

October 1981

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NEWS of War and Revolution

NUMBER 3

A
READER
SENT
US
A
POEM

Politician and Union Boss
together left and right
Control us ——— own us
and get us to fight
————— each other
sister brother — every worker
is made a fighter
by them — for them and their profit
Giving us little making us struggle
Offering War — their War
great and official
————— our blood
we must refuse it
————— save it
sack them now forever
And us World Worker
————— Unite
against the giant money master
————— and Win
by international revolution

JACC, 1981

Luxemburg said we face
the question,
"WAR OR REVOLUTION?"

In this issue of NEWS there is a leaflet on the BL strike. We handed it out at Cowley in the last week of October.

We've also produced leaflets for two major demonstrations. One was in Birmingham, on Unemployment. The other, 'War or Revolution' for the CND rally in London. 'War or Revolution' brought the help of other communists both in writing it and in handing it out. They also helped us sell NEWS. This seems a good way to strengthen the activity of communists on issues where they can agree.

Another aspect of co-operation comes in the translation of a French leaflet on the new Socialist government in France. This is a good way again, where we can agree on the main questions. We have also an item sent in by a reader: the poem on the front cover. Again, we welcome items from readers, and will use them where we agree with what they say.

We have also received a lot of letters. Where we're not sure if we agree, then articles seem to be a good way of getting a discussion off the ground. We've taken up a question raised in several letters in this way: communists and organisation. We welcome other contributions to take this further, or to open up other questions in our pages.

We've had to return to the question of the ICC. Several comrades have left the ICC this summer and the ICC's behaviour towards them couldn't be ignored.

These comrades invited us to a conference where they want to sort out their future activity. We shall report on this in the next issue. In the meantime we hope this meeting can help joint work in the future to follow up the 'War or Revolution' leaflet. Communists must look for ways to increase the number of leaflets and publications where agreement allows.

Our efforts are limited by time and, more important, money. Our thanks to all those who have taken out subscriptions or sent donations. The subscription rate is £1 for six issues (send stamps, cash, postal orders or cheques made payable to 'News'). Our thanks also to those who have taken extra copies of NEWS to sell themselves.

We're sorry we can't send back issues of NEWS-1 and NEWS-2. We've got rid of over 1000 and have none left. You'll have to get NEWS as it comes out because we don't think it's useful sitting on a shelf. We can always use straightaway everything that we print.

Write, with comments on NEWS, or with items for inclusion or discussion, to:

NEWS, c/o 70, HIGH STREET, LEICESTER, GREAT BRITAIN.

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WAR OR REVOLUTION ?

NUCLEAR WEAPONS WILL NOT CAUSE WORLD WAR III. CAPITALISM WILL CAUSE IT,
JUST AS CAPITALISM HAS CAUSED WAR FOR OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS.

Look at the mountain of dead this century !

Two world wars, never a year without a war somewhere, 100 million dead,
- AND ALL FOR CAPITALISM.

Capitalism will cause World War III !

And no country on earth can stop it. It's not a matter of what you want .
It's what capitalism will inevitably give you. Every country in the world
is a bitter economic enemy of the others. This is what makes them enemies.
This is what drives them to war. This is what will make World War III.

World War I didn't happen because Germany and Britain built battleships !

The arms race always starts because the ruling class in each country can't
avoid war. When countries can't sell the goods they make, they look forward
to war. Our rulers see the empty factories and the 3 million out of work in
Britain and know that war is coming. They know that war is the only future
for them. They promise jobs in order to sell the arms race to the workers:

"Don't worry that you're making guns, Jack, it's not for war.
It's just to give you a job to do. "

The ruling class doesn't care what you want !

It's never been any good getting down on your knees and begging favours from
the state. The ruling class is the same the world over, and in each country
the state belongs to some bit of the ruling class. And the rulers in London,
Washington and Moscow don't give a damn for your moral stand on weapons.

The ruling class has made 400 million refugees in the world today.

The ruling class lets 15 million kids starve to death each year. That's a
Hiroshima Bomb every three days.

The ruling class gets full cooperation from the unions and the Labour Party.
It relied on them to get the workers into the trenches in two world wars.

The ruling class gets full support from CND. CND even praises British democracy
and asks you to ignore the fresh blood of 2000 dead in Ulster, and a butcher's
bill longer than any other country in the world.

Do you just want to choose the way you'll die ?

If any bit of the ruling class doesn't have modern weapons to kill with, it
will use what it can. After nuclear weapons there's germ warfare, then nerve
gas, then napalm bombs, then high explosive, then tanks, then bullets.....

From Afghanistan to Angola they're already fighting it out with knives and
bare hands. Can you ban bare hands as well as the Bomb ? Because that is
what it comes down to as long as capitalism is around. World War III is the
only future for capitalism - and the future doesn't change because of the
weapons it can use.

A nuclear free zone in Europe will change nothing !

The front-line doesn't run across your doorstep because you agreed to it.
It's there to stay, whatever you say about it. It's there even if there isn't
a single soldier to mark its position. Europe is an important capitalist
centre and it is the frontier between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. This is why
Russia and America will bomb Europe. This is why their tank armies will rip
it apart in World War III. They're out to destroy economic competition and
no country will be able to stay out of World War III.

The ruling class wants you to die in the name of peace !

The ruling class never asks you to die in the name of war. Russia says it wants peace today. So does America and Britain. But in the name of peace, and under the excuse of defence, they're all getting ready for World War III. That includes the Labour Party which wants to govern the state when the Tories go.

WHEN THE RULING CLASS SAYS PEACE - IT MEANS WAR .

WHEN THEY CALL FOR DEFENCE - THEY WANT TO ATTACK .

All countries claim they are defending themselves - just as they all did in World War I and World War II . Capitalists always use these excuses for war.

- In World War I you were asked to defend yourself against British imperialism or Prussian militarism.
- In World War II you were asked to defend yourself against German fascism or British democracy.
- For World War III, the Labour Party is asking you to take part in order to defend socialism and a nuclear-free Britain.

These are all tricks to get you into khaki. The ruling class uses different lies in different countries. But whatever the excuse, workers end up dead in a war between economic rivals. This is what lies behind every capitalist lie.

You have only one way to Ban the Bomb and Stop World War III

DESTROY CAPITALISM ! GRUB IT OUT, ROOT AND BRANCH, BEFORE IT DESTROYS YOU !

The only way to destroy capitalism is through a working class revolution - a revolution on a world scale that sets out to build communism.

Communism needs no countries, no frontiers and no competition - it ends war.

LOOK AT POLAND ! In 1980 the workers went out in a mass strike. The Polish ruling class couldn't count on its armies, and couldn't keep up arms production. They had no chance of getting warships built in Stettin and Gdansk when the workers were looking after their own interests! At the start of the strike the Polish workers created their own independent organisations - joint strike committees of all workers on strike. Before the Solidarity union took them over, they showed how workers could look after their own interests. All the war weapons of the Polish ruling class were useless when they couldn't get the workers to make them or use them.

LOOK AT BRITAIN! Last year the Civil Servants strike held up the sailing of a Polaris submarine. This was collective sabotage of the British and NATO war effort. This year, dockers in Southampton and Liverpool, and car workers at BL can do more to stop World War III than a thousand OND marches and rallies.

The state doesn't just get ready for war by building more bombs and tanks. It switches money into arms production. It cuts hospitals so it can build Trident submarines. It cuts the pay of workers so it can pay more soldiers. It asks the working class to support this war economy. When workers strike for their own interests they are holding back World War III.

AGAINST JOB CUTS AND PAY CUTS! AGAINST ALL CUTS IN WORKERS' LIVING STANDARDS !

Because this is the only way to fight AGAINST WAR and FOR THE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION!

This leaflet is written by News of War and Revolution in cooperation with other communists. We think it's important to organise ourselves and welcome any discussion of the politics contained in this leaflet. Write to:

"NEWS" c/o 70, HIGH STREET,
LEICESTER, GREAT BRITAIN

We put out this leaflet in Birmingham on - UNEMPLOYMENT

A job today spells misery for the worker. It means getting home tired out. It means too little money to buy what you need. It means making goods you can't afford to buy yourself - or you'll never want, like weapons to kill other workers. But no job is worse.

NO JOB means even less money - it means worse poverty on the dole.
NO JOB means begging the state to pay your rent and your bills.
NO JOB means you're pushed around even more by state officials.
NO JOB means you'll be used to cut the wages of workers who have jobs. The bosses say "If you won't work for this wage, there's plenty who will."
NO JOB means getting sick more often, or being scrapped as a pensioner in your 50's, or kicking your heels on street corners till you're 18 or 20 - perhaps for ever.

We're against unemployment because it means poverty, misery, and a worse standard of living than when you have a job. It's no answer to save jobs by putting up with conditions that are as bad as being on the dole. The fight against unemployment isn't just a fight for jobs. What's the point if a job means you're no better off than when you're on the dole? The fight is for a better standard of living for the working class. That means two things:

- 1) Better pay and conditions when you've got a job
- 2) Fighting shut-downs and lay-offs so workers everywhere get and keep a better standard of living.

There's no point in trading jobs for pay, or pay for jobs. The bosses and the government want you to choose. So do the unions. If you start choosing between pay and jobs you'll always lose out. The only answer is:

MORE PAY AND MORE JOBS !

The government, the Labour Party and the unions all say that unemployment will go down if you take less pay or put up with some new economic plan. That's plain rubbish. Less pay doesn't help you. And new plans are just ways of cutting wages by putting up prices, or getting ready for World War III. The government can't help you no matter which party is running it. Nor can the unions - because capitalism has had it as far as the workers are concerned.

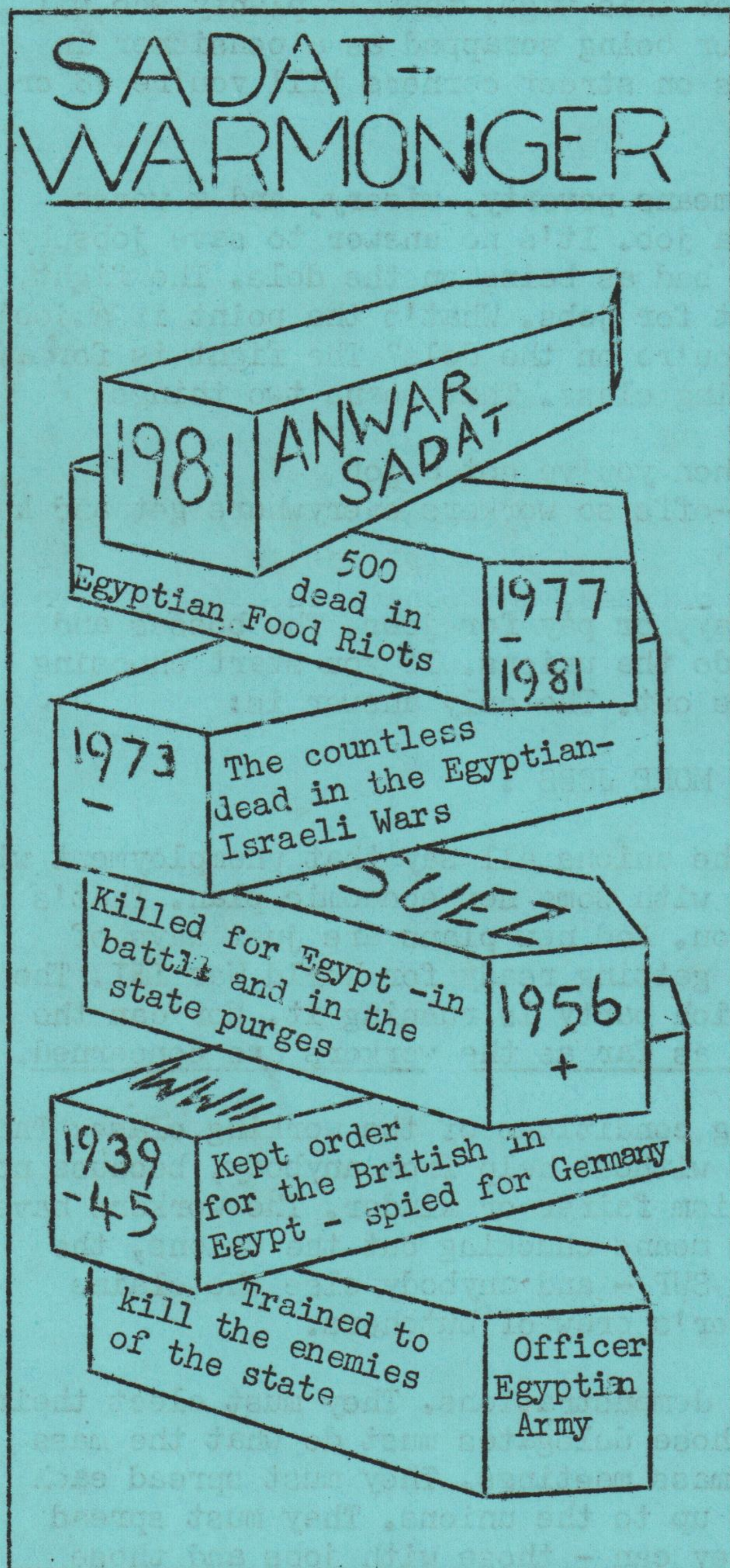
It's got no way of improving the living conditions of the working class. The working class must look after itself - without help from anybody, because nobody can help it any more by making capitalism fairer or kinder. The workers have to fight for their own interests. That means chucking out the unions, the Labour Party, the Communist Party, the SWP - and anybody else who claims they can run things better than Thatcher's crew of butchers.

Workers must run their own strikes and demonstrations. They must elect their own committees at mass meetings, and those delegates must do what the mass meetings say - or be voted out by the mass meetings. They must spread each struggle themselves without leaving it up to the unions. They must spread each struggle to as many workers as they can - those with jobs and those without. The more the workers decide for themselves, and the more workers take part in that sort of strike or demonstration, the better the chance of getting what the workers want.

As long as capitalism lasts there won't be any rest from strikes and demonstrations. Workers can get more pay now. Workers can stop closures and lay-offs now. Workers can defend their living standards now - if they do it on their own. But it won't last. You'll have to fight again, and again, and again, to keep what you've got.

There is only one way to get a better life and keep it. Capitalism must be destroyed all over the world. The working class has to take power and set up a communist society. When wages, and prices, and national frontiers have all gone, when workers alone decide what goods will be made, when everybody is part of the working class, and when you can have everything you need - then, and only then, will workers rest. This isn't a dream. The alternative is World War III.

News of War & Revolution



A LEAFLET FROM COMMUNISTS IN FRANCE

On the following pages we are printing a translation of a leaflet produced in northern France by a new communist group, L'Ouvrier Internationaliste. This leaflet shows how the lies of the left and the unions in France are being exposed under the new Socialist government.

We agree with the view expressed by these comrades. We also think that the picture they paint of France under a left government is appropriate right now in Britain. At their recent conferences, the TUC and the Labour Party have discussed all the issues raised in the leaflet. Just as in France, the policies they have in store for us cannot stem the collapse of the capitalist system. Just as in France, they will try to save capitalism on the backs of the workers.

The tricks practised by the bosses in one country are often tried in others if they succeed. The measures put forward by the left in France are similar to those of the last two Labour governments in Britain. The exposure of the anti-working class policies of the left is a warning about the intentions of the next Labour government in Britain.

L'Ouvrier Internationaliste can be contacted by writing to:

P.S., BP 282, 59019, Lille, Cedex, France.

L'Ouvrier Internationaliste

Unemployment, inflation, increasing speed up.....

THE LEFT IN POWER WILL NOT IMPOSE ITS AUSTERITY

For more than three months socialists, communists, radicals and ex-gaullists (Delors, Jobert) have held the reins of power and have attempted what they call the 'change'. There's no chance the working class will see this 'change'. Because of the economic crisis, Mauroy and his government will make the workers pay for it just like a government of the right.

Unemployment continues to rise (more than 2 million out of work). Prices go on climbing and buying-power falls. The measures taken by the left at the start of the summer have already been overtaken by inflation. The policy of the left is only illusions and pretty words, it is far from the grand campaigns of radio and TV. These are destined to stay on the shelf, to hide the austerity measures and let them pass smoothly.

Nationalisation

The nationalisation of a certain number of industrial groups will be an advance for the working class, they say. In reality, these measures restructure capitalism, so as to make it more competitive in the economic war that nations are given over to. And it is the world working class which bears the cost of this war when it submits to austerity everywhere.

Nationalisations which give compensation to bosses and shareholders are not an attack on capitalism and its functioning. They are not a step forward in putting an end to the exploitation of the working class. They simply change the exploiter. Instead of being bled by a private capitalist, you are exploited by the capitalist state itself! For example, where is the progress for Renault workers who face frequent speed ups? What humanisation of work is there in the Post Office or the railway which have been in the Public Sector for a long time?

Temporary Job Agencies

When they were in opposition, the SP and especially the CP proposed the suppression of temporary job agencies. Marchais spoke of the 'slave-traders of modern times' in his famous 131 propositions for struggle and change. What has actually happened? Not only do they continue to exist, but temporary agencies flourish even more. A few more of their benefits have been imposed.....

The Struggle Against Unemployment

The government pretends to struggle against unemployment. This is a huge lie. How can a government which wants to save capitalism prevent the natural consequences of this system? Can and will the government forbid closures?

Evidently not! Meanwhile, young people will have to be patient with meaningless job training schemes, waiting in unemployment offices, on council estates or even in clearing forests!

Reduction in Working Hours

Last 11th July, the bosses and the unions (except the CGT) signed an agreement which they presented as a step forward! A real insult to the working class. They dared to present the 39 hour week as a victory. We can see in this all the hypocrisy and twisting and turning of the unions. What does 39 hours instead of 40 hours mean if you don't do away with overtime? Worse still, factories will now be able to enforce weekend work. Women can be made to work up till midnight (this was banned before). As for the CGT, it refused to sign the agreement. But it doesn't oppose overtime, and proposes..... 38 hours instead of 39! Like the other unions, it supports the anti-worker content of the agreement. Once again, it wants to make the national capitalism more competitive. This is the no.1 concern of such people.

All the measures taken by the left and

supported by the unions are dust thrown in the workers' eyes. They aim to keep French capitalism afloat amidst world rivalry. Each worker must know that this can only be done on his back. In a period of crisis, a competitive capitalism is one which imposes low wages, hellish speed up, liquidation of unprofitable sectors (closures) on workers. Those who pretend the opposite, those who want us to think that the workers and the capitalists can have a 'solidarity' faced with the crisis are the enemies of the working class.

The Economic Crisis is World Wide

Today the workers in all countries are hit by the crisis. Our comrades in Poland must struggle against a capitalist system where the state owns the factories. Are their living and working conditions better than ours? Don't they go on strike for the same interests as us? Who can make us believe that nationalisations will be able to resolve the collapse of a system where wealth is destroyed because products don't sell, and where millions of people die of hunger. A system where abundance is destroyed when needs grow every day. A system where the more a worker produces, the more he lives in misery. The left like the right will save this chaos, the anarchy of production and of distribution, the austerity, exploitation for some, unemployment for the others.

Capitalism Leads to War

Not only will they keep everything the same, but, like all capitalist states, they are preparing for war. While we must tighten our belts, they are making nuclear submarines, tanks and neutron bombs which cost billions and which can destroy humanity.

Today, the left talks about 'National Solidarity' with the bosses in order to save the capitalist economy. Tomorrow they will call on us for a greater sacrifice: our lives for the defence of the country, THEIR COUNTRY. They played this trick in 1914 and in 1939; they mustn't do it again a third time.

Workers, Comrades,

The left and the unions lie to us and promise a golden tomorrow. Many workers and militants believe that the unions will be on their side all the same if the government doesn't keep its promises. It's just the opposite. The unions will begin to explain how strikes which are too militant and too big are a trick... by the bosses and the right. Who can believe that the massive mobilisation of the working class will be a trick of the bosses and exploiters? Just like the struggle of May 68 was a trick of the capitalists!

But who sabotaged May 68 and a whole series of struggles afterwards? The workers or the unions? Who explained to us then, in the years when the right was in power, that we needed to know when to stop a strike - it was the unions! In fact, the unions, the left and the right, are all in agreement to save capitalism. If they squabble, it's only on secondary points that don't concern the workers. The workers always get cheated.

Against those who wish to make us accept the austerity of the left and explain how nothing can change we must not give in to demoralisation. The failure of the capitalist system is an opportunity for us workers to seize power and eliminate the whole clique of exploiters and parasites who live off our work. It is in struggling for ourselves, with our own methods, all sectors united, French and immigrant side-by-side, that we can learn, like our Polish comrades, to make our class enemy retreat. To refuse austerity today is also to refuse war and to prepare the communist revolution.

NO SOLIDARITY WITH OUR
EXPLOITERS AND THE
NATIONAL ECONOMY.

Leaflet produced by L'Ouvrier
Internationaliste, Lille, France.

STRIKE AT BL! SPREAD IT BEYOND BL!

What happens in a capitalist crisis? All the political parties, the unions and the bosses say to workers: stop strikes, tighten your belts, work harder for the national interest.

For years they've played this tune to workers at BL. What's been the workers' reward for good behaviour?

- plant closures: seven plants and 72,000 jobs gone in four years.
- pay cuts: rises less than 5% for three years while inflation has stayed in double figures.
- changed working conditions: bribes of bonus in exchange for speed-up and redundancies.

After four years workers have had enough. Co-operation with bosses and unions only makes Edwardes and Thatcher cut even deeper. Workers have no choice but to strike when they try more closures and a pay cut.

Don't let the unions fool you. This strike isn't just about pay.

Edwardes has just announced more closures as well as the 3.8% offer. The two go hand in hand as part of the government's attack on all workers. Workers who face the sack have nothing to lose by going on strike with the rest. All workers are stronger by fighting together for both pay and jobs. Listening to the unions' lies about how strikes threaten jobs just plays into Edwardes' hands. The job cuts have come in spite of co-operation.

This strike is about jobs and pay. Only the unions and the bosses will say it's not.

WHAT KIND OF STRIKE WILL DEFEND THE WORKERS' INTERESTS?

Throw out the unions' control of the strike!

For too long workers have given up the right to run their strikes to the unions and the stewards. Each time these unions and stewards have backed down when Edwardes has threatened sackings or closures. It doesn't mean anything because they're standing firm now! If the unions can keep the issues of jobs and pay separate, and if they can keep workers at home with only token pickets on the gates of plants shut by the strike, then they'll be able to sell out in a few weeks time.

Look at the recent Triumph Acclaim strike! The unions stood aside when Edwardes threatened the sack. The unions didn't fight. They let Edwardes use the threat to drive the men back to work for nothing.

Throw out the unions' plans for a peaceful strike!

In 1978 the Ford unions organised a company-wide strike at Ford (after wildcat walkouts). They stopped flying pickets taking the workers' case to other factories, so Ford were able to use stockpiles to ride out the strike. The unions kept the workers at home getting bored and impatient for a settlement. The unions were soon able to make a sell-out.

Workers and unions aren't fighting for the same things. Workers are fighting for their jobs, their standard of living, their pay packets and a future for themselves and their families. Union bosses swapped a council house and the shopfloor for a country cottage and the boardroom years ago. Stewards swapped the demands of the workers for settlements that keep the capitalist system going.

Remember the steel strike!

Then the unions tried to keep pay and jobs separate, but the workers fought this all along. The plants that were due to close came out alongside the rest. Corby steelworkers stayed out on strike even after their own jobs were gone. They knew that victory in the strike was the only way to save other jobs. In the end the unions won. Jobs went as part of the deal that gave the remaining steelworkers a bit more pay.

When did the steelworkers make the greatest impact?

- when they organised their own mass pickets against the unions' orders!
- when they broke the union limit of token pickets on plants!
- when they went to the private sector and stockholders in hundreds and even thousands!
- when they went beyond steel and tried to contact other workers!

At Castle Bromwich a mass picket tried to talk to carworkers direct. It took more than the closed factory gates and a police cordon to keep them back. It took the orders of the stewards inside the plant to keep the line going. This is what union solidarity means. It means no solidarity. It means workers divided from other workers. It means one sector fighting alone against a government which attacks all of us without mercy.

BL is owned by the state

To defend themselves against Edwardes' cuts, workers have to take on the miserly capitalist state. It's no good listening to the unions who want to divide us sector by sector. The capitalist state attacks all workers. Workers at BL can declare war on the capitalist state by going on strike, but carworkers alone cannot beat the capitalist state. The strike can only get stronger by spreading everywhere.

Edwardes' Plans aren't due to Thatcher. The BL Plan was made under a Labour government!

To keep us divided the unions want us to believe that a Labour government would be less miserly. BL's fate is in the hands of a worldwide capitalist crisis. Sometimes this crisis is managed by the right - at workers' expense. Sometimes it's managed by the left - but it's still at the workers' expense!

LOOK AT POLAND

Last year millions of workers organised nationwide strikes without unions. They stopped the Polish state's plans for price rises. They stopped the state using troops against them.

This year the workers have let the new Solidarity union represent them. Now the Polish state has brought in price rises and has put troops on the streets. The unions are on the bosses' side in every country. They tell workers it will all be OK if only they'll give up strikes.

Last year the Polish workers showed that strikes can go ahead without unions. Without unions, strikes hold up the state's plans for mass poverty. The Polish workers did all this by holding daily mass meetings to elect and control strike committees. As the strikes spread to different sectors they elected joint strike committees which were answerable every day to all the mass meetings. They won pay rises, a reduction in the working week and a stop on price rises. Now the unions have sold all this in exchange for food shortages and increased productivity.

THE UNIONS ARE ALWAYS ON THE SIDE OF THE BOSSES AND THE STATE

THE ONLY WAY FORWARD IS FOR WORKERS TO RUN THEIR OWN STRIKES AND SPREAD THEM TO ALL SECTORS

Leaflet produced by NEWS OF WAR AND REVOLUTION: write to NEWS, c/o 70 High St, Leicester.

correspondence COMMUNISTS AND ORGANISATION

We've had some letters. Our readers want to know what we think about organisation.

Some comrades in the International Communist Current wrote:

"It is impossible to see what position you have on the role of revolutionary organisations. You seem to support the idea of a 'correspondence network'. Is that so? How do you envisage political work? What position do you have about centralisation and the building of an international organisation?" (23/8/81)

A group called Authority also wrote to us and said:

"What seems to characterise these groups* is that they are formed in a specific town and they function both at the level of producing basic propaganda as well as taking part in a more detailed discussion of class struggle and communism. This is done without the constraints of a bureaucracy which seeks to integrate such local activity into a national or international strategy of intervention. Do you see yourselves evolving in such a direction?" (14/3/81)

We think it's best to say what we think about organisation in general before becoming specific. We haven't got the space in this issue to give all the arguments - but we'll take them up bit by bit in future issues.

Communists organise themselves in many different ways, but there's two ways that are quite common. In the first, communists decide to join together and agree that they will work together on something specific - a leaflet, or a conference, for example.

* The groups mentioned were:

Groupe des Communistes Internationalistes in Clermont Ferrand, L'Eveil Internationaliste in St. Nazaire, Groupede Travailleurs pour l'Autonomie Ouvrière and the London Workers Group.

In the second, communists decide to join together for a whole range of activity - in fact virtually everything they do as communists. They usually agree to a common statement of their views - and call it Main Principles, or a Platform, or 'What we Stand For', or something like that - and consider themselves part of the organisation.

We'll come back to these two ways in a moment, but for the present we want to group them under the general idea of 'organisation'.

Let's make a first point that no organisation can take or hold power in place of the working class. No organisation of communists can appoint itself the leader of the working class. It can't take charge of the working class or take any decisions for the working class.

This became very clear during the Russian Revolution of 1917. Ossinsky was there, and in 1918 he said:

"If the working class does not know how to create the necessary conditions for the socialist organisation of labour, nobody can do this for it, and nobody can compel it to do this."

Ossinsky went on to say:

"Socialism and socialist organisation must be set up by the working class itself, or they will not be set up at all."

This point is very important to us. We don't see how you can call yourself a communist if you disagree on this - and when we go on to talk about what communists can and can't do, we're assuming that a communist must at least agree with us on this point.

Only the working class can decide what's right and what's wrong. Communists, however they are organised, can't take the place of the working class, so they can't make decisions for it. They certainly can't prevent a particular view being put to the working class by other communists.

This becomes important when we think about how communists organise themselves. When we were in the ICC some people said:

"Wouldn't it be crazy if a disagreement about whether the workers should at some moment overthrow the state caused the organisation to say 'Yes' and 'No'?"

No, we don't think that's crazy at all. We're against any organisation that stops a communist putting his or her view to the working class. Communists can't know for sure if they're right or wrong - but it's not up to them anyway to make a decision, then act on it in a way that stops other communists from saying what they think.

They must say:

"Look, this is the conclusion we have come to about what's right. Here is the evidence for it. But other people, who we agree are communists, have drawn this other conclusion."

Yet what actually happens? The organisation says to some of its members: "Most of us think differently from you. Either we won't print what you say - or we'll decide when you can say it."

It's not a question of communists being fair-minded. They don't say to the whole world:

"We don't agree with you, but we'll die for your right to say it."

But they must say this to their own class. They can't silence part of their own class. We said this marks out the communist.

When communists are in the same organisation they must believe that they're all part of the same class. Putting a view inside the organisation is not the same as putting it to the whole working class. So when only this is allowed, communists are in fact silencing part of their own class.

We don't think bureaucracy is inevitable when communists organise in these ways. But you don't stop it by choosing a special system - like centralism or federalism, or whatever. Bureaucracy arises through disagreements. It starts off as a way of trying to balance different points of view - to sort out rival claims on resources which will let those views be put. And

it ends up defending its own privilege to decide on this - finally to decide which view suits it best.

What do you do to stop all this? The rise of a bureaucracy will speed up the silencing of communists. It can lead the organisation into worse and worse habits. It destroys communists and stops them being of any use to the struggle of the working class.

You can't stop a bureaucracy arising by some formula. There's no way out through letting communists form a little organisation inside the big one - a Tendency, or a Faction, or a Fraction, or whatever. These are only ways of coping with a bureaucracy once you've already got it. No way stops the distortion, or makes it less.

Communists can only organise an activity amongst themselves when they agree. Organisation must be the consequence of agreement - it doesn't provide a special way of making that agreement come about. So organisations can grow up - and can hold off the development of a bureaucracy - when there's more and more agreement between communists.

When there's less and less agreement, those organisations must break up into smaller units. Even if communists don't recognise this the process still goes ahead - through Tendencies and Factions and so on. But the price of ignorance is paid. Communists are wasted and the bureaucracy remains in the rump of the old organisation.

There's obviously no such thing as full agreement between communists. It isn't possible - so you've got to make a judgement when communists organise. You've got to draw a line and say:

"This amount of agreement will let us work together. It will let us do more than we could on our own. But there's enough agreement to be sure that nobody's view will be kept away from the rest of the working class."

Where do we think you can draw that line today? You can't have all the activity of communists agreed between them unless the organisation today is small enough for each communist to be sure that he or she agrees with all of it. Authority's right to note: "What seems to characterise these groups is that they are formed in a specific town..."

This doesn't mean that communists are trapped into a local view. It just expresses what are the best conditions for getting agreement between communists - and keeping it. We think that large organisations of communists - organisations where all activity is agreed between them - are only possible on the eve of revolution. This isn't because things get more urgent then. It's because the struggle of the working class is moving ahead so fast that it settles disagreements between communists. We think you can see this if you look at Russia in 1905 and 1917.

So, to answer the ICC comrades. No, we don't think there'll be a big international organisation until the eve of the revolution.

You must go on talking with other communists no matter where they live. But you can't let yourself go beyond the line you draw about the level of agreement. You don't sit down and say: 'let's see if we can form a big organisation.'

You begin with the first kind of organisation that we mentioned. You try to agree on a specific activity - a leaflet, a pamphlet, a bulletin or whatever - with any communist you can get hold of. If this sort of thing turns out to be possible, then you'll get the fusion into one organisation as the areas of joint work multiply. Organisation is the recognition of what's come about, just as much as it's a proposal for new things to be done.

Thinking in this way, we can't quite see what Authority means when it mentions national and international strategies. We certainly don't think we are pinned down in Great Britain, let alone the Midlands. News gets sent to all the communists and all the bookshops we know of - no matter where they are. We go ourselves wherever we can, though we don't forget what's on our own doorstep.

Another thing about organisation: discussion between communists can't take place in private. It's got to be made available to the working class.

But organisation often stops this, or at least distorts it. Too often, only a fraction of the effort which goes into discussion is spent on publishing it in magazines or leaflets.

The comrades in the ICC ask: "You seem to support the idea of a correspondence network. Is that so?"

Well, we want to seek out as many contacts with other communists as we can. We want to discuss with them - but we want to make it as public as we can. We think it is best if all written discussion gets printed widely in the first place. It's what we're trying to do in this magazine. You should only discuss by letter if you can't do what we're trying to do.

In the same way, we think conferences and meetings should lead to leaflets or pamphlets or bulletins. These things aren't some sort of afterthought. They're part of the purpose in any meeting or conference. Communists must put their views and their discussions to as much of the working class as they can. It's what communists are for - so you're wrong to have discussion for the sake of the people who happen to be in the same room.

That brings us finally to the International Discussion Bulletin. Authority asked whether we were interested in it.

The International Discussion Bulletin seems to us a good way of reporting what's said when communists from different groups meet. It's also a good way of getting those meetings ready. At the moment we think it's better for communists to keep up regular discussion with each other through magazines and leaflets. It's easier for workers to read what's going on that way. When communists get together they often lapse into a terrible jargon and shorthand way of speaking. We don't accept that this is necessary - but we think the IDB is rather like that at the moment.

If we wanted to join in a discussion that's taking place in the IDB, then we'd try to do that by writing in NEWS first of all. At the moment we're reading through the IDB to see if there's something particular we want to take up like this.

The IDB is available from Authority, whose address used to be:
Box 666, 182 Upper St., London, n.1.

ICC uses State Terror

Many communists left the ICC this year. Sometimes the ICC said nothing in public about these splits, sometimes it did. For example, in the September issue of their newspaper, World Revolution, they mentioned that News of War and Revolution now existed. They said that the communists who left to form News had done so prematurely. They didn't give any political arguments apart from this judgement, and didn't answer what we'd said in News. So we can't treat their comment seriously. It's pointless arguing with people who reply to every political statement by saying "No, we're not" or "It's not true". If you want a parrot to say that to you it's easier to go to a pet shop.

Communists don't behave that way. They put arguments before the workers so the workers themselves can decide. The ICC doesn't, because it thinks the ICC is more important to the working class than political discussion. This is just confirmation that the ICC is dead as far as the workers are concerned. It's no use to them.

We did think that capitalism wouldn't actually be able to use the ICC against the workers. It looks as if we were wrong about this. The ICC has now started to use fear of the police against other communists and against the working class.

During October, the ICC said in its French newspaper, Revolution Internationale, that one communist who left had created "turbid or even suspicious situations". At a meeting of the group Volonte Communiste in Paris they even said this communist was a "police agent".

The ICC was rotten enough to stop communists inside it from putting their views to the workers. That's why these communists left. It's now taken another step by trying to stop communists outside the ICC putting their views to the workers. You can give no other meaning to what they've just done.

Capitalism uses state terror against communists. It locks them up, throws them out of work and persecutes them. It terrorises communists and all workers by threatening to harm them in these ways if they speak up for what they believe.

You can see how it works. Look at what happens in strikes. The boss will sack a worker who speaks up before the rest are ready to protect him or her. Workers can only defend themselves when they unite in a strike or demonstration. So the workers only talk to other workers about the strike which is coming. They don't go and shout their mouths off to the boss first. It's asking to be sacked, and it doesn't help the other workers one bit. But imagine what it's like if you think some other worker will rat on you to the boss. You don't trust what he or she says. And the rest of the workers are driven into silence. This is the way terror is used to prevent strikes. Stalin was very good at this.

This is what the ICC has now done to the workers. It's said "don't trust this man, he'll sell you to the boss or the police". In this way, they've made it clear that the ICC doesn't behave like a communist organisation. Not only have they tried to silence a communist outside the ICC, but they've chosen a very special method to do this. They've used the fear which workers have as individuals for the police.

The ICC is asking for the help of the capitalist state. They've done this just as surely as getting the police to arrest a communist. They've used the fear of arrest and persecution. That's a weapon which is just as real and just as capitalist as the police itself.

Against whom have they used the weapon of state terror? It's true that the communist concerned will be upset and frustrated because some people may not trust him now. But he is not the object of their terror. The weapon has been used against the people he might speak to, not him. It's been used against the working class.

Let's be very clear. The ICC has used a weapon of the state against the workers. It's one small example, one minor incident. But it's one more nail in the coffin. The ICC is dead.

To contact the ICC write to:
BM Box 869, London, WC1N 3XX, Great Britain.

TO THE MANCHESTER CONFERENCE OF EX-ICC COMRADES

We welcome the fact that so many have now left the ICC. To those who haven't yet taken this step, we can only urge that you do so quickly.

We were told by the ICC that we would enter a 'void' where no activity or discussion took place. Our experience since June has shown what a huge lie this is.

Our initial aims were modest. To produce a magazine that could promote discussion within the working class, written so that workers could join in. To send that magazine to as many shops and countries as possible. To write leaflets for demonstrations and strikes that came up from time to time.

The response to this venture has been greater than we expected. Some of this response is in this third issue of News. More must wait till next time.

We have subscribers in several countries. We have exchanges of publications with several organisations. Since June we have had more worthwhile discussions with more communists than we had for years before!

Through the production and distribution of the magazine we have begun to co-operate with others. This has gone further with leaflets. We want to put as much effort as possible into this area of co-operation. But we don't want to rush it. It mustn't go ahead without a real basis of agreement on the questions which confront the working class today. Discussion of such questions must therefore be at the top of any agenda for discussion amongst communists.

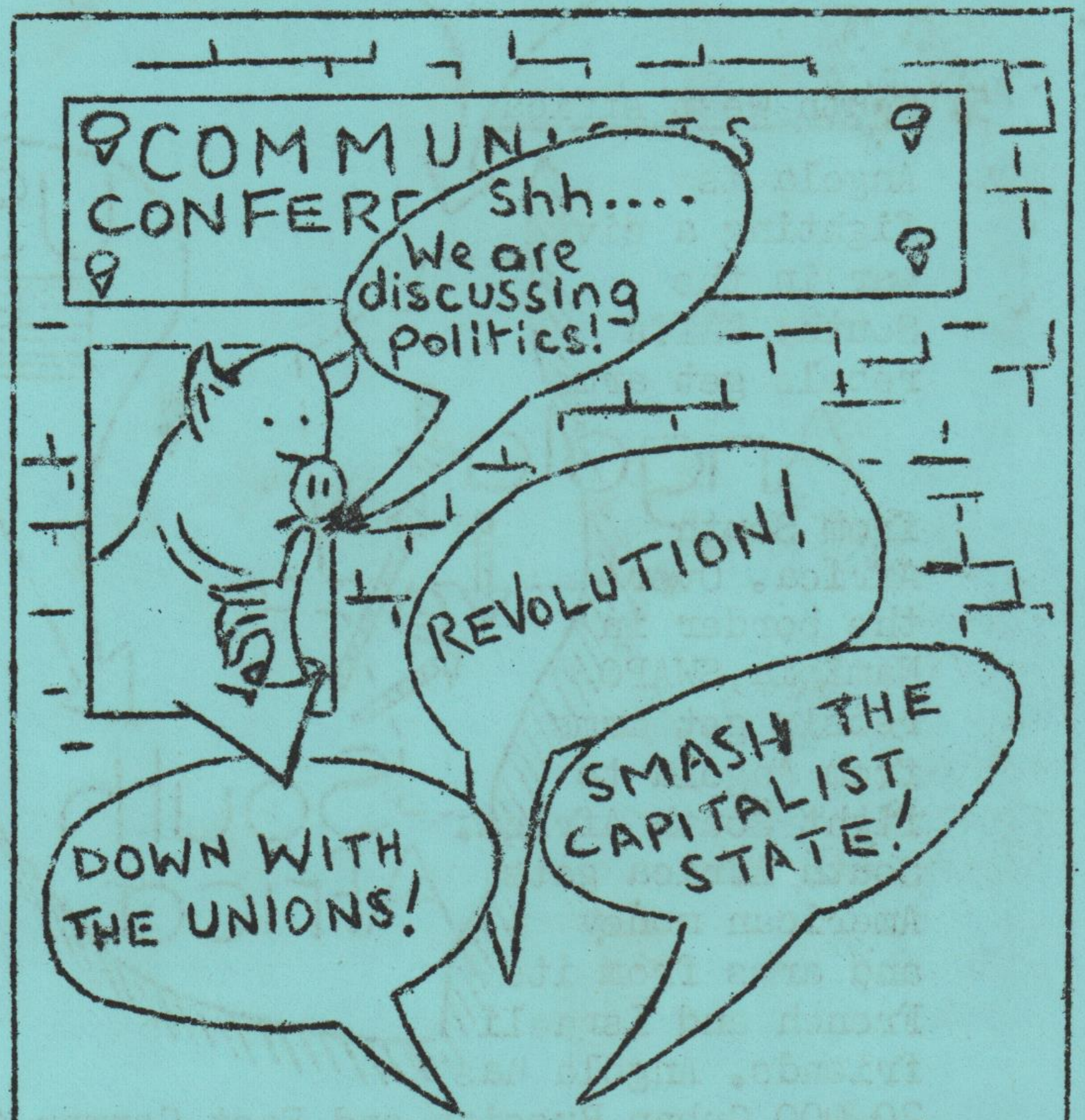
The building of a bigger organisation is a step for the future. Co-operation today is a necessary forerunner. Before a bigger organisation is possible it is essential that those who would form it begin to work as communists. You must produce your own newspapers and leaflets, promoting co-operation where you can. The discussion that can result between us, and others to, and

that will lead to wider co-operation, must take place in public through our various publications. Then the whole working class will be able to judge how useful our activities are to the class struggle - for this is the real and only test. The whole class must be the judge of how far and how fast a bigger organisation can develop.

As an important step towards future co-operation and future discussion before the working class, the progress made at this conference must be made public. All our activities must reach out to workers everywhere, and to communists all over the world.

CORRESPONDENCE ACKNOWLEDGED

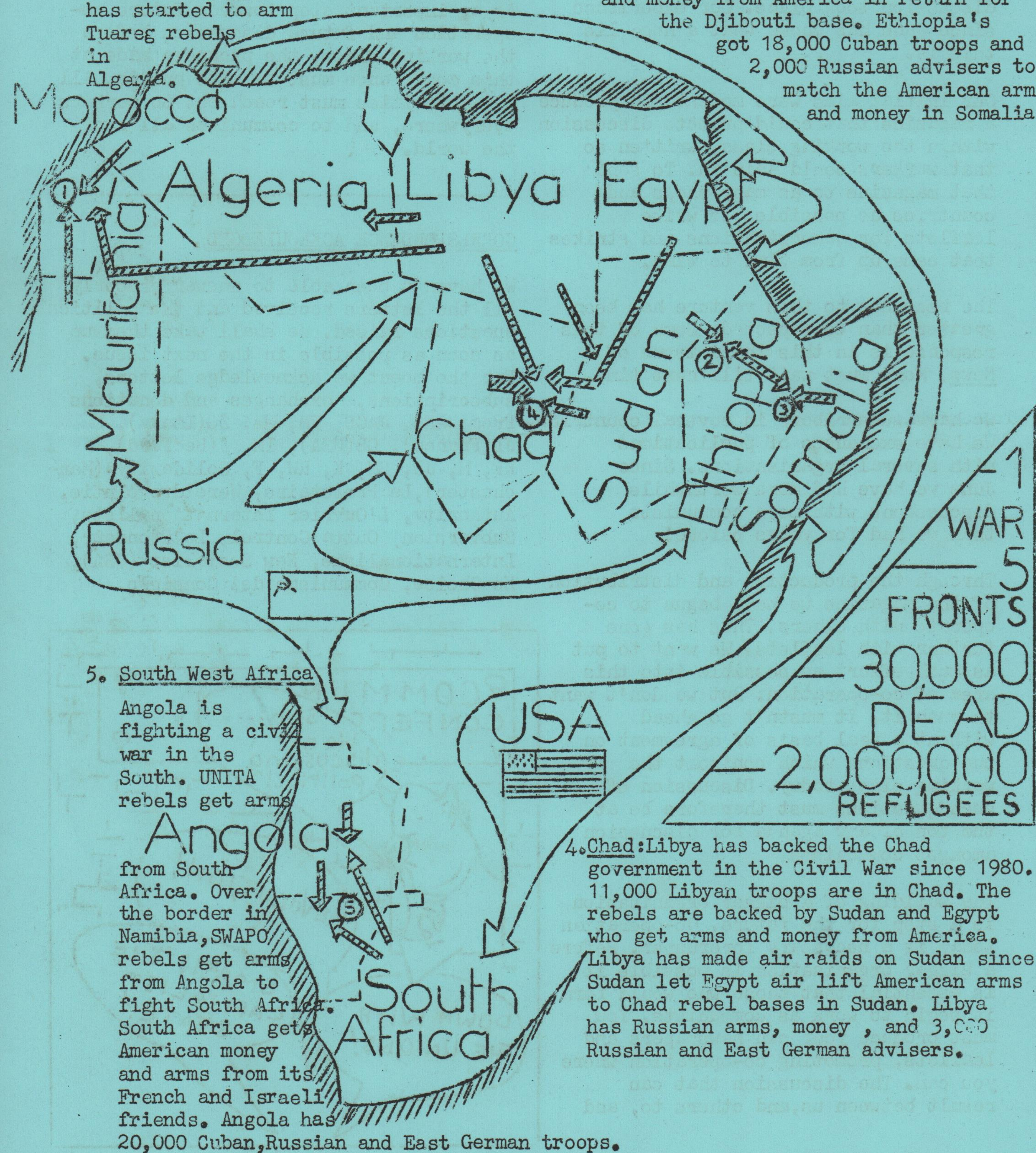
We haven't been able to answer properly all the letters received and the political questions raised. We shall take them up as soon as possible in the next issue. For the moment we acknowledge letters, subscriptions, exchanges and donations from: AKS, JACC, FM, MB, ZG(Italy), JL(France), GB(USA), IM, J(Bedford), KF, M, JB, SM, K, RW, F, Solidarity (Manchester), Le Proletaire, Wereldrevolutie, Authority, L'Ouvrier Internationaliste, Subversion, Outta Control, Le Frondeur, Internationalisme, New Socialist (USA), No Choice, Comunismo dei Consiglo.



THE WAR IN AFRICA : Russia and America fight it out on five fronts

1. Western Sahara: Morocco is fighting Polisario rebels who get Russian arms from Mauritania and Libya. Morocco is armed by France and America. Algeria used to help Libya and Mauritania but is now flirting with America. America is sending C130 transport planes to Algeria and will sell even numbers of F14's to Algeria and Morocco, so Libya has started to arm Tuareg rebels in Algeria.

2. Eritrea: Ethiopia is fighting a civil war in Eritrea. The rebels have bases in Sudan. Sudan denies it helps the rebels but is frantic for a £200 million arms deal with America.
3. Ogaden: Ethiopia is also fighting Somalia in the Ogaden. This war has lasted since 1977. Somalia gets arms and money from America in return for the Djibouti base. Ethiopia's got 18,000 Cuban troops and 2,000 Russian advisers to match the American arms and money in Somalia.



THE WAR IN AFRICA

America says the war in Africa is because the Russians stir up trouble. Pravda says much the same about the Americans. They blame each other so you'll take sides in a war that will go on as long as capitalism lasts. They know the war won't go away - and no single country causes it.

Peace will never come to the countries in Africa. As long as they exist they will fight each other. War is the past, present and future for every African country - because they're all part of capitalism. War is the capitalist disease in Africa. It's the only way of life for capitalism.

These countries are flat broke. Even the richer ones - like Algeria and Libya - are now trying to pay bills with crude oil because they haven't got the cash.

Most Africans go hungry. Governments ripped out crops of maize so they could plant cotton or coffee to sell in Europe and America.

Most Africans die young because there's no money for medicine and hospitals. They don't work because factories were never built. They starve on the mud floors of disease-ridden hovels in shanty towns. This is all they get out of capitalism - and all they've got to look forward to.

That's why rebellion and civil war is ready to break out in every African country. What stops it? Soldiers and guns keep you in your place. A little money bribes you into silence. African governments need money and arms to stay in power. Without this, they're finished.

That's why African countries scramble for arms from Russia and America. There's nowhere else to get what they want, or to sell what they make. Kenya can't buy raw copper from Zimbabwe. Tunisia can't buy oil from Libya. Only South Africa can process raw materials like these. And no country in Africa has money to pay or arms to swap.

The market for raw materials is in Europe, Russia and America. And it's the only place to get arms and money in return. But it's not a sellers' market for African raw materials. There's a glut. Libya only sells a third of its oil now. Zimbabwe can only sell a fraction of the copper that comes out of its mines.

What's the result? Europe can pick and choose. It can decide which governments get the arms to stay in power - and which don't. Russia and America dictate their own terms when they deal with countries in Africa. They want raw materials at rock-bottom prices - but they also want military bases, and cheap African armies to defend their interests. So Libya's got to compete with Algeria when it sells oil. Zimbabwe's got to compete with Zaire when it sells copper.

There's only one way to compete in Africa: through war. The competition for arms and money from Russia and America leads to war between African countries. There aren't enough money and arms to make certain that a government is secure in Africa. There's no way to make sure of the market for raw materials unless you eliminate the competition.

Russia and America sell arms and very little else in Africa. It suits them because they make high technology goods. And the only high technology industry in Africa is waging war. This suits the African countries. Arms are the first priority if a government wants to stay in power. Arms are the first step in getting anything else.

Ethiopia wanted to dominate the competition when it went to war with Somalia. Victory would give it better control over coffee supplies to Europe. Victory would make sure of its market. Victory would put it past that first step.

But no African country ever gets past that first step. The other super-power will arm the country next door if it's got something to sell. Somalia had the Russian base at Djibouti to sell - so it got arms and money from America.

The competition between Russia and America just makes sure that wars in Africa are always part of the bigger war between themselves. It turns five wars in Africa into one war with five fronts. Russia doesn't start wars in Africa. Nor does America. They just choose the wars that help them against each other.

World War III has started for millions of Africans. It will never end for them as long as capitalism lasts. Capitalism in Africa has already got to its final way of death.

Luxemburg said we face the question, "WAR OR REVOLUTION?".

NEWS OF WAR AND REVOLUTION

we are
AGAINST

we are
FOR

CLASS SOCIETY - workers are exploited as long as class society continues.

CAPITALISM, EAST & WEST - Russia, Cuba, China, Yugoslavia, Albania and all the police states are as capitalist as Britain and the USA.

THE WAGES SYSTEM - the bosses and the state pay workers less than the value of the goods they make.

THE OPPRESSION THAT IS PART OF CAPITALIST SOCIETY

SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY - workers cannot make communism while capitalism survives anywhere on earth.

NATIONALISM - the workers have no country.

WAR - wars have killed millions of workers this century.

PARLIAMENT & ELECTIONS - no capitalist state, nor any change in it, can help the workers at all.

LEFT & RIGHT PARTIES - Tories, Liberals, Labour, SDP, CP, NF, Trotskyists and Maoists - all serve the ruling class.

UNIONS - the unions are dead, and no new unions can be made to serve the workers. All unions serve the ruling class.

SELF-MANAGEMENT & NATIONALISATION - workers can't run industry in their own interests in a capitalist society.

COMMUNISTS ORGANISING WORKERS AND TAKING POWER FOR THEM - only the whole working class can build communism.

WORKERS DEFENDING THEIR LIVING STANDARDS
Unions and capitalist parties defend the bosses' profits, cut workers' wages, and raise prices and productivity. The workers have no interest in this.

WORKERS ORGANISING THEIR OWN STRIKES
Shop stewards and union officials look after their own interests and those of capitalism. Workers alone must decide about their strikes in mass meetings. They must carry out their decisions through delegates elected and controlled by the same mass meetings.

WORKERS SPREADING THEIR OWN STRIKES
Unions which offer to spread strikes are setting a trap to limit them. Workers must spread strikes by their own flying pickets and delegations.

WORKERS' STRUGGLES AGAINST THE STATE
Struggles must link up across industries, working class communities and countries, and attack all parts of the state.

WORKERS MAKING THEIR OWN REVOLUTION
No party can do this. Only workers can organise and control the workers' councils which will destroy capitalism.

REVOLUTION ON A WORLD SCALE
The Russian Revolution was lost when it failed to spread to other countries.

WORKERS ORGANISING SOCIETY
The class which produces the goods is the only class which can bring communism.

COMMUNISM
A society of production for human needs, with no classes, no wages system, no oppression and no frontiers.

COMMUNISTS MUST SPEAK OUT ON ALL THESE QUESTIONS.

*All Best
Mike.*