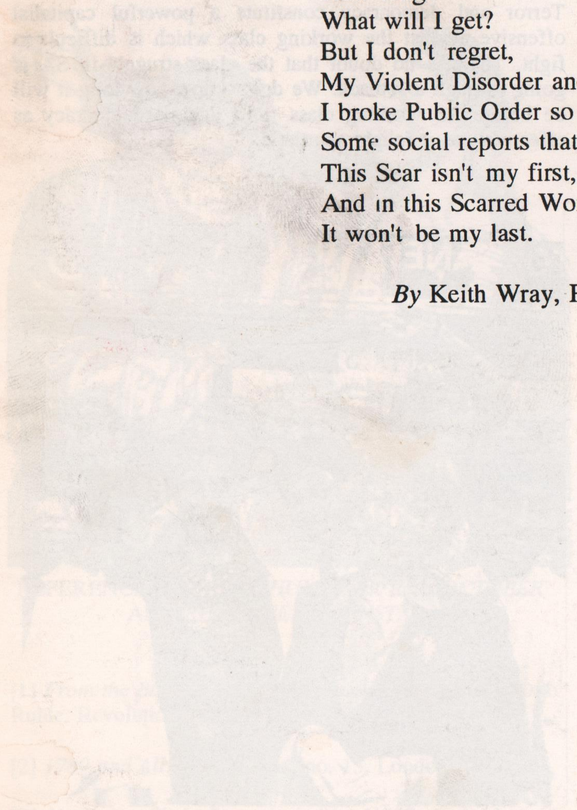
SCARRED WORLD

"For these deeds" he said,
"You must pay",
My sentence four weeks away,
How much?
How long?
What will I get?
But I don't regret,
My Violent Disorder and Affray,
I broke Public Order so they say,
Some social reports that look in my past,
This Scar isn't my first,
And in this Scarred World,
It won't be my last.

By Keith Wray, Poll Tax Prisoner.



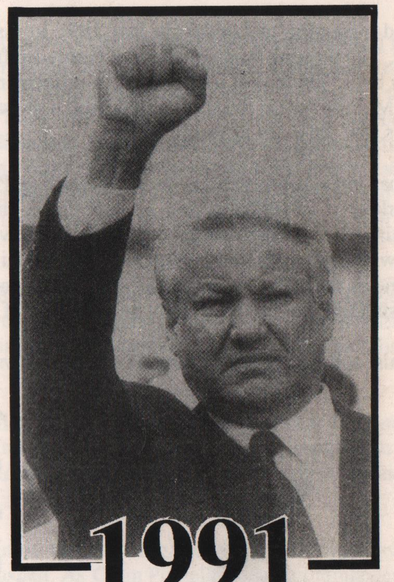
£1.50/$3

Wildcat

★★★

No. 15 Autumn 1991

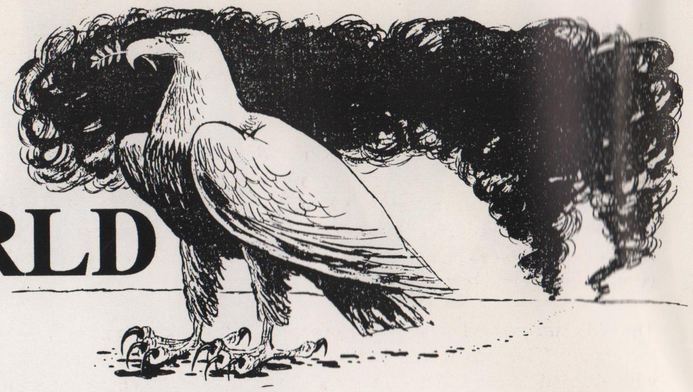
1921



1991

Counter-Revolution in Russia

DISOBEY THE NEW WORLD ORDER



We organized a meeting in London in July 1991 to discuss the consequences of the Gulf War, Imperialism and the New World Order. The meeting was attended by comrades from *Wildcat* Germany, as well as *Radical Chains* from Britain, and various other bods. There was a high level of agreement as to the basic method of analysis. The participants have rejected the classical Marxist "crisis theory" and adopted a more "autonomist" position. We can hardly do justice to either approach in a few lines, but we'll try anyway.

The traditional view takes various forms, including Paul Mattick's "the falling rate of profit explains everything", the saturated markets of Luxemburg, and Lenin's theory that imperialism would inevitably lead to world war and generalised permanent ruin. All these theories have in common the view that the internal workings of capital lead to periodic catastrophic breakdowns which are essentially independent of anything the working class does. The working class, then, remains passive until such time as the crisis, in the form of recession and/or war, comes along and gives it a good kick in the arse, spurring it into understanding the fundamentally nasty nature of capitalism and thus the need to struggle for communism.

The autonomist approach can be summed up as follows :

- The working class has power to influence the direction and slow down the progress of capitalism.
- Almost everything capitalism does can be explained as a reaction to the class struggle.
- The class struggle is everywhere. It takes multiple forms, most of them disguised as something else.
- The capitalist system is not an objective fact, governed by iron laws. It is a relationship of power between classes.
- The economic crisis is initially caused by working class struggle, but is also used by the bourgeoisie as a weapon against that struggle.

The difference between the two approaches can be clearly seen in wartime. Crisis theory tends to see war as just an inevitable symptom of capitalist competition and economic collapse. The experience of two major wars in the Gulf, though, has taught us how important war is as a means of crushing the class struggle. War is **not** a symptom of capitalist collapse - quite the contrary. With the anarchists we say "war is the health of the state!".

The most accessible journal in the autonomist tradition to English speakers is *Midnight Notes* (available from Box 204, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, USA). Various articles from this journal were distributed before the conference. Valuable though these extracts were, the participants at the conference rejected *Midnight Notes's* support for everything that moves, including national liberation struggles which have always **undermined** the class struggle. *Midnight Notes's* optimistic assessment of the state of working class autonomy in America today led one comrade to remark "What have they been smoking, and where can I get some?".

Radical Chains found this too cynical, arguing that the USA has not yet tested whether it has really overcome the post-Vietnam

syndrome. Our German namesake argued against the idea of "ultra-imperialism", the view that capitalism is united on a world scale. There were numerous other disagreements at the meeting, the minutes of which will be available shortly. In this article, we reiterate **our** view of the current balance of class forces. First, a brief summary of the last 25 years of world history.

May 1968 in France, when 10 million workers paralysed the country in a mass strike outside union control, and politicized students rioted in Paris for a program of immediate social revolution, demonstrated that revolution is possible in an advanced industrial democracy. It was the tip of an iceberg. Mass strikes shook the world through the late 60's and early 70's, and a revolutionary movement emerged, opposing capitalism east and west and affirming pleasure, the refusal of work, the rejection of authority, and the overthrow of this society and its replacement with one based on cooperation in place of competition. The old mole was digging new ground.

The Vietnam war led to mutinies, desertion and the killing of officers. Soldiers held three-day dope parties rather than fight the enemy. This was recognised by the North Vietnamese negotiators who said that their men would not fight Americans who avoided combat. This defeat had devastating effects on America's self-image, to the benefit of the working class. That self-image has only just been restored.

No ruling class gives up voluntarily. In Chile, Italy and elsewhere, capitalists experimented with repression and restructuring of industry. The price of oil was raised to generate inflation, undermining wages. In America, Christianity crawled back into the light of day. The drug war attacked the counter-culture and justified the militarization of the police. Grenada was invaded to restore US national morale, then Panama, then the Gulf. There were numerous working class reactions - France '79, Poland '81, Britain '84 - but the proletariat had no political direction. Isolated defensive struggles were inadequate against an aggressive, conscious, political assault by the world ruling class, increasingly united under US leadership. The USA has forestalled the emergence of a rival imperialist power for the immediate future, though in the long run it will come into conflict with the Fourth Reich, or European Community. In the meantime, numerous small wars will continue to proliferate against the working class.

Communists greatly underestimated the depth of defeat. Many comrades didn't believe the Gulf war would happen. Our view that it would be another Vietnam was completely wrong. Events overtook us. The propaganda of the "No War But The Class War" group in London was too concerned with opposing both sides, instead of pointing out that the two capitalist sides were in fact united against our side.

Thanks to our international contacts, we were able to produce a leaflet after the war explaining how it was ended by mass desertion on the Iraqi side, and how Saddam Hussein, the West and the Kurdish nationalists cooperated to prevent the uprising turning into a proletarian revolution. The leaflet, included in this issue, has been distributed in Britain, Germany, the USA and elsewhere.

The war in the Gulf demonstrated the success of the counter-revolution against the gains of the working class movement of the sixties and early seventies. The US working class has been smashed. As Colin Powell, the US commander, announced on 28 February, the post-Vietnam syndrome has been cured. Now the US feels able to intervene militarily anywhere in the world to attack the class struggle. America is finding a role as the world's policeman. The workplace struggle in the US has virtually disappeared, crushed by unemployment and atomization. Real wages are now lower than they were in 1959. Struggles in the community around housing, prison, police harassment and so on, are being successfully held back by racism and diverted by separatism.

Yugoslavia: Birth of a Nation

Western Europe is a hot spot compared to America, but for the most part, the working class here is also going through a massive defeat. Nonetheless, the ruling class is having to pay a price for restructuring. In France and Britain for example, we have seen the reemergence of a minority of the working class with no social-democratic links to the state, whose struggles take the form of direct

confrontations with it. This minority is learning how to organise riots with growing confidence. The legitimacy of the state is increasingly in question. Western societies rely on a huge bluff. State power is not based on force alone. The drain in public confidence in the police is an expression of this bluff gradually falling apart. But the economic crisis has proved to be a very effective way of sabotaging workplace struggles.

Eastern Europe contained greater potential for class conflict, but considering the scale of the counter-revolution, the working class is simply failing to defend itself. Nevertheless, Romania showed the international ruling class the danger of working class revolution has not been permanently overcome. The events of December 1989 started as a workers' uprising in Timisoara, and had spread halfway across the country, to Sibiu to be precise, before the army were able to take control of it. This was a major failure in the programme of privatising Eastern Europe.

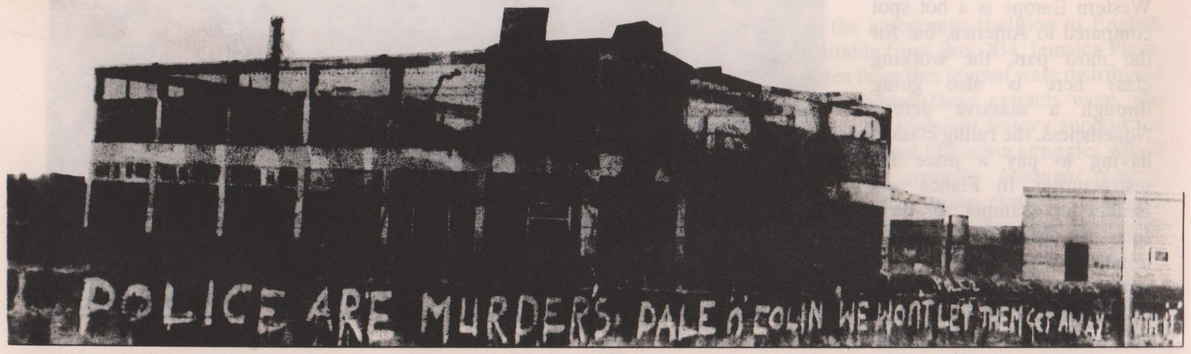
This is why capitalism has started a civil war in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia has a long tradition of **international** class struggle, across its various internal boundaries. Nationalism has been deliberately stirred up by Yugoslavian and German politicians to crush the class struggle. Dividing the working class by racism and nationalism has proved the most effective way of avoiding a united international working class being created by capital's homogenisation. When different groups of workers are constantly engaged in killing each other, they are obviously unable to unite as a class to fight the attacks of capital. The conflict is continuing to spread, threatening to involve other European countries. In 1914, we were urged to defend Serbia against German imperialism. Today, its the other way round. The bourgeoisie is turning Yugoslavia into another Lebanon. This will be a massive blow to the class struggle in Eastern and Western Europe. (A detailed history of class struggle in Yugoslavia can be found in the pamphlet *Yugoslavery*, available from BM Blob, London WC1N 3XX).

We do not know the precise mechanics of the Yeltsin coup in Russia, though it seems certain that the "hardliners" were set up by the KGB -just like Saddam Hussein was set up to invade Kuwait.

The involvement of ordinary people in Yeltsin's manoeuvres around August 19 is symptomatic of the success of the counter-revolution. They were used as extras in a theatrical set-piece battle whose outcome was never in doubt. The crane which tore down Dzerzhinsky's statue was provided by Moscow city council. As we have maintained since the beginning of perestroika, the popular upheavals in Eastern Europe have been largely directed by the state. More detailed analyses of the counter-revolution in Eastern Europe can be found in *Wildcats* 12 and 14. Now Yeltsin and his followers can disguise the jackboot of perestroika with the figleaf of a popular revolution, denouncing strikers as Communists as they introduce privatisation, mass unemployment, wage cuts, price rises, and national and ethnic conflicts across the whole of what was the Soviet Union. This doesn't mean that they want to break up the Soviet Union economically - its far too integrated for that and Russia and the Ukraine, through their control of heavy industry and food supplies, have the power to dominate the other Republics. With its monopoly of nuclear weapons Russia can also dominate them militarily if need be. As with the EC the rulers want the best of both worlds; a strongly integrated economic bloc in which the working class is nationally divided. It remains to be seen whether the class will be able to resist the collapse of its living standards.

As we write, the counter-revolution is deepening almost daily. Democracy and the free market stalk the world, dealing dispossession and death. But this is not a rerun of the counter-revolution of the thirties. Capitalism has progressed since then. The world proletariat, the dispossessed, has expanded considerably. It now confronts one united world capitalist class, ruling a world with an increasingly homogenous culture and even one language, which potentially unites capitalism's gravedigger. We don't know how long it will be before the international class struggle revives. In the long term, the New World Order contains the seeds of its own destruction. But the immediate future looks bleak.

September 21 1991.



"SATANIC CHILD SEX TERRORIST CRACK MENACE GROWS"

The moral panic has always been an important weapon in the arsenal of the bourgeoisie. By manufacturing scare stories about "problems" which they can blame on lack of individual moral responsibility they can gain acceptance for harsher state repression and hammer home the need to respect work, the family and the Law. These scare stories are usually simple morality tales about the link between hedonism, violence and the corruption of youth. They bear little relation to reality. From the "juvenile delinquency" panics of the 1950's to the "crack menace" of today the story is the same.

SATAN AND HIS WORKS

In Britain the present crop of moral panics have mostly failed to take root. In the USA the "War On Drugs" has been much more successful. Much of the anti-drugs propaganda in the British media has simply been imported from the US.

In 1989 a national drug squad, overcoming the traditional rivalry between police and Customs was set up, with wide ranging powers. Drugs are a pretext. The bourgeoisie isn't worried about crack in Lambeth, Hackney and Moss Side. It's an excuse to crack down on the inner cities with, they hope, the support of a majority of the population. In June 1989 there was a riot in Wolverhampton following a police "drugs" raid. In October 1990, about 500 axe-wielding police invaded Broadwater Farm estate, against which they have a grudge. A cop was killed there during an uprising in 1985 after the cops had caused the death of a local woman. The media willingly cooperated in this attempt to isolate and criminalise the estate. Small amounts of cannabis were found. In July 1991 armed police with a helicopter attacked the Pembury estate in Hackney, kicking a pregnant woman down the stairs, and dragging black workers returning from work into police vans. The estate is one of the most squatted in London.

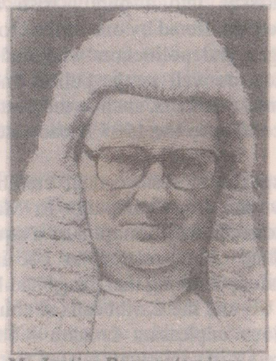
In April 1989 a United States Drug Enforcement special agent had addressed a senior police drugs conference giving his "personal guarantee" that within two years Britain would have a crack problem on a par with the US, which would cause an explosion of murder and child abuse. The British media uncritically repeated the story, and added their own lurid tales of drug induced decadence. In a few days, the press claimed that a crack addict allowed her daughter to be raped in exchange for the drug; that the "third world" infant mortality rate in Washington DC is caused by cocaine; and that coke causes child molesting. This is a concerted attempt to link our deepest fears to drugs. In particular, there is an attempt to convince us that the horrors of life in American cities are caused chiefly by the import of a mild anaesthetic from South America.

The predicted drug boom didn't take off. There was even a suggestion in August 1990 that the special police and Customs squad set up to fight crack should be disbanded. Senior officers of the National Drugs Intelligence Unit admitted that there had been no upsurge in crack use.

Every now and again, a story is exposed. The Lambeth Police Monitoring Unit discovered that the police story about a Caribbean "Black Mafia" called "Yardies" was a pack of racist lies. But even in demolishing the black drug-pusher myth, the *South London Press* (6 July 90) maintained that there is a "spiralling crack menace in South East London". Spiral, spiral. A Southwark council moron summed up the official line : "Although the Yardie idea may be myth it cannot be ignored". The overtly racist nature of anti-drug campaigns is nothing new. In the 1920's, *Scientific American* published articles scientifically linking cocaine use by black men with raping white women. In Britain in the early 1950's the first serious media scare about youth being corrupted by smoking grass provided the pretext for police repression against newly-arrived West Indian immigrants.

WITCH HUNT

Not all moral panics issue from the police. When British social workers started spreading stories about groups of people from Nottingham to the Orkneys livening up their Satanic rituals with a spot of child abuse, the police were sceptical. Nevertheless, they joined forces with crazed social workers to raid dozens of innocent homes, taking children off to secret locations, where the social workers used standard police interrogation techniques ("you might as well tell us, your sister already has") to intimidate children into agreeing to lies about their parents.


Mr Justice Brown: 'serious mistakes by social services'

In every case, the stories were exposed as complete nonsense, the product of the

Seen but not heard

I AM the elder sister of two of the Orkney children (aged 11 and 15) taken into care amidst allegations of "ritualistic sexual abuse". I am a senior honours law student and have not been implicated in these allegations.

Exactly one month has passed since my brothers were snatched. They were removed within seven minutes of the arrival of the social workers (at 7am) without even being allowed to use the bathroom.

They continue to be denied access to anyone or anything familiar. They are not even together. I have made a number of applications for any contact under any conditions, simply to reassure them. These requests have been made both to Mr Sloane (interim reporter to the Childrens' Panel) and to Mr Lee (Director of Social Work, Orkney). Neither of them has had the common courtesy to even acknowledge my letters. This denial of access is contrary to the spirit of the Cleveland recommendations by Dame Butler Sloss (paragraph 4d) and the Scottish Code of Practice, "Access to children in care or under supervision" (paragraph 7).

To date, as far as I am aware, no one outside the "care" authorities has had any form of access to these children, thus no independent check upon their physical or mental well being has been possible.

It is also feared that they do not know their legal rights. Attempts by independent lawyers to visit them and explain these, prior to the appointment of curators, were thwarted. Children have a right to have their views expressed at the children's hearing, this right was denied. Certainly the older of the two as an intelligent and articulate 15-year-old is well able to express his views, either personally, on tape, or in written form. My father specifically sought any of these at the hearing on March 25 — none were available.

At this hearing the "Place of Safety" Orders were extended for a further 21 days. The paramount consideration of both the English and Scottish systems is the "Best interests of the child?" Does Mr Sloane believe that these change upon crossing the border?

Name and address supplied.

Letter to the *Guardian*, 29 March 91.

imaginations of Christian social workers and their American gurus. They were a clumsy attempt to spread fear and distrust. The natural inclination of children to fantasize about witches and demons scares Christians, who respond to interest in witchcraft, the occult, etc., by labelling all of it "Satanism" and claiming it leads to child-molesting.

The state realized that the Satanism campaign was getting out of hand. The social services were under attack. Groups were set up to defend parents against persecution. So they abandoned the campaign and let the children go home.

Social workers' brutality against children in "care" led to a small uprising in a children's "home". Slates were thrown, windows smashed and furniture broken before police restored order at the Tyn Mawr institution in Wales. This action shows an identification with prisoners. It also implies identifying social workers with prison officers and the police. Their lefty friends don't agree. "'We want to care for the kids', said one social worker. 'But unless they give us the resources we can't do that'" (*Social(ist) Worker* 8 June 91).

There is a crisis of state legitimacy in Britain, with growing numbers of workers holding the police and the courts in contempt. The release of the Birmingham Six in March 1991, after 17 years of false imprisonment, damaged the system still further. Refusing attempts by nationalists to turn the issue into a purely Irish affair, firmly rejecting a tricolour offered by one of the crowd, the Six denounced the judges and politicians who had conspired to keep them inside, as well as the police, and read out a list of other framed prisoners, such as the Tottenham 3, who were forced to confess to the 1985 Broadwater Farm cop-chop.

Desperate to restore their credibility, the police started a new anti-drugs campaign in May 1991. In August they announced the formation of a squad of detectives to tackle violent crime related to cocaine dealing across south London, claiming that gangs had links to organized crime in the US and the Caribbean (of course!). Scotland Yard listed various unpleasant London robberies, claiming that they were all in some way related to crack.

CRACK DOWN

Since the USA was defeated in Vietnam, its rulers have been working out how to persuade the public to support war abroad and the law at home.

The anti-terrorism campaign was one such attempt. There were a number of important blunders in this campaign. Reagan was exposed selling arms to Iranian terrorists and using the proceeds to finance Nicaraguan ones, and it was revealed that he persuaded the Iranians to keep the Embassy hostages in order to destabilize the Carter administration.

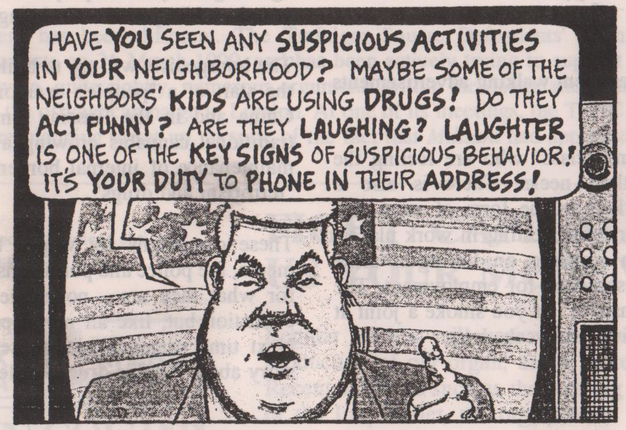
Given the cock-ups, they had to try something else. General Noriega, originally put in power by the drug runners of the CIA under George Bush in the seventies, was turned into a scapegoat. They didn't invade Panama in December '89 to stop the coke trade which now flourishes more than ever before. They did it to ensure control over the Panama canal, and to test how US public opinion would react to the biggest military operation since Vietnam. Given the success of the operation - it was "over by Christmas" - opinion polls reported overwhelming support. This led to the Gulf war. The American ruling class are now confident that they can launch a full scale war anywhere to protect their interests.

Recently US involvement in Peru has escalated with the sending of military personnel to train two combat battalions who will be used to protect police units from attack by left wing guerillas. In Colombia, the drugs war is largely a faction fight within the ruling class, between the US-backed government and the big dealers who process coca leaves into cocaine. It affects the poor only so far as the streets become less safe and jobs in the coke industry are destroyed. In Peru it is directed primarily at the peasants of the Upper Huallaga valley where up to 300,000 families survive by growing coca. The Peruvian government talks of crop substitution but its obvious that growing potatoes instead of coca is economically absurd. The drugs war is about nothing less than the brutal expropriation of these peasants who will flood into the cities, forcing down wages of urban workers who already live at bare subsistence level.

THE WAR ON DRUGS

"I think people believe that the only strategy we have is to put a lot of police officers on the street and harass people and make arrests for inconsequential kinds of things. Well, that's part of the strategy, no question about it." - Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates.

In the ghettoes of America's cities, another war is being fought, with equally sinister implications for the working class. With crack dealing as a pretext, military style operations are being used against inner-city non-white youth. In these operations, thousands of teenagers are searched at random, forced to "kiss the sidewalk", and have their names entered on computers for "gang membership". LAPD Chief Gates explains the "reasoning" behind the campaign : "This is war... we're exceedingly angry... we want to get the message out to the cowards out there... we want the message to go out that we're going to come and get them." The head of the drug squad added "This is Vietnam here". And the *Los Angeles Times* quoted local politicians comparing the drug-dealing gangs to "the murderous militias of Beirut".



There is a political purpose behind these wild claims. In the midst of a local economic boom, black youth unemployment in LA County is 45%, and worse in other areas. American cities are increasingly racially divided. Crack dealing to neighbouring wealthy white suburbanites is rational economic behaviour for local gangster capitalists, who employ thousands of people. A Rand Corporation survey in 1985 found that three quarters of cocaine users in the Washington metropolitan area lived not in the black ghettoes of DC itself but in the Virginia and Maryland suburbs. In a New York Times/CBS poll in 1989 it turned out that the highest percentages of people "knowing someone seriously affected by drugs" were those earning more than $35,000 a year. This is not, of course, how the trade is depicted by the media, who talk about the "ghetto drug problem", and you don't see many yuppie coke-heads spread-eagled over their Porsches by the police.

Crack is derived from cocaine by removing the hydrochloride salt. This makes it possible to vaporize, hence smoke it. Smoking it gets you higher, quicker. Thus it is more addictive than ordinary cocaine. However, a survey in Miami revealed two thirds of teenage crack users using it less than once a day (*British Medical Journal* 5 August 1989).

Crack related deaths in the USA are caused by shoot-outs in the competition for the money to be made, a result of the drug's illegality. Unlike legal business, which is controlled by the law, the illegal part of the capitalist economy is regulated by murder, just as it was during the Prohibition of alcohol. The dealers are organized in gangs in order to defend their slice of the market. Because coke dealing is so lucrative, it is tempting for the children of respectable working class and even middle class black people to get involved. Youth involvement in the business has produced a phenomenal mortality rate. A black male in Washington DC stands a 1 in 10 chance of being shot dead before his 35th birthday.

The war on drugs has nothing to with the dangers of the drugs themselves. The most intelligent capitalists agree with the *Economist* that most illicit drugs are relatively harmless and that their legalization is the only rational solution. The fact that rationality is not the issue is proven by the proposed death penalty for smuggling a boat load of grass, and the massive raids on marijuana growers in Humboldt, Mendocino and Trinity counties in Northern California in 1989 and 1990 by the Army and National Guard. These raids were not carried out because the ruling class don't know that marijuana is harmless, but to accustom people to helicopter gunships flying over their houses, the army sealing off large areas, and troops terrorizing schoolchildren with automatic weapons.

The drugs war is also an attempt to mobilize good citizens in support of the police. It could not achieve this objective without the collaboration of community activists, social workers and priests. After years of vicious cuts in all forms of social services the only sources of funding left to "community leaders" and similar parasites are those related to the drugs war. They are now in a position to provide a service which the state is more than willing to pay for.

A major ideological aim of the drugs war is to blame crack (rather than job losses and welfare cuts) for the dramatic decline in incomes and general quality of life in the inner cities over the last decade. This is made easier by the fact that, unlike in the suburbs, crack use in the ghettoes is a very visible phenomenon. Many destitute street people **do** turn to crack for solace and **do** become addicted. Because they run out of money it is very common for them to go through withdrawal which involves manic behaviour. Since they are constantly on the streets the craziness of easily

labelled "crack heads" makes them walking advertisements for the war on drugs.

It is not just the urban "underclass" who are feeling the iron-heeled jackboot on their necks. There is also a campaign against lazy workers in the form of more and more widespread compulsory drug testing in work places. Some companies are even insisting on testing a urine sample before considering someone for employment. The technology used is **very** sensitive - if you smoke a joint at a party you could test positive two weeks later.

AMERICA'S GULAG

The war on drugs has massively overloaded the US prison system, which now has by far the highest per capita detention rate in the world. The American gulag boasts 426 prisoners per 100,000 head of population, against South Africa's 333, the Soviet Union's 268, and Britain's 97 (London *Guardian*, 19 June 91). The prison population is growing at 13% per annum necessitating a vast prison building program. A system of parole and probation exists whereby a prisoner can be under judicial control for up to 10 years after release. This allows a prisoner to be permanently circulated through the system on the slightest pretext. A black man in America is four times more likely to be in prison than a non-white South African man. One in four black men in their twenties is in prison, on parole or probation. The number of black Americans arrested for drug offences increased even more rapidly than the general arrest rate, which grew every year from 1980.

In 1967-68, tanks had to be used to quell inner-city riots. Since then, all kinds of techniques have been used to split, demoralize and destroy these communities. But racism, impoverishment and heroin have not completely defeated the urban proletariat, as was shown in May when black and Latino youths joined forces in Washington to attack the police and loot shops for three days running, jogging memories of 1968, when machine guns were ready on the White House lawn to protect the President from the proletariat. Hence the anti-drugs campaign. Its aim is to get people used to military policing which at the end of the day is the guarantor of the survival of the state.

FIGHTING THE WAR ON DRUGS

So far, the drugs war is much more intense and successful in the US than in the rest of the world. Surveillance with video cameras, and a wide proliferation of different kinds of police and security guards, are widely tolerated. Notices about "drug-free zones" don't get ripped down. A lot of Americans agree to drug-testing by employers; this means agreeing that your employer has the right to determine what you do while you are not being paid.

The bourgeoisie will try to build on their success. Recently the start of a "people's war on drugs" was announced in China and in the Russian Empire perestroika has made traditional cannabis growing a target of persecution. The maintenance of internal borders in the EC is justified by "terrorism and drugs".

These campaigns are waged by our usual enemies: the media, the police and politicians. We should recognise them for what they are - not some kind of misguided health education but, like all moral panics, attacks on our class. Next time someone tries to sell you a newspaper with a story about Satanic drug peddlers, **just say no**.

Riot in Washington DC.

FREE THE POLL TAX PRISONERS!

The anti-poll tax struggle in Britain showed that even in times of defeat, when workplace strikes are at a fifty-year low, the working class still has power to resist the attacks of the capitalists.

The class struggle is everywhere. This battle was fought at home, on the streets, in the courts and jury rooms. The main method of struggle was simply not paying the tax, which was introduced by the Conservative government in 1989-90 in order to make poor people pay more for local government. Previously, only house owners had to pay. When the government finally announced the abolition of the tax, non-payment figures continued to rise, in spite of the use of imprisonment to intimidate non-payers. The official figures show a 10% decline in the number of people who have paid any poll tax at all between June 1990 and June 1991. In Lambeth, only 22% have paid anything this year.

Though the struggle has failed to spread much beyond non-payment of one particularly onerous tax, it has created a culture of non-cooperation. This invalidated the British census data for 1991, because in many urban areas, a significant minority refused to fill in the census forms. Hundreds of thousands have dropped off the electoral register.

It has also strengthened the militant mob within the working class. By this we mean people who don't merely respond to state attacks like the poll tax, but go out of their way to look for trouble. These are the people who see the need to prioritize support for prisoners, an area where the anti-poll tax struggle has helped forge links with a crucial area of the class struggle. The Trafalgar Square riot in March 1990 inspired the Strangeways uprising, which started the following day, and turned into the longest prison rebellion in British history.

One of the main weaknesses of the miners' strike of 1984-85 was the failure of miners to support class struggle prisoners. A movement which cannot support its own POW's is doomed. We tried to set up a prisoners' aid network during the strike, and both this and an attempt to build a more liberal version failed due to lack of interest among miners and other workers.

The anti-poll tax movement has been different. The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign (TSDC) was created immediately after the 500 arrests on 31 March 1990, and has been actively trying to support these defendants ever since. From the beginning there were, quite rightly, numerous arguments within the defendants' campaign - including everyone who was involved, not just the official campaign in London. At one of its meetings, the TSDC agreed to cooperate with the enquiry which *Militant* were planning to set up, in spite of the fact that *Militant* had appeared on TV directly after the 31

The award for the most extreme and violent anti-poll tax poster goes to West Hampstead APTU:

FIGHT CAPITALISM - SEND US YOUR MONEY

Regular readers will notice an improvement in the quality of production of our organ, and a corresponding price adjustment. Recent activities such as the printing and widespread distribution of the Iraq leaflet, the organisation of a conference, etc., have placed considerable strains on even our vast resources. So once again we appeal for donations, either in the form of cash or postal orders. Do not send cheques, as we still don't have a bank account.

The pamphlets "Open Letter to Comrade Lenin" and "Class War on the Home Front" are still available, price £3/$10 including postage.

The price of subscriptions to *Wildcat* is now £5 or $15.

Our address is :
BM CAT, London WC1N 3XX, UK.
Comrades close to us in the USA can be reached at :
PO Box 3305, Oakland CA 94609, USA.

One of our long-term aims is an international journal of anti-democratic communism, produced in several countries with the aid of computer communications. Anyone interested in helping with this project should contact us at the UK address.

March riot saying that this enquiry would give information to the police. In the end the matter was quietly dropped. The enquiry never happened. There were various other disturbing tendencies in the TSDC prior to October 1990. They telephoned bookshops asking them to stop selling the *Poll Tax Riot* pamphlet, because it mentions the TSDC. There was no legal reason for their paranoia : the pamphlet could not have been used as evidence against defendants merely because it mentioned the TSDC. No prosecutor would risk such an overtly political trial. The campaign was opposed to the working class politics of the pamphlet, which demonstrates that a large crowd of hooligans were in Trafalgar Square looking for trouble before the police started it. This undermines the myth that all the violence in Trafalgar Square and the West End was caused by the police provoking a crowd of respectable protestors.

The riot was caused primarily by the desire to attack the police and capitalism in general. The rioters took advantage of tactical mistakes on the part of the police. The working class is rediscovering its history of struggle, and this means being proud of victories like Trafalgar Square. The liberals in the TSDC and their allies in the media smother this history. They isolate Trafalgar Square from the series of mini-riots which preceded it. Take for example Despite TV's documentary "Battle of Trafalgar". Instead of showing that the riot was a great victory - it was the single most important cause of Thatcher's downfall - the documentary whines about how the police spoilt a nice family outing. The attack on the South African embassy, the looting of shops, the rioting which spread for miles - this was not a crowd of peaceful protestors acting in self-defence! The liberals present the working class as victims, and working class violence as a result of desperation and police provocation. Yet they believe they are an alternative to the official media. This is what the presenter of "Battle of Trafalgar" says when questioned about working with the official bourgeois media (in *Flux* no 2).

"DTV wasn't part of the media establishment then and it isn't now. Although ultimately we had the IBA looking over our shoulders, there was no direct censorship or control from Channel 4. Look at what we achieved. 1.4 million people watched a programme which told them that the media were lying, the police were lying, **this** is the reality that 200,000 people experienced. It was a chance to claim back some of people's history, to prevent the state having the final word. If you were purist and turned that down because you didn't want to become part of the Spectacle, it would be a crime."

The TSDC's legal support work has **not** been as effective as it makes out. Neither have its videos. In one case, when the prosecution video and a TSDC video were shown, a supporter innocently asked which was which. A more detailed critique of the TSDC, produced by anti-poll tax activists in London and comrades from Sussex Poll Tax Resisters, can be obtained from our address.

But the campaign is more than a few film-makers trying to build their careers on the back of the class struggle. The campaign for the release of all poll tax prisoners continues, with demos, fund-raising, prison pickets, etc.. The pickets have openly called for the example of Strangeways to be imitated, communicating with prisoners across the prison walls. This struggle has been more important than any in Britain since the seventies, because it has done more than the miners' strike to question the legitimacy of the state, leading at its high points to open attacks on capitalism and the prison system on which it depends.

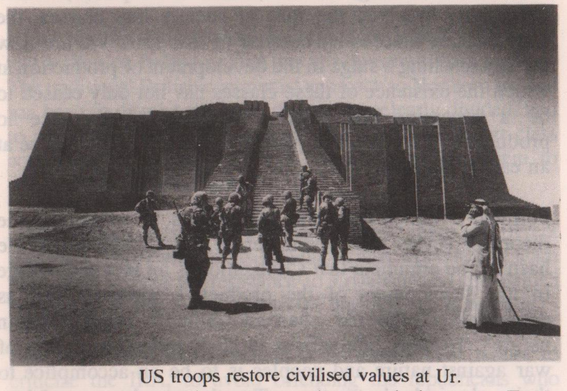
The Prisoners' Support Group can be contacted at Brixton Law Centre, 506 Brixton Road, London SW9, Tel. 071-738-7586. Here is a list of some of the longer-term Poll Tax prisoners. Please write to them, but contact the Prisoners' Support Group first, to check that the facts are still correct when you read this. Be careful what you write.

Richard Andrews, MW0962, HMP SEND, RIPLEY ROAD, WOKING GU23 7LJ.
Neil Bremner, MW0216, HMP COLDINGLEY, BISLEY, WOKING GU24 9EX.
Michael Dalley, PF3098, HMP WANDSWORTH, HEATHFIELD RD, LONDON SW18 3HS.
Darren Healey, RA2183, HMP WANDSWORTH.
Timothy Donaghy, MW0105, HMP BELMARSH, WESTERN WAY, LONDON SE2.
Matt Lee, MW1054, HMP FEATHERSTONE, NEW ROAD, FEATHERSTONE WV10 7PU.
Simon Russell, ND1666, HMP THE MOUNT, MOLYNEAUX AVE, BOVINGDON HP3 ONZ.
Brian Tavares, MW3239, HMP CAMP HILL, CLISSOLD RD, NEWPORT, PO30 5PB.
Keith Wray, MW1241, HMP FELTHAM, BEDFONT RD, FELTHAM, MIDDX TW13 4ND.
Robert Wray, MW1242, HMP FELTHAM.

(List correct on 8 August 1991).

The extent of the rioting on March 31.

OZYMANDIAS


US troops restore civilised values at Ur.

Review: *Against His-story! Against Leviathan!* by Fredy Perlman, Black & Red, Detroit 1983.

Against His-story! is an attempt to take opposition to Progress to its logical conclusion. So is this belated review.

Perlman summarises the whole history of Civilisation from the viewpoint of its victims: we, the "zeks", free people who were enslaved then taught to identify with the enslaving monster: Leviathan.

ROCK OF STAGES

Civilisation, the antithesis of community, is only 5,000 years old. Communities existed in the New World for thousands of years without either "giving rise to" or becoming part of, the Civilisations of the Aztecs and Incas, which shrank. Civilisations did not arise inevitably because of the development of the productive forces. People have **always** tried to fight Civilization. So why did it arise, how did it spread and dominate the world, and why didn't communities stop it?

The minority which created Civilisation did so initially, not in a place where the productive forces were rich, but where they were poor, and where Nature was harsh: Mesopotamia. The Sumerians had to build waterworks, so expertise and eventually kings developed. When the waterworks of Lagash overflowed into those of Ur, the king of Ur, or Lugal, persuaded his people to attack Lagash, and basically ended up enslaving its inhabitants and forcing them to rebuild both sets of waterworks, by now a full-time activity.

Communities try to resist Civilisation in various ways. But to form permanent military alliances, which is what is needed to seriously threaten the monster, is to turn these communities into a new Civilisation. Walled cities need a permanent wall-building proletariat. What was a free activity becomes compulsory. What Civilisation touches turns to stone. People **internalise** compulsion. They become "armored", to use Perlman's term, creating morality and guilt.

Other communities ran away. The modern Leviathan is just now wiping out the very last of them in New Guinea and the Amazon. People have always tried to escape. Leviathans perpetually decompose. Hence the ruins in deserts and jungles. One of the most spectacular examples of decomposition Perlman describes is the decay of French colonialism, stretched out across the fur trails of North America, losing hunters and traders to the existing communities, until the British wiped them out. The first proletarian uprising in American history was the one led by Francisco Roldan against Columbus in 1498. Roldan and a mob of ex-convicts from Spain overthrew the government in Santo Domingo, and ran off into the hills to join the natives, fighting against Civilisation, which they knew from personal experience was far worse than the alternative. There were also tendencies toward primitive communism among English Americans: hence the New England witch trials.

Perlman's critique of religion is more penetrating than Marx's. Moses' God was simply Leviathan made abstract. His program was a "declaration of war against all Life": "Replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth".

There were numerous genuine primitivist crisis cults in the decomposing Roman Leviathan. Christianity was Civilisation's way of recuperating and suppressing them. Christianity is not, as Marxists have argued, the essential capitalist religion. Perlman explains how Islam was the midwife of mercantile capitalism. Arab merchants taught Europeans commerce, maths, etc., and they have never been given credit for this. Capitalism grew, not out of the burghs of mediaeval Europe but out of the trading networks imported by Islam's imitators. There is no God but Value, and Mohammed is his Profit.

The antithesis of Civilisation, communism, has always been possible. There is a constant tendency toward communist revolution: 4th century Persia, 16th century Germany. The aim of the revolution is to destroy the productive forces, not to develop them. Decadence is not a stage in the development of Civilisation, but a permanent tendency to decompose, the result of the invariant struggle of slaves against private property and the state. Progress is the result of a disruption of cyclical time. Our struggle reasserts invariant, cyclical time against progressive, linear time. Civilisation is not inevitable, but it is a permanent danger, and primitive communities' myths warn them against it.

Myths such as Dream Time, Eden and the Golden Age when "They dwelt in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things, rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods" (Hesiod) are humanity's memories of pre-Civilisation. Leviathan's myths are lies. Here is an example:

"Changes in the economy freed part of the population from the need to engage in subsistence farming, more men now became available to pursue other tasks (i.e. crafts, defence, religious life, administration and technology)" (*Penguin Atlas of World History*, Vol. 1).

Became available to whom? The Penguin Atlas continues:

"The centralisation of the state and the hierarchical ordering of society into sharply differentiated classes (rulers, priests,

warriors, officials, craftsmen, traders, peasants, slaves) enabled the Egyptians to solve the problems which confronted every riverine civilisation".

This is literally nonsense. The division into classes makes the phrase "the Egyptians" meaningless. "The Egyptians" did not differentiate themselves into slaves and torturers in order to solve their common problems. The slaves **were enslaved**. From this point on, to talk of humanity solving its problems, is to peddle the discourse of the State.

STAGE FRIGHT

The evidence discovered since Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) derived from the racist anthropologist Morgan, shows that primitive peoples did not generally live in scarcity, nor were they cannibals. It was not the increase in the wealth of society which allowed Civilisation to emerge. It emerged in an area of scarcity, whereas Native Americans often lived in abundance, and, according to Perlman, consciously rejected the Civilisations on offer. This is hardly surprising. Civilisation has made more and more people more and more miserable for five thousand years.

Perlman's uncritical description of Native American communities should not be swallowed whole. According to one of his main inspirations, FW Turner, scarcity, competition, warfare, intolerance and torture did exist among pre-Columbian Indians (see *The Portable North American Indian Reader*). Perlman manages to paint a glaringly black-and-white picture of community and Civilisation. European Civilisation introduced the horse into Native America. On the other hand, it exterminated the beneficiaries of this development. Some white supremacists used Morgan's stages theory as an excuse. Nathan Meeker founded a cooperative concentration camp for the Ute Indians in Colorado, which he believed would raise them from savagery through the pastoral stage to barbarism, then to "the enlightened, scientific, and religious stage" (*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, p372). Sounds familiar? The ideologists of the frontier didn't need historical materialism. Christianity served their genocidal purposes adequately. The ignorant savages, unwilling to be elevated into barbarians, killed Meeker in 1879.

FREDY VS. FRED

Perlman dismisses the progressist ideas of Marx's Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy* as "moronic". Capitalism doesn't "develop the productive forces", it creates **capitalist** "productive forces" and "relations of production". "The so-called material conditions are Leviathan's garments, not the ground it stands on." Perlman is right to point out that the productive forces do not exist apart from their social form, and that the latter give rise to the former, not vice-versa. But his dismissal of Marx is a trifle brusque. He makes no attempt to give a balanced assessment of Marx and Engels' contribution.

Engels' position was ambiguous. Although he saw the state as a weapon of one class against another, he also believed it "arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check". The concept of the "needs of society" implies some neutral force apart from the two antagonistic classes:

"At a certain stage of economic development, which necessarily involved the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity because of this split. We are now rapidly reaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes has not only ceased to be a necessity but becomes a positive hindrance to production. They will fall just as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage."

Perlman confidently invites his readers to reexamine the theory of stages to see whether he has caricatured it. He hasn't. The argument that Civilization is an inevitable stage in the development of the productive forces is just as dangerous as the old chestnut about it being "human nature". To deny alternatives to Civilization's program of war against nature and peoples is to be an accomplice to their physical destruction. To those who say Marx developed a less progressist position (for example Teodor Shanin in *Late Marx and the Russian Road*), I would reply that it's a shame he didn't do it earlier. Nevertheless, it is simplistic to identify the whole of Marx's work with some of his, and especially Engels', mistakes. Perlman gives the impression that nothing good has happened since the state first arose in Sumer, and that non-civilised people were just as Hesiod described them. If the only alternative to life under Civilization is the "Stone Age", a life of hunting, screwing, being at one with Nature, etc., there is no question which is preferable.

Women in particular were better off before Civilisation, which has systematically stripped them of the power they used to have. But some technologies which have been developed during the last 5,000 years could be inherited by communism. No doubt the idea of a centralised world administration will be rejected. There will be a large degree of self-sufficiency. Without the waste of capitalism, the world could easily support its current population. The Stone Age couldn't. The population figure will depend entirely on how many children women choose to have and how much effort people are prepared to put into raising them (see *How Deep is Deep Ecology?* by George Bradford).

Perlman's arrogance is infectious. He dispatches Marxism in a couple of pages, the concept of "bourgeois revolutions" in one sentence. His method of dealing with anyone he doesn't like involves its own totalitarian circular logic. His critics are dismissed as "armored". People who want some positive evidence before accepting his conclusions are guard dogs of the Leviathanic order. Perlman's anti-history is so all-explanatory, covering the whole of history in 300 pages, there must be a danger of Against *His-story!* eventually becoming a new bible for a political dogma, the fate which befell Situationist theory.

An eclectic approach is needed to avoid this dead end. In learning from the culture of primitive peoples, we are not obliged to abandon everything which has been developed since the waterworks of Mesopotamia.

RB, 8 September 1991.

OPPORTUNISM KNOCKS - DEBATE ON IRELAND

Following this introduction, we reproduce edited versions of two leaflets on Ireland written recently by comrades in London. The traditional British communist approach to Northern Ireland has been to dismiss the class there as hopelessly divided, and to pray that one day a European revolution will import class consciousness to the poor Irish workers, enabling them to overcome their sectarianism.

"From Bloody Sunday to Trafalgar Square" takes a different approach. This leaflet looks at what British workers can learn from Irish proletarian resistance to Loyalism and the British army, linking this experience to the anti-poll tax movement.

The major flaw in this article is its almost total failure to criticize the IRA, to avoid offending the republicans who inevitably dominate anything connected with Ireland. The reason for this is isolation, caused by the lack of solidarity with Irish resistance among the British working class. The leaflet doesn't say anything about the IRA policing the Catholics, nor its bomb attacks on British workers during the mass strikes of the seventies.

We reject the stance taken in "A Response". To say that the link between state repression in Ireland and Britain is "worth pointing out, although it has become something of a cliche" has a complacent ring about it. It's no good hoping for the day when the proletariat sees the communist point of view, and turns against "the Brits, the IRA and all the other paramilitary gangsters". What matters is to begin to create working class unity now, on however small a scale.

The author of "From Bloody Sunday" can be contacted c/o Box 9, 124 Vassall Road, London SW9, and the other at News From Everywhere, Box 14, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E8.

FROM BLOODY SUNDAY TO TRAFALGAR SQUARE

"I'd shoot some of these bastards, I would, honest... this is more like Northern Ireland" (comments by police, 31 March 1990)

The Trafalgar Square riot of 31 March 1990 was a liberating experience for most of those who took part in it. The attempt by the police to assert their control over a crowd of 200,000 anti-poll tax protestors was met with massive resistance and for a while we were in control of the streets of the West End.

Although the police might have "lost it a bit" on the day they have been determined ever since to show who's boss. Even on the day there were 391 arrests, and many demonstrators were injured by the police. Immediately afterwards the police launched **Operation Carnaby** - more than 100 people were arrested as the police raided the homes of anti-poll tax activists. The Crown Prosecution Service set up a special unit to rush people through the courts in political show trials, where magistrates have been handing down heavy sentences (Robert Robinson was jailed for two years for allegedly kicking a police van being driven at high speed into a packed crowd). On October 20th the police made a further 135 arrests when they violently dispersed a Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign picket outside Brixton prison.

The level of state repression has clearly taken some people in the anti-poll tax movement by surprise. In itself the fact that so few covered their faces at the height of the fighting on the 31st shows how unprepared people were. This naivety might be understandable if it wasn't for the fact that the British state has been dishing out such repression, and worse, for years just over the Irish Sea.

In the North of Ireland (with a total population of one and a half million) there are more than 30,000 members of the security forces on active duty, This includes 13,000 heavily armed members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and its reserve, 10,000 British troops, and 6,000 Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers. By way of a seasonal present 600 extra troops were sent over in time for Christmas. The firepower of these bodies of armed men is almost entirely aimed at the working class in the catholic areas of the six counties.

In this part of the world raids on people's homes are a common part of daily harassment. At the beginning of December for instance upwards of 800 homes and other premises were raided in Derry, as troops carried out house-to-house searches (the peak year for house searches so far was 1973, when 74,556 searches were carried out - amounting to nearly one-fifth of all homes in the six counties).

People here don't have to just worry about video surveillance in the streets (as is becoming common in English city centres). They are subject to massive and permanent electronic eavesdropping. Demonstrators have been attacked not just with truncheons, but with CS gas, plastic bullets and live ammunition. The "conveyor belt justice" being meted out to poll tax protestors is nothing new either. Trial by jury has been abolished in Northern Ireland, where the "Diplock Courts" have a high (and rapid) conviction rate of 90-95%.

A whole series of "dirty tricks" have also been used, with British Intelligence working hand-in-glove with loyalist terrorists when it suits them.

"You're innocent until proven Irish" (woman arrested under PTA)

British state terrorism against Irish people is not confined to Ireland either. Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, introduced by the Labour Party to intimidate Irish communities in Britain, 7,222 people have been arrested, detained and questioned (as of December 1990). Many have been excluded from Britain without even being charged. Every year 50,000 Irish people are stopped and questioned at British ports. And as the cases of the Guildford 4 (the first people arrested under the PTA) and the Birmingham 6 demonstrate, being Irish in the wrong place and at the wrong time is a major crime in British courts.

Still, some people would no doubt say, things are different in Ireland. After all, isn't all this repression simply a response to the bullets and bombs of the IRA? NO! In fact the tactics used by working class catholics in the early phases of the present "troubles" were remarkably similar to those used by the anti-poll tax movement today.

In Derry, 1968, the movement initially focused around poor

housing, and in particular the discrimination against catholics which stopped them getting council houses. The Derry Housing Action Committee began by disrupting meetings of the Londonderry Corporation, the local council. Empty houses were squatted, private landlords charging exorbitant rents were picketed, and Electricity Department officials prevented from cutting off supplies.

In Belfast the struggle for better housing was based at first around opposition to the building of the Divis Flats high-rise complex, and continued when they were built. During 1969 the police reacted increasingly violently to protests and there were frequent riots. On one occasion fifty people armed with a telegraph pole attempted to break down the door of Hastings Street police barracks.

In Derry too even peaceful demonstrations with the most timid demands for "civil rights" were clubbed into the ground. On 5 October 1968 police baton charged a banned march in the city. In January 1969 a march from Belfast to Derry was attacked at Burntollet Bridge, a few miles outside Derry. Loyalists in open collusion with the police waded in with nailed clubs, stones and bicycle chains. Rioting broke out in the city, and barricades went up in the Bogside. The police were kept out of "Free Derry" for five days. A pirate radio station began broadcasting and defence patrols armed with sticks and iron bars were organised.

BATTLE OF THE BOGSIDE

The barricades went up again on August 11 in anticipation of an RUC and Orange attack the next day, the day of the Apprentice Boys march (the annual celebration of protestant supremacy). The next day, as feared, RUC men and Apprentice Boys marchers attempted to charge into the area and fighting erupted. "The Battle of the Bogside" lasted for about forty-eight hours. Open-air petrol bomb factories and first-aid stations were set up, and dumpers hijacked from a building site were used to carry stones to the front.

Meanwhile people took to the streets in Belfast after hearing a taped plea from Derry for solidarity. Teenagers with petrol bombs faced police armoured cars with high-velocity, heavy .30 calibre Browning machine guns (with a range of almost two and a half miles and capable of shooting through brick walls). A nine year old boy, Patrick Rooney, was killed in his bed in the Divis by one of these bullets. Although some IRA members used their few guns to defend the catholic ghettoes in Belfast, the organisation's role at this time was minimal. Indeed graffiti such as "IRA = I Ran Away" appeared on the Falls Road (it is important to stress this fact as many people in Britain imagine that so long as we don't use arms, neither will the state).

Back in Derry, the Bogside was not only successfully defended (youths lobbed petrol bombs onto the police from the top of a block of flats overlooking the main entrance to the Bogside), but the police began to be pushed back towards the commercial area of the City. It was at this point that the Labour Government sent in the troops. The army were not sent in to protect the catholics or as a neutral peace-keeping force, but because the situation was getting out of control and the RUC were losing.

Initially the troops were welcomed in some catholic areas as a neutral force. Such illusions were also pedalled by British leftists who defended sending in the army, such as the International Socialists (forerunners of the SWP):

"Because the troops do not have the ingrained hatreds of the RUC Specials, they will not behave with the same viciousness" (Socialist Worker, 21.8.69)

Any illusions in the Army's "peacekeeping" role didn't last long. In July 1970 the Army imposed a curfew on the Falls Road in Belfast, in the course of which four catholics were killed. On 4 November 1971 Emma Groves lost both her eyes after a soldier fired a rubber bullet into her living room from close range.

Resistance to the army grew steadily, and by the summer of '71 a mass popular movement had developed in Ballymurphy, with street committees, women's committees, youth committees, etc. A picket (consisting mostly of local women) outside the Ballymurphy British army base had been violently attacked, and street fighting had become a regular event. In this period fifteen people were killed in the area. An attempt to build an RUC station was abandoned when people overran the intended site. Rioters overcame troops and rode off in some of their jeeps. In short the state "lost it a bit", not just for an afternoon as on 31 March, but for a prolonged period. The RUC, the Army and thousands of gas canisters had failed to subdue the insurgent working class of Belfast, Derry and elsewhere.

BLOODY SUNDAY

"Bloody Sunday was a planned, calculated response to a demand for civil rights, designed to terrify organised protestors away from protesting. It fits easily into the catalogue of British involvement in Ireland as a quite logical and even natural event" (Fred Holroyd, ex-British Army Intelligence Officer.)

In August 1971 internment without trial was introduced. On the tenth, Operation Demetrius was launched: 342 people were arrested and nine people killed by troops. In this period experiments in sensory deprivation torture were carried out on some people arrested, with the aim of psychologically breaking them. With hoods placed over their heads, they were made to stand spread-eagled against a wall balanced on their fingertips. They were kept like this for four or five days, being bombarded with white noise and beaten if they moved, denied food, drink, sleep, or access to toilets. At intervals they were taken up in a helicopter, still wearing their hoods, and thrown out while just a few feet off the ground having been told that they were hundreds of feet up.

In protest at internment, a rent and rates strike was organised which attracted the support of some 40,000 households. By October this had escalated to non-payment of TV, radio, car licences, road tax, ground rent, electricity, gas and hire purchase. In response to this crisis the Payments of Debt Act was passed, allowing debts to be deducted directly from benefits - no doubt our rulers remembered this idea when they dreamt up the poll tax.

The introduction of internment was accompanied by a 12-month ban on all demonstrations. Despite this, on January 30 1972 tens of thousands of people attended a demonstration in Derry. The state's response to this act of defiance was a cold-blooded massacre. CS Gas and water cannon had already been used by the time the Parachute Regiment came onto the streets and opened fire on the crowd. The Army claimed that they were returning fire, but forensic tests on the 14 people killed showed that none of them had had contact with weapons and no weapons were found anywhere near the bodies.

Since Bloody Sunday many more have died. In the last twenty years more than 300 people have been killed by the army and police.

BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME

"The British Army has a great deal of experience of what we call "counter-revolutionary" warfare" (Army recruitment advert, December 1990)

If people in Britain have been slow to learn the lessons of Ireland, the same cannot be said for our rulers. They have used the North as a laboratory for social control, where methods of repression can be tested before being tried out on the rest of us.

This is not a new phenomenon. For instance as long ago as 1883, the police Special Branch (originally called the Special Irish Branch) was set up to deal with Irish rebels. Snatch squads were used against pickets during the 1977 Grunwick strike, and in the same year riot shields were introduced at Lewisham when a crowd fought fascists and the police. But it was the 1981 riots in English cities that marked a real turning point in the application of the lessons learned in Ireland.

The first riots occurred in Brixton in April 1981 (a helicopter-borne night-vision TV camera was used, as seen in the six counties). In July there were further riots in Brixton, Manchester Moss Side, Birmingham, Luton, and many other places. At Toxteth in Liverpool CS Gas was used for the first time in Britain.

In 1981 the riots in England coincided with a resurgence of mass protest in Ireland in support of the prisoners' struggles in the H-Blocks and Armagh. Hunger strikers' deaths were marked by intense rioting, and the similarities between the repression facing the working class in Britain and Ireland became increasingly apparent. For instance two youths in Derry were killed by an army land rover; later the same tactics of using army or police vehicles to break up crowds led to the death of David Moore in Toxteth (it is a miracle that nobody was killed at Trafalgar Square when police vans were again used in this way).

In response to the riots the government announced that plastic bullets, armoured personnel carriers and water cannon would be available to the police. On 14 July, six senior police officers flew to the six counties for a crash course in riot control from the RUC (it is now standard practice for police superintendents to do a tour of duty with the RUC).

In the Broadwater Farm uprising in 1985, plastic bullets were deployed, but not used. In the North of Ireland 17 people have been killed by plastic and rubber bullets, and they have been widely used in "crowd control" - in May 1981 no fewer than 16,656 plastic bullets were fired. British police had stockpiled 20,000 plastic bullets by 1986. The post-riot repression on Broadwater Farm was straight out of Belfast, complete with raids on people's homes and frame-ups.

During the 1984/5 miners strike, many mining areas were placed under police occupation. Roadblocks were extensively used to prevent the movement of flying pickets. A striking miner who had served with the army in Northern Ireland said at the time: "As far as I can see the police occupation here is exactly the same as we were doing in Northern Ireland".

The international outcry after Bloody Sunday (in Dublin a crowd marched on the British Embassy and burnt it down) helped force a change of tactics on the British Army. Since 1972, live ammunition has rarely been used on crowds; instead SAS death squads and their locally trained allies have targeted particular individuals for assassination (and anybody who gets in the way).

So far the SAS has not been used in this way in Britain. However an undercover SAS unit has been in operation here since 1984. In October 1987 the SAS used stun and CS grenades to end a jail siege at Peterhead prison. During the 1990 Strangeways riot there were calls from sections of the establishment to send in the SAS.

THE POLL TAX

"If a genuine and serious grievance arose, such as might result from a significant drop in the standard of living, all those who now dissipate their protest over a wide variety of causes might concentrate their efforts and produce a situation which was beyond the power of the police to handle. Should this happen the army would be required to restore the position rapidly" (Brigadier Frank Kitson, Low Intensity Operations).

The poll tax is potentially the "genuine and serious grievance" Kitson feared. It has lowered the standard of living of practically the entire working class, and has provided a focus for all the anger that has built up in ten years of defeats.There has been massive resistance. Millions have refused to pay, anti-poll tax groups have been set up in estates and workplaces throughout Britain, and central London has seen the most serious rioting for a hundred years.

Police have attempted to intimidate people off the streets, notably by the use of thousands of riot cops to smash the poll tax prisoners support demonstration on October 20th. Senior police officers have called for the banning of future demonstrations. Nevertheless the rioters of the 31st did not face the gas and the bullets that our comrades in Derry suffered in

1972. Why is this?

Obviously the West End is the heartland of the tourist trade; wealthy tourists and shoppers would inevitably have been caught up in gas or gunfire. A more general reason is that the state has learnt a lesson in Ireland that we can take some comfort from: repression is a double-edged sword. Bloody Sunday led, in the long run, to further resistance.

In the North of Ireland the British state can take the chance of provoking such resistance. It is dealing with the minority population of a statelet, and its propaganda machine works overtime to keep the struggles of this population isolated from the rest of us. Shooting down poll-tax protestors is another matter. The state simply did not want to risk a massive escalation of the struggle with who knows what consequences.

We shouldn't be lulled into a false sense of security however. The armoured cars and tanks and guns are ready and waiting. We might not be facing the army at the moment, but we still have a lot to learn from what's going on in the six counties. This doesn't mean that we should tool up with semtex and armalites. It does mean that we should pay a lot closer attention to what's happening just across the Irish Sea. Quite simply, Ireland shows what the British state is like with its back to the wall.

INTERNATIONALISM BEGINS AT HOME

People all over the world (including Ireland) have recognised the anti-poll tax struggle as their own. There have been actions in support of our movement in Australia, Greece, Holland, Poland and elsewhere. It is vital that we adopt a similar internationalist approach.

Some people in the anti-poll tax movement might think it's just a matter of getting rid of the Tories (even though Labour councils are sending in bailiffs against us). Some people in Ireland might think its just a matter of getting rid of *British* troops. In fact just swapping one set of bosses for another, or flying a different colour flag over the prisons, barracks, and factories, won't make any difference. Behind all their apparent differences (democratic, military, "socialist", republican, monarchist), all the governments of the world are united against the working class. All of them try to enforce the rule of the bosses' profit system with its money-work-wages routine. And all of them use force against those who seriously challenge this set-up.

We need to link up our struggles internationally and fight together for a classless world community where our needs are what counts, not capital's.

Since Trafalgar Square there have been similar working class riots in such places as Germany, Greece, France and Morocco. We could and should build links with people in these places. But if we don't even try to build links with people on our own doorstep in Ireland, the emergence of a wider internationalist perspective in Britain doesn't look very likely.

This doesn't mean becoming armchair cheerleaders for the IRA. It means linking up at a grass-roots level with struggles in Ireland, North and South. It is true that the poll tax hasn't been introduced there. For a start it would be unenforceable - as it is there are whole parts of West Belfast where people don't pay for their electricity - and besides it would risk encouraging protestant workers to unite with their catholic neighbours. However we still have plenty in common; for instance we could draw on their experience of dealing with the courts and prison system.

England had its own Bloody Sunday a hundred years ago. On 13 November 1887 socialists, radicals and Irish people came together to defy a ban on meetings in Trafalgar Square. Tens of thousands marched to the Square, protesting against "coercion in Ireland", among other things. They were attacked by the police and several people were killed. Today there is still repression in Ireland, we are still facing the police in Trafalgar Square, and our rulers are still scared of united resistance in Britain and Ireland. **Let's not wait another hundred years to turn their nightmares into reality.**

A RESPONSE

The leaflet "From Bloody Sunday to Trafalgar Square" aims to show the link between British state repression in Northern Ireland over the past 20 years and its growing and potential application over here. This relationship is obviously worth pointing out, although it has become something of a cliche amongst UK politicos. The simple formula "our enemy's enemy is our friend" seems to be enough for them to give uncritical, unconditional support to the republican struggle.

But in order to clarify and develop our understanding of Northern Ireland and its significance over here, it's necessary to go beyond the simplistic portrayals and conclusions of republicanism and the left. "From Bloody Sunday to Trafalgar Square" unfortunately mainly fails to do this and thereby tends to reinforce them; by failing to deal with the contradictions involved or ask essential questions it draws a limited and distorted picture of the situation and the issues involved. It fails for example to ask why, after the days of Free Derry when the IRA's influence was minimal, they could soon come to dominate the catholic resistance. Insurrectionary acts or radical movements over here may well face the same problems of how, in a situation where arming of a community is necessary, do we stop one group monopolising the use of arms in order to police us as much as defend us? Contrary to the image implied in the leaflet, the Brits and their allies are not the only agents of repression against the working class, and the character of their repression is largely determined by their relationship to the other forces involved. "The RUC, the Army and thousands of gas canisters had failed to subdue the insurgent working class of Belfast, Derry and elsewhere" - but the IRA and its nationalist ideology could.

Someday, the proletariat will have to turn **its** guns on the Brits, the IRA and all the other paramilitary gangsters, states and would-be states. As in all capitalist warzones, we encourage the proletariat to mutiny. The leaflet gives the impression that in Northern Ireland there is state repression and there is resistance to it; oh, and the IRA/republicanism fit in somewhere too - but let's not really talk critically about that 'cos it's too complicated and might alienate some readers (pro-republicans?) - this seems to be the underlying weight and logic to the article, which does not state that there is **inter-**capitalist warfare going on there **in order** to repress the working class. In days like these, how can one talk of any advancement of class struggle anywhere without being explicit about the role of all forms of capitalist warfare everywhere as the deadly enemy of the proletariat?

TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK IRAQ

Inside information from an uprising

The Gulf war was not ended by the military victory of America and the Allies. It was ended by the mass desertion of thousands of Iraqi conscript soldiers. So overwhelming was the refusal to fight for the Iraqi state on the part of its conscripted army that, contrary to all predictions, not one Allied soldier was killed by hostile fire in the final ground offensive to recapture Kuwait. Indeed the sheer scale of this mutiny is perhaps unprecedented in modern military history.

But these mutinous troops did not simply flee back to Iraq. On their return many of them turned their guns against the Iraqi state, sparking a simultaneous uprising in both Southern Iraq and in Kurdistan to the North. Only the central region of Iraq surrounding Baghdad remained firmly in the state's hands in the weeks following the end of the war.

From the very start the Western media has grossly misrepresented these uprisings. The uprising in the South, centred on Basra, was portrayed as a Shia Muslim revolt. Whereas the insurrection in the North was reported as an exclusively Kurdish Nationalist uprising which demanded little more than an autonomous Kurdish region within Iraq.

The truth is that the uprisings in both the North and South of Iraq were proletarian insurrections.

Basra is one of the most secular areas in the Middle East. Almost no one goes to the mosques in Basra. The radical traditions in this area are not those of Islamic fundamentalism but rather those of Arab Nationalism and Stalinism. The Iraqi Communist Party is the only bourgeois party with any significant influence in this region. The cities of Basra, Nasriah and Hilah have long been known as the region of the Communist Party and have a long history of open rebellion against both religion and the state. The "Iraqi" working class has always been one of the most troublesome in a volatile region.

In the North, there is little sympathy for the Nationalist parties - the KDP and the PUK - and their peshmergas (guerilla movements) due to their repeated failure of their compromises with the Iraqi state. This is particularly true in the Sulaimania area. The inhabitants of the area have been especially hostile to the Nationalists since the Halabja massacre. Following the chemical attack by the Iraqi airforce against deserters and civilians in the city of Halabja in 1988, the peshmergas initially prevented people from fleeing and then went on to pillage and rape those who survived the massacre. As a result, many villagers have long since refused to feed or shelter nationalist peshmergas. As in the South, the Communist Party and its peshmergas are more popular.

عشرة أيام هزة العراق

The uprising in the North was not nationalist. In the early stages Ba'athist officials and secret police were executed, police files were destroyed and the prisons stormed. People were openly hostile to the bourgeois policies of the Kurdish Nationalists. In Sulaimania the Nationalist peshmergas were excluded from the city and the exiled leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Jalal Talabani, was prevented from returning to his home town. When the Kurdish Democratic Party leader, Massoud Barzani, went to Chamcharnal, near to Sulaimania, he was attacked and two of his body guards were killed. When the Nationalists broadcast the slogan: "Now's the time to kill the Ba'athists!" the people of Sulaimania replied with the slogan: "Now's the time for the Nationalists to loot Porsches!", meaning that the Nationalists were only interested in looting.

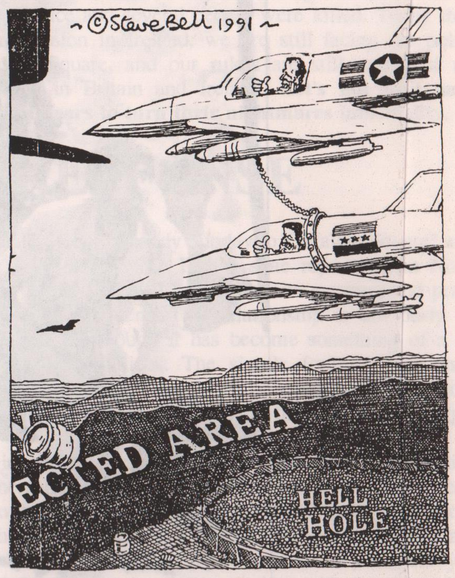
A revolutionary group, "Communist Perspective", played a major role in the insurrection. In their publication, "Proletariat", they advocated the setting up of workers' councils. This provoked fear and anger amongst the Nationalists, as well as the Communist Party and its splinter groups.

Faced with these proletarian uprisings the various bourgeois interests in the region had to suspend hostilities and unite to supress them. It is well known that the West, led by the USA, have long backed Saddam Hussein's brutal regime. They supported him in the war against Iran.

HISTORIC EMBRACE: Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani embraces Saddam Hussein on Iraqi TV.

In supporting Saddam the Western ruling class also recognised that the Ba'athist Party, as a mass based fascist party, was the only force in Iraq capable and ruthless enough to repress the oil producing proletariat.

However, Saddam's ultimate strategy for maintaining social peace in Iraq was for a permanent war drive and militarisation of society. But such a strategy could only lead to further economic ruin and the intensification of class antagonisms. In the Spring of 1990 this contradiction was becoming blatant. The Iraqi economy was shattered after eight years of war with Iran. Oil production, the main source of hard currency, was restricted while oil prices were relatvely low. The only options for redeeming war time promises of prosperity in peace were a rise in the price of oil or more war. The former choice was blocked by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Saddam's bold leap to resolve this impasse was to annex Kuwai and its rich oil fields.



This gave America the opportunity to reassert its political hegemony, not only in the Middle East, but also in the world as a whole. With the hope of exorcising the spectre of Vietnam, the Bush regime prepared for all out war. The Bush administration hoped for a quick and decisive victory that would evict Iraq from Kuwait but at the same time leave the Iraqi regime intact. However, to mobilise the home front for war, Bush had to equate Saddam with Hitler and so became increasingly committed publicly to toppling the Iraqi leader.

With this commitment the American government now sought to impose such a military defeat on Iraq that the Ba'athist Party would be obliged to replace Saddam with someone else. Indeed the Bush regime openly invited the ruling circles in Iraq to replace Saddam Hussein with the approach of the ground war in March. However, the mass desertion of Iraqi conscripts and the subsequent uprisings in Iraq robbed the American government of such a convenient victory. Instead they faced the prospect of the uprising turning into a full scale proletarian revolution, with all the dire consequences this would have for the accumulation of capital in the Middle East.

The last thing the American government wanted was to be drawn into a prolonged military occupation of Iraq in order to suppress the uprisings. It was far more efficent to back the existing state. But there was no time to insist on the removal of Saddam Hussein. They could ill afford the disruption this would cause. Hence, almost overnight, Bush's hostility to the butcher of Baghdad evaporated. The two rival butchers went into partnership.

Their first task was to crush the uprising in the South which was being swelled by the huge columns of deserters streaming North from Kuwait. Even though these fleeing Iraqi conscripts posed no military threat to Allied troops, or to the objective of "liberating" Kuwait, the war was prolonged long enough for them to be carpet bombed on the road to Basra by the RAF and the USAF. This cold blooded massacre served no other purpose than to preserve the Iraqi state from mutinous armed deserters.

Following this massacre the Allied ground forces, having swept through Southern Iraq to encircle Kuwait, stopped short of Basra and gave free reign to the Republican Guards - the elite troops loyal to the Iraqi regime - to crush the insurgents. All proposals to inflict a decisive defeat on the Republican Guards or to proceed towards Baghdad to topple Saddam were quickly forgotten. In the ceasefire negotiations the Allied forces insisted on the grounding of all fixed wing aircraft but the use of helicopters vital for counter-insurgency were permitted for "administrative purposes". This "concession" proved important once the uprising in the South was put down and the Iraqi state's attention turned to the advancing insurrection in the North.

Whereas the uprising in the Basra region was crushed almost as it began, the Northern uprising had more time to develop. It began in Raniah and spread to Sulaimania and Kut and at its height threatened to spread beyond Kurdistan to the capital. The original aim of the uprising was expressed in the popular slogan: "We will celebrate our New Year with the Arabs in Baghdad!" The defeat of this rebellion owed as much to the Kurdish Nationalists as to the Western powers and the Iraqi state.

Like all nationalist movements the Kurdish Nationalists defend the interests of the propertied classes against the working class. Most Kurdish nationalist leaders come from very rich families. For example, Talabani comes from a dynasty originally set up by the British and his parents own luxury hotels in Baghdad. The KDP was set up by rich exiles driven out of Kurdistan by the mass working class uprisings of 1958 when hundreds of landowners and capitalists were strung up. As a result of these disturbing events a meeting of exiled bourgeois in Razaeia, Iran organised nationalist death squads to kill class struggle militants in Iraqi Kurdistan. Later they carried out racist murders of Arabs. During the Iraq-Iran war very few deserters joined the nationalists and the PUK received an amnesty from the Iraqi state in return for repressing deserters.

These Kurdish Nationalists, like the international bourgeoisie, recognised the importance of a strong Iraqi state in order to maintain capital accumulation against a militant working class. So much so, in fact, that they merely demanded that Iraqi Kurdistan be granted the status of an autonomous region within a united Iraq.

In the uprising they did their best to defend the Iraqi state. They actively intervened to prevent the destruction of police files and state property, including military bases. The Nationalists stopped Arab deserters from joining the "Kurdish" uprising, disarmed them, and sent them back to Baghdad to be arrested. They did all they could to prevent the insurrection from spreading beyond the "borders" of Kurdistan which was its only hope of success. When the Iraqi state began to turn its attention to the uprising in Kurdistan the Kurdish Nationalists' radio broadcasts did not encourage or co-ordinate resistance but instead exaggerated the threat posed by the demoralised Iraqi troops still loyal to the government and advised people to flee to the mountains. Which they eventually did. None of this is any surprise if we examine their history.

Although, as we have seen, there was much hostility towards the Kurdish Nationalists, they were able to gain control and bring to halt the insurrection in Kurdistan because of their organisation and greater material resources. Having been long backed by the

OPPOSITION TO THE WAR IN IRAQ

There has been a long tradition of class struggle in Iraq, particularly since the revolution in 1958. With Saddam's strategy of a permanent war drive to maintain social peace this struggle has often taken the form of mass desertion from the army. During the Iraq-Iran war tens of thousands of soldiers deserted the army. This swelled the mass working class opposition to the war. With the unreliability of the army it became increasingly difficult for the Iraqi state to put down such working class rebellions. It was for this reason that Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against the town of Halabja in 1988.

Following the invasion of Kuwait there were many demonstrations against its continued occupation. Even the ruling Ba'athist Party was obliged to organise such demonstrations under the slogan: "No to Kuwait: We only want Saddam and Iraq!" in order to head off anti-war feeling. With the dramatic rise in the price of necessities - food prices alone rising to twenty times their pre-invasion levels - there was little enthusisasm for war. The common attitude throughout Iraq was one of defeatism.

Despite a 200% pay rise desertion from the army became common. In the city of Sulaimania alone there were an estimated 30,000 deserters. In Kut there were 20,000. So overwhelming was the desertion that it became relatively easy for soldiers to bribe their way out of the army by giving money to their officers. But these working class conscripts did not merely desert, they organised. In Kut thousands marched on the local police station and forced the police to concede an end to the harrassment of deserters.

Two days after the begining of the war anti-war riots broke out in Raniah and later in Sulaimania.

West - the KDP by the USA and the PUK by Britain - it was the Kurdish Nationalist parties that were able to control both the supply of food and information. This was vital, since after years of deprivation, exacerbated by the war, the search for food was an overriding concern. Many individuals were mainly content with looting food, rather than with maintaining revolutionary organisation and the development of the insurrection. This weakness allowed the Nationalist organisations to step in with their ample supplies of food and well established radio stations.

The war in the Gulf was brought to an end by the refusal of the Iraqi working class to fight and by the subsequent uprisings in Iraq. But such proletarian actions were crushed by the combined efforts of the various international and national bourgeois forces. Once again, nationalism has served as the stumbling block for proletarian insurrection. While it is important to stress that Middle East politics is not dominated by Islamic fundamentalism and Arab Nationalism, as it is usually portrayed in the bourgeois press, but rests on class conflict, it must be said that the immediate prospects for the development of working class struggle in Iraq are now bleak.

The war not only resulted in the defeat of the Iraqi working class but also revealed the state of defeat of the working class in the USA, and, to a lesser degree, Europe. The western anti-war movement never developed into a mass working class opposition to the war. It remained dominated by a pacifist orientation that "opposed" the war in terms of an alternative national interest: "Peace is Patriotic". While it expressed abhorrence of the Allies' holocaust it opposed doing anything to stop it that might bring it into confrontation with the state. Instead it concentrated on futile symbolic protest that simply fostered the sense of helplessness in the face of the state's war machine.

Following the defeat of the insurrection, the Western media's misrepresentation continued. The proletariat was represented as helpless victims, ripe for patronizing by the charities, grateful for the spectacles of pop stars flogging the Live Aid horse once more. For those that remembered the uprising a "Let It Be... Kurdistan" t-shirt was the obvious answer. Whilst the uprising was defeated we cannot allow its aims and the manner of its defeat to be distorted without challenge: hence this text.

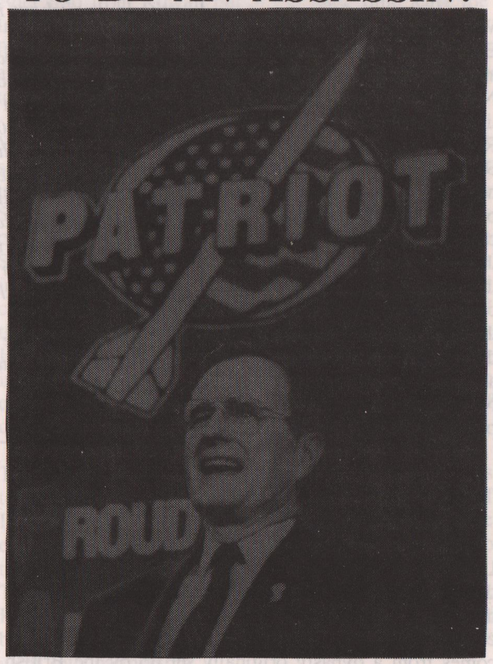
The failure of the working class to recognize its own class interests as distinct from the "national interest" and sabotage the war effort can only serve to deepen the divisions amongst our international class along national lines. Our rulers will now be that much more confident of conducting murderous wars unopposed elsewhere in the world, a confidence they have lacked since the working class ended the Vietnam war by mutinies, desertion, strikes and riots.

This leaflet was produced by revolutionaries from Iraq and Britain. For more copies or correspondence we can be contacted by writing as follows :

BM CAT, LONDON WCIN 3XX, UK., or
PO BOX 3305, OAKLAND CA 94609, USA.

Donations towards the cost of this leaflet would be appreciated.

TO BE A PATRIOT IS TO BE AN ASSASSIN!



THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

Ten Days That Didn't Overthrow Capitalism

"No-one can belittle the huge importance of the October revolution and its influence on the course of world history and the progress of mankind",

announced the chairman of the Soviet parliament in November 1990. Nevertheless, we're going to try.

The article which follows this introduction views the Russian revolution of October 1917 from the viewpoint of the inhabitants of Kronstadt, a strategic island in the Gulf of Finland, which was universally regarded as the most radical part of Russia, until it was militarily suppressed by the Bolshevik government in March 1921.

This introduction measures theories of what happened in 1917 against the events of February to October, to see what relevance, if any, these events and theories have for the communist project today.

The view that the Soviet system, resulting from the tactical genius of Lenin and the discipline of his party, is a great gain for humanity to be defended by the working class, has been somewhat eroded by that system's collapse. So too has the orthodox Trotskyist variant of this position.

Analyses which endorse October, but say that at some point between then and now, Russia became capitalist, have more life in them. Immediately after the second world war, various tendencies, for example Tony Cliff's, tried to make sense of the Red Army's rule in Eastern Europe. They worked out that wage labour prevailed in these countries, and concluded that they were dominated by a form of capitalism, which they called "state capitalism". The problem was **when** the gains of October had been lost.

This is not an academic question. Though we try to avoid the habit of seeing today in terms of 1917, there are some lessons to be drawn from then which still apply. We are **still** engaged in battles against the manoeuvres of Leninists in the class struggle in the 1990's. For this reason alone, this obituary is worthwhile. On the other hand, the funeral is long overdue. The conclusions of the following contributions are necessarily general, and many of them are non-specific to the Russian revolution.

The most dangerous of all errors made by non-Leninist tendencies analysing the Russian revolution is the critique of Leninism as undemocratic. Councilists and other democrats turn the ideology of Leninism on its head. Instead of a benevolent genius leading a clear minority through numerous dire straits to ultimate victory, councilists saw an evil genius, with an undemocratic minority party, which seized power without the approval of the majority of the working class, and thus was bound to do no good. The conclusion they draw is that only when the majority of the working class (usually in one country) have voted for the revolution is it safe for it to take place. This idea has been defended by councilists since the early twenties, and still finds an echo in the revolutionary movement of today. Democracy can only hinder the revolutionary minority. Depending on majority approval, whether in one workplace, one city, or one country, will always prevent this minority doing what needs to be done. As we argue throughout these text, what went wrong in Russia was **not** the result of a minority substituting itself for the working class.

MAJORITY RUHLES

The council communist movement arose in the 1920's in response to the Bolshevik counter-revolution and the manoeuvres of the German Communist Party (KPD). The Communist Workers Party (KAPD) had emerged from a split in the KPD, on the basis of opposition to parliament and trade unionism. The council communists, most of whom came from the KAPD and its Dutch equivalent, went further than the KAPD in their critique of the Bolsheviks. Whereas the KAPD argued that the Soviet state, the official communist parties around the world, grouped together in the Communist International, became counter-revolutionary in 1921-22, the council communists discovered that they had never been revolutionary at all.

They defended a simplified Marxist "stages" theory of history, taking at face value the claim that there had been a series of "bourgeois revolutions" which overthrew the old feudal social relations and substituted capitalist ones. These revolutions included the English in the 1640s, the French in 1789, and the German in 1848. The capitalist outcome of these revolutions was inevitable, notwithstanding the involvement of the proletariat. The clearest defence of this position can be found in *From the Bourgeois to the Proletarian Revolution* by Otto Ruhle [1]. For our critique of the concept of bourgeois revolutions, see the article in *Wildcat* 13 [2].

The councilists argued that Russia could not give birth to a

proletarian revolution because it was too backward. This argument is the same as that put forward by most of the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks prior to 1917. Capitalism in Russia, precisely because it had taken root late, was **more** advanced than that of England. Petrograd had the biggest factory in the world. The fact that the territories of the Russian Empire were full of peasants could not make a workers' and soldiers' uprising in Petrograd capitalist "in essence".

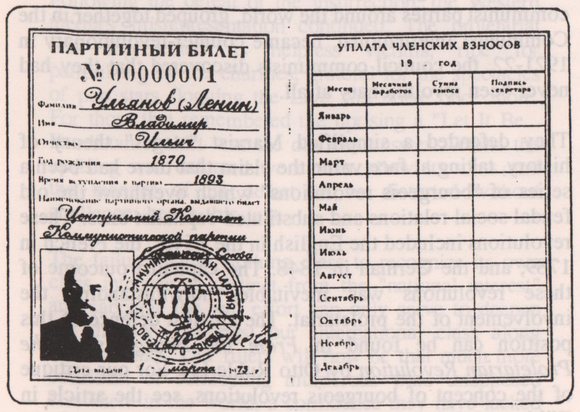
Even if Russian capitalism had been backward, this is beside the point. Petrograd was a link in a chain of industrial cities which stretched around the world, and its workers knew it. That is why they responded to Lenin's calls for an internationalist revolution.

Councilists were if anything more dogmatic and didactic in their interpretation of Marxism than their Leninist opponents:

"According to the phaseological pattern of development as formulated and advocated by Marx, after feudal tsarism in Russia there had to come the capitalist bourgeois state, whose creator and representative is the bourgeois class." ([1], p13).

But the tsars of Russia were capitalist from Peter the Great (1689-1725) onwards. Their religious beliefs did not make them feudal. The tsars, with the aid of foreign capital, had developed Russian capitalism, in particular in the shipping and related industries, creating a modern industrial base in Petrograd and Moscow. "Unlike in Western Europe, the State did not merely supervise the new industries; it directly managed the bulk of heavy industry, and part of light industry, thereby employing the majority of all industrial workers as forced labour" ([3], p3). "State capitalism" was not introduced by the Bolsheviks.

We therefore reject the councilist analysis of the origins, course and outcome of the Russian revolution. However, they do have the merit of being the first to point out the evidence for the capitalist nature of the Bolshevik regime and the social relations it supervised. In 1920, Otto Ruhle refused to take his place in the Communist International in Moscow, as the KAPD had instructed. His journey through Russia had completely disillusioned him with the idea that socialism was being built there. Ruhle attacks the Bolsheviks' national liberation policy, their giving the right of self-determination to the nations (in other words, to the bourgeoisie) of Finland, Poland, etc. as "the outcome of bourgeois political orientation" ([1], p14). He ridicules their giving land to the peasantry, though what the Bolsheviks should have done instead, he does not say. He attacks the treaty of Brest-Litovsk which brought peace between the Soviet state and German imperialism, giving the latter one last chance to step up the fight against both the Entente powers and its own working class. Ruhle points out that "nationalisation is not socialisation" and describes the Russian economy as "large-scale tightly centrally-run state capitalism... Only it is still capitalism". He equates the massacre of the Kronstadt uprising of 1921 with the suppression of the Paris Commune and the German revolution.



Lenin's Party card

The "left communist" current, in common with Cliff and other ex-Trotskyists, supports the Bolsheviks in the October revolution, but argues that the revolution degenerated because of Russia's isolation. This point of view deserves to be seriously considered, before being dismissed out of hand. The problem of **when** Russia was no longer a workers' state has caused tremendous problems to these groups, and most of them have given up trying to answer the question.

But they are generally in agreement on the primary cause of the degeneration: isolation. It is true that, if it were not supported by a revolution in the rest of the world, the Russian revolution would inevitably have led to capitalism. However, this is not why it did so. The Bolshevik regime did not try to create communism, find itself isolated, and end up implementing capitalist policies in spite of its best intentions. On the contrary, it enthusiastically administered and expanded capitalism - the exploitation of labour by means of the wages system - from its very first day in office.

"And the facts speak for themselves: after the October revolution Lenin did not want the expropriation of the capitalists, but only 'workers control'; control by the workers' shopfloor organizations over the capitalists, who were to continue to retain management of the enterprises. A fierce class struggle ensued, invalidating Lenin's thesis on the collaboration of the classes under his power: the capitalists replied with sabotage and the workers' collectives took over all the factories one after the other... And it was only when the expropriation of the capitalists had been effected **de facto** by the worker masses that the Soviet government recognized it **de jure** by publishing the decree on the nationalization of industry. Then, in 1918, Lenin answered the socialist aspirations of the workers by opposing to them the system of State capitalism ('on the model of wartime Germany'), with the greatest participation of former capitalists in the new Soviet economy." (A. Ciliga, *The Russian Enigma* [12], pp 283-284).

The Bolsheviks were already imprisoning their revolutionary

opponents before the outbreak of the civil war in 1918. They had already tried to strike deals to keep the capitalist managers in charge of the factories. As Mandel shows in *The Petrograd Workers and the Soviet Seizure of Power* [5], the factory committees frequently came into conflict with the Bolsheviks, who wanted to dissolve them into the trade unions. He also quotes the leather manufacturers' organisation in Petrograd to the effect that the Bolshevik trade unionists were preferable, as people with whom jointly to manage production, to the "anarcho-communist" factory committees. Clearly, to some extent, the factory committees attempted to continue the revolution after October in the teeth of Bolshevik opposition. We do not however idolise the factory committees, as does Brinton in *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control* [6]. Though containing useful information, it should be read in conjunction with *Factory Committees and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* [7], in which Goodey shows how simplistic it is to see the committees as the goodies and the Bolsheviks as the baddies.

Relations of production inside Russia never ceased to be capitalist. Hardly **any** attempt was made to abolish wage labour and the law of value, and **none** by the Party. The Bolsheviks did carry out nationalisations, under pressure from the factory committees, but these had nothing to do with communism.

In *"Left-Wing"* Communism [9] written two and a half years after the October uprising, Lenin argued that in Russia the trade unions were "and will long remain" a necessary means for "gradually transferring the management of the whole economy of the country to the hands of the working **class** (and not of the separate trades), and later to the hands of all the toilers". Lenin didn't claim that at that time the working class even managed the economy. They had not even instituted workers management, let alone socialism. He argued that state capitalism was a step on the road to socialism, and urged Russian socialists to "study the state capitalism of the Germans, to adopt it **with all possible strength**, not to spare **dictatorial** methods in order to hasten its adoption" (*On "Left" Infantilism and the Petty-Bourgeois Spirit*, cited in E.H. Carr, [10], p99).

Lenin and the Bolsheviks conceived of a long period of transition, during which workers would gradually exert more and more control over production and society as a whole, eventually, after many years, converting it into socialism (see [6], pp 12-13, citing Lenin, [8], p245). This would be assisted by "general state **book-keeping**, general state accounting of the production and distribution of goods", and would be "something in the nature, so to speak, of the **skeleton** of a socialist society". . In the meantime, the state would be in control of capitalist relations of production. Any Marxist should be able to work out that a state which is in control of capitalism - wage labour - is a capitalist state. In order to run the economy, it has to impose work discipline, and all the accompanying forms of repression which capitalism is heir to. The idea of a "workers' state" which will gradually transform wage labour into the free association of producers is an un-Marxist utopia. The involvement of the working class in the administration of capitalism, through Soviets, etc., just leads it into managing

its own exploitation.

Supporters of the notion of a "workers' state" will admit that, initially, such a state is in charge of a capitalist economy. What will prevent it becoming a capitalist state is the **intentions** of the people running it. They - organised in the Party - **want** to create communism. But it is again basic materialism to point out that states develop independently of the intentions of their functionaries. A state in charge of capitalism cannot transform it into communism by willpower. There has to be another way.

The concept of a "degenerated" workers' state is absurd. States are administrative bodies based on armed forces. They defend particular social relations. A state cannot degenerate. It cannot gradually change from defending the proletariat to defending the bourgeoisie. This would involve a period of transition in which it abolished wage labour with less and less enthusiasm, followed by a phase in which it defended it with greater and greater vigour, divided by an interregnum in which it couldn't quite make up its mind!

To summarily demonstrate the nature of the Bolshevik regime, we will briefly look at three areas of society in which the new regime strengthened capitalism with a resolve which must have been the envy of the liberals they had just overthrown.

The Extraordinary Commission to Fight Counter-Revolution, or Cheka, was founded on December 8 1917 "to watch the press, saboteurs, **strikers**, and the Socialist-Revolutionaries of the Right" (Daniels, [18] p90, citing the Cheka's founding decree, our emphasis). Strikers were now labelled agents of the counter-revolution, and subject to rapidly increasing repression, starting with "confiscation, confinement, deprivation of (food) cards", and ending with summary execution.

In March 1918, Trotsky abolished the elective principle in the army, replacing elected officers with former tsarist officers who, "in the area of command, operations and fighting" (in other words, everything), were given "full

responsibility" and "the necessary rights" ([18], p93). One year after the revolution which destroyed the tsar's army and navy, Trotsky restored them.

Finally, in the economy, Lenin said in April 1918: "We must raise the question of piecework and apply and test it in practice; we must raise the question of applying much of what is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system, we must make wages correspond to the total amount of goods turned out..." ([18], p96).

And he didn't just raise these questions, he answered them.

When a particular state imprisons strikers, decimates soldiers, militarises labour, cooperates with factory owners and negotiates territory with imperialist powers, its nature is clear. Such a state defends the capitalist class and the capitalist mode of production against the proletariat and the communist movement. Such was the nature of the Soviet state created by the October revolution.

WE GOT THE POWER

Between February and October 1917, the working class had a significant amount of power in Russia. Following the Petrograd mutiny of 27 February, when troops refused to shoot demonstrators and striking workers and joined them, the whole edifice of tsarist autocracy collapsed. Kerensky commented that throughout the whole of the Russian lands, there was "literally not one policeman". They crowded into the jails to avoid lynching, taking the place of thousands of hardened revolutionaries of all factions who wasted no time in getting stuck in. From February to October, a situation of "dual power" existed, with a weak bourgeois government and numerous organs of working class power. Even at the lowest points during these eight months, when the bourgeoisie was on the offensive, workers defied the bosses, and soldiers and sailors chose which orders to obey. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, led by the Petrograd Soviet, had more power than the Provisional Government, though they persistently refused to use it to destroy the latter, in fact they propped it up by sending ministers and giving it "socialist" credibility.

Finally on October 25, the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Bolshevik-dominated Petrograd Soviet smashed the Provisional Government and announced that the Soviets were now the power in the land. The Congress of Soviets elected a government, the Council of People's Commissars, or SovNarKom, to which the Soviets now gave increasing amounts of their own power. From the viewpoint of the working class, it is difficult to find any major gains resulting from October. There is one major exception: peace.

It is understandable that the Soviets, after much debate, accepted Lenin's arguments for signing a peace treaty with Germany. Most of the Soviets initially bitterly opposed the idea, arguing that a revolutionary war, even a guerilla war which would not actually beat Germany, would hasten the advent of the world revolution. But the argument that Russia was exhausted won the day. The Brest-Litovsk treaty was disastrous for the working class. It freed German militarism from fighting a war on two fronts, giving it the Ukraine, and boosted its morale (its power over its own workers), which enabled it to launch the March-July 1918 offensives on the Western front, prolonging the war.

It is impossible for us to say exactly what effect a refusal by the working class to accept Brest-Litovsk would have had. Certainly the Germans would have advanced towards Petrograd, but a communist guerilla war would have tied up vast numbers of troops, bringing forward the collapse of the Central Powers and the wave of Revolutions which eventually brought them down in November 1918. There was certainly a readiness for a fight, as shown by the debates in the Soviets, and by subsequent events in the Ukraine, where a large anarchist army fought the counter-revolution with considerable success, until it was suppressed by the Red Army (see Voline, *The Unknown Revolution*, [11]).

The Russian revolution was **not** defeated primarily because Russia was isolated by the civil war and the defeat of the German revolution - it had already been seriously undermined from within before isolation had a chance to take hold. Of course, the invasion of White Russian and imperialist armies in the summer of 1918 took its toll of surviving revolutionary gains, not least because it enabled the Bolshevik government to impose capitalist discipline and the militarisation of labour. But the Soviet government was **already** defending capital against communism before the outbreak of the civil war. So "isolation" is a feeble excuse. The suppression of Kronstadt in 1921, the most spectacular act of the Bolshevik counter-revolution, was the culmination of four years of constant attacks on the working class revolution of February 1917. Lenin succeeded where Kerensky had failed.

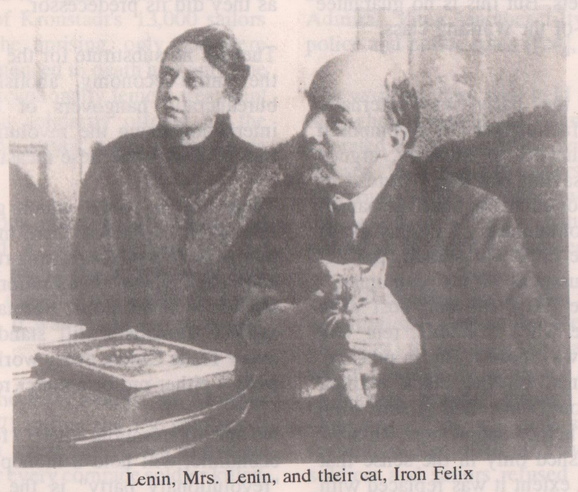
Nor were the Bolsheviks forced to conduct the civil war in the way they did by circumstances beyond their control. Insurgents in the Ukraine were capable of holding Soviet congresses to organise the struggle against the White armies. The Red Army under Trotsky ruthlessly liquidated such attempts to conduct a communist civil war against counter-revolution. Voline cites Trotsky's order no. 1824 of June 4, 1919, which calls participation in a Soviet Congress of insurgents in various regions of the Ukraine, "an act of high treason", and forbids it: "In no case shall it take place" ([11], pp596-597). Whilst the "anarchist bandits" were fighting Denikin's offensive, the Red Army attacked them from the rear.

One of the causes of the 1921 uprising was the capitalist organisation of the Red Army. This was not a consequence of the civil war, preceding it by four months. The arbitrary brutality of bourgeois military discipline is neither necessary nor possible in a class struggle army. We only have to look at Makhno's partisans to see this (see Arshinov, [13]). Another was corruption. The armed guards who checked people bringing in food from the countryside took bribes to allow black marketeers through, and took what they wanted for resale or for themselves.

It is quite clear from Trotsky's account [14] that the Bolshevik Party consistently tried to hold back the class struggle up to October 1917 until they were in a position to dominate the government which resulted from the insurrection. Had Kornilov taken Petrograd in August 1917, he would have murdered the left-wing leaders, yet when sailors from the *Aurora* visited Trotsky in prison, he urged restraint! ([14], **2**, p233).

THE FIREHOSE

Some of the writings and speeches of Bolshevik leaders at this time are impressive. Lenin's *April Theses* [15] served to radicalise the Bolshevik apparatus in 1917. The depth of this radicalisation can be gauged by the introduction of one-man management a year later. *The State and Revolution* [16], Lenin's most revolutionary work, was not published until 1918, when the counter-revolution was well under way, thus made no positive contribution. The Bolsheviks talked of a "commune-state", of "the arming of the whole people", of the "abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy", and proceeded to create a capitalist police state which disarmed the working class and gave birth to the biggest bureaucracy the world has ever seen. The more radical elements of Bolshevik propaganda had the effect of disguising a social democratic party as a communist one.


Lenin, Mrs. Lenin, and their cat, Iron Felix

The Bolsheviks were, of all the Russian underground groups, the most opposed to the formation of Soviets in 1905. In February 1917,

"Inside Russia, the most active group in St. Petersburg, the Bolsheviks, refused requests for arms from the strikers and tried to dissuade them from further demonstrations, convinced that the tide was on the ebb and that consolidation was needed." ([17], p39).

In August, "The Bolshevik leaders themselves often joked about the similarity of their warnings to the political *leit-motif* of the German social democracy, which has invariably restrained the masses from every serious struggle by referring to the danger of provocateurs and necessity of accumulating strength." ([14], **2**, p311).

A generally held view of revolution is that timing is of the essence. The prospective revolutionary class or party must choose its moment well. Too early an insurrectionary attempt will provoke repression; too late, and the revolutionaries will have missed their chance.

A proletarian revolution is only possible when the ruling class is in severe crisis, which is likely to last for months. Such was the case in Russia in 1917. In such situations, it is unlikely that the proletariat will lose much by going on the offensive. Even in the normal day-to-day life of capitalist society, it is unusual, though not unheard-of, for a genuine revolutionary group (as opposed to a leftist one) to urge restraint.

Military analogies are over-used in the class war, and often misleading. The class war is fundamentally different from a war between states. The workers are not an army until they start fighting. But in straightforward physical confrontations between classes, an understanding of timing, the balance of forces, and so on, is important. We cannot condemn the Bolsheviks simply because they held back the armed struggle. However, revolutionaries would not spend most of their time trying to hold back the class where the government is weak and the working class has real autonomous power in sections of society, including the armed forces. They would not try to prevent strikes as the Bolsheviks in the Vyborg district did ([14], **2**, p10).

The Bolsheviks' strategy of holding back the class war was not based on fear of provoking the government (what would the government have done when provoked that it couldn't have done in any case?), but on the argument that there was no coherent force to take power. They left the Provisional Government in power while they were unsure of their ability to provide an alternative administration. The government could not even control the naval fort which defended Petrograd. So when Lenin urged "caution, caution, caution", he was trying to hold back the class struggle until the Bolsheviks were in a position to use it for their own ends. To do this, he needed a more disciplined party, so he described Bolsheviks who had supported the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" against the more moderate official Bolshevik slogan "Long Live the Soviet" as guilty of "a serious crime". "Long Live the Soviet" in July 1917 meant supporting the body which, as Lenin constantly pointed out, was the main prop of the capitalist government.

In Petrograd, even at the militant Putilov factory, the Bolsheviks tried to stop the July demo, but were swept aside by the workers. The party in the Vyborg district decided it had to go along to "maintain order" ([14], **2**, p17). Although Lenin did everything he could to prevent the July 4th armed demonstration, he explained why he had to support it once it was inevitable: "For our party to have broken with the spontaneous movement of the Kronstadt masses would have struck an irreparable blow at its authority".

Describing the genesis of the July Days, Trotsky admits: "With an embarrassed shake of the head, the Vyborg Bolsheviks would complain to their friends: 'We have to play the part of the fire hose.'" ([14], **2**, p10). He candidly

describes now he persuaded the 176th regiment to defend the "socialist" ministers against the demonstrators. When the demonstrators demanded to see minister Tseretelli, leading Bolshevik Zinoviev came out and spoke: "I appealed to that audience to disperse peacefully at once, keeping perfect order, and under no circumstances permitting anyone to provoke them to any aggressive action." Trotsky adds: "This episode offers the best possible illustration of the keen discontent of the masses, their lack of any plan of attack, and the actual role of the Bolshevik party in the July events" ([14], **2**, p45). It certainly does.

LOYAL OPPOSITIONS

Our critique of October is not that it was an undemocratic coup d'etat. Firstly, because we do not believe that a majority of the working class has to endorse an assault on state power by a minority, and secondly, because the Bolsheviks did have the support of a large proportion of the most militant workers. We would not quibble over the description of the result of October as a "workers' state", since it was based on the Soviets. But this is no guarantee that it will defend the interests of the working class.

Neither do we argue that the party was internally undemocratic. The *Kommunist* faction (see [19]), composed of some of the leading Bolsheviks in Moscow, argued against the party's decisions, saying that they "Instead of raising the banner forward to communism, raise the banner back to capitalism." The left communists also opposed the Brest-Litovsk treaty. When the civil war started, the left described the situation inside Russia as "War Communism". Housing was redistributed (see [20]), rail and post were free, electricity and water free when available, rent was abolished, and so, it appeared, was money. But in practice, most of the food was obtained on the black market, otherwise even more people would have died of starvation ([20], p101). Cannibalism also helped supplement Russia's meagre diet. Money was abolished only in the sense that inflation devalued it to such an extent it was replaced with barter.

Kollontai's Workers' Opposition advocated workers' control of capitalism, via the trade unions. Nowhere in *The Workers' Opposition* [21] does Kollontai understand that Russia is capitalist. The Workers' Opposition were "the first" to volunteer for the supression of Kronstadt in 1921 at the 10th Party Congress. At this congress, the left communists lurched to the right, defending private trade. After this, factions were banned, sent to Siberia, or shot. There were nevertheless numerous oppositions formally inside the Party even after this point, some of them quite positive, for example Miasnikov's Workers' Group and Bogdanov's Workers' Truth Group:

"The soviet, party, and trade-union bureaucracies and organizers find themselves with material conditions which are sharply distinguished from the conditions of existence of the working class. Their very well-being and the stability of their general position depend on the degree to which the toiling masses are exploited and subordinated to them." (*Appeal of the Workers' Truth Group*, 1922, cited in [18], p147).

Other examples can be found in Daniels, [22], and Ciliga, [12]. The latter describes the debates among oppositionists in prison and in exile in the late twenties and early thirties, many of whom had managed to work out what had gone wrong. But by this time it was too late.

FOR ANTI-STATE COMMUNISM

It is obvious that conditions today are far removed from 1917, so we would not mechanically transfer the lessons of the proletariat's mistakes in Russia to today. However, there are some general points which can be drawn from the Russian experience. Between February and October, the proletariat had considerable power in Russia, but then rapidly lost it, and a strong capitalist state was created. When class warfare reaches a certain level, a Soviet state may emerge. However it will only be a step on the road to communism if the revolutionary workers refuse to accept the Soviet state as their own, and oppose it as intransigently as they did its predecessor.

There is no substitute for the immediate task of socialising the entire economy, abolishing money, destroying all bureaucratic hangovers of capitalist rule, and rapidly internationalising the revolution. Any organisation which tries to hold back these measures should be swept aside.

There are no forms which guarantee the success of the revolution, neither is there much point in trying to avoid particular forms, nor making rules about which pre-ordained tasks each type of organisation must take on or refuse. With obvious qualifications, Herman Gorter's 1920 formulation against formalism still stands: "...during the revolution, every Trade Union, every workers' union even, is a political party - either pro or counter revolutionary" (Gorter, [23]).

No one organisation, whether formally political or ostensibly economic, will hold a monopoly of correct positions. The "revolutionary party" is the sum of all individuals and organisations, whether formal political organisations or not, which actually defend the needs of the social revolution at a given moment. It is impossible to centralise such a minority under one command. However, immense discipline and more importantly, solidarity, will be required for such a party to act in a unified way against the bourgeoisie and its well-organised political forces, let alone its military ones.

This minority can certainly take any action - for example, the overthrow of the state - which serves proletarian goals, without endorsement from the majority of the working class. It cannot however impose communism - this can only be the product of mass activity - therefore it does not seek to create a new state power - a "workers' state" - in place of the old administration. It remains continuously in opposition to any state which is set up, participating in organising the class war until its final victory in the destruction of all states, and the creation of world communism, a free association of producers, in which the freedom of each is the condition for the freedom of all.

REMEMBER KRONSTADT

The 70th anniversary of the suppression of the Kronstadt uprising coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union, giving us two convenient excuses to reexamine the Russian revolution. This brief history of the naval fortress-town in the Gulf of Finland gives us a particular viewpoint on the revolution itself: the viewpoint of some of its most combative participants.

Following the destruction of the fleet by the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, Kronstadt joined the general uprising which swept the demoralised country. The first Kronstadt uprising in October 1905 was basically a large armed riot, accompanied by liberal political demands. The Tsarist autocracy managed to regain control after two days. Although the majority of Kronstadt's 13,000 sailors and soldiers participated in the uprising, only 208 were brought to trial. None were sentenced to death and only one to hard labour for life. This exceptionally lenient treatment was the result of the explicit solidarity offered by the workers of St. Petersburg who struck against the courts martial.

Kronstadt's second uprising took place in July 1906. The Socialist Revolutionaries and a few members of the Bolshevik Party convinced the rest of the Kronstadters that their parties would be able to organise a nationwide naval mutiny and then a revolution. It was totally unsuccessful, and brutally suppressed.

Directly after the debacle of the 1906 mutiny, the Minister of War received a letter from 71 sailors and 136 soldiers of Kronstadt who assembled in a forest and vowed to avenge their executed comrades. "...for every comrade soldier killed, we will hang three officers edgewise, and shoot another five" (I. Getzler, [24], p8).

Kronstadt's revolutionary tradition had begun.

Politically, Kronstadt was originally peasant-oriented. Land and Liberty were the main slogans. Following her humiliation by the Japanese, Russia resolved to build a modern fleet. From 1906, the Russian navy became increasingly composed of industrial workers who were capable of using and maintaining modern battleships, which had the effect of fusing the elemental aspirations of the peasantry with the class-conscious industrial proletariat.

The revolutionary spirit revived after the fall of Warsaw to the Germans on 4 August 1915, exactly one year into the First World War. Politically, patriotism was still on the ascendant, and the Kronstadt sailors mixed anti-German sentiments with their demands for better food and more humane treatment; many of their officers had German names. Nevertheless, the Kronstadters were miles ahead of the rest of the working class of Europe, who were busy killing each other. The demonstrations in Kronstadt in the summer of 1915 turned to mutiny in October. This was another failure.

As is usually the case when the barriers of discipline within the armed forces break down, the revolution in Kronstadt in February 1917 was rapid and violent. Sailors abstained from singing hymns with their officers, and refused *en masse* to reply when spoken to. Soldiers ordered to shoot the mutineers joined them instead, and Kronstadt joined the revolutionary soldiers and workers who were already in the process of destroying the Tsarist regime in Petrograd (the city's name had been Russified). They encountered little real resistance. The police ran, and most of the officers quickly saved their skins by surrendering. The revolutionaries shot Admiral Viren, another fifty officers, and around thirty police and police spies ([24], p24).

The working class now held power in Kronstadt. Whereas, throughout most of the country, the workers and soldiers tolerated an uneasy truce with the bourgeoisie, Kronstadt refused to recognise orders from the new Provisional Government. This defiance was to be its major strength for the next four years. A battleship would only sail from Kronstadt if the Soviet agreed to it.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Provisional Government of constitutional democrats, Mensheviks and Right SRs was able (just) to continue the war until October, the naval fort which guarded the approach to its capital was in a state of permanent mutiny through February, right through to October, and as we shall see, even after the Bolshevik revolution. Kronstadt effectively seceded from Russia. The soldiers and sailors refused to accept the authority of the Provisional Government, and it could do nothing about it. This was the dictatorship of the proletariat.

PARTIES AT KRONSTADT

Although the primarily peasant Socialist Revolutionary Party was until May the majority party in the Kronstadt Soviet, the Kronstadt SRs were mainly of the party's left wing. These had the same war policy as the Bolsheviks: armistice on all fronts, publication of the secret treaties, and no annexations.

There was a non-Party group at Kronstadt, led by Anatolii Lamanov. According to Getzler [24], "it rejected party factionalism" and "stood for pure sovietism". In August 1917, it joined the Union of Socialist Revolutionaries-Maximalists. They sought an immediate agrarian and urban social revolution, calling for the "socialisation of power, of the land and of the factories" ([24] p135) to be organised by a federation of soviets based on direct elections and instant recall, as a first step towards socialism. They rejected parliamentarism in principle and were against political parties, though it is not clear in what way they did not

constitute a party themselves. According to Getzler's account, they prefigured the council communist current. They urged workers to seize control of the factories, rather than merely exercising control over production while leaving ownership and management unchanged, as the Bolsheviks advocated.

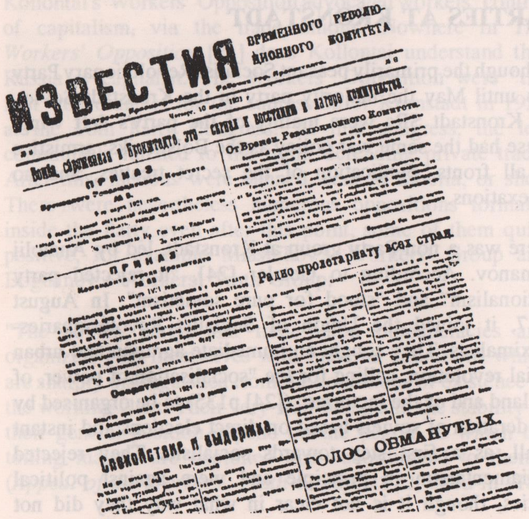
The Anarchists were less influential. There were anarcho-syndicalists, allied to the Bolsheviks, and a more piratical group led by Bleikhman, who appeared at mass meetings bristling with guns and ammunition, advocating a bloody war of class vengeance.

The Kronstadt Soviet was less party-dominated than other Soviets, in particular the Petrograd Soviet, the most powerful institution in the country from March to October. The debates at Kronstadt were **real** debates, in which the deputies, even to some extent Bolshevik ones, decided the issues on their merits, rather than on the basis of the party line. This contrasts with Petrograd, where the real business of the Soviet had been worked out by the party whips, so that "the resolutions moved by the speaker were almost automatically adopted" (Liubovitch, cited in [24] p54).

Since no political fraction is always right, it is sensible to allow members to decide issues on the basis of the arguments, not on the basis of which party the speaker belongs to. There is however a tendency to take this argument too far. If parties have no monopoly of truth, neither do soviets. The soviet form of organisation is not intrinsically more likely to produce a communist programme than a political or any other kind of organisation. Kronstadt's 1921 slogan "All Power to the Soviets and not the Parties" is no formula for success: it ignores completely the question of reactionary soviets.

The Mensheviks at Kronstadt were also on the extreme left, joining the Menshevik Internationalists, who rejected the main Menshevik Party's participation in the government and support for the war.

It is worth mentioning at this point that this factional fluidity was not restricted to Kronstadt, nor to 1917.


ИЗВЕСТИЯ ВРЕМЕННОГО РЕВОЛЮЦИОННОГО КОМИТЕТА

Голос обманутых

A copy of Kronstadt *Izvestiia* from March 1921.

Different parts of parties frequently defied the official line on this or that issue, and the Bolsheviks were no exception. When Lenin returned to Russia in April 1917, he had to admonish Bolsheviks for defencism (support for Russia in the war against Germany). As [17] makes clear, no single party or faction represented the clear programme of revolution.

The Bolshevik party certainly played no role in the February revolution at Kronstadt, since it didn't exist. Its organisation had been completely smashed by the Okhrana secret police in September 1916. Bolshevik sympathisers participated as individuals or in league with the SRs, but had no organisational connection with each other. So in the first Kronstadt Soviet elections, the Bolsheviks gained only 11 deputies. In May, they became the largest party in the Soviet, with 96 delegates.

This is remarkable considering how badly the Bolsheviks had cocked up their first intervention at Kronstadt as an organised party after March, which Getzler describes as "aggressive and shrill", and was accompanied by the publication of self-serving lies in *Pravda* about how the Bolsheviks had pulled the revolution in Kronstadt together ([24] p42).

The Bolsheviks gained the upper hand by saying what the sailors and soldiers wanted to hear, and by being better organised than the other parties. For example, they said that the bourgeois-democratic revolution had just begun, and the socialist revolution was not on the agenda, whereas Lenin's *April Theses* [15] argued that the former was complete, and the latter about to commence.

Following the Provisional Government's declaration of unswerving allegiance to the Entente's war aims on 18 April, the Bolsheviks at Kronstadt turned sharply to the left, in line with Lenin's, and increasingly the Party's, views. They were thus able to put themselves at the head of the militant mobs when these put pressure on the Soviet for a more radical break with the government. They became, along with the left wing of the anarchists, the most consistent opponents of the Petrograd Soviet's coalition with the bourgeoisie.

This position - all power to the soviets and the overthrow of the government - enabled them to win the May Soviet elections. Kronstadt Bolsheviks were able to distinguish between soviets, and said that only the more radical soviets should take power, though in practice they supported the SR position of recognising the Petrograd Soviet, despite the latter's support for the government.

The Anarcho-Communists went one better: they refused to recognise the authority even of the Kronstadt Soviet. "We, as Anarcho-Communists, can support a power only to the extent that it executes our will" ([24] p76).

The Kronstadters as a whole embarrassed the Petrograd Soviet by recognising only its authority "in matters of state", implicitly urging it to stop propping up the Provisional Government. This provoked a crisis. The Kronstadt Bolsheviks supported the unilateral declaration of

independence from the government, though Lenin rebuked them for failing to consult the Central Committee first: for such breaches of discipline, he warned, "we shall shoot!".

The war continued. But it became increasingly difficult for the Provisional Government to mobilise men for the front. At the beginning of July, according to Trotsky ([14], **2**, p6), "the offensive... was dying in convulsions". The June offensive had failed. Anti-war agitation of all sorts continued at the front and in the rear, despite desperate attempts to suppress it.

It was their anti-war policy - a just peace, with no annexations - that gave the Bolsheviks their complete victory in the Kronstadt Soviet on 23 June when it debated the Kerensky offensive. The Left SRs and Menshevik-Internationalists, as well as the Maximalists and Anarchists, agreed with the Bolsheviks' anti-war message, but it was the Bolsheviks who were the best organised propagandists in its favour.

DISCIPLINE

The central importance of organisation - but **not** of centralised party discipline - is demonstrated by Getzler's account of how Raskolnikov and the other Kronstadt Bolsheviks ensured not only Kronstadt's participation in the July Days, but their leadership of it. The impressively-named Petrograd Machine-Gunners had come to Kronstadt to ask for support for a massive armed demonstration on 4 July. The Bolsheviks and their anarchist allies were quite clear that this was to be a campaign for the overthrow of the government.

Using techniques which are familiar to anyone who encounters their epigones in the class struggle today, the Bolsheviks packed a non-quorate meeting of the Soviet Executive Committee with "some 30 unverified representatives of armed units" ([24], p113), and then used their domination of this meeting to organise the arming and transportation of Kronstadters to Petrograd. But the rascally Raskolnikov and his comrades did something today's Leninists would never have the audacity to do. Telephoning the Bolshevik Central Committee, he told them he was unable to hold back the masses, whereas he hadn't even tried, but rather had done everything in his power to ensure Kronstadt's participation in the July days under Bolshevik leadership. This had the effect of galvanizing the Central Committee into action (see "The Hunt for Red October"). When the 10-12,000 armed men of Kronstadt arrived in Petrograd, the Bolsheviks led them straight to HQ at Smolny. First, Bolshevik speakers tried to persuade them to go home ([14], **2**, p21). When this didn't work, the Bolsheviks bored them with speeches and lined them up behind the banner of the Central Committee.

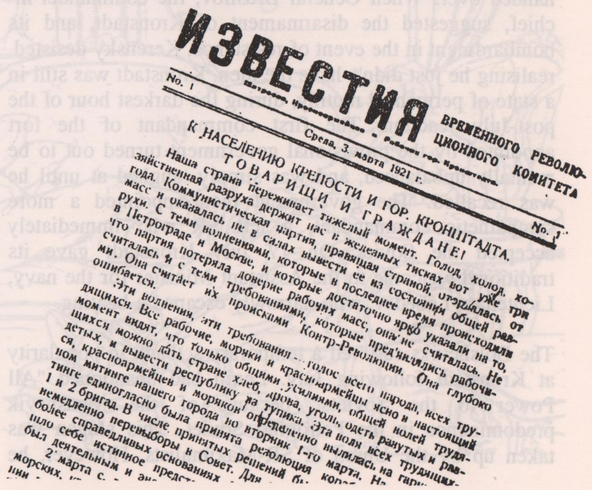
Those who propose democratic solutions to the manoeuvres of today's leftist parties should think again. What was right and wrong about Raskolnikov moving the goalposts on 3 and 4 July coincides in no way to what was democratic or undemocratic about it. For a minority to outmanoeuvre its more conservative opponents by bending the rules in order to achieve a step forward in the class struggle is a fine thing.

It is the **content** of an organisation's activity that counts, not its form. For example, packing meetings is not in itself reactionary, but claiming that participants are valid because they have been elected is. It depends on what they are doing - are they sidestepping an obstacle in the class struggle or creating one? Raskolnikov's creative approach to party discipline - acting first, then informing the leadership - is a useful counter-example to advocates of military hierarchy as the model for organisation.

The same applies to the larger example of the October uprising. The fact that the Military Revolutionary Committee did not wait for the Congress of Soviets to endorse the attack on the provisional government before acting is not a sin. Our critique is of the Bolshevik Party's capitalist programme.

The July Days ended in failure. The Kronstadters were not all veterans, and when someone fired at the demo, panic broke out. Their lack of confidence is shown by this episode and by their behaviour outside the Tauride Palace, the seat of the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee, where Trotsky and the Bolsheviks managed to rescue the SR minister Chernov from lynching by the Kronstadters. In a speech which sounds ironic in the light of his more critical evaluation four years later, Trotsky addressed the sailors as the "pride and glory of the Russian revolution", and went on to persuade them to free "comrade Chernov".

Could the working class have seized power in July? Trotsky, in [14] **2**, looks at the situation on the Russo-German Front, quoting a representative letter from a soldier. The soldier threatens to bayonet the Provisional Government, but says "we don't understand very well about parties". According to Trotsky, the army "mutinied constantly, but was far from ready to raise an insurrection in order to give power to the Bolshevik Party" (p 70). He then admits that in many other areas of the country, the Soviets were ready to take power. He adds that, immediately after the suppression of the July demonstrations, news came through from the front that the June offensive had collapsed. This would certainly have aided an insurrection had one


ИЗВЕСТИЯ ВРЕМЕННОГО РЕВОЛЮЦИОННОГО КОМИТЕТА

К НАСЕЛЕНИЮ КРЕПОСТИ И ГОР. КРОНШТАДТА.

ТОВАРИЩИ И ГРАЖДАНЕ!

been tried. Finally, the Bolsheviks' opposition to the demonstrations significantly reduced the chance of an uprising. Trotsky candidly explains how the Bolsheviks acted as a "firehose" during the hot summer of 1917 (see "The Hunt for Red October").

He argues that the Bolsheviks urged restraint in July in case they would be blamed for causing the collapse of the war offensive. But, he admits, they were blamed in any case. The offensive had already collapsed, this was already known in the capital, and would have been more widely known had the Bolsheviks publicised it. The working class had every interest in undermining the war effort, and openly boasting of the demoralising effect of its unpatriotic action. The ease with which the working class deflected Kornilov's attempted coup shows how much power it still had directly after the July counter-revolution.

Trotsky was only interested in whether the workers could have put the Bolsheviks in power in July. In spite of weaknesses on the proletarian side, the government was weaker. The class **could** have smashed the Provisional Government. One of the things which stopped them is the Bolsheviks.

In spite of major downturns, the proletariat had power between February and October, but consistently failed to use it to destroy the power of capital. Even after October, the soviets were the power in the land, together with the factory committees and to some extent peasant committees. Inasmuch as they gave this power to the reactionary leadership of the Bolsheviks, they undermined their own. The Brest-Litovsk treaty with Germany in 1918 was certainly an error by the working class - the soviets were persuaded to accept Lenin's argument for peace with imperialism. Although the soviets weren't ideal means for representing the will of the class, there is no reason to believe better forms would have had a markedly different content.

The July Days finished in fiasco, but not in rout. The government were only able to institute the mildest counter-revolution at Kronstadt: two of the Bolshevik leaders were arrested, red flags were taken down, and the imprisoned tsarist officers (held by Kronstadt since February) were handed over. When General Brusilov, the commander-in-chief, suggested the disarmament of Kronstadt, and its bombardment in the event of resistance, Kerensky desisted, realising he just didn't have the men. Kronstadt was still in a state of permanent mutiny, during the darkest hour of the post-July reaction. The first commandant of the fort appointed by the provisional government turned out to be mentally unbalanced, and was simply laughed at until he was recalled. The government then appointed a more sympathetic commandant, a left SR who immediately accepted the Soviet. On 17 July Kronstadt gave its traditional welcome to the Assistant Minister for the navy, Lieutenant Lebedev, who narrowly escaped a beating.

The Bolsheviks suffered a temporary setback in popularity at Kronstadt following July. Lenin had abandoned "All Power to the Soviets" because of the Menshevik predominance in the Petrograd Soviet. This slogan was taken up by the Union of SR-Maximalists. However, he reintroduced it when his party gained a majority in the Soviets.

Kronstadt played a key role in the October 25 uprising, storming the Winter Palace, arresting the provisional government and defending Petrograd against the attempted comeback by Kerensky. Approximately 4,000 Kronstadters constituted nearly 40% of the naval force which in turn made up the bulk of the Petrograd Soviet's team on the day. The Bolsheviks rewarded their loyalty in March 1921.
The back-stabbing started immediately after October. The Kronstadt Bolsheviks helped the central government undermine workers' power on the island. They opposed the election of a commissar to "liaise" with Petrograd, supporting the Soviet constitution of June 1918 which subordinated local Soviets to the "corresponding higher organs of Soviet power", in other words to the capitalist state. The Bolsheviks had an easier time suppressing the other parties in Russia than at Kronstadt. Kronstadt had an "Investigation Commission" which originally looked into the cases of the tsarist officers. By 1918, its main role was to combat drunkenness. The Bolsheviks wanted to give it much more policing power on the pretext that it needed to "totally root out all gambling" (crack hadn't been invented). The Maximalists opposed the policy, as in March the entire Investigation Commission had been arrested by the Soviet Executive for taking bribes. Corruption was one of the main targets of Kronstadt's "third revolution" in March 1921.

SOCIALISATION NOT NATIONALISATION

Kronstadt was a little town as well as a naval fortress, with various factories and workshops. Like most of the military substructure of Russia, this industry was state-owned, and was therefore easy to transfer to local soviet then to Soviet state control.

However Kronstadt went further than implementing state capitalism and calling it socialism. The Kronstadters, unlike the Bolshevik government, had some idea of **socialising** the economy as opposed to **nationalising** it, for example, in 1918 they socialised housing, and distributed it on the basis of need.

The Bolsheviks and Mensheviks formed a united front against the abolition of private property in housing, and its replacement with management committees elected by tenants. The Bolsheviks, acting on instructions from SovNarKom, used various delaying tactics to try to avoid discussing the issue and implementing socialisation at Kronstadt, arguing that they should wait for Lenin to issue a decree on the subject. They were outvoted by the Left SRs, Maximalists and anarchists. A few Bolsheviks who voted for socialisation were expelled from the party.

Housing was reorganised so everyone had roughly the same amount of space, in place of the tremendous inequality which had prevailed before 1918. The Bolsheviks defended privilege against the first tentative steps towards communism, in Kronstadt as everywhere else.

Unfortunately, our main source on this question, Voline, a leading authority on anarchism, is concerned solely with the

democratic forms which socialisation took. House Committees sent delegates to Street Committees, then came the District Committees, the Borough Committees, and finally the City Committee ([11] p457). The militia was also democratically elected. These democratic, libertarian policemen "functioned admirably", of course, along with all the other public services. But one day, along came the wicked Bolsheviks, who subverted the autonomous administration and replaced it by "a mechanical statist organisation controlled by officials" ([11] p458). This misses the central point, that the Bolshevik appointed police served the interests of capitalism, by defending the state, which was opposing the tentative communist movement.

The Kronstadt Soviet was itself constantly pressurised by mass meetings, generally held in Anchor Square. For example, on 25 May 1917, a large crowd, inspired by Bolshevik and anarchist speakers, marched to the Naval Assembly and forced the leaders of the Soviet to rescind their agreement with the more moderate Petrograd Soviet. The more reactionary elements were often manhandled by mobs. Kronstadt's hagiographers tend to downplay the less democratic aspects of the fortress's daily life. If we knew more, we would redress the balance.

On 18 April 1918, the Kronstadt Soviet denounced the Moscow Soviet's round-up of anarchists. The Bolsheviks had a struggle to exert control. This appeared to be over when the 5th Congress of Soviets purged the Left SR's in July following the assassination of the German ambassador and their attempt to organise peasant uprisings. Kronstadt's Left SR's were expelled from the Soviet, giving the Bolsheviks a solid majority. The Menshevik Party, its hands stained with workers' rather than diplomats' blood, was allowed to organise until the end of 1920.

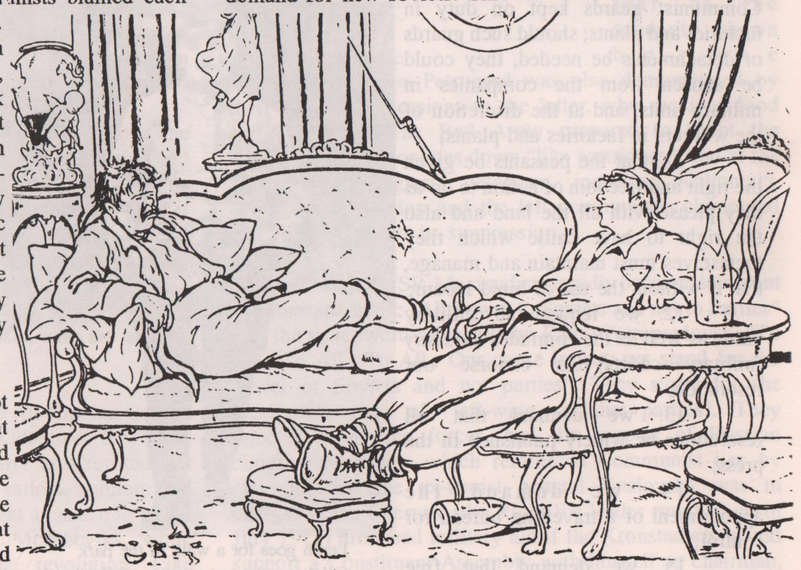
As the civil war progressed, the rule of the Communist Party at Kronstadt became more and more repressive, bureaucratic, paranoid and arbitrary. The more strident its propaganda, though, the more evident its fragility. The country was in chaos, and the Communists blamed each other as well as everyone else. Undoubtedly, the white and foreign armies helped finish off the revolution, strengthening the Bolshevik dictatorship. However, the communist tradition at Kronstadt had been suppressed by the Bolsheviks, its rank-and-file committees replaced by party ones, and its debates by histrionic propaganda issued from the Soviet government, **before** it was put in the front line of the civil war by Yudenich's White North-Western Army in May 1919.

The third revolution of 1921 was not primarily a response to conditions at Kronstadt. It was not chiefly motivated by Communist Party dictatorship at the fortress, despite the opulent lifestyle openly enjoyed by the apparatchiks at Kronstadt and in Petrograd, compared with the relative austerity imposed on the sailors and soldiers. Kronstadt was, from the start of the civil war, a holiday camp compared to the rest of Russia, in which millions died of starvation. In the countryside, the only way out for many people was to become corrupt Communist Party officials. Kronstadters on leave couldn't avoid noticing the contrast between the ideals of socialism and the reality. Soldier Egorov described how the Communists "lorded it over us in a manner never before permitted to any except the village policemen of tsarist days" and "took the bread not from those they should have taken it from, but only from those who were not their friends", and "went on the train and, sheltering behind the word 'requisition', robbed everyone of whatever took their fancy, but spared the speculators - this fact was obvious".

"An analysis of 211 complaints that had arrived in the Complaints Bureau of the Politotdel [Political Committee] of the Baltic Fleet by the end of 1920, many lodged by the crews of the "Petropavlovsk", the "Sevastopol" and the minelayer "Narova", has shown that the abuses of provincial authorities, the injustice of forced grain collections and illegal requisitioning provided the major focus of discontent." ([24], p209).

Conditions in the countryside fanned the Kronstadters' discontent, but it was contact with the Petrograd industrial proletariat which sparked off the uprising.

Faction fighting within the Communist Party led to the virtual collapse of its supposedly iron discipline at Kronstadt at the beginning of 1921. One third of party workers on the island left during 1920 ([24], p211). Unauthorised sailors' meetings began to take place in February 1921, at the same time as strikes against austerity in Petrograd. The government introduced martial law and made mass arrests. The Kronstadters, defying the commissars, sent a delegation. Most workers were too terrorised by the Cheka to speak. One did, and told the delegation of the starvation and repression which the workers had to endure, and of the demand for new soviets. This demand was backed by the



Mensheviks. The party which had supported the war and the Provisional Government now called for new soviet elections to bring the state into the hands of the toilers, and the true realisation of "the workers' democracy" ([24], p213). Reactionary parties always support some of the workers' demands in any struggle against capitalism so as not to become totally discredited. The Kronstadters returned to the battleship Petropavlovsk and adopted 15 resolutions:

"1. That in view of the fact that the present Soviets do not express the will of the workers and peasants, new elections by secret ballot be held immediately, with free preliminary propaganda for all workers and peasants before the elections;

2. freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants, anarchists and left socialist parties;

3. freedom of assembly for trade unions and peasant associations;

4. that a non-party conference of workers, Red Army soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt and Petrograd Province be convened not later than 10 March 1921;

5. the liberation of all political prisoners of socialist parties, as well as all workers and peasants, Red Army soldiers and sailors imprisoned in connection with the working-class and peasant movements;

6. the election of a commission to review the cases of those who are held in jails and concentration camps;

7. the abolition of all political departments because no single party should have special privileges in the propaganda of its ideas and receive funds from the state for this purpose; instead of these departments, locally funded cultural-educational commissions should be established, to be financed by the state;

8. that all roadblock detachments [to prevent food smuggling] be removed immediately;

9. the equalisation of the rations of all toilers, with the exception of those working in trades injurious to health;

10. the abolition of the Communist fighting detachments in all military units, as well as various Communist guards kept on duty in factories and plants; should such guards or detachments be needed, they could be chosen from the companies in military units, and at the discretion of the workers in factories and plants;

11. that the peasants be given the right and freedom of action to do as they please with all the land and also the right to have cattle which they themselves must maintain and manage, that is without the use of hired labour;

12. we request all military units, as well as the comrades *kursanty* (military cadets) to endorse our resolution;

13. we demand that all resolutions be widely published in the press;

14. we demand the appointment of a travelling bureau for control;

15. we demand that free handicraft production by one's own labour be permitted." ([24], pp213-214).

Lenin goes for a walk in the park following the suppression of Kronstadt.

Some of these demands, if granted, would have aided the proletariat. Those that wouldn't, would hardly have made the situation worse. A wider movement of the class at that time would not have overthrown capitalism, but it would have weakened it, and demoralised the shaky Leninist regime, making it harder for the Party to raise its blood-stained flag over the corpse of the revolution. There is **always** a class struggle, and it is **always** worth fighting. This refutes those who try to take a neutral position on the class war at Kronstadt, on the grounds that the uprising could not have succeeded. This includes most of the left communist groups, for example the Internationalist Communist Party [4].

A TERRIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING?

The PCInt. realise there was something amiss in Russia. "In the factories the odious methods of Taylorism were returning in order to increase efficiency and production". This refers to the introduction of time-and-motion schemes. But these methods weren't introducing themselves, they were being imposed on the working class by the Bolshevik government. The chief advocate of Taylorism was the head of government, the PCInt's hero, Lenin. In a similar jeu de mots, they say "a hierarchical order was reinstalled" in the Baltic Fleet after 1917, "annulling the revolutionary spirit which the Bolsheviks had been responsible for introducing". As can be seen from our account, the Bolsheviks had had nothing to do with the revolutionary spirit of the fleet, other than the introduction of the hierarchical order which "annulled" it.

You would have to be very athletic to sit on the fence over such a clear-cut battle of class against class, and the PCInt. don't quite manage it. First they try to use the aftermath of the revolt to smear the rebels. The leaders, they say,

"though to the left of the communist party in words, took refuge in Finland once the revolt was suppressed, and fell into (or more accurately re-entered) the arms of the counter-revolution, with whom they shared ideas and positions."

But the Communist Party didn't merely share ideas and positions with the counter-revolution, it was its main instrument. The fact that the survivors fled to Finland is hardly surprising: there was nowhere else to go. In defence of their attempted neutrality, the PCInt. plead the complicated nature of the situation: the insurgents had various confused ideas. But what proletarian movement doesn't? The Kronstadt program contains various confusions, such as belief in democracy, but when thousands of workers take up arms against a corrupt police state which jails strikers,

decimates soldiers and exiles revolutionaries, this is class war. At no point in their analysis of Kronstadt do these Marxist-Leninists use class as a category. Yet they accuse the anarchists of precisely this failing: "... social conflict, rather than being seen as a dispute between classes, is depicted as a dispute between two opposing tendencies; authority on the one hand and liberty on the other."

The Bolsheviks suppressed the anarchist groups in Moscow in April 1918, not because of their idealist conception of history, but because of their opposition to capitalism. The anarchists and the SR-Maximalists clearly saw the Kronstadt revolt as a struggle of the proletariat against capital.

At one point in its failed attempt to sit on the fence, the PCInt. tries to stand on both sides at once. It admits that the uprising was revolutionary, then says that the Bolsheviks considered the uprising to be "simply a conspiracy by Entente spies" (p33). Lenin knew that the Kronstadters were neither for the Bolsheviks nor the counter-revolution but they were "taken advantage of by skilful international centres of counter-revolution". Finally, it quotes Victor Serge: "Insurgent Kronstadt was not counter-revolutionary, but its victory would have led inexorably to the counter-revolution". To summarise, the Italians argue that the Kronstadt uprising was revolutionary, counter-revolutionary, and neither. We hope nobody thinks we have deliberately chosen this article in order to make our own analysis look clearer.

The assassination of the German ambassador.

They can't hide in no-man's-land for ever.

"The Russian emigres, indirectly supported by the imperialist forces of the Entente, were plotting. Plotting and scheming too were the provocateurs inside the revolt. Given these last two points, the repression of the revolt - even if it opened up a chapter of deep agony in the workers' movement, had more than enough reasons to justify itself." ([4], p35).

We prefer the position of the Trotskyists, who are at least honest about the need to take sides.

Back to reality. Kalinin, chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets, addressed the mass meeting called by the Communist Party at Kronstadt on March 1st. Kalinin pleaded with the sailors, soldiers and civilians to give the people's government a chance to repair the economy, and not to listen to Mensheviks, white guardists, and other enemies of the revolution. Like Ceausescu in 1989, he was heckled off the rostrum. The uprising had begun.

It was too late for party hacks to flatter the "pride and glory of the Russian revolution". New Soviet elections were held, and not a single Communist won. The Petropavlovsk resolutions became Kronstadt's manifesto. The senior military commanders, some of them old tsarist officers who had been placed in charge of Kronstadt by the Communist Party, agreed to serve as specialists under the orders of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee and under the close control of elected rank-and-file committees. Whilst Lenin allowed himself the luxury of arguing that the Kronstadters wanted only to "correct Bolshevik policy", though this put them **objectively** on the side of the white guards, Trotsky, as head of the Red Army, simply said that the Kronstadters were **controlled** by white guard tsarist generals. This is a lie for two reasons. Firstly the ex-tsarist officers were not white guards, and secondly, they were controlled by the Kronstadters, not the other way round. Whereas Trotsky, when he put the ex-tsarist officers in charge in March 1918, had abolished sailors' and soldiers' control by decree.

The Communist response to the third revolution is well known. Red Kronstadt had become a white guard, Black Hundred, right-wing, Left-SR counter-revolution. Kronstadt was militarily isolated to prevent links with the mainland being maintained. The Communists' fear of the solidarity shown by the Petropavlovskii for Petrograd was also demonstrated by their sudden concessions to the latter, who received food and clothing. The Red Army prepared to shoot the Kronstadt revolutionaries down "like partridges", and at the 10th Party Congress, delegates, including Kollontai's Workers' Opposition and the left communists, clamoured and volunteered for its suppression.

The politics of the SR-Maximalists rapidly became dominant at Kronstadt again: "All Power to Soviets and not to Parties" was the watchword broadcast by Radio Petropavlovsk. "To All.. To All.. To All.. Our cause is just: we stand for the power of Soviets and not parties". They stood for the legalisation only of "left-wing socialist parties". They rejected right-wing forces, and the support of Russian emigre newspapers which reinforced Communist lies by claiming that the ex-tsarist general Kozlovsky was in charge. When Chernov (the Right-SR leader roughed up in July 1917) promised military aid if the Kronstadters would support a Constituent Assembly with himself as chairman,

it was rejected by a large majority.

Ironically, Kozlovsky's military advice might have saved many of the Kronstadters, but they refused to attack the supply depot at Oranienbaum, relying on a policy of "passive defence" and waiting for a Soviet revolution to occur on the mainland. But the working class as a whole was too demoralised to fight. Instead of a delegation of workers, Kronstadt woke up on 17 March to find a delegation from the 10th Party Congress, accompanied by 45-50,000 troops, advancing across the ice. Whereas in 1905 the Kronstadters were rescued by the Petrograd workers, by 1921 the counter-revolution had taken its toll, and the bloody suppression of the mutiny was totally successful. The last sparks of the Russian revolution were snuffed out. Capitalism had finally found the regime it needed. Only now has the Leninist counter-revolution served its purpose.

One-quarter of the delegates from the Party Congress (279), plus 2,758 additional party volunteers, stiffened the resolve of the Red Army battallions. They realised that ordinary Red Army soldiers were unreliable in a battle against Red Kronstadt; many had to be "driven at gunpoint onto the ice" ([24], p243). Communist Party members suffered up to 80% losses in dead and wounded; greater than the number of Kronstadters killed in the battle of March 17th-18th or subsequently executed. Now the system they died for has itself undergone a terminal experience.

REFERENCES FOR *THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER* AND *REMEMBER KRONSTADT*

[1] *From the Bourgeois to the Proletarian Revolution*, Otto Ruhle, Revolutionary Perspectives, 1974 (out of print).

[2] *1789 and All That*, Wildcat no. 13, London, 1989.

[3] *Notes on Class Struggle in the USSR*, Red Menace, London, 1989.

[4] *Kronstadt 1921: An Analysis of a Popular Uprising in Russia at the Time of Lenin*, Revolutionary Perspectives no. 23, 1986.

[5] *The Petrograd Workers and the Soviet Seizure of Power*, D. Mandel, MacMillan 1984.

[6] *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control*, M. Brinton, Solidarity, London, 1970.

[7] *Factory Committees and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, C. Goodey, Critique no. 3, Glasgow, 1973.

[8] *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*, V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, **4**, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1950.

[9] *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, V.I. Lenin, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1950.

[10] *The Bolshevik Revolution*, **2**, E.H. Carr, Penguin, London, 1966.

[11] *The Unknown Revolution*, Voline, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 1975.

[12] *The Russian Enigma*, A. Ciliga, Ink Links, London, 1979.

[13] *History of the Makhnovist Movement 1918-1921*, P. Arshinov, Black & Red, Detroit, 1974.

[14] *The History of the Russian Revolution*, L. Trotsky, Pathfinder, New York, 1980 [3 vols. in one].

[15] *The April Theses*, V.I. Lenin, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1951.

[16] *The State and Revolution*, V.I. Lenin, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976.

[17] *Clarity and Unity in the Russian Revolution*, Communist Bulletin no. 10, Aberdeen, 1987.

[18] *A Documentary History of Communism*, **1**, ed. R.V. Daniels, Tauris & Co., London, 1985.

[19] *Theses of the Left Communists*, N. Bukharin et. al., Critique, Glasgow, 1977.

[20] *The Russian Revolution*, **1**, W.H. Chamberlain, Grosset and Dunlap, New York.

[21] *The Workers' Opposition*, A. Kollontai, Solidarity, London.

[22] *The Conscience of the Revolution*, R.V. Daniels, Harvard University Press, 1960.

[23] *Open Letter to Comrade Lenin*, H. Gorter, Wildcat, London, 1989.

[24] *Kronstadt 1917-1921 - the Fate of a Soviet Democracy*, I. Getzler, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

TERROR AND DEMOCRACY -

TWO FACES OF THE KRUGERRAND

The reformist De Klerk regime in South Africa is not the only government which is implicated in the massacres of black proletarians by Inkatha mobs.

The international ruling class approve of and support the massacres, just as warmly as they support the abolition of apartheid. The EC decided to drop the ban on investment in SA after sending a delegation there at the height of the terror. The delegates must have known that the police and army were working with the Zulu fascist movement Inkatha to terrorize the working class in the townships. As the terror grew, the USA lifted sanctions against the SA government, welcoming it back into the community of civilized nations.

Democracy cannot succeed without terror and vice versa. Both are means to neutralise the class struggle. SA has been one of the main centres of class warfare since 1976, with various highs and lows, and since 1985, has seen a permanent mobilization of proletarian autonomy on numerous fronts - rent strikes, workplace struggles, attacking local councillors, squatting, defying racist laws. This has seriously disrupted the accumulation of capital, and forced the Afrikaner ruling class to undertake a remarkable shift to the left, even abandoning the Population Registration Act, the central pillar of apartheid.

The working class of SA was not prepared to give up its struggle in return for Nelson Mandela at the beginning of 1990. The newly legalised ANC were unable to control the class struggle, so the role of Inkatha was greatly expanded. Random murderous attacks on commuter trains were added to its rampages through the townships. The resulting climate of fear has undermined the working class's ability to organise itself. The ANC call for police protection for the townships and the inhabitants are often so desperate they go along with this. For all its talk of armed struggle, the ANC has never actually armed its supporters inside SA. Instead it has **negotiated** with Inkatha; as if the slaughter it perpetrates on behalf of the state is just the result of an unfortunate misunderstanding. The South African state has been developing Inkatha as a scabbing and policing organisation since 1974, making use of the division between permanent township residents and male migrant workers in hostels. It is significant that only in the last 18 months has this been really successful. Without the pacifying influence of the ANC terror could be nowhere near as effective.

When eventually the ANC deliver what the government wants - the suppression of the working class struggle - the pogroms will be wound down, and the ANC can tell the proletariat not to make trouble, for fear of provoking another wave of terror. Then democracy will be fully implemented, with the new nominally non-racial National Party and the ANC as the two major capitalist parties, together with all kinds of racially-based political gangs continuing to divide the proletariat.

The ANC has been put in its place. The international bourgeoisie were genuinely worried about the unreconstructed Stalinism of most of the ANC leadership, and found their Damascan conversion to multi-party democracy unconvincing. ANC leaders were among the few people in the world to announce support for the short-lived coup in Moscow. The ruling class didn't want a Romania in SA, with Winnie Mandela playing the role of Elena Ceausescu.

Hence her trial, and hence the attacks on ANC hacks as well as on the working class. They didn't charge Winnie with the murder of 14 year old Stompie Moeketsi, because she and her husband are too important. But they made clear to the Mandelas and their private police force, colourfully known as "Mandela United Football Club", that they must clean up their act. For example, bribing people to keep quiet about ANC torture, murder and abduction may be just as effective as threatening to kill them. The ANC, like Winnie Mandela's victims, is being whipped into shape.

Terror and democracy constitute a powerful capitalist offensive against the working class which is difficult to fight. There is no doubt that the class struggle in SA is going through a setback. We don't know how long it will be before the working class turns against democracy as effectively as it fought apartheid.

Winnie Mandela: more popular in North London than East London