

# PLATFORM

## of the

# Communist

# Bulletin

# Group

### Class Society

The exact age of humanity is unknown but current estimates put it somewhere between one and four million years. Class Society, a society in which one class of men dominates all other classes is perhaps only six thousand years old: in terms of human history, an extremely short period of time.

For the vastly greater part of his existence on Earth man has been a cooperative communal-living being. Class Society, in an attempt to make legitimate and to perpetuate its existence, has thrown up an elaborate ideological facade which tries to peddle the lie that how man is today is how he has always been, conveniently forgetting the thousands of years before Class society. Human nature is portrayed as base, brutish and unchanging, rather than as a product of the base, brutish nature of Class society.

The high point of Class society - Capitalism - has, as is to be expected, spawned the greatest refinement of this lie: that the pinnacle of human potential is - Capitalism. It is Marxism alone which has challenged this lie and which has pointed to the historical movement of all class societies; Marxism alone which has shown that such societies have gone through periods of ascendancy which are then inescapably followed by a period of decadence. Ascendant when they have served a progressive function in developing man's potential to develop the productive forces and control the world and enjoy freedom from want; decadent when the revolutionary thrust of the particular class society has come up against the limits of its own historic period and has thus become a barrier to further human development.

Thus Slave society, which destroyed the hundreds of thousands of years old communal society of primitive man was revolutionary and progressive in that it laid the foundations for a subsequent development of thought and technology which, after subsequent centuries of decadence and stagnation, gave birth to Feudalism. And Feudalism in turn gave birth, with its further creation of both a potential proletariat and a productive surplus, to Capitalism; a Capitalism which, through revolution, swept aside Feudalism's decadence.

Capitalism's ideology would have us believe that this latest and most profound class society is eternal. It is not. Capitalism is based on the creation of and the exploitation of a collective producer class - the Proletariat. Despite the barrage of capitalist ideology which attempts to fragment, privatise, isolate and individualise workers, that collectivity is absolute and is as international as Capitalism itself. Capitalism has, as Marx noted, produced its own gravediggers.

The proletariat, as with all previous classes which would become revolutionary, threw up a political expression - in this case Marxism - which even in the period of capitalist ascendancy was able to identify the logic of previous human development and predict the finite nature of Capitalism.

### The Development of Capitalism

Capitalism, up to the end of the Nineteenth Century, despite all its appalling exploitation and horrific conditions, was progressive. It created a world wide social system, created a world wide revolutionary class and developed technology and man's control of his environment to the point where all mankind's material needs can be potentially met. It also during this period of ascendancy was able to provide real gains for the working class upon demand, for the proletariat could and did ally itself to progressive factions of the bourgeoisie to further its own, and Capitalism's ends.

### Decadence

But 1914 marked the definitive end of Capitalism's progressive period. Up until then its wars had been wars of capitalist expansion; its crises had been crises of growth. By 1914 the world was already carved up between the capitalist states. Expansion could only take place at the expense of rival capitals. And Capitalism had to expand to fuel the accumulation that is the motor of its existence. From 1914 Capitalism began to feed upon itself - it had become decadent. The working class it depended upon now became a revolutionary class, a fact dramatically driven home by the victorious Russian revolution, and indeed by the Europe-wide upheavals of the revolutionary wave of 1917 to 1921. As the Third International proclaimed:

" A new epoch has opened - the epoch of proletarian revolution."

### The Revolutionary Wave

It is within the political expressions of this wave that we locate our roots. From Lenin and the Bolsheviks of course, who played such a major role in the initial unfolding of the revolutionary wave and in the efforts preceding that to break from the decaying elements of the Second International, but more specifically from the Left fractions of the Communist movement - the K.A.P.D., the Dutch Tribune Group and the Abstentionist Fraction of the Italian Left, who fought a rearguard action against the decay of the Third International which rapidly became a defender of the counterrevolution in Russia with the downturn and defeat of the revolutionary wave.

### The Counterrevolution

This counterrevolution was a direct product of the failure of the workers of other countries to successfully make revolution. Russia, trying to exist, isolated in a capitalist world, could only do so by becoming capitalist. The workers who rallied behind the cries of Internationalism in 1917 were soon to be crushed in the interests of the Russian 'Motherland'.

### The Communist Tradition

The Left Communist tradition built on the gains of Marxism of last century - the understanding of the revolutionary role of the proletariat, the realisation that the capitalist state must be toppled by force, the recognition that a dictatorship of the workers must oversee the transition period between Capitalism and communism, the understanding that Capitalism's very process of accumulation would lead to its death crisis. To these understandings the Left Communists added the working class' experiences during the 1917-1921 revolutionary wave and the appreciation of the political and historical changes that decadence had brought, to lay the foundations upon which we, and all today's communist groups, build our platform. More than fifty years separate us from the last revolutionary wave but once more these political gains of the working class are being presented as the class intensifies its battle with Capitalism.

## Our Political Activity

Thus our political activity is based on the following:

### The Cycle of Decay.

This century Capitalism is locked into a cycle of crisis-war-reconstruction-crisis. Capitalism this century has no solution to its crisis other than preparation for war and war itself. Only on the back of reconstruction following war has it been able to stagger on. The onset of decadence at the beginning of this century forced Capitalism worldwide into a frenzy of mass murder in World War I; the defeat of the revolutionary wave of 1917-21 allowed Capitalism to force the proletariat into the misery of the Great Depression and then into the further bloodbath of World War II. Only on the bones of millions of workers and on the destruction of whole economies was Capitalism able to carry out the post war reconstruction which lasted until the 1960's and the end of which presents Capitalism once more with the horror of its own decay.

### The Impossibility of Reforms

Decadent Capitalism cannot grant meaningful reforms to the working class. The 'gains' that workers appear to have made this century are both localised and temporary (we see how quickly they disappear). They are won by only a small percentage of the world's workers and, above all, are paid for by the blood of millions of workers who have died in Capitalism's wars.

### The Unions

The Trade Unions which were set up last century when the winning of reforms was a possibility, have fundamentally changed this century when such gains and reforms are no longer possible. They now act to tie workers to the state, policing them in the interests of capital. In times of war they have dragooned workers to the Front; in times of 'peace' (and this century the world has known no peace) they have acted as brokers for the state dictating levels of exploitation. Whenever workers have struggled this century the unions have been at the forefront of the state's defences - dividing, isolating, fragmenting workers, locking them into the 'national interest'. This role is practiced not, as the leftists would have it, because of 'bad leaders' (as Marxists we recognise that leaders are thrown up by the logic and drive of social organisations, they don't determine that logic and drive), but because the whole union apparatus defends a bourgeois political programme for the organisation of capital which forces it to act as an arm of the capitalist state. Indeed it is the grass roots of the union machine which are the most dangerous to workers. Few workers have any deep confidence in the bureaucrats at the heads of the unions but many stewards and union militants because of their militant words and radical stances, are able to tie workers to the union organisation. Workers in struggle constantly find themselves in conflict with these stewards who in turn are forced to adopt ever more radical poses so that they and the union machine can ultimately fulfil their role of derailing struggle and confining it. There is nothing Machievellian about this: some stewards are obviously stooges and toadies, but many others are well intentioned individuals trying to defend workers' conditions. However their subjective intentions count for nothing. Their objective role is to prevent workers breaking out of the union strangle-hold, joining up with each other and recognising that capitalism can offer nothing but austerity and war.

### The Capitalist State

The state in decadence dominates all social life. The economic crises and collapses of last century led to a centralisation of capital. This century, where national capitals confront one another for survival, has led to the state more and more controlling all aspects of the economy in an effort to make it as resilient and responsive as possible and this domination has been mirrored in all aspects of society: education, health, planning etc. State Capitalism is not to be found only in China and the Iron Curtain countries, it is universal - as developed in America as Angola, Britain as Brazil.

Parliament and Democracy

Parliament, once a vehicle for workers winning reforms, under decadence can offer workers nothing. Even the bourgeoisie uses it only for its role in mystifying workers, pushing the lie that 'Democracy' has some meaning. It is the state's executive and permanent organisation that fundamentally dictates policy. Parliament is an attack on the struggle and consciousness of workers and acts to encourage them into a passive, individualised acceptance of their exploitation. The readiness of the bourgeoisie to dispense with it completely - in time of war, for example or when it is no longer an appropriate form of control for them - shows the emptiness of its content.

Factions of Capital

Under decadence all factions of the bourgeoisie are reactionary, all are equally mortal enemies of the workers. To pick and choose between them is for workers to pick and choose their own executioners. The 'democratic' and 'liberal' factions are every bit as drenched in workers' blood this century as the 'right-wing' and 'fascist' factions. Campaigns by radicals, Stalinists or Trotskyists to 'critically' support one capitalist faction against another are merely manoeuvres by these bourgeois groups to lead workers away from the real battle ground and disarm them. For these 'leftist' organisations, far from being part of the proletarian movement, are, by their explicit defences of capitalism - East or West - shown to be merely the left wing of the international bourgeoisie. By their failure to separate themselves from the decaying Comintern and the advocates of state capitalist programmes they show themselves to be merely offering workers yet more bourgeois programmes for the survival of Capitalism and for the continued dominance of Capitalism worldwide.

The Impossibility of 'National Liberation'

With decadence all the world is capitalist. Last century workers could support some bourgeois national liberation movements since these aided the development of Capitalism and eliminated pre-capitalist social relations. Today this is no longer possible: Capitalism cannot develop any more. Two world wars have seen the formation of imperialist blocs: after World War I some half dozen blocs - after World War II this had been whittled down to two, the Russian and the American, which have carved the world up between them. National liberation wars today are only moments in the imperialist rivalry between these two. National liberation movements against one of the blocs serve only to turn workers and peasants into cannon fodder for the interests of the other. The revolutionary cry of World War I; "turn the imperialist war into a civil war" can be the only watch-word of the proletariat everywhere, the 'third world' included.

Partial Struggles

The decomposition of capitalist material life has led to a decomposition of capitalist social life in reaction to which all manner of partial struggles have arisen, focussing on race, or sex, or age. These, far from contributing to revolutionary struggle merely serve to defuse it. Only by destroying the material base of Capitalism can its cultural oppression be destroyed. Partial struggles act to veil the real conflict between classes today, hiding this beneath the myth of inter-class unity of blacks, gays, women or the young.

The Barbarism of decadent Capitalism

Decadent Capitalism is barbaric. It can only survive through a remorseless drive to war - even though the next world war may destroy humanity. This drive is inescapable; it doesn't result from irrationality or lunacy on the part of a particular faction of the bourgeoisie, or the intrigues of an entrenched military; it is endemic in a system which is based on competition and accumulation. A peaceful Capitalism is no more a possibility than a Capitalism which stamps out poverty and oppression. Thus peace campaigns are reactionary campaigns - attempts to blind workers to the real nature of Capitalism, to tie them to

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the state with the myth that the state can be appealed to and is susceptible to popular feeling, to hide the fact that war under capitalism is inescapable. The only way to end war is through the civil war which will overthrow Capitalism, for if this fails Capitalism will destroy all humanity in the holocaust of World War III.

#### Workers and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The form that the Proletarian dictatorship will take has been made clear by the experience of workers' struggles in the past: workers councils, centralised and based on elected and revocable delegates which will enable the working class to wield its power in a truly collective manner. The working class cannot yield up its power to any minority, no matter how proletarian that minority may be. Only class-wide involvement in the running of the state will ensure the continuation of the surge of consciousness which revolution brings and which alone will ensure the destruction of Capitalism.

#### The Task of Communists

The communist groups thrown up by the class before the revolution will always be small - the mass workers' party belongs to the period of ascendancy. Numbers are likely to grow significantly only in the revolutionary period. The recognition of the need for a centralised international party is recognised by almost all communist groups today - but only the heightening of the class struggle can ensure its creation, though the preparation for that moment is an urgent task today. We, unlike some other communist groups, don't see the party's role as one of organising and directing the class. This view stems from a lack of confidence in the class, an inability to grasp the lessons of past insurrections which showed how the full revolutionary potential of the class frequently left even the most clear communist organisations far behind. Only the complete involvement of the whole class can offer guarantees against reaction; the clearest party programme is no substitute for this. The role of revolutionary groups, as it will be of the party is to give a political leadership to the class, to make clear the communist goal and to point the way forward showing clearly the dangers that face the proletariat today, in the revolutionary period and in the period of transition to communism. As the party will be in the revolution so it must be today: centralised and disciplined yet careful not to let such discipline be confused with conformity, rigidity or monolithism. The guarantees of the party's, and today's political fractions', work must always be political clarity and not just organisational practice.

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