

has no alternative but to continue savagely attacking the working class. And when workers fight back collectively (as we all will sooner or later), the content of our struggles, the interests we are forced to defend, are more and more, at bottom, the same.

However, a revolutionary, internationally unified uprising is not inevitable. Presently, workers' struggles concern themselves solely with defending themselves from attacks on their living and working conditions, preventing their wages or social 'benefits' from falling more and more behind the cost of living, fighting layoffs, work speed-ups, mandatory overtime, etc. Revolutionaries (ie. those who understand the direction capitalism is moving in and see the necessity for world proletarian revolution to prevent the destruction of humanity) must intervene in workers' struggles to point out the increasingly common interests and circumstances of all

such struggles today, to denounce the unions and leftists as agents of the state (pointing out how they play that role), and to argue for the necessity for workers to self-organize, extend, and unify their struggles, and the need to directly confront the state on a mass scale. We must point out both the necessity and the possibility of international revolutionary transformation, and convince our class brothers and sisters to take up a revolutionary perspective.

Cynicism may be hip these days, but it is really based on ignorance, and the state today is more than happy with it. Those of us who aren't ignorant and who haven't yet given up on humanity's fate must get together to clarify our revolutionary perspectives and influence the proletariat's struggles of today and tomorrow.

Welcome to the first issue of Class Struggle Bulletin. The reason for its existence is primarily to publicize the facts of, and the lessons to be drawn from, the nurses' strike in B.C. this summer. This account is of course aimed at a very specific section of society: those whose 'politics' identify them with the project of eliminating capitalism by means of autonomous proletarian action. (We hope that some nurses, and others, with lesser political aims will also be interested.) Since those of us putting out C.S.B. are located in Vancouver, and since the level of class struggle here is not likely to soon reach what it did this summer (there was also a strike by workers in the fish catching and processing sector--which is relatively sizable here--which 'their' union effectively sabotaged), this will perhaps also be the last issue of C.S.B., as such. We would love to put out a second issue as soon as is practically possible, but we may not possess sufficient material to do so for who knows how long. Unless another important moment of class struggle erupts here or other revolutionaries pass on to us material concerning class struggles elsewhere in North America--for example, we would greatly appreciate any decent accounts, from a revolutionary perspective, of the strikes by nurses and other public sector workers in Quebec in September--we won't see a second issue soon. Nevertheless, we may publish a sequel to C.S.B.; that is, a different publication with a different name, oriented more to theory and analysis, but continuing and developing the perspectives outlined here. It's presently an open question. What could influence our decision is the response we get to C.S.B. So if you have any worthwhile material that

others in the North American revolutionary milieu ought to know about concerning contemporary class struggle, send it to us. Or, if you have any response, especially a critical and substantial one, to the contents of this issue, and you consider yourself a partisan of autonomous class struggle, write it up and mail it to us. Or if you have any material on issues of concern to contemporary class struggle or international proletarian revolution, get it to us. (Such issues include, atleast, state capitalism, unions, imperialism, 'national liberation', leftism, the decadence of capitalism, the history of class struggle under capitalism, the development of class consciousness, how to effectively struggle today, and how revolutionaries should 'organize' themselves and intervene in class struggle today.) We cannot over emphasize that revolutionaries today must communicate with each other to the greatest extent possible, in a genuinely fraternal manner, to pass on information on the various moments of class struggle occurring around the world and the interventions of revolutionaries made therein, to confront and debate ideas and perspectives, and to work towards international collaboration and unity.

Finally, we are obviously losing money by distributing this issue of C.S.B. for free. And if we are to publish a sequel, we will require additional funds. We appreciate any monetary contributions (all cheques to 'cash').

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Articles on:

* B.C. NURSES' STRIKE

and

* THE OUTLOOK FOR CLASS STRUGGLE TODAY

NURSES' STRIKE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

As in many other 'welfare' capitalist states in the past few years, Canada has seen severe government budget reductions of expenditures on social and health services. And as in many other such countries, this has led to resistance by workers directly affected by these cutbacks. Such was the strike which erupted on June 13 by the nurses of British Columbia (Canadian nurses are organized at a bargain on a province by province basis). As a result of the state's reduction of spending on public health, nurses' wages have lagged far behind the cost of living for many years, leading to a largescale exodus from 'professional employment'. This in turn has led to a widespread nursing shortage in a number of countries, which of course means a significant increase in workload for all nurses--both work speed-up and ever more overtime. These, in short, are the reasons for the militant class struggle nurses have exhibited over the past few years in Britain, France, Canada, the U.S., and elsewhere.

The 17,500 nurses of British Columbia (B.C.) decided overwhelmingly to strike rather than accept an offer of 18% wage increases over three years. Their demands were for an immediate increase of 22% and 7.5% in each of the second and third years, increases in overtime, shift, and weekend pay, and improved working conditions. Only by means of a significant immediate wage increase for starting nurses, they argued, could more nurses be attracted--the only way to increase staffing levels, and so reduce the presently intolerable workload.

Right from the beginning of the strike the union collaborated with the hospitals' management and the government on fixing 'essential staffing levels' at approximately 70% of the workforce, so that there were never more than 5,500 nurses actually withdrawing their labour at any one time. Although most nurses remained on the job, the effectiveness of the strike was strengthened by the refusal of the 29,000 workers (actually about 21,000 not deemed likewise 'essen-

tial') within the Hospital Employees Union (HEU), consisting of nurses' aides, orderlies, clerks, janitors, etc., to cross the nurses' picket lines. Then on June 22 the healthcare workers in the HEU joined the strike. Although this extension of the strike was not a matter of nurses convincing healthcare workers to unite with them in one fight for a common set of demands, since it was confined to 'normal union procedures', and both unions did their best to keep the disputes and the demands separate, there was a real unity on the picket lines and this undoubtedly increased pressure on the hospitals (and the government, which funds them).

The striking nurses' militancy and obvious public (ie. predominantly working class) support for their struggle--despite the campaign by the media to portray the the nurses as 'endangering public health'--led the hospitals to increase their wage offer on June 26 to 29.5% over three years. (These numbers were deceiving, however, since increases were to take place every six months, instead of every year, thereby lowering the overall increase; the immediate increase was to be 6.25%, followed by ones of 6.25, 3.0, 4.0, 3.0, 4.0, and 3.0%).

Up to this point in the strike the nurses showed no apparent dissatisfaction with the union: while B.C. nurses had not previously gone on strike, the union nevertheless was prepared and flexible enough to contain the nurses' anger. However, when the union immediately accepted ('tentatively') the new offer and began using its propaganda machinery to 'encourage' its acceptance by the rank and file, many nurses began to see that the union was not representing their interests.

Mass anger exploded over the next several days, as hundreds of Vancouver area nurses forced the union leadership--including on one occasion by storming their way into the union's head offices --to explain what seemed to them as a betrayal of their interests. This display of combativity and autonomous action must have scared the union, as it certainly caught the relatively inexperienced union president off guard. In the heat of the moment--undoubtedly thinking of her career as a union leader --she imagined herself a benign dictator and unilaterally withdrew the support of the union's executive for the offer it had just agreed to and was actively pro-

moting around the province. Of course, the union couldn't tolerate this degree of responsiveness--it would destroy their reputation as a responsible, 'good faith' bargaining agent--and so the next day the self-same union president shame-facedly admitted she had violated the 'democratic procedure' by which the union executive decides whether to recommend acceptance or rejection of a contract offer.

From then on the union adamantly insisted, in concert with the hospitals, that not a penny more could possibly be gained by the nurses since 'there's no more money in the hospitals' coffers'. In addition, a number of the province's most prominent union leaders, including the head of the B.C. Federation of Labour, spoke out that the nurses would be fools not to accept this 'great' offer. The nurses refused, in the face of this spectacle, to moderate their militant opposition. While they normally would have gone back to work on the 'tentative acceptance' of the contract offer by the union leadership, the healthcare workers strike meant continued picketing in solidarity. However, that strike ended June 30 when the HEU 'tentatively accepted' a contract providing wage increases far below what had been demanded. This situation provided a crossroads for the nurses. Instead of remaining on strike and taking the struggle outside of and against 'their' union, they returned to work over the weekend of July 1-2.

Nevertheless, about 1,000 nurses, roughly half of the nursing staff at Vancouver General Hospital (the province's largest) organized a mass assembly July 1 on the basis of opposition to the contract offer supported by the union. This is where an anti-union orientation could have led to the struggle breaking out on its own. However, while some of that consciousness may have been present at that assembly, it was far from dominating as rank and file unionists captured control of this 'dissident movement'. The result was the creation of a 'Vote No' campaign complete with fundraising so that the new 'dissident leaders' (a shop steward and another low level union functionary)--whether genuinely elected or self-appointed is unknown, the latter being more likely--could spread the 'Vote No' message around the province.

The rank and filists carried on their campaign of diversion and deflation of anger by directing 'dissident' nurses safely back into the union straight-jacket, first, by helping to organize, within the union, an 'information meeting' for July 4 for all nurses in greater Vancouver to learn what 'options' they had. It became clear that the option the dissident leaders were promoting was simply 'vote no' and re-open negotiations with a new bargaining committee (presumably composed of a majority of themselves and their supporters); and even this option, they argued, could be pursued without going back on strike! It was a classic case of base unionist recuperation.

The union leadership was shrewd enough to set the date for contract 'ratification' voting for July 12, eleven days after the nurses had returned to work. The nurses immediately recognized this as a tactic to demoralize them into voting 'yes', and this was clearly reflected in their 'dissident' anger of June 27 to July 4. But this anger never really broke out of the confines of base unionism. And the media aided in this project of derailment by giving much exposure to the two dissident leaders who travelled around the province to spread their 'Vote No' message. The union leadership also did its part in this charade by playing the 'bad cop': by also sending a delegation around the province to counter the dissidents' message, openly threatening nurses by telling them that if they didn't approve the offer, the government would unquestionably prevent them from going back on strike and force them to live with the contract they were supposed to be freely voting on (this was openly said to be based on reliable 'inside information'), and accusing the dissidents of being 'negades' who were trying to 'split the union'. The dissident leaders responded, of course, by renewing their commitment to the union, and claiming to be campaigning only for openness and democracy within the union--which was undeniably true.

This display of faction fighting and the media's willingness to continuously publicize it undoubtedly led to increasing popularity for the dissident leaders at the expense of the existing leadership. However, there is no doubt that when the nurses did finally vote and

decide by 65% to reject the offer their principal motivation was simple recognition that it didn't come close to meeting what they required, what they had gone on strike for.

Following the vote of July 12 the union virtually disappeared from sight and media attention. Apparently, their strategy of 'laying low' was really to wait and see how the nurses would react --would they begin increasing pressure for renewal of strike action? would they spontaneously go out on a wildcat? or would they only demand a new bargaining committee? The strategy worked because the only reaction of nurses was a relatively weak demand for a new bargaining committee--which even nurses who had voted for the deal thought was necessary now. Evidently, the substitutionist delegation of 'dissident' leadership to the base unionists had left most nurses passive and atomized.

The union's response was to not discontinue the ban on overtime and 'non-nursing' work which had in force since the strike ended--which had made nurses' work just tolerable enough for them to be willing to 'sit tight and hope'--while adding only one new 'dissident' to the bargaining committee. Even the rank and filists did little: perhaps they wanted to outwait the leadership and then react; but they refused to call for a renewal of the strike or even any escalation of job action. By this point they had completed their key mission of recuperation, and weren't about to re-open any doors to potential 'chaos' (ie. autonomous struggle).

Union-management bargaining, under a mutually agreed upon mediator, was finally renewed August 8. The union demanded the same amount of money that had already been offered by the hospitals, but to be given over a two year, rather than a three year, term. The provincial government, after three days of publicly announced 'stalemate', and at the urging of the hospitals' bargaining agent, threatened to end the 'free' bargaining and have a deal imposed by binding arbitration. So on August 14 the union, ever-so 'reluctantly', agreed to have a deal bindingly imposed by the mediator that was already presiding over the negotiations. Its leaders argued that they 'had no choice' ('what can you do?'), what with the government's

threats, and that atleast the mediator was 'impartial' and 'aware of nurses' concerns'. The union agreed at the same time to immediately end the overtime and non-nursing work bans. Lo and behold, the new deal contained exactly the same wage increases as the earlier one, the one nurses had rejected, had over the first two years--that was the only difference, that it would be for two rather than three years.

Once nurses realized what they were stuck with for the next two years and that they must go back to their intolerable levels of overtime work, it was clear that all their anger had returned. But by now they felt helpless and defeated. For some, perhaps more than ever before, the only option they see themselves as having is to quit. Others will refuse some or all overtime work they are 'requested' to do. The union has said such action will be a purely 'individual' matter--in other words, such nurses can expect no union support --but since it may well be widespread, the base unionists, in order to retain a semblance of credibility, have taken on the task of 'supporting' and identifying themselves with an overtime boycott.

For now, it appears the ruling class, from the government and the media to the unions and the base unionists, have succeeded in 'taming' the nurses of B.C. However, it can be said with confidence that the nurses will return, more combative than ever, and having learned a few lessons from this experience about what not to do next time.

PERSPECTIVES

The attacks on and the conditions suffered by B.C.'s nurses show clearly what capitalism has in store for the whole working class. Capitalism no longer has any option--whether it is the Right such as Mulroney in Canada or Thatcher in Britain, or the Left such as Mitterand in France or Gonzalez in Spain, which is in power--but to severely attack the living and working conditions of the working class everywhere. Squeezing more and more out of us is the only way capitalism's rulers can reduce their debts and make their various national capitals more competitive on the world market.

The nurses' struggle shows clearly that deteriorating living and working conditions force even the most inexperienced sections of the working class in the capitalist metropoles to strike back with great militancy. It also shows vividly the impotency of struggling within the unions. The unions today will only contain and defuse workers' militancy. The nurses' strike this summer is further proof of this for anyone who still needs it.

The first steps of both self-organization and extension were exhibited in this strike, but there was not a clear consciousness of the necessity of both today if workers are to move forward in their struggles. On the question of extension particularly, B.C. nurses showed that they are especially prone to corporatist illusions (notably of the 'professionalist' variety), just as nurses in France, Britain, and elsewhere are.

The 'extension' of the strike to the healthcare workers in the HEU--the bulk of hospital workers in B.C.--was in fact a completely legal affair wholly under union control. Even though it is certain that most healthcare workers realized that striking alongside the nurses was preferable to striking alone, even though many nurses must have come to realize that the healthcare workers' strike strengthened their own, and even though there was clearly a great deal of solidarity between nurses and healthcare workers both on the picket line and in the hospitals (for those workers both unions forced to continue working to provide 'essential services')--and all of these factors undoubtedly advanced the class consciousness of nurses and healthcare workers; nevertheless, the 'extension' of the strike was not a genuine extension because it was neither under the control of the workers themselves nor forced on the unions by the workers' self-initiative, and because it did not lead to a genuinely united strike with common demands and commitments on both 'sides' to not return to work before the 'others' but only when all the common demands have been met and a majority of all strikers choose to end the strike. There was clearly a certain amount of corporative distrust between the two 'sides': the nurses had a much more militant and determined conscious-

ness, a clear recognition that the state is their enemy (albeit not a clear recognition that 'their' union is a part of that state), and an intransigent refusal to accept any 'best offers' which didn't meet their demands; while none of this was evident in the healthcare workers, who ended up accepting an offer representing less than half the wage increases they had demanded, and only barely above the present (and ever-rising) rate of inflation. At the same time the nurses perceived themselves--and the media and the leftists also propagated the view--as uniquely under attack from a 'vicious right-wing government' and uniquely deserving of a 'great deal'.

The nurses did indeed take the first step of self-organization once they realized the union was openly acting against them, but their general assembly was immediately captured by rank and file unionists who succeeded in diverting the militancy and self-initiative back into the union by focusing all anger at the existing leadership and initiating a faction fight of shop stewards and other low level union functionaries against the leadership, who were portrayed (as they always are by rank and filists) as 'out of touch with the rank and file'.

Self-organization which does not involve a refusal to recognize anyone participating as privileged or deserving of a special status because of their position within the union, a complete openness to all workers involved to voice their views, and decisions about what collective actions to undertake made by a simple majority of a show of hands (after debate, of course), is only stunted and partial self-organization. Workers cannot elect a few leaders to 'carry out the necessary tasks'. It

can never be that simple. Rather, they must decide, on the basis of thorough and open discussion, what actions will be taken by all the workers involved. And they must continue to meet regularly outside of the union so they can decide on any further actions to take or alter their previous plans, and so workers not already involved can also take part. They must also send delegations of themselves to other workplaces so as to spread the struggle and link up. After all, the more workers involved in the struggle, the more effective it will be. (We can say specifically in the case of the nurses that their assembly should have been made open to healthcare workers as well.) If this orientation succeeds, and the struggle breaks out of union(s), then the workers in their various assemblies can elect mandated and revocable delegates to a central strike committee to co-ordinate the overall struggle.

For the nurses and the whole working class of B.C. this strike represents a significant step forward from the state of affairs that had prevailed here for a number of years, that is, a lack of open combativity--even though living and working conditions were (and continue to be) slowly eroding--and a thoroughgoing identification with the unions (even if there is a widespread recognition that the unions 'can't really do anything for us'). The B.C. nurses' strike exhibited small signs of the way forward for all workers today: militant refusal to compromise with the state, extension and self-organization of the struggle. For workers to take up this course they must shed their illusions in corporatism and unionism by recognizing that such illusions render impotent every struggle to defend our living conditions today.

THE OUTLOOK FOR CLASS STRUGGLE TODAY

It is patently clear that the whole civilized world, the whole industrialized social order, including both the 'democratic' west and the 'socialist' east, is crumbling before our eyes. But it isn't just falling apart by itself--it is taking the whole of humanity and the whole of the planet with it. Although nuclear war is still an enormous threat (despite all the propaganda about 'the end of the cold war'), the present reality of

steady social decay and environmental destruction is already achieving the same results (at a muted pace) without war having been 'officially' declared. The present course the industrialized world is on will soon lead to the absolute impoverishment of the majority of people everywhere (even in the richest countries) and the wholesale destruction of the earth's ecological system.

It ought to be clear that in the west the state is no less to blame than are the private corporations for this state of affairs. Of course, most working people have long since lost faith that the state can 'reform' the economy in any significant way that can improve our lives. In fact, the state always makes things worse, and its real purpose with respect to the economy is to make the whole thing operate more efficiently, which means increasing or atleast maintaining the overall rates of profit and growth, maximizing their national competitiveness on the world market, and all the while keeping the working class pre-occupied with keeping or finding 'a job'. In today's situation of chronic crisis, this can only mean intensifying the exploitation of workers (whether it be productivity increases or wages falling behind the rising cost of living) and savage repression when workers resist these attacks on their working and living conditions.

While in the 'socialist' east bloc the state has the same tasks as it does in the west, as well as being the sole employer. And in being the country's sole employer, the state there has the same aims as the employers (both private and 'public') of the west: to maximize the accumulation of capital by extracting surplus-value from the working class to sell their commodities as competitively as possible on the world market.

Thus, given the primary role of the state in the national and international economy in both the west and the east, the result is not significantly differing forms of STATE CAPITALISM everywhere today. (While the bureaucratically centralized organization of the economy in the 'socialist' states has misled many into believing that commodities aren't produced competitively there, Gorbachev's 'perestroika' aims to increase competition and efficiency within the national economy, but it obviously won't mean changing the overall mode of production—it's been capitalist all along; and anyone who seriously believes the economy in the west is, or ever again can become—à la 'privatization'—laissez faire or 'free market' capitalism is grossly ignorant of its actual workings and imperatives.)

So what should we conclude from this? We must conclude that the state itself, in its totalitarian totality, is our primary enemy today. Its central, for more than fifty years now has been not just to protect the power and privileges of the ruling class and to physically repress all challenges to that power by the exploited and oppressed, but to actively intervene and play the leading role in maintaining the 'well-being' of the economy and the whole society under capitalist social relations. By taking responsibility for the 'social wage' (ie. welfare, unemployment insurance, family allowances, pensions, and in more social democratic 'welfare' states, socialized healthcare), the state made itself appear as 'the great provider', the benifi-

cent redistributor—while in reality sharing the costs for these 'benefits' equitably among the whole of society; but today, in the face of irreversible economic crisis, the state can only appear as the axeman, responsible for more and more cutbacks, tax increases, and other austerity measures. The state and the capitalist system today are one and the same, and the leading echelons of the ruling class are to be found in the state bureaucracy. *implies state outside capitalism before*

We must be clear that any strategies for social change that come down to trying to reform the state or the economy (eg. Green parties or leftist parties generally) cannot possibly represent a real challenge to the existing system, and in fact are or can be used by the ruling class to co-opt or recuperate the well-intentioned efforts of people for genuine social change. We must clear that the state today really is totalitarian, that it will do everything in its power to embrace and control everything in society relevant to wealth and social power, and that every social institution or organization which is not engaged in a life or death struggle with the state becomes integrated within it. Such is what happened long ago to all 'socialist', 'communist', and other leftist parties and groups, 'progressive' organizations, and trade unions which exist today. All of these must be considered as organs of the state, no matter what the intentions or beliefs are of those who make up their membership. If they (the 'rank and file') think their organizations can play any positive role in social transformation they are simply under the grip of one or another ideology of the ruling class.

So then how are we to prevent state capitalism from destroying humanity and the planet? Is it not too onerous a task? While it is pointless to tell people not to engage in such struggles as those for 'peace', women's rights, gay rights, against particular environment-destroying corporations or state regulations which permit such, against apartheid or other manifestations of racism, etc., what must be realized by everyone who wants a new world is that these partial struggles will play no role whatsoever in ridding the world of state capitalist barbarism. The role such struggles play is to give the illusion that a better society can be had if only we put enough 'pressure' on the state to reform itself, as well as to reinforce the divisions which capitalist society imposes and these struggles attempt to overcome. In reality the demands of such struggles on states which are on a fast track to wholesale destruction effectively become: "Give us bigger cages and longer chains!"

To rid the world of state capitalism, what is required is massive and militant struggle on an international scale which explicitly aims at the destruction of all the world's states. These struggles must therefore be or quickly become openly political and revolu-

divisions before were in a position to be a revolutionary (United) class.

tionary struggles. Such struggles today will not be 'popular' struggles of 'all the people', since these struggles always end up (more often they begin) in the hands of bureaucratic leaderships which have no interest in destroying capitalism, and couldn't do so even if they were to try. The only struggle which can pose the question of the revolutionary destruction of the states and the capitalist economy everywhere is class struggle; that struggle which unites all workers, employed and unemployed (an ever increasing mass internationally), and their dependents, on the basis of their class interests to abolish their condition as wage labourers, as producers of commodities to be sold for profit. Because of their fundamental role in the capitalist system of production, the proletariat can both bring the economy to a halt, and then, when it wants to, reorganize the world economy so as to eliminate commodities, markets, and profits, and instead produce goods and services for real human needs. By taking control of every aspect of production—a condition which necessitates the possession of supreme political power—the proletariat will be able to eliminate all technologies and all production processes and facilities which are dangerous or alienating to producers, consumers, or the environment. Of all the goods and services produced, there will either be enough for all or else what there is can be equitably shared by everyone who co-operates. No other class has any material interest in bringing about such an economic reorganization. Therefore all class-collaboration must be definitively rejected.

But how could such a transformation work? How could it be organized so that no political party, 'vanguard', or minority takes control and becomes a new ruling class? The answer to this problem is actually quite simple, and the historical experience of proletarian class struggle has furnished it. That answer ultimately comes down to militant and permanent self-organization of struggles outside of all unions, leftist parties, and other bourgeois (or statist) organizations. Self-organization at workplaces means first of all general assemblies of all the workers, fully open, but with control in the hands of the whole, based on a simple majority vote by *Democracy*. Ideas must be freely debated and decisions not taken too hastily, but the orientation must be to direct action, and not to electing 'leaders' to decide or carry out policies. The unemployed can organize their own general assemblies based on locality, where they live or wherever they want to meet; if an assembly gets too big for everyone to fully participate, then it can split in two. But of course an international struggle requires unity of action and strategy of all proletarians regardless of workplace, industry, or region. Thus every general assembly will have to reach important political decisions concerning the overall struggle, and then elect revocable delegates from its own ranks who are mandated by those

specific decisions. These delegates will then meet with delegates from other assemblies, permitting unity of a much greater number of workers in action. These delegates will not be able to make any final votes committing their assemblies to carry out certain actions until those assemblies mandate them to make such votes. To encompass ever greater regions and numbers of workers in united action, delegates from these meetings of delegates can be elected (again revocable and again mandated). Even though these delegates eventually (eg. at an international level) will seem 'far removed' from workers in their assemblies, it must be remembered that they are all mandated and fully controlled ultimately by the assemblies. Direct action oriented forms of decision making of this sort are no 'utopia'—they have arisen in many past mass struggles of workers this century (first in 1905 in Russia, most recently in Poland in 1980, before the Solidarity union took control). The system of mandated and revocable delegates is known as the system of "workers' councils". Non-bureaucratized workers' councils are the historically discovered form for waging revolutionary struggle, class war, on a unified international scale. They are no 'blueprint' and and in no way are 'dated' or outmoded. They are the crystallization of proletarian self-organization.

But self-organization will remain healthy and will serve as a means to revolutionary goals only as long as revolutionary class consciousness is present within the organizational forms. In order to make our fight successful we must become confident in ourselves, in our class, as having the same interests and aims, and in our ability as one international class to destroy all state capitalist power. To gain this confidence we must see self-organized workers struggles arise simultaneously in a number of countries. These struggles rarely break out on a massive scale with revolutionary aims all at once. Rather, they evolve out of previous struggles, which are defeated, but from which the workers (and not just those directly involved) draw important lessons, about self-organization, about the unions and leftist parties, about the need to generalize the struggle over corporatist divisions, and about the need to directly confront the state. Such struggles are already brewing today, all around the world, among the Russian coal miners, transport and public sector workers in Britain, various public sector workers in France, Belgium, and Holland, all sorts of workers in Spain and in Poland, workers in 'outlying' countries of Peru, Brazil, South Korea, Mexico (and probably China), and even among workers in Canada and the U.S. Few of these struggles are really massive today and none openly revolutionary. But all of them and others that the capitalist media won't tell us about contain that potential. That is because capitalism everywhere today is sinking further and further into crisis and