

Gloomy prospects for the European economy

European economy could fall into recession, now with Germany

::READ MORE PAGE 6::



Socialist Voice

Number 17 | November 2014

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE | INTERNATIONAL WORKERS LEAGUE - FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

£1

Liverpool public libraries: No closures! No sackings!



Rally on 6th October at Liverpool's Central Library

Demand Joe Anderson and all Labour councillors organise a referendum!

Liverpool, city of culture, is witnessing a wide, imaginative, creative and diverse campaign against library closures which is gaining support from almost all residents, young and old. The plan to close 11 libraries will rip the heart out of communities.

::READ MORE PAGE 3::

Workers show that they want to defeat government's austerity

Strikes show the way. Only workers can solve the crisis.

::PAGE 4::

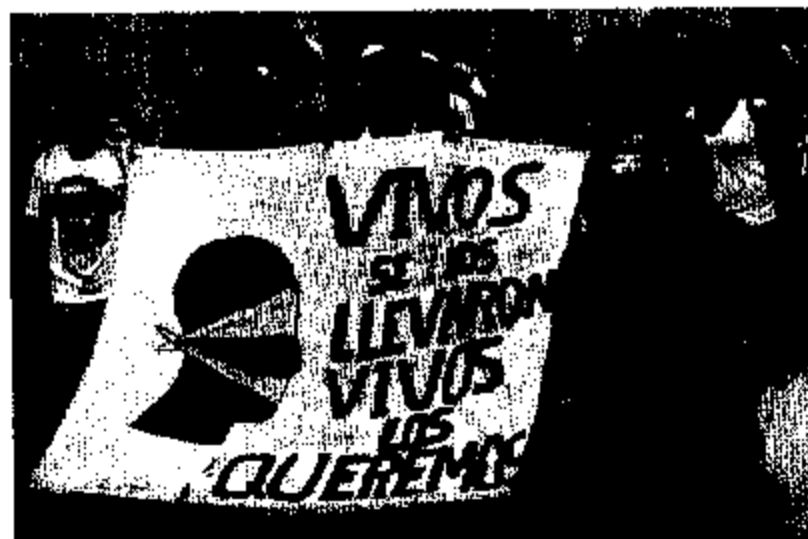


SCOTLAND Independence referendum: A vote against austerity

::PAGE 8::

MEXICO People take the streets against the missing of 43 students

::PAGE 7::



KOBANE



Kobane outcome will shape the future of the Syrian revolution

::PAGE 10::

Socialist Voice

Number 17 | November 2014

LIFE OF THE IWL



In memory of Didi, Dirceu Travesso. A great internationalist fighter and Trotskyist



Didi, Dirceu Travesso, an international leader of the Brazilian CSP-Conlutas (a union and social movement federation) and a leader of the PSTU (Brazilian section of the International Workers League-Fourth International), passed away on 16 September after struggling with cancer for five years, he was 55 years old.

He was a great comrade and friend, Didi was, one might say, larger than life because of his dedication to the working class, Marxism and Internationalism. His strength came from the knowledge that without the struggle for Marxism and the revolutionary international, no initiative could be successful. No doubt he would have been a great leader of a socialist revolution.

He had a special style and he could relate the international class struggle to many who only had experience of struggle in their own country. Didi's style was a direct expression of his Marxist thought and his experience. And he could bring the struggle against capitalism and the labour bureaucracy to life.

He met many activists in England, including the Liverpool dock workers

in 1996 and 1997 during their dispute. Later he met RMT leaders and fighters, and activists from the anti-blacklisting campaign and got a warm welcome in Liverpool TUC.

His last visit was in June, when he spoke to a meeting of 70 people in London to discuss the struggle of metro workers and many other fights during the period of the World Cup. Just before that he met a group of railway workers from the RMT.

From the Blacklist Support Group

It was an honour to meet and chat with Didi a few times over the years at conferences and political meetings. He inspired many with his words and his actions in Brazil and around the world. Condolences to his family and comrades.

Dave Smith

Sajid Kasher, Pakistan

We regret that Didi has passed away, the worker of PSTU and leader of working class in Brazil. Even though it is a big loss for the Brazilian PSTU and working class of Brazil and the world, we undertake to carry on his mission here in Pakistan.

Long live internationalism!



Liverpool public libraries

No closures! No sackings!

MARTIN RALPH, INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE

Demand Joe Anderson and all Labour councillors organise a referendum!

Liverpool, city of culture, is witnessing a wide, imaginative, creative and diverse campaign against library closures which is gaining support from almost all residents, young and old. The plan to close 11 libraries will rip the heart out of communities. An upsurge in opposition is building daily – in public meetings, demonstrations and council meetings.

On 23 October, in a message to campaigners, Liverpool Mayor Joe Anderson said that it saddened him that “so many from our own city want to condemn the decisions we are making”. His defensive reaction shows that he did not expect to meet any opposition to his plans.

The campaign began with a petition that now aims to collect 20,001 signatures. This is in response to Councillor McLinden, who on 27 June said to a wheelchair bound disabled person, Mitch Mitchell from Old Swan, I do not care “if Old Swan Against the Cuts gets 20,000 signatures and in two years time you will have no parks”. This was a reference to the offensive and outrageous strategy of selling off all public services and spaces.

On 4 October, a demonstration with over 200 gathered outside the Central Library with writers and activists, including an 11-year-old speaker who started her own petition and campaign. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8PiUd1EnQ&feature=youtu.be>

A broad campaign

The campaign is broad and includes parents with young children, unemployed, disabled people, schools, trade unionists, immigrants, writers, poets, musicians and academics.



Demonstration in Liverpool against library closures

It is democratically led by Liverpool Against the Cuts, Old Swan Against the Cuts and an anti-cuts group from Sefton Park, with the support of Liverpool TUC and Merseyside TUC.

Anderson essentially runs the council, and councillors almost always vote the way they are told to by the Labour whip. He has warned that there will be more and more cuts for years to come.

He agrees that the vulnerable are being harmed and even asserted that people will die, but says he has no other choice than to make the cuts.

Across the country the government and Labour councils' policy is to close libraries. But struggles to keep public libraries have taken place in many parts of the country such as in Sheffield, Kirklees, Leicester and Brent.

Over 500 writers, artists and academics show support

The campaign has gained full support from children's authors Alan Gibbons and Cathy Cassidy. They wrote a letter to 150 head teachers in Liverpool saying, they “strongly oppose the closure of eleven well-used and much-loved Liverpool libraries. With recent figures showing that one in three children do not own a book, it seems to us terrifying that even the chance of borrowing a book is about to be taken away from many Liverpool children.

“We care very much about the threatened libraries and know many children...We are asking the children,

teachers, librarians, parents ... everyone in Liverpool who cares about the libraries ... to send a ‘Love Letter to Liverpool Libraries’ to Mayor Joe Anderson to ask him to reconsider”.

An ideological attack

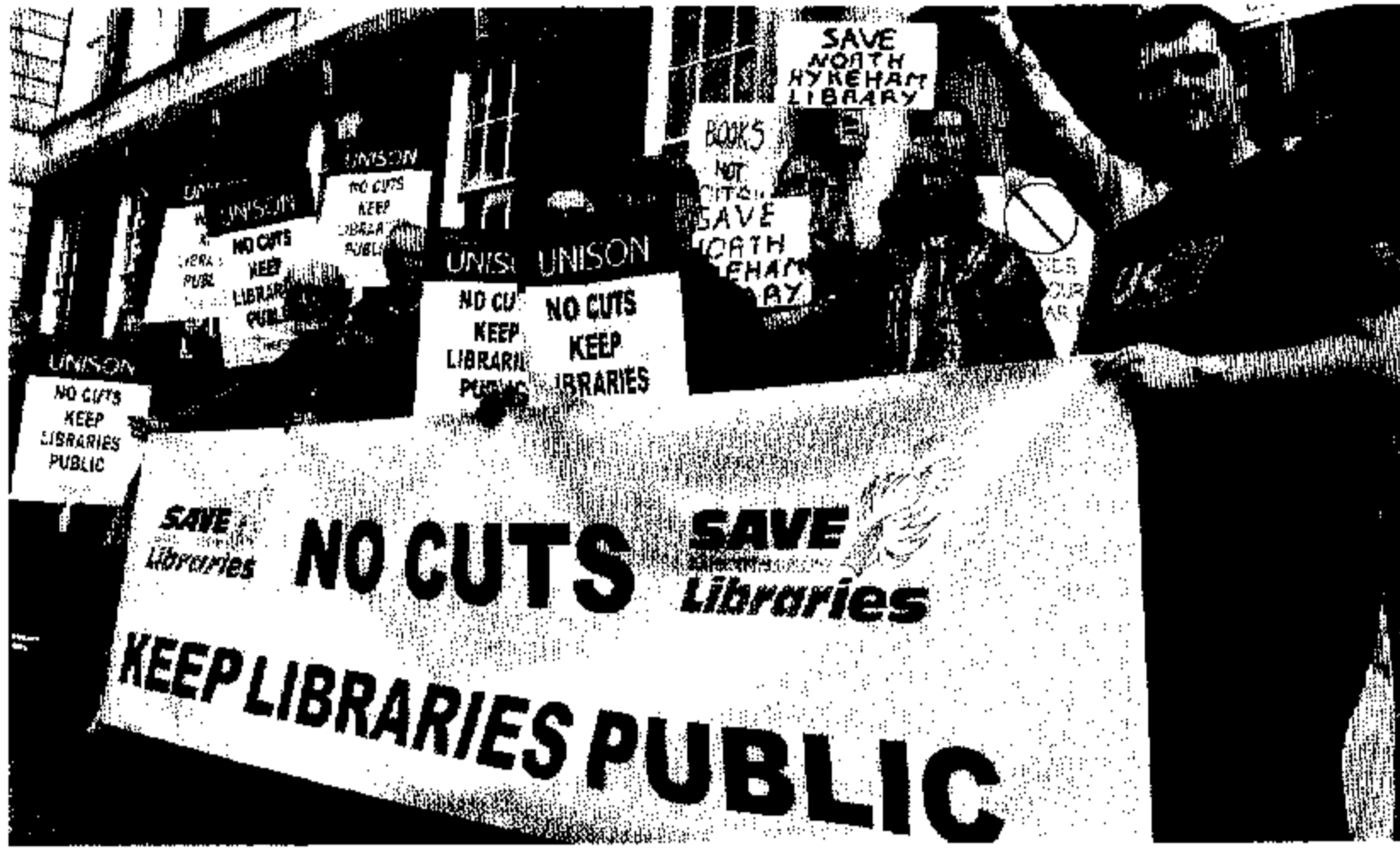
“Public Library News” (PLN) commented on their website on a recent Sunday Politics programme “how similar both the Conservative and Labour MPs were on the issue: indeed, they completely agreed on every point (apart from, perhaps, charging market rate rents to volunteers). Both praised co-locations and saw volunteers as a viable solution and had no problem with professional libraries being available only in the largest branches.”

The PLN continued, “Many would argue that they would be the lesser of two evils but, so far at least, it is hard to see a renaissance coming for the sector should Ed Milliband become Prime Minister next year.”

Tory and Labour support the use of volunteers and closing public libraries. Liverpool city council are getting their plans, their new “ideas” from the Tories and Labour leaders, which are ideologically driven. The use of volunteers means sacking staff, removing libraries from an integrated service and making them easier to close in the future. But campaigners refuse to allow libraries to be demoted this way, they are fighting to maintain a core professional service.

Some local Labour councillors in

Demand Joe Anderson and all Labour councillors organise a referendum!



Campaigns such as in Lincolnshire and Sheffield, picture below, are taking place across the country

Liverpool have issued a leaflet saying they do not want to close libraries. While welcome this has followed pressure from below and the fear of a defeat in next year's elections. They are sensing the growing anger. If councillors want to keep the libraries open, why do they vote to close them?

No sackings, unions must fight with us

Unfortunately, Unison and GMB have not said a word about the library closures. Closing libraries mean sacking workers, and it's a duty of the unions to defend their membership and oppose Labour's plans. We call them to publicly support the campaign and organise librarians and library support workers to defend their jobs and the libraries.

The unity of workers and the public is the only way to win this fight and give a step forward to organise the fight against all cuts.

Call a Referendum now

On 8 November, a public rally will call for a referendum, as proposed by Old Swan Against the Cuts. Gibbons and Cassidy wrote an open letter calling Anderson to organise a referendum on the future of the libraries.

This call has the support of Children's Laureate Malorie Blackman, Joan Bakewell, Roger

McGough, Frank Cotterill Boyce, David Morrissey, Terry Jones from Monty Python, Merseyside TUCs, and all the campaign groups.

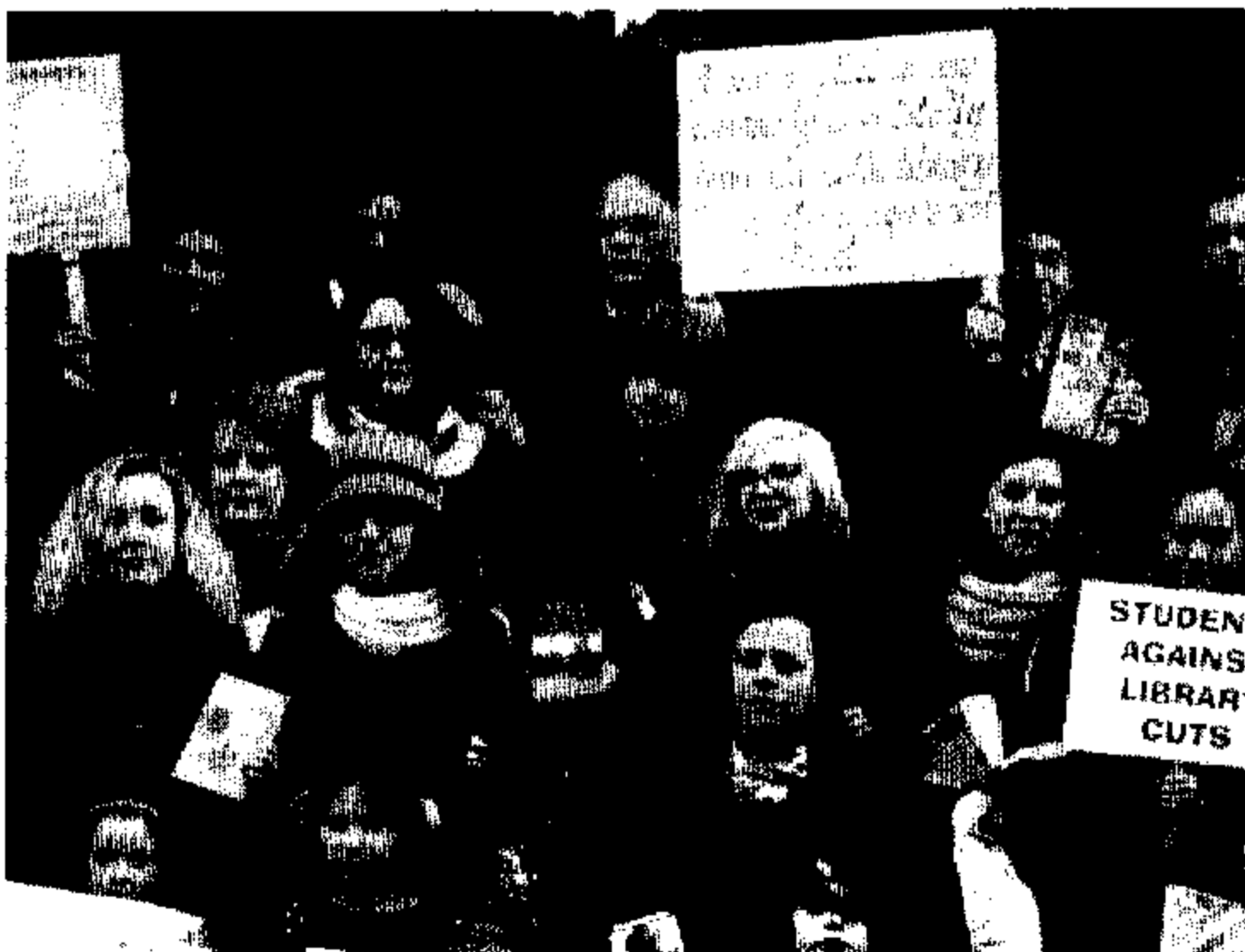
The closure of libraries was not included in Anderson's electoral manifesto and the councillors say they don't want to close them.

They don't need to agree with the campaigners who are against the closures, but they must comply with the people's will.

The referendum is the most democratic way to decide, because it gives the people from Liverpool the final say.

The International Socialist League (ISL) is an important part of this campaign and defends the right of workers and the people to decide, so we are in the forefront to demand the Labour Council call a referendum now!

We are putting our energy into this fight to build a broad and democratic alliance of the exploited and oppressed against the attacks from all the parties of austerity.



Workers defeat

Over half a million public sector workers struck on 13 and 15 October, to demand an end to the wage freeze. Picket lines were well supported and there is a strong feeling for more action as nobody expects the government to be moved by a single strike.

On 13 October, National Health Service unions (NHS) went on strike. Unison, Unite and GMB were joined by the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) who were striking for the first time in its 133-year history.

The civil service workers strike on 15 October was very well supported (with over 90 per cent support). Driving their anger is the continuous attack by managers and the government on their pay, conditions, jobs and pensions.

And on 18 October the working class, led by the public sector workers, showed their power again at a national demonstration. Tens of thousands took the streets in London demanding a pay rise and more strike action, despite the fact that the demonstration was part of a plan to build for the Labour in the 2015 election. The anger was so strong that the TUC had to cancel Miliband's appearance at Hyde Park out of fear of a backlash from the strikers.

The workers sent a strong message to the government and the Labour party: they want a pay rise to end the wage freeze policy and to defeat austerity and they do not want to have to wait for the election.

With GDP running at three per cent and Osborne, the Chancellor, says "plan is working". "Recovery" is the story being spun and Labour's and the TUC's message is "keep quiet and wait for us in the general Election". But workers and strikers have absolutely no confidence in any of this.

The resolution to the crisis that exploded in 2007 to 2008, in reality has seen wages drop since 2008, 10 per cent according to the Bank of England, but many workers feel they have lost much more. At the same time Bank of England printed £375

show that they want to government's austerity

MARGARET MCADAM, INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE

billion to generate a speculative recovery in the financial sector.

What the Chief Economist G Haldane of Bank of England does say is that the fall in wages is "unprecedented since at least the mid-1800s, other than demobilisations after the World Wars." Actually it is the longest sustained fall in UK wages since records began (Michael Roberts <http://thenextrecession.wordpress.com>), and levels of inequality continue to rise

Workers want action

Workers are ready to fight, but the same cannot be said of the leaders. The union leaderships, like Dave Prentice of Unison, had agreed to limit the NHS strike to four hours. Just days before the 14 October the local authority strike was called off by Unison, the decision was not opposed by Unite or GMB and they did not consult their membership.

Local authority employers made an offer to the unions which meant the total offer on the table was less than what had been offered previously. These union leaderships went with the Labour Party to prevent any fight against the onslaught on council services and they have done the same over the workers' demands over pay.

Rank and file – take control

To defeat the government's policy it is necessary to organise a general strike, which will only come from rank and file pressure, because the TUC will not organise any strike action.



The next NHS strike is on 24 November. Hospital workers should make their feelings known by calling for a one day stoppage, and not just four hours. They should organise inter-union meetings and discuss co-ordinating strikes together.

The fight to defend wages, jobs, pensions and public services is also a fight against Labour Party control. Unless the union and Labour party leaders are fought by the rank and file the decline in wages will continue.

The North-West and London Unison regions have so far condemned the calling off of the local authority strike and are demanding an emergency conference, and demanding rejection of the pay "offer" and for strike action in November, together with the NHS unions. Salford Unison called the action of the leadership suicidal and a capitulation.

Small strikes are happening all the time, in Liverpool civil service workers struck for five days against the threat to close a Jobcentre Plus office in Garston;

care workers, who work for Care UK, have taken 89 days of strike action for a living wage, which would be an increase of 0.65p per hour (an hourly rate of £7.65); in Portsmouth on 21 October there was a successful unofficial action against the sacking of Postal worker who refused to do extra work, after his shift had finished.

All these actions should be supported and spread but the main question is for others to make a plan and to join them, towards building a general strike, that is the most urgent task to fight "austerity".

Only workers can solve the crisis

The financial institutions, the Bank of England and the government will not invest in the public sector; they are destroying it. At the same time they blame Europe and scapegoat immigrants for the decline in services.

The TUC demonstration in London was called, "Britain needs a pay rise". Yes workers do need a pay rise, but the unemployed need jobs and an increase in benefits and immigrant workers must have the same rights as the "British" workers. We are one working class, regardless of which county we come from.

We call on workers to fight for: a twenty per cent wage increase; raising the minimum wage to £10 an hour; end benefit cuts and sanctions; public pensions and end the attack on pension schemes; linking all pensions to inflation and increasing the state pension to £178 a week; the right to work for all.



Gloomy prospects for the European economy

MARCOS MARGARIDO

It looks like that after the recessions in the southern countries, the crisis is deepening from the periphery to the core countries that is to Italy, France, Germany and Britain.

But only a few months ago it was announced that in Europe and Britain a sustainable recovery had begun which was also influenced by the American economic recovery.

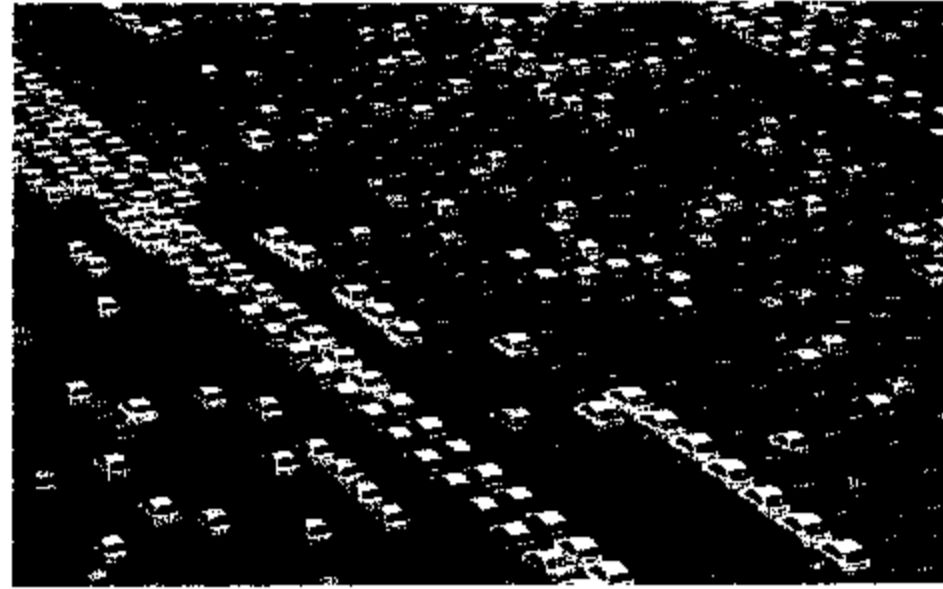
However, for the great majority of workers things did not change; an improvement in our living standards was not part of the recovery. It was not a recovery in society in general but in profits, which came at the expense of our wages, pensions, jobs, benefits and social rights.

However, recently the media started to talk about *their* crisis again: "The European economy has stalled," said Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank (ECB). The latest IMF *World Economic Outlook* forecasts a "lower than expected growth" because there was a "surprising decline in activity during the first quarter of 2014" in the US and a "stagnant Euro area growth, with a contraction in output in Italy, no growth in France, and a unexpected weakness in Germany in the second quarter", along with decreasing growth in Japan, Latin America, Russia and China.

The Euro area

The IMF increased the probability of recession for the Euro area, from 22.5 per cent to 37.5 per cent within one year, with a 30 per cent chance of deflation. Their main concern is a recession in Germany: "Among the core economies, growth projections for the German economy have been revised downward... Growth in France stalled in the first half of 2014."

A fall of 0.4 per cent of German production means a fall of 1.8 per cent of the Euro area's industrial production. A recession in Germany would drag down the whole EU, including Britain, because the EU economy is integrated into the German export machine.



Car over-production is through-out Europe

Germany, after a growth in January and February saw its production decline for the rest of the year. That is why the Euro area is in trouble. Eurostat states that industrial production in the EU18 (the 18 countries of the EU) was 0.3 per cent down from May to June 2014, and 0.1 per cent down in the EU28 (the 28 countries of the EU).

The result in most of the European countries is an increase of idle capacity in industrial production, 30 per cent for example in the automotive industry. So jobs are not being created and prices may fall due to weak demand and falling production. Bulgaria, Greece; Portugal, Spain and Slovakia are already experiencing deflation which is an indication of the paralysis of the productive activity.

Britain

Britain appeared to be in a different – and better – situation than the rest of the major European countries. Its GDP expanded three per cent year-on-year in the third quarter of 2014 and, while the EU still struggles to reach the pre-crisis growth levels, Britain has actually surpassed it.

There are some political and economic reasons for this. First of all, Britain's currency is not the Euro, which means the British government has a higher degree of autonomy to manage the economic policy. Secondly, many of the structural reforms ongoing in Spain, Portugal, etc. had been laid down by and since Thatcher. And, most important, British social-democracy (Labour and TUC) proved to be more effective in

controlling the working class that allowed the government to implement austerity without fierce resistance.

Cameron says "the government's plan is working". However, according to the IMF behind the scenes the "legacies of the pre-crisis boom and the subsequent crisis, including high private and public debt, still cast a shadow on the recovery,".

It is possible that industrial production can follow the same pattern as in the Euro area. The construction sector is on a downward slope. In August 2014, output has fallen by 3.9 per cent compared with July 2014 and it is the first time since May 2013 that the year-on-year estimate has decreased.

After an increase in one year of 2.5 per cent in production, in August total production flattened and manufacturing increased only 0.1 per cent compared with July.

Fight the coming attacks

Facing the possibility of a new recession and the impossibility of deepening fiscal measures the IMF appeals for more attacks on the working class:

"In the Euro area, more growth-enhancing structural reforms are necessary to tackle high unemployment, increase competitiveness in stressed economies, and facilitate rebalancing."

It is more of the same: pension and labour reforms, increasing labour casualisation, lowering wages and working conditions, issues which would affect all workers but hit women, Blacks and immigrants the most. New structural reforms have been announced in France and Italy. Workers in Europe, but now with the addition of the huge battalions of German and French workers, must be prepared for a new round of battles in this social war.

To win, it is necessary to bring all struggles together against national governments into a single European one, which includes the fight for jobs, pay rises, and against pension reforms and casualisation. And these struggles must be united against the IMF, and the EU

Solidarity with the Mexican students

“They took them alive, we want them alive”

CLARA SARAIVA, INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE

Solidarity actions have been taken place in London and many other cities against the massacre of students in Mexico movement.

Between 26 and 27 September, 57 teacher-training college students from Ayotzinapa, in the state of Guerrero, Mexico, were brutally attacked by some of the uniformed local police. Six young people were killed and 43 students remain missing, nearly half of whom were last seen in police custody.

The students were returning from a school activity, when municipal police stopped the bus. Two of the students went down the front of the bus to see what was happening and were immediately killed. All though the rest of the students escaped the police attack, a truck with an armed gang continued to attack them. The result of this atrocity is that six students were killed and 43 are missing. Before murdering one boy, the police plucked out his eyes and took the skin off his face, an act of unprecedented cruelty.



The attitude of the Mexican government only increases the suspicion that authorities are protecting the perpetrators and that the 43 who are missing, unfortunately, could be found in a grave. So far there has been the declaration by a hit man and a municipal policeman who said they have handed over 17 high-school students to criminal gangs, but they do not know the whereabouts of the rest of the young people. Parents and colleagues of the missing are still hoping to find them alive.

The massacre of the high-school students has caused indignation and rage in the Mexican population. In the region, throughout Mexico and internationally a campaign is developing that is demanding the clarification of the facts and punishment of those responsible for this crime. Many thousands of Mexican people went to the streets in large demonstrations to demand justice. Through-out the world solidarity events are taking place.

The massacre of the Ayotzinapa students is not only a demonstration of the power of drug trafficking and its links with the governing party, but an expression of the high level of Mexican state terrorism, where dissenting voices are silenced with death, torture and disappearances.

This massacre of innocent young people, means that solidarity and support for the demand for justice in the British trade union, social and left movements must continue to be built.

Write to the Mexican embassy, show your solidarity and condemn this massacre

Mexican Embassy in London, 16 St George Street, London W1S 1FD.

Email: embgbretana@sre.gob.mx

Government's of Mexico and US behind the violence

The government is behind the “dirty war” against narco-trafficking and that it is used as an pretext to attack the people.

As the weeks go the Ayotzinapa massacre complicates the life of the federal government. In the early days it was said that the massacre was ordered by the Iguala mayor, which allied itself with organized crime – specifically the group known as Guerreros Unidos – and had ordered the city police to repress and kidnap a group of students as revenge because they were supporting an opposing cartel. That means the motive, according to this fantasy, would be revenge.

But slowly the idea that this is a kind of genocide and has been compared to a massacre that took place on 10 June 10,



Mass demonstration in Mexico

1971. At that time the state did not take responsibility for the massacre, but this was a message about the methods it was willing to use against dissidents.

The causes of the “dirty war”

The overall situation in the country is deteriorating with no chance of improvement. As a result, most of the population will continue their fatal march into misery, overcrowding, ignorance, poor health and violence. For these reasons the state needs to “tighten” their instruments of “crowd control” over the increasingly desperate, impoverished and forgotten people. For these reasons we may be on the verge of social unrest as an answer to a dictatorship that has as policy or “solution” of violence.

We must take into account that since 2002, when Vicente Fox ruled, the armed forces have been subordinated to the Pentagon's Northern Command, and therefore any military, semi-military or paramilitary strategy was determined by the USA. In Ayotzinapa no mayor, even one from the PRD, could take the initiative to kill 50 students, not even the state governor.

The dirty war includes a hundred thousand dead, thirty thousand disappeared, massacres in Tlatlaya and Ayotzinapa, extrajudicial executions, paramilitary massacres, harassment of human rights activists and political opponents, electoral fraud and systematic repression of resistance movements.

Information taken from www.litci.org/en

Independence referendum:

ANALYSIS BY THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE

When David Cameron, the UK Prime Minister, signed the "Edinburgh agreement" on 15 October 2012 to allow a referendum on Scotland's independence at the request of Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish National Party and Scotland's Prime Minister, he could not have imagined that the comfortable advantage of two thirds of Scotland's 4 million voters against the independence could change and turn into a nightmare.

In mid-July, only two months before the referendum the Yes vote had stalled at 41 per cent (after stripping out the undecided).

But things began to change less than a month from referendum day. On the last Sunday, 14 September, of the campaign some of the polls indicated a victory for the independence side, while others showed a No vote lead of only four per cent.

The unpredictable result was enough for big business and their representatives to start a wave of attacks and threats against a possible independent Scotland.

The first to make threats were David Cameron and Ed Miliband. Cameron said he would not allow the use of Sterling in an independent Scotland and Miliband stated that "if you do not want borders, vote to stay in the UK".

Even Nigel Farage, showing the reactionary character of the UK he wants, appealed to the Queen and said it "might be handy" if she defended the union.

The threats of the big business

The representatives of finance capital, such as the IMF, also made threats. They said the victory for independence could provoke turmoil in financial markets, while the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) and the Lloyds Banking Group threatened to move their headquarters to another country if the Yes vote won.

Even big supermarket chains – many of them attached to banks – joined the chorus of the No side saying they would be forced to increase the prices of products in their shops if the Yes vote won.

On the eve of the referendum, Westminster started an intense campaign promising to do what it did not want



to do: give extensive new powers to Holyrood, which could include control of all taxation and the welfare system in Scotland. The Labour Party represented by the former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, was at the forefront of this campaign.

The rise of the Yes campaign

Scotland said No to independence with a historic turnout of 84 per cent and with a narrow margin of 383,937 votes. The Yes campaign mobilised thousands of people, in contrast to the disinterest of a year before. But what changed if Salmond did not?

Salmond never defended a real independence. He wanted to keep the currency and the Queen, continue as a NATO member and in the EU.

As a representative of the Scottish national middle and petty bourgeoisie (the big bourgeoisie is part of British financial capital) the SNP looked for "independence" from a decaying British Empire, which no longer so useful as before. But for them independence would mean falling into Germany arms.

However, the fight for independence did drag behind it the most exploited sectors of the working class and the youth, in Glasgow, which voted Yes by 53 per cent against 47 per cent, and the Yes also won in North Lanarkshire, Inverclyde and Dundee.

Salmond pledged a fairer share of wealth, quality public services, more jobs, no tuition fees and the end of the Trident nuclear base. And they believed independence could make it happen.

There were two campaigns on the Yes side: the cowardly bourgeois campaign that did not want a real split with the "Empire" and the working class campaign, which fought an anti-austerity fight.

Are the No voters non-working class?

The Union would not have been maintained if the working class as a whole had voted for independence. It was not a "class against class" vote. The most probable conclusion is that the upper layer of the working class voted No because they have not broken with the Labour Party. Some 73 per cent of those over 65 backed the status quo out of fear of losing their pensions.

And 57 per cent of all ages voted No because they wanted to keep Sterling. Cameron knew what he was doing when he said the UK would not allow an independent Scotland to keep Sterling.

This was not a vote determined by the national question. Only 27 per cent of the No voters considered strong attachment to the UK and its history, tradition and culture an important reason to say No. Among the Yes voters only 20 per cent said the future would be brighter in an independent country. So, what was the main element that drove the votes?

A vote against austerity and for change

The votes were related, on both sides, with the current economic crisis and the austerity policy imposed by the Tory government and supported by Labour.

On the side of the No backers this has less influence, because they are the

a vote against austerity



sectors who have higher wages, stable jobs and are less affected by the benefit cuts. But even among them an important section was concerned with a possible worsening of the economic situation if independence won, for example pensioners, but also people who are worried about tax and public spending, jobs, prices and, mainly the NHS.

On the Yes side the main concerns were the austerity policy in general, expressed in their hatred of Westminster politics, and the NHS, but also jobs, tax and public spending.

The working-class votes expressed the fight against austerity and their hope for changes, each side with different motivations and reasoning.

The No voters were mainly Labour voters, members of trade unions, who followed their leaders' orientation believing (erroneously) that the UK working class would be better off after a Labour victory in the 2015 general elections. So, to keep the countries united and voting for Labour would be, for them, the best option.

The workers who opted for independence were more radical, due to their material condition. They had lost all hope in the major parties (Tory, Labour, Liberals, Ukip) that are destroying the welfare state, public services, cutting their benefits, sending them to food banks. For them, the UK is no longer a solution, so, their option was to vote for an independent Scotland and, a great part of them may vote SNP in the future.

New political scenario in Scotland and UK

Despite losing the referendum, there was a remarkable surge in support for the political parties and movements that campaigned for independence, mainly the SNP. Its membership has tripled from 25,000 to 75,000, the Scottish Green party's membership has jumped to more than 6,000 and the Scottish Socialist

party has 2,500 new members.

About 1,000 delegates are expected to attend a *Women for Independence* meeting and as many as 8,000 people are expected at a national conference in November for the *Radical Independence Campaign* (RIC).

The big loser is the Scottish Labour Party, 37 per cent of their members disobeyed the chiefs' orders and joined the independence campaign, some of these are joining the SNP. Many of them were sickened at watching their party acting as an errand boy of the Conservative party and big business during the referendum campaign.

The aftermath is very contradictory. On one side, the fall of the Labour party in Scotland is very progressive; they (and the trade union leaderships) are mainly responsible for keeping the working class quiet, even under austerity. On the other side, the SNP is equally a bourgeois party, neither less pro-imperialist nor less exploiter.

In the past three years the SNP administration cut 55,000 public service jobs, their MPs voted against a living wage, advocated a reduction on corporation tax as a priority for businesses, while zero hour contracts are imposed on workers.

As many workers are joining the SNP and placing their hopes in it, a new obstacle is being created in the path of the working class to conquer its independence not as a nation but as a class.

Many in the left are making the error of substituting the national question for the class struggle and are trying to deepen the fight for independence, such as *Women for Independence* or the RIC are doing.

But the referendum was between those who projected the ideal of a social democratic country onto an independent Scotland and those who feared the

economic consequences of the change. But this is a question of class struggle rather than just a national question.

Unite the working class against capital

The working class cannot be divided between those who support or do not support independence. 70 per cent of the Yes voters said the most important reason for their option was that all decisions about Scotland should be made in Scotland. This is a progressive feeling of self-determination, but must now grow into a working-class character. The working class must now become the leadership of the fight against austerity, whether they voted Yes or No.

They need to fight finance capital and their parties – Tory, Liberals and UKIP; and their "aide-de-camp", the betrayers from the Labour Party and the TUC bureaucracy (including the national trade union leaderships). But also the SNP and the Scottish bourgeoisie, the Scottish Green Party and other bourgeoisie variants have to be fought.

Because of this, the fight for independence cannot be the dividing line either in Scotland or in the UK.

There is a common fight of the English, Welsh and Scottish working classes: the fight against austerity, against European Union imperialism and British imperialism, and against their master, American imperialism. And a common fight against the national bourgeoisies from all these nations, that cannot be separated from the fight against imperialism.

In this struggle, the social allies of the British working class are the European workers, in the common fight against the EU.

This involves a strategic task: the struggle for a Confederation of British Socialist Republics, associated with the fight against the EU and for a Europe of the workers and peoples.

The fate of Kobane will shape the future of the Syrian revolution

DANIEL SUGASTI, CORRIENTE ROJA, SPANISH SECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS LEAGUE-FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The Kurdish city of Kobane has fought the Islamic State (IS) siege for over a month and it has strengthened its heroic resistance against their brutal aggressor. The price, however, is high. Over 700 people have died and 300,000 have fled the siege.

Within the city the resistance moves among the skeletons of buildings, it fires through holes in walls, sets ambushes and even resorts to suicide attacks. There are thousands of fighters from the People's Protection Units (YPG), commanded by Narin Afrin, a woman who inspires everyone by her leadership capabilities, and demonstrates a seemingly inexhaustible determination.

Kurdish militias also have the active support of at least three battalions from the Syrian resistance: the revolutionary battalion Raqqa; the battalion "Northern Sun" and the "Jirablis".

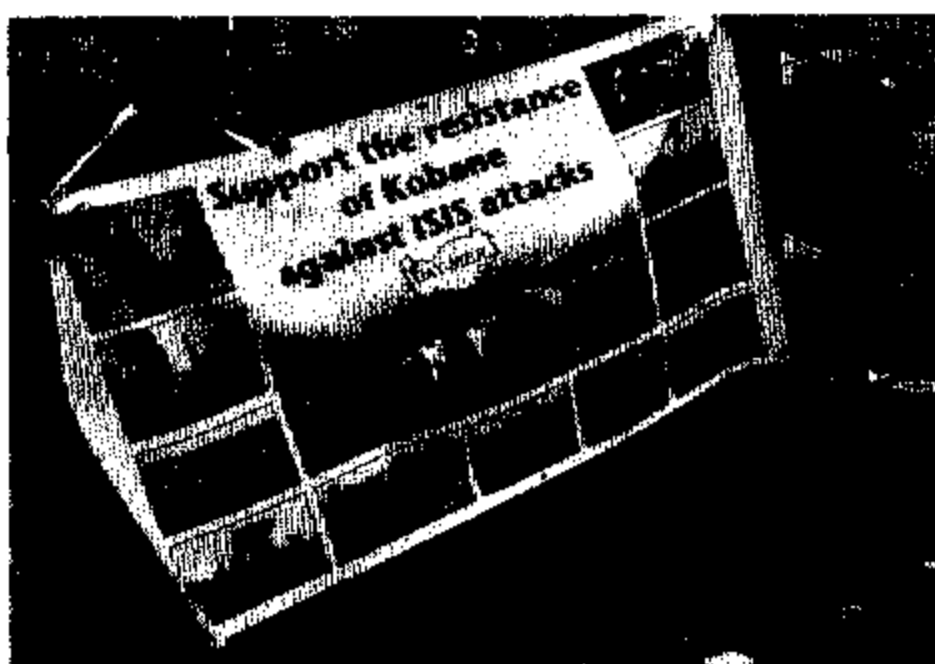
Meanwhile, on 4 October, the Free Syrian Army (FSA) decided to join this effort and sent a thousand fighters to defend Kobane.

An agreement was made between the YPG and the FSA to fight "terrorism and build a free and democratic Syria", and to create a "coordination between us and the important factions of the FSA in the northern countryside of Aleppo, Afrin, Kobane, and Jazira."

Furthermore, thousands of PKK fighters attempted to cross the Turkish border to join the resistance. The response by the Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Turkish government was to bomb these fighters in south-eastern Turkey.

However, hundreds of Peshmerga, the armed forces of Iraqi Kurdistan, who have faced the IS in their own territory since June, have volunteered to join the fight in Kobane.

Erdogan's repressed protests in support of Kobane and killed dozens in Istanbul, Ankara and especially in Diyarbakir, considered the Kurdish "capital" in Turkey. Meanwhile mass demonstrations have taken place in Berlin, Brussels,



A demonstration to support Kobane in London

Paris and other European cities.

But IS is a powerful threat. For this "party-army", which has a theocratic-dictatorial program, the capture of Kobane, which is located between the cities of Cerablus and Tell Abyad, would give them a territorial continuity with the area that it already occupies in northern Syria, besides being a gateway to Turkey.

The role of US bombing

The US air raids have nothing of a "progressive" or "humanitarian" character, and it has shown little interest in the fate of Kobane. On 8 October, US Secretary of State John Kerry suggested that preventing the fall of Kobane was not a strategic US objective.

Obama finds himself in a delicate position; on the one hand, he could not give strong "help" to the Kurds, because that would create more friction with Turkey, a country with which the White House opposes Kurdish self-determination, just as Turkey does. On the other hand, he could not afford a lightning advance of IS, as this would undermine the credibility of the ongoing air strikes.

That is why, without being eager to "save" Kobane, imperialism intensified its aerial bombardment of Jihadist positions. The Pentagon dropped weapons and drugs around Kobane and Kerry said that the air-drop was a "momentary effort" adding that "it is a crisis moment, an emergency".

Meanwhile, the Turkish government

decided to open a border crossing with Iraq to let Peshmerga units cross into Kobane. However, this is not a shift in its policy towards Kobane. In Erdogan's words: "To create a front against IS could mean arming the PYD, but for us the PYD is the same as the PKK, a terrorist organization".

It's time to take advantage of this situation and demand the unconditional delivery of heavy weapons to Kurdish fighters and the opening of a corridor to the besieged town to allow the passage of Kurdish or other volunteers to defend Kobane.

Defend Kobane to defend the Syrian revolution!

The fate of the Syrian revolution is intimately linked with what happens in Kobane, which was liberated from al-Assad's regime in July 19, 2012 and is part of Rojava, a self-governed state in Syria.

A victory over IS in Kobane would gain two things: it would mean a step towards self-determination of the Kurdish people and would give a boost to the struggle against al-Assad's dictatorship.

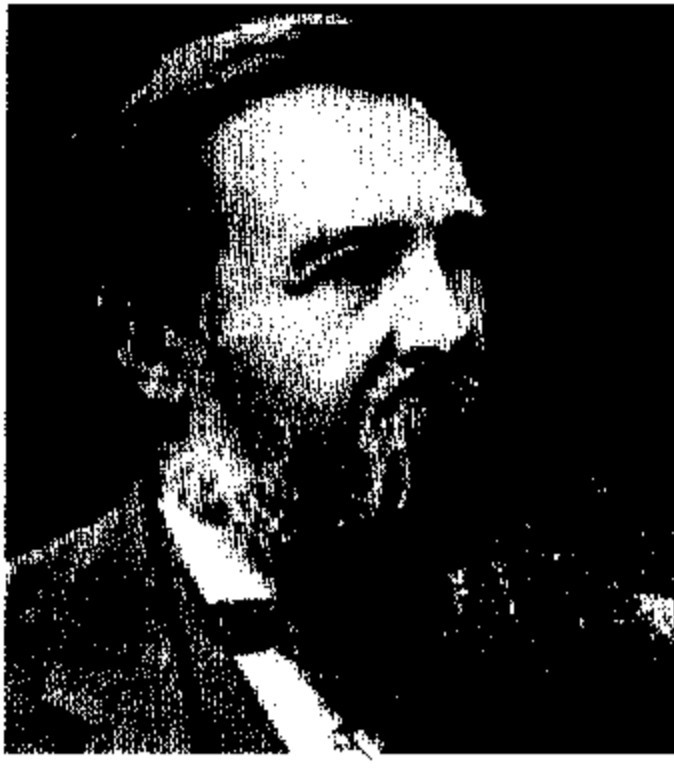
As we have insisted before, the military unity of the Kurds with the Syrian Arab rebels is a condition for victory.

It is necessary to support this unity and in the same breath fight both Arab and Kurdish bourgeois leaderships, who do not recognize the right of Kurdish self-determination or has merely a nationalistic perspective without engaging fully in the struggle to overthrow al-Assad.

We support unconditionally the Syrian revolution and the inalienable right of the Kurdish people to establish an independent state, against al-Assad and IS.

We are fully committed to the military victory of the Kurds in Kobane, which is today one of the most iconic and moving chapters of the national cause of this oppressed people.

The Communist Manifesto the most banned and loved book



in breaking free of feudal restrictions and engendering an enormous increase in production.

However, the increases in production were in conflict with its own property relations that meant that production was directed solely to the profit of the capitalist owners. It was this contradiction which brought about the conjunctural crises described above, but it also brought capitalism's general historical decline. Capitalism in the twentieth century entered, as the Marxists declared, an epoch of decay. The economic crises as well as the struggles which the working class were compelled to wage became deeper, more shattering and more dangerous to the system.

Acute question

It was, as Lenin declared, an epoch of wars and revolution, an epoch of the transition to socialism. Indeed the twentieth century has been one of the most cataclysmic and brutal in history with its bloody wars, which brought the slaughter of millions, its racial and ethnic cleansing and the barbarity of fascism.

There has been the development of great productive powers with the ability to satisfy all humanities expanding wants. However "Bourgeois society" said the Manifesto, "has conjured up such gigantic means of production and exchange" that it was "like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world that he has called up by his spells".

These words live more truly today than they did 150 years ago. The society that brought an increase of productive power beyond that of any preceding society has also now created an incredible and monstrous destructive power. No other society before capitalism developed its power to build and make so much from nature. But no other society brought into the hands of rulers, blinded with profit seeking, such power to make of the earth a poisonous waste or to destroy it.

"Bourgeois society" said the Manifesto, "has conjured up such gigantic means of production and exchange" that it was "like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world that he has called up by his spells".

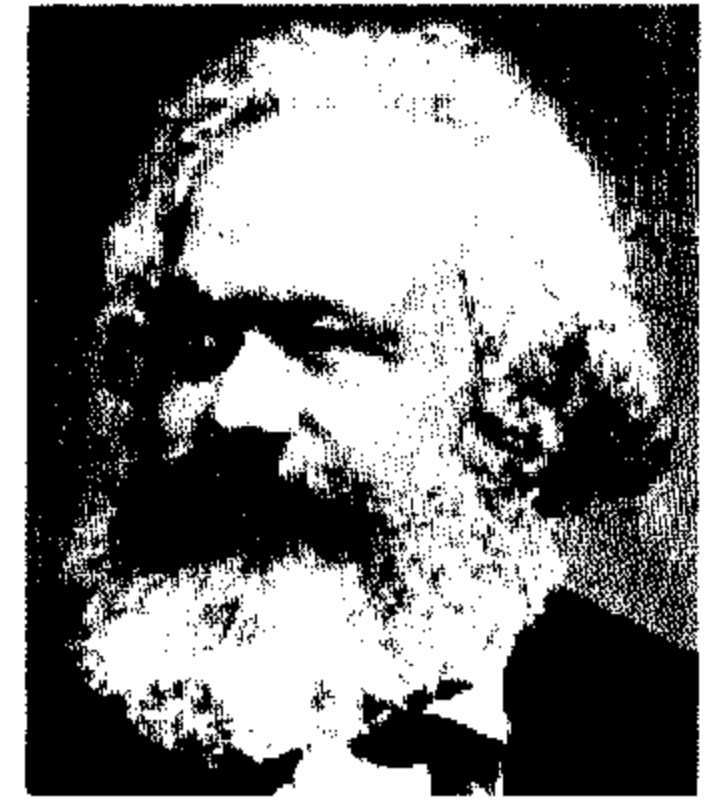
Thus, the question of who is to control the productive forces: the producers or the profit-makers, becomes an ever more acute question at the end of the twentieth century

The Communist Manifesto describes how capitalism developed a world division of labour and a working class that, of necessity must be internationalist. It ended with the famous slogan: "Working Men of all Countries Unite." That was never as vital as it is today.

"The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

"The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country... To the great chagrin of reactionaries, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones, industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country we find new wants requiring for their satisfaction the production of different lands and climes."

What is now called globalisation would have been no surprise to Marx and Engels. Globalisation brings, not the end, but a sharpening of the contradictions that they unveiled as the essence of capitalism. The computer and information technology which are



the basis for globalisation, speed up the old capitalist contradictory processes; they speed the growth of the parasitism, naked gambling and unproductive energy which characterises capitalism's decay. Along with the intensification of the exploitation of labour, they accelerate the cycle of production and profit.

International context

One feature of the rise of struggle of workers in every continent that is now in its beginning is the international context in which they take place. Today, more than ever in its history, the evolution of capitalist exploitation brings international questions before every serious struggle of workers. Transnationals exploit the globe. Everywhere the ruling classes and their governments in East and West are engaged in an attack on the conquests which the working class have won.

The attacks on health, education and welfare are global. Flexibility of labour, uncertain working hours and repressive contracts are everywhere, with the repression of working class rights backed in most countries by legal curbs or, workers' organisations and workers' struggles.

Already, important struggles of the working class have pushed towards an international unity in struggle. But the struggles of the working class proceed unevenly and most importantly, unevenly between various countries. More than ever is the need for an international organisation of communists devoted to working class struggle. Our task is that which *The Communist Manifesto* outlined in 1848, declaring of the communists that:

"In the national struggles of the proletarians of different countries they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality."

To express these tasks means, above all, the struggle for an International — a world party.

Bill Hunter's Archives

The Communist Manifesto the most banned and loved book

In 1999 the International Socialist League published a pamphlet by Bill Hunter called *150 years of the Communist Manifesto*. It was part of a series of pamphlets, called *The Roots of Marxism*. These pamphlets examined how Marxism developed in theory and in practice.

Here we publish the first of three parts of the pamphlet which is an introduction to the famous pamphlet by Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, and examines some of the books central ideas.

The writings of 1849 are clearly as relevant, if not more so, today as the times they were written. Capitalism is deepening its many sided crisis because it attacks the conquests of the world working class as a way out, which can only increase the probability of a new crisis exploding.

The ISL will be holding educational sessions on *The Communist Manifesto* November this year. If any reader is interested in attending please contact us.

One hundred and fifty years ago, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote *The Communist Manifesto*. It was a booklet that gave a concise summary of their basic theory of historical development and scientific socialism and made a call for the unity of the world's workers in the struggle to take humanity forward.

It became on one hand, the world's most repressed, condemned, banned, and burnt work; and on the other, its most quoted, most loved, and most respected. Repeatedly, the Marxist outlook that inspires it has been declared dead and buried. Repeatedly, it has sprung renewed from the earth. It is now set for another 'miraculous' rebirth.

In the new century, this masterful summary of basic principles of Marxism is once again due for an enormous increase in popularity. We are certain of this, because, once again we see the world capitalist system entering economic and financial catastrophes.

Trade union activists, particularly those in the motor industry, will remember

"Repeatedly, the Marxist outlook that inspires it has been declared dead and buried. Repeatedly, it has sprung renewed from the earth. It is now set for another "miraculous" rebirth."

that in the eighties and early nineties, the 'labour process' theorists and 'human resource' managers invited them to marvel at the 'miracle' of the Japanese economy. Japanese methods, it was said, organised 'jobs-for-life' production, and there were new 'buzz' words: lean production, quality circles, etc.

A much quoted book reflected this sociological ideology of the time. *The Machine that Changed the World*, written by James P Womburg, Daniel V Jones, and Daniel Roos in 1991, was widely publicised among economists and sociologists. The three authors wrote with great optimism, declaring in their introduction that lean production would mean a global revolution and would become "the standard global production system of the twenty first century". As a result, they emphatically concluded, that the world will be a very different and better place".

The stark truth is that by the time that this book and others were celebrating the 'Japanese miracle', the Japanese economy was slowing down. It went into its worst recession since the war and then, as the end of the decade approached, the crises of the Far Eastern 'tigers' burst into the news. To-day Japan, together with all the 'tigers' in the East, is in the throes of a deep crisis.

Certainly, Marxism is not dead. The prophecies of Marx and Engels are steadily working their way out, as a result of the same contradictions of capitalism that the authors of *The Communist Manifesto* described so brilliantly.

Fundamental processes

There are, for example, two fundamental processes clearly revealed today, that they wrote about: the inevitably worsening crises of overproduction and the, equally inevitable, creation of an extreme polarisation in society. As to the latter, an immense accumulation of wealth at the top of society is now taking place together with an increasing misery at the bottom. That can be seen, reaching unprecedented proportions, in every country in the world today. In relation to the former, *The Communist Manifesto* declared the inevitability of capitalist crises of overproduction. Marx and Engels were able to show how economic crises were inherent features of capitalism:

"It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the whole of bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic, that in all previous epochs would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of over-production society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence, industry and commerce seem to be destroyed... The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them."

Capitalist economists have continually attacked this conclusion and declared capitalism was a system, which was in a state of equilibrium through the workings of the market, and that the financial and economic crises were a temporary disruption of that equilibrium. However, since 1848, capitalism has had booms and slumps.

In the twentieth century, it did not just develop the regular economic cycles spoken of above, but also it went through a historical development from youth and virility to decay. *The Communist Manifesto* describes how, in its youth, capitalism made a progressive evolution