular work". The Iraqi armed forces launched a huge offensive against them in April and May, particularly in the Babed region between the 29th April and the 5th of May. With the help of heavy artillery, ground-to-ground missiles and aircraft, the Iraqi army bombarded the whole region for almost two weeks before sending out the infantry to "comb" the area for rebels. The villages regarded as having too lenient an attitude towards the militant defeatists were systematically burned to death. In Douro, a village to the south of Hilla, armed inhabitants resisted against the police to prevent house-to-house searches and the arrest of deserters. In Kasem, in the same area, an armed detachment of defeatists attacked the Iraqi army which was guarding the railway linking Baghdad and Basra. On the 3rd and 4th of May 1983 in the Kefel area, the Iraqi army, sent to "clear the area of all subversive forces", fought defeatists who were supported by the local inhabitants, for two days. It proved necessary to bring in large reinforcements of arms and men to bombard the villages, massacre the defeatists and the villagers supporting them or those unlucky enough to be present during the fighting. The bodies of the militant defeatists were then loaded onto milit-

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ary vehicles and paraded around the towns of the area "to show the citizens that the nation will not renounce its power to the enemy and leave them unpunished." (Communique by the Commander General of the Iraqi armed forces, April 1983.)

If it is impossible to calculate the force of the proletariat by the number of dead left on revolutionary battlefields (one should look rather at the number from the opposite side in the class war!), nor on the basis of the repressive power of its enemy, it still remains that this information leaves no possible doubt that there has been an exacerbation of the class conflict in Iraq and a real attempt by the proletariat to oppose the imperialist war, by revolutionary defeatism as a manifestation of the class war.

In Iran, the blockade of information is resisting better and therefore one can doubtless see the reflection of a more powerfully imposed national consensus. But seems doubtful that the state in Iran hasn't been undergoing similar movements aimed at the destabilisation and disintegration of its army. And, putting the durability of the "sacred union" into proportion, remember the cohesion and the force represented by the shah's army, one of the most powerful in the world which was broken up in less time than it takes to say it, by the proletarian defeatist struggle. Today, the general situation in Iran makes one think that the acts of fraternisation recounted above, between the soldiers of the countries at war must be merely the tip of the iceberg. The "Iraqi aggression" obviously acted as a catalyst to reinforce the repression of workers struggles and equally for the Iranian bourgeoisie the 1000km long front has acted as an outlet (a reservoir) for hundreds of thousands of immigrant proletarians, unemployed or school children, cannon fodder - whatever they desire. But the 'Holy War' has its limits! It serves as a useful element of mystification in order to send the Iranians to a forced suicide, but the thousands who have ended up dead, putrifying in the marshes of the warfront, may cause the war to lose its odour of sanctity.

This is an eyewitness's account of one of the battles where, according to an Iraqi general, "more than 3000 men were reduced to a pulp in 17 hours" :- "subjected to heavy artillery fire, missiles and rockets the Iranian troops were completely decimated. The marshes were strewn with thousands of dead on a warfront 30km long and 20km deep. The Iraqi military who took part in the operation said that they felt like they were ordering mass executions (not far from the truth.) Iranian schoolchildren whose schools have been closed down, are sent to the battle front like cattle... I've seen hundreds of Iranian prisoners, mainly children, saying : 'I was forced to, I was forced to...' "

Even though the brainwashing of proletarians in Iran seems relatively more effective, the same need to fight against destruction appears in the facts nonetheless and makes one think that the force that the proletariat will have to muster to stop the horror of their destruction and to broaden the field of defeatism will be no less powerful. The assassins should beware!



Internationalist solidarity

For the bourgeoisie on both sides, the defeat of the proletariat is issue at each battle. Whether the Iraqi army bombs its own land (and vice versa) or whether one or the other imperialist "opponent" carries out the execution of proletarians is immaterial. The only thing that matters to the bourgeoisie as a worldwide class is to bring the proletariat to heel by its systematic massacre and prepare it for a new cycle of valorisation in the area. The extension of the conflict to a worldwide level puts it in a different perspective. The direct implication of Saudi Arabia in the conflict, the United Arab Emirates (both allies of the USA) for Iraq as well as the aid provided for Iran by Syria and Libia (allies of the Soviet

Union), constitute the first signs of generalised war that the bourgeoisie, driven to desperation by the economic crisis, could well instigate.

In the light of this there can be no doubt that the class retaliation is still insufficient. Even if there have been attempts by proletarians to organise spontaneous action in their fight against destruction, the working class has not yet managed to split completely, that is in a continued and organised way, from the bourgeois ideology and brainwashing systems (the myth of democracy, trade union groups, national forces, regionalists, "communist" parties....) and to provide itself with an autonomous direction, a centralised organisation for the international

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proletarian struggle, a class party, a communist party. In the confrontation with its enemy, the proletariat has not yet realised that it is in fact the same force repressing the proletariat in England and Brazil today, who repressed in Morocco, Tunisia and Poland yesterday and who will oppose the working class's fight for freedom tomorrow, every where and always (until their complete destruction!).

On the Iran-Iraq warfront, like all over the world, the struggle is still organised too much "on the spur of the moment". Mystified by the "Golden Years" of capital and submitted to more than 60 years of counter-revolution, it has not been easy for the proletariat to draw conclusions from past revolutionary struggles and the following period of counter-revolution. Equally, the proletariat finds itself faced with enormous difficulties in bringing to light, making known and materialising its own international revolutionary perspectives. This is not a reality isolated to Iran and Iraq. It is directly determined by the relation of world force between the classes and by the generally unprepared state of the fight confronting the proletariat. As regards this situation, we have no pious wishes and hopes to formulate. The role of communists is to make the balance of forces more favourable to our class by actively taking charge of internationalist tasks.

We are not publishing this information on the class war in Iran and Iraq out of journalistic concerns, but rather because it is necessary to reveal the international character of the class war, usually masked by journalism. We are calling for the circulation of this information as widely as possible throughout the class and we also denounce the foul contempt and criminal indifference shown by the so-called "revolutionary milieu" as regards the movements going on outside the "developed" countries. This euro-centrist bias amounts to no more than a "radical" concession to nationalist bourgeois ideologies... turning internationalism into continentalism.

The fact that capital is concentrated in certain places and forms what we call poles of accumulation is an important variable affecting the proletariat's resolution to fight: the polar development is spread across the whole earth. Strong poles of concentration of capital are forming in the Middle East, South America and are developing in Africa and Asia etc. By reducing the objective possibility of communist revolution to the confines of Europe - obligatory passing point for class war generalisation - one submits oneself to and spreads the bourgeois myth of a world divided into developed and underdeveloped countries, rich and poor. By placing the "third world" (bourgeois terminology used by these groups) opposite the other two thirds ("socialist", "capitalist", "non-aligned" etc.) one only serves to reinforce the opposition, ideologically supported by the bourgeoisie, between workers' groups with so-called divergent interests. It is believed that on the one hand, the workers of the "centre" have "become bourgeois" through decades of social peace and that nothing more can be expected of them (this is

the leftist version or one of its variants). On the other hand, the "revolutionary milieu" completes the myth by reducing the poles of accumulation of capital and the class war to the confines of Europe, despising in an almost racist way those class movements going on other parts of the world. This is done under the indifferent pretext that the lack of development of capital in these areas has inescapably caused the proletariat to be misled by national liberation fights.

The class war going on today, particularly in Iran and Iraq - however real its insufficiencies discussed above might be - is described in a way which denies the facts, with a fatalist conception of the struggles taking place outside Europe. This "theoretical" indifferentism leads the eurocentrists to a practical neglect of the necessary actions of international solidarity. Developing internationalism also means politically training militant proletarians obliged to flee repression as far as organising the continuity of the revolutionary fight going on in "their" region is concerned.

The successful development of the class war on an international level, the reinforcement of internationalism, is dependent upon - amongst other things - the support of the defeatist actions taken by the proletarians in Iran and Iraq against the imperialist war at all levels (diffusion of information, solidarity and training of exiles, organisation of the fight...). To understand the world is to transform it. Reinforcing international centralisation, organising here, and everywhere else, a fight against all states, all governments, all armies, is understanding what proletarian internationalism really means. It is doubtful whether the sects of the ultra-left with their semi-chauvinistic vision of the world will manage this, since if such groups have been able to theorise about their praxis with an image so marked with the limits (frontiers!) stuffed into their heads by the bourgeoisie to this day, it seems unlikely that they will emerge from their ghetto to take real charge of internationalist actions.

ACTIVE AND INTERNATIONALIST SOLIDARITY WITH THE
REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATIST MILITANTS FIGHT IN IRAN
AND IRAQ!

to be a patriot is
to be an assassin!

IRAN-IRAQ

Against journalism & the information blockade!

On the 4th of September 1980, Saddam Hussein and the ruling Baath party, taking advantage of the general chaos in Iran following the fall of the shah, dispatched the Iraqi army to "recapture" the area of chatt el Arab. Retaliating against this "aggression", Khomeini, recently made head of the Iranian government, vigorously mobilised his troops to launch them into a holy war against the "Satanic Hussein".

The scene was set and from that time on, worldwide daily newspapers, against a backdrop of sensationalist headlines, have been relentlessly set upon describing the conflict between the two countries in a way that only conveys information necessary to lead to a purely inter-imperialist understanding of the war. Be it by expressing sympathy for one side or the other, or by taking a "neutral and objective" stance, the journalistic point of view meets the objectively bourgeois point of view, taking the war and reducing it to a fight between two countries over the capture of land (the region of Chatt el Arab), to a religious war (muslims against muslims!), to an historically "popular" war (Arabs against Persians) to a war of nations or even to the possibility of future involvement of the two main blocs (East and West). Even if some of these opposing factors are actual existing contradictions (inter-factional bourgeois wars), they serve nevertheless as

a powerful screen. First, they obscure the real * reason for the war - a bourgeois war for the mass destruction of surplus workforces, a war to destroy the proletariat as a force which threatens the existence of capitalism. Second, they obscure the reality of the class struggle - the definitive contradiction! - which both inside and outside the two countries, pits exploited against exploiters, "cannon fodder" against officers, defeatist forces against warmongering forces, revolutionary militants against state controlled organisations, deserters against military police, the shot-at against the "shooters", strikers against anti-strikers.... proletariat against bourgeoisie.

As the Iran-Iraq conflict has progressed, it has become clear to an alarmed world bourgeoisie "what is really going on", reminding the world - with facts - of the reality of the two implacably antagonistic and historically inimical social forces: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Proletarians organising themselves into defeatist action at the front in order to resist their own destruction represent a serious challenge to the bourgeois solution to the developing crisis. But what is even more terrifying for the bourgeois, is the realisation that the stance taken by the workers in the face of the war is becoming generalised amongst world proletarian awareness. The



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bourgeoisie is using all possible weapons - the media not the least among them - to fight this threat and to wipe such manifestations of the class war out of social awareness. The bourgeoisie is aiming to prevent the formation of the proletariat into a worldwide organised class, by its almost total control of the channels of information. The function of the bourgeois press is to deny the existence of the social contradictions violently shaking up the military apparatus of the countries at war by the means of camouflaging the social antagonisms present even in the midst of the armies through "objective" communiqués reporting the successive defeats and victories of the particular military forces at the time. But the "objectiveness" upon which it prides itself is nothing but a "subjective" restriction (class point of view!) on reporting what is going on in the Persian Gulf, turning it into the mystical image of war given by the bourgeoisie. And not only as far as a war is concerned!

The dominant ideology - mediated by the various channels of information, amongst other things - is the ideological expression/materialisation of the terror to which the proletariat is submitted by its class enemy. If this ideological terror had merely limited itself to a somewhat "tolerant" appearance towards the exploited, it would be far less effective today. This is a lesson that history has taught the bourgeoisie: it is no longer satisfied with asserting exploitation and its reasons by force, but mystifies reality by theoretically denying itself as a class and ideologically disguising the forms of exploitation behind external appearances of kindness, thus making the workers feel solidarity with their exploiters and making them grateful for what amounts to their exploitation. Workers and bosses find themselves side by side, equal in rights in the sad world of the citizen, the buyer and seller of goods. It is this free world that the citizen/soldiers are prepared to defend with body and soul when they are sent to be butchered, heavily armed with patriotic songs, speeches exalting nationalism ... and bayonets in their backs!

By presenting itself as a body for the diffusion of pure facts, concrete things, numbered data which when offered to public opinion (public opinion being the sum of the ideas of grouped individuals, dispossessed from themselves and expropriated from their own thought) should permit a correct appreciation of reality, the press has made itself into an appropriate instrument whereby the world can be described in a mythical way, all social antagonisms wiped out. The deceiving ghost of objectivity, unflinchingly pursued by journalists lacking in moral reason, is nothing more, in the mystifying description of social relationships that is given, than the dominant point of view, the opinion of the dominant class, an objectively bourgeois point of view. But in order to wipe the fact of the class struggle out of social consciousness, the bourgeoisie cannot be satisfied with explaining reality from a non-classist point of view (a purely class orientated point of view, therefore, since camouflaging the social conflict is asserting capitalist dictatorship even more firmly!) and is obliged

to hide the salient facts of the proletarian action. In this way the media rounds off its false position of neutrality by the pure and simple blockade of information. Workers' struggles in Iran and Iraq, fraternisation on the war front, acts of sabotage attacking the national economy, acts of revolutionary defeatism, the process of the breaking up of the armies, deserting, in short, the fight led by the Iranian and Iraqi proletarians against the war (whether a "just" war or not) against labour ("free" or "popular") against their own bourgeoisie and therefore against world capital all remain unmentioned and undiscussed by the newspapers!

If the dominant class were to relate the facts and put them in the real setting of the class war it would be like them providing the proletariat with sticks to beat them! This is what we want to do in this text by divulging information from the Iran-Iraq war front. This information as the state of the class struggle in these countries (more particularly in Iraq) has been supplied by groups of communist comrades who have written a "manifesto against the war in Iran and Iraq" published in the central reviews of the GCI in French (No 14) in Spanish (No 10), in English (No 1) and in Arabic (No 1). It has also been translated into Kurdish and Portuguese.



IRAN-IRAQ

Down with all states!

Today, as the war goes on, more and more deserters are hiding in the cities, in the marsh regions of the South, and in the mountains. The sabotage activities in the factories as well as the general refusal of military discipline have become real and harsh facts that the established order has to face. We do not have much information about the struggles that have taken place more recently. We know that on 23 March 1984 barricades were set up by rioters in Teheran, who looted and wounded several Islamic guards (Pasdaran) This riot came to an end when nearly a thousand people got arrested. A week later clashes took place in Gorgan between prisoners and guards. Some of the soldiers on duty took sides with the prisoners, and six of the prisoners were killed by the State. At the same time similar events took place in other camps. On 10 April 1985 new riots took place in some of the southern areas of Teheran. Rioters shouted 'Death to Khomeiny! Down with war!' 25 were killed any many others wounded.

In Iraq, according to official statistics, the situation of the poor is getting more and more unbearable - besides the worsening food situation, each family has had several of its members mobilised for the war. According to reliable sources, in September 1985, after 5 years of war, 70,000 Iraqis have been killed, 150,000 have been wounded and about 50,000 have been made prisoner (according to the 'Middle East Economic Digest' Oct 1985)

'In light of this situation, and to prevent all revolts, the police and the party cross-rule the whole country. Everyone knows they are being watched, eavesdropped upon and possibly in danger of being imprisoned. The Council of Command of the Revolution (CCR) the supreme instance of power in Iraq, has decreed a law - on 17 November 1986 - that sentences to life anyone who publicly insults the president of the Republic or the Baas Party.' (according to 'le Monde Diplomatique' of Feb 1986)

The governments, both in Iran and Iraq, have to use nearly as many forces against these rebels as they display on the battlefields. But as these governments become more and more incapable of controlling the situation, they can always count on the very active support by rich nationalist groups like Komala or the official communist

party. These are the Reserve-keeps of capital. In the beginning of the war, when the situation did not push the proletarian forces to affirm themselves in an autonomous manner against the sacrifices the war required from them, these parties (Komala, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan in Iraq, the CPI) could easily create illusions and maintain the proletarians within the capitalist framework. But now that these illusions have been swept away, These organisations have had to reveal their true nature by repressing, chasing and imprisoning the deserters!

From the end of 1985 to the middle of 1986, Kemala, after having reached an agreement with the Iraqi government, has participated directly, together with the official army force, in the repression of the riots against war and misery. This took place in several cities in the north of Iraq (Suliamnia and Erbil) Militants from Kemala have informed the police about the hiding place where deserters and internationalist militants used to meet (Spring 1986) On top of that, Kemala has exchanged prisoners it kept in its gaols against some of its own militants that were being kept by Saddam Hussein. The People's Modjaheddin abroad can always weep for compassion while showing the pictures of the atrocities committed by the Iranian State, in this way trying to get all the signatures they want, but all this has never prevented them from participating in the massacres of struggling proletarians. Those bastards prefer the Iraqi state to the Iranian state. We leave them with their choice, but they will be destroyed by the communist movement together with all other states.

While assuming this task of repression against the communist movement, these organisations serve the interests of the national economy. It's because they claim to be revolutionary, because they have usurped the red banner of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that these organisations can chain the proletarian movement more easily to interests that are not its own (the national interest instead of the proletarian interest; democracy and social peace instead of the dictatorship of the proletariat and revolution) And those who really try to defend the proletarian interests and revolutionary defeatism find on this path these enemies disguised as friends, and they'll have to unmask them and destroy these nationalist militia in the same way as all other capitalist military forces.

poland 1981

Graveyard

of workers'

Democracy

Review

HENRI SIMON. Poland 1980-82 - Class Struggle and the Crisis of Capital. Published by Black and Red, PO Box 02374, Detroit, Michigan 48202, USA.

POLAND 1980-82 is one of Simon's three books on the class struggle in Poland. Many of the details he gives of the massive series of strikes which shook Polish and world capitalism during 1980 and 1981 can't be found elsewhere.

The mass strike in Poland which began at the Ursus tractor factory on July 1 1980 in response to food price rises was one of the most significant in the wave of strikes which swept the world from 1968 to 1981. It was the most widespread struggle post-war Poland has seen, surpassing the uprisings and strikes of 1970 and 1976.

Without the new union Solidarity to represent them, Polish workers were able to organise a nation-wide strike in a matter of days, paralysing the Polish state and forcing the bourgeoisie to the negotiating table. Whenever the state

granted one demand, workers demanded more. Whenever one group of workers' demands were met, they refused to go back until all striking workers' demands were satisfied.

After the foundation of Solidarity, workers were disorganised. Strikes were continually prevented by the Solidarity bureaucracy; instead of full-scale immediate strikes against the slightest repression, police assaults on workers were met with the threat of one-day strikes a month later. As Solidarity realised its responsibility in helping run Poland, even these were called off. Eventually, Solidarity had so weakened the workers' resistance that the ruling class were able to impose martial law and the price rises.

Wildcat shares with Simon an analysis of Poland as a capitalist country, which along with the rest of the Eastern bloc will have to be overthrown by a working class revolution if we are to achieve socialism. Simon demonstrates the class nature of Polish society, analysing in detail the various classes including the capitalist class. We also share his opposition to all types of unions which

claim to represent the interests of the working class permanently in capitalist society, and attribute the defeat in Poland as much as anything to the ability of the new union to hold back strikes and other struggles in the interests of the Polish ruling class.

Simon shows the weakness of the Polish proletariat in numerous quotes from the scene, but finds convoluted arguments about undemocratic and elitist leaders necessary to explain the emergence of Solidarity.

"the majority of workers... seemed to be satisfied with the vague words which they thought contained their conception of protest and demands, whereas they contained the conceptions of the democratic bourgeoisie".
(pp30-31)

The origins of Solidarity

In the summer of 1980, the workers in Poland were faced with price rises that

affected them all, and rather than accept the ruling bureaucracy's attempt to divide them by negotiating on a plant by plant basis, unified their strikes. Delegates from thousands of workplaces elected further delegates onto a central strike committee known as the "M.K.S.". The fact that these delegates were rapidly revocable by the masses who had elected them meant that workers could control negotiations with the bourgeoisie. This prevented the sort of sell outs which are a feature of trade union controlled strikes.

However the M.K.S. wasn't revolutionary, it was as Simon points out,

"a meeting of reformists"

At various points in his book Simon tries to locate the origins of Solidarity outside the strike committee. But on one occasion he clearly shows where Solidarity came from:

"A strike committee was elected which, immediately after the strike, transformed itself into a permanent workers' commission. Later this would be the core of the new union." (p100)

The workers' struggle begat the MKS, and the MKS begat Solidarity. The reason why Solidarity, a reformist, nationalist, capitalist union could arise out of the MKS was because the consciousness of most of the Polish working class, which the MKS democratically represented, never went beyond reformism, nationalism and trade unionism.

Given this, Simon's complaints about "elitist conceptions" among the leaders

of the MKS seem misplaced. Would Lech Walesa's role have been any less reactionary had he been less elitist given that he shared the workers democratic bourgeois conceptions?

Simon blames the degeneration of the strike committee into a body which called off strikes in the interest of national capital on leaders and intellectuals.

A few vague phrases about "participation" (p104) are taken as evidence of class consciousness, and the tendency for "experts" to want to control decision making is presented as the death knell of the movement. This is simply not true. Walesa was an unemployed shipyard electrician,

Walentinowicz a crane driver. These devout catholic trade unionists were as horny handed as they come. Anyone who has seen the pictures of Gdansk shipyard workers taking "mass" in 1980 cannot doubt that the leaders truly expressed the consciousness of the "mass" of the workers.

Simon argues that the MKS became reactionary because it became less democratic. But in fact, it was bound to become more reactionary as it reflected the aims of the majority of workers. Its aim - negotiating the rate of exploitation with the bourgeoisie - made it reactionary, democratic or otherwise. Since only a minority of workers rejected negotiations, they couldn't have kept the MKS as a fighting organisation, even



if it had remained democratic. Given the aim of the majority of workers - negotiating with, thus accepting the existence of, the ruling class, within a national framework - any democratic body was bound to assist the defeat of the movement.

If workers still want to negotiate with the bourgeoisie, it's irrelevant whether the negotiators are revocable or not. Communists in a situation where they had any influence would refuse to take part in a committee which regularly negotiated with the class enemy. We have nothing to say to the ruling class but "Behold your future executioners!" - the slogan of the Chicago anarchists in the 1880's. We are closer to this attitude of uncompromising class struggle than to the so-called Marxists who praise workers' democracy.

There was a realisation in the Polish movement that the working class is a class with common interests, but this is compatible with any number of reactionary ideas.

Numerous quotes from Simon's book demonstrate this. The following two, the first from a bureaucrat, the second from a worker, are supposed to show that the workers were more conscious than the bureaucrats realised.

"Striking Polish workers have no class consciousness."

"And you, there, in France, do you realize that a revolution is underway in Poland? A revolution that will not stop as in Portugal after the flowers, but which will go further, go to the end, until we have complete democracy." (p80)

This counter revolutionary rubbish accurately reflects the consciousness of militant Polish workers after a year of intense and widespread struggle. The workers still wanted a more democratic management of the nation. Any nation is based on exploiting the workers. In other words, workers fought for better management of their own exploitation.

Simon is right to point out that capital's inability to grant even this lays the foundations for a more conscious uprising in the future. But he is dangerously wrong when his worship of the working class leads him to quote counter revolutionary ideas approvingly. Even the following very clear expression of the weight of reformist ideology is proudly related:

"This time we're not so stupid as we once were [??]. We're willing to give

the government time to clear the mess up. But we also want our own interests to be permanently represented [!!!]." (p83)

The flying firemen

By 1981, Solidarity's determination to impose its consensus with the bourgeoisie on the workers made it oppose all strikes. Simon gives dozens of examples of the blatant attack on the struggle both by Solidarity's leadership and also by rank and file groupings within it such as "the Network". Perhaps the most memorable quote comes



from Lech Walesa, who described himself as "the flying fireman", ready to go to any trouble spot in a government helicopter and dampen the flames of class struggle. He and the Polish ruling class were far clearer on the role of Solidarity than the leftist groups in the West who supported it:

"The authorities knew this and even authorised our formation... since they realised that Solidarity would play a role of shock-absorber, reasonable and serious, that it would not liquidate the Party..."

But numerous strikes continued to break out, prisons were attacked by workers, police stations were burned, etc.. By November 1981, there were 400,000 workers striking against Solidarity's orders.

But if as Simon says the movement was going forward in late 1981, how come the bourgeoisie was able to snuff it out with impunity?

The end of the movement

Simon claims its because Solidarity failed to take the heat out of the movement that the bourgeoisie resorted to military law in December 1981. But the success of the coup disproves this. Rather, it was when Solidarity had done as much as it could to derail the movement, and the workers had failed to consciously go beyond Solidarity, that the ruling class was able to restore order.

Simon sees the coup conspiratorially. One of his chapters is entitled "West and East Agree to Destroy a Dangerous Revolutionary Ferment".

"one section of the army of the Eastern branch of capital intervened in Poland (because this was its designated operational zone) on behalf of the consolidated imperialisms." (p69)

The Polish army doesn't need Poland to be designated its operational zone in order to intervene in it. There is no need to go outside an analysis of the Polish working class's Achilles heel - its reactionary ideas - to explain why the ruling class was successful. The workers' resistance to the military was pathetic. A rising workers' movement would have been able to resist; in 1980, when the workers' actions were miles ahead of their ideas, the bourgeoisie knew this, and was powerless. A year and a half later, workers barricaded themselves in mines and threatened to blow themselves up.

Class consciousness and the Party

Blind to the cause of the failure - the absence of class consciousness - Simon looks outside the working class, to "experts" or the machinations of international capital, to explain it. In his desperation to find class consciousness, he even sees the collapse of the strikes after 1981 as a sign of consciousness (p95) - the "rank and file" were defying Solidarity's orders to strike!

Mass strikes are perfectly compatible with nationalism. The Polish workers made no attempt to spread the struggle outside Poland, so they were in any case doomed. Simon shows how nationalist was working class resistance after the coup. A rank and file document circulated after December 1981 by Polish workers concludes:

"today there is nothing more important than the struggle for national liberation, the lifting of the State of War, respect for civil liberties and union rights". (p75)

These bourgeois ideas were not overcome by the struggle of the working class. Certainly, a communist minority tends to emerge during massive struggles, but it will remain a minority until well into the revolutionary period. Inevitably, this minority will take the lead in doing what needs to be done. There is no question of this minority "injecting class consciousness from the outside", as the Leninists believe, since it doesn't come from outside the class. But the idea that it has to limit itself to "accelerating" the class struggle for fear of substituting itself for the class is just as reactionary as substitutionism itself, because it leads this minority to abandon its avant garde role in favour of following the existing class struggle and the non-communist majority. This reactionary social-democratic idea is common to followers of Rosa Luxemburg and councilists like Henri Simon.

For materialists, being precedes consciousness. In the class struggle this means that frequently, the actions of combative proletarians go ahead of their ideas. Democracy, which registers their ideas, results in holding back necessary actions. The mass strike doesn't start from all the workers. It is the result of preparation by minorities. To call on revolutionary proletarians to wait for the majority to agree to what needs to be done before doing it is tantamount to sabotaging the revolution. One of the main lessons of Poland is that militant minorities need to act as soon as they are able, and call on the majority to participate.

To his credit, Simon recognises that action necessarily precedes consciousness whilst bourgeois ideas still dominate the working class, but fails to draw the consequences.

"The same people who, one day, supported the union, demonstrated behind the Polish flag and piously took communion in front of factories during a strike, were shamelessly robbing the state and were constantly scheming against the system of exploitation on an earlier day, and will abandon the union, will burn flags and churches, in the fight for their own interests, on the day when they find the organised force of unions, army or church in their way; and they will probably still believe in them while they do it." (p85)

The extent to which the MKS and other mass bodies facilitate the actions of the working class against capital is the extent to which we support them. The degree to which they are democratic, i.e. the extent to which they reflect the ideas and opinions of the majority of the working class, which are capitalist, is the extent to which they are reactionary.

The mass strike in Poland shows this clearly. Workers democratically voted for negotiation, and logically, Solidarity. Not only does the ruling class possess the power to produce the ruling ideas in society, the working class in its everyday life, even in mass struggles, continually creates new bourgeois ideas. But in the course of struggles, there is a continual tendency to break with these ideas.

The communist party is simply the communist part of the working class. It is extremely confusing to talk of "The Party" as though it was a single organisation - at no time in history has one organisation taken on the role of the party. The party is that minority which is struggling for revolution, in a more or less confused way, at a given moment. The working class maintains no permanent institutions in capitalist society. The party appears and disappears, and takes various forms. From political organisations to strike committee's, from hit squads to workers groups. During the Russian Revolution, there were revolutionaries in the Bolshevik Party, amongst

the anarchists and Left Socialist Revolutionaries and even in the ranks of the Mensheviks. There were also many who belonged to no party and participated through the Factory Committee's and Soviets.

Who needs Democracy

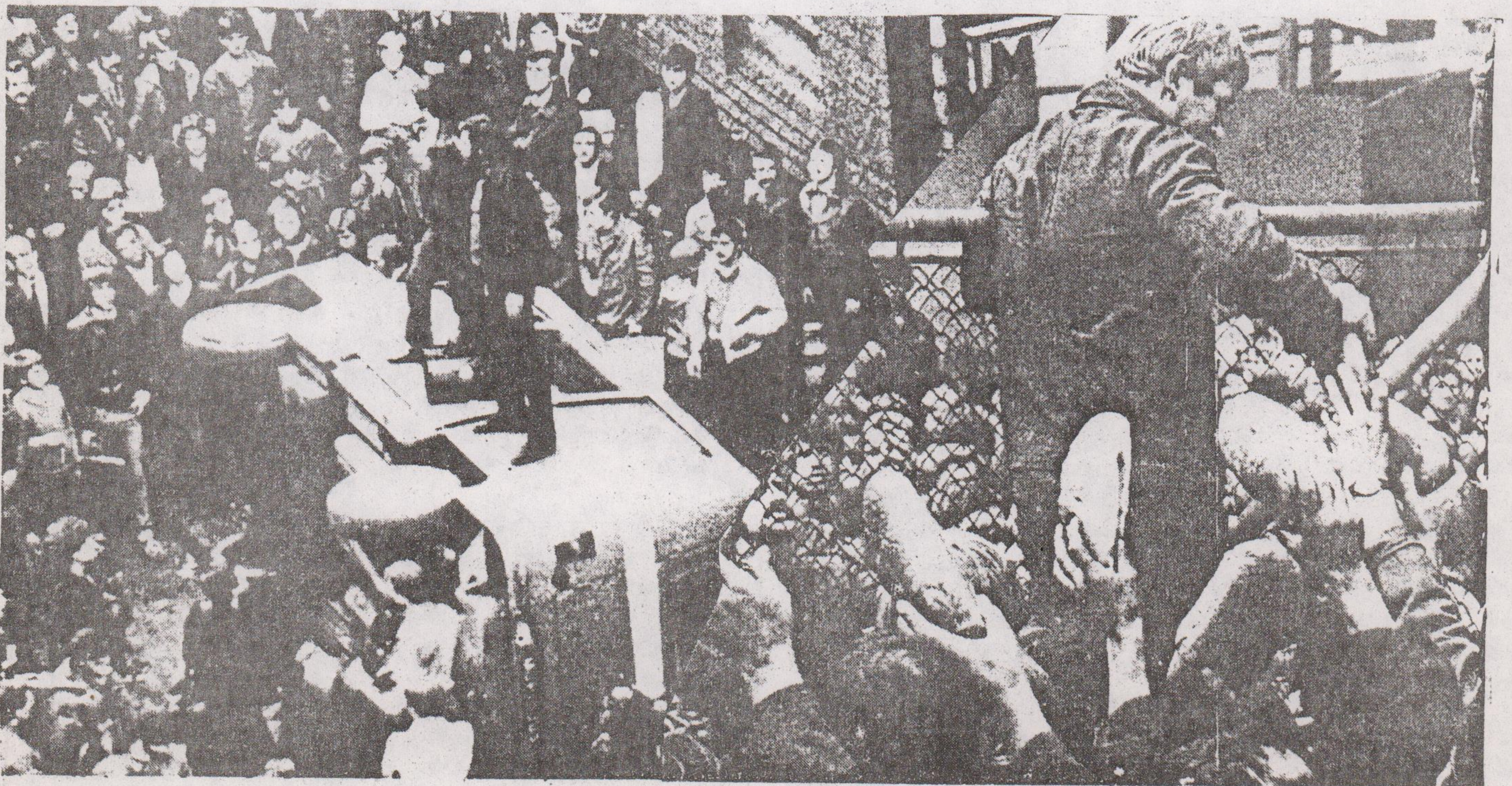
Simon's view that the defeat of the movement was located in the lack of democracy leads him to complain that the Gdansk accords had been imposed on the rank and file

"without being voted on by the MKS."
(p37)

"Violating all democratic procedures [Tsk, tsk] they [Walesa and the ubiquitous experts] signed an agreement which contained only promises and then ran to the TV to call off the strike without asking anyone's advice."
(p49)

But if the agreements with the class enemy had been voted on by the MKS it would have been worse, since workers would have accepted the views of democratically revocable delegates more easily. What was reactionary was calling off strikes, not that it was done undemocratically.

Simon defines his idea of democracy as follows:



"For the workers it is something completely different: the right to intervene directly in any decisions made over their heads." (p87)

But this avoids the problem of how to resolve disagreements among workers. Suppose, instead of being made "over their heads", reactionary decisions which affected militant minorities were made by other workers? Surely a defender of workers' democracy would advocate that the minority should not intervene directly against the decisions of the majority, for the sake of unity and discipline? For communists, the issue is clear. We support whichever side is tending to move towards communism. We may call on strikebreakers to obey the decisions of a mass meeting to stay on strike, but not because its the decision of a mass meeting. Where mass meetings vote for scabs, such as the scab mass

significant struggles which have taken place in the world since 1981 have been notably undemocratic. The class struggle in South Africa cannot be democratic. The suppression of unions by the state means they cannot organise mass meetings, so the struggle goes on in an undemocratic way. The situation in the townships is similar. Some democrats, such as the Socialist Workers Party in Britain, condemn the hit squads in South Africa for being "substitutionist". One of the high points of class struggle in Britain was the Tottenham riot. Although the uprising was preceded by a long meeting, it started when a section of the meeting simply walked out saying "Its too late for words". Which is the more revolutionary this, and the violent struggles in Poland in '80-'81 and '71 and '76 detailed in Simon's books, or the bourgeois rubbish that he uncritically

"Communism is also the end of any element necessary for the unification of society: it is the end of politics. It is neither democratic nor dictatorial. Of course it is "democratic" if this word means that everyone will be in charge of all social activities. This will not be so because of people's will to manage society, or because of a democratic principle, but because the organization of activities can only be carried out by those taking part in them. However, as opposed to what the democrats say, this will be possible only through communism, where all the elements of life are part of the community, when all separate activity and all isolated production are abolished. This can only be achieved through the destruction of value."

Barrott - in 'What is Communism'

meetings which were organised during the dock strike in 1984, we support minorities who defy these democratic decisions. When mass meetings of strikers take reactionary decisions, we call on revolutionary minorities to ignore them.

Democracy does not preclude leaders. Leaders who get elected democratically are all the more powerful because of it. If British miners had set up revocable strike committees during their strike, they would have elected Arthur Scargill, whom they worshipped, to lead them.

It is argued that the proletarian revolution must involve the majority of the proletariat. It is true that the revolution cannot be carried out by a small minority, but it is not true that the majority of the working class have to actively support the initial insurrection. All that is required is that they do not actively oppose it.

Many of the high points of the class struggle in Poland were outside the control of democratic bodies, and the most

quotes about rights, participation, democracy and worse?

The last few years of riots in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Latin America, Zambia, Britain, Japan and West Germany and above all the struggles in South Africa have had more revolutionary potential than the Polish mass strike, although none of them have involved a majority of workers. Obviously, more working class people need to be involved. Those who have borne the brunt of police repression hardly need councilism to tell them it takes a lot of people to beat the state.

No doubt mass strikes will play an important role in the revolution. But revolutionaries and militant minorities will need to be prepared to defy any organs which arise to represent the opinions of the majority of workers. It will often be necessary to set up organs of workers power to take the initiative in leading the struggle forward, independent of the mass assemblies which

represent the majority.

In this polemic, we have necessarily concentrated on the weaknesses of the Polish strikes. In spite of these, the international class struggle did make some gains from the struggle in Poland:

- a leap forward in workers' consciousness of the power of their class.
- the realization that the working class can organise production and distribution in its own interests.

- the limitation of struggle within national boundaries.

But none of these insights are in themselves revolutionary.

A truly revolutionary consciousness can only emerge from ruthless criticism of the weaknesses of worker struggles. Foremost among these weaknesses is democracy.

The Wages System Under New Management

A. Buick and J. Crump. Macmillan Press. £8.95.

This is an excellently written explanation of the nature of state capitalism as part of the world capitalist economy.

Starting with an analysis of the fundamentals of the capitalist economy, it relentlessly pursues its aim of exposing the myth that nationalisation or state ownership has anything to do with communism of the interests of the working class. It situates the development of state ownership firmly in the competitive drive of the system, the need to expand capital and aggregate larger and larger units of capital for the more effective exploitation of wage labour.

The ideological cover of 'socialism' is traced back to the orthodoxy of social democratic politics, and particularly the variant of this expressed in Leninism.

The major fault of the book is the authors' neglect of that other dynamic of capitalism - the class struggle - as a factor in shaping the development of modern capitalism, and especially the evolution of state capitalism as a world wide phenomena.

This is partly reflected in its treatment of the Russian revolution, which is characterised as a (state) capitalist revolution. Even if we accept this deterministic definition for the sake of argument, it still totally underestimates the importance of the events of 1917 for the working class. The fact that the emerging Bolshevik Party bureaucracy had to wrest control from the working class, in order to establish its supremacy is not mentioned. Great stress is laid on the absence of socialist consciousness amongst the Russian and European working class at this time, but

this ignores the vital importance of the struggle itself in producing that consciousness.

The final chapter on the alternative to world capitalism clearly distinguishes communist society as a system without commodity exchange, wage-labour, money and the nation state, with free access to goods and 'services'. The impossibility of achieving such a system by gradual means is clearly argued. However whilst they successfully reject reformism, they fail to understand that communism is not just a future society but a social movement which emerges from the struggles of the world's working class.

The formal definition of communist society as the "common ownership and democratic control" of production and distribution" needs to be criticised. Indeed the authors themselves point out that strictly speaking communist society will know nothing of any kind of ownership. The 'economy' as such will no longer exist, conscious control of society having replaced domination of society by a separate sphere called economy. We might just add that in the same way 'democratic control' will have lost its meaning as a formal means of administration separate from the community.

These criticisms aside however, this amounts to a very useful book... well worth getting hold of. At £8.95 though you might be best trying to get it on the principle of free access. The only one we'll mention here is the Library.... if you think of any other remember that the law of value is still enforced!

CHAPELTOWN COMMUNITY COPS

A community leader, hailed as a hero for helping to calm around 100 youths at the centre of last night's disturbances in Chapeltown, Leeds, has praised police for their efforts.

Mr Mitch Lewis, Chapeltown and Harehills Liaison Officer for the City Council, said that early yesterday evening he had been at a meeting with police when it had been agreed that officers should not "go back in the community", possibly provoking further tension.

He said: "The police did a wonderful job in meeting that request.

"Unfortunately a few youths slipped through our own line of community workers, resulting in a fire at the sex shop in Chapeltown Road.

"The police attended there, they kept to themselves and stayed away from the youths."

Mr Lewis also praised volunteers and youth workers from the Mandela Centre and the Palace Youth Project in Chapeltown who contained the youngsters for much of the time on one side of Chapeltown Road.

"Those youths were in a rage, to put it mildly," added Mr Lewis.

"I think it pays for community workers to be on the streets in a situation like that because the people can recognise a face that they know.

"It could have been a lot worse if the police had come back into the community last night. We very much appreciate the all round co-operation early today."



Mitch Lewis - cop!

Mr Lewis continued: "It is impossible to say what the future can hold in this sort of situation. The young people are angry for various reasons.

"Some feel that the police have ill-treated them and their friends while others feel that they are wasting their own time because they have got nothing to do in life and they cannot get work."

"The young people have got grievances and we need really to look at them to find out what they are. We all have to really come together and see how to best look at the deeper problems and we need the young people to tell us what the problems are."

Mr Lewis remained on the streets in Chapeltown until around 8.30 a.m. today and was this evening due to meet with police and other community leaders for further discussions.

Within the community of Chapeltown today, Mr Lewis was described as something of a hero for his efforts in co-ordinating voluntary workers who were calming youths gathered along Chapeltown Road.

The workers helped to shepherd the young people on to one side of the road on a stretch of around 40 yards of pavement, opposite local shops, including the sex shop which was damaged.

FRICKLEY

UNIONS AND DEMOCRACY STRIKE AGAIN

On the 15th of July 6 pits in S. Yorkshire were picketed out by 200 flying pickets from Frickley colliery. Later the whole of S. Yorkshire was out. The dispute was started because five miners were sacked under the new 'Code of Conduct' - a document designed to allow British Coal to get rid of any elements who might cause trouble. It is obviously aimed at undermining the high levels of militancy in the coal fields after the miner strike - only 10 pits in the country haven't been on strike this year. It is also going to enable them to push through new plans for more 'flexible working' (read: rigorous exploitation!) which include a six day week coupled with a 10% productivity increase. They have already got rid of 60,000 jobs since the end of the miners strike in '85, it looks like they're going to follow the new trend in management techniques as practiced in the Murdoch School: Sack half your workforce and don't pay redundancies.

The strike was a solid, speedy and effective response to a 'charter' that would allow the coal board to sack people for getting in trouble with the police even if they were later acquitted in court and to sack them for a single instance of misconduct, even if they were not under warning. However the striking miners didn't just have to put up with threats of the sack from British Coal they also had to put up with sabotage from the union. They managed the first few hurdles, by-passing union 'procedures' and the branch officials who defend them. They ignored Jack Taylor's call for an unconditional return to work on Sunday the 19th.... the following Monday saw 9 S.Y. pits and 2 N.Y. pits still being picketed out. However this last Manoeuvre coupled with the call of the NUM's Executive committee for an end to the strike in order to have a ballot on an overtime ban finally scuppered the strike. However, we don't blame the leadership, they always do this, they always prefer negotiation to fighting.

YOU CAN'T HAVE LEADERS WITHOUT FOLLOWERS!

RECENT PUBLICATIONS - REPRINTS

FRANCE GOES OFF THE RAILS - documents from the Students movement and the Railstrike in France - available from B.M. Combustion, London WC1N 3XX or B.M. Blob, London WC1N 3XX

BARBED WIRE LIES - 'the truth about the class war against Murdoch's empire' excellent cartoon pamphlet - from Catalyst, c/o 70 High Street, Leicester.

FASCISM/ANTIFASCISM - J. Barrot - from Box 14, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8

WHAT IS SITUATIONISM - J. Barrot - from Unpopular Books, c/o Box 15, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8

A NOTE OF CLARIFICATION ON THE QUESTION OF DEMOCRACY

Two articles in this issue deal with the question of democracy. Both articles in their original form generated much discussion and disagreement in our group. The final version, which appear here represent a certain measure of agreement in our criticism of democratic ideology as it currently afflicts the class struggle. However, disagreements and differences of emphasis still remain and we welcome comments and criticisms on this issue from other revolutionaries.

We would just like to stress at this point that whatever criticisms we level against 'workers democracy' we still consider that mass assemblies, delegate committees and workers councils etc are an essential means of organising mass class struggle towards the destruction of capitalism and the beginnings of communism, notwithstanding the need for militant minority action outside this framework.

For an outline of our views on the relationship of militant and revolutionary minorities to mass class struggle we refer you to our pamphlet - "CAPITALISM AND ITS REVOLUTIONARY DESTRUCTION" 40p inc post from our group address.

