In Defence of Trotskyism

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China: deformed workers’ state or rising world imperialist power?

Reply to the International Bolshevik Tendency and the Spart “Family”

Unity is strength, L’union fait la force, Es la unidad fuerza, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, đon kết là sức mạnh, Jedność jest siła, ykseys on kesto, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, Midnimo iyo waa awood, hundeb ydy chryfder, Einheit ist Stärke, एकता शक्ति है, единстве наша сила, vienybes jėga, bashkimi ben fuqine, אֶּאֶֽחְדָּ֑ותּ הָאִ֣דָּחַתּ, unidad es fuerza, eining er styrkur, De eenheid is de sterkte, الوحدة هو الفوز, Ni neart go chur le céile, pagkakaisa ay kalakasan, jednota is síla, 일성은 이다 힘 힘, Workers of the World
In Defence of Trotskyism page 2

Introducing In Defence of Trotskyism

The International Trotskyist Current has begun this series of theoretical and polemical journals because much of the material is very specialised and directed at the Trotskyist "Family" and far left currents who take theory seriously and are familiar with the historical conflicts and lines of demarcation which constitutes the history of revolutionary Trotskyism. This is vital work. We understand that the current crisis of world imperialism is of a profound nature and are deeply concerned that the heritage of Trotskyism, which alone has the revolutionary programme and method to liberate humanity from the nightmare of economic crises, starvation, war, dictatorship and ecological disaster is now defended by relatively few internationally. The fight for Trotskyism was betrayed by Michel Pablo's, the FI post-war leader who increasingly yielded the conscious fight for revolutionary leadership to the unconscious historical process "objectively" carried out by agencies hostile to Trotskyism and the socialist revolution, to Stalinism or left, and sometimes right nationalism. At the same time the sectarianists abandon the Transitional Programme, in practice if not in words, and, because they do not seek the road to the mass of the working class and oppressed, begin as the obverse of Pabloism, but end up in a worse political position, as the ICL did in "Hail Red Army" in Afghanistan. We are confident that there are enough revolutionary internationalists to enable us to strengthen the core around the Permanent Revolution Collective (CoRep) and so begin the international struggle to regerstrate Trotskyism.

This publication expanded from an open letter to the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT) to an assessment of the entire International Communist League (ICL, Spartacist) tradition because the three groups that make up what we have called the dysfunctional Spart "Family", which also includes the League for the Fourth International (LFI), are so related to each other ideologically and psychologically that, although they obviously hate each other to the point of revulsion, they are unable to break this relationship because of agreement on what constitutes the continuity of Trotskyism and the Fourth International. For the "Family" continuity went with the International Committee (IC) split from "Pabloism" in 1953 via JP Cannon, Lambert and Healy. Then when that was faltering James Robertson arrived in the nick of time to oppose the political collapse to Castroism in 1963 and the SWP's reunification with Ernest Mandel. The mantel of Trotskyism then fell to Robertson when the rest of the IC, Lambert and Healy, abysmally failed the test of continuity. We are confident that there are enough revolutionary internationalists to enable us to strengthen the core around the Permanent Revolution Collective (CoRep) and so begin the international struggle to regerate Trotskyism.

Then when Robertson supposedly betrayed this sacred trust it fell to Bill Logan, of the IBT or Jan Norden of the LFI, depending of when your 'group split'. This despite the fact that they are all "fighting propaganda groups" with a totally different approach to the working class to their mentors in their best periods (e.g. Cannon in the 1930s). This amounts to almost no approach at all, their entire existence consisting in attacking all other groups and particularly each other; much of their charges are justified but then so are many of the counter-charges. Nonetheless there are big differences and the IBT are attempting to turn to the working class. To do this they must break from the "Family" by assessing the history of wrong political positions and the methodology that is Sparticism.

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Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
Reply to the International Bolshevik Tendency

Introductory Remarks

Dear Comrades,

We are reluctantly forced to adopt this open letter tactic because, despite a good degree of political agreement on the main aspects of the class struggle and the fight to build a revolutionary party, Alan Davis, speaking apparently on behalf of the British group, told us on 7th November after the public meeting in London that we had “blown it” as regards discussions although he might be willing to discuss with us about some unspecified issues sometime in the indefinite future if some unspecified things changed. We do not deserve to be “no platformed” like this. Your website tells us that, “building a revolutionary workers’ party, the most urgent task of our time, requires waging political war on ‘internationalists’ who push nationalist poison and ‘revolutionaries’ who seek to place new reformist obstacles on the road to proletarian power”. We took a similar position on the Bj4Bw poisonous nationalist campaign at the Lindsey Oil Refinery dispute, but with some differences which we will come to later. The very least your communist internationalist principles demands is discussions about joint intervention in the Labour movement (what that is can also be contentious so we will also deal with it later). How can you abandon this duty in this way, and by “you” I refer to the IBT international leadership who have presumably issued this instruction? As a tiny current of about 40 internationally which is not growing for you to continue to rely on linear recruitment or hostile polemics against the Sparts and “Pabloites” like North’s SEP is a dead end.

Six months to respond to the huge political, ideological and social crisis that was Bj4Bws

You must surely begin with intervening in the class struggle in order to advance that, to win the best militants to revolutionary Marxism on the basis that you have the best programme to advance that class struggle. But it seems to us that your intervention still tends towards a purely propagandistic approach; that you intervene in order to expose the errors of your opponents so as to build your sect, that you are not really interested in the class struggle. You could discuss with Socialist Fight, expose the “errors of our ways” to us in a comradely manner. We are implanted in the trade unions, are we fighting in there in a revolutionary socialist manner or as left reformists?

But you are not interested in helping us, and we do not know if you feel you can. We have learned from discussing with your comrades that much internal discussion in the British section of the IBT consists in what is wrong with various articles in SF 1, 2 and 3 but it seems that these are aimed at warning off your members from being “taken in” by us rather than “putting us right”. It took six months for you to respond to the huge political, ideological and social crisis that was the British Jobs for British workers (Bj4Bw) dispute centred on the Lindsey Oil Refinery. The importance of this dispute for building a revolutionary leadership beginning in Britain cannot be overestimated; it set the negative political parameters for the whole of the rest of the year in Britain and its international repercussions were correspondingly severe. Yet apparently an international internal political dispute paralysed your organisation for six months; enquiries on where you stood even in general were met with embarrassed evasions. Your international leadership (it seems, if problems were not closer to home), far from being an asset to you in this time, rendered you impotent in the class struggle, despite the fact that you eventually came out with a good (though not entirely correct) position on the dispute in July.

Socialist Fight intervened within a week

The quarterly Socialist Fight, on the other hand, intervened within a week and its position was widely praised internationally and established us overnight as principled Trotskyist fighters. Your yearly 1917 journal is just a propagandist weapon without the necessary detailed focus on the domestic class struggle to guide an effective intervention for you or for any other section that even groups as small as yours can make. It is, frankly, dull and boring to the masses and makes no attempt to develop guide an effective intervention for you or for any other section that even groups as small as yours can make. It is, frankly, dull and boring to the masses and makes no attempt to develop relations with new layers coming into struggle. This it has in common with the ICL and the LFI [1] – they even use the same format, the same style and type of journal, placards are identically handwritten just so as to make the point that you are the dysfunctional Spart “Family”. You will be forced to commit sati when the ICL (and/or its leader James Robertson) dies. The ICL are slowly dragging you with it into the abyss as it is.

But you have begun to step up statements for distribution, on the Lisbon Treaty in September and on the NPA in November, all very orthodox containing little we would disagree with. This begs the question; why can you not produce a more frequent publication in Britain, more directed to the class struggle and the political forces here as Socialist Fight does with a smaller
membership than your own? The problem is that during those six month events rapidly developed in the British class struggle which necessitated a principled position on Lindsey in order to intervene. But you could not do so. If similar or even more important events occur in the near future, and we are sure they will, will you be equally hamstrung? Let us list what you missed:

1. **People’s Charter** This predated the Bj4Bw but was part of the same political process. It was pure Stalinism in its politics and methods. It was prepared in secret behind the backs of the ranks of the Labour movement; it was drafted by the CPB, all its politics were already decided before opening it up to discussion by ‘representatives of the working class’. These plenipotentiaries, like the RMT’s General Secretary Bob Crow, LRC leader John McDonnell MP, Prison Officers’ Association’s Brian Caton, Nick Wrack of Respect and Dot Gibson, General Secretary of the National Pensioners Convention, met behind closed doors, refusing entry even to leading RMT activists. Naturally it was not discussed during its preparation within the ranks of the RMT, the LRC or anywhere else because there are just too many leftist there who might object to its appalling reformist, nationalist outlook.

2. **Lindsey Oil Refinery** itself – see above.

3. **Unite’s Left Caucus** Then we had to endure the spectacle of Unite’s Left Caucus on 21 February. This was again prepared by ultra Stalinist methods and politics, supported by the SWP, SP, AWL and PR. The latter two have wavered a bit now, the AWL fudging on who to support in the Unite General Secretary Election and PR implicitly changing their line on the legitimacy of the United Left by publishing the objections of a Shop Steward to the United Left Manchester Hastings fraud. We propose to wage a campaign over the next year demanding that the SWP, the SP, PR and the AWL support the candidacy of Jerry Hicks who has announced he will stand for the General Secretary of Unite. Acting entirely outside of and against the bureaucracy and with only lukewarm support from the SWP (who had backed the right-winger Fairclough against him, because the CPB said he was a ‘left’ and they capitulated to them, until he withdrew). In the voting Simpson got 60,048, 37.85% and Hicks came second with 39,307, 24.84%. We have explained our reasons in SF3 – will you support this campaign?

4. **No2EU** This was again prepared by the Stalinists themselves in secret, progressively allowing in other ‘leaders’, the same methods and largely the same individuals as the People’s Charter.

**Centrists**

As we observed of the intervention of the centrists in SF 2: “They have all but lost the political ability to relate to the independent interests of the working class not mediated through the left TU bureaucracy. They are unable to see the relevance of revolutionary socialist politics in fighting for rank-and-file mobilisations that set the working class base against the bureaucratic superstructure to open up the space for the propagation of revolutionary ideas and the building of a revolutionary party. They have become conservative and opportunist behind their ‘Marxist’ verbiage, still victims of imperialism’s neo-liberal offensive.” Socialist Fight was able to cover all these developments in detail and produce political commentary to guide our intervention whilst the IBT members had to kick their heels for six months.

Remember here we are not talking about fusion talks but simply about how to intervene as revolutionary communists in the real movement of the working class. And it seems that when the IBT do just that, as in their recent intervention in the Brent Postal Workers Support Group, we make almost identical interventions in a meeting of some 35 mostly experiences trade unionists and leftists youth, and were the only ones to warn of the treachery of the trade union bureaucrats and the need to build rank-and-file opposition to fight this. But we must have been talking of different types of R+F opposition, SF must have a syndicalist concept compared to the revolution concept of the IBT, right?

How do you know that as you will not discuss the matter? And it must be taken as read that the IBT have said the last word on how these should work because of your experience in the International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union (ILWU)? As with the continuity of the Fourth International running through the albeit very flawed but nonetheless better-than-anyone-else characters JP Cannon and James Robertson; only the US SWP, the ICL and their interventions in the US Labor movement have anything to teach the world of revolutionary Trotskyism it seems.

We are opposed to pure propaganda organisations or ‘fighting propaganda groups’ and oppose third period Stalinist methods in the trade unions. That is the most important question to be corrected but there is a second, almost as important and closely related question which the “Family” make the first, namely Stalinism. But if we are to debate the IBT we must first say why they must break with the ICL and what is wrong with that tradition. The Gruppe IV. International, which became the Gruppe Spartakus, German section of the IBT in 1990, had a good posi-
tion on continuity when they wrote in 1984 that "We do not intend to become disoriented in the ‘gravitational field of the ICL’ nor do we intend to apply to the ICL this conception of a Trotskyist family". [2] Yet over twenty five years later you have still not achieved that task, you are still very palpably part of the ICL “Family” on the question of Stalinism, the Malvinas and anti-imperialism in general, TU work, etc. You, together with the International Group (IG), exclusively confer on each other the honourable title of “left-centrists” as you clearly think these questions and Soviet defencism in particular are the defining issues (“acid tests”) for Trotskyism. You direct most of your serious theoretical polemics at each other in a most incestuous manner. Your combined numbers are only a few hundred but these cadres are the only significant ones in terms of revolutionary regroupment, apparently.

Except most of these “only-hope-for-the-revolution people” are slated as the most appalling thugs and scoundrels by their opponents; The Road to Jimstown (IBT), What Makes Logan Run? and The Norden “Group”: Polymorphous Opportunism, (ICL) etc. - the quotations marks are presumably supposed to lead us to snort “Group” in scornful derision.

You have “disappeared” the rest of the subjectively revolutionary Trotskyists internationally, the rest of the subjectively revolutionists of any colour outside the “Family” and with them the entire historical experience of the fight by other forces for Trotskyism internationally, however inadequate that might have been and with them has gone the working class and its revolutionary potential. The healthy revolutionary elements outside of your own ranks must now be reduced to a few dozen at most, in the eyes of the three opposing sectarian “Family” groups.

Gross Sectarians

IBT and the LFI are strategically orientated to the ICL and so cannot break with that tradition and method; there are limits which if breached could call into question the entire tradition. Why must you go so far with these gross sectarians, the ICL? To take just a few examples;

1. In an article in WV 945 (23 Oct 2009) The Syphilitic Chain (from Voltaire’s Candida) they attack the IG because they "promote the May Day 2008 antiwar port shutdown by the International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union (ILWU) as opposed to the opportunists” “programme of chaining the working class and anti-war activists to the Democrats” - but this is not the case apparently because Jack Heyman, LFI supporter whose motion produced the shutdown, knew someone, "his co-emcee" Clarence Thomas, who had tried to shut up anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan about the war in Afghanistan. So he knew someone with reactionary views, he must have those same views himself in the best House Un-American Activities Committee tradition. The very title of the piece, The Syphilitic Chain, is meant to suggest this mode of thought. But there is a further charge, an un-sourced or dated “quote” that tells is that Heyman said “we want the troops home”. We would like to see the context, we hope it is not as bad as the ICL’s line on Lebanon in 1983 where they patriotically wanted the US Marines out “alive.” Jack Heyman’s initiative was rightly seen internationally as spirational and an example of what revolutionary communist can and should achieve in the right circumstances. To vilify it in this manner is unpardonable. And we do not have to agree with him in all his political positions to take that stand. Bravo Jack!

2. In the very same issue we are requested to condemn the League for the Revolutionary Party because back in Winter 1976 -77 Socialist Voice printed a picture which showed the Stars and Stripes above the Confederate flag and captioned “U.S. flag above Confederate banner atop state capitol building in Montgomery, Alabama, symbolises dominance of Northern capital in the South”. We are supposed to fly into an apoplexy of rage at the LRP who do not understand Revolutionary Integrationism as the ICL does and are thereby “Jim Crow socialists”. Again what utter and unpardonable nonsense. The LRP’s “crime”, in the eyes of the ICL, is that they do serious trade union work as opposed to the ICL who do none at all these days.

3. The mad stuff about not demanding the jailing of killer cops because this sows illusions in the capitalist justice, an infantile argument if ever there was one. As the IBT correctly say. “Advocacy of a revolutionary solution to social oppression does not, however, mean that Marxists are not also prepared to advance certain concrete, usually negative, demands on bourgeois authority. An obvious example is the call to drop legal proceedings against those who were arrested on 7 January while protesting this hideous crime. It is equally necessary to demand, not only that Mehserle’s (the killer cop) bail be revoked, but that this racist killer be jailed for life.”

4. Roberson’s latest craze of condemning any revolutionary candidate for executive positions.
These examples demonstrate sectarian bigotry of the first order, for the ICL the main purpose of intervening in the class struggle is to demonstrate how much opposed they are to all other groups and how they put the cult needs of their group above the class struggle itself. If they inflict damage on the working class in the process who cares? You are wasting your time orientation to such a degenerate group after 25 years. There is no “orthodoxy” here now, in so far as there ever was some in its relatively healthy days of the 1960s. Are you not too much like that yourselves? Look to the wider internationalist tendencies and seek to intervene in the class struggle with a better method than this. Look at what the Transitional Programme says on this,

“The Fourth International continues the tradition of Bolshevism which first showed the proletariat how to conquer power. The Fourth International sweeps away the quacks, charlatans and unsolicited teachers of morals. In a society based upon exploitation, the highest moral is that of the social revolution. All methods are good which raise the class consciousness of the workers, their trust in their own forces, their readiness for self-sacrifice in the struggle. The impermissible methods are those which implant fear and submissiveness in the oppressed before their oppressors, which crush the spirit of protest and indignation or substitute for the will of the masses the will of the leaders; for conviction-compulsion; for an analysis of reality-demagogy and frame-up.”

There is no problem fitting the Sparts into that but your attempts to break from it are weak and inadequate. You put the internal requirements to maintain the rigid internal discipline of your group above the class struggle itself and the needs of the working class. Or are you getting over that at last? Your latest refusal of even talks on joint work certainly does not sound like it. Remember Trotsky’s warning:

“You have for example an important number of Jewish non-worker elements in your ranks. They can be a very valuable yeast if the party succeeds by and by in extracting them from a closed milieu and ties them to the factory workers by daily activity. I believe such an orientation would also assure a healthier atmosphere inside the party. "One general rule we can establish immediately: a party member who doesn’t win during three or six months a new worker for the party is not a good party member.” (“Letter to Cannon”, 3 October 1937)

Mobilised the base against the bureaucratic leadership

Should your comrade who spoke in the Willesden meeting not have denounced Socialist Fight openly as the ICL does for refusing to defend the deformed workers’ states of China and Vietnam and calling for a vote for Labour rather than intervene in the reasonable and relevant way he did in order to attempt to begin to mobilise the base against the bureaucratic sell out leadership in the CWU? You will have to influence him with more sectarian bile or he will not be able to resist continuing to make pertinent interventions in the real class struggle and relating favourable by operating temporary blocs with those who do likewise however partially and inadequately. Namely SF, Work-

ers Power leftist individuals and dissident members of the PR, AWL, SWP and SP. What a terrifying scenario!

And you know what is coming now. If you want to break the umbilical cord tying you to Sparticism first of all remember Marx’s definition of sectarianism; a mode of thought which counterposes the socialist propaganda group to the real movement of the proletariat, because that real movement of the proletariat is so backward. Sectarians are those who they take as their point of honour the shibboleth that separates them from the movement. As Marx famously said “the development of the system of Socialist sects and that of the real workers’ movement always stand in inverse ratio to each other.” And here is Trotsky in the Transitional Programme;

Under the influence of the betrayal by the historical organizations of the proletariat, certain sectarian moods and groupings of various kinds arise or are regenerated at the periphery of the Fourth International. At their base lies a refusal to struggle for partial and transitional demands, i.e., for the elementary interests and needs of the working masses, as they are today. Preparing for the revolution means to the sectarians, convincing themselves of the superiority of socialism. They propose turning their backs on the “old” trade unions, i.e., to tens of millions of organized workers-as if the masses could somehow live outside of the conditions of the actual class struggle! (Trotsky saw the Northite SEP coming!)

They remain indifferent to the inner struggle within reformist organizations - as if one could win the masses without intervening in their daily strife! They refuse to draw a distinction between the bourgeois democracy and fascism - as if the masses could (not?) help but feel the difference on every hand! These sterile politicians generally have no need of a bridge in the form of transitional demands because they do not intend to cross over to the other shore. They simply dawdle in one place, satisfying themselves with a repetition of the selfsame meagre abstractions. Political events are for them an occasion for comment but not for action.

Most of the sectarian groups and cliques, nourished on accidental crumbs from the table of the Fourth International lead an “independent” organizational existence, with great pretensions but without the least chance for success. Bolshevik-Leninists, without waste of time, calmly leave these groups to their own fate... A correct policy regarding trade unions is a basic condition for adherence to the Fourth International. He who does not seek and does not find the road to the masses is not a fighter but a dead weight to the party. A programme is formulated not for the editorial board or for the leaders of discussion clubs, but for the revolutionary action of millions. The cleansing of the ranks of the Fourth International of sectarianism and incurable sectarians is a primary condition for revolutionary success.”

Major differences

What are the major differences preventing joint work?

1. On trade union work and “rank-and-fileism” there is such a large difference, apparently communicated to the IBT membership but that not to SF, which makes joint work impossible.
2. On the British Labour party (and bourgeois-workers’ parties internationally); the IBT says that whilst it is still a bourgeois-workers’ party we cannot vote for it automatically whereas SF says vote Labour except in extraordinary circumstances like a revolutionary situation in the absence of a revolutionary or class struggle centrist alternative; always the position of Lenin and Trotsky.  
3. Poisonous Nationalism in Lindsey and national chauvinism on the Malvinas war.  
6. On the restoration of capitalism in China and Vietnam; the IBT say these are still workers’ states, SF says they are capitalist states; this is a fundamental barrier to discussions, apparently.

Combining all these we see a different method, contend the IBT, and we agree that at least what we have is two very different interpretations of the same method. But we think that the IBT, or at least some of them, are seeking ways out of the straitjacket and would like to hear more of what we have to say. We know that they take the principles of Trotskyism very seriously, that there are very few potential leaders amongst today’s self-proclaimed Trotskyists who take theory seriously, they just need to enter the class struggle in order to find out how to apply it. “All theory, dear friend, is gray, but the golden tree of life springs ever green” said Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. But perhaps even more apocryphal is his critique of the gospel according the St. John which, for very important ideological reasons, was read out in the vernacular [3] in every Catholic Church in the world since the Tridentine Mass was initiated by the Council of Trent in the middle of the sixteenth century (1545-1563) during the counter-reformation and is still read today. It begins “In the beginning was the word” (logos, reason, i.e. God, from Greek philosophy). No, no, said Goethe’s Faust “In the beginning was the deed” (Im Anfang war der Tat). And every serious Marxist in the world agrees with Goethe. So we do not apologise for the sharp nature of this polemic.

1. Trade union work; rank-and-file or Party Caucus?  

The Sparts vs. JP Cannon on the Trade Unions

In trade union work the IBT take their line from the theory developed by the ICL from the trade union work of JP Cannon. The Spartacist guiding principles for work in the trade unions can be found online; Trotskyist Work in the Trade Unions by Chris Knox [4]

This is their basis theory;  

“The Spartacist League sees as the chief lesson from this experience not the need to reject united fronts, occasional blocs or the tactic of critical support in the trade unions, but the need to subordinate these tactics to the task of building a revolutionary political alternative to the bureaucracy within the unions. A bloc or tactic of electoral support which fails to enhance revolution-
But Cannon was not capitulating to opportunism in fighting the ultra-lefts. In fact his alliance with William Z. Foster was on the basis that they formed a bloc to fight the old Jay Lovestone opportunist line which capitulated to the left bureaucrats and “progressives”. When Foster made his power bid against Lovestone on the third period ultra-leftism (“We will have nothing to do with them (the progressives),”) he could quote Lovestone approvingly;

“The progressives are of vital importance in the development of a left wing movement of a mass character. They serve under certain conditions as one of the levers for the development of a clear-cut, broad, left-wing movement.”

But Cannon observes;

“The statement quoted above, which in our opinion is a correct one, was formulated in a guarded way so as to appear more "left" than the actual opinions of the writer. To learn that, it is only necessary to recall the practices of united front without criticism, under the hegemony of the progressives in so many cases; personal relations at the top instead of the utilization of relations with progressive leaders for the promotion of a common movement of the workers below. But these distortions should not lead us to react to the present policy of rejecting all relations with the new progressive movement. To do so is to turn aside from one of the most important avenues for the development of the class movement of the workers and the building of the Communist influence and organization within it.”

Cannon in the best Communist tradition

There, you would think, Cannon was acting in the best Communist tradition, fighting to put the workers’ united front into action by building a broad class struggle movement (we in Britain would call that a rank-and-file movement). But he was wrong, according to the ICL, he should have formed a party front-type organisation with the full Trotskyist Transitional Programme as its programme and used that to form united fronts with other currents. That this was the traditional Stalinist tactic which sought to replace one bureaucratic misleadership with another escaped the attention of the ICL; the Healyites had a similar All Trade Union Alliance as a party front, the Socialists were a National Network of Shop Stewards and the SWP have the Right to Work, etc. They all were/are subordinate to left bureaucrats.

We should build our own party front that is principled and revolutionary and that will prepare the revolution, say the Sparts. Of course if the Trotskyists did the caucus thing in 1934 they would not have led anything; if the workers think you are just trying to build your own sect and not fight the class struggle, not trying to win the immediate battles, you will not build anything which is what our “Family” have discovered, but cannot seem to work out why. They say;

The Spartacist League sees as the chief lesson from this experience not the need to reject united fronts, occasional blocs or the tactic of critical support in the trade unions, but the need to subordinate these tactics to the task of building a revolutionary movement of the workers below. But these distortions should not lead us to react to the present policy of rejecting all relations with the new progressive movement. To do so is to turn aside from one of the most important avenues for the development of the class movement of the workers and the building of the Communist influence and organization within it.”

And that is the exact opposite of how Cannon operated so successfully in the 1934 Teamster strike in Minnesota in 1934;

“The Trotskyists’ mistake... was that they lacked different tactical weapons in their arsenal for different conditions and periods. An independent, Trotskyist-led caucus, expressing a full programme of transitional demands for the unions, wasn’t so important in 1934 as later, since in 1934 the Trotskyists were in a position to implement their most important demands in practice ... Later, however, when they weren’t in a position to provide direct leadership of the class, the Trotskyists showed inflexibility.”

And the Spart “Family” in fact reject all that in favour of their: "The central conclusion is that there is no substitute for the hard road of struggle to inject a political class perspective of proletarian internationalism into what is normally a narrow, nationalist and parochial arena of struggle. Especially in the initial phases of struggle when the revolutionary forces are weak, it is necessary to make an independent pole as politically distinct as possible, so that the basis for future growth is clear. To this end, the ICL calls for the building of caucuses based on the revolutionary transitional programme.”
political alternative to the bureaucracy within the unions. A bloc or tactic of electoral support which fails to enhance revolutionary leadership through undermining the bureaucracy as such can only build illusions in reformism.”

So when you are relatively big and influential you formed united fronts and they might work, when you were small and isolated you compensated for this by raising the full revolutionary programme which might train a few but would isolate you even further so you begin to blame the whole working class.

**Howard Keylor interview with 1917**

And we have to say Cannon was entirely correct in that. We can see that the sectarian ICL approach still affected Howard Keylor as recounted in an interview with 1917 No 4 Autumn 1987. He advocates the incorrect ICL position but obviously in practice at least partially operated the correct Cannonite position on the TUs;

“1917: So in the union you ran on the Transitional Programme. One of the criticisms which we often hear of this approach by groups like Workers Power in Britain is that raising a full socialist programme amounts to “ulitmatism.” Their idea is that demands like the call for workers’ defence guards or for a workers’ government are too advanced for the present consciousness of the class. How would you respond?

**Keylor:** I would respond that the failure to raise the whole Transitional Programme as applied to the particular trade-union milieu or trade-union situation amounts to misleading the workers, because all points or aspects of that programme sometime or other, sooner or later, relate to immediate questions facing the union. It is impossible to build a class-struggle opposition that can lead workers, even to defend themselves, without educating at least a section of the activist workers—the most advanced ones—about the social and political reality in which they are operating.”

This is obviously the sectarian ICL position which would have simply isolated Keylor from the entire workforce if he really implemented it. You can raise you full programme (which does not consist solely of Transitional demands) with a vanguard by propaganda but it is foolish to do so with the masses by agitation. Remember “this bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today’s conditions and from today’s consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat” (Transitional Programme). It should not need explaining that to raise the demand for workers’ defence guards in a period when they are clearly not needed makes you seem like you are off your head, not in tune with the union. It is impossible to build a class-in the eyes of his base to fight for some programmatic plank which is really opposed to pro-capitalist business unionism, then class-struggle elements could consider (sic!) offering him critical support, despite the reformist limitations of the rest of his platform.

At the same time, it is necessary to warn those who follow such a candidate that his platform as a whole contradicts this particular demand. That way, if and when he betrays this demand, those who supported him because of it will begin to understand that only the consistent class-struggle elements in the union are capable of really fighting for their interests.”

It’s the revolution or nothing, apparently for Keylor here. He has ruled out support for anyone in 99.99% of union elections and the Sparts had no problem ruling out the 0.01% of candidates that was left like himself and later Jack Heyman. And even here Keylor seems to suggest that there may be “consistent class-struggle elements” who are not IBT members and with whom he should collaborate even if they never join his group, which is what he obviously did to achieve his famous anti-apartheid strikes in the mid 80s and what Heyman did to launch the anti-war strike in May Day 2008.

This is not very ICL; far more Cannon and therefore far more effective. The real problems of real workers were addressed in some ways by both Keylor, in his time and by Heyman not by the ultra-left sectarian theory expounded above but by real practical intervention, albeit in a union with probably the most democratic constitution and culture on the planet.

**Class Consciousness and the Revolutionary Party**

The following extract from Class Consciousness and the Revolutionary Party by GD in 1998[5] is a polemic against the similar sectarian methods of the LRP, who have developed somewhat better methods, at least on paper, since then. The IBT could be substituted for the LRP almost everywhere, showing a common US-centred ideology;

The LRP say:

“WP employs the anti-Trotskyist concept of pitting ‘the rank and file’ against the bureaucrats because it sees both as functional positions within the working class. The class driven contradiction is between proletariat and petty-bourgeois leadership. The union bureaucracy, even its leftmost sections, is not simply a ‘cast’ of the working class but a class intrusion that must be overturned.”[6]
The LRP counterpose revolutionary leadership to mobilising the rank-and-file. This profound misunderstanding of the duality of the tactic, of the, yet again, dialectic of fighting for revolutionary leadership by mobilising the rank-and-file to fight within and without the union is not understood at all. The truth is the trade union (and Labour Party) bureaucracy is both part of the working class movement – it is its currently existing leadership – and the vehicle for imposing capitalist austerity and reinforcing bourgeois ideology on the working class.

A rank-and-file movement must stand for every electable position, must constantly advocate action and class struggle as against the machinations of the bureaucrats and must act where possible as an ‘internal breakaway’. It must therefore place demands on the existing workers’ leaders. It must mobilise for action itself and must seek to be in the position of threatening, and calling unofficial action if the bureaucrats refuse to – ‘with the bureaucracy when possible, against them when necessary’. To be really effective it should be led by revolutionaries who will complement its work by wider propaganda for revolutionary socialism itself in their party press and meetings, etc. thereby threatening the political control over the entire Labour movement which the bureaucracy (TU and Labour party leaders) have In Britain.

These are tactics within an overall strategy. The LRP has one strategy and no tactics. If they have an academic understanding of the dialectic they certainly have given no thought to its practical application. Their list of ‘Marxist “don’ts”’ is impressive: Don’t: vote for the British Labour Party or any social democratic party anywhere, don’t advocate a US Labor Party, workers’ government or the like, don’t enter popular fronts (correct on that one), don’t enter reformist parties, centrist parties, UFs or fight for rank-and-file bodies in the trade unions. And the ‘dos’: At all times and at all places build the revolutionary party by pure propaganda, proclaim the political independence of the class to be secured if that is done (no matter how small the party is) and at all time and in all places scorn the ideas of tactics and flexible approach to reformist parties and workers as the purest form of class treachery.

That also describes the ICL and it must make uncomfortable reading for some IBTers. It is surely a major sign of a further move to the ultra-left “hunkering down” on behalf of some of your leaders that the author of your last major polemical article against the grosser sectarian antics of the Northite SEP – who not only deny that bourgeois-workers’ parties are part of the Labour movement but say the trade unions themselves are now merely instruments for capitalist control of the working class – has now been driven out of your organisation. Significantly he cites the sectarian position on the women’s movement (the use of the term “feminism” in an insensitive way) as one of his criticisms of the IBT and an indication of your sectarian approach.

2. The British Labour Party

Both the IBT and Workers Power still characterise the Labour party as a bourgeois-workers’ party but this has no programmatic significance for either. They would be more politically honest if they called it a straight bourgeois party, like the US Democrats because they come close to treating it like that. [7] In essence the Labour party is a sort of coalition between trade union bureaucrats and capitalist politicians which is tied to capitalism but based on the working class.

At the IBT meeting on 7 November an SF militant intervened to say that the workers united front (WUF) was essentially putting demands on leaders of the Labour movement, TU and Labour party, in order to mobilise the working class into action and open up the conflict between the base and the bureaucratic misleadership of the class. Lenin and Trotsky had always called for a vote for Labour, in fact in 1936 Trotsky had attacked the London Independent Labour party (a left split from Labour) because they advocated only voting for those Labour candidates who were against sanctions on Abyssinia.

In reply Alan said the Labour party was still a bourgeois workers’ party but it was a tactical question of whether to vote for them. The Labour party was fundamentally different now from the 1930s because workers no longer had illusions in Labour so there were no illusions to dispel. Also Alan expressed amazement at a SF militant’s assertion that those who will vote for Labour in the next election were the most class conscious if reformist workers. No, he said these were those who belonged to left groups or who would not vote at all. The SF militant pointed out after the meeting that those who did not vote had become politically demoralised and had given up on politics and we did not know where they might end up. The SF militant pointed out that the main reason for voting Labour was because it was a bourgeois workers’ party and the workers supported it against the direct representatives of capital, the Liberal Democrats and the Tories. They were reformist in their outlook and so would vote for the reformist party. Alan said Labour was no longer reformist because it did not carry out any reforms.
Abandoning the traditional orthodox communist/Trotskyist workers’ united front

The rational for abandoning the traditional orthodox communist/Trotskyist workers’ united front (WUF) orientation to the trade unions and bourgeois-workers’ parties comes from two main sources. 1. From the opportunist left who seek to build their own group by posing as more radical reformist than Labour and 2. From the sectarian, mainly US-influenced groups who never understood the difference between the US Labour movement which never formed a bourgeois-workers’ party and the rest of the advanced capitalist countries which did. They failed to appreciate this difference and were partly miffed by the notion that others had achieved more than them – the ICL is the typical example of a US-centred group influenced by national chauvinism. Arguments that the Labour party is no longer reformist because it produces no reforms are simply silly; reformism is a relationship to capitalism which yields as little as possible to the working class for the smoother running of the system. It would quickly produce many reforms to head off a revolution. The idea that the ranks of the party is “hollowed out” is also historically off the mark. In fact in the beginning there were no individual membership of the party and the door knockers were provided by the affiliated socialist groups.

The ILP took a great proportion of the active membership and the left MPs in the 1932 split. Post WWII only certain areas and constituencies had an active membership who made up something that could be called a sort of a left reformist party at the base, always opposed, at some times more than others, to the always-capitalist leadership and government. When was it better, when was there a “real Labour” leadership – Ramsey McDonald maybe? No the real problem is that our ultra-lefts have no idea about what method inspired Lenin and Trotsky to be life-long “vote Labour” men, they run away from the unpopularity of the Labour government and use that as an excuse to abandon the Labour core voters in the inner city housing estate and with them the working class as a whole.

The ILP took some 16,000 members and 7 MPs when it split in 1932. It had lost 75% of these just three years later and all its MPs by 1947. The CPGB grew to its greatest extent of 60,000 members in 1932. It had lost 75% of these just three years later and all its MPs by 1947. The PCF had 800,000 members when it split in 1930. The CPGB grew to its greatest extent of 60,000 members in 1932. It had lost 75% of these just three years later and all its MPs by 1947. The ILP took a great proportion of the active membership and the left MPs in the 1932 split.

but revolutionaries don’t advise people to just stay at home on election day. The capitalist media labels those who won’t participate in this bourgeois dogfight as ‘apathetic’, but we say go to the polling booth and spoil your ballot – denounce the occupation of Iraq or the state of our schools and hospitals, or simply leave it blank.”

Anarchism, Bolshevism and voting

Question is how do we (or more pertinently they) establish their “working-class political independence from the bourgeoisie”? By voting for revolutionaries, or more radical reformists or what? This is just unserious anarchist “don’t vote organise” stuff. This is not Bolshevism, voting is a form of political action not counterposed but complementary to all other political actions including the implicit content of all industrial actions like strikes, occupations, etc. Lenin and Trotsky thought that the British working class had established a measure of reformist class independence by supporting and voting for the bourgeois-workers’ Labour party. Are the core Labour voters in the inner cities simply fools to vote against the Tories and the Liberal Democrats (and now the BNP) when they would defend themselves far better by not voting at all? The best they will get is a rejection of David Cameron for Gordon Brown, what good are such silly reformist marginal gains? Vote Labour is of some importance to class conscious but reformist workers, Lenin and Trotsky thought so but there is no need to strive to understand that because, that was then and this is now when apparently there is a completely different relationship of class forces. We say this is fundamentally wrong, the relationship of class forces is basically the same, the task of breaking workers from reformism is still the same and it does not rely on propaganda alone but also on an activist intervention with the methods of Lenin and Trotsky, not with the methods of Stalin, Robertson and anarchism.
You ask; "Do you think it is acceptable to vote for the so-called workers’ component of popular fronts, as the CPGB did by voting for some Respect candidates in 2005?" This is another of your acid tests, and one which has been thoroughly discredited by an ex-member; one Ian Donavan (who is now a leader of Respect) in his article Trotskyism and the Popular Front in the journal Revolution and Truth Issue 1, Summer 1998 (http://revolutiontruth.site11.com/). In the first place no IBTer or ICLer has been able to produce a Trotsky quote to prove Robertson’s 1970 assertion that you do not vote for bourgeoisie-workers’ candidates in Popular Fronts, but the IBT are big on reasons why people should not vote, or intervene in any other significant way with the working class at all. Remember Trotsky? "At their base lies a refusal to struggle for partial and transitional demands, i.e., for the elementary interests and needs of the working masses, as they are today." In fact, Trotsky was clearly in favour of voting for the PCF and SFIO in France in 1936 because he advocated French Trotskyist standing against the second round bourgeois components of the Popular Front but not against the bourgeoisie-workers’ candidates. And then Ian points out that Jan Norden tried to get around this by saying that Trotsky just did not know what the French Trotskyists were up to. As if his writings were not voluminous enough to show that he knew almost every detail. And what are we to make of Trotsky’s advice to his Spanish followers that they should work as a faction inside Largo Caballeros’ (the Stalinist’s “Spanish Lenin”, until he had fulfilled the task they gave him of derailing the revolution) Socialist Party when it was in the Popular Front government? These were his programmatic suggestions;

1. To condemn and denounce mercilessly before the masses the policy of all the leaders who take part in the Popular Front.
2. To understand fully and to bring clearly before the eyes of the advanced workers the pitiful rôle of the leadership of the "Workers Party of Marxian Unification" [POUM] and especially of the former “left communists”, Andres Nin, Andrade, etc.
3. To rally around the banner of the Fourth International, on the basis of the Open Letter.
4. To join the Socialist party and the United Youth, in order to work there as a fraction in the spirit of Bolshevism.
5. To create fractions and nuclei in the trade unions and other mass organizations.
6. To direct their main attention to the spontaneous and semi spontaneous movements, to study their general traits, that is, to concern themselves with the temperature of the masses and not that of the parliamentary cliques.
7. To be present in every struggle in order to give it clear expression.
8. To insist always on the masses forming their committees of action, elected ad hoc (juntas, soviets) and to enlarge them constantly.
9. To oppose the programme of the conquest of power, of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the social revolution to all the hybrid programs (à la Caballero or à la Maurin).

But then Trotsky was strategically concerned with reaching the radicalising working class, unlike the "Family", not finding “principled” excuses for avoiding the struggle. Maybe he was still opposed to voting for the SP but forgot to tell us? Or did not know enough about Spain?

3. Poisonous Nationalism

We will look at two examples of this very serious problem for the working class and all revolutionaries. The IBT have criticised the Socialist Fight intervention in the Lindsey Oil Refinery dispute in the following terms,

British jobs for British workers and the IBT.

"Workers Hammer, which had no criticism of Downing’s statement, did not comment on his opposition to union control of hiring and contented itself with a string of abstractly correct generalisations." The full IBT text can be viewed here: http://www.bolshevik.org/statements/LOR_strikes_2009.html

This section is naive in the extreme and demonstrates zero understanding of the real forces on the ground in the trade unions and how they operate. It is the IBT who give us the abstract generalisations and cannot recognise reality. To speak of the "unions" in abstract without looking at who actually controls them, the bureaucrats or the rank-and-file is plain wrong. In defence of Cannon, that matter was in dispute in 1936 in the US with the rise of the CIO and industrial militancy, so the demand had some purchase then. We were mistaken, however, in not realising the seriousness of the problems and what the attack on “Downing’s position” in the IBT statement meant and the previous tone of the statement which led up to this until we were directed to the exchanges on Michael Brennan’s Facebook site on 9 October. Here the IBT defended in a shamefaced and apologetic but nonetheless real way the ICL reactionary Shachtmanite chauvinist positions on immigration controls.

In the course of the exchange IBT leader Alan Davis made the following apology and defence of immigration controls: "The Marxist answer to the grotesque inequalities created by imperialism is not mass migration, but the creation of a rational, socialist world order through proletarian revolution... Yes I am not for lifting all immigration controls that have ever existed or will ever exist. Opposing all immigration controls in every situation and at every time is not some absolute principle except for those whose politics really are an infantile disorder."

The League for the Revolutionary Party exposed the reactionary ICL position in 1992 in Proletarian Revolution No. 65 (Fall 2002).

"We also observed that the SL, along with the Bolshevik Tendency (BT) and the Internationalist Group (IG) that descend from them, oppose the slogan on chauvinist grounds: they are against ending all immigration restrictions by imperialist powers. We quoted from a Workers Vanguard article in 1974, making an argument which the Spartacists have repeated often since then:
"However, on a sufficiently large scale, immigration flows could wipe out the national identity of the recipient countries. Unlimited immigration as a principle is incompatible with the right to national self-determination...an "open" U.S./Mexico border would not only introduce impoverished Mexican labourers to flood the U.S. labor market, becoming an unprotected pool for capitalist super exploitation, but would also lead to well-financed American "colonists" buying up Mexican enterprises and real estate...If, for example, there were unlimited immigration into Northern Europe, the population influx from the Mediterranean basin would tend to dissolve the national identity of small countries like Holland and Belgium." (Workers Vanguard, Jan. 18, 1974.)

A precedent in employment law for a new racist protectionism

But as "Billy" in the hammer-and-sickle blog on 12 Feb. 2009 opined;

"The 'local jobs' and union register thing is at worst a precedent in employment law for a new racist protectionism, at best the closed shop, with all the faith that entails in the union bureaucracy's objectivity in recruitment. Leave recruitment to the employers and that way they can be held accountable for their prejudices. Give it to the bureaucrats and they will use it against their enemies within the union. The genesis of workers' control is in the occupation, not in the closed shop. GD has endeavoured to show how this was applied through official union channels as a means of precluding Catholics from employment (in the north of Ireland)."

In SF3 AJ Byrne's History of the TGWU Andrew Murray quotes Jack Jones, "at Bevin's instigation the three leaders of the (unofficial) ban (on overtime at Salford docks) were expelled from the union and lost their employment' (p71). He does not tell us why they lost their jobs: in fact membership of the union was a condition of employment and union officials used this to weed out militants in collaboration with the bosses".

In Workers Vanguard 946 in a letter from K.A "A former Fremont Auto Worker" we find the following passage which again makes the same point,

"When GM and Toyota opened NUMMI in 1984 the UAW dissolved Local 1364 which had earned a reputation for militancy over the years. Hiring at NUMMI was not done according to Local 1364 seniority. Instead a new union, Local 2214 was formed over the years. Hiring at NUMMI was not done according to Local 1364 which had earned a reputation for militancy. (always suspected that they were screening out the militants) The UAW bureaucracy's line since 1984 that NUMMI represented a new partnership between labor and capital – "team spirit" – has now borne rotten fruit during an economic recession far worse than when the Fremont GM plant closed in 1982."

So comrades when you ask, "Union control of hiring and a closed shop would allow workers to do more than merely 'demand' equal treatment from the bosses - they could impose it. So why not advance these elementary common sense demands?" We must reply that, in these circumstances and in this relationship of class forces, "union control of hiring and firing" would mean bureaucratic control (and this is precisely why the Socialist Party raised it, to ingratiate themselves with the Bj4Bw Unite bureaucracy), it would mean victimisation of union militants. It would mean racist exclusion of foreign workers as happened in Hook in South Wales when 50 Polish workers were sacked to make way for "locals" as a direct result of Lindsey. This demand is not common sense at all; it may sound well meaning and orthodox but is politically disastrously counter-productive.

The Malvinas Conflict

The "Family" all have the same reactionary chauvinist positions on this conflict which all are obliged to adopt because Robertson adopted this line and he was the continuity of Trotskyism up to the point when the mantle passed to Logan or Norden. They all refused to defend semi-colonial Argentina against imperialist Britain because "The Falkland war (sic!) was an armed conflict between capitalist Argentina and rotten British imperialism. At no point in this war was the national sovereignty of Argentina was put into question whereas the overthrow of their respective governments was in the interests of the British and also of the Argentinean working classes. For this reason communists put forward the position of revolutionary defeatism and fight for the defeat of their own bourgeoisie. [9]

This is a shameful evasion of your proletarian internationalist duty to defend a semi-colony against an imperialist attack; the evasive "capitalist (not semi-colonial) Argentina", the failure to admit US support for "rotten imperialist Britain" and the transparent cowardly; "at no point in this war was the national sovereignty of Argentina was put into question" as if this could excuse a failure to defend this semi-colony against imperialist attack.

And the rational for it all; "the overthrow of their respective governments was in the interests of the British and also of the Argentinean working classes", clearly was wrong on both counts. Thatcher recovered from a disastrous opinion poll position because of her destruction of British jobs and manufacturing industry to sweep the next election because of it. This ideological victory set her up for her assault on the miners in 1985.
for her anti-union laws and privatisation of public assets. As SF 1 said;

“Well that certainly was not what happened in 1982 when Brit- ain attacked semi-fascist Galtieri-governed Argentina, which is a US semi-colony like Brazil was in 1938. The US gave every as- stance to the British war fleet to defeat Argentina just as she would have done to defeat Brazil in 1938, because Alexander Haig was a better strategist for imperialism than Macnair is for the world working class. And, of course, the CPGB predecessor, the Leninist, took the exact same position of capitulating to British imperialist chauvinism as the Militant, Matgamna and even the Alan Thornett opposition in the WSL by taking a fudged position. Do we need to point out that consistent revolu- tionists, in every country in the planet but particularly in Britain, would have been for the defeat of the British expeditionary force? As we are for the defeat of imperialism in Iraq, Afghan- stan and Gaza regardless of who constitutes the leadership of the oppressed masses there.

And need we point out the dire political consequence of this for the British and world working class however much imperialism’s apologists on the far left might have sought to obfuscate their treachery by trumpeting the secondary gain of the overthrow of Galtieri.

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4. The origins of Sparticism in JP Cannon's SWP

We will now examine the origins of Sparticism in the SWP and for this we must comment briefly on the degeneration of the SWP itself. We want to show that the degeneration had its origins in four crucial factors;

1. The fightback of the US state in collaboration with the Team- ster’s bureaucracy (and the Mafia) against the revolutionary gains made in that union. The SWP had won important union positions the Northwest Organizer, their rank-and-file TU newspaper was very successful. On 9 June 1941 Teamsters Local 544, voted to disaffiliate from Teamsters’ leader Daniel J Tobin’s AFL to affiliate to the CIO. Tobin had appealed to Roosevelt, “The officers of the local union were requested to disassociate themselves from the radical Trotsky organization ... these dis- turbers must be in some way prevented from pursuing this course.” The Trotskyists were arrested and charged within a week.

2. In WWII the very powerful wave of national chauvinism that swept the US including the working class. This assisted in the Trial and jailing of the 18 Trotskyist leaders, including Cannon. Cannon’s failure to defend revolutionary defeatism in that trial was a crucial victory for the state. Grandizo Munis was correct on this, even if he clearly attacked from an ultra-left perspec- tive. This national isolationism grew until it produced the 1946 American Theses and Cannon’s The Coming American Revolution – which was both objectivist and chauvinist at the same time.

3. The consequent wholesale desertion of the middle class intellec- tuals. Cannon comments poignantly and bitterly on their cowardice in 1937, from the pre-war Shachtmanites to Goldman and Morrow post war. “The learned professors such as Hook and
Burnham, the writers such as Eastman and Corey, and the journalists whose names are too numerous to mention, did not fall back to an independent middle position after they had deserted the workers whom they had promised to lead and the youth whom they had promised truly to instruct. They went over to the enemy, unconditionally and all the way, with all their bags and such baggage as they had, and helped to lie the youth into the war. “The movement was shorn of its best theoretical leaders and was hopelessly theoretically incapable now of dealing with the question of the nature of Stalinism. This was the crucial question for Trotskyism of the time; the 1946 American Theses does not even mention the problem.

4. The penetration of the movement by both Stalinist GPU agents and the CIA. Whilst rejecting totally the Healy/Slaughter Security and the Fourth International slander campaign against SWP leaders Joe Hansen and George Novak nevertheless this investigation established that politically this leadership had capitulated to Stalinism soon after Trotsky was murdered and never properly investigated the assassination and ignored and covered up for the activities of known GPU agents within the movement for this reason, particularly when direct evidence emerged during the McCarthyite witch-hunt investigations of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Healy had to allege a conscious conspiracy and his opponents had to reject totally the masses of primary source documents uncovered because to admit this truth would seriously undermine the International Committees claims to represent Trotskyist continuity.

These agents who were exposed during the McCarthyite HUAC investigations included Mark Zborowski who organised the murder of Trotsky’s son Leon Sedov, Trotsky’s secretaries Rudolf Clement and Erwin Wolfe and assisted in the organising of Trotsky’s murder, also Jack Sobel and his brother Dr Robert Soblen who infiltrated the German Trotskyist group and so prevented the dissemination of much of Trotsky’s writing on how to fight fascism there. Sobel also helped to organise Trotsky’s assassination. Sylvia Ageloff worked with Trotsky’s assassination. Sylvia Callen Franklin was a GPU spy in the SWP and passed on internal documents. Floyd Cleveland Miller organised the assassination of Trotskyist seamen on the WWII convoys, having infiltrated the movement and there were others, like the Dallins and Robert Sheldon Hart who had a case to answer. The SWP refused to deal with this material in any systematic way even when absolute proof emerged from the HUAC because of their capitulation to Stalinism. Much of this WRP/Workers League material is now plagiarised and published in a new book Trotsky’s Nemesis, The Exile and Murder of Leon Trotsky by Bertrand M Patenaude Faber and Faber 2009.

The American Theses of 1946

However it is on the American Theses and JP Cannon’s speech of 1946 that we will now focus to highlight the degeneration of the SWP. As the ICL and the “Family” defend these it reveals starkly the flawed nature of their claims to Trotskyist continuity. The Revolutionary Tendency” (RT) of the SWP produced In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective in June 1962 and it was published as Marxist Bulletin No. 1 by the Spartacist group. It says in point 9 of its summation “We must continue to educate the entire membership in the spirit of the fundamental principles laid down in the Theses on the American Revolution. We hold that those fundamentals are as valid today as they were in 1946, and they were in 1952. We hold that those fundamentals are internationalist to the core.” Whilst section XIV does defend the central role of the revolutionary party the document is national chauvinist, objectivist and has no analysis of Stalinism which had by then appeared to the working class of the world as a powerful revolutionary force following their defeat of Hitler. Having been marginalised by the TU bureaucracy, by witch hunts and the frame-up trials. The Stalinists had supported these enthusiastically, including the jailings, only to suffer the same fate themselves from 1944.

The Theses is catastrophic in denying the post-war stabilisation; it regards the tasks of the revolutionary party as having been taken up by the objective historic process, “In sum, the major factors that once served to foster and fortify American capitalism either no longer exist or are turning into their opposites”. The party’s tasks in fighting for immigrant’s rights were over, accomplished by the development of capitalism itself, “Previously, large and decisive sections of the proletariat in the basic industries were recruited by immigration. These foreign-born workers were handicapped and divided by language barriers, treated as social pariahs, and deprived of citizenship and the most elementary civil rights. All these circumstances appeared to be insuperable barriers in the way of their organisation and functioning as a united labor force. In the intervening years, however, these foreign-born workers have been assimilated and “Americanized.” They and their sons today constitute a powerful, militant, and articulate detachment of the organized labor movement.”

Even better racism against Blacks was now also a thing of the past, nine years before Rosa Parks’ Montgomery Bus Boycott;
Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

In Defence of Trotskyism page 16

The political content of this document is familiar to any who have read any Trotsky's works. The Theses take the road of denying all reality with perspectives of continuity and dual function. Yet you use the terms interchangeably. It is wrong to say that the workers' states have a dual nature? All three groups say yes and they agree that the bureaucracy as "counterrevolutionary" with the manner in which Robertson repudiated Joe Hansen's thesis of "deformed and degenerated workers' states has a "dual nature". The question resolves around the nature of the former bureaucracy staffed them and who were the leadership of those mass organizations and the effects of organization by the dominant reactionary craft unions on the other hand. I find this approach too simplistic and take no position on the Trotskyist position on Trotskyism, which has been criticized already by people who deal exclusively in "the small coin of concrete events." We have been criticized because we "do not mention concrete tasks" and "pose exclusively in "the small coin of concrete events." We have been criticized because we "do not mention concrete tasks" and "pose exclusively in "the small coin of concrete events." We have been criticized because we "do not mention concrete tasks" and "pose exclusively in "the small coin of concrete events." We have been criticized because we "do not mention concrete tasks" and "pose exclusively in "the small coin of concrete events."
"Far from characterizing the bureaucracy as "counter-revolutionary through and through," in the Transitional Programme, the founding document of the Fourth International, Trotsky wrote that "all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko)" The dual nature of the Kremlin oligarchy is fundamental to the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union combined with the call for political revolution to oust the bureaucracy." And the IG;

Stalinists Led the Counterrevolution? ICL, Between Shachtman and Trotsky in The Internationalist AUG 2000: In claiming that the Stalinists led the counterrevolution, the ICL in effect declared that the bureaucracy had lost its dual nature, that it ceased to be a contradictory layer. If today the SL/ICL leadership takes a quarter-step backwards when their revision becomes too blatant, opining that some bureaucratic sectors may “balk at the consequences” of counterrevolution (in China but not in the GDR or USSR?), they nonetheless oppose seeking to split the bureaucracy in the course of a workers’ political revolution... This revision of Trotsky’s analysis of the dual nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy negated what the SL/ICL had written on the “Russian question” for three decades, and was sharply counterposed to its own intervention fighting counter-revolution in the GDR and the USSR during 1989-92.”

A “dual nature” of any phenomenon is impossible. We have dual tendencies in dynamic internal conflict within a single phenomenon. It is important to note that when Trotsky did battle with Shachtman and his tendency he laid great emphasis on the central need to study the Marxist dialectic to understand Stalinism; the extract below (and the full document) does this. Robertson has never portrayed Stalinism in motion and change, as a single phenomenon in internal contradiction in which the bourgeois side was constantly strengthening; for him it is a dead, fixed category in its relationship with imperialism and the world proletariat. Hence its “dual nature”. In 1987 a huge conflict had arisen in the WRP over Gerry Downing’s rejection of the Stalinophobic assertion, that Stalinism was “the most counter-revolutionary force on the planet”. It is available on Gerry Downing’s Documents on Scribd WRP Explosion. This is an extract from Gérard Laffont’s reply to Cliff Slaughter in in 1987 on Stalinism:

“Trotsky, in fact, never did talk about a ‘dual nature’ of the bureaucracy. The expression is Pabloite. And it corresponds completely to the ‘theory’ in question, especially developed by Mandel...The formulation ‘dual nature’ constitutes a real monstrosity from the point of view of the dialectic. That is why Trotsky never employed it in regard to the bureaucracy, no more than he used it;... in regard to the Soviet state...Trotsky speaks of a dual character of the state, of a duality of its functions, but in no way of a ‘dual nature’ of this state. The duality of the character of the Soviet state is effectively determined by the existence of contradictory, counterposed tendencies – bourgeois and socialist – within this state. And it is the struggle between these ‘mutually exclusive’ tendencies (and not between two ‘natures’) that determines the physiognomy and the future of the workers’ state...Thus the dual nature of the workers’ state – writes Slaughter — ‘is dual precisely in that the working class and the bureaucracy are the proletarian (socialist) and the bourgeois sides of this duality!’ Well, no. That is not at all the case. The proletariat constitutes itself as the ruling class through the installation of its dictatorship, which it exercises through a state. The necessity of this state flows from the very necessity for ‘hastening the growth of material power’ (The Revolution Betrayed, 1970 Pathfinder edition, page 54), indispensable for the coming of the socialist society.

“But as Marx said, ‘law can never be higher than the economic structure and the cultural development of society conditioned by that structure’ (ibid p. 53), the workers’ state undertakes socialist construction while utilizing bourgeois forms of distribution. Thus, as Trotsky said, the state assumes directly and from the very beginning a dual character; socialist, insofar as it defends social property in the means of production, bourgeois insofar as the distribution of life’s goods is carried out with a capitalistic measure of value and all the consequences ensuing therefrom’ (p. 54)...‘The dual function of the state,’ adds Trotsky, could not but affect its structure...For the defence of bourgeois law the workers’ state was compelled to create a bourgeois type of instrument – that is, the same old gendarme although in a new uniform” (pp. 54-55) that is; there is no workers’ state without a bureaucracy

“...In given historic conditions, the bureaucracy of the first proletarian state reached such a degree of development, has so strengthened the bourgeois tendencies inherent in this state that, without a new revolutionary leap by the proletariat, this bureaucracy, ‘becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie’ will conclude by overthrowing the new property relations and plunging the country back into capitalism, ‘with a catastrophic decline in production and culture.’ That is the historic justification of the political revolution. But the task of this revolution – the only one possible and conceivable at this stage of historical development is the regeneration of the workers’ state and in no way its abolition. The working class has to ‘crush the bureaucracy to put it ‘out of condition to do harm’; such are the expressions used by Trotsky.”[11]
The Bureaucracy would become restorationist

Trotsky was here predicting that the bureaucracy would become restorationist and quite obviously by 1989–91 the quantitative development of the restorationist wing of the bureaucracy, immensely assisted by the 1981 events in Poland, had become restorationist; they had decided to base themselves on capitalist property relations. The contradictions had become resolved in their minds because of the economic collapse; its privileges had been based on nationalised property relationships up to then, these relationships could no longer guarantee their privileges so they abandoned them. In the IBT’s 1917 No. 8 – Summer 1990 we get: “The attitude of revolutionaries toward the Soviet military in the deformed workers’ states depends on the concrete circumstances. Insofar as it represents a bulwark against imperialist military pressure, or domestic counterrevolution, we defend it.” But by then it was not a bulwark against imperialist intervention or internal counter-revolution, it was itself an active part of the counter-revolution.

So now the brutal reality faced by the ICL after Tretiow Park was as Trotsky predicted. The truth, that there was not even a hint of a “faction of Reiss”, the Stalinist abandoned the workers’ state in a mad grab for a new social basis for their privileges. This obvious reality was too must to swallow for the LFI’s Jan Norden, who took off complaining about ICL realism and blaming the working class by writing that incredible stupid document, Stalinists Led the Counterrevolution? ICL, Between Shachtman and Trotsky; the counterrevolution was led by “DDR (Kohl’s Christian Democrats and Brandt’s Social Democrats), the Soviet Union (Bush’s man Yeltsin) and East Europe (such as Solidarnosc, the Polish company union for the Vatican and CIA)” they say, ignoring the facts like Yeltsin was a Stalinist bureaucrat and Jaruzelski actively participated in the Polish restoration.

Since there was no imperialist invasion, not only no resistance of note from the Stalinists but active collaboration and leadership from them and the easiest of tasks for restorationists to overturn the rotten structures it must follow that the bourgeois character of the bureaucracy had at last triumphed over defence of the nationalised property relations. Capitalism now promised better things for them. All the “Family” looked to the wrong “class”, which had been a bureaucratic caste and was now transforming itself into the defenders of capitalism, to defend the nationalised property relations even if only “in the final analysis”. Against the LFI positions the ICL and the IBT to a lesser extent, made a pragmatic adaption to reality.

Even if this means to confront the majority of a proletariat misled in a nationalistic manner

Note how the LFI must insist on the dual nature of the bureaucracy above in order to abandon the working class and orientate to the bureaucracy, just as the ICL and IBT abandoned the whole Polish working class. The Gruppe IV. International advocated leaving Solidarnosc and calling the workers to follow them after the leadership had adopted the openly restorationist programme in August 1981; “Under these circumstances it was impossible for communists to stay in Solidarnosc”.

If Trotsky could advocate that the German Trotskyists enter the fascist front unions under Hitler why could Trotskyists not continue to fight to forge a revolutionary opposition in Solidarnosc? Because the “Family” knew about the “dual nature of the bureaucracy which would save the deformed workers’ state. So they were for “the unconditional military defence of proletarian property forms even if this means to confront the majority of a proletariat misled in a nationalistic manner”. [12] The IBT’s Acid Test has the following incredible passage, “Many of the demands raised in the Solidarnosc program... deal with questions of marginal importance; the call for adequate heating and food for the elderly or for the protection of the environment are, in themselves, unobjectionable. But they are also politically insignificant.”

So the counterrevolutionaries in Solidarnosc were concerned about “adequate heating and food for the elderly or for the protection of the environment”, the Stalinists launched their repression promising these things immediately but we simon-pure revolutionaries knew that these necessities of life, the very stuff of political activity for all those orientated to the masses, were politically insignificant. If you were aspiring to lead a political revolution against both the Stalinist bureaucracy and Solidarnosc counterrevolutionary restorationists leadership you would have been formulating some democratic transitional demands. Something similar to “Land, Bread and Peace” which had some “political significance”, historically. The above quoted extract proves beyond doubt that you had no such aspirations or orientation; your advice to the masses, because you are almost a pure propaganda group was to meekly bare their breasts to the bullets of Jaruzelski’s repression and don’t mind if the elderly or anyone else freezes or starves to death or chokes on industrial pollution, the thing now is to defend Stalinism!

When Trotsky said, “On the other hand, if the dictatorship of the proletariat means anything at all, then it means that the vanguard of the class is armed with the resources of the state in order to repel dangers, including those emanating from the backward layers of the proletariat itself,” he was not proposing that the bureaucracy crush the entire working class, as they did with ICL/IBT support. Walesa opposed the “radicals” in December 1981 because he feared his alliance with the bureaucracy would fail in an uprising. Jaruzelski crushed the workers so that Solidarnosc emerge without a radical base which made restoration almost inevitable in 1989. Their reaction in 1989 was determined by Walesa and Jaruzelski.

This is exactly what they did just eight years later and now there was no hope than anyone would listen to the “revolutionaries” that supported their crushing in 1981 – although the IBT were not for excusing all the excess of the Stalinists and the ICL were. Is not curious that the IBT pamphlet - written in 1988 - stops in 1981? So, there is nothing about the repression, nor the discussions - organised by the Catholic Church and the USSR bureaucracy led the by Gorbachev- between Solidarnosc leadership and the Polish government which began officially... in 1988. Let us see how they fared on Russia and China.
6. The Yanayev coup and the Yeltsin counter-coup

We will first comment on the WIL/LTT’s *The Marxist theory of the state and the collapse of Stalinism* [13] to elaborate our position and where we are coming from. This document clarifies and develops the Marxist theory of the state and is a powerful weapon for forging a genuine revolutionary party. It defended and clarified Trotsky’s defence of a deformed workers’ state and it elaborated in detail both the way that Stalinism overturned the bourgeois property relations in Europe in late 1947 and early 1948 and it also spelled out in detail how the ‘film was run in reverse’ when these deformed and degenerated workers’ states were returned to capitalism between 1989 and 1991. It clarified the political problems which contributed to the decent into centrism of the Fourth International in 1950-51.

It had real political influence beyond its own organisation. It made a significant political contribution to politically clarifying the international opposition current in the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. It is quoted extensively in the *Declaration of the Proletarian Faction* which was the basis of the international opposition and produced by the Communist Workers Group (CWG) of New Zealand, which went on to form the Liaison Committee of Militants for a Revolutionary Communist International (LCMRCI). Workers Power adopted the LTT line in 2000 on Richard Brenner’s motion who admitted that he was convinced by the Trotsky quotes in the piece. However there are a number of problems with the text when we come to the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. Without capitulating to the ‘democratic counter-revolution’ as many of the right-centrist Trotskyist groups and the LRCI/Workers Power did, it was soft on ‘democracy’ and did not consistently make imperialism the main enemy, which problem became worse in relation to Izetbegović in Bosnia and the KLA in Kosovo, as they adopted positions almost as bad as Workers Power.

The LTT should have opposed the pro-imperialist capitalist restorationist leadership in the Baltic States and demanded independent soviet states, as Trotsky did for the USSR in 1938. These movements were used by Russian restorationist leaders like Yeltsin as a lever to begin the breakup of the USSR. Secondly they should not have condoned any form of political bloc with Yeltsin apart from one in defence of life and limb. Saying that workers should have supported the general strike, briefly moodied by Yeltsin, was a form of political support as was rallying with Yeltsin at the White House. But, whilst Yeltsin was the preferred agent of a section of the imperialist before and after the coup surely the main enemy of the Russian and therefore the world working class during the short period of the coup itself was Yanayev, it was he who immediately threatened their lives and organisations and so they were entitled to make a military but not a political bloc even with Yeltsin (with the “devil and his grandmother” as Trotsky said). That being said the LTT took a far better position than the LRCI and these mistakes could easily have been corrected, as the LCMRCI did over Yeltsin.

Workers, apart from some miners’ leaders who supported Yeltsin, took no action and supported neither side. As both the coupists and Yeltsin were restorationists the matter at issue was the pace of restoration and which sections of the bureaucratic apparatus would retain which privileges after that restoration. The coup, after all, was apparently directed against Gorbachev not Yeltsin. Gorbachev had attempted some defence of nationalised property relations up to then, although with waning conviction. When he abandoned even this with the Union Treaty breaking up the USSR Yanayev launched his coup because he saw the impending demise of that section of the bureaucracy on which he was based.

But the coup clearly had as its prime target the working class and its organisations, as its statements made clear. Had the coupists succeeded, and there was international ambiguity about who to support as the LTT’s *The Marxist theory of the state* points out, then restoration would have taken place at a more planned and rationalised pace which would have been better for capitalism in the former USSR and for world imperialism, than the unplanned and gangsterist regime imposed by Yeltsin which had such disastrous effects. Yanayev based his coup on the Tiananmen Square massacre on 4 June 1989 and the follow up.

Stalinophobic thirdcampism

In Section 5 Trotsky and the Possible Paths of Counter-Revolution we find,

‘Trotsky’s thinking underwent a corresponding evolution, and increasingly saw the bureaucracy itself as the principal source of internal danger. Indeed, his view that the Bukharinite right was “the main danger” and “the Thermidorian wing of the party” led the Left Opposition to refuse to countenance any bloc on internal democracy. The characterisation of the Right Opposition as “the masked form of counter-revolution”, as the proxy for the kulaks and NEPmen, runs through many of Trotsky’s writings in Alma Ata. Whatever the merits of this position, the ease with which Stalin crushed the Right made this too an increasingly less likely scenario’.
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This section does whiff slightly of Stalinophobic thirdcampism and does suggest that Trotsky would have been correct to make a bloc with the restorationist Bukharin. A bloc of the left and right against the centre, even on ‘democracy’ would have been correctly seen internationally as opportunism and would have invalidated his attempts to fight Stalinist betrayals in Germany and Spain in particular. This issue came up at the time of the WIL split and provoked a sharp but brief interchange in a LTT meeting between RP and GD. The document correctly quotes Trotsky in relation on the invasion of Poland, the Baltic States and Finland in 1939 as a consequence of the Hitler-Stalin pact.

This is wrong. Trotsky, in In Defence of Marxism defends the Red Army’s invasion of Poland, the Baltic states and Finland in 1939, although this violated these nation’s right to self-determination, because of the security of the USSR was threatened by Hitler and the Allies as WWII approached. Section 8 The August Coup and the End of the Soviet Union is also wrong in that it does not identify Yeltsin as imperialism’s main agent and so the main enemy (apart from at the time of the coup) and does not defend the nationalised property relations of the USSR,

"Nevertheless – as at August 19, 1991 – the most important task was to defend the democratic rights of the working class and the minority nations against the immediate threat of the coup, by mobilising for a general strike, and, if conditions had ripened, by organising an armed uprising. Yeltsin had not ceased to be an enemy, but in this situation he had to be fought with different methods from those which were necessary against the putschists."

Not democracy in the abstract but bourgeois democracy

As the Declaration of the Proletarian Faction pointed out, "The problem is that it is not democracy in the abstract but bourgeois democracy which reflects at the level of state power and ideology, bourgeois social relations. Here "bourgeois right" already existing in the form of unequal relations of distribution, are extended to represent the "rights" of private property, ownership of the means of production, contract etc. i.e. bourgeois relations of production.

Trotsky said: "Things must be called by their right names. What is involved here is not the introduction of some disembodied democracy but returning Russia to the capitalist road"... "But the masses do not want the landowner, the official, or the boss back. One must not overlook these "trifles" in intoxicating oneself with commonplaces about democracy". [Trotsky "Is Parliamentary Democracy Likely?" [Writings, 1929 p. 55] "When people counterpose democracy to the Soviets, what they usually have in mind is simply the parliamentary system. They forget about the other side of the question, the decisive one at that - namely that the October Revolution cleared the path for the greatest democratic revolution in human history... The Soviet system is not simply a form of government that can be compared abstractly with the parliamentary form. Above all it is a new form of property relations. What is involved at bottom is the ownership of land, the banks, the mines, the factories, the railroads." [p.54].

Favourable conditions entrepreneurial activity

As The Marxist theory of the state says;

"What is more, the restorationist goal was never in dispute. In their declaration to the United Nations and to the world’s governments on August 19, 1991, the coup-plotters stated that the emergency measures taken "will in no way...lead to the abandonment of the course of fundamental reforms in all areas of life of state and society."[14] Underlining their preparedness to continue Gorbachev’s pro-market "reforms", they promised:

"Favourable conditions shall be created for increasing the..."
real contribution made by all types of entrepreneurial activity". [15]

The response of the most important imperialist politicians to the coup was to announce their readiness to continue co-operation with the new leadership of the Soviet Union. Some bourgeois commentators saw it as a chance to slow down the course of restoration and avoid provoking major class struggles. The idea that working class political independence could be bartered for the "right" to passively support a military coup was totally alien to Trotsky's thinking. The programme of political revolution rested on the premise that the working class could only defend the workers’ state with its own, proletarian, methods. Its interests lay solely in defending its gains, which were linked to the existence of the workers’ state, rather than defending the bureaucratic apparatus which sat on top of it.

In fact, as Workers Power points out, only the Posadists took the same position of total support for the coupists as the IBT in 1991 demonstrating that they were now prepared to defend an openly capitalist restoration section of the bureaucratic apparatus; they had become "campists" in the sense of "for Stalin or against" as the ICL became in Afghanistan in 1979. This is just as the old Stalinists used to pose the question. Trotsky ridiculed just this position,

"Although it is thus impermissible to deny in advance the possibility, in strictly defined instances, of a "united front" with the Thermidorian section of the bureaucracy against open attack by capitalist counterrevolution, the chief political task in the USSR still remains the overthrow of this same Thermidorian bureaucracy. Each day added to its domination helps rot the foundations of the socialist elements of economy and increases the chances for capitalist restoration. It is in precisely this direction that the Comintern moves as the agent and accomplice of the Stalinist clique in strangling the Spanish Revolution and demoralizing the international proletariat."

The ICL were devastated at the non-appearance of the "faction of Reiss" in Germany in 1989 following the farcical Treptow Park escapade, where the ICL put all their faith in the Red Army to defend property relations in the GDR only to be bitterly disappointed when the entire bureaucracy became restorationist at the first opportunist. Actively entering the class struggle, perhaps for the first and only time in their history, albeit in an opportunist way, led them to a relatively good position of identifying the Yanayev coup as restorationist. Here the IBT saw an opportunity to "out-left" the Sparts and so defended the indefensible. Then the IBT correctly identified the Yeltsin counter-coup as the point of restoration basing themselves on Trotsky's "Not as bourgeois, not a workers' state? – 1937 polemic against Burnham and Carter. But the Sparts were overcome by their previous history of Stalinophilia and so could not admit what the world pragmatically recognised – "Communism", i.e. the Stalinist-controlled command economy, the degenerated workers’ state, had collapsed. So the IBT can laugh at their unexplained year-long defence of the Russian "workers' state" under Yeltsin.

Former IBT member Samuel Trachtenberg, in his Revolutionary Regroupment website, http://www.regroupment.org/main/
7. Is China still a deformed workers' state?

The LTT’s *The Marxist Theory of the State* made just this point: According to Trotsky’s succinct definition, “the class character of the state is determined by its relation to the forms of property in the means of production” and “by the character of the forms of property and productive relations which the given state guards and defends”. [16] This implies a dialectical rather than a mechanical relationship between base and superstructure: it is not merely a question of the existing forms of property but of those which the state defends and strives to develop.

Underlining this approach, Lenin argued in early 1918 that: “No one, I think, in studying the question of the economic system of Russia, has denied its transitional character. Nor, I think, has any Communist denied that the term Socialist Soviet Republic implies the determination of Soviet power to achieve the transition to socialism, and not that the new economic system is recognised as a socialist order.” [17]

However having correctly used this method in the USSR in 1991 the IBT are totally unable to use it in China today. In 1917 No. 31 *Political Revolution or Counterrevolution—Whither China?* the IBT use the totally incorrect criterion for defining a workers’ state which they rejected back in 1989, “in the final analysis the class character of a state is based on the underlying social relations of production.” They proclaim and they write a long document based on this false assertion which they must know to be incorrect. They certainly knew it when they wrote *Poland, the Acid Test* in 1988 when it was the political character of the state that determined the nature and direction of the economy not the other way around as above.

"For Trotskyists, Solidarnosc can only be analyzed within the framework of our position on the "Russian question" and its programmatic implications? Marxists determine the class nature of a given state by its social content, that is, by the character of the property relations it defends—not by its political forms. Trotsky remarked in 1939: "Although economics determines politics not directly or immediately, but only in the last analysis, nevertheless economics does determine politics. The Marxists affirm precisely this in contrast to the bourgeois professors and their disciples. While analyzing and exposing the growing political independence of the bureaucracy from the proletariat, we have never lost sight of the objective social boundaries of this ‘independence’; namely, nationalized property supplemented by the monopoly of foreign trade."

If the IBT, along with the rest of the “Family” were to ask that very empirical question, what relations of production does the Chinese state defend? then they could give only one answer – the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy use statised property to defend and develop capitalist property relations. This is the total opposite to what Lenin did via the NEP and what all USSR bureaucracy did, even Gorbachev up to late 1990; they used a certain measures of controlled capitalist production and distribution to guard and develop collectivised property relations. The IBT theory is a reversion to the old Granite/Militant theory that a workers’ state is defined by the degree of nationalisation. Ted Grant, in *The Colonial Revolution and the Deformed Workers’ States* written in July 1978 gave us the following hilarious list: “In Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Burma, Syria, Angola, Mozambique, Aden, Benin, Ethiopia and as models, Cuba and China (which in their turn had the model of Eastern Europe as a beacon showing the way) there has been a transformation of social relations”.

When he made his speech to the International Committee Third Conference in 1966 James Robertson had enough “common sense” and was sufficiently aware of the importance of empirical evidence to ridicule the Healy/Lambert line on Cuba (a capitalist state with a weak or "phantom" bourgeoisie);

"While the nationalisation in Algeria now amounts to some 15 per cent of the economy, the Cuban economy is, in essence, entirely nationalized; China probably has more vestiges of its bourgeoisie. If the Cuban bourgeoisie is indeed "weak," as the I.C. affirms, one can only observe that it must be tired from its long swim to Miami, Florida.”

Whilst wrongly relying on nationalisation alone Robertson’s empirical examination of reality proved far superior to Healy’s "dialectics" which railed against “the facts” because that was "empiricism". But he cannot do the same for China today.

**Has the CCP Bureaucracy become a capitalist class?**

Well not exactly. But it does rule on behalf of the capitalist class.
as the following report in The Telegraph makes clear which property relations provide its privileges; China denies claim that Communist Party offspring make up 90% of multi-millionaires. By Malcolm Moore; The Telegraph Shanghai 07 Aug 2009.

"A report that relatives of senior Communist Party cadres make up nine out of ten of China's multi-millionaires has been firmly denied by the Chinese government. The report, which first appeared last month in Time Weekly, a Chinese magazine, quickly caused a sensation on the Chinese internet. It cited a joint project between several senior government research bodies and the Publicity ministry that claimed 91 per cent of the 3,220 people in China worth over 100 million yuan (£8.75 million) were "children of senior cadres"." This is how the LTT's The Marxist theory of the state addressed the problem of the "peaceful overturn" of bourgeois property relations in Eastern Europe in 1947-48;

"Does this mean that we are arguing that a bourgeois state can be used as a platform to create a workers' state, and are thereby fundamentally revising Marxism? The apparently gradual transformation of state structures was, on the face of things, closer to the "gradual" model of the transition from feudal to capitalist states which took place in most central and Eastern European countries. The semi-feudal aristocracy was forced to industrialise in much of central Europe during the 19th century under the threat of economic and political downfall. In these cases state apparatuses were adapted to the needs of new relations of production, whilst partially maintaining the old institutional framework. These old forms finally changed their social character... The real question for Marxists is not the class origins of the functionaries but in whose interests they function. The history of bourgeois revolutions showed that it was possible for opportunist elements to navigate the choppy waters of both revolution and counter-revolution - General Monck and the Vicar of Bray in England, Fouché and Talleyrand in France. Even the Bolsheviks were obliged to retain a good part of the old civil service for a period, and subsequently re-employ the "military specialists"."

This is how it addressed the problem of state and economic form; "History abounds with examples of contradiction between the state and economic forms, which demonstrate that the class character of the state cannot be defined in purely mechanical terms. For instance, feudal states continued to exist during the formative period of merchant capital in Europe. In this century, Marxists have recognised as bourgeois states both countries which contain many survivals from pre-capitalist economic formations and countries in which substantial sections of the means of production have been nationalised (e.g. Algeria, Angola, Burma, Ethiopia, Libya, Mozambique, Syria, etc). Among what we previously recognised as deformed workers' states were countries with numerous pre-capitalist survivals and/or significant private sectors within their economies. Moreover, most of the countries of Eastern Europe had large state sectors prior to 1947-48 - the period most Trotskyists identify as marking the emergence of deformed workers' states.

"The cutting edge of distinction between bourgeois states and workers' states is not some decisive degree of nationalisation (Militant/CWI), nor the existence of "central planning" (Workers Power/LRCJ), nor the alleged "commitment" of the state apparatus to defend the socialised forces of production (ICL and IBT), but which class interests the economy and the state apparatus ultimately serve."

Tiananmen Square and Deng Xiaoping

During the Tiananmen Square protests Deng Xiaoping, the "Paramount leader of the People's Republic of China from 1978 to the early 1990s," strongly supported the demonstrators, as did his pro-market ally General Secretary Zhao Ziyang until the ranks of the student restorationist leaders began to be swamped by the working class who started to make their own political demands. Martial law was declared on 20 May. And surely only Deng had the authority to order the massacre on 4 June. The Chinese authorities "summarily tried and executed many of the workers they arrested in Beijing. In contrast, the students, many of whom came from relatively affluent backgrounds, were well-connected, received much lighter sentences" (Wikipedia). The "family" have never noticed this dichotomy; why did they not call for the repression of Deng's allies, the restorationist students, here? The CCP then began to deal "strictly with those inside the party with serious tendencies toward bourgeois liberalization". Zhao Ziyang was put under house arrest and Deng himself was forced to make concessions to anti-reform communists. He denounced the movement; "the entire imperialist Western world plans to make all socialist countries discard the socialist road and then bring them under the monopoly of international capital and onto the capitalist road". But it was only a tactical retreat. Resistance of all types, from the immediate restorationists as well as from bureaucratic defenders of the state and its nationalised property relations was thoroughly crushed by the 30,000 party officials charged with this grizzly task. Deng was then in a position to win over the last holdout hardliners. This is how Wikipedia reported Deng's legendary southern tour;

"To reassert his economic agenda, in the spring of 1992, Deng made his famous southern tour of China, visiting Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and spending the New Year in Shanghai, in reality using his travels as a method of reasserting his economic policy after his retirement from office. On his tour, Deng made various speeches and generated large local support for his reformist platform. He stressed the importance of economic construction in China, and criticized those who were against further economic and openness reforms. Although there is debate on whether or not Deng actually said it, his perceived catchphrase, "To get rich is glorious", unleashed a wave of personal entrepreneurship that continues to drive China's economy today. He stated that the "leftist" elements of Chinese society were much more dangerous than "rightist" ones. Deng was instrumental in the opening of Shanghai's Pudong New Area, revitalizing the city as China's economic hub."

"His southern tour was initially ignored by the Beijing and national media, which were then under the control of Deng's political rivals. President Jiang Zemin showed little support. Challenging their media control, Shanghai's Liberation Daily newspaper published several articles supporting reforms authored by "Huangfu Ping", which quickly gained support amongst local
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officials and populace. Deng's new wave of policy rhetoric gave way to a new political storm between factions in the Politburo. President Jiang Zemin eventually sided with Deng, and the national media finally reported Deng's southern tour several months after it occurred. Observers suggest that Jiang's submission to Deng's policies had solidified his position as Deng's heir apparent. Behind the scenes, Deng's southern tour aided his reformist allies' climb to the apex of nation*

In our view Tiananmen Square set in motion the chain of events that enabled the CCP to purge the party and state apparatus and neuter the working class. The development of capitalist property relations were prioritised consciously by the entire bureaucracy and state in 1992 when Jiang capitulated to Deng. China then ceased being a workers' state in any way.

Otto von Bismarck and Pyotr Stolypin

China and Vietnam are nothing like any previous or current example of a deformed or degenerated workers' state. In fact the closest analogy to the current states in China and Vietnam is that of late 19th century Germany under Otto von Bismarck and early 20th Century Russia under Pyotr Stolypin. Vietnam is a typical semi-colony now. [18] The Chinese state unquestionably and demonstrable guards and develops capitalist property relations on any rational criteria. So why does the "Family", together with oddities like the WRP/News Line group (who still "support the struggle of Russian, Chinese, and East European workers to prevent the restoration of capitalism"[19] – and East Germany?) defend these as workers' states? The Stalinophile ICL wish to relate to those semi-Stalinist like the Workers World Party and those Stalinists who regard these as "really existing" socialist states as a self-proclaimed Communist party is in power.

Many Stalinists also include Laos and the Indian states of Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura, where the CPI (M) is in government. The ICL view is merely a variety of this – they are orientated to the bureaucracy and not to the world proletariat because they have lost confidence in the world working class entirely as the source of world revolution. They are "late Pabloites", and in some ways worse than Pablo because he capitulated to what appeared to be an opposition to the Stalinist central bureaucratic apparatus, the ICL capitulated to that apparatus itself ("Heil Red Army", they infamously proclaimed in Afghanistan in 1980). The IBT did the same by supporting the restorationist Yanayev who was not buying time for the working class to oppose restoration because he was dedicated to smashing up the working class to facilitating restoration with his participation, as Yeltsin later did. In fact had Yanayev's coup succeeded he would have gone on to do what Deng, and Jiang Zemin when he capitulated to Deng in 1992, did; dismantle the deformed workers' state, which the Tiananmen Square massacre had prepared.

"From the standpoint of the world proletariat", was Trotsky's outlook on Stalin's invasion of the Baltic states and Finland in 1939, is our standpoint today and from that standpoint we must surely look to the workers of the Chinese industrial heartlands. They are brutally and murderously oppressed by the bosses and if that is not enough to keep them down they will get the All Chinese Federation of Trade Unions and if they are really troublesome a branch of CCP itself to beat them up or murder the most militant to ensure subservience to the production needs of the Chinese bourgeoisie and the imperialist world market. When China entered the World Trade Organisation in December 2001 it abandoned what was left of the monopoly of foreign trade.

Let us list the features of the Chinese economy and state to see which it is;

1. The "iron rice bowl" is basically gone. Mao's welfare state has been abolished apart from in a few places. The Gini Coefficient shows a sharply rising graph of income and wealth inequality in China since the early 1980s as in India, not yet as high as Brazil, Mexico and South Africa but getting there.

2. There is a thriving capitalist sector with its own class differentiated bourgeoisie and working class. China now has more millionaires than the UK, Germany or Japan, although at 450,000 it is still a long way behind the U.S. even though that fell by 2.5 million to 6.7 million in 2008. All deformed and degenerated workers' states expropriated their capitalists and prevented that class arising anew.

3. There is a Stock Exchange and capitalist banks, although, a la Bismarck, Stolypin and Keynes, they are state controlled (unlike in Britain under Blair and Brown) to ensure the better development of capitalism. All deformed and degenerated workers' states had/have no stock exchanges. This is not neo-liberal capitalism but it is capitalism nevertheless.

4. The monopoly of foreign trade is gone but the state still retains strategic control over trade as good capitalist planners. All deformed and degenerated workers' states had/have a state monopoly of foreign trade.

5. They are developing as an imperialist power; their investments in Africa, South America and Sri Lanka, for example, are for purely commercial and strategic/military purposes. This is totally unlike the practice of the USSR where support and investment was to strengthen their hand and give them more pawns in the chess game of achieving peaceful cooperation and compromise with the world Imperialism. The USSR was prepared to sponsor, ideologically and materially, armed opposition to imperialism to this end, China arms its clients but has no ideological opposition to imperialism, however distorted, to offer. However China still retains strong elements of a semi-colonial state in its far-flung backward regions, which are prey to US/CIA interventions to begin the breakup of a developing rival. It is still a long way from a fully fledged imperialist power.

Galileo before the Inquisition. Brecht's monk protested to Galileo in his play; "What would my people say if I told them that they happen to be on a small knob of stone twisting endlessly through the void round a second-rate star, just one among myriads?" James Robertson and the Spart ICL are not the centre of the universe.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
and history never proceeds in a straight line without wars and revolutions so its uninterrupted development is far from certain.

Comrades, when we see a bird that walks like a duck and swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, we call that bird a duck. James Robertson had pragmatically seen the significance of the long swim of the capitalists from Cuba to Miami by 1966 but the International Committee of Gerry Healy and Pierre Lambert refused to look at what had happened there after 1959. In his play Galileo Bertolt Brecht’s Galileo invites the leading scholars of Florence to peer into his telescope for the ultimate proof that Aristotle was wrong; but the men refused to look, instead making evasive, dogmatic speeches about why the telescope could not possibly show any such thing. A little more pragmatism and common sense would now assist comrades, before we progress to the more complex world of the Marxist dialectic. China is capitalist, look; it waddles and paddles and quacks, it’s a duck!

After 30 years of acting as a fraction towards an organisation without roots within the working class, you are degenerating yourselves. Your should discuss and work with genuine and lively internationalists like SF and the CoReP.

Appendices

1. China breaks the iron rice bowl by Martine Bulard

Here is how the destruction of the Iron Rice bowl has proceeded in China: according to Le Monde diplomatique;[20]

China has moved into fourth position in the league table of world economies, but only a third of its population has access to the new temple of consumerism. The rural poor, internal immigrants and laid-off workers suffer worst from the gross new inequalities. Somewhere between the third and fourth ringroad in northeast Beijing is one of the city’s most happening spots. Unit 798 is a handsome cluster of red-brick buildings in the Bauhaus style, occupied by avant-garde galleries, trendy restaurants and chic boutiques.

Before it was fashionable, Unit 798 housed a danwei - a large state company employing some 20,000 workers to manufacture arms. Its premises, designed in 1957 in the name of socialist solidarity by East German specialists, were nearly a kilometre long. In those days every big company had its own housing, schools, clinics, even its own theatre. In those days the Dashanzi complex, to which Unit 798 is attached, saw itself as a model. Those days ended less than 15 years ago. Since then economic reform has swept away the factories, the workers and their families.

Near Chengde and the imperial summer palace, 300km from Dashanzi, the Cheng Gang steelworks (Chengde Iron and Steel Group Co) has not gone under in the reformist flood. Its workers are proud to show visitors around, with the prior permission of the Communist party secretary, of course. The steel they produce was used to build the Oriental Pearl television tower in Shanghai, symbol of the city’s new modernity, and also the gargantuan Yangtze dam.

2. More millionaires than the UK, Germany or Japan

Fewer millionaires in Britain than in China, says survey of super-rich, By Sean O’Grady, Economics Editor, The Independent Thursday, 25 June 2009

There are now more millionaires in China than in Britain, according to the latest authoritative survey of the super-rich. The Capgemini/Merrill Lynch World Wealth Report reveals that by the end of last year there were 362,000 "high net worth" people in the UK, down from 491,000 in 2007 and 2,000 fewer than the researchers say live in China. "High net worth" is defined as those who have "investable assets" exceeding $1m (£.607m) that is excluding their homes, collectables and consumer goods.
China’s Gini Coefficient and Market Economy by Alice Poor, 14 August 2007[21] This is my translation of an article by Xue Cong on www.cesnew.com titled “Is Market Economy A Sure Cause for Wealth Disparity?” (dated August 14, 2007),

Let us now take a look at the global situation. I have found some GINI coefficient ranking statistics compiled by the United Nation. In these statistics, the higher the grading the more unequal the society. China’s coefficient is 0.447 and is among the thirty countries that have the widest wealth gap. I could not find any developed country whose rich-poor gap is worse than China’s. For example, Denmark, Japan, Sweden and Norway rank No. 1, 2, 3 and 5 as the most equal societies and their respective GINI coefficient are 0.247, 0.249, 0.25 and 0.258.

Even the United States, who is well known for having great wealth inequality, has a coefficient of 0.408; Germany – 0.283, Britain – 0.36, and France – 0.327. Those economically advanced countries with ratings over 0.40 include only the U.S. and Singapore (0.425), but they are still lower than China’s figure. As for those countries whose rich-poor gap is worse than China’s, they are mostly the poorest countries like some African countries, Sri Lanka and Haiti, plus some developing countries whose economies are a notch better, like Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Chile.

3. China’s stock market: a marriage of capitalism and socialism

Sonia M. L. Wong – Cato Journal 2006[22]

The rise of China’s stock market during the 1990s was nothing short of breathtaking. For more than 30 years after 1949, China was a centrally planned economy in which virtually all enterprises were state owned or collectively owned. Investments were centrally planned and funded by government fiscal grants as well as by loans from the state-owned monobank system as dictated by the government’s central credit plan. In the late 1980s, as part of enterprise reforms that took place during China’s gradual transition to a market economy, local governments in China started experimenting with selling shares of collectively owned enterprises directly to domestic individuals in order to raise equity capital.

Curbed trading of enterprise shares soon began and was quickly followed by over-the-counter (OTC) trading in more organized but still informal exchanges. In 1991, two stock exchanges, one created by the Shanghai municipal government and the other by the Shenzhen municipal government, were launched, with the central government’s formal approval. Between 1992 and 2003, the market raised a total of 796.79 billion yuan of equity capital. At the end of 2003, China’s stock market had 1,287 listed enterprises and more than 70 million investor accounts (CSRC 2004).

4. Monopoly of Foreign Trade

And how has the monopoly of foreign trade proceeded, given the importance the "Family" ascribed to it? Here is the report on its progress a year after entering the WTO according to the

China's moves into Africa by 2005. The USSR was prepared to sponsor, ideologically and materially, armed opposition to imperialism to this end, China arms its clients but has no ideological opposition to imperialism, however distorted, to offer. trade sectors. Over the past year, China slashed import duties on 5,300-odd goods and lowered the overall tariff level from 15.3 percent to 12 percent. Another significant step forward in meeting its WTO commitments was the increasing administrative transparency nationwide, with many government departments streamlining and transforming functions.

China has also revamped reform of some industries, including telecommunications and civil aviation, which had operated under state monopoly for decades. "China has committed itself to WTO rules, and is already ahead of many countries in terms of clearing market intervention," said Supachai Panitchpakdi, the incumbent director-general of the WTO. Thanks to its efforts to fulfill its membership pledges, China expects to score more than 50 billion US dollars in actual foreign direct investment (FDI) for the whole of this year and surpass the United States as the world’s top recipient of FDI.

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Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
5. Is China developing as an imperialist power?

The following article from Living Marxism poses the question, why is China Imperialist?[24]

As China rises, other imperialists fall. If China can monopolise capital accumulation at home and is now embarking on a rapid expansion offshore, is this a classic case of the export of finance capital of an emergent imperialist power? For China to emerge as a new imperialist power it must do so by re-dividing the spheres of influence of existing imperialist powers. That means a growing rivalry with these powers as competition for scarce resources such as oil, gas and minerals intensifies. As we have seen China as a deformed workers’ state (DWS) asserted its historic control over Greater China and the autonomous territories etc. It has not had to contest control over these territories with existing imperialist powers. Everywhere else China has to fight for control of these resources.

On what terms? Is this done on behalf of other imperialist powers? To do so they would have to pass on cheap inputs to its rivals. We have seen that this is not the case in China. This means that China is a rival not a patsy. Why else were the Unocal and RioTinto deals stopped? This would have seen China gain more control over the energy sector internationally. Is this not protectionism? Why is China accused of exploiting the Congo? Why is the US beefing up its military presence in Africa in the form of AFRICOM which is training African troops in several countries where China has significant investments as well as journalists in Kinshasa?

Why is the SCO and military agreement led by China/Russia being projected as the main threat to US hegemony in Central Asia by the US itself? But China is not the new US. It is an emerging imperialist power that can only expand at the expense of other imperialist powers by "re-partitioning" their spheres of interest. Which will these be? In East Asia, Japan is the main competitor. Is China developing at the expense of Japan for hegemony in East Asia and the Eastern Pacific? South East Asia? Australia?

In Central Asia China is part of a bloc with Germany, Russia, India and Iran that are all experiencing growth at the expense of the US/Japan/UK/France bloc. Germany is an established imperialist country, while Russia is also a newly emerging imperialist power...In Latin America (Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina) China is doing deals under the nose of the US, France and Britain. In Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Lesotho, Congo (Katanga), Sudan, Zimbabwe etc) China is rapidly becoming the major rival to the US led bloc. These and other questions of the expansionary role of China can only be explained by recourse to Lenin’s theory of imperialism. In a global capitalist economy growth is only possible by means of capital accumulation. Expansion overseas into the existing markets or spheres of interest of imperialist powers, can only occur at the expense of the existing imperialist powers. This has direct effects of the workers and peasants over whose surplus value these powers are fighting. If we cannot explain what is driving China in its expansion we are theoretically and programmatically disarmed in our struggle against the super-exploitation and oppression of all imperialist powers.

Endnotes

“Comrades, when we see a bird that walks like a duck and swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, we call that bird a duck. James Robertson had pragmatically seen the significance of the long swim of the capitalists from Cuba to Miami by 1966 but the International Committee of Gerry Healy and Pierre Lambert refused to look at what had happened there after 1959. In his play Galileo Bertolt Brecht’s Galileo invites the leading scholars of Florence to peer into his telescope for the ultimate proof that Aristotle was wrong; but the men refused to look, instead making evasive, dogmatic speeches about why the telescope could not possibly show any such thing. A little more pragmatism and common sense would now assist comrades, before we progress to the more complex world of the Marxist dialectic. China is capitalist, look; it waddles and paddles and quacks, it’s a duck!”

“The cutting edge of distinction between bourgeois states and workers’ states is not some decisive degree of nationalisation (Militant/CWI), nor the existence of “central planning” (Workers Power/LRCI), nor the alleged “commitment” of the state apparatus to defend the socialised forces of production (ICL and IBT), but which class interests the economy and the state apparatus ultimately serve.” (LTT)

Socialist Fight: Where We Stand

We stand with Karl Marx: ‘The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule’. We see democratic soviets/workers’ councils as the instruments of participatory democracy which must be the basis of the successful struggle for workers’ power.

We are for the nationalisation and expropriation of capitalist private property without compensation and under workers’ control. The capitalist state must be overthrown and smashed to achieve socialism.

The revolutionary process of transition to communism is based on the struggle for workers’ power. We support the right of people to fight back against racist and fascist attacks. Self-defence is no offence!

We oppose all immigration controls. We fight racism and fascism.

We are for the refoundation and reconstruction of social democratic bourgeois workers’ parties (always) and in the mass reformist struggle as direct participants in the trade unions (always) and in the mass reformist social democratic bourgeois workers’ parties despite their pro-capitalist leaderships when conditions are favourable.

We aim to develop a programme for the emancipation of all class rule. The struggle for workers’ power is the Marxist method of mass work as advocated by Lenin in Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder in 1920.

We support Trotsky’s Transitional Programme of 1938 in its context. We always practice the method embodied in that document because it is the Marxist method of mass work. We support the right of women, Black and Asian people, lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people to cause inside the unions and in social democratic parties.

We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist attacks. Self-defence is no offence!

We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and imperialist governments mount massive interventions in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan (and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc.). We demand of all governments a world plan to combat climate change and the degradation of the biosphere which is caused by the anarchy of capitalist production for profits of transnational corporations. Ecological catastrophe is not “as crucial as imperialism” but caused by imperialism so to combat this threat we must redouble our efforts to forward the world revolution.

We support Trotsky’s theory of Permanent Revolution and its applicability to the present era of globalisation.

We are for the refoundation and reconstruction of the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution and will fight for the fusions and splits necessary for this in our international work.


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