



world revolution

**1914,
1944,
2014:
Capitalism
means war**

Ukraine slides towards military barbarism

Our rulers just can't get enough of war. A whole year of 'commemorations' of World War One, with opinion divided among them about whether this was a Good War or a Bad War. The right wing tends to argue that this was a Good War. The Kaiser was Bad, and had to be stopped. And Britain's empire was, on the whole, a Good Thing, which had to be defended. The left wing can then pose as very radical, and say, this was a Bad, Imperialist War.

A week or more of celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings in 1944, with royals and presidents hob-nobbing in northern France on the big day. This time left and right are united: this was a Good War. The US and the British were definitely the Goodies, and the Germans were the Baddies. The Goodness of the war is proved by the fact that it made the world safe for Democracy.

When it comes to the First World War, the left can quote authentic revolutionaries like Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg and tell us that capitalism, at a certain stage in its historical development, inevitably turns to imperialism and war to prolong its survival past its sell-by date. But they mysteriously forget all this when it comes to the Second World War, which was to all intents and purposes the same war fought by the same imperialist powers as the conflict that ended only 20 years previously. The magic of 'anti-fascism', of 'Nazism is the greater evil', wipes away what marxism tells us about the real nature of capitalism, and the barbarism of Auschwitz and Treblinka justifies the barbarism of the aerial obliteration of Hamburg, Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In opposing the First World War on the basis of working class internationalism, the revolutionaries who went on to form the Communist International insisted that if capitalism in decay was not overthrown by proletarian revolution, it would drag humanity into a deadly spiral of wars which would threaten its very existence. History has proved them right: the Second World War – which revolutionaries opposed for the same reason – plumbed even greater depths of horror than the First. The "Cold War" that immediately followed wiped out millions in proxy wars between the two superpowers, with the sword of nuclear annihilation hanging over mankind's head. The break-up of the two imperialist blocs after 1989 did not bring peace, but a growing war of each against

The crisis in Ukraine is the most dangerous in Europe since the break-up of Yugoslavia a quarter of a century ago, as Russia attempts to defend its interests in the region against the tendency for western European powers to gain more influence, threatening civil war internally and destabilisation in the region.

The country has a new president, Petro Poroshenko, elected by a majority in the first round of voting and promising to defeat the "separatist terrorists" in the East of the country within hours. A new hope he is not. His political career started in the United Social Democratic Party of Ukraine and then the Party of Regions, loyal to Kuchma, an ally of Russia, before swapping to Yushchenko's Our Ukraine Bloc in 2001. He has been a minister in governments of both Yushchenko and Yanukovich. A chocolate billionaire, he was accused of corruption in 2005 and fought the presidential election with the support of former boxer Vitaly Klitschko, who was elected Mayor of Kiev at the same time, and his corrupt backers, Levochkin and Firtash. Ukraine has yet another corrupt oligarch in charge, imposing the only perspective this rotten capitalist system has in store for humanity: militarism and austerity.

Far from defeating the pro-Russian separatists in hours, the fighting has continued with Ukraine repulsing a separatist assault on Donetsk airport, at the cost of dozens of lives, and losing a helicopter with a general on board. The fighting continues and the separatists remain in place.

all that has swept across Africa, the Middle East, and, with the war in ex-Yugoslavia, to the gates of Europe. The great powers, reacting to the break-up of their spheres of influence, have since 1989 intervened militarily even more often than during the Cold War, but as we can see in Chechnya, Iraq and Afghanistan, they have only accelerated the plunge into chaos.

Today the ruin that is Syria, the permanent massacre that is the Congo and Central Africa, the growing tensions between the USA and Japan and China in the Far East, the descent of Ukraine into an imperialist 'civil war' fuelled by both Russia and the western powers – all this is testimony to the fact that the rulers cannot have enough of war, that their system needs it, feeds on it, fuels it, even if this murderous addiction will also lead

Far from ushering in a new era of democratic stability and growth, Ukraine's presidential election on 25 May was another step in its slide into bloody civil war, just as much as the referendums held by separatists in Crimea in March and Donetsk and Luhansk in May. What we are seeing is the widening of the internal divisions in this bankrupt artificial country, precipitated by imperialist manoeuvres from outside. The danger is that the country will be torn apart in civil war, ethnic cleansing, pogroms, massacres, and widening imperialist conflict and instability in the region.

Ukraine's inherent instability

Ukraine is Europe's second largest country, an artificial construct including 78% Ukrainians and 17% Russian-speaking who form the majority in the Donbas Region, as well as various other nationalities including the Crimean Tartars. Economic divisions follow much the same lines, with the coal and steel industries in the Russian speaking East largely exporting to Russia, and accounting for 25% of the country's exports, and with the Western part of the country, which has been the scene of the Orange protests in 2004 and the Maidan protests this last winter, looking towards the EU for its salvation.

The economy is a disaster. By 1999 output fell to 40% of the level of 1991 when the country became independent. After a relative revival it contracted by 15% in 2009. The industry in the East is out of date, highly dangerous and polluting. Depletion

of the mines has led to more dangerous working at depths up to 1200 metres with the threat of methane and coal dust explosions as well as rock bursts (the hazards that caused over 300 deaths recently in Soma, Turkey). Pollution from mine water affects water supplies, while antiquated coke and steel mills spew out visible air pollution and spoil

to capital's own destruction. Hence all the efforts of all the ruling classes of the world to stir up the poison of patriotism, to make the exploited of the world identify with their exploiters and wave the national flag, which is always the flag of capitalism and war. For the working class, to identify with our rulers, to march in their parades, leads to suicide. To understand our identity with all the exploited of the world, to unite in struggle against the capitalists' call for sacrifice in the national interest, to carry on that struggle against the capitalists even when they go to war, to oppose the national flag with the flag of the international revolution – that is the only hope for a world without war. **Amos, 8.6.14**

Communiqué to our readers:
The ICC under attack from a new agency of the bourgeois state
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of the mines has led to more dangerous working at depths up to 1200 metres with the threat of methane and coal dust explosions as well as rock bursts (the hazards that caused over 300 deaths recently in Soma, Turkey). Pollution from mine water affects water supplies, while antiquated coke and steel mills spew out visible air pollution and spoil

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Capitalist decomposition produces the search for scapegoats

As the results of May's elections to the European Parliament became clear, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said it was "more than a warning. It is a shock, an earthquake." The 'seismic' outcome was that about a quarter of the seats would be taken up by parties that are 'malcontents' when it comes to the European dream.

From the Right there were massive gains by the Front National in France, the UK Independence Party in the UK, the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn in Greece and other 'extremist' parties in Hungary, Austria and Denmark. From the Left there was Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain. In Italy the Five Star Movement, difficult to categorise in left/right terms, also had an impact, coming second overall in the poll.

As has happened before, with only a 43% turnout across Europe, the majority of people didn't vote at all. And of those who did, how many had any real concern with the European Parliament, how it functions and whatever it is it does? British Foreign Minister William Hague said "I think that

people do know that in the European elections they can have a free vote, a free hit". The Euro vote is seen as a focus for frustrations, an impotent means of expressing anger or unhappiness. This also applies to those who are elected. UKIP leader Nigel Farage said in a speech in February: "We can't change a thing in Europe" and that while Eurosceptics could "have some fun" in the European Parliament trying to block legislation, it would "not last very long" (*Guardian* 27/2/14).

But if more than 200 million (out of 380 million) people didn't bother to vote, what can be said of the illusions of those who did? Elections channel discontent into support for different factions of the bourgeoisie, but it is significant when new or revived forces come to the fore and support for long-established parties declines. In Greece, for example, there is a widespread conviction that European institutions are dominated by Germany and many parties, not just Syriza, see the re-structuring of the EU as essential if national economies are going to improve. But across Europe, nationalists of all hues blame the EU for economic

and social problems: in short, the EU is a visible scapegoat for capitalism's economic crisis, in a way not dissimilar to blaming the bankers for the crash of 2008.

More sinister is the growing tendency of the 'new' political forces to focus the blame on immigrants and ethnic or religious minorities. Racism and anti-immigrant rhetoric are the common currency of bourgeois parties, but groups like Golden Dawn are not just anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant in words, they terrorise their victims, using physical violence without hesitation. The spirit of the pogrom lurks in the anti-immigrant nationalism of many parties.

In the propaganda of all the populists, left and right, there are simple answers. Everything's the fault of the EU. It's all because of German domination. It's immigrants. It's the Jews. Where once middle class voters would have confidence in their conservative or liberal choices, and workers would routinely support the parties of the left, there is now increasingly disorientation throughout society, because while the ruling class is increasingly

incoherent and fragmented, the working class is not putting itself forward as a social force which can change society at its roots. In such a situation, discontent with the way things are does not easily lead to a questioning of the capitalist system that is at the root of material deprivation and cultural impoverishment; disillusionment with the 'respectable' parties that manage the various capitalist states can soon be replaced with illusions in 'new' parties that promise 'radical' alternatives or identify easily defined scapegoats.

The real power of the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, does not lie in its parliaments, European or national, but in its position as the class which appropriates the surplus value created by the working class. Elections give an outlet for dissatisfaction, and, when traditional parties begin to become discredited, there are other forces waiting in the wings. But these forces are there solely to make sure that 'the more it changes, the more it stays the same'. **Car 8/6/14**

Ukraine slides towards military barbarism

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tips or slag heaps risk mud slides¹. Added to which there is radioactivity from Soviet era nuclear mining. These industries are not competitive in the medium term, or even the short term if they have to face EU competition, and it is difficult to see who will want to put in the necessary investment. Not the oligarchs who have a history of getting very, very rich while the economy goes to pot. Not Russia which has its own out of date Soviet era industry to cope with. And surely not Western European capital which presided over the closure of much of its own mining and steel industries in the 1970s and 1980s. The idea that Russia could offer a way out of economic disaster, impoverishment and unemployment, which has all been going on while the oligarchs get rich – a sort of nostalgia for Stalinism and its disguised unemployment – is a dangerous illusion that could only undermine the working class' ability to defend itself.

Illusions in money from the west are equally dangerous. The IMF bailout in March, worth \$14-18 billion, replacing the \$15 billion withdrawn by Russia when Yanukovich fell, has come on condition of strict austerity, raising fuel prices 40% and cutting 10% of public sector employees, about 24,000 jobs. Unemployment figures are already unreliable as many people are unregistered or underemployed.

While Ukraine was part of the USSR and surrounded on its Western borders by Russian satellites, the divisions did not threaten the integrity of the country. This does not mean such divisions were not used and played on. For instance 70 years ago the Crimean Tartars were expelled and only recently some of them returned. The divisions are being played up in the most nauseating and bloodthirsty manner by all sides. It's not just the far right Svoboda, nor the interim government's rehabilitation of Stepan Bandera, the wartime Ukrainian Nazi: Yulia Tymoshenko uses the language of shooting and bombing Russian leaders and population, and Poroshenko is putting this into practice. The Russian side is equally nauseating and murderous. Both sides have formed paramilitaries. Even Kiev does not rely solely on the regular army. These irregular forces include the most dangerous fanatics, mercenaries, terrorists, killers, inflicting terror on the civilian population and killing each other. Once these forces are unleashed they will tend to become autonomous, out of control, leading to the sort of death toll we see in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya or Syria.

Russia defends its strategic interest in Crimea

Russian imperialism needs Crimea for its Black Sea fleet, a warm water fleet with access to the Mediterranean. Without its Crimean bases Russia could no longer maintain operations in the Mediterranean or the Indian Ocean. Its strategic position depends on Crimea. Ukraine is also needed for defence of the South Stream gas pipeline when it is finished. This has been a constant concern since Ukrainian independence. It simply cannot tolerate the possibility of a pro-Western Ukrainian government in charge of Crimea, hence its response to any question of an agreement with the EU. In 2010 it gave a discount on gas in return for an extension of the lease on its naval base in Crimea. When the Yanukovich government postponed the Association Agreement with the EU last November, Russia responded with a \$15bn assistance package, which was halted when Yanukovich was impeached and fled Ukraine. Shortly after it took over Crimea and organised a referendum on joining Russia, which it could use in its propaganda war in favour of its annexation, despite the fact it has not been internationally recognised.

So in March Russia had Crimea, de facto if not recognised internationally. But it is still not secure, since it is surrounded by Ukraine, a country that is on its way to signing an Association Agreement with the EU and therefore allying with Russia's enemies, and trying to escape from Russian blackmail by finding new donors in Western Europe. For strategic reasons, in order to have an overland access to Crimea, Russia needs the Eastern part of Ukraine under its control. Eastern Ukraine is a whole different matter from Crimea, despite the weight of the Russian-speaking population that provides the alibi for Russia's moves. With no military base in Eastern Ukraine the separatist referendums in Donetsk and Luhansk cannot secure these regions for Russia but only destabilise them, lead to more fighting. It cannot even be certain to control the local separatist gangs.

Russia has one other card to play in the possible destabilisation in the area: Trans-Dniester, which broke away from Moldova on Ukraine's South Western border, and also has a large Russian-speaking population.

Not a new cold war, but another spiral into military barbarity

This is by no means a return to the cold war. That was a period of decades of military tensions between two imperialist blocs that divided Europe. But in 1989 Russia had become weakened to the point that it could no longer keep control of its satellites, or even the old USSR, despite its efforts, such as the war in Chechnya. Now many Eastern European countries are in Nato, which can operate right up to the Russian border. But Russia still has its nuclear arsenal, and it still has

the same strategic interests. The threatened loss of all influence in Ukraine is a further weakening it cannot tolerate, and it has forced it to react.

The USA is the only remaining superpower, but it no longer has the authority of a bloc leader over its 'allies' and competitors in Europe, as shown by the fact that it could no longer mobilise these powers to support it in the second Iraq war the way it could in the first. The US has in fact been weakened by more than 20 years of being bogged down in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The USA is faced with the rise of a new rival, China, which is destabilising South East Asia and the Far East. As a result, despite the USA's intention to cut its military budget, it is obliged to focus attention on that region of the world. Obama has said that "some of our most costly mistakes came not from our restraint, but from our willingness to rush into military adventures without thinking through the consequences"². That does not mean it will not try to get a piece of the Ukrainian action through diplomacy, propaganda and covert operations, but it has no immediate perspective of military intervention. Russia does not face a united West, but a number of different countries all defending their own imperialist interests, however much they verbally condemn its moves in Ukraine. Britain does not want sanctions that harm Russian investment in the City, Germany is mindful of its current reliance on Russian gas, although it is searching for other energy suppliers. The Baltic states are in favour of the strongest condemnation and measures since with large Russian populations in their countries they also feel threatened. Thus the Ukrainian conflict has sparked off another spiral of military tensions in Eastern Europe, showing that they are an incurable cancer.

At present Russia faces sanctions which are potentially very damaging since it relies so much on its oil and gas exports. Its recent deal to sell gas to China will be a great help. China abstained on the UN condemnation of Russian annexation of Crimea. On the level of propaganda it claims Taiwan on the same principle as Russia claimed Crimea, the unity of Chinese speaking people, but it does not want to admit the principle of self-determination when it has so many minorities of its own.

All the bourgeoisie's factions, both within Ukraine and those stirring things up from outside, are facing a situation where every move makes things worse. This is like zugzwang in chess, a game much loved in Russia and Ukraine, a position in which any move a player can make only worsens his position, yet he has to move – or resign. For instance, Kiev and the EU want a closer association, which only leads to conflict with Russia and separatism in the East; Russia wants to secure its control of Crimea, but instead of taking control of Ukraine or its Eastern region all it

can do is stir up separatism and instability. The more they try and defend their interests, the more chaotic the situation, the more the country slides towards open civil war – like Yugoslavia in the 1990s. This is a feature of the decomposition of capitalism in which the ruling class cannot put forward any rational perspective for society, and the working class is not yet able to put forward its own perspective.

The danger for the working class

The danger for the working class in this situation is that it should be recruited behind the various nationalist factions. This danger is greater because of the historical enmity based on the real barbarity carried out by each faction during the 20th century: the Ukrainian bourgeoisie can remind the population and particularly the working class of the famine that killed millions as a result of forced collectivisation under Stalinist Russia; the Russians can remind their population of the Ukrainian support for Germany in the Second World War; and the Tartars have not forgotten their expulsion from Crimea and the deaths of about half the 200,000 people affected. There is also the danger of workers being hoodwinked into blaming one or other faction for their increasing misery, and being drawn into support for the other on that basis. None of them have anything to offer the working class but worsening austerity and bloodthirsty conflict.

While it is inevitable that some workers will be drawn into the pro or anti-Russian sentiment³ we do not know the situation on the ground. But the fact that the Donbas has become a battle ground for nationalist forces emphasises the weakness of the working class in the area. Faced with unemployment and poverty they have not been able to develop struggles for their own interests alongside their class brothers in western Ukraine, and are faced with the danger of being divided against each other.

There is a tiny, but nonetheless significant, minority of internationalists in Ukraine and Russia, the KRAS and others, whose courageous statement, "War on war! Not a single drop of blood for the 'nation'!"⁴, defends the working class position. The working class, while it cannot yet put forward its own revolutionary perspective, remains undefeated internationally, and this is the only hope for an alternative to capitalism's headlong drive towards barbarism and self-destruction. **Alex, 8.6.14**

3. For instance 300 miners, a significantly small number, rallied in support of separatists, (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/28/miners-russia-rally-donetsk>).

4. <http://en.internationalism.org/worldrevolution/201403/9565/internationalist-declaration-russia>

1. No-one who was living in the UK in 1966 can mention such mudslides without being reminded of the Aberfan disaster in which a slag heap buried a primary school, killing 116 children and 28 adults.

2. *The Economist* 31.5.14

1984-85: How the NUM served to defeat the miners

We've just passed the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the miners' strike in Britain, a strike which began in March 1984, lasted nearly a year and involved some 120,000 workers; a strike moreover which had its roots in the whole period beforehand of international class struggle. Despite returning to this question over a couple of decades, and particularly on anniversaries, we make no apology for looking at this issue once again given that the lessons of this strike and its defeat, the role of the trade unions - particularly the National Union of Miners - are important not only for the working class in Britain but also for the proletariat internationally.



Set piece confrontation

The strike itself broke out after a long period of rising international class struggle - a strike wave in Britain, strikes in Germany, Belgium, the USA, Italy and Poland, to name but a few - with the workers more and more tending towards self-organisation and, in this process, coming up against the constraints and diversions of the trade unions. If there are some revolutionary, anarchist or libertarian elements that are unaware of the fundamental role of the trade unions in policing and attacking the working class (indeed some of these elements actively work within the unions and bolster their ideology), then there are elements of the ruling class that are well aware that the trade unions belong to them and know how to use them to the greatest effect. Such was the case with the 1984 miners' strike where the state used repression on the one hand and the National Union of Miners and its leader Arthur Scargill on the other, in order to crush the miners and deliver a message that "struggle doesn't pay" not only to the class in Britain but to the proletariat internationally.

Under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher the British bourgeoisie prepared well and carefully from the very early 80s in order to take on the miners. A shadowy Cabinet Office group, MISC 57, was set up in 1981 in order to lay the ground. This included buying up land next to power stations so that coal could be stockpiled and the group also identified the power, steel and rail workers as too dangerous to be involved. The watered down, sanitised 2001 memoirs of MI5 boss Stella Rimington show how MI5 used its agency not only against the NUM leadership (there is absolutely no contradiction with one element of the British state spying on another) but also on the ground against miners¹. There was widespread bugging by GCHQ and the involvement of MI5 agents in the NUM leadership. Such infiltration is not at all unusual in the trade unions as these structures, ruled from the top with Byzantine rule-books, lend themselves, indeed offer themselves, to infiltration by the secret services. What many naive believers in "open democracy" on the left see as a "conspiracy theory" is the real activity of the state against the working class. Joe Gormley, for example, a president of the NUM was, like many union leaders, a Special Branch informant. An early proposal to use troops against the miners was rejected as too dangerous - a wise decision by the state given the number of soldiers on leave that eventually fought alongside the miners on the picket lines and in protests. Another key weapon in the repressive apparatus was the police who were given carte blanche to crack down on the miners, the mining communities and other workers, and provided with bottomless funds to

1. <http://www.theguardian.com/comment/story/0,3604,376455,00.html>

do so. The state was set up to go on the attack: a MI5 section - DS19 - was set up for directing the police, surveillance and providing agent-provocateurs; the courts dished out sentences against miners which went beyond their powers; there was similar lawbreaking from the DHSS which turned down legitimate claims of miners' families; and the media of course with the blatantly lying BBC heading the pack entirely at the service of the British state and against the working class.

But it was the trade unions, with the NUM at the forefront, that provided the real line of defence for the British state and the defence of the national interest. The miners were given decent pay rises in the early 80s (not least as a result of their struggles) and the Thatcher clique concluded secret deals with the ISTC steel union, the NUR rail union and the power workers union in order to keep their workers out of the strike - which they did using their union rule-books and union discipline. The GMBU, with workers in the rail and power industries, ordered its workers to cross miners' picket lines, as did other unions including the NUR. The NACODs pit-deputies' union ignored an overwhelming ballot by their members to join the strike and the dockers' union, whose workers struck in July, kept their workers and their strike isolated from the miners' actions. And of all the unions, all of them "scab" unions as all unions have been for decades, the great National Union of Miners clearly demonstrated its own scab nature at the end of the strike by leading the 60% of miners still out, "with heads held high" as the union put it, across picket lines of miners who had been sacked or were on bail. Despite acts of solidarity and support from individual workers or groups of workers, the whole of the trade union apparatus showed in practice its support for the state against the miners. To back up this formidable opposition to the miners, many of whom were being radicalised by the overt repression of the police and other state agencies, the whole gamut of leftism, whose concern is always in tandem with the unions for the national interest, was mobilised behind the NUM and other trade unions in order to maintain credibility in the fiction among workers that it was inside the union structures and in defence of the union that the miners had to be supported. And the unions, the NUM and the other major unions, supported the workers like the rope supports the hanged man. The overt repression of the police and the subtle divisive repression of the NUM and other unions worked hand in hand against the miners specifically and the working class in general. The defeat of the miners' strike was never a done deal and the bourgeoisie had some worrying moments when the strike threatened to extend and get out of control. But it was the NUM and the Scargill "factor" that kept the miners trapped in the union framework and it was this framework/prison that proved decisive in the defeat of the miners and their strike.

Scargill's role

Arthur Scargill became president of the NUM in 1982. He was the perfect foil for the Thatcher clique, the other side of the coin in the left versus right game that the British bourgeoisie was getting down to a fine art. He was deliberately set up as a bogeyman and the more the bourgeoisie attacked him the more he drew the majority of the miners behind him. This is an old trick of the ruling class and the *modus operandi* of the British bourgeoisie - particularly using its popular press and TV stations - in many important strikes through the 60's, 70's and into the 80's. Union leaders were labelled "socialist firebrands", "reds" and so on but many of these "wreckers" managed to get knighted, made Baronesses, or some other title that got them into the House of Lords. Others ended up with part-time plum jobs on various state bodies with some of them presumably getting a pension from the security services for whom they had worked. We saw a glimpse of this game recently with the appearance of the media's Bob Crow appreciation society on the occasion of his death. Not a lot of chance of this for Arthur because this was a very important strike for the bourgeoisie to win. He had to be elevated to supreme pantomime villain and he was just right

for the role. Scargill started his political life as a Young Stalinist and this career bureaucrat knew all about rising through the union ranks from his position as a minor legal functionary of the NUM to become the leader at the top of the union. And today, the pathetic figure of Scargill is reduced to ongoing legal battles with his union. Despite his inestimable services to the state, there will be no knighthood for Arthur Scargill.



In reality Thatcher wasn't the only enemy

In 1981, a wildcat strike by tens of thousands of miners - which threatened to get even bigger - pushed the Thatcher government to withdraw its pit closure plans and severely dented the latter's credibility in the eyes of the ruling class. Thatcher was on her way out but the British victory in the Falklands War, facilitated by the US, gave renewed vigour to the British bourgeoisie and it turned to dealing with the "enemy within" - the working class, the main battalion of which, due to their militancy and will to fight, was the miners. The repressive plans mentioned above were put in place and the ruling class relied on the NUM leadership, along with the other main unions, to play the role that it had consistently played in the past: isolating the miners and leading them into an ambush and subsequent defeat. Scargill and the NUM started this ball rolling with a ridiculous overtime ban began in November 1983, which gave the bosses all the warning they needed in order to build up coal stocks and their own repressive forces. None of Scargill's whining and evasions in his "memoirs" alters this or any of his and his union's role in the defeat that followed². There were plenty of workers' initiatives that counter-posed a class dynamic particularly based on their self-organisation. This included the very effective 'flying pickets' when the strike started in March 1984, which the union tried to curtail. But the union had the misplaced confidence of a great number of the workers behind it and this reinforced the role of the NUM, with its nationalist demands for "British Coal" and "Defend the NUM". The union fixated the miners on the Notts collieries and set-piece battles, like the ones around the Orgreave coking plant that, in the face of repressive forces, the miners could only lose. While the only dynamic that will take a workers' struggle forward is self-organisation and extension to other workers, Scargill, the NUM and the other unions, turned this militancy back into warfare between the miners, growing isolation and unwinnable ritualised battles.

It's not a question of "bad leadership" or of the personality of Scargill. It was the whole union structure of the NUM and the other major unions that defeated the miners and delivered a blow to the rest of the class in Britain and internationally. We can see this more clearly in the correspondence between David Douglass, a rank-and-file NUM official and the ICC published a few years ago³. The strike says Douglass was "through the union and in defence of the union" which was one

2. <http://en.internationalism.org/worldrevolution/200904/2850/scargill-s-memoirs-1984-85-strike-hiding-num-s-role-sabotaging-struggle>
3. <http://en.internationalism.org/2009/icconline/october/miners>

of the major problems as the miners were unable to break with this framework and involve other workers - many of whom were involved in their "own" struggles at the time. He insists on the importance of "the different levels and functions of the union", which again was a problem not only for other workers to get involved but were incomprehensible to many miners. Rule books, area divisions, branch ballots and all the rules around

them, regional areas under distinct Stalinist-like leaderships in competition with other areas - the NUM had all these divisions within itself and they helped to strangle any initiative of the miners to cut through all this shit and move the direction of the strike towards a result.

There were many positives expressed in this strike from the actions of the workers themselves: the militancy and combative spirit of the working class; the solidarity and sacrifice of the miners and their families; the expressions of self-organisation and the active involvement of other workers and not a few serving soldiers. And the role of the women directly in the struggle who, while the "feminists" were demanding a bigger place at capitalism's table, were radicalised, took to the streets in their thousands and tens of thousands and continued supporting workers' strikes and protests long after the miners' strike was over⁴. But the overwhelming lesson of the miners' strike for the working class today is that not only are the trade unions useless for taking a struggle forward - they are prisons policed by officials and rules whose main function for the capitalist state is to keep workers isolated and divided. We can look back and see that that was exactly what the NUM and the other unions did in 1984/5.

Baboon, 13.5.14

4. <https://www.google.co.uk/#q=we+caused+a+lot+of+havoc>

Also on Britain:

The recovery bubble

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Revolutionaries in Britain and the struggle against imperialist war

In World Revolution 365 we republished an article that showed how, when the imperialist war of 1914 broke out, the Labour party and the trade unions offered their services to the ruling class by mobilising the workers for war. But there were numerous voices within the workers' movement in Britain who, like their counterparts in other countries (such as the Bolsheviks in Russia and the Spartacists in Germany) remained loyal to their internationalist principles and raised their voices against the ideological orgy of patriotism and the hideous carnage in the trenches. This article, written by a close sympathiser of the ICC, was originally published in two parts (in World Revolution 267 and 268 in September and October of 2003) which we have now consolidated into one article.

An additional article, on the minority in the UK who maintained internationalist positions in the face of the Second World War, was published in WR 270.

Part 1: the First World War

The first duty of revolutionaries in the face of capitalist war is to defend the interests of the whole working class, as expressed in the historic slogan of the workers' movement: "Workers of the world unite!"

The defence of internationalism for revolutionaries has never been an abstract principle; it is an intensely practical struggle, involving a fight for clarity inside the political organisations of the working class, and more widely through intervention in its defensive struggles, often in difficult conditions of state repression and patriotic frenzy.

This article examines the struggle of the revolutionary left in Britain against the first world war, looking firstly at the development of clarity at the theoretical level about the entry of capitalism into its imperialist phase, and then at the organisational struggle for an active anti-war position inside the main ostensibly Marxist organisation, the British Socialist Party.

This struggle for internationalism demanded not only a ruthless fight against the jingoism and nationalism of the enemy class, but also against all signs of opportunism and centrism within the working class. (The history of the different socialist organisations in Britain and their responses to the First World War are dealt with in more detail in the series on the struggle for the class party in Britain - see WR 237, September 2000).

Understanding the new imperialist epoch

The understanding that capitalism had entered into its imperialist phase was the product of a pre-war political struggle waged by the left - in particular the Bolsheviks, the left-wing in the German Socialist Party and the Dutch Tribunists - against the revisionist theories of Bernstein and others on the right-wing of the Second International, who began to argue that capitalism was in fact capable of overcoming its own inner contradictions and that the struggle for gradual reforms alone could result in a peaceful transformation into socialism.

The left in Britain not only participated in this political struggle as an integral part of European social democracy, but also made its own contribution to the Marxist understanding of the changing conditions for the class struggle in the most advanced capitalist countries; as early as the 1880s William Morris identified the rise of imperialism as a response to capitalism's increasingly desperate need for new markets:

"...the one thing for which our thrice accursed civilisation craves, as the stifling man for fresh air, is **new markets**; fresh countries must be conquered by it which are not manufacturing and are producers of raw material, so that 'civilised' manufac-

tures can be forced on them. **All wars now waged, under whatever pretences, are really wars for the great prizes in the world market.**"¹

The British left fought vigorously against local variants of revisionism, making an explicit link between the tendencies towards state capitalism at home and imperialism abroad: "Imperialism... is in its essence nothing but the application outside the British Isles of that socio-political principle which, when applied at home, leads to 'state socialism'. That principle is the organisation and the consolidation by the power of the state of...the interests of the capitalist classes."²

The Socialist Labour Party in particular developed quite a sophisticated analysis of state capitalism, arguing that even the Liberal government's welfare measures - despite offering some minimal improvements in the conditions of the working class - were fundamentally "a preliminary measure towards the bureaucratic enslavement of the people."³ For the SLP, the final outbreak of the imperialist world war and the insatiable demands of the war economy greatly intensified this tendency and confirmed the reactionary consequences of any further support for nationalisation or state control:

"Nationalisation or 'state socialism' so far from being a method of working class progress to socialism, has become the very life blood and method of the most militant and aggressive imperialism... State control means the highest form of capitalism, and will create the industrial warfare of whole empires and groups of empires... Thus, along the road of nationalisation or state ownership, instead of meeting socialism, freedom and peace, we find competition intensified, wage slavery, militarism, and, in the distance, the bloodstained fields of future battlefields."⁴

Three years of bloodstained battlefields enabled the clearest elements the SLP to conclude that capitalism, like the social systems which preceded it, had now definitely entered into its period of decadence.⁵ Although this conclusion was coloured by a mechanistic vision of the system's 'inevitable' dissolution, it was still based on the solid Marxist position that the war was essentially the product of capitalism's historic crisis of **overproduction**. Echoing Rosa Luxemburg, William Paul of the SLP argued that in order to avert this crisis the capitalist class had been forced to divert the productive forces into waste production - in particular of armaments - and finally to go to war in order to re-divide a saturated world market.⁶

There was also an understanding amongst the clearest revolutionaries that the war could not solve this crisis and that unless the working class



Red Clydeside - a mass meeting in 1919

was able to destroy capitalism the perspective would be one of further imperialist bloodbaths. On the revolutionary left wing of the BSP, John Maclean was probably the clearest in drawing the lessons of the economic struggle between capitalist states in the new period to ominously predict a second, even more destructive round of butchery, which threw into question the whole basis of any future struggle for reforms:

"The increased output of commodities...will necessitate larger markets abroad, and hence a larger empire. The same will apply to other capitalist countries. This must develop a more intense economic war than led up to the present war, and so precipitate the world into a bloodier business than we are steeped in just now. The temporary advantage the workers may get in shorter hours and higher wages with higher purchasing power will then be swept away in the destruction of millions of good lives and fabulous masses of wealth."⁷

These were vital insights by small minorities of the British working class into the roots of the First World War and its profound significance for the struggle for socialism, which gave strength to the left's organisational struggle for internationalism.

The organisational struggle for internationalism

In Britain, the earliest and most consistent defender of a revolutionary position against the war was the group around John Maclean and the Glasgow District Council of the British Socialist Party. The BSP led by Hyndman, a notorious pro-imperialist, had declared its wholehearted support for Britain's entry into the war and called for an allied victory; a position endorsed by representatives of the left and centre in the party.

But even as the BSP was proclaiming its support for King and Country, Maclean and his supporters were carrying out anti-war propaganda at factory gates on Clydeside, where mass meetings of workers passed resolutions calling for an end to the war and sent fraternal greetings to workers of all nations.⁸ In September 1914, Maclean argued that: "Our first business is to hate the British capitalist system that, with 'business as usual', means the continued robbery of the workers... It is our business as socialists to develop 'class patriotism', refusing to murder one another for a sordid world capitalism."⁹ In the first issue of his own paper the *Vanguard* - started as a riposte to Hyndman's pro-war *Justice* - Maclean set out his belief that the only alternative to war now was revolution: "Nothing but world socialism will do. This monstrous war shows that the day of social pottering or reform is past... We do not think national wars are of benefit to the workers so we shall oppose all national wars as we oppose this one. The only war that is worth fighting is the class war..."¹⁰ Unless this war ended in revolution, further world imperialist wars were inevitable.

Maclean's clear internationalist tendency, however, co-existed in a party still controlled by a rabidly chauvinist leadership. A determined struggle for the organisation was necessary, in order to

exclude those who had betrayed internationalism and to win over the whole party to a revolutionary position against the war.

In the decade before the war, the left wing of the BSP had waged a bitter internal struggle against the growing chauvinism of the party leadership. In particular, the left fought to disassociate the party from Hyndman's public advocacy of a big navy and to obtain its adherence to the official position of the Second International against war. The left was strongest in East London, and in Scotland where Maclean and the Glasgow branches carried out anti-militarist propaganda. In both areas, émigré Marxists with invaluable experience of the organisational struggles in Russian and East European social democracy played a leading role. The left was successful in gaining representation on the party's executive, and in late 1912 narrowly won endorsement for its own clear rejection of militarism and imperialism.¹¹ But, in the face of a counter-attack by the right, the opposition revealed a fatal tendency to vacillate; two of its representatives failed to attend the next executive meeting in February 1913, giving the leadership a majority of one in voting to suspend the resolution and to allow the party to decide on the question of maintaining a British Navy. At the 1913 party conference, the centre in the party did all it could to prevent a split on such a 'non-essential point', proposing that members should be "free to hold any opinion they like on subjects apart from socialism"! As one delegate bluntly put it: "first and foremost they must have socialist unity." In the end, the left's anti-militarist resolution was never voted on and Hyndman, while still airing his 'strong conviction' that a very powerful navy was 'indispensable' to Britain, agreed to keep quiet for the sake of the party. In a display of phoney unity, a resolution was then adopted, pledging the BSP to oppose the growth of militarism as an integral part of the Second International. For the left this proved a Pyrrhic victory. The right, in danger of losing its grip on the party, had been rescued by centrist conciliation.¹² The working class paid heavily for this failure; at the outbreak of the first imperialist world war one of the very few Marxist organisations in Britain - so painfully built up during the preceding period of capitalist prosperity - remained in the hands of a right-wing chauvinist clique which proceeded to offer its enthusiastic support to the slaughter, dragging the whole notion of proletarian internationalism down into the mud with it.

Part 2: the Third International

The organisational struggle for an internationalist position - the dangers of centrism

The BSP leadership's first tentative efforts to mobilise the party behind the bourgeoisie's war effort provoked a swift reaction from the internationalists in the party, who found growing support among the membership. The right was forced to prevent this opposition unifying by avoiding a national conference in 1915; at the six regional conferences held instead, the mass of the party rejected both social chauvinist and revolutionary positions, narrowly adopting an 'india rubber' resolution which in fact justified the British war effort. Again the leadership survived by allowing the 'expression of opinion', but there was a running battle over the party's press which continued to present the views of the chauvinists, and in 1916 the arch-jingoist Hyndman and his supporters set up a 'Socialist National Defence Committee' which effectively operated as an arm of the government in the party; the organisational struggle turned violent and anti-war militants found themselves being set up for state repression by their own leadership.

A split was clearly inevitable, but the opposition - which included both the left and the centre of the party - still hesitated to take the initiative despite gaining a majority on the executive. Within the opposition, there appeared a more clearly defined centrist current, which resolutely avoided any call for action against the war and restricted itself to calls for peace. The *Vanguard* group around John Maclean called on the party to choose its camp: either the revolutionary left, or Hyndman and the old International. However, with Maclean's imprisonment and the closure of the *Vanguard* in 1916 political leadership of the opposition passed by default to the centrist current, which urged peace and called on the Second International to 'act'. At the 1916 conference, the Hyndmanites were finally isolated and walked out, but even now they were not excluded, and the debates at the conference clearly revealed the centrist confusions of the majority. Essentially the new BSP leadership deeply feared a British military defeat and did all it could to avoid any action that might jeopardise an allied victory.

Zimmerwald: a first step in the regroupment of the internationalists

After the initial shock of the war and the betrayal of social democracy, the question for revolutionaries was whether the old International could be rebuilt or if a new one was now necessary. In practice, with the old International's leaders now fully backing their respective imperialisms, its central organ, the 'International Socialist Bureau' (ISB), was completely impotent. It was eventually on the initiative of the Italian Socialist Party that a first, unofficial international socialist conference was held at Zimmerwald in September 1915. This



Sylvia Pankhurst. She broke from the suffragette movement because it supported the war

brought together some of the most important currents of the revolutionary left, including the Bolsheviks, along with representatives of the pacifist centre. The left's own draft resolutions and anti-war manifesto, which called for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, were rejected by the majority which restricted itself to a call for peace, but the conference acted as an important moment

in the regroupment of revolutionaries against the war, enabling the left to establish itself as an organised fraction which later, following a second conference at Kienthal in April 1916, became the nucleus of the Third International.

The BSP executive platonically greeted Zimmerwald but remained opposed to any move to form a new international organisation in opposition to the ISB, while the centre of the party was hesitant in its support, repeating its demand that the ISB 'act'. In contrast, John Maclean enthusiastically welcomed the Zimmerwald manifesto as a call for "*the class war for social democracy*" and denounced the ISB's efforts to keep the sides apart. His émigré collaborator Peter Petroff, with closer links to the movement abroad, was better placed to analyse the political character of the conference, giving it his support while pointing out that its manifesto stopped short of calling for revolutionary action against the war.

The Socialist Labour Party had also been kept informed of the anti-war movement abroad through émigré contacts and supported Zimmerwald as laying the foundations for a new International, denouncing the pro-war socialists with whom all common action was now impossible: "*We are at the parting of the ways. Every day the cleavage between the socialists remaining true to the International and the pro-war socialists is becoming more and more marked...*"

Sylvia Pankhurst also gave support to Zimmerwald in her paper the *Women's Dreadnought*, which was in the process of evolving towards a revolutionary position on the war; its transition to class politics would be marked by the newspaper changing its name to the *Workers' Dreadnought* in 1917.

So from their initial isolation, by late 1915 at least some of the scattered revolutionary forces in Britain had taken their first steps towards regroupment at an international level based on a clear political break with the social chauvinists, but also by differentiating themselves - more or less explicitly - from the pacifist centre.

The need for a clear internationalist perspective for the workers' struggles

The collapse of the Second International and the definitive betrayal of its opportunist right wing, while disarming the working class and temporarily putting a brake on its struggles, did not constitute a decisive blow, and the genuine euphoria with which thousands of workers greeted the war quickly began to evaporate as the bourgeoisie demanded ever greater sacrifices in the name of the war effort.

As early as February 1915, workers' struggles re-emerged, when engineering workers on the Clyde struck for higher wages against the advice of their union executive and formed their own unofficial strike committee. Rent strikes also began. In July, 200,000 South Wales miners struck in defiance of the Munitions Act and forced concessions from the government, while in November 1915 transport workers in Dublin paralysed the docks. Unofficial shop stewards' committees grew up all over country. The introduction of conscription in 1916 provoked further strikes by Clydeside engineering workers, which were only cut short by the wholesale arrest and imprisonment of the strike leaders (including John Maclean). The centre of resistance now moved to England with a strike by engineering workers in Sheffield in November 1916, and in the following March further repressive government measures led to renewed unrest which spread throughout England, eventually involving over 200,000 workers; the largest strike movement of the war.

In the midst of the slaughter, these struggles - which were echoed abroad - began to open up revolutionary opportunities, and despite their initial isolation, those few revolutionaries who had remained faithful to the cause of the proletariat in 1914 now found opportunities to win a hearing in the workers' struggles. The group around John Maclean was particularly active in the unofficial strike movements on Clydeside; against the prevalent disdain of British socialists for the class's immediate struggles, Maclean saw every deter-



John Maclean and comrades

mined struggle of the workers as a preparation for socialism, and the *Vanguard* group put its efforts into connecting all the different struggles on immediate issues - wages, rent rises, the 'dilution' of skilled labour - into a class-wide offensive to end the war, calling on the Clyde workers to adopt the tactic of the political strike along the lines of the pre-war European mass strikes:

"We rest assured that our comrades in the various works will incessantly urge this aspect on their shopmates, and so prepare the ground for the next great counter-move of our class in the raging class warfare - raging more than even during the Great Unrest period of three or four years ago...the only way to fight the class war is by accepting every challenge of the master class and throwing down more challenges ourselves. Every determined fight binds the workers together more and more, and so prepares for the final conflict. Every battle lifts the curtain more and more, and clears the heads of our class to their robbed and enslaved conditions, and so prepares them for the acceptance of our full gospel of socialism, and the full development of the class struggle to the end of establishing socialism."

The *Vanguard* group also intervened in Clyde Workers' Committee - the body set up by the militant shop stewards to co-ordinate their struggle against the Munitions Act - to urge it to organise mass action against the threat of conscription, but was expelled from its meetings after attacking the leadership's refusal to deal with the issue of the war, which led Maclean to question its ability to respond to the needs of the class struggle, calling on the workers if necessary to 'take the initiative into their own hands'. Only the revolutionary left around Maclean consistently intervened in the workers' struggles to call for a class struggle against the war.

The Socialist Labour Party also had a strong presence on Clydeside, where some of its militants played a leading role in the Clyde Workers' Committee, but it failed to raise the question of the war or to attempt to give the struggles a revolutionary perspective, pandering instead to the syndicalist ideas of the majority and restricting its intervention to a call for nationalisation and workers' self-management of the munitions industry. From its initial focus on the fight for women's suffrage, the small group in the East End of London around Sylvia Pankhurst also moved closer to the workers' struggles to defend their conditions, actively denouncing the imperialist war at mass demonstrations and leading protests to the government against repression and the hunger and misery imposed on the working class.

In this way, despite all their confusions, through active intervention in the growing struggles against the war revolutionaries gained a small but significant hearing for internationalist positions within the working class, and constituted part of an international movement against the war. The outbreak of revolution in Russia in February 1917 - only three years after capitalism had plunged the world into the massacre - spectacularly confirmed the revolutionary perspective of this movement, and when in November 1918 the bourgeoisie was forced to hurriedly declare an armistice in order to be able to deal with the proletarian threat, the SLP rightly observed that: "*For the first time in history a great world war had been ended by the action of the workers.*" The imperialist war was turned into a civil war.

Conclusions

War and revolution are vital tests for revolutionaries. By supporting national defence in the imperialist war, the right wing of the workers' movement - including in Britain the Labour Party and the trade union leadership - passed over to the

camp of the bourgeoisie. The centre and the left proved by their continued defence of the basic internationalist interests of the working class that they remained within the proletarian camp, but only the left defended the need for a real struggle against the war.

By breaking with the social chauvinists and identifying with the Zimmerwald movement the left had taken the first necessary steps towards the regroupment of revolutionaries at an international level. However, a political struggle against the centre and the influence of centrism within the ranks of the workers' movement was still an essential condition for the creation of a new party and a new International.

An equally important condition for this was the presence of revolutionaries within the working class, to intervene in the workers' struggles and give them a revolutionary direction. It was the workers' own efforts to defend themselves against the attacks on their conditions that laid the ground for a revolutionary struggle against the war and strengthened the left in its struggle against both chauvinism and social pacifism. **MH**

Notes

- 1 *Commonweal*, 19 February 1887.
- 2 Theodore Rothstein, *Social Democrat*, 15 December 1901, p.360.
- 3 *Socialist*, October 1913.
- 4 *Socialist*, October 1916.
- 5 William Paul, *The State: Its Origin and Function*, SLP Press, 1917.
- 6 See, for example, *Socialist*, May 1917.
- 7 John Maclean, *The war after the war*, Scottish Labour College pamphlet, 1917, reprinted in Nan Milton (Ed.), *Op. Cit.*, p.135.
- 8 Letter from 'JM', *Justice*, 17 August 1914.
- 9 *Justice*, 17 September 1914.
- 10 *Vanguard*, October 1915.
- 11 See 'Resolution at a meeting of the Executive Committee on 14 December 1912', *BSP Report of the Second Annual Conference, 1913*, p.37.
- 12 *BSP Report of the Second Annual Conference, 1913*, pp.16-18.

Day of Discussion 1914-18: how the workers were mobilised for war, and how they put an end to it

The ICC in Britain will be holding a third Day of Discussion in September 2014. This year, the theme will be World War One - part of our response to the international campaign of the bourgeoisie 'commemorating' this barbaric war. We plan to divide the day as follows:

- In the morning, a session on how the social democratic parties, and in particular the German SPD, betrayed the working class and mobilised it for war. The presentation will look at the process of degeneration that led to this betrayal.

- In the afternoon, we will be screening and then discussing a short film on 'How the working class ended the war'. The film will show how the working class recovered from its disarray in 1914 and began to respond to the slaughter with strikes, mutinies, and revolutions, ultimately compelling the bourgeoisie to stop the war in order to deal with the proletarian danger.

The meeting will take place in London; the provisional date is 13 September, but please check our website for confirmation and details of time and venue. We will also suggest some reading material to help prepare the discussions.

All welcome; comrades who envisage travelling from outside London, and who will need accommodation, should write to us at uk@internationalism.org.

The ICC under attack from a new agency of the bourgeois state

In October 2013, a new ‘political group’ was born and gave itself the pompous name of ‘International Group of the Communist Left’ (IGCL). This new group doesn’t tell us much about its identity: it is in fact made up of the fusion between two elements of the group Klasbat-alo in Montreal and elements from the so-called ‘Internal Fraction’ of the ICC (IFICC), who were excluded from the ICC in 2003 for behaviour unworthy of communist militants: as well as robbery, slander, and blackmail, these elements crossed the Rubicon with their deliberate behaviour as snitches, in particular by publishing in advance, on the internet, the date the conference of our section in Mexico and plastering up the real initials of one of our comrades, presented as the ‘leader of the ICC’. We refer our readers who are unaware of this to the articles published in our press at the time¹.

In one of these articles, ‘The police-like methods of the IFICC’, we clearly showed that these elements were freely offering their good and loyal services to the bourgeois state. They spend the greater part of their time assiduously surveying the ICC’s website, trying to inform themselves about everything going on in our organisation, nourishing themselves with and spreading the most nauseating gossip dragged up from the sewers (especially about the couple Louise and Peter, two ICC militants, who have obsessed and excited them to the highest degree for more than 10 years!). Shortly after this article, they further aggravated their case by publishing a document of 114 pages, reproducing numerous extracts from the meetings of our international central organ, supposedly to demonstrate the truth of their accusations against the ICC. What this document really demonstrates is that these elements have a sickness of the mind, that they are totally blinded by hatred towards our organisation, and that they are consciously handing over to the police information that can only help them with their work.

Hardly was it born than this new abortion named the ‘International Group of the Communist Left’ uttered its first cry by unleashing some hysterical propaganda against the ICC, as we can see from the title page of their website: ‘A new (final?) internal crisis of the ICC!’, accompanied by an ‘Appeal to the proletarian camp and the militants of the ICC’.

For several days, this ‘international group’ made up of four individuals has been carrying out a frenzied activity, addressing letter after letter to the whole ‘proletarian milieu’, as well as to our militants and some of our sympathisers (those whose addresses they have got hold of) in order to save them from the claws of a so-called ‘liquidationist faction’ (a clan made up of Louise, Peter and Baruch).

The founding members of this new group, the two snitches of the ex-IFICC, have just taken a new step into ignominy by clearly revealing their police methods aimed at the destruction of the ICC. The so-called IGCL is ringing the alarm bells and crying at the top of its voice that it is in possession of the internal bulletins of the ICC. By showing off their war trophy and making such a racket, the message that these out and out informers want to get across is very clear: there is a ‘mole’ in the ICC who is working hand in hand with the ex-IFICC! This is clearly a police work which has no other aim than to sow generalised suspicion, trouble and ill-feeling in our organisation. These are the same methods that were used by the GPU, Stalin’s political police, to destroy the Trotskyist movement from the inside during the 1930s. These are the same methods that the members of the ex-IFICC have already used (notably two of them, Juan and Jonas, founding members of the IGCL) when they made special trips to several sections of the ICC to organise secret meetings and circulate rumours that one of our comrades (the ‘wife of the ICC’s chief’, as they put it) is a ‘cop’. Today, it’s the same procedure to try to sow panic and destroy the ICC from the inside, but it’s even more abject: under

1. ‘Defence of the organisation: the police-like methods of the IFICC’, <http://en.internationalism.org/book/export/html/705>; ‘The ICC doesn’t allow snitches into its public meetings’, http://en.internationalism.org/262_infraction.htm; Calomnie et mouchardage, les deux mamelles de la politique de la FICCI envers le CCI; http://fr.internationalism.org/icconline/2006_ficci

the hypocritical pretext of wanting to “hold out a hand” to the militants of the ICC and save them from “demoralisation”, these professional telltales are really addressing the following message to all the militants of the ICC: “there is one (or several) traitors among you who are giving us your internal bulletins, but we won’t give you their name because it’s up to you to look for them!”. This is the terrible objective of all the feverish agitation of this new ‘international group’: to once again introduce the poison of suspicion and distrust within the ICC in order to undermine it from within. This is a real enterprise of destruction which is no less perverse than the methods of Stalin’s political police or of the Stasi.

As we have recalled several times in our press, Victor Serge, in his well-known book which is a reference point for the workers’ movement, *What every revolutionary should know about repression*, makes it clear that spreading suspicion and slander is the favourite weapon of the bourgeois state for destroying revolutionary organisations:

“confidence in the party is the cement of all revolutionary forces.... the enemies of action, the cowards, the well-entrenched ones, the opportunists, are happy to assemble their arsenal – in the sewers! Suspicion and slander are their weapons for discrediting revolutionaries... This evil of suspicion and mistrust among us can only be reduced and isolated by a great effort of will. It is necessary, as the condition of any real struggle against provocation – and slanderous accusation of members is playing the game of provocation – that no-one should be accused lightly, and it should also be impossible for an accusation against a revolutionary to be accepted without being investigated. Each time that the least suspicion is aroused, a jury of comrades must pronounce and rule on the accusation or on the slander. Simple rules to observe with an inflexible rigour if one wants to preserve the moral health of revolutionary organisations”.

The ICC is the only revolutionary organisation which has remained faithful to this tradition of the workers’ movement by defending the principle of Juries of Honour in the face of slander: only adventurers, dubious elements and cowards would refuse to render things clear in front of a Jury of Honour².

Victor Serge also insists that the motives which lead certain revolutionaries to offer their services to the repressive forces of the bourgeois state don’t always come from material misery or cowardice: *“there are, much more dangerously, those dilettantes and adventurers who believe in nothing, indifferent to the ideal they have been serving, taken by the idea of danger, intrigue, conspiracy, a complicated game in which they can make fools of everyone. They may have talent, their role may be almost undetectable”.*

And as part of this profile of informers or agents provocateurs, you will find, according to Serge, ex-militants “wounded by the party”. Simple hurt pride, personal resentments (jealousy, frustration, disappointment...) can lead militants to develop an uncontrollable hatred towards the party (or against certain of its militants who they see as rivals) and so offer their services to the bourgeois state.

All the ringing ‘Appeals’ of this stuck-up agency of the bourgeois state which is the IGCL are nothing but calls for a pogrom against certain of our comrades (and we have already denounced in our press the threats made by a member of the ex-IFICC who said to one of our militants, “You, I will cut your throat!”). It’s no accident that this new ‘Appeal’ by the snitches of the IFICC was immediately relayed by one of their friends and accomplices, a certain Pierre Hempel, who publishes a ‘blog’ as indigestible as it is delirious, ‘Le Proletariat Universel’, in which you can read stuff like “Peter and his floozy”. The “floozy” in question being none other than our comrade who has been harassed for over ten years by the snitches and potential killers of the ex-IFICC and their accomplices. This is the very ‘proletarian’ literature that circulates the ‘Appeal’ of the ‘IGCL’ which will pique the curiosity and voyeurism of the so-called ‘proletarian’ milieu. You get the friends you deserve.

But that’s not all. If you click on the links on

2. See in particular our communiqué of 21 February 2002, ‘Revolutionary organisations struggle against provocation and slander’ http://en.internationalism.org/wr/252_slander.htm

the note below³, our readers who really do belong to the camp of the communist left can get a more precise idea of the pedigree of this new ‘International Group of the Communist Left’: it has been sponsored for several years by a tendency within another office of the bourgeois state, the NPA (the ‘New Anticapitalist Party’ of Olivier Besancenot which stands at elections and is regularly invited to appear on the TV). This tendency in the NPA often makes loud publicity for the IGCL, putting it on the front page of its internet site! If a group of the extreme left of capital makes so much publicity for the IFICC and its new disguise as the IGCL, this is proof that the bourgeoisie recognises one of its faithful servants: it knows it can count on it to try to destroy the ICC. Thus the snitches of the IGCL would have every right to claim a decoration from the state (obviously from the hands of the Interior Minister), since they have rendered much more eminent services to it than most of those who have been graced with medals by the state.

The ICC will cast as much clarity as possible on all this and inform its readers about the follow-up to this affair. It is quite possible that we have been infiltrated by one (or several) dubious elements. It wouldn’t be for the first time and we have had a long experience of this type of problem going back as least as far as the Chenier affair. Chenier was an element excluded from the ICC in 1981 and a few months later was seen officially working for the Socialist party which was in government at the time. If this is the case them obviously we will apply our statutes as we have always done in the past.

But we can’t rule out another hypothesis: that one of our computers has been hacked by the services of the police (who have been surveying our activities for over 40 years). And it’s not impossible that it was the police itself (by passing themselves off as a ‘mole’, an anonymous ICC militant) which transmitted to the IFICC certain of our internal bulletins knowing quite well that these snitches (and especially the two founding members of the IGCL) would immediately put them to good use. This would not be at all surprising since the IFICC cowboys (who always shoot faster than their own shadows) have done the same thing before, in 2004, when they flirted with an ‘unknown’ element from a Stalinist agency in Argentina, the ‘Citizen B’ who hid himself behind a so-called ‘Circulo de Comunistas Internacionalistas’. This purely fictitious ‘Circulo’ had the great merit of publishing gross and ignoble lies against our organisation, lies which were complacently relayed by the IFICC. As soon as these lies were exposed, ‘Citizen B’ vanished, leaving the IFICC in consternation and disarray.

The IFICC/IGCL claims that *“the proletariat needs its political organisations more than ever to orient it towards the proletarian revolution. A weakening of the ICC still means a weakening of the whole proletarian camp. And a weakening of the proletarian camp necessarily implies a weakening of the proletariat in the class struggle”.* This is the most disgusting hypocrisy. The Stalinist parties declare themselves to be the defenders of the communist revolution when they are in fact its fiercest enemies. No one should be taken in: whatever the scenario – the presence in our ranks of a ‘mole’ of the IFICC or manipulation by the official forces of the state – this latest ‘coup’ by the IFICC/IGCL clearly shows that its vocation is in no way to defend the positions of the communist left and work towards the proletarian revolution but to destroy the main organisation of the communist left today. This is a police agency of the capitalist state, whether it gets paid or not.

The ICC has always defended itself against the attacks of its enemies, notably against those who want to destroy it through campaigns of lies and slander. This time it will do the same. It will be neither destabilised or intimidated by this attack by the class enemy. All the proletarian organisations of the past have had to face up to attacks from the bourgeois state aimed at destroying them. They defended themselves ferociously and these attacks, far from weakening them, on the contrary strengthened their unity and the solidarity between militants. This is how the ICC and its militants have always reacted to the attacks and informing of the IFICC. Thus, as soon as the ignoble appeal of the IGCL was

3. <http://tendanceclair.npa.free.fr/breve.php?id=655>
<http://tendanceclair.npa.free.fr/breve.php?id=2058>
<http://tendanceclair.npa.free.fr/breve.php?id=7197>

known about, all the sections and militants of the ICC immediately mobilised themselves to defend, with the utmost determination, our organisation and the comrades targeted in this ‘Appeal’.
International Communist Current, 4.5.14

Discuss with the ICC and others through our online discussion forum

A debate on our forum has developed around our communiqué to readers on the attacks on the ICC by the group calling itself the International Group of the Communist Left (see the article in this issue). One reader, Esty, argued that the communiqué was an expression of paranoia and hysteria on the part of the ICC:

Enemies are everywhere.

Parasites. Provocateurs. Police snitches. Everything is an “attack”.

How could one not see this kind of language as being paranoid, hysterical ranting? All of the accusations of the ICC against the IGCL boil down to three things: they published the real initials of a militant, they published an internal letter which included the time and date of an ICC meeting in Mexico, and militant(s) within the ICC passed on internal documents to members of the IGCL. I don’t defend these acts but I don’t think that from this you can deduce that these people are police agents or that the ICC is under attack. The ICC has a history of using hysterical language against other groups on the communist left and against its former militants. To point this out is not an attack on the ICC. (from post 16 on 12 May)

There were a number of responses from ICC sympathisers:

While there is a danger of paranoia in the current situation, faced with an attack on an organisation of the revolutionary milieu this certainly is a secondary one compared to the greater danger of complacency, which is often characterised by its ‘calm’, ‘reasonable’ language and its tone of ‘common sense’, which at worst reveals deep illusions in bourgeois democracy.

Esty’s comments above reveal, to say the least, a rather complacent view of what does and doesn’t constitute an attack on a revolutionary organisation: the publishing of the real initials of a militant, details of the time and date of an ICC meeting in a politically dangerous and violent capitalist country, along with information from internal documents; are we to accept such behaviour as just the normal mode of behaviour of people supposedly dedicated to the cause of proletarian revolution? Whether the individuals involved are directly or indirectly acting as police agents is not clear, at least to me; but what does it take to constitute an attack on a revolutionary organisation? Physical violence? That too, has been at least threatened, according to ICC texts. MH (from post 23,14 May)

Given the wholesale verifiable evidence over the last couple of years of insights into the infiltration of the state into small political groups in Britain (entirely unsurprising in my opinion and I would think the same for the ICC) and the general plethora of information about the spying activities of the state world wide, I think that the idea of the ICC going into another “hysterical rant” is something worse than complacency – though that is undoubtedly a factor of it. Behind this complacency is an idea that real revolutionary groups are of no interest to the bourgeoisie, that they don’t see them as any sort of threat. This is an expression of illusions in democracy and the democratic state. It’s also related to the rejection of the machiavellian nature of the bourgeoisie, another analysis of the ICC that’s been more than confirmed by events over the last couple of years (if it needed to be). Baboon (from post 24, 14 May)

The recovery bubble

City and media commentators think that things are definitely looking up for the British economy. The statistics that they are basing themselves on certainly show a vigour in the economy that has not been present for six long years, since the crash of 2008. The housing market is moving forward at a great pace, and not just in London. So much so, there is definite anxiety about an unsustainable bubble. Unemployment has fallen sharply – much faster than predicted by the Bank of England. The UK car industry has seen a long period of growth with sales rising for 27 months in a row (although presumably some of the demand is met by German output, for example). Some see exports doing well, but the UK's trade deficit with the rest of the world widened by more than expected in April, because of weaker manufacturing exports, which were offset by the usual surplus in the services sector.

But British commentators do look for good news about the performance of the economy, and like to compare it with Europe where possible. As a commentator in the *Evening Standard* (5/6/14) said: "Consider that the eurozone economy grew by just 0.2 per cent in the first quarter, missing targets, while Britain advanced at four times that rate. The European Commission forecasts 1.2 per cent growth for the economic bloc this year followed by 1.7 per cent next; it has pencilled in 2.7 per cent and 2.5 per cent for the UK over the same periods."

A key reason why the commentators feel a little less restrained in talking up the performance of the British economy is that it has finally, at this point in time, arrived back at the level of output prior to the financial crash in 2008 (i.e. 6 years). Previously, even if, at times, the economy appeared to be on an overall growth track, everyone knew that there was no recovery in the formal sense: arrival back at the level of economic activity before the recession. Furthermore, the time taken to arrive back at the starting point for Britain is longer – much longer – than in the case of the Great Depression. In the Great Depression (in the 1930s) it took 'only' 4 years for the economy to arrive back at the level of output it had at the beginning of the

recession. This is one reason why the state authorities (notably Mr. Carney and his colleagues at the Bank of England who have responsibility for interest rates) take quite a very measured view of the performance of the economy and have caught out speculators on interest rates more than once.

The 'recovery' takes many forms. The level of employment in Britain in actual numbers is much higher than it was at the beginning of the recession. Historically, it is higher than it has ever been. This is a bit confusing since unemployment is very high as well – even after the recent falls, it is over 2 million (and that is only the official count). Nonetheless, it is true that employment has expanded as the population has expanded (partly due to natural increase and partly due to immigration). Now, one does not have to be an expert to see that productivity has therefore fallen – significantly fallen. To figure out national productivity the bourgeoisie simply divide the overall economic output by the number of people working. Since the economy has only just got back to where it started (in 2008) it follows that productivity has fallen since the working population is significantly larger. That is a very serious problem for the bourgeoisie and has a profound implication for the 'success' of the recovery. That is why the bourgeoisie do not talk about their success in employing so many new people as often as one might expect – despite the fact that what has been achieved on this level is not replicated in every country.

Furthermore, for the bourgeoisie's purposes, claims of 'falling unemployment' are not undermined by the growth of chronic *underemployment*, highlighted by the scandal of zero hours contracts; and 'overall economic output' tends to include any number of parasitic and unproductive activities, such as property speculation. In sum, more reasons for being sceptical about the 'recovery'.

This is why for every proclamation of progress in the economy, usually from the government and its least critical supporters, there is also caution. The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) recently upgraded their predictions for growth, but

"dampened some of the feelgood factor with a warning that 2014 could mark the high point for the economy as households come under renewed financial strain next year once interest rates start to rise." (*Guardian* 30/5/14). The director general of the BCC warned that "The task at hand is to ensure that 2014 is not 'as good as it gets' for the UK economy" (ibid) A spokesman for the treasury agreed that "we cannot take the recovery for granted" (ibid).

Other commentators are more blunt. "James Meadway, a former adviser at the Treasury, has criticised Chancellor George Osborne's claim that newly released GDP figures prove 'Britain is coming back.' He argues that the government's relentless pursuit of stringent austerity and expansion of household debt is reinforcing the risk of a major economic crash. Meadway argues that the policies driving UK growth are fatally flawed: 'We are setting up... exactly the conditions that helped produce the crash of 2008: debt-led growth, in which stagnant or falling real earnings are masked by increasing levels of household debt that sustain continued consumer spending.'

Despite the 0.8% increase in growth over the last quarter, current performance indicates that manufacturing output 'will not recover to its 2008 level before 2019.' With average earnings rising at a rate of 1.4%, and the Consumer Price Index's inflation figures ignoring the large cost of housing at around 40% of household income, real inflation 'is now running at 2.5% a year, well ahead of increases in earnings...The fall in real earnings since 2008 is the longest sustained decline in most people's living standards since the 1870s.'" (*Guardian* 1/5/14)

This particular bourgeois expert comes perilously close to telling the truth: that the 'recovery' is largely a sham fuelled by debt, that the prospects for future difficulties are clearly discernible, and that the perspective for the working class is a continuing attack on its living conditions.

Hardin/York 8/6/14

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Readers will be aware that we have reduced the frequency of the publication of *World Revolution*.

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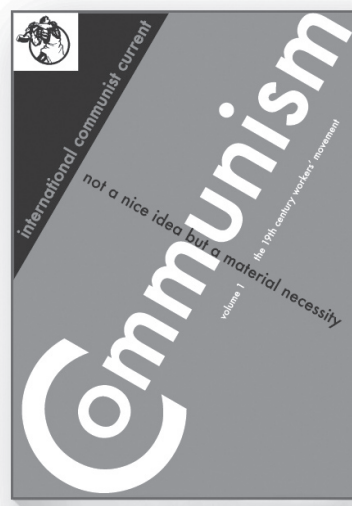
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The 'Arab Spring': from hope to terror

In Egypt, the army's candidate Abdel al-Sisi has won a 'landslide' victory, polling between 93% and 96% of the votes. True, the elections were widely boycotted, and only 46% of the electorate went to the polls (government estimate) and the main opposition party, the Muslim Brotherhood, was banned; true this election was in fact an out and out farce comparable to the one that Bashar Asad organised in war-shattered Syria on 3 June (and even Asad only polled 88.7% of the vote!). But just as the sectarian divisions in Syrian society have led many – such as Christians and members of the Alawite sect that the Asad family belongs to – to support Asad's brutal regime out of fear of what would happen if he lost the civil war, so in Egypt the fact that many ordinary people continue to support the rule of the army is also a product of fear.

Fear of the repression and corruption incarnated by Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood government that came to power in the elections that followed the fall of the Mubarak regime in 2011. Fear of the crime in the streets that has grown appreciably worse since the decline of the mass movement that ousted Mubarak. Fear of the jihadist version of Islam which was gaining influence under the cloak of the 'moderately Islamist' Muslim Brotherhood. It was this climate of fear which led even many of those who had participated in the 2011 movement – which had been directed against Mubarak's army-based regime – to turn back to the army in the hope that it would guarantee a minimum of order.

This order, of course, is also based on the same ruthless repression which kept Mubarak in power for so long, and which sustained the brief rule of Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. The clearest proof of this was the mass death sentence handed out last March to over 500 Brotherhood supporters who took part in a demonstration which resulted in attacks on people and property, and the death of one police officer.

Such blatant manipulation of the courts, whether or not the death sentences are carried out, is designed, like all forms of state terror, to drum home the message that any form of rebellion against the state will not be tolerated.

For the moment the message is getting home: the social revolts and the workers' strikes of 2011 have fallen silent.

In 2011, these movements were seen as part of an 'Arab spring', an outbreak of hope, where people could leave their fear behind and come together in their thousands in the streets, facing

the forces of repression (not only the police and the army, but also the criminal gangs unleashed on the demonstrators by the regime). Massive strikes centred round the huge textile factories and other industrial concentrations affirmed the power of the working class and were a decisive factor in the decision of the ruling class to ditch Mubarak. The revolts centred in Tunisia and Egypt were an inspiration to a rebellion across the divide of war, in Israel, and to the 'Indignation' which motivated the mass demonstrations and assemblies in Spain, the Occupy movement in the USA, and the street rebellions in Turkey and Brazil in 2013.



July 2013: demonstrators support army coup against Morsi government

But these revolts never escaped the profound ideological illusions of those who took part in them. They were in essence the response of a new generation of the working class, faced with a capitalist system mired in an insoluble economic crisis and with a future of insecurity, unemployment and austerity. These revolts saw themselves as revolutions, even as part of a world revolution, but they were the product of a proletariat which has largely lost its sense of identity as a class, forgotten its real history and its traditions of struggle. The participants acted in their hundreds of thousands, but they still largely saw themselves as citizens, individuals, not as part of an associated class.

'Democracy' is the logical expression of this outlook of the atomised citizen: one man, one vote, enter what the French call the 'isoloir' the polling booth/isolator to elect a capitalist party to manage the capitalist state. And this was the great goal

that was offered to, and largely accepted by, these movements, with only a small minority arguing that the assemblies where people came together to discuss and take decisions could be the basis of a new form of power, like the soviets of 1917 – one which left the 'democracy' of bourgeois parliaments in the dustbin. On the basis of this abdication to democracy, dictators like Morsi and al-Sisi may vie for government office, but the state power they serve remains intact.

Today the dreams of the Arab spring have been rudely shattered: in Egypt which has become a sordid contest between power-hungry factions, in Libya which is collapsing into the rule of local armed gangs, with the chaos spreading south into Chad, Mali and beyond; in Syria, above all, which has become an almost unimaginable nightmare, where Asad rules over a country that has been bombed to ruins, and where the 'opposition', increasingly torn between 'moderate' and 'extreme' Islamist factions, offers the grimmest possible

alternative. In Ukraine, a series of events which were superficially modelled on the Arab spring was immediately engulfed in nationalism and integrated into the reviving imperialist rivalries between Russia and the western powers. In Europe and the USA as well, the struggles against the impact of the capitalist crisis have gone into retreat. Small wonder that so many have succumbed to despair, where the hope of changing the world is dismissed as a fairy tale.

But this is not the first time that the class war has gone underground. The proletarian revolution takes its time. It does not obey an immediate calendar, or respond machine-like to a certain level of economic indicators. Those who stand for the genuine revolution against world capitalism have the task of drawing out the lessons of past defeats so that the revolts of the future do not repeat the same mistakes – not least, the fatal error of believing in the bourgeois sham of democracy. **Amos, 6.6.14**

ICC Online: recent additions

Soma mining disaster: capitalism is responsible

Kidnapping of schoolgirls in Nigeria: Five years of carnage and bourgeois hypocrisy

The indignation of Venezuelan youth derailed by democratism

Class struggle in China

1944 celebrations: 50 years of imperialist lies, parts one and two (republished from 1994)

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International Review 152

**Social movements in
Turkey and Brazil:
Indignation at the heart of the
proletarian dynamic**

20th congress of the ICC

- Balance sheet of the congress
- Report on imperialist tensions
- Resolution on the international situation

Bilan, the Dutch left, and the transition to communism (II)

Political positions of the ICC

World Revolution is the section in Britain of the **International Communist Current** which defends the following political positions:

* Since the first world war, capitalism has been a decadent social system. It has twice plunged humanity into a barbaric cycle of crisis, world war, reconstruction and new crisis. In the 1980s, it entered into the final phase of this decadence, the phase of decomposition. There is only one alternative offered by this irreversible historical decline: socialism or barbarism, world communist revolution or the destruction of humanity.

* The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once these conditions had been provided by the onset of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution in an international revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolutionary wave, particularly in Germany in 1919-23, condemned the revolution in Russia to isolation and to a rapid degeneration. Stalinism was not the product of the Russian revolution, but its gravedigger.

* The satiated regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.

* Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in

the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

* All the nationalist ideologies - 'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination' etc - whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.

* In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as Stalinism and fascism.

* All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist' and 'Communist' parties (now ex-'Communists'), the leftist organisations (Trotskyists, Maoists and ex-Maoists, official anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix up the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.

* With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union

organisation, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.

* In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their extension and organisation through sovereign general assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.

* Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the working class. The expression of social strata with no historic future and of the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie, when it's not the direct expression of the permanent war between capitalist states, terrorism has always been a fertile soil for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. Advocating secret action by small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which derives from conscious and organised mass action by the proletariat.

* The working class is the only class which can carry out the communist revolution. Its revolutionary struggle will inevitably lead the working class towards a confrontation with the capitalist state. In order to destroy capitalism, the working class will have to overthrow all existing states and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale: the international power of the workers' councils, regrouping the entire proletariat.

* The communist transformation of society by the workers' councils does not mean 'self-management' or the nationalisation of the economy. Communism requires the conscious abolition by the working class of capitalist social relations: wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers. It means the creation of a world community in which all activity is oriented towards the full satisfaction of human needs.

* The revolutionary political organisation constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active

factor in the generalisation of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organise the working class' nor to 'take power' in its name, but to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of them for themselves, and at the same time to draw out the revolutionary political goals of the proletariat's combat.

OUR ACTIVITY

Political and theoretical clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and its immediate conditions.

Organised intervention, united and centralised on an international scale, in order to contribute to the process which leads to the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

The regroupment of revolutionaries with the aim of constituting a real world communist party, which is indispensable to the working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a communist society.

OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary organisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organisations have drawn throughout its history. The ICC thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the *Communist League* of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the *International Workingmen's Association*, 1864-72, the *Socialist International*, 1884-1914, the *Communist International*, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the *German, Dutch and Italian Lefts*.