Cuts in living standards

The false opposition of Labour and the unions

The Comprehensive Spending Review is not due till 20 October, bringing cuts of up to 25% in some government departments. Workers are not so much waiting for the cuts to be announced as waiting for even more cuts on top of those announced in the last Labour budget, the first coalition budget and others since then.

In fact the austerity measures that have been imposed over the last two years are only the latest, and harshest, in a series going back 40 years and resulting in unemployment which has risen higher and lasted longer with every recession (see page 2). They have also robbed us of much that was regarded as an essential part of the welfare state in the 1960s (student grants, school milk, a large number of hospital beds, etc). The relentless pressure to drive down benefits spending, particularly by taking people off incapacity benefit and Disability Living Allowance and cutting housing benefit, is already well underway (see page 2).

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The austerity drive has created more interest in the TUC and party conference season than we’ve seen for a long time, as the media have looked at how the TUC and Labour Party will respond to the discontent growing among workers, and at the Lib-Dems to see how the coalition is holding up – which it is at present. Will there be another ‘winter of discontent’ like the widespread strikes in the public sector and beyond in 1978-79? Will there be big confrontations between government and unions as under Thatcher? The TUC have certainly made some militant sounding noises: Brendan Barber condemned cuts in services and jobs which “increase inequality…. make Britain a darker, brutish, more frightening place”; Dave Prentis of Unison said “when the call was there” they would “co-ordinate industrial action”. All this sound and fury actually comes down to … a demonstration outside Westminster on the eve of the spending review and a demonstration in March. What of Bob Crow, famous for being a militant firebrand? When he wants to go beyond his TUC colleagues in calling for alliances with communities, he is calling for direct action – what the Guardian (14/9/10) accurately described as “Fathers4Justice-style publicity stunts over a general strike”.

In fact the TUC, like the Labour Party under the leadership of ‘Red Ed’ Miliband (see page 3), wants the deficit reduced over a longer period and resulting in unemployment which has risen higher and lasted longer with every recession (see page 2). They have also robbed us of much that was regarded as an essential part of the welfare state in the 1960s (student grants, school milk, a large number of hospital beds, etc). The relentless pressure to drive down benefits spending, particularly by taking people off incapacity benefit and Disability Living Allowance and cutting housing benefit, is already well underway (see page 2). They have also robbed us of much that was regarded as an essential part of the welfare state in the 1960s (student grants, school milk, a large number of hospital beds, etc).

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Persistent unemployment shows the deepening of the crisis

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx describes the result of economic crises: “an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity - the epidemic of over-production”. Why is overproduction an “absurdity”? Because it is not overproduction in terms of actual human need but in terms of the market requirements of capitalist accumulation; real human beings may starve to death but where there is no profit, capitalism will not produce food.

Another commodity that suffers from this absurdity is that of human labour power. This is expressed in the phenomenon of unemployment. While begging and vagrancy existed under previous modes of production (usually as a result of physical incapacity, war or famine), unemployment is a consciously capitalist phenomenon. Unemployment follows the capitalist accumulation and plays an essential role in that process.

Capitalism needs unemployment to function. The law of accumulation is to capital accumulation, enabling the system to indirectly force the working class to accept the working conditions they are subjected to. The system of the law of the price of labour helps keep the price of labour down and helps the capitalist in the drive for profits. In the classical periods of depression during the nineteenth century the oversupply became particularly acute, forcing labour costs down rapidly and putting pressure on those still employed to increase productivity for fear of losing their jobs. In the nineteenth century, periods of boom, surplus labour allowed expanding capitalism to take on workers quickly without paying them from other parts of the economy or causing wages to rise to the point where they threatened the accumulation cycle. (See Capital, Vol 1, Ch 25) put “the industrial reserve army, during the periods of stagnation and average prosperity, weighs down the active labour force, during periods of over-production and paroxysm, it holds its pretensions in check. Relative surplus population is therefore the pivot upon which the law of demand and supply of labour works. It confines the field of action of this law within the limits absolutely convenient to the activity of exploitation and to the domination of capital.”

For all the fine speeches of the capitalist class – in the US the state still has a legal requirement to ensure “full employment” – in the UK faces the longest, deepest sustained period of unemployment. The greatest fear of the ruling class is that such reactions will take place with those who are still in work. The greatest fear of the ruling class is that such reactions will take place with those who are still in work.

Although unemployment has not tended to fall with the fluctuations of the economy during the last twenty years there has been a rise in levels of employment. This can be accounted for by growing female participation in the labour market, especially younger mothers who work part-time and for generally lower wages. It is also important to remember the growing pressure on students and the retired to take up part-time work to support themselves. The number of part-time workers has grown from around 1.5 million in 1980 to nearly 8 million in 2010. A significant proportion of these part-time workers are involuntary part-timers – those who are forced to work part-time because they cannot get full-time work. Although the numbers of involuntary part-timers fluctuate, the lowest figure achieved since 2000 was still nearly 600,000. It now stands at over a million. Similarly, although the number of involuntary part-time workers also went down over the same period, it remained at roughly 400,000 at its lowest point.

Unemployment and crisis

Looking at the above figures it is clear that behind them the level of unemployment and underemployment in the economy is a growing problem for capitalism. The fact that real unemployment has persisted at a high level for decades shows that for capitalism the unemployment is not a problem. This is clear why their numbers are highest in those areas where employment chances are the most limited, namely those areas that have been most scarred by the collapse of traditional industries.

In the UK, for example, in 1984 the ILO measure of unemployment and the claimant count were both roughly the same. By 2010 approximately a million people who are unemployed by the ILO measure were not in receipt of any unemployment benefits.

The ILO figure alone, however, does not paint the full picture of unemployment. It largely excludes the 2.7 million who receive sickness and disability benefits. The hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie is that they claim to be extremely shrewdly managing as many unemployed people as it could onto sickness benefits in the 80s and 90s, it is now deliberately separating these cuts as they will only affect those who are still in work. The government understands this and wants to have the right type of ‘universal benefits’ ready for those thrown onto the scrapheap of unemployment.

We can see that the most important target of the government cuts is the massive cost of the benefit system, in particular: the growing inability of capital to successfully extract surplus value; the growing inability of capital to successfully extract surplus value; the growing inability of capital to successfully extract surplus value; the growing inability of capital to successfully extract surplus value.

Labour’s Chancellor Alistair Darling has said that Labour would have made such drastic cuts. He’s a liar! Labour had already promised across-the-board cuts of 20%. In addition some 70% of the fiscal consolidation measures contained in Osborne’s budget had already been identified by Labour and were in train when the election came to power. Across the whole political spectrum of the bourgeoisie there was no secret about the need to make such drastic cuts. And it was always Labour’s intention to introduce such a programme of cuts.

Unemployment and the welfare state

Sixty years of capitalist accumulation, in which the ruling class has declined the existing welfare system, has meant that the British welfare state is no longer fit for purpose. The British welfare state is now launching a vicious attack on this benefit stream. The government’s aim to provide a space for the fraternal, constructive discussion is already underway in various parts of the world and posts reflecting different political views. We see our forum as a complementary to others that we already participate on individual articles. The idea is to make the discussions easier to follow and more focused. We invite people from different parts of the world and perspectives to participate on our forum, to add to the debate and to contribute to the development of a socialist Alternative to capitalism.

The ICC website has recently opened up a discussion forum, replacing the system of comments on individual articles. The idea is to make the discussions easier to follow and more focused. We invite people from different parts of the world and perspectives to participate on our forum, to add to the debate and to contribute to the development of a socialist Alternative to capitalism.
Red Ed’ – a good choice for the bourgeoisie

In this year’s general election all the major parties agreed that the extent of the deficit meant cuts in expenditure would be at the top of the incoming government’s agenda. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have been able to work together because they share this priority; and Ed Miliband, even in opposition where ‘radical’ poses are easy, admits that cuts are inescapable.

While some areas have supposedly been marked as off limits or ‘ring-fenced’, in reality nothing is sacred. The conventional view of the Tories is of a party of uncompromising militarists, but the ongo- ing debate about the extent and nature of defence cuts shows that no area will be spared.

The idea of Tory defence cuts should not be a surprise. Look at the early 1990s. After the end of the Cold War and with the break up of the imperial- istic bloc there were widespread cuts in defence spending and reductions in the numbers of the armed forces. The total strength of NATO armed forces went from 5.4 million in 1955 to just over 4 million in 1995. In the UK, under Conservative governments, the proportion of GDP expenditure on defence went from 5.2% in 1985 to 3.1% in 1995. There was talk of a ‘peace dividend’, but the cuts were real.

Liam Fox’s letter leaked to the Telegraph showed that the Defence Secretary doesn’t have the same view as Cameron and Osborne. In the summer he said that “We face some difficult, delicate and po- litically charged decisions” and that “We must act carefully”. But in his speech at the Tory conference he said that he was “warming of the ‘grave political consequences’ of ‘such draconian cuts’.”

For the British imperialists “will be unable to undertake all the standing commitments” it is involved with today. For example: Britain “could not carry out the Sierra Leone operation again”; the Navy would have to withdraw from one of its “standing communities” – the Gulf, Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. That is, the capacity to undertake the operation “to deploy military forces rapidly into high-threat areas”; there would be “some reduction in our ability to deal with developing- dealing with strikes, terrorist attacks and fuel shortages.

One commentator, referring to the possibilities of repeating the Sierra Leone operation, wrote “If the Government sticks to its plan of slashing the defence budget in the next few weeks then it might only be able to defend ourselves against the Icelandic fishing fleet, let alone drug-crazed groups of Afghan militiamen” (Daily Telegraph 1/10/10). This is a polemical point made for effect, but it is part of a real debate.

How close is Britain to America? The divisions within the British government stem from a longstanding difference in the ruling class on the nature of Britain’s relationship with US imperialism.

When Fox went to the US in September he told debate that “We have to face up to the fact that Brit- ain would only be able to provide the manpower for medium-scale conflicts or for support in large-scale conflicts which we can only do in an alliance” (Telegraph 24/9/10). In practice this meant that “the military could only deploy 6,000 troops to any one operation,” although that “is very big risk.”

Against this the main faction of the British bour- geoisie is more concerned to emphasise an inde- pendent orientation for British imperialism. The proposed defence cuts come partly from econom- ic necessity and partly from an acknowledgment of reality. The basic question is asked: “what has Britain gained by allying itself with the US in the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan? In Iraq, for example, Britain has met with no successes. In a forthcoming documentary Colonel Peter MacArthur, the British army’s second in command in Iraq, says “I don’t know that you could see the British withdrawal from Basra in 2007 in any light other than a defeat.”

Unsurprisingly, current estimates will only be able to provide the manpower forces in Iraq says “it was a huge mistake to pull out of Basra and to leave the people of Basra to be subjected to the Iranian surrogates who brutal- ized them, intimidated them, terrorized them.”

Whether seen as a defeat or a mistake the Brit- ish bourgeoisie is still capable of learning from experience.

This year we saw another British retreat, this time in Afghanistan. After four years in the San- gal region of Afghanistan British troops have been withdrawn and redeployed to an easier area, in central Helmand. Their role has been taken over by US forces. Again, according to those who advocate an orientation more independent of the US, withdrawal from Afghanistan can’t come too soon.

An article in the Spectator (2/10/10) summarises the differences “should Britain exercise an exper- tise in the areas it feels it needs; it should not depend on the professional army designed for home defence and limited expeditions?” Part of the ruling class view is that “the British military should build more ships which can defend trade routes, target seaborne crime and aid humanitarian operations” and understand that “the Royal Navy’s focus on long-term, po- litical and post-conflict resolution”. Of course there is more to British imperialism’s military strategy than protecting trade routes; the future of the cuts as not just down to the state of the British economy.

Leaks on defence cuts reveal divisions on imperialist strategy

All over the world, same crisis, same struggle

There is no doubt that workers all over the world face the same capitalist exploitation, the same capitalist crisis, austerity everywhere, and have the same need to struggle against it. Large scale strikes have largely not developed in Britain, workers are discontented but often do not see how they can mobilise in the way that workers in other countries do.

In many respects the struggle in Britain has been the same. The government have tried to give the same lessons as those elsewhere in the world – when unions are in charge of the struggle workers are separate, as with the BA cabin crew and BAA workers, whatever fine speeches are made about “co-ordinated industrial action”, but when workers go into struggle on their own they find ways of showing solidarity as with the Heathrow baggage handlers strike in support of Gate Gourmet workers 5 years ago.

We see the same effort to understand and re- spond to the situation on discussion forums and union meetings. The struggle against the cuts is not just a battle with the government, it is part of a struggle against capitalism, it must be fought only in order to keep the workers under control on behalf of capital” (http://en.internationalism.org/2010/05/tekel-what-are-the-unions). The struggle against cuts is not just an attempt to make the necessary attacks, even if there is dis- pute about where ‘radical’ poses are easy, admits that cuts are inescapable.

Continued from page 1

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Imperialism hooked on drugs

R
cent newspaper articles, Simon Jenkins notes, for example, have expressed some hand-wringing within the bourgeoisie recently over the question of "the war on drugs". Whether to legalise this or that drug, whether to de-

criminalise and so on. It's all hot air. Drugs and the drug trade are not article and a key feature of capitalism and, further, integral aspects of militarism, imperial-

ism and capitalist decomposition. Jenkins points to the 28,000 people in Mexico killed in the last four years as a direct result of the drugs trade. He also gives an estimate of half-a-million people di-

rectly employed in the Mexican drugs trade - other estimates go as high as one million. In Mexico the drug trade industry is one of the few expanding businesses in an increasingly poverty-stricken country and President Felipe Calderon, who has admitted defeat in his four year "war on drugs". Drugs war 'expert' Edgaro Budascagin in The Guardian 13.9.10, has called the proliferation of the drugs cartels in Mexico a "narcos-insurrection" and US Secret-

ary of State Hillary Clinton, earlier this month, warned that the poppy growers in Afghanistan were a failed state, with all the military implications that this has for this weaker neighbourhood of US imperial- 

ism, the "war on drugs" is just as fraudulent as the war on terrorism. In the context of imperial wars of Britain against China, and Chinese suicide vie with each other in offer-

ing much needed liquidity. But even this is not the strongest, major powers whose militaries and secret services are deeply involved in the illegal drugs industry. Drugs, legal or illegal, are not a Latin American problem but a facet of imperialism world wide.

Just one example: on the Canadian border, de-

spite various crackdowns, the business of "drugs for money" has been active if not as dramatic as the southern US border region. Canadian police estimate one hundred thousand British Columbians are engaged in the marijuana business alone. There's a veritable United Nations of organised criminal gangs of tens of thousands in the drug trade - from abusing of the arms-running from Cana-

da into the United States with home grown outlets to motorcycle gangs involved. Simon Jenkins above argues that there should be a relative weight be-

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to, Antonio Maria Costa with justifiable anger: Canadian police estimate one hundred thousand British Columbians are engaged in the marijuana business alone. There's a veritable United Nations of organised criminal gangs of tens of thousands in the drug trade - from abusing of the arms-running from Canada to the United States with home grown outlets to motorcycle gangs involved. Simon Jenkins above argues that there should be a relative weight between "hard" and "soft" drugs with an element of decriminalisation involved. But he himself, though he can only see a way out within capitalism, is correct in the use of the word "drugs" and he quotes the words of the UN's prohibitionist drugs cartels money helped to stave off the collapse of the world's economic system in 2008-9 by provid-

ing much needed liquidity. But even this is not the major indication of the scale of the drugs industry and its relationship to the irrationality and decom-

position of capitalist society.

Drugs and imperialism in Afghanistan

For some years now, the poppy, as a symbol of the class war waged by war, has had an addi-

tional detail. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime has detailed Afghan poppy cultivation as increasing from 25,000 hectares in 2000 to 84,000 hectares in 2004 - 92 years ago to just over 92% today. It also estimated the number of Afghans involved in the whole pro-
duction and distribution process as between 1.7 to 2.3 million. Over the same period the farm-gate price of dry opium at harvest time has fallen by 69%. The British military occupation of Helmand province has overflowed the largest expansion of the cultivation of poppy production now extending to all of Helmand province. Afghanistan, is a key feature of capitalism and, further, integral aspects of militarism, the "war on drugs" is just as fraudulent as the war on terrorism. In both cases capitalism is driven to use violence to help it to support itself. It has an inexhaustible appetite for human-

ity. In 2007, the UN estimated there were around one million opium addicts in Afghanistan, 600,000 under 15 and a growing number of women (41,000, 17-59). A cheap heroin from Afghanistan is having a devastating effect on Iran, India, the US, Canada and China, where it's causing a public health crisis.

Afghanistan is not the only country to be invaded by illegal drugs but by the fact, particularly in this period when capitalism is rotting on its feet, that these relatively weaker states can only be organi-

ised to resist aggression by military force is just one of the ironies of Afghanistan that the west is paying the price for.

The big change here is the export of heroin rather than opium that has worked its way through the whole of Asia and Australia. Britain's ex-ambassador to Uzbekistan, where the CIA flew drugs into the arms of Madame Joy. From one side of the world to the other, from the poorest to the rela-
tively better off, cheap Afghan heroin is wreaking havoc.

A week or two ago newspapers (also BBC, 12th September) were reporting a whistleblower talking about "large quantities" of opium being exported from Afghanistan on US, Canadian and British military aircraft. This is quite possible and doesn't have to be a deliberate policy of the military, but it is a direct consequence of imperialism. When opium production in Afghanistan began to take off in the early 1990s, ravelling Colombia and Burma in the heroin trade, the CIA funded and supported the Afghan drugs lord, Ahmed Shah Massoud. MI6 also armed and funded him and British intel-

ligence taught his immediate entourage English while the Russian KGb was involved with him as was French intelligence. Since the west's direct intervention in Afghanistan from late 2001, Afghan poppy production has increased 33-fold. According to Britain's ex-ambassador to Kabul, Craig Murray in a 2007 piece in the Daily Mail, western intelligence agencies helped Af-

ghanistan go from simple poppy farming to indus-

trial-scale conversion into heroin with, needless to say, the direct implication of the Afghan state. The big change here is the export of heroin rather than opium and this needs large factories, volumes of chemicals imported, labour and a lot of transport to ship the refined product out (it's one of the many ironies of Afghanistan that the west is paying the Taliban to at least partly watch over the transpor-
tation of refined heroin). Before 1979, very little heroin as opium came from Afghanistan although the CIA in its anti-Russian campaign tracked arms to Karachi one way from whence they returned laden with heroin (The Road to 9/11, UCP, 2007).

The role of imperialism's secret services in the drug business has been detailed since World War II. The CIA and the Corcoran mafia's involvement in the cocaine trade in the late 40s – the famous "French Connection"; Burma, Laos and Thailand in the Golden Triangle where the CIA flew drugs into Vietnam, all over south-east Asia, Panama in the 70s and US involvement with drugs through their puppet Noriega; Vietnam, where the CIA's "Air America" flew drugs between Laos and Hong Kong; the cocaine trade in Haiti in the 80s; the Iran-Contra "guns in, drugs out" policy of the CIA and, more recently, the CIA's rendition "torture taxi" be-

International Review 142

Capitalism has reached a dead-end: neither austerity packages nor recovery plans can change anything

"The austerity packages which a large number of governments are implementing are simply a band-

aid to the all in depression and will enourage a pro-
duction of deflation, some sights of which are already appearing."

What are the workers' councils? (ii)

The revolution of 1917 (July to Oct); the renewal of the workers' councils and the seizure of power

"In this series... we want to answer the question by analysing the historical experience of the pro-

eretariat.

The decadence of capitalism (vii)

Rosa Luxembourg and the limits to capitalist expansion

"Consciously or unconsciously [Luxemburg's crit-

ic] supposed the fact that on this issue Capital is an incomplete fragment which stops short at the point where this problem should be opened up."

The Communist Left in Russia

The Manifesto of the Workers' Group of the Russian Communist Party

"This group formed part of what is called the Communist Left... The represented a proletarian re-

sponse tin the form of left currents, like those that had existed previously faced with the de-

velopment of opportunism in the "Left International""

History of the workers' movement

The left wing of the Communist Party of Turkey

"The importance of the Turkish Left's experience lies not in its theoretical heritage but in the fact that the struggle between nationalism and com-

munism in the East was played out in Turkey on the bitter end, not in debate but on the ground, in the class struggles."

1. John Rosa, El Movimiento - Douan and Revolution in Mexico City.
2. Steve Coll, Ghost Bure.
“More than any other class in history, the proletariat was and is, in the words of Karl Marx, a class of workers, in devoted militants, relentless fighters, martyrs, thinkers and men of action. This is due to the fact, that, in the language of the First International, theworker only fought against the reactionary classes in order to put in place their own system of domination, to imagine a world for the working classes, a privile- ced class, the proletariat has no privileges to win” (“The Three L’s: Lenin, Luxemburg, Liebknecht: Three L’s, in Lenin, Karl (ed. by V. I. Lenin), The State and Revolution (Moscow, 1946).” The workers’ move- ment has so many exemplary militants that it is impossible to pay homage to all of them. Some of them, however, have a particular way the passion for revolution, and here we want to salute the memory of three of them who went through the difficult tests of the period of counter-revolution of the 1920s and 1930s, then of the Second World War. We are referring to Leon Trotsky, Pannekoek, and Appel.

Leon Trotsky

At the beginning of the Second World War, Trotsky, after a life of ardor dedication to the cause of the working class, was killed by a pick- ax wound in the front line in the snow in the Ural mountains and exiled, he never stopped working for the perspective of revolution. As a very young propagandist for the social democratic paper Nieuw Tijd, he was a crucial negotiator of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Ger- many. As an unrivalled road map for the October revolution, and in the formation of the Red Army, which was revolutionary Russia’s natural rampart against the attacks of the counter-revolu- tionary White armies and of the Allied forces who worked together to crush the communist regime.

Trotsky played the particularly thankless role of negotiator of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Ger- many, an agreement which the Bolsheviks signed in order to be able to concentrate on the question of the counter-revolution, Stalin had first eliminated numerous revolutionaries by sending them into the camps. They included many old Bolsheviks and revolutionary socialist intellectuals, those who had played a key role in the October revolution. But this was not enough. The most dangerous of the Bolsheviks, even though now in exile, was still Trotsky. He was the only one of Lenin’s direct collaborators, his son Leon Sedov in Paris in 1938. Now it was Trotsky himself who had to be eliminated. And there was no easier solution even to a Preventor than the killing of the other Bolsheviks and members of the Russian communist left.

Pannekoek

On 28 April 1960 Anton Pannekoek died after eleven years of combat against the German occupation. At the beginning of the 20th century he had made his presence felt in the workers’ movement during the struggle against the revisionist current, both within the Dutch movement as represented by Troeltsch. Along with Görlitz, he denounced all those who, in the liberal factions of the bourgeoisie in parliament: “a necessary conciliation, nor an approach to the bourgeois parties, nor the abandonment of our demands are the means to ob- tain a solution.” 2 “We can only do this by strong- ening our organisations, in number and in class understanding and consciousness, so that they do not allow the bourgeoisie as aggressive and terror- izing and terrifying forces” (Pannekoek and Görlitz, “Marxism and Revisionism”, Nieuw Tijd, 1909).

When he moved to Germany at the beginning of the Russian Revolution it was a fundamental reference for understanding the whole importance of this histori- cal event. And Trotsky’s literary heritage, whether on the political, historical, cultural or theoretical level, is immense, a testament to Marx’s motto that “Nothing human is alien to me.”

Trotsky’s theory of the “permanent revolution”, despite the errors of analysis which went with it (such as the idea that the proletariat had to carry out the bourgeois revolution in countries where the bourgeoisie was too weak to vanquish feudalism), was still one of the sources of Stalin’s hatred for him. This was because the theory contained the fundamental idea that the revolutions of the 20th century could not stop at bourgeois and na- tional tasks and was thus contrary to the theory of ‘socialism in one country’ and of ‘revolution by stages’ which was the basis of Stalinism in the 1920s and 30s.

In his later years, Trotsky, who used to say that “reality will not forgive a single theoretical error” once more put himself at the head of the policy of entryism towards the social democratic parties, the United Front, the “working class” national- ity in the USO, and later the KAPD as well. In his view, the communist left rightly criticised in the 1930s. But he never joined the bourgeois camp, which the Trotskyist party did after the war. In particular, on the question of imperialist war, he still defended the traditional position of the revolutionary move- ment: “the Russian proletariat has no privileges to win” (“The Three L’s: Lenin, Luxemburg, Liebknecht: Three L’s, in Lenin, Karl (ed. by V. I. Lenin), The State and Revolution (Moscow, 1946).” The workers’ move- ment has so many exemplary militants that it is impossible to pay homage to all of them. Some of them, however, have a particular way the passion for revolution, and here we want to salute the memory of three of them who went through the difficult tests of the period of counter-revolution of the 1920s and 1930s, then of the Second World War. We are referring to Leon Trotsky, Pannekoek, and Appel.

Pannekoek – The Permanent Revolution

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Permanent Revolution movement, which was the basis of Stalinism in the 1920s and 30s. This led him at the end of 1917 to side with Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Lenin and Trotsky: “We will extend to the whole of Russia. A new period to its programme. This document summarised the most important positions of the new period. Trotsky was also at Lenin’s side in the work of founding the CPSU, and though he had been forced into exile in the 1920s and 30s, he remained faithful to marxism, to the working class.

Pannekoek – A Political Orientation

On 4 May 1985, the last great figure of the Com- munist International, Jan Appel, died at the age of 95. This was one of those who never betrayed the proletar- ian revolutionary vanguard, the most important representa- tion of the Second World War. We are referring to Leon Trotsky, Pannekoek, and Appel.

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Today there are still fears about debating and working together. To go beyond these difficulties, you need a spirit of internationalism: the debates that are going on in the same camp, the camp of the proletariat and the revolution, despite our disagreements. But that is not enough. We also have to make a conscious effort, and that involves being prepared to reconcile anarchism and Marxism, because it is in this sense of open criticism that what's more, the internationalist anarchists are debating together as revolutionaries. To go beyond these difficulties, we share key revolutionary positions: the working class or on other revolutionary groups. We fully recognize that, from its birth, anarchism has had a profound feeling of revolt against capitalist exploitation and barbarity but that it also inherited the vision of the “artisans, shopkeepers and small peasants” who played a key role in this birth. This does not mean that today all the anarchist groups are “petty bourgeois”. It is obvious that theCNT, the KRA and the CNT-AIT are not part of this petty bourgeoisie. We are repeating ourselves, but the political past, a profound tradition in the Italian workers’ movement. We merely show the world what it is really like. For the ICC, is the relationship between revolutionaries and anarchists one of teacher to pupil? The ICC does not address these criticisms to the petty bourgeois revolutionaries. Instead, we engage in debates, even if we are debating with those who organise for having a “professorial” tone. Here, the point of debate of certain parties and groups. How do we address these criticisms? Does the communist left have a monopoly on internationalism, or can we represent a model for it to follow? Do we think that an enlightened minority has to inject the truth or a clear understanding? Or, as a more concrete example, do we assert that the ICC is some kind of tutor for the CNT-AIT? In fact, such a notion would be in total contradiction with the approach of the communist left: on a deeper level, it poses the question of the link between revolutionary communists and our class....

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Contact the ICC

Debate is vital to the revolutionary movement. One of the most important elements of our activity, defined in our Basic Positions, is the “Political and theoretical clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and its immediate conditions”. This, we are convinced, is only possible through the confrontation and discussion of differing views and positions within the revolutionary camp.

For this reason, we urge our readers to write to us with their comments, opinions and disagreements on the positions and analyses that we defend in our written press, including our web site. We will do our best to reply to all serious correspondence as quickly as possible, although given our limited resources we may not always be able to do so immediately. Should the subject matter be of general interest, then we may publish both correspondence and our reply in our press.

While debate amongst revolutionaries is vital, it is equally necessary not to fall into the trap of thinking that our activity is something anodyne and acceptable to the bourgeois dictatorship disguised under the trappings of the democratic state. We will not under any circumstances publish our correspondents’ real names, nor their home or e-mail addresses.

Write to the following addresses without mentioning the name:

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COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALIST POB 25, NIT, Faridabad, 121001 Haryana, INDIA.
INTERNACIONALISMO Due to the political situation in Venezuela, we ask that all correspondence be sent to Accion Proletaria in Spain.
INTERNATIONALISM 320 7th Avenue #211, Brooklyn, NY 11215, USA.
INTERNATIONALISM DP 94, 2600 Berchem, BELGIUM (new address)
INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTION Box 21 106, 100 31 Stockholm, SWEDEN.
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WORLD REVOLUTION BM Box 869, London WC1N 3XX, GREAT BRITAIN

Write by e-mail to the following addresses:

From Great Britain use uk@internationalism.org
From India use india@internationalism.org
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(Addresses for other countries will appear in the near future.)

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Weltrevolution
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Internationalism DP 94, 2600 Berchem, Belgium (new address).
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World Revolution BM Box 869, London WC1N 3XX, Great Britain.

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From Great Britain use uk@internationalism.org
From India use india@internationalism.org
From USA use usa@internationalism.org
From the rest of the world use international@internationalism.org

(Addresses for other countries will appear in the near future.)
The dug-up footpath imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between the two social systems. It has twice plunged humanity into a deep depression. The October revolution of 1917 put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolution has proved the decadence of capitalism and the creation of a communist society. The three Internationals (the Communist League of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the Socialist International of Marx and Engels (1864-72), the International Working Men’s Association, 1868-72, the Social Democratic Federation, 1889-1913, the Communist International, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from 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 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 International Working Men’s Association, 1868-72, the Social Democratic Federation, 1889-1913, 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.