Imperialism faces its worst financial, economic and political crises since the 1930s—Page 22
The 15 September celebrations of David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy over the fall of Colonel Gaddafi in Tripoli highlight yet again the crisis of leadership of the working class internationally. Because this was the end sought by the majority of the left groups, this was their ‘revolution’ this was the outcome they wished for. As we write the brave soldiers of the Libyan national army are fighting the NATO-rebel forces with outrageous courage. Imperialism has robbed Libyan oil and they are celebrating complete neo-colonial domination of the country. And still the slaughter goes on with the support of renegades from Trotskyism of Workers Power, the SWP, the SP, the AWL and the rest. This in the midst of the worst economic, social and political crisis since the 1930s.

This war to ‘protect the lives of civilians’ has cost the lives of at least 30,000 people and 50,000 wounded, according to the TNC health minister Naji Barakat. Half the total are Gaddafi’s courageous troops, about 2,000 rebel troops and the remaining 13,000 or so civilians. The Guardian’s Ian Black and Chris Stephen, in an article of unbelievable hypocrisy on 26 September, reported that there was “mounting concern over the humanitarian situation in the city (of Sirte)” not from the savage NATO bombing which is slaughtering thousands but from NATO reports that “Gaddafi forces in the city are endangering “hundreds of families!!”

These lying scoundrels of the mass media and pro-imperialist politicians right into the ranks of the leadership of the majority of the far left groups are prepared to lie and cover up for this slaughter in the hope of benefiting materially or politically from the booty robbed from Libya.

The editorial of the Guardian is a measure of the political collapse of the far left into the arms of the trade union bureaucrats. The chief manifestation of this is the SWP’s capitulation to the Unite bureaucracy. The SWP have implicitly agreed no longer to criticise the ‘left-wing General Secretary’ of Unite as the price of retaining their places on the Unite Executive and the SP and the AWL have indicated that they had already made that political grovel by agreeing that the mild SWP criticism of the British Airways betrayal by Unite (no details of the protracted machinations by Simpson et al to isolate the dispute and to frustrate the strike votes) was ‘ultra-left’. The terrible tale of how this left Abdul Omer Mohsin isolated and facing eviction with a serious heart attack threat-

ching which is slaughtering thousands but from NATO reports that “Gaddafi forces in the city are endangering “hundreds of families!!”

The political and industrial go hand in hand. We must tackle the first in order to advance the second. In order to begin the regroupment process we need agreement on two fundamental principles and agreement to begin the discussion on the third position.

1. The principle that we are for the defeat of our own ruling class and its NATO-rebels agents in its war on Libya
2. We are for rank-and-file-mobilisation and organisations;
   “in the trade unions to should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists; but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organisations corresponding more closely to the problems of mass struggle in bourgeois society: not stopping, if necessary, even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions.” Trotsky – The Transitional Programme, 1938.
3. The third position, on which agreement is not necessary to begin with, is the relationship to the Labour party. Is the Labour party still a bourgeois workers party and by extension do bourgeois-workers parties internationally exist in large numbers? This discussion cannot be avoided because it concerns the method behind the theory of the United Front and Trotsky’s Transitional Programme – how do small groups of revolutionaries relate to the mass of the working class Labour voters?

Socialist Fight’s Where we Stand document says, “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”.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
Protests in the building industry have broken out over the threat by eight major Joint Industry Board (JIB) contractors to withdraw from the nationally negotiated agreement by March 2012. Paving the way for hourly rates to be slashed by up to 35% and de-skilling of the electrical industry.

In the battle to protect the JIB agreement from being ripped up five of the eight have upped the stakes. Balfour Beatty, Crown House Technologies, Spie Matthew Hall, Shepherd Engineering Services and NG Bailey have issued Unite with legal notice of their intention to dismiss, by giving the legally required 90 day notice to thousands of employees before re-engage them on inferior contracts on December 7th.

So answering the TUC’s call this week for “Civil Disobedience” against the cuts, on Wednesday we obliged, and the action kicked off across the country. At the Grangemouth site in Scotland, sparks and Pipe-fitters working for BBES voted to walk off the job marking a major advance in our struggle against de-skilling and the vicious attacks on JIB agreement. Also in Scotland sparks protested at the Faslane site.

In London 150 protested at the Olympic site, blocked the main gate and then marched to the A12 main road and blocked the highway in to Stratford for 20 mins causing a major traffic jam eventually PC plod moved us on but it certainly caught the public attention which is great.

Manchester chipped in with a protest at the BBES Paddock Mill site. It all amounted to another fantastic day of rank-and-file activity but, the 8 have declared war and 5 of them are going for a rout by issuing the December 7th deadline letters. The rank-and-file workers on these sites must respond by downing tools and walking off site. Unite are slowly getting involved, 2 officials were present at the most recent demo.

The London Olympic site

In the week that the TUC meet in London unofficial protests by electricians and fitters at high profile construction sites are spreading across the country.

This morning at 6.30 am, rank and file Unite and other union members are holding a protest at the prestigious London Olympic site in Stratford, Pudding Mill Lane. This spot was deliberately targeted by the eight firms as a testing at major sites across the country until Christmas and beyond if necessary. Indeed plans are being made to get round all the sites where one of the eight is working.

Balfour Beatty’s Blackfriars Station

On Wednesday 24th August 2011, 200 electricians protested outside Balfour Beatty’s Blackfriars Station construction project in the first of many.

Alan Keys said, “What a great turn out and this is just the beginning now let’s push on. We can win this battle and turn over the 8 firms who have threatened to pull out of JIB agreement we’ve done before and we can do it again. The last time the electrical contractors attempted to cut wages by de-skilling the electrical trade was 1999 which led to coordinated strikes on the Jubilee Line, Royal Opera House, Puffers and projects across the UK.

The disputes sparked off because 8 major electrical contractors announced withdrawal from the Joint Industry Board (JIB). They are Bailey Building Services, Balfour Beatty Engineering Services, Tommy Clarke, Crown House Technologies, Grattie Brothers, M/N Colston, SES and SPIE Matthew Hall.

Taking the piss or what, last year the chief executive of Balfour’s gave himself an 8% pay rise yet for us they propose 3 new grades for electricians: metalworker £10.50 per hour, Wiring £12. Terminating £14. The current electricians JIB rate is £16.25 per hour across the board. For the worst hit it’s a 35% pay cut coupled with major changes to other terms and conditions.

There is a lot of anger and electricians won’t stand for it, these rank and file, grass roots protests will only get bigger.

Future meetings to organise protests are being planned in Hull, Cardiff and Liverpool as well as in Scotland where it will see its first demonstration at the Grangemouth oil refinery near Glassgow on Wednesday. Interestingly, up to now Unite the union has kept away from protests although an officer from London did show up at the most recent demo.

One of the organisers, Alan Keys said: “It was great to see one of our officials at the Shard, a real boost for the protestors. All being well, Unite will get behind its members and organise a ballot for industrial action”

He went on to say that whatever happens the obvious anger of rank-and-file union members means that they will continue protesting up to Christmas and beyond if necessary. Indeed plans are being made to get round all the sites where one of the eight is working.

Unite Construction Rank and File

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
The BA offer to its cabin crew, as recommended by the Unite union, was indeed terrible and represented a defeat for those workers. Sadie Robinson’s Socialist Worker article, ‘BA workers should reject shoddy deal’, was entirely correct to point out the unacceptable features.

These included “employing workers on lower pay and worse conditions”, the job cuts imposed in November 2009 remaining in place, no guarantee that sacked workers will be reinstated, the promise by Unite not to support any member bringing legal action against BA, the below-inflation pay offer for 2011-12 and 2012-13 too. Comrade Robinson went on to add: “Allowing scab labour makes the current deal worse than previous ones” (Socialist Worker May 21).

The reaction to the article of the union’s Unite Left was predictable: coming out in defence of “our left general secretary” against the “ultra-left” Socialist Workers Party. Nonetheless, some aspects of the letter from UL chair Martin Mayer and secretary Paul Birkett were shocking in their refusal to countenance any criticism of the union leadership. Referring to the Socialist Worker article, they claimed it “caused offence by implicitly criticising our left general secretary, Len McCluskey, ... for recommending this ‘terrible deal’” (unitedleft.org.uk).

The UL has become an open tool of bureaucratic oppression of all militants within the union to the unprincipled manoeuvres of the top bureaucracy. Rank-and-filers everywhere can only react with revulsion to such a position.

The letter from Mayer and Birkett ended with a clear threat: “... our BASSA reps are saying they do not now wish to attend Unite Left meetings if SWP members are present ... We therefore invite comments and views especially from Unite Left regions ... on what Unite Left should do with regards to acceptance of SWP members within our organisation.”

When Andy Newman posted the letter on his Socialist Unity website on May 27, he managed not only to demand that all criticism and opposition to McCluskey cease within Unite, but that we must all get behind Ed Miliband in the Labour Party - left reformists like Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell should cease their opposition to him.

The following comment thread showed where this cowardly capitulation is leading. ‘E’ ended his remarks with a question to Newman: “The logic of this would surely be that nobody on the Labour left should criticise Ed Miliband, for the simple reason that the Parliamentary Labour Party is so rightwing that no socialist is likely to be successful in mounting a challenge. Is that really your position? John McDonnell should stop ‘destabilising’ Ed Miliband’s leadership?”

To which Newman replied: “Correct. The left’s job is broadly to support Ed Miliband against the threat of the Blairite right; and certainly John McDonnell has shown a lack of tactical judgement, despite his many admirable qualities.”

But what of Andy’s very pertinent question to the SWP? - “... if they cannot act in a disciplined way to defend the left leadership of the union, then why are they in the Unite Left? Correct me if I am wrong, but don’t the SWP owe their places on the exec to their being part of the Unite Left slate? In which case they would seem to be having their cake and eating it. More generally though, I feel there is a definite loss of patience with the ultra-left in the unions now, as we are rearing up for very serious challenges, and can do without the infantile chorus” (www.socialistunity.com/?p=8170).

The SWP met in Birmingham on June 4 to decide what to do. It had already written a grovelling letter to apologise for the article; now it was time to make its position clear. After all, even the Socialist Party and Alliance for Workers’ Liberty, having previously semi-defended the SWP for fear of the consequences for themselves of a full-scale anti-left witch-hunt, were now saying that the reasonable article by Sadie Robinson, with which no serious militant could disagree, was over the top and ultra-left.

Note that it was the UL national coordinating committee (NCC) which was to take the expulsion decision: the UL as a whole could not be trusted. The members had refused to go along with the previous attempt to expel the SWP over its support for Jerry Hicks in last year’s general secretary election and there was a clear danger that Mayer and Birkett (read McCluskey) would lose again if they took the matter to the UL membership.

In the end the SWP decided to send Gill George, one of its most prominent right-wingers, to the NCC - some have joked that the SWP was thinking of sending her partner, the even more right-wing Pete Gillard. Both had argued passionately (but ultimately unsuccessfully) against supporting comrade Hicks at the SWP Unite caucus in 2010 (see my article, ‘Jane Loftus syndrome’ Weekly Worker August 26 2010).

Comrade George obviously gave the NCC enough assurance regarding the SWP’s future good behaviour to mollify the witch-hunters-in-chief and secure the lifting of the expulsion threat. The argument was that Socialist Worker has published no further articles on the BA deal and in any case Sadie Robinson was not a member of the SWP Unite caucus, which therefore should not be blamed for her article.

I hear the discussion at the NCC went something like this: ‘But you did sell that issue outside the caucus meeting, didn’t you, comrades, implying you agree with your newspaper’s line on the BA dispute? Say sorry and promise never to do it again.’ ‘We promise, we promise. Please don’t expel us, sir!’

‘On probation then. Your last chance. But the next time an ultra-left SWP militant attacks some Unite bureaucrat you are gone.’

So the effect of the UL intervention in the internal politics of the SWP has been to reverse the defeat the leadership suffered last year, when its Unite caucus eventually voted by 25 votes to five to support Jerry Hicks - the leadership had wanted to back McCluskey in order to keep in the UL’s good books. Now Gill George is in practice back in charge of the caucus.

But we cannot just mock the SWP. The Grass Roots Left’s aspirations to build a genuine rank and file movement against all trade union bureaucrats has suffered a serious setback.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
The Hounding of Abdul Omer Mohsin by Unite the Union

By A J Byrne: Unite's inaction and SWP vacillation and the consequence of capitulation

Abdul Omer, then a member of the Sudanese Communist Party, fled Sudan in 1977. Following the counter-coup of Gaafar Muhammad Nimeiry against the communist-backed attempt at power in 1971, SCP leaders were being executed and members were forced into hiding. Omer was sent to Britain for medical treatment following a strike on his behalf by students at the University of Khartoum. They collected the money needed for him to go. He emerged from the plane weighing just six and a half stone and at death's door. He had been six years on the run.

Having joined the Socialist Workers Party, Omer was elected convenor at the Sovereign bus company - the only SWP convenor or shop steward in London buses, with its 23,000 drivers represented by some 83 union branches. No other left group has had one since the mid-80s, such is the rightwing, bureaucratic dominance and collaboration with management.

At a rally during the campaign for pay parity in July 2008, Steve Hart, then Unite regional secretary, said, to prolonged cheering: "We are saying that it is not right that the driver of a No13 bus going down Oxford Street, employed by Transdev, gets 18 grand a year and he passes the No25 from East London Bus Group on 27 and a half grand a year. How can it be right that two drivers in the same street, driving the same buses, are £10,000 different in their basic pay?"

But the campaign for pay parity launched by Unite was dropped as soon as Bob Crow from the RMT agreed not to represent the 1,000 members at the two Sovereign garages of Harrow and Edgware, owned by the same company. Drivers had walked out on a wildcat strike in Edgware over the imposition of new schedules, inspired by his leadership. They won total victory. Such action has been very rare on the buses over the last few decades.

This led to Omer's harassment by Sovereign. First he was suspended following an altercation over a Unite Against Fascism poster. Then, following his return to work, he was outrageously dismissed for making allegations of institutionalised racism against the company, when defending a black member facing disciplinary action. After Omer's sacking on March 31 2010, the union officials cancelled the agreement he had won on pay parity, with the result that Sovereign were able to win the 251 route from Metroline. The company was very grateful to Unite for their assistance.

On November 16 2010 the online journal Permanent Revolution reported a comment from Jerry Hinks, candidate for Unite general secretary: "Why is it that each attempt by [Omer] and his supporters to raise these issues is met with manoeuvres, evasion and excuses to prevent any campaign? As we face an employers' offensive that is leading to many more attempts to attack our best activists at BA and beyond, when is Unite going to stand by our reps, beginning with a campaign to defend Abdul Omer Mohsin?"

Omer had asked for Unite's support in organising a campaign to stop the union-busting at Sovereign, including a ballot for industrial action to win his reinstatement. But the treatment that Omer has been subjected to is shameful, said Hicks, the SWP candidate, to prolonged cheering. "We are saying that it is not right that the driver of a No13 bus going down Oxford Street, employed by Transdev, gets 18 grand a year, how can it be right that two drivers in the same street, driving the same buses, are £10,000 different in their basic pay?"

A letter from Gerry Downing to the Weekly Worker last month stated that the capitulation of the SWP to the United Left meant that "The UL has become an open tool of bureaucratic oppression of all militants within the union to the unprincipled manoeuvres of the top bureaucracy" (June 23). We had less than a week to wait for that dire prediction to be confirmed. When I visited Abdul Omer in Hillingdon hospital on July 3, he told me the details.

The drivers at the two Sovereign garages of Harrow and Edgware had just seen off the attempts of the bureaucracy to get them to abandon the struggle to reinstate him by voting in a new convenor. Both garages soundly rejected this attempt. Omer had asked for Unite's support in organising a campaign to stop the union-busting at Sovereign, including a ballot for industrial action to win his reinstatement. But he is still waiting over 18 months later.

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Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

Continued on page 8
This is the text of the terrible letter from Peter Kavanagh to Abdul Omer Mohsin as posted on the internet by Brent TUC: 8 July 2011

Dear Omer,

I hope you are keeping well.

It has been brought to my attention that you have paid no union subscriptions since December 2010 and are currently therefore in Arrears of £228.82.

You will be aware that Unite has taken a decision to support your claim to a Tribunal in spite of advice received by our lawyers about the poor prospect of a successful outcome and even of the danger of costs being awarded in the event of losing.

Unite has paid substantial amounts of money to you in terms of hardship.

You will be aware that you need to maintain your membership position if you wish the Union to act on your behalf. Will you please therefore make arrangements, without delay, to forward your backdated subscriptions to the Membership Register Department, Unite the Union, 218 Green Lanes, Finsbury Park, London N4 2HB. You will also need to make immediate arrangements to re-commence your membership if you wish us to continue to support you.

Yours Sincerely,
PETER KAVANAGH
REGIONAL SECRETARY (ACTING)

This is surely one of the most terrible, spiteful and vindictive letter ever written by a trade union official to a victimised member. It is a complete fraud, full of so many distortions, half truths and dissimulations that its message amounts to a total lie about what has happened to SWP member Omer.

It was obviously in response to the Facebook post on Gerry Downing’s site “The Hounding of Abdul Omer Mohsin by Unite the Union” by A J Byrne at 12.35 on that same 8th July (a version of this appeared in Weekly Worker on July 14th, http://www.cpgb.org.uk/article.php?article_id=1004481). This contained the following sentence “Anyway it seems that other union rules were ignored; Omer should have been written to inform him of the arrears before expulsion”. This was the immediate response.

Kavanagh’s career as a union official in the London TGWU suffered a bit of a setback when he was shunted to the margins of Docks and Waterways under Bill Morris but returned to the limelight as Senior Regional Industrial Organiser for the buses following the ouster of right-winger Eddie McDermott as Regional Secretary in 2006 and his replacement by the ‘left’ Steve Hart. He is now the Acting Regional Secretary for London and South East, following Hart’s elevation to the newly created post of Political Director Unite.

Now to analyse that shocking letter in some detail:

“I hope you are keeping well.”

We might conclude from the tone of this letter that he was hoping for the exact opposite. It was clearly written to increase the psychological pressure on Omer. The Facebook post had detailed his very fragile state, having collapsed twice just over a week previously (on 29th June and 2nd July) when he had been given the bum’s rush by S. Higgins, the appallingly brutal bureaucratic stand-in chair of the RISC at Chelmsford on 29th June. Omer had previously written to Kavanagh informing him that he was suffering acute stress because of the way he (Kavanagh) was treating him by the prolonged investigation of his branch over payments to him and the withholding of monies collected for him using this excuse. This was a delaying tactic which produced nothing at all except to defer by several month the union’s ‘support’ for Omer. If he intended to push Omer over the top yet again this had the desired effect. On reading the letter Omer suffered another panic attack with racing heart and an ambulance had to be called as a massive heart attack was clearly threatening.

“It has been brought to my attention that you have paid no union subscriptions since December 2010 and are currently therefore in Arrears of £228.82.”

As Kavanagh was the central Unite figure dealing with Omer’s sacking he was aware of when he got sacked and that he had been unemployed ever since so should have been on unemployed rates, which according to the Membership Register Department when Omer enquired, means he owed £16.00 not £228.82. The Facebook post said. “The ignorant bureaucrat (who we now know was S. Higgins) refused to sign the expenses sheet, saying Omer was not a union member and should not even be at the meeting (of the Unite RISC on 29 June) as he had not paid his union dues since he was sacked – what back-stabber went to the trouble to dig that out?” Now we know who that back-stabber was who verbally informed/instructed Higgins to do the dirty on elected RISC member Omer. However he was so anxious to dump on Omer that he forget to enquire what the records themselves showed; or did Omer not ‘officially’ inform him of his sacking so Unite did not know? The woman in the office had heard at any rate but did not know she was supposed to be so viciously bureaucratic to a victimised member. No doubt she has been spoken to sharply to remind her of the proper attitude to take to troublesome leftists in future.

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During Christmas 2010 retired Unison member John Tymon who had been Shop Steward, Housing Convenor Branch Secretary, and finally President of Brent local government Union Nalgo met Omer and discussed his case. Tymon wrote to Unite members and other trade union members involved with the case. “I have just made a social call to Omer and I was shocked and disgusted at the way his case is going”. Although Thompsons were given the case Tymon discovered that the most basic work had not been done. Thompsons Solicitor Ellie Reeves was appointed but not provided with the most basic information about the case, so that in turn the Barrister could not be briefed for Legal opinion about the prospects. Tymon found Abdul Omer in very low spirits, he had tragically lost his only daughter only months previously, he had no money, had not eaten for days, he was at risk of losing his home, whatever sleep he grabbed was an arm chair between cups of coffee, he was not sleeping for days at a time, and felt deeply hurt as those he had supported for so long had deserted him. Tymon spent the next three months with Abdul doing what Unite officers were being paid to do, but which they had grossly and wilfully neglected. He even had to chase up Unite officials to obtain statements from them. He listed the witnesses and obtained statements from them. He typed Abdul’s witness statements, which recalled detailed accounts of several meetings and events, which he then sent to Thompsons Lawyers, who were
Tymon confirmed that the case was a winner, but was worried that time wasting tactics was weakening the case for reinstatement. So we are entitled to ask which lawyers gave Kavanagh this advice which contradicts the barrister’s opinion and what are the details?

The SWP’s call for a General Strike is an ultra-left posture to avoid the fight against the trade union bureaucracy as Abdul Omer’s case shows. But at least they are advocating industrial action and class struggle; both recent splits to the right, Counterfire and the IG, oppose this because they oppose the class struggle itself, not because it is an avoidance of the real struggle.

When Omer was sacked on 30th March 2010 Unite immediately applied for interim relief, i.e. protection of earnings, which the company, Sovereign, would have to pay if they withdrew it soon after, obviously following advice from those dealing with the Omer’s case, the Regional Industrial Organiser (RIO) Wayne King and Peter Kavanagh. These two had organised the annulment of the parity agreement of the Sovereign drivers with London United which Omer had negotiated and which would have resulted in a hike of £4,000 pa for this workforce, one of the lowest paid in London. Omer discovered the process was already in train for the annulment when he went to clear his locker following the loss of his appeal. This is in contrast to the RMT, who pressed forward and won interim relief from London Underground for the two sacked Unite activists, Arwyn Thomas and Eamonn Lynch. The Evening Standard reported this, “Employment tribunals ruled that Arwyn Thomas and Eamonn Lynch, both from south London, should be paid their £45,000 salary until full hearings take place”. This judgement obviously helped to win the employment tribunal later. But the RIO, Wayne King, insisted that the evidence relating to trade union activity not be part of Omer’s defence in his disciplinary hearing or appeal. By extension they argued it should not be part of the employment tribunal case. He made this case because he said it would harm the chances of victory in the Tribunal if they won the protection of earnings. John Tymon’s intervention thwarted that plan.

The barrister confirmed that the withdrawal of Unite’s claim for interim relief and delaying tactics in securing industrial action harmed the chances of victory, as it seemed to indicate that the union did not believe it could win. As is shown by Kavanagh’s letter above and their actions Unite does not want him to win the ET or reinstatement by industrial action and have put every obstacle in his path to prevent him doing so.

As to the threat of costs being awarded against Unite, according to Emplaw.co.uk, “An award of costs is especially likely if the tribunal considers that “the party in bringing the proceedings, or he or his representative in conducting the proceedings, acted vexatiously, abusively, disruptively or otherwise unreasonably, or that the bringing or conducting of proceedings was misconceived” (at one time the power to award costs arose only where conduct was “frivolous or vexatious” but over the years it has been gradually, but considerably, widened to get to the current position).”

That is Kavanagh believed he has now manoeuvred matters to such an extent that Omer’s whole case based on the previous history of victimisation because of union activity would be ignored. All the evidence of company manoeuvres and the whole reasons behind the sackings would not be examined, the union would summarily convey to the tribunal its desired outcome and a right wing judge would obligingly concur. The lawyers and barrister would be misinformed and so unable to put his full case. But Tymon’s intervention has scuppered this plan, although Kavanagh does not seem to be aware of this.

“Unite has paid substantial amounts of money to you in terms of hardship.”

Up to when the London Grass Roots Left met on Monday 11 July Omer had received just £3000 from Unite but all monies had dried up from all sources by then, which is why the possession order was issued against him for non-payment of his mortgage. In fact Unite only issued an appeal to branches to help Omer and then the London and South East region pledged to match Unite’s donations to Omer. In fact Unite only issued an appeal to branches to help Omer and then the London and South East region pledged to match Unite’s donations to Omer. In fact Unite only issued an appeal to branches to help Omer and then the London and South East region pledged to match Unite’s donations to Omer. In fact Unite only issued an appeal to branches to help Omer and then the London and South East region pledged to match Unite’s donations to Omer. In fact Unite only issued an appeal to branches to help Omer and then the London and South East region pledged to match Unite’s donations to Omer.

There were many more SWP and other donations later but we only have the details of these initial vital donations.

The implications of this case for the SWP are obvious. They had abandoned their own victimised member; he would not even have been mentioned at all at Marxism 2011 during the ‘how to built fighting trade unions’ (sic!) debate between Ian Allison and Steve Hart had he not performed the publicity stunt of collapsing in the street twice in the previous couple of days and the presence of two Grass Roots Left members at the meeting. Perhaps they did not know about his desperate financial state and so that was why they took no collection for their most important victimised militant at the huge five day event which attracts thousands of trade union militants, that only shows the measure of their neglect of him in their pursuit of accommodation with the United Left bureaucrats, the source of their positions on the Unite Executive.

He was an embarrassment to them in these endeavours; they had abandoned their own member and were it not for the intervention of the other political contacts he had made outside of his own ‘revolutionary’ organisation he would be homeless now facing certain defeat in the November employment tribunal. As it is he faces a difficult task with an uncertain outcome in that case. They say he must put in an official complaint about Peter Kavanagh’s terrible letter in and await the outcome; he must wait yet longer and not alienate the Unite bureaucracy even now.

But nothing will move the Unite bureaucrats apart from a public campaign and a revolt of their members; it is to the members of his own union in the two bus garages of Edgware and Harrow that he must orient now; they hold the key. We (all his genuine political supporters in all political groups and none) must launch a support group modelled on the Defend Yunus Bakhsh Campaign. The employment tribunal found Yunus was unfairly dismissed by North- umberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust because of trade union activities in July 2010 after a model vigorous public campaign by the SWP and a wider range of other trade unionists.

Omer needs a public campaign of lobbying and public meetings etc. to demand an official ballot for industrial action for his reinstatement is put to them after a full campaign explaining the whole case to all the members.

Omer is very loyal to the SWP and in a sense he has a point because that organisation does contain some of the best militants in Britain. But he owes no loyalty to those SWP leaders who have treated him like this; those who put advancement in the ranks of the TU bureaucracy above fighting to raise the combativity and political consciousness of the union members and workers in general. Those who voted 30 to 5 to back Jerry Hicks in 2010 did so against their own leadership and in the face of bitter opposition from the aspiring TU bureaucrats in their own ranks. Omer must give them a clear lead; he has the authority to become a rallying point for this very vital militant left opposition who are still there. The organisation has suffered two debilitating splits to the right recently, made far more damaging because political clarity on their capitulation to the capitalist neoliberal offensive was never fought out. These are now eschewing the working class and industrial action in general. If SWP militants do not make an open and public stand over Omer they will end up the same way. This is an appeal especially to the seasoned militants in the SWP who know the iron rules of the class struggle. They must know that if their leaders continue to flout these rules in this way destruction beckons; how many Jane Loftus’ do we need? Those rules must surely point them in the direction of the Grass Roots Left in the first place and out of the bogus bureaucrats’ front, the United Left. And finally to other left groups, the Socialist Party and the Alliance for Workers Liberty in the main who mock the SWP now because of this case. They have no internal problems apparently. They both slandered SWP journalist Sadie Robinson’s very mild – she did not detail the manoeuvrings of the Unite bureaucracy to wear down and demoralise the strikers by constantly refusing to heed their mandate for effective strike action – but truthful article on the British Airways strike as ‘ultra-left’. That is they were much further up the rectum of the left TU bureaucracy than the SWP as a whole, there is no left opposition in prospect there to their leadership’s capitulation to the left bureaucracy.

From page 5

LEGAL ASSISTANCE FROM HIS INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNAL, ETC. HOWEVER, following the SWP’s capitulation to the bureaucracy by agreeing not to criticise the “leftwing general secretary”, matters could only get worse. Steve Hart shared a platform with the SWP’s Ian Allison at Marxism 2011 on Saturday July 2. Ironically they were debating ‘How to build fighting unions’, Ian did not mention Abdul Omer at all, and neither did Steve Hart. But leading SWP member Pete Gillard was called to speak and he demanded that the union arrange a campaign to reinstate him. He did not mention the appalling events of a few days before on June 29. Two Grass Roots Left members, this writer and Billy McKeen, put in slips to speak on Abdul Omer, but we were not called by SWP central committee member Michael Bradley, who vetted the slips. It was remiss of us not to stand up and shout out what had just happened and direct the anger of the whole meeting at Steve Hart, who simply ignored Peter Gillard’s demand on Omer and went on to justify the union’s sell-out of the BA dispute.

So is Abdul Omer to be hung out to dry – the result of bureaucratic treachery and cowardly capitulation? Maybe there is enough fight left in the anti-bureaucratic wing of the SWP to stop that happening, but if they fight the bureaucracy openly for Omer’s reinstatement they will surely be expelled from the United Left.

The old fighter is out of hospital now and says he is still up for the fight. We must now demand that the entire labour movement rallies behind this redoubtable communist militant.
Build the Grass Roots Left on the London buses

by Tony Fox

A rally during the campaign for equal pay in July 2008 Steve Hart, then Unite Regional Secretary, said, to prolonged cheering and chants of “strike, strike”: “We are saying that it is not right that the driver of a No 13 bus going down Oxford Street, employed by Sovereign Transdev, gets 18 grand a year and he passes the No 25 from East London Bus Group on 27 and a half grand a year. How can it be right that two drivers in the same street, driving the same buses, are £10,000 different in their basis pay? . . . London busworkers united will never be defeated.”

At the same rally Peter Kavanagh, then Senior Regional Organiser now Acting Regional Secretary said, “We have 28,000 organised who, if they get themselves together, if they get themselves together, if they stand shoulder to shoulder they will be one almighty army. We have described London busworkers as a sleeping army, no more, no more, we are on the march, we are organised, we are going to fight anyone that gets in our way, aren’t we?”

Chairing the rally, Steve O’Rourke now Chair of the Regional Industrial Sector Committee (RISC) and London Bus Conference said “We are at round one, we do not expect to go more that round two before we get a knock-out” and elsewhere, “Listen comrades, you know we are not going to achieve this in one year, but this is a campaign, this not a sprint but a marathon.”

Of great significance was the presence of small numbers of RMT flags and baseball caps at all these rallies. On 22 October 2008 14,000 busworkers were pledged to go on strike but one small company in south London with only 1,000 drivers, Metronet, obtained an injunction against the strike and the convenors representing the rest of the busworkers immediately gathered and called off the strikes, not even informing their own members in many instances; company notices appeared on management notice boards triumphantly telling drivers that strikes were called off.

That common claim was abandoned by the 2008 annual London Busworkers Conference. Now all the talk was about the abstract “principle” of Central Pay Bargaining without any reference to harmonising pay and conditions and very soon they even stopped talking about that. No explanation was offered to the members. But the reason did appear in a letter from RMT General Secretary Bob Crow posted up in all the garages by Unite branch secretaries; the RMT would no longer represent members on the London buses and RMT busworker members were to rejoin Unite. There was no serious competition to union membership now, Kavanagh’s “almighty army” was left leaderless and as for O’Rourke’s “round two knock-out” the red corner threw in the towel and the blue corner won by a walk-over.

This betrayal of London busworkers had dire consequences. Note the two companies compared were Sovereign Transdev, still the lowest paid in London and East London buses. Have the earnings of Sovereign drivers increased? No, it is lower now than in 2008. But whatever about Central Pay Bargaining we are getting harmonisation, but by the “race to the bottom” because East London buses are now having a 15% wage cut.

Abdul Omer Mohsin, Convenor of Sovereign, took the matter of parity of pay and conditions across London seriously and negotiated a deal which eliminated the £4,000 gap in pay between Sovereign drivers and the much bigger London United garages, owned by the same company. Omer was sacked on a trumped up charge on 30 March 2010 and the Company then not only cancelled the parity agreement but have gone on to impose worse conditions than back then.

East London buses are determined to slash pay by 15 percent or sack 250 drivers. Like at British Airways and Abdul Omer’s sacking, Unite are seeking to demoralise and defeat the workers by refusing to organise strike action and refusing to organise London wide support. They are not even telling drivers throughout London what is going on.

Back in March, Socialist Worker reported that drivers voted by 987 to 413 to continue negotiations, and by 399 to 26 to be balloted for industrial action. But drivers answering yes to negotiations were told they could not answer the, second question. “Of course we want our reps to negotiate—but they shouldn’t be posed as contradicting one another” one driver told Socialist Worker.

But the situation is ongoing and unresolved. John Griffiths, the Unite Regional Industrial Organiser, said in June: “This is the result of the mayor’s tendering policies in the London bus market which is leading to an accelerated and ugly race to the bottom”.

So Unite officially blame the tendering system to avoid blaming the bus companies. Consequently they do not call for renationalisation of the buses but have no campaign for ending the tendering system either. Meantime all the bigger companies are not only losing routes to each other, with all the disruption to the lives of drivers this causes, but increasingly smaller companies who have bad terms and conditions like Sovereign and Abellio are winning routes, leading to increased pressure for cuts in wages and conditions in the bigger companies like they got in 1993.

And as in 1993 this Unite leadership in London, Peter Kavanagh and Steve O’Rourke, are doing everything to make sure there is no united comeback, there is no possibility of uniting the struggles like they falsely promised would be achieved by the Olympics when Kavanagh told us no one would get to the starting line if we did not achieve a united “almighty army” by then.

The Grass Roots Left will be standing candidates in the coming branch elections fighting for a rank and file movement to lead the fightback to defeat this attack on drivers; to be successful we must defeat this useless bureaucratic Unite leadership who are in the pockets of the companies in almost everything.

London busworkers need to fight for these demands;

1. Renationalise the buses
2. End competitive tendering
3. Reinstatement the campaign for one set of wages and conditions throughout London
4. Reinstatement Abdul Omer in Sovereign
5. Victory to the East London busworkers

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
Socialist Fight had a stall at the annual Fête de Lutte Ouvrière in the grounds of a château near the small village of Presles, in the Val d’Oise, Ile-de-France, 50 kilometres north of Paris, on the weekend of 11-13 June. This is the largest gathering of the revolutionary left in the world, attracting up to 40,000 visitors over the weekend. We sold many issues of Socialist Fight and In Defence of Trotskyism, the press of the Socialist Fight Group, Qina Msebenzi, the press of the Revolutionary Marxist Group of South Africa and O Bolchevique of the Liga Comunista of Brazil.

This year’s event appeared smaller than recent years and certainly the cité politique, where all the left groups have their free stalls and engage in political debates in the Forums, was smaller than ever. In the 80s and early 90s this was huge, the largest section of the Fete.

The political crisis of the left was evident. The New Anticapitalist Party (Nouveau Parti anticapitaliste, NPA), had a large stall. The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR, USFI), which claimed to be the largest “Trotskyist” group in the world, had dissolved itself into the NPA in 2009 expecting to get more votes in elections. The result was the opposite; the radical French workers deserted them in droves, reducing their electoral appeal from a high point approaching 10% for all the far left groups on 2006 to about 3% now. A comrade from Chile discussed with us and refused to believe that the NPA was demanding that the rest of the world’s imperialist powers and all the world’s bourgeois states recognise the Benghazi rebels as the legitimate government of Libya. “I will ask them” he said and reported back “you are right, but they said that was just their leaders, they did not agree with the call”. Well if it is the case that the ranks of the NPA are more Anti-imperialist than their leaders then surely they have enough democratic rights within their organisation to overturn that leadership. The supposed ‘revolutionary’ base, which the reactionaries in Benghazi are ridiculously supposed to have, could expect no such workers democracy but a swift execution, like the black workers, for raising such opposition.

All the groups present, apart from the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT), either supported the attack on Libya or supported the Benghazi rebels. Some amazingly oppose the NATO bombing but still support the ‘revolutionary rebels’ ground army. The IBT, together with the two other members of the ‘Spartacist Family’ the International Communist League and the Internationalist Group, refused to take a stance with the Gaddafi regime against the ‘rebels’ before the NATO bombing war began, but then took the correct stance of calling for an anti-imperialist united front without political support to Gaddafi against the imperialist assault and the rebels. The IBT Forum, in which we intervened, foolishly sought to prove that China was still a deformed workers state.

The Lutte Ouvrière organisation itself is making a strong pitch for the mantle of Trotskyism in France, sensing a hole in the market. The proper name of the international group is The Internationalist Communist Union (Trotskyist). But why is ‘Trotskyist’ in brackets? asked one long standing member, revealing internal disputes traditionally well hidden by the group. And on Libya it opposes the NATO bombing but fudges the rest; no anti-imperialist united front with Gaddafi and no stance on seeking the defeat of NATO’s ground forces, the ‘Benghazi rebels’.

And on the closely linked question of the trade unions they covered up for the betrayals of the trade union leaders in strike struggles last October-November by oil and port workers and students against pension cuts. Their growing collaboration in the unions with the Communist Party in France (PCF) has become more than legitimate United Front tactics; it is clearly becoming a strategic orientation to advance their own careers in the union bureaucracy. Look at how they justified the sell-out by the bureaucrats at the end of last year:

“The union leaders had a right to hope that, on such a political problem, they would be associated with the negotiations and that they could justify their role and their preference for negotiations with a few concessions they could use against the workers’ discontent. Well, they were most certainly not associated with the negotiations!”


Now is the time to intervene strongly in such groups where they leadership are drawing closer to the trade union bureaucracies and thereby the imperialist states interests themselves as shown over the refusal to mobilise against the cuts and against the war in Libya and whose militants are becoming ever more concerned at the direction of their groups.
The Irish Labour party, austerity measures and lifestyle choices

By Charlie Walsh

Nearly a quarter of people in the South of Ireland have less than €20 a week to live on after all their essential bills have been paid, an income tracking survey published recently found.

The survey, by the Irish League of Credit Unions, illustrates just how hard austerity measures and price hikes are hitting people and paints a very bleak picture for many who are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. The survey found that 23%, or 805,000 people, now have just €70 a month left after all their essential bills are paid while one in two adults say they are unable to meet all their financial obligations each month, while 47%, admit they are forced to pay at least one bill late.

Just over a quarter of 1,000 people surveyed by the League last month said they had less than 5% of their income left when all their bills were paid, while 82% said they would be unable to cope if there were further cuts to their income or social welfare. The survey also found that 45% of those with less than 5% of their income left after all their bills were paid did not believe they or their families had a future in Ireland.

Meanwhile Joan Bruton, a Labour Party Minister in the coalition government with the right wing Fine Gael party has announced €65 million cuts in social welfare. Ms Bruton, Minister for Social Protection (surely a joke) has announced cuts to fuel, electricity and phone allowances for social welfare recipients which will have a major detrimental effect on vulnerable older peoples, charities representing the poor and elderly have said. The government approved cuts in fuel allowances and household benefit schemes will affect more than 630,000 people.

The Minister said that while the government wished to protect social welfare payments "regrettably there is an ongoing necessity to achieve savings due to our commitments with the IMF/ECU/ECB Troika." This shows Bruton and the Labour party in their true colours: defending capitalism and its institutions while attacking the working class are paying the price for the failures of capitalism and its institutions while attacking the working class are paying the price for the failures of capitalism and its institutions while attacking the working class are paying the price for the failures of capitalism and attacking the Labour party in their true colours: defending capitalism and its institutions while attacking the working class are paying the price for the failures of capitalism.

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Bruton’s comments were Thatchertish, according to Sinn Fein’s social protection spokesman Aengus Ó Snodaigh. He said Bruton’s comments, in which she described dependence of social welfare as a lifestyle choice, were outrageous and another example of the Labour party moving to the right.

However, spokesman for the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed Brid O’Brien said: “The INOU does not agree with the Minister for Social Protection’s claim that young people are choosing to go on the ‘dole’ as a ‘lifestyle choice’.

“In the summer of 2007, just before the Live Register started its initial slow climb up to the very dramatic levels we now see, young people accounted for 20 per cent of the register. In June of this year, they accounted for 19 per cent.

“At present it is possible for an unemployed person to liaise with the State and yet not meet anyone who is in a position to discuss with them their employment, education and training options,” she said.

United Left Alliance meeting attended by those in mortgage arrears

From the Irish Times of 4 July.

“John Byrne’s home in Tullycanna, Co Wexford, has been in his family for more than 50 years. His grandmother was born and raised in the house and her father before her. But Byrne, a carpenter struggling to make ends meet in the recession, and his mother are fighting a legal battle with one of the State’s biggest subprime mortgage lenders to try to keep the family home.

“My wife and I have tried everything to keep the house in our family. We went to the lender and offered to pay €800 a month for 40 years. It is all we can pay. They wouldn’t listen and last November the High Court granted a repossession order,” he says.

Byrne is one of an estimated 60,000 people in mortgage arrears in Ireland. At a public meeting in Dublin yesterday addressing the evolving mortgage crisis, he broke down as he described how his father, an alcoholic, drank himself to death a few years after remortgaging the family home.

“I work in Bus Éireann and my take-home pay has been cut by a third. I knew I was going to be in trouble and tried to contact Bank of Ireland to see what could be done . . . but a staff member told me nobody had time to talk to customers until a first default had occurred.” Another man working in the building trade says he separated from his wife a few years ago and had bought another house. He is in mortgage arrears of €6,000 and the house is now worth €100,000 less than he paid for it. “My wages are down 50 per cent and it is difficult to meet the mortgage payments,” he says.

Joan Collins TD, a member of the United Left Alliance, says it is a crazy situation to put people out of their family homes and then have the State pay people’s rent. "This is a throwback to the 1800s when absentee landlords threw people out of their homes . . . The situation will get worse this week when interest rates go up again," she says. “Hundreds of thousands of people are struggling with debts they can’t sus-
Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union presidency in 1974 he became an official in the Ireland (USI). Following the completion of his President of the national Union of Students in 1970 President of the NUI, Galway Students’ Union in 1976, Pat Rabbitte went on to become a Member of the Executive Council in 1979. He served as Vice-President of the Union from 1980 to 1982, and as President from 1980 to 1984. In 1984, he was elected to the Irish Senate, where he served until 1987. He then returned to the Dáil as a Member of Parliament for the Dublin North-West constituency, and served as a Government Whip for two years. In 1992, he became a Senator again, this time for the Labour Party, and served as Leader of the Opposition from 1997 to 2002.

In 2002, Pat Rabbitte was elected as the leader of the Labour Party, becoming the first member of the party to hold the position since its founding in 1932. He served as party leader until 2008, when he was succeeded by Eamon Gilmore. During his time as leader, he was involved in a number of significant political events, including the Rainbow Coalition of Fine Gael, Labour and the Green Party, which was formed in 2007. He was also a key figure in the negotiations that led to the agreement on the Programme for Government in 2008.

Energy policy: The multinational oil and gas companies need no fears

From an Irish Times report, July 17, 2011:

“Pat Rabbitte, Labour TD and Minister for Energy in the coalition government has said he has “no plans” for a moratorium on issuing new petroleum licences off the west coast before any review of the State’s existing terms for oil and gas companies...

A 2006-7 consultancy study for the Department of Energy estimated a total reserve of 10 billion barrels of oil equivalent beneath the west coast sea bed. The trade union SIPTU’s recently published report on the issue has said the 2007 estimate was “potentially worth €750 billion” at current prices, and “the equivalent of Ireland’s supply needs for 100 years based on current consumption”.

The SIPTU report noted the current licensing system transfers ownership of resources to the lease holders, and companies are not required to sell any oil or gas or both into the Irish market - but can sell at full market price. The report says a revised fiscal system - such as a contractual system - would afford the State more return and more control, and could be used to pay for the transition to renewable energies.”

€750 billion would overcome Ireland’s present woes. It is interesting to look at Pat Rabbitte’s political evolution. According to Wikipedia, “While at university Rabbitte became involved in several college movements before serving as President of the NUI, Galway Students’ Union in 1970-1971. Between 1972 and 1974 he achieved national attention when he served as President of the national Union of Students in Ireland (USI). Following the completion of his presidency in 1974 he became an official in the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union (ITGWU), becoming National Secretary for the union in 1980.” Politically he started out in Official Sinn Fein the Workers party, which became the Workers party and then the Democratic Left which merged with the Labour party in 1998. He became its leader in 2002 and stepped down in 2007 after that disastrous election result. He participated in the Rainbow Coalition of Fine Gael, Labour and the Democratic Left from 1994 to 1997. All along he has progressively shed his alleged socialist principles ending up as a supporter and defender of capitalism against the interests of the working class, the unemployed, the poor, the sick and the elderly. And he and his party will give every support to Enda Kenny to protect the interests of the rich and powerful.

Letter to the Irish Times

Recently the new chief justice in Ireland, Mrs Justice Susan Denham, announced she will not be taking the €38,000 increase in salary that goes with the position. She said her salary would remain at its existing level until measures were in place for deciding judges’ pay. This means she will receive the not insubstantial €257,822 per annum, rather than the €295,916 she is entitled to. A referendum is to be held sometime in the autumn to amend the constitution to allow the government to marginally reduce judges’ salaries.

Mrs Denham said judges were acutely aware of the financial crisis and judges are not immune from the effects of the economic crisis. Well let’s compare and contrast. While Mrs Denham is doing very well with her €257,822 per annum salary, almost half a million Irish people are on the dole while, according to a recent survey from the Irish League of Credit Unions, nearly one quarter of Irish people have less than €20 a week to live on once all their essential bills have been paid (see article opposite).

Now let us compare the struggling poor in Ireland with some of Ireland’s richest men who are challenging overtime payments and Sunday premiums. John Magnier of Coolmore Stud Farm and Racing Stables at Ballydudley, who has a personal fortune of €600 million and who gets huge subsidies from the State in terms of his training industry, and is a tax exile who is bringing low-paid agricultural workers earning €9.10 per hour to the courts because he feels their wage demands are excessive. A case of greed over need by Mr Magnier. While Pat McDonagh, number 68 on Ireland’s Rich List, like John Magnier, is challenging the overtime payments and Sunday premium payments. He founded the Quick Service Food Alliance and owns Supermacs. All I can say is what is happening in Ireland is a total disgrace. An Ireland where an elite like Susan Denham and her legal colleagues, John Magnier et al, politicians of the three largest parties, top civil servants, CEOs of private companies, bankers and leaders of multinational s. This minority of rich and powerful people, not forgetting the well-paid and well-fed media people, who despite the terrible suffering of the majority of ordinary Irish people carry on their gilt-edged existence, pay themselves ever larger salaries plus expenses and tell us without blushing that, in the words of Susan Denham, “Judges are not, nor have they ever been, opposed to playing their part in sharing the financial pain required of everybody at this difficult time.” Well, Susan, I don’t think you will suffer much pain existing on only €257,822 per annum. I am sure you will manage somehow. You could always get a job as a cleaner to make ends meet.

In a country of 4 million people what is happening in and to Ireland and its people is frightening. And to cap it all we have a president Mary McAleese being paid €300,000 per annum, plus €200,000 expenses. The above I think just about sums up the madness, the political and economic madness, that has brought Ireland and the majority of its people to their knees.

Meanwhile, Richard Bruton, Minister for Enterprise and Jobs in the coalition government and a member of the Fine Gael party, has ruled out the compulsory recognition of unions by companies. He went on to say that the government would reform the current law on employers’ rights to engage in collective bargaining. And Bruton said there wasn’t any commitment to recognise unions. He further stated that American companies operating in Ireland would be very sensitive to any question of compulsory union recognition.

The possibility of special legal entitlement to Sunday premium payments being dropped for workers by Joint Labour Committees was first raised by the previous government last February. The submission raises the issue of whether there should be any provision made in employment regulation orders in respect of Sunday premiums, leave (holidays) and rest breaks. The submission also asks whether instead they should refer to the Organisation of Working Time Act on these issues. It also asks whether an inability to pay provision should be put in place. Under the Organisation of Working Time Act, employers have a choice of ways by which to recognise work carried out on a Sunday. This includes the provision of time off in lieu. The government has decided that Joint Labour Committees will no longer set Sunday premium rates, workers will have to rely on the Organisation of Working Time Act, while companies will be able to derogate from the official rates in case of financial difficulty.

The above shows the attacks on the working class, on their right to union recognition and also the right to be paid for Sunday work, overtime, unsocial hours, etc. The deafening silence on the part of the Irish Labour Party shows it agrees totally with the right-wing trajectory of the Kenny led coalition government. While the trade union bureaucracy is silent on the government attacks on its members and refuses to lead the fight back.

Yours Faithfully,

Charlie Walsh
The events of August 9th 1971 are well chronicled in Irish republican history and folklore. It is the day the British government introduced ‘Internment without trial’ in the Six Counties in an effort to quell and subdue the street protests which had broken out a year or more earlier in Belfast and Derry. Men and women were rounded up at dawn and interned in Britain’s newest and latest concentration camp - Long Kesh - simply for holding political views and ideologies which the government of the day disagreed with. Even those who had died years earlier were on the RUC ‘wanted list’! The policy of internment without trial however proved a disaster and a dismal failure and was ultimately abandoned. Like all other ‘British solutions’ it just did not work!

But the leopard cannot change its spots and now forty years later almost to the day, republican activists find themselves interned again without trial.

Marian Price - a founder-member of the 32 County Sovereignty Movement - is one of a number of political activists held without trial. To be a member of the 32 County Sovereignty Movement is by no means illegal, nor is it a criminal offence to support or join this organisation. It is not proscribed by law, nor is the Irish Republican Prisoner’s Welfare Association (which Marian Price helped found) and was until her arrest and (illegal) detention that group’s secretary.

Her ‘crime’ apparently is she ‘poses a significant threat to society.’!

Marian Price has always been a political activist. Released from Armagh Women's Prison in 1980 after serving over seven years she continued her republican activities - organising, fund raising and generally promoting the republican cause for national liberation and justice. Nothing illegal in that! So then, why is she held in solitary confinement in Maghaberry Prison indefinitely (which is a male prison)? If there IS evidence Marian Price poses a ‘significant threat to society’ then put her in the dock and produce this illusive ‘evidence.’ Is that too much to ask?

Apparently so!

Now what has recently surfaced is the fact Marian Price was released from Armagh Women's Prison in 1980 having been granted an RPM - a Royal Prerogative of Mercy - as she was suffering from anorexia and tuberculosis brought on by forced-feeding and ill-treatment. This means the Secretary of State was not legally entitled to order her return to prison as she had been released by Royal Prerogative of Mercy - and not on licence. The Price legal team are now thought to be preparing to launch a legal challenge in the light of this information.

If the authorities expect us to believe the Minister of Justice was unaware of this situation when he revoked her licence back in May let him then tell us yet another lie trying to explain it!

The Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group calls for the immediate release of Marian Price and the other political activists held without trial - an end to torture - and the implementation of the 2010 Maghaberry agreement.

Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group page:
Marian Price detention illegal! By Michael Holden

List of anti-Good Friday Agreement POWs

Maghaberry Gaol
Roe 3
Old Road
Ballinderry Upper
Lisburn
Ireland
BT28 2PT
Joe Barr
Barry Boardmann
Barry O'Donnell
Brian Cavanagh
Joe Connor
Colin Duffy
Dominic Dyes
Harry Fitzsimmons
Michael Johnstnn
Darryn McCallion
Brendan McCown
Sean McConville
Jason McCormack
Mark McGuigan
Gerard McManus
Damien McKenna
Damien McLaughlin
Martin McLoone
Christopher Nash
Kevin Barry Nolan
Cavan
Phil O'Donnell
Stevie O'Donnell
Robert O'Neill
Liam Rainey
Sean O'Reilly
Tony Rooney
Brian Sheridan
Gary Toman
Daniel Turnbull
Willie Wong
John Paul Wooton
Special Supervision Unit - isolation
Liam Campbell
Gavin Coyle
FEMALE REPUBLICAN WING
Marian McGlinchey
Price
INDEPENDENT POLITICAL PRISONERS
Noel Maguire
Portlaoise
Portlaoise Gaol
Portlaoise County Laoise
Ireland
E-2
Patrick Tierny
Liam Rainey
Tom O'Hanlon
Jackie Bates
Ciaran Dunne
Ken Donohoe
Tony Hyland
Robbie Kearns
Michael McDonald
Michael McKevitt
David Jordan
Toirealach MacD'homhnaill
Cormac Fitzpatrick
E-3
Derek Brady
John Brock
Sean Connolly
Anthony Crowley
Bernard Dempsey
Aidan Hulme
Robert Hulme
Jim McCormick
Thomas Morris
Fintan Paul O'Farrell
Barry Petticropic
Declan John Rafferty
E-4
Liam Grogan - Kildare
Darren Mulholland - Dundalk
IRSP prisoners:
Owen Clai
Denis Dywer
Eugene Kelly
Paul Kelly
Paddy Wall
Thomas Kelly
Gerard Kelleher
Neil Myles
Jonathan Keogh
Noel Mooney
Gareth Bryne
Anthony Lee
Other Gaols
MAGILLIGAN PRISON
Point Road
Limvady Co. Derry
BT 49 OLR
Liam Hannaway
The Grove
Castlerea Gaol
Castlerea,
Co Roscommon
Ireland
(IRSP) Eddie McGarrigle
Johnny McCrossan
Ercoury 293249
Div. 1 Cellule 217
Maison D'arrret De la Sante
42 Rue De La Sante
75014
Paris, Cedex 14
France D1217
Kieron Doran
LUKISKES PRISON
Lukiski bstr. 6
Vilnius, LT 01108
Lithuania
Michael Campbell

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
he most intense rioting seen in the British occupied North of Ireland in over a decade erupted in a number of Catholic ghettos in response to provocative Protestant supremacists paradings marking the 12th of July. Genuine working-class revolutionaries are not indifferent to these conflicts, but rather stand with the oppressed Catholic workers and youth against the loyalists [1] and the British imperialist state that backs them. As the economic crisis continues to take its toll on living standards and frustration rises among both Catholic and Protestant workers in the North, further loyalist parades threaten to spark more unrest. It is therefore crucial that we draw correct conclusions from these most recent riots so that revolutionaries can show how the struggle against Protestant supremacy in the North can advance the aim of uniting workers across the sectarian [2] divide and in a struggle against imperialist capitalism that exploits all.

The 12th of July is celebrated by Protestant supremacists or “loyalist” organisations such as the Orange Order, as the date of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 at which the Protestant forces of Dutch-born William of Orange defeated the Catholic forces of King James II of England. This and other victories for “King Billy” led to a strengthening of the Penal Laws in Ireland which severely restricted the rights of Catholics, Presbyterians and all non-Anglicans. It also ensured political dominance and economic privilege for those loyal to the British state for centuries to come.

There have been numerous modifications to this trend since then which have been dictated by the needs of British Imperialism at any given time or have come about as a result of the pressure of popular struggles. The most recent of these ‘compromises’ was the Good Friday Agreement (GFA – so named because it was signed on Good Friday, 1998). The GFA re-established a local administration at Stormont castle, the historic seat of Protestant rule in the North of Ireland, based upon a system of “forced coalition” between loyalist and nationalist political parties. Besides institutionalising sectarianism and a “neo-liberal” economic agenda set by London, other features of this reactionary agreement include the abolition of the rights of political prisoners, the demand that all paramilitaries disband and that they surrender their arsenals of weaponry.

Despite these modifications the trend of Protestant or loyalist “ascendancy” nevertheless continues to this day in the North of Ireland and forms the material basis for triumphalist displays by loyalist reactionaries such as those witnessed this year in Ardoyne, a predominately Catholic area in Belfast city. In many ways Ardoyne is typical of Catholic ghettos in the North of Ireland; characterised by crippling poverty, a disproportionate level of unemployment, inadequate access to essential services and so forth. As a report published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) at the end of May this year demonstrated, the overwhelming majority of the most deprived communities in the North of Ireland have a population of 75% or more of people “from a Catholic community background.”[3] Coupled with some of the worst living conditions in Western Europe is the constant threat posed by loyalist gangs who often attack Catholic homes, small businesses and severely injure and occasionally murder individual Catholics.

It was effectively in celebration of this state of affairs that the Orange Order planned to march through Ardoyne. In response to this plan, the Greater Ardoyne Residents Collective (GARC) [4] petitioned to have the march re-routed away from historically Catholic areas and presented the results of a survey showing that over 1,000 households in the immediate vicinity of the route of the march were opposed to it going ahead. Yet the talking shop that is the Parades Commission [5] gave the Protestant supremacists the green light to go ahead with their parade regardless. In the face of this provocation, GARC organized a peaceful protest of which the socialist Republican group Éirígí [6] was, to its credit, a particularly prominent supporter where many other socialist groups failed to take a stand.

On the day of the parade protesters gathered at a major intersection on the parade route through Ardoyne, linked arms and sat down, wearing t-shirts declaring their aim of “Peaceful Protest” and holding signs declaring themselves “Residents, Not Dissidents.”[7] But hundreds of riot police from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) had also mobilized and they responded with great violence. When they failed in their attempts to move the protesters in order to let the parade through, they began firing (by their own admission) some 70 plastic bullet rounds into the crowd and from armoured vehicles even targeted women and young children with water cannons.

State terror so blatantly in the service of sectarianism was inevitably going to meet with a more robust response in an area with a long history of resistance to such despicable tactics. This response, as elsewhere in the North of Ireland, was provided by local working class youth who fought the police with stones and what homemade weaponry they could muster and whose courage in opposing the state and loyalist reactionaries at great risk to their own personal safety should be saluted. It is certainly regrettable that the youths’ lack of organization and leadership beyond some important supporter where many other socialist groups failed to take a stand.

Not all of the mud flung the way of the rioters has come from the usual quarters. Some self-proclaimed revolutionaries, deciding that such explosions of rage by the working class and oppressed do not fit their narrow economicistic and opportunist approach to politics, have jumped on board the hysterical bandwagon. A glaring example is that of the Socialist Party (SP)[9]:

The rioting was indefensible and only leads to further misery and increased sectarian tension.

So claims Ciaran Mulholland in an article featured on the SP’s website. He goes on to say:

Despite being a right-wing, sectarian organisation, the Orange Order has the right to parade. The residents of local areas have the right to object to parades through their areas with all the accompanying coat-trailing and intimidation. But, most importantly, the working class as a whole has the right to avoid being dragged into serious sectarian conflict over the issue of contentious parades.

In other words, the reformist Taefeites of the SP have a right to bury their heads in the sand for fear of alienating backward sections of the work-
Imperialism and its subordinates both North and South of the Irish border. The correct method for winning Protestant or even ostensibly loyalist workers to the cause of socialist revolution is to clearly explain to them that while they enjoy a relative privilege at the expense of their Catholic or nationalist brother and sisters, they are also ensnared by a system that exploits them and indeed keeps many of them living in impoverished conditions also. The SP’s position that the sectarian forces on both sides are on an even keel negates the fact that one side has the backing of the state and behind that state lays an imperialist power.

Others on the left have fared better with the Cliffite Socialist Workers Party (SWP) [11] rightly declaring itself on the side of those fighting the loyalists and the PSNI and correctly attacking Sinn Féin for their capitulation to the Orange Order. [12] However that brave statement was made on their website – the SWP has thus far failed to account for why it did not mobilize its forces to join the protest against the Orange Order march that attempted to pass through Ardoyne or why it did not stand shoulder to shoulder with other working class communities affected by events surrounding the 12th of July.

The reality is that the SWP has abstained from such struggles for fear of promoting sectarianism, and like the CWI, they have contented themselves with an economism that promises avoidance of such political disputes and emphasis on workers’ “bread and butter” concerns as the road to working-class unity. Indeed in writing about the struggle in Ardoyne, the SWP added a pacific perspective on the legacy of “The Troubles” in a lame attempt to counter the arguments of Irish Republicans still engaged in armed actions:

If the last thirty years has taught us anything, it should be those who promote the armed struggle turn into establishment politicians a decade or so later. [13]

No, those who promoted armed struggle only to capitulate to Imperialism and become establishment politicians did not do so because of the military means of struggle that they once proposed, but because they always pursued the nationalist aims of the Catholic bourgeoisie and middle class and not the revolutionary socialist interests of the working class. Indeed genuine revolutionaries know that the capitalist state will give the working class no choice but to defend itself, arms in hand, and pacifist sentiment like this expressed by the SWP can only serve to hold back the most radical, class-conscious workers from preparing for that.

What is lacking is a revolutionary perspective and an organisation that can carry forward a programme that can unite the working class en route to the socialist revolution. Such a perspective being Trotskyist, that is to say genuinely Marxist, must uphold the right of the oppressed to self-defence, be it against the state, reactionaries or both (as in the case of the North of Ireland). Whether such defence requires the working class or oppressed to arm themselves depends on specific conditions, but revolutionaries should never shy away from or try to conceal the fact that the masses will ultimately have to be armed in the course of the revolution as severe counter-revolutionary violence is inevitable.

While addressing the divisions fostered by capitalism in this epoch of decay, revolutionaries must also advance positions that can enhance working class unity. Obvious examples exist in the current context of the “Great Recession.” Not only should we support workers struggling to defend their living conditions but we must also call for job creation and the expansion of beneficial social programs. In the case of the North and South of Ireland this translates as a call for a general strike to halt cutbacks and other assaults on the working class and to force a retreat on the part of the bourgeoisie. A general strike would also demonstrate the power of the mobilized working class; the greatest force on Earth!

Such an approach combined with the fight against threats like the Stormont administration’s Public Authorities Bill, which under the auspices of dealing with disputes relating to the loyalist marching season would virtually remove the right of trade unions and political organisations to hold demonstrations or otherwise congregate publicly, along with the unequivocal demand for the immediate release of all political prisoners should be integral to the programme of a much-needed revolutionary organization in Ireland.

Notes
1. In connection with the North of Ireland, the term “loyalist” refers to people, essentially from a Protestant religious background, who are militantly in favor of union with Great Britain and are thus “loyal” to the British Crown.
2. The term “sectarian” is used here to refer to political conflicts based on religious identifications and in the North of Ireland refers to struggles based on the Protestant-Catholic divide.
4. www.greaterardoyneresidentscollective.blogspot.com
5. The Parades Commission was set up by the Good Friday Agreement with the supposed responsibility of “regulating” such “contentious” parades but typically encourages such sectarian fanfare as the Orange Order’s 12th of July celebration.
6. eirígí’s website can be found at www.eirigi.org.
7. The term “disidents” is used to describe several organizations and factions that have broken away from Sinn Féin and the IRA over the years and whom the capitalist media is constantly pointing to as wanting to bring back the violence of the years after the late 1960s that are known as “The Troubles.”
8. Sinn Féin is the bourgeois nationalist party that has long held sway over the nationalist community in the North of Ireland. Today it participates in the power-sharing Executive of the Northern Ireland Assembly, which is dominated by the loyalist Democratic Unionist Party.
9. Irish section of the Committee for a Workers’ International.
11. The Irish section of the International Socialist Tendency, whose website can be found at www.swp.ie.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

Continued from p. 16
n an article, The Anti-Imperialist United Front, its applications, possibilities and limitations on 31/12/2010 Workers Power leader Simon Hardy quotes Trotsky in 1937 on the Sino-Japanese war,

"Let us imagine, for an instant, a worker saying to himself: 'I do not want to participate in the strike because the leaders are agents of capital.' This doctrine of this ultraleft imbecile would serve to brand him by his real name: a strikebreaker. The case of the Sino-Japanese War is, from this point of view, entirely analogous. If Japan is an imperialist country and if China is the victim of Imperialism, we favour China. Japanese patriotism is the hideous mask of worldwide robbery. Chinese patriotism is legitimate and progressive. To place the two on the same plane and to speak of "social patriotism" can be done only by those who have read nothing of Lenin, who have understood nothing of the attitude of the Bolsheviks during the imperialist war, and who can but compromise and prostitute the teachings of Marxism. The Effelites have heard that the social patriots accuse the internationalists of being the agents of the enemy and they tell us: "You are doing the same thing." In a war between two imperialist countries, it is a question neither of democracy nor of national independence, but of the oppression of backward non-imperialist peoples. In such a war, the two countries find themselves on the same historical plane. The revolutionaries in both armies are defeatists. But Japan and China are not on the same historical plane. The victory of Japan will signify the enslavement of China, the end of her economic and social development, and the terrible strengthening of Japanese Imperialism. The victory of China will signify, on the contrary, the social revolution in Japan and the free development, that is to say unhindered by external oppression, of the class struggle in China.

This is the Facebook thread on that article:

Gerry: Trotsky argues "But Muammar Muhammad al-Gaddafi? We need have no illusions about Muammar Muhammad al-Gaddafi, his party, or the whole ruling class of Libya, just as Marx and Engels had no illusions about the ruling classes of Ireland and Poland.

Muammar Muhammad al-Gaddafi is the executioner of the Libyan workers and peasants. But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Imperialism for the remainder of the independence of Libya. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible. It is probable. It is even inevitable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoundrels, or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle.

I have mangled a Trotsky quote (he referred to China, of course) above from an article by Simon Hardy of Workers Power to marvel at how it is possible to make correct theoretical points and do the total opposite when it is required of you to put your words into practice over Libya; "The overriding question in Libya today is not "Who are the imperialists attacking?" It is "How can the Libyan Revolution succeed in overthrowing Gaddafi's regime?" he wrote just a few weeks after writing the above.

Liam: Except Libya is not a case of a semi-feudal nation with an anti-imperialist national bourgeois democratic movement in which the workers movement can form a United Front (there is no strong workers movement under the Gaddafi dictatorship for one). It is a case of a capitalist country, in which Gaddafi is an authoritarian form of bourgeois ruler who has for a long time collaborated with Imperialism and has his own regional imperialist ambitions in a struggle with another bourgeois force. The 'classical' Marxist analysis from the Lenin-era cannot just be transposed ahistorically on to modern times. That's like travelling on the Paris metro with a map of the London Underground. It's fundamentally un-Marxism.

Ray: Simon Hardy, and his ridiculous 5th Internation is, a pompous strutting student of leftist who has no idea what constitutes a revolutionary fighter for socialism. To wit, and many others of this ilk have been conspicuously silent on their 'Neither Trippoli nor Bengahzi line' over the recent days. That he has the gall to quote Lenin and Trotsky on Imperialism when himself indulging in the most flagrant repudiation of those very principles he cites as 'core values' of communism. It is told however, that he is very good at both playing and evaluating fictional computer games - this may well be true.

Gerry: Liam, I would suggest the world is still basically the same in terms of the relationship of world Imperialism to the oppressed nations of the world and to its 'own' working class as it was in Lenin's time. True there are more bourgeois nationalist forces now, far fewer remnants of feudalism but Lenin showed that class relationship in Russia were capitalist and not feudal in 1898, if I remember correctly. And Trotsky constantly pounded on this relationship between bourgeois nationalism and Imperialism until his death. And Ray, I have ploughed further into Simon Hardy's article and found this gem: "The physiognomy of resistance movements. In the event of an imperialist attack on a country a resistance movement usually develops. Whilst many of the bourgeoisie will go over to the imperialists, offering themselves as willing quailing puppets for their new masters, some bourgeoisie and petty bourgeois forces usually move into a struggle against the imperialists. Where these seek to mobilise the masses in a fight for 'national independence' or 'in defence of the nation' they can put themselves at the head of serious forces. You could not make it up!"

Liam: You're exactly right about Lenin showing that Russia had capitalist social relations; that's kind of my point. Many self-styled 'anti-imperialist' rulers are actually just presiding over regional imperialist projects (Iran) in pretty much capitalist states so the stark division between oppressed and oppressor nations is not exactly the same as it was in Lenin's time when the KMT were trying to unite China against British, French and Japanese Imperialism for instance. Also, the working class is much, much larger. Consequently, the promotion of independent working class politics and eventually 'permanent revolution' is very much on the agenda rather than Marxists lining up behind anti-working class regimes with spurious anti-imperialist credentials. The real anti-Imperialism is anti-capitalist revolutionary socialism based on independent class politics, not Gaddafi or Ahmadinejad or any number of populist regimes.

Gerry: Liam, Your post is based on two wrong assumptions and in fact abandons the theories of combined and uneven development and Permanent Revolution themselves: You imply that Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks (and the revolutionary Comintern) only made the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations because,

1. Imperialism only oppressed colonies and semi-colonies where feudal relationships dominated and the working class was small. Russia had just emerged from this position by 1917 so was different to the rest of the oppressed nations; had become an oppressor nation, in fact.

2. Once capitalist property relations dominated and a big working class emerged then there was no longer a distinction to be drawn, it was now the entire global capitalists against the entire global workers without distinction.

This is wrong because it misunderstands the essence of Imperialism. That consists of the domination of the planet by the huge global finance houses in Wall Street, the City of London, Hamburg, Paris, Tokyo, etc. The attacks on Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, etc. are to secure the unfettered penetration of these economies by finance capital, their exploitation and the repatriation of those profits to Wall Street etc. Native bourgeois nationalist regimes, like Iran, Libya etc. wish to exploit their own workers in partnership with Imperialism, but wish to retain far too much of the loot for themselves for the liking of finance.

Continued on p. 15
On September 11, 2001 less than 3000 people died in the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon. According to the Unknown News site, which provides a detailed statistical number of deaths in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, 919,967 people were killed between civilians and military in both countries since the invasion and occupied first by the imperialist coalition from 2001 until August 2010. During the same period, the site records that 1,739,547 people injured in the two countries. In Iraq alone the death toll is 900,338. http://www.unknownnews.org/casualties.html.

The Iraq Body Count, which uses a different methodology, which counts only the deaths of civilians in Iraq that are recorded in newspapers or on TV, has much more conservative numbers: 111,937 civilians were killed in Iraq alone. In a country ravaged by daily violence, it seems unlikely that the report of every man, woman and child dead - or even most Iraqi deaths - were mentioned in the media of that country.

ONE MILLION lives during this decade was what imperialist terrorism that affects the whole world, imposed directly on the Afghans and Iraqis alone. 100 000 lives per year! About 333 times more people were killed in Afghanistan and Iraq than in the U.S. in the attacks of September 11, 2001. According to data compiled by the U.S. State Department, more than 130 times more people were killed in these wars and occupations than in all the “terrorist attacks” in the world between 1993-2004.

"Civilized" Empire versus “savage” “terrorist” oppressed people

The terrorism of the imperialist states is greater today than at any time. Concurrent with this the response of oppressed people increases through suicide bombings, ambushes, etc., Especially in Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq) and Africa (Nigeria, Somalia, Ivory Coast), the Nazi-Yankee Imperialism of the Bush and Obama is 33 times more destructive than the Nazis of Hitler’s Third Reich. It is worth noting that Hitler’s Nazi regime lasted 12 years (1933-1945). The governance of the USA on the planet followed the end of the second war thus far, an area at least five times. The Nazis had no opportunity to fully develop or drop the atomic bomb on other people. The U.S. has wiped out thousands in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Years later, they dumped tons of Agent Orange over thousands of Vietnamese. The predatory war of American Imperialism does not stop, just multiply.

Nazism Yankee is the turbocharged successor of Nazi Germany. As Trotsky noted, "the belief in an automatic development is the most characteristic trait of opportunism.” Far from the illusory prospects around the enhancement of democratic capitalism, the trend of Imperialism is towards increased repression, militarism and the increasing domination by force to control the growing contradictions and inter-imperialist disputes. The opposite extreme, but no less stupid, is the belief in the fatal catastrophe, the faith that one day Imperialism will come to a no-win situation and selfimplode. The revolutions must recognize the legitimate acts of guerrilla resistance by organizations fighting against Imperialism and defend them politically against the persecution of empire. After all, as taught in one of the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, "when injustice becomes law, resistance becomes a duty.” But these type of actions are limited by the political orientation of the guerrillas and their subordination to the vaticating and treacherous national bourgeoisie. These actions are not enough to win the national liberation of oppressed peoples. Imperialism will survive, destroying humanity and nature, until the only revolutionary class in modern society, the proletariat, organize all the righteous anger of the oppressed to finish off capitalism through an internationalist party. The possibility of liberation of humanity from the valley of tears caused by the imperialist regime of terror depends en-
Letters to Socialist Fight from Irish Republican Prisoners:

A Chara,

I received the copy of Socialist Fight and just wanted to send my thanks. It was a great read and with some very good articles. Fair play to all involved and I appreciate you taking the time and expense to send me a copy.

Do Chara

Kieran Doran, Paris, France.

A Chara,

Thanks for the recent copies of Socialist Fight (Issue 6) which you forwarded to us. They were distributed amongst comrades within the block.

I am interested in hearing/learning more of the work of the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group in London and would be grateful to receive any updates of your ongoing efforts. Given our limited access to information and communication (on internet facilities) we are not always au fait with various developments.

Your message of solidarity (page 6 Socialist Fight) was welcomed by comrades here especially as it articulated a maturity regarding political differences.

I’ll close for now, extending best wishes to you and your comrades in your endeavours.

Imise le meas,

E4 Landing Portlaoise Goal.

Please write to the Irish Republican Political Prisoners; their names and addresses are given in the IPRS pages.

Imperialism’s plans for Libya not going so well

Hi Comrades,

Am I correct in thinking that things are not going according to plan for the imperialist predators and their temporary minions, the gangs from Benghazi. So far it is now the world’s biggest armed robbery. The British and American predators seized Libya’s assets, recognized the Benghazi gangs as the legitimate government so that they can share out the payola under the guise of authorisation presumably to overcome these armed robbers, the predators from Britain, France, Italy and the US, and their marionettes. Another thing that might happen which wouldn’t surprise me is that the bombers and the minions might fall out over how the payola is divided out. Hopefully the continued resistance of the Libyan masses will bring out all of these contradictions and make the job of driving them back and out of the country sooner than we might otherwise have hope for. Beir Bua,

Michael O’Cionnaith Co Leitrim, 29 Jul 2011

Letter from South Africa: a “workers party” is not always a “workers party”

Dear Comrades,

Let me say at the outset that I cannot presume to speak for the organisation (RMG) on this matter but I will reflect some key issues from our perspectives documents and historical experience:

1) The CWG (a forerunner of the RMG) called for a critical vote for the ANC in 1994. As early as the end of 1992 we recognised that - if elections were called in which the vast majority of the working class and oppressed masses would participate and if no significant break to the left had by such a time occurred - we would engage in mass propaganda and agitation against the bourgeois ANC leadership, solidarise with the masses and the militants in the trade unions and other democratic formations, opposing bourgeois electoral illusions, with a fighting programme of demands. In short our view was: “You as the workers have fought and struggled for genuine democracy – for a meaningful end of Apartheid and the achievement of true freedom. Your faith remains with ANC but the ANC is now a part of the bourgeois ruling class, its main job is to keep your militancy in check, to provide conditions for new bourgeois democracy to flourish against the needs of the masses and the working class. They cannot provide even the meagre promises of the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme). This democracy is a fraud, but it is a serious advance from the system of Apartheid. Prepare to struggle for your demands through class methods, distrust your leaders, control your organisations and break the trade unions from the wretched tripartite alliance which serves no purpose other than to chain the working class to incoming bourgeois nationalist political and economic project. The ANC has already betrayed the demands of the working class in favour of bourgeois electoralism and subservience before Imperialism. Their rotten democracy will mean more misery and hardship but we will go through this experience with you, every step of the way, we will not abstain from this moment, this historic breakthrough which you as the heroic black working class have fought. Vote ANC! Break the Alliance! Build the Workers Party!”

2) The masses had illusions in the ANC. We characterised the ANC as bourgeois nationalist party. Abstention from the 1994 election would have been a political mistake or mindless sectarianism. A critical vote enabled us to connect with militants and advanced layers, particular the militant socialist workers in the trade unions. Other comrades in the RMG participated in standing left candidates in the 1994 elections. We are however in agreement that without significant mass implantation and support from vanguard layers electoralism is merely adventurism ala WIVL or the rather unfortunate Workers List Party. The lessons from that experience should serve to remind comrades of much of what is outlined in comrades Gerry’s article (SF 3, p.24, Bourgeois workers’ parties: behind the mask of pseudo-revolutionary intransigence by Ret Marut and Philippe Couthon): Pure “revolutionary” electoral interventions juxtapose the revolutionary against the masses on some false reified political basis; Centrist electoral amalgams do much the same on a confused political platform which essentially amounts to anyone outside the traditional organisations of the class are “good” and anyone of and in these formations are “bad”, either way not advancing the struggle of the masses themselves against their “own leaders”.

3) The Alliance (ANC/SACP/COSATU) is a form of popular frontism, albeit a unique form shaped by the historic conditions in South Africa. The ANC represents the bourgeoisie, the emerging black bourgeoisie and sections of the petty bourgeoisie with a strong hold over the rural masses and pauperised sections of the working class. COSATU represents the black working class, sections of the militant and socialist youth and marginally (i.e. less meaningfully) the interests of working class communities. It is the “social democratic” wing of the alliance, preferring the stability of capitalism achieved through co-determination, “pro-

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
poor" policies and Keynesian economics. The SACP represents the Stalinist wing: it has no independent mass class constituency, it is petty bourgeois in both its class composition, programme and outlook. Sections of the new black bourgeoisie maintain direct links with the SACP through its central committee and politbureau. The ministerial political elite is heavily represented on the Central Committee of the SACP. The left labour bureaucrats make up the rest of the SACP hierarchy.

4) Our orientation is to break the alliance, call for working class independence in politics on its own class programme. The break is against the reformist leadership of COSATU, the Stalinist SACP and the bourgeois nationalistic ANC. We do not regard the SACP as a mass class formation in its own right but rather as a parasitic caste of one wing of the labour bureaucracy with some influence amongst more socialist minded workers and sections of the youth. In the past we have called for a Workers Party based on the trade unions as the most important political and organisational step towards securing the vehicle through which the class can fight for both its immediate economic and social demands as well as express its own political (class based) interests.

5) We do not regard the SACP as "bourgeois workers party" or as having the potential to be such- it is a Stalinist caste of high priest whose only job is to preserve the semblance of radicalism of the bourgeois politics of the ANC. In many respects the Stalinist stand on the right wing of even the bourgeois nationalist politics of the ANC and the Alliance as a whole. This is not to deny that many socialist workers have an association with the SACP but this is not the organisational or political character of the SACP. We do however orientate ourselves specifically to the Young Communist League and its militant layers in particular, including factional struggle, agitation and propaganda. Naturally in the trade unions we pay special attention to the communist (SACP) layers who are class militants.

6) In the most recent elections for local government we called for a "No Vote for the ANC" as well the its main bourgeois rival, the Democratic Alliance. We called on workers to go to the polls and spoil their ballots. This is of course an inadequate position - workers and working class communities still have a strong attachment to the bourgeois democratic forms as against the old Apartheid system and the parties of what is popularly perceived as the white ruling class elites. The ANC Youth League in particular has been key to promoting a left bourgeois nationalist version of the ANC which is "true" to the Freedom Charter and more akin to Chavez, Mugabe, Qaddafi and other left "anti-imperialist" leaders. It has made calls for nationalisation of land without compensation, nationalisation of the mines and the banks. The next issue of Qinxe Msebenzi (August 2011) will focus specifically on this emerging trend, its causes and consequences for mass struggles etc.

7) While it is a issue for debate (our electoral tactics in 1994) and different comrades have different views on the matter, in all essentials the position taken is in my view correct. Similarly our no vote position against the ANC was equally correct but this has taken place without a political-organisational continuity and would have to be assessed as we move forward in building the RMG.

8) In respect of a general analogy of electoral tactics which equates the ANC with the PT and the British Labour Party - it is obviously a matter which requires careful consideration and political debate from the standpoint of historically conditioned factors and the overall viewpoint of making revolutionary Marxism valid to these conditions whilst being consistent with the methods, analyses and tools of the Communist International and the FI. At a glance the PT and ANC are similar or at least share many key characteristics and political class dynamics. The LP is a different matter - what is obvious is that a bourgeois workers party cannot be such a thing in perpetuity and surely we must consider what 100 yrs of "bourgeois workers party" means in today's class struggles and political battles. This task means understanding what building a revolutionary workers party means today in Britain, what is our assessment of the opportunities to break the vanguard layers from the labour lefts and labourites in general? For example we could anticipate that the ANC would become a bourgeois nationalist party but we could not anticipate what forms this would take i.e. the degree neo-liberalism would come to dominate the ANC. The PT must have undergone its own specific evolution and emneshment with the bourgeoisie in Brazil and similarly must have rede fined its relationship to the working class?

9) What I think this means is that a "workers party" is not always a 'workers party' much like Trotsky pointed out that "A is not equal A" etc. The thing in and of itself must first be understood and static notions and categories are not necessarily helpful in guiding our thinking and action in a living class struggle. The American and British experience of "two-party" electoral democracy is obviously not universal. In the US in particular the tactic of the Workers Party remains important, even if like in South Africa, this tactic may not primarily find expression in and through the organised trade union movement - the task of building an independent workers party may fall to the rural or landless masses, sections of the organised workers, working class youth and/or organisations of working class communities. It would be incorrect in South Africa today to persist in calling for a Workers Party based on the trade unions exclusively.

10) I cannot see fundamental disagreement with the article reproduced by Cde Gerry against abstentionism and ultra-leftist electoralism in general (from Socialist Fight No 3 p. 24). It is a matter of debate and close theoretical study and practical struggle about the actual class and political dynamics which should assist us all in sharpening our methods, tactics, slogans and actions in each situation.

Revolutionary greetings

Munro Tom, Revolutionary Marxist Group

Letter from France: "lutte de classes" instead of the "lutte de classes" - "Une époque de merde!"

Comrades,

There are only three real parties and one faction with some seriousness, looking from my home in provincial France which is not the best place to take a look. Little groups are mostly based in Paris, and I am not a Trotskyist and have never been. The Independent Workers’ Party, Parti Ouvrière Indépendant, (POI) is a 2008 rebranding of the old Lambertist party which works seriously but they are mixed up with nationalism and they are in the same party together with republicans and others. They work hard, have some influence over the workers but are in the bureaucratic apparatus of the Force Ouvrière Union. Today they are looking for “unity” but on their own terms and with the sectorists who would cause internal fights. Lutte Ouvrière (LO) and NPA (New Anticapitalist Party) have just given them “une fin de non recevoir” (a sharp answer no).

NPA will remain, as the LCR (forerunner of the NPA) has remained for decades, always the same, “finding” new “developments” in every new petit bourgeois tendency that surges around the world. LO, you know them a little, will continue their orientation to the working class but without any (or with a very diminished) national presence. Their work with the working class will “pay” if a big class struggle develops, but if not, they will surely have internal problems, or they will lose people (the way some militants protest against the direction when they don’t find the political reasons).

The LO Faction “Etincelle” who is in the NPA with one leg in and the other out, does the same work as LO, but they are fewer and are perhaps not so politically mature. Their perspective, orienting towards the working class, is a
those monkeys don't want it. They prefer to
be stupid illusions, but real illusions. (working aristocrats) they prefer to wait and
the class still have something to defend
ing in Greece and Portugal and Ireland and
class. But people here, knowing what's happen-
ning..."

"useless"
People who voted LO said today that it is
chon because there is no other perspective with
ple who are close to me who will vote Mélen-
omm and they prefer, knowing Mélenchon,
ning the grapes "it is not important this elec-
tion..."

Don't bother with the NPA. There is a chance it
won't last. They are in serious internal difficul-
ties between right wingers (friends of Mélen-
chon, ecologists, décroisaneurs” (minimalists) and
petit bourgeois of that ilk) and "left" ones
(mainly ex-LCR and factions from LO, from PT
who joined the NPA). They are credited only
0.5% in the next presidential elections...after
Besançonet has quit (or deserted). Well, elec-
tions are far ahead (April 2012), but if they make even less than LO (credited 1.5%),
there are good reasons to think that they will shrink to the
LCR (the "best" option) or just split and disappear.

Libya is a taboo subject here in France. From
time to time there is a brief note made by the
LO, not so sharp but just the minimum not to
incur too much criticism from their members.
Some Maoists (who are very few and with no
influence whatsoever) make net statements of the
same kind, perhaps betters. Everyone is
waiting for the next presidential elections or in
the hypothetic hope of "des luttes" (the strug-
gles of the working class). But I think the bour-
geoisie has succeeded in putting everyone in
their place for this elections.

And everyone is fearing the consequences of the
crisis that is looming over our heads. No one
is prepared, and the class, the masses, the peo-
ples who are close to me who will vote Mélen-
chon because there is no other perspective with
even a slight chance of having a "decent" result.
People who voted LO said today that it is
"useless" and they prefer, knowing Mélenchon,
to vote for him just to make a counter weight to
the Socialists and Sarkozy.

Mélenchon, a bastard, uses very sharp lan-
guage, but in the main points he is a brave dog
of the bourgeoisie. There is no hope other than
a weakening of the fighting spirit of the working
class. But people here, knowing what’s happen-
ing in Greece and Portugal and Ireland and
Spain and next Italy, and as a large portion of
the class still have something to defend
(working aristocrats) they prefer to wait and
pray this crisis will not come to France. These
are stupid illusions, but real illusions.

There is no other thing to do but wait and work
for a minimum union of the extreme left. But
those monkeys don’t want it. They prefer to
disappear from national public political
life instead of making a compromise. Gods
blinds the ones they condemn.

There are some other new developments in
NPA. Two sections, those of Clermont
Ferrand and Limousin (not too big regions in
centre of France), both who had "good
electoral results", (17% or more of the vote)
and some local authorities mili-
tants of NPA elected have signed an appeal,
uniting with Front de Gauche (Mélenchon, PCF
front) and stated that they will not obey the
decisions of the new direction of the agree-
ments they have recently named, making Philippe
Poutou as candidate to the presidency of France
(a worker near VdF ex-LO faction expelled in
1996 (?) I think). They are saying they will work
with the FdG for the parliamentary election on
the same date as the presidential (not a word of
the presidential one), and they are calling for a
meeting and a "summer university" of all the
ones like them nationally to meet there to dis-
cuss a "Unitaire" NPA. (Unitaire for "unite
with Mélanchon and the PS. I suppose there are no
others who should want a United Front with
them).

In fact this is a split that doesn't use the word.
This will make it even more difficult to gather
the signatures (500) needed to validate a can-
didate, and is a terrible blow to the NPA by the
same ones that were presented as the future of
the political left. A lot of people, die hard social-
democrats and petit bourgeois, are seeking for
what here is called "lutte de places" (fight for
the election, the representative posts) instead of
the "lutte de classes" (class fight). They don't
bother with respecting discussions and votes
inside the party and they have no regret if they
split or kill the NPA.

To me, it's a matter of survival to put all those
people out and as fast as possible. But, without
them the NPA will become a LCR minus the ones
who has been demoralised by their erratic
march.

The NPA is going now in a "left" course. Re-
cently the "left" tendencies (there are at least
three) gained control of the direction against
"minimalist", rightist looking for Mélanchon
without any condition, ecologist and the like.
This is more or less the ancient LCR plus some
little "help" coming from Claire tendency (ex-PT
today POI) and "Faction l'Eticelle" ex LO faction
and others even more little groups who joined
the NPA at its beginning. There are some illu-
sions for Philippe Poutou that is a very fighting
worker (led a 4 years struggle against Ford
Automobiles in Bourdeaux and achieved a stale-
mate or a little triumph which is rare nowadays
in France) and a real working class militant.

He is really a blue collar worker who speaks the
language of the working class and has not the
"langue de bois" (stereotypical language) of
others. There is a clear difference between his
general rank and file worker aspect and the one
of Nathalie Arthaud from LO who is an econom-
tics teacher and a petite bourgeoisie from origin
even if she has more than 20 years of militancy
in LO. She has no big charisma but she delivers
the party line.

I suppose that the left line will last till the next
change of mood in the ex-LCR leading staff (who
have the overwhelming majority now) or they
will rest in the same position as the ex-LCR with
little concessions to their "allies". No doubt,
there are many very subjective opinions that
need correction. I am not a theoretician but a
worker on the dole. The devil takes them all
Everywhere traitors and opportunists!
I am not Trotskyist and isolated and old. What
an epoch! "Une époque de merde!" as they say
here.

Your Comrade Yao Wenyuan, France

Casus belli; WRP-related "sleaze"

Comrades,
As for casus belli, who knows what was in
the minds of Cameron and Sarkozy all those months
ago? To me at least, it was clear from day one
that the Libyan "rebels" had little or nothing in
common with those in Morocco, Egypt and
elsewhere and that something was up. Obama
hadn't at first a clue what to do - it was, it
seemed, Cameron's Churchill moment.
(remember that picture of Thatcher sitting on
top of a tank and wearing that fetching head
scarf?)

Cameron is a nasty piece of work who, unlike
Thatcher, is disloyal to colleagues. (note how he
shifted Kenneth Clarke over long overdue even
-in their-terms prison reforms just to get over a
few Red Top rants.) He'd be perfectly happy to
bomb the fuck out of Libya to humiliate Blair
and look good to the US whatever wiser coun-
se He may have been given.

OK, I accept that the essence of imperial inter-
Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
vocation is the protection of assets and power by whatever means necessary but I’d argue that the accidental, the psychological and so on are how that essence appears. (See, I really am that old-fashioned.)

My hunch is that Cameron will now hope to use the war to keep Lib-Dims in tow over upcoming spats such as Human Rights reversals, heavy NHS cuts and the like. If the Cleggs do cut up, Cameron can threaten a snap election, looking to the " Falklands Factor" to get him an overall majority over a Milliband-led Labour Party which, it has to be said, is beginning to recover from the Brown shambles.

In either case, Clegg is finished - most Lib-Dim rank and filers despise him even more than the voters do, furious that their party is, despite their efforts, possibly as badly shafted as it was in 1906. So keeping schtum while clutching Cameron's coat-tails is Clegg's only hope now. In short, the war was partly vanity but in large measure a wheeze to divert attention from political tensions, worsening economic woes and, of course, poor, dear Rebekah's troubles. (Such a strong girl.)

What humbles me is that I had to trawl through all sorts of right-wing shit to understand that. Little or nothing from the left, esp. the British left, offered a clue, obsessed as it is with distancing itself from WRP-related "sleaze".

Yours etc. Jock McFadden, Scotland

The "Arab Spring" and the Libyan revolt; Reply to a Renegade

Comrades,
The continuity between the "Arab Spring" and the Libyan revolt has to be shown, not merely assumed. So what is the evidence that there is a difference between the two?

1. The NATO powers did what they could first to defuse then to accommodate to the movements in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere. In Bahrain, they stood aside while the regime put down unarmed protestors with the help of the Saudi military. In none of these cases was there any threat either of "armed struggle" or of input from Islamist elements. (In Egypt, the middle-of-the-road Muslim Brotherhood tended to side with the establishment.)

In Libya OTOH NATO rapidly intervened on the side of armed rebels with a lengthy and aggressive bombing campaign. It seems to know the difference even if you don't. (The argument that they are doing so to the better to control the rebellion is too fatuous to merit serious consideration.)

2. The "Arab Spring" movements were by and large spontaneous and attracted few defectors from incumbent regimes even though these regimes were eventually forced into minor concessions such as the departure of the Tunisian prime minister and the show trial of the senescent Hosni Mubarak. The leadership of the armed Libyan "rebellion" is very different.

2.1 Militarily, it has large contingents of very-far-right indeed battle-hardened Islamic fundamentalists. These earlier posed such a threat in Libya and Iraq that the US and Britain managed to overcome their post-Lockerbie hatred of Gaddafi (not that Libya had any part in Lockerbie but that's another story) and Gaddafi overcame his mistrust of the West.

They collaborated to suppress the Islamists. Tripoli airport was clogged with politicians on friendship visits. As we all now know and many already suspected, Britain even felt able to outsource the thumb-screw contracts. This fact, understood by all except Blue Rinse and the middle-to-left, underlies the concerns of many about the wisdom of the cobbled-together Anglo-French initiative that led NATO to switch to backing the alliance of Islamists and right-leaning oppositionists against Gaddafi. (Presumably it hopes to deal with the Islamists later. After all, it worked a treat in Afghanistan.)

2.2 Politically, the rebellion's leadership is dominated by renegade Gaddafi heavies. As you know, former justice minister Mustafa Jalil has chaired the TNC since February and the US-educated Mahmoud Jibril, an unashamed and influential far-right economic "reformer", is acting prime and foreign minister.

He it was who persuaded Sarkozy and Hague to send in the bombers. It takes a brave commentator to suggest that he is not determined to open Libya up to the sort of "investment" that led over the years to the appalling mess in Egypt.

3. If the rebels needed foreign assistance to win and to protect themselves from a massacre, why did they not appeal to the black proletariat to join their struggle? And why are "socialists" so quiet about this obvious omission?

The answer is clear to those who bother to look. The "rebels" are in the main intensely anti-African and anti-black. (See, I really am that old-fashioned.)


There's plenty more. You say, "As the imperialists try to catch up, it is not unexpected to see the sad remnants of Healyism backing the oppressors".

To which I reply "I have to say I never expected to see the day when even the saddest of the remnants of Healyism were happy to condone racist pogroms, right-wing economic reforms and NATO bombing campaigns". Shame on you.

Best, Walter Campbell, Scotland

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
Imperialism faces its worst financial, economic and political crises since the 1930s

Statement by the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International (LCFI) 15 September 2011

The US is still the only major superpower in terms of military might. The emerging rival imperialist powers bloc of Germany and the BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, who abstained in the Libya no fly zone vote at the UN (apart from South Africa who was not then a member) have been intimidated into accepting the situation; pressure on Germany has cowed that rival and in turn Russia and China has been forced to accept that the military might of the US and its allies Britain, France and other smaller European imperialist countries cannot be challenged on a global scale. It is clear that this is very much the weaker Imperialist power bloc; they do not have the economic might to replace the dollar and they do not have anything like the military strength to oppose the US and its allies in a war. And there are really only two rival theories of world Imperialism and we are Leninists; it will not be possible ultimately to resolve these inter-imperialist conflicts as Karl Kautsky thought. These will inevitably lead to WWIII and great revolutionary upheavals where the world revolution of decent into generations of barbarism will again be sharply posed.

But the sociological terminology has some purchase here; it is a multi-polar world now with the decline of US Imperialism and the rise of the Asian economies – these now account for almost 36% of the world’s GDP, with the US and EU on about 20% and the rest of the world on about 24%. But the relationship is much different when it comes to military spending. Here the US military budget accounts for 43% of the world expenditure; almost six time that of its nearest rival China. The US has accused China of duplicity in its military spending data but “There is no such thing as a so-called hidden military expenditure in China,” Li Zhaoxing, spokesman for the Fourth Session of the 11th National People’s Congress, said at a March 4 news conference announcing the budget. Whatever the truth of this allegation the massive imbalance cannot be denied.

But in economic terms it is a very different matter. Look at the GDP graph. Clearly Asia is rising strongly, with China to the fore, and the US and particularly Europe are declining not only relatively but in real terms also. Therefore imperialist rivalries and tensions continue to grow. According to the website Marsh on Monday on Aug. 22, 2011, Germany was forced to make a choice: US or them? We read;

“Last week’s meeting between French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, which brought more promises of “economic government” (called, unhelpfully, “economic direction” in German), predictably failed to calm the markets. Since there is no firm

buyer of last resort to repel bond-market contagion, the viral assailants are now closing in on Berlin. Many of Merkel’s natural supporters are uneasily aware that, were Germany and other creditor countries to submit to demands that they formally pool government borrowing with the other euro states, that could mark the gradual end of Germany’s own economic sanctity.”

The logic of the crisis is forcing a choice upon Germany to split Europe no matter what it wants to do. If it is to bail out Italy and Spain after Greece, Ireland and Portugal – and France is also in trouble – how will it manage to avoid hyperinflation and economic collapse? As March on Monday says,

“Wolfgang Reitzle, the well-regarded boss of industrial gas giant Linde, says he supports the euro “but not at any price.” Kurt Lauck, the head of the economic council of Merkel’s Christian Democrats, a former finance director of motor group Daimler and energy company Veba (the former Eni) even talks of a “currency reform” if euro supports arrangements fail to work.”

China is desperately propping up the Euro and demanding a new world currency to replace the dollar. But there is little prospect of that happening. The wars on Iraq and on Libya followed moves by both regimes to ditch the dollar, Iraq following Iran in adopting the euro as its oil currency and Libya promising to use a gold dinar which could see a new move to restore the gold standard to all currencies internationally.

But when Nixon abandoned the gold standard in 1971 (and so effectively defaulted on its international debts) gold was set at $35 to an ounce. It now hovers around $1,900 to the ounce. Establishing a global currency based on gold would require gold at a far higher price and would also require the liquidation of such quantities of debt built up over the last forty years since Nixon’s fateful decision that it is as yet impossible to contemplate for the world imperialists. But there is no alternative; to prepare for this global currency the exploitation of the working class in the metropolitan countries combined with the subjugation of the remaining semi-colonial hold-outs must be enormously increased. And that really requires WWIII as the working class will not tolerate this and the rivals of US Imperialism cannot tolerate their continued propping up of the US economy by means of the dollar’s position as the global reserve currency. The consequent ability of the US treasury to print dollars in ‘Quantative Easing’ exercises forces the rest of the world to pay for US debts and, incidentally, fund the enormous US military spending which is aimed ultimately at war on them.

‘Double dip’ after 2008 or new and greater global crisis?

What stage of the global economic crisis are we at? It is clear that the so-called ‘double dip’ theory explains nothing. The LCFI suspect that the current crisis expresses the depletion of a cycle marked by the hegemony of the dollar standard. Here it is clear we are in the period of a new crisis of global capitalism. Details like France’s manoeuvres against Italy over Libya reveal the change to protectionism in the minds of the ruling class and the seeming irrationality of the drive to war. But in reality this is the perfectly rational class interests of the capitalist class that is now so much a feature of this crisis.

The US is provocatively patrolling the South China Sea and fomenting disputes over four separate groups of islands claimed by China. A recent article in China’s state-run Daily Times described the South China Sea as a “second Persian Gulf” according to an article on the WSWS website US Imperialism and the South China Sea crisis on 26 July 2011. They say:

“The South China Sea is also the key passageway for China’s energy imports. About 80 percent of all oil brought into China crosses the Indian Ocean from the Middle East and Africa, entering the South China Sea via the Straits of Malacca. Other Asian economies, including Japan and South Korea, are similarly dependent on the daily passage of oil tankers through the South China Sea, making the naval route a key strategic choke point.”

Following the imperialist war on Libya China, smarting at her obvious loss of influence and contracts there and in the rest of Africa, delivered a blunt warning to the US. According to the European Union Times on May 22nd, 2011, “China has officially put the United States on notice that Washington’s planned attack on Pakistan will be interpreted as an act of aggres–
sion against Beijing. This blunt warning represents the first known strategic ultimatum received by the United States in half a century, going back to Soviet warnings during the Berlin crisis of 1958-1961, and indicates the grave danger of general war growing out of the US-Pakistan confrontation… Responding to reports that China has asked the US to respect Pakistan’s sovereignty in the aftermath of the Bin Laden operation, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu used a May 19 press briefing to state Beijing’s categorical demand that the, “sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan must be respected.”

According to Pakistani diplomatic sources cited by the Times of India, China has, "warned in unequivocal terms that any attack on Pakistan would be construed as an attack on China." This ultimatum was reportedly delivered at the May 9 China-US strategic dialogue and economic talks in Washington, where the Chinese delegation was led by Vice Prime Minister Wang Qishan and State Councillor Dai Bingguo. Chinese warnings are implicitly backed up by that nation’s nuclear missiles, including an estimated 66 ICBMs, some capable of striking the United States, plus 118 intermediate-range missiles, 36 submarine-launched missiles, and numerous shorter-range systems.

What does this mean for the future of the semi-colonial world? It is clear that there is a new ‘grab for Africa’ and victory in a war that apparently did not cost a single NATO life will encourage the unfolding of the plan that Gen. Wesley Clark revealed to Amy Goodman in that famous interview in September 2001, just after the 9/11 attack: “I said, ‘Are we still going to war with Iraq?’ And he said, ‘Oh, it’s worse than that.’ He reached over on his desk. He picked up a piece of paper. And he said, ‘I just got this down from upstairs’” – meaning the Secretary of Defense’s office -- “today.” And he said, “This is a memo that describes how we’re going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran.”

They are a bit behind schedule but they are getting there. It is clear the Syria is next as that opposition has been definitely subordinated to the interests of imperialism, despite the legitimate demands of the initial protests.

The “War on Terrorism” has brought death and destruction to millions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, etc. but it has met with fierce defeat in Afghanistan and in the last decade the rise of China has proceeded apace whilst the US and Europe have declined as global imperialist powers. But new bellicose noises are issuing. The US is again threatening Pakistan and Syria, the new NTC government in Libya is threatening Algeria and war on Iran look inevitable. In fact we may well be seeing the opening wars of WWIII. But with global conflagrations come revolutions which must develop on a global scale to win.

We are confident that the British riots that began in Tottenham on 6 August after the police shooting of Mark Duggan are a portent of the coming revolution, a reflection of the deep going anger and despair of a whole generation of youth demanding a future and consigned to minimalisation and oppression as the economy enters a new phase of its crisis; the sub-prime crisis of banking debt has been replaced by sovereign debts of whole nations which is insolvable – bourgeois commentators have taken to quoting Marx and some even Lenin in reference to the currency crisis. These were an expression of the holding back of the class struggle on behalf of the capitalist class by the TU bureaucracy, like the Chilean high school and college students who are demanding free, quality education and are fighting against the neo-liberal politics of the right wing government which has lead to such appalling levels of inequality. Similar also were the Banlieu riots in France in late 2005 and those of the picartos in Argentina in 2001-2.

In the United States itself, the land of the mightiest imperialist power the world has ever seen, trade union struggle is practically illegal following the Wisconsin attack on union rights in February 2011 and the WSWS site reports on the latest statistics on poverty in the US:

"The poverty rate increased nearly a full percentage point, from 14.3 percent in 2009. It was the third consecutive annual increase in the poverty rate and the fourth consecutive annual increase in the number of people living in poverty. Last year, there were 46.2 million people living in poverty, defined as the absurdly low level of about $22,000 a year for a family of four and $11,000 a year for an individual. The number of people earning less than twice the poverty rate (about $44,000 for a family of four) stood at 103 million in 2010, or about 34 percent of the population."

The laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus, Trotsky affirmed, the bureaucrats will be swept aside and the whole class will be fighting for its life and future internationally. This does require a new Trotskyist international, a recreated Fourth International. That is the prime task the present crisis poses to all serious militant and Marxists internationally.

Workers moving from defence to attack need to understand the new situation that presents itself, the inter-imperialist crisis and growing offensive against the world proletariat. Only then can we establish a program of action to organise the political resistance of the masses. The LCRI was born to organise this resistance from the perspective of permanent revolution and internationalism.

Continued from p. 24 existing misleaders of the working class, independently mobilising their belief to set it against the leadership in struggle. This is the central principle of the rank and file tactic in the trade unions; no capitulation to the left trade union bureaucracrats, mass agitation to mobilise the class into action combined with focused propaganda to win to Trotskyism the class conscious natural leaders of the class that emerge in all serious struggle. Paraphrasing the well known words of Leonid Brejnev, leader of the Red Orchestra in WWII in The Great Game: Memoirs of the Spy Hitler Couldn’t Silence we can say, “Between the hammer of world imperialism and the anvil of bourgeois nationalism and centrist revisionism, the path is a narrow one for those of us who still believed in the World Revolution.”

His following comments give us courage and inspiration and a determination to politically fight to clarify and win to Trotskyism the new forces of that world revolution seen in the recent riots in Britain, in Greece, in Spain in Chile and elsewhere. Trepper commented later in the same book, Who rose up to voice his outrage? The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honour. Following the example of their leader, who was rewarded for his obstinacy with the end of an ice-axe, they fought Stalinism to the death, and they were the only ones who did.

By the time of the great purges, they could only shout their rebellion in the freezing wastelands where they had been dragged in order to be exterminated. In the camps, their conduct was admirable. But their voices were lost in the tun- dra.

"Today, the Trotskyites have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves... Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of..."

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
The fall of Tripoli reveals the new global balance of class forces

Statement by the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International 18 September 2011

**Leon Trotsky:** I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

O
n the night of 21-22 August 2011 Tripoli fell to the NATO-rebel forces of world Imperialism, with the assistance of NATO bombs and Special Forces from several imperialist countries and troops from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Despite the fact that powerful resistance continues, it is clear that NATO and their stooges, the TNC rebels, have dealt a major blow at the independence of Libya. It is no satisfaction to have our dire predictions confirmed. In the Statement on Libya by the Liga Comunista of Brazil, the Revolutionary Marxist Group of South Africa and Socialist Fight of Britain on 21 April 2011 we said:

“The greatest proof that the "rebels" are nothing but butchers and Libyan agents of Imperialism is that they have invoked NATO bombing on their own people, as did the collaborators at all times of the class struggle since the Paris Commune Thiers (1871) to Lebanon (2006). As each day passes it becomes clearer that the native agents of Imperialism are merely open cat’s paws for multinational intervention in the country. They are racists and xenophobes, the enemies of all black working class Saharans in Libya. In the hunt for "Gaddafi mercenaries" they seek to demoralise the work force in the country, preparing it for the super exploitation in a new era of extreme Imperialist plunder. The Libyan “rebels” are bunch bourgeois turncoats from the Gaddafi regime in favour of big business internationally.”

Nor did we make any concessions to third world apologists for the national bourgeoisie who sought to prettify Gaddafi, dismiss or excuse his crimes against the working class and so marginalise the political struggles of Trotskyist internationalism for the world revolution:

“It was the anti-working class, neoliberal policies of Gaddafi during the last decade that paved the way this reaction. Gaddafi has established new agreements with imperialism, destroying the gains of the process of nationalisation of the means of production and post-1969 energy resources. Gaddafi banned trade unions and strikes and made racist anti-immigrant agreements with Berlusconi, he has sponsored the election campaign of Sarkozy and privatized and made auctions with the energy resources of Libya. Thus, the caudillo of Tripoli has lost popularity with the Libyan and African population and fuelled the appetite of sectors of the native bourgeoisie to negotiate directly with imperialism, freeing up Gaddafi’s clan.”

What do we have to say to the following comment, all too common on the ‘left’?

“Whatever the contradictions of the situation the rebel victory in Libya strengthens the chances of rebellion in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain - if Gaddafi had won, Assad and the other tyrants would have felt stronger and repressed with even more vigour.”

Of course the complete opposite is the case, as Trotsky explained so well about Abyssinia, China and hypothetically Brazil in 1936, 1937 and 1938. Any victory for imperialism will strengthen chauvinism and reaction in the form of the hold of the TU bureaucracy over the working class primarily in the metropolitan countries where it MUST be defeated ultimately and challenged strongly now in order to advance the cause of the working class globally. And it will strengthen the pro-imperialist grouping and leaderships in all the rest of the countries engaged in the ‘Arab Spring’. This can only point in the direction of defeat. The argument that defeat will allow the working class to organise as a class in this region ignores the fact that the working class is a global class; a serious wound to its head will not allow its peripheral organs to function properly. This was the argument at the accession of Yeltsin in 1991, what serious Marxist does not now recognize that as a victory for neo-liberal Imperialism and a defeat for the global working class? It is no accident that in this previous “4th August” moment for the left groups, the majority chose defence of “democracy” over defence of the nationalised property relations of the USSR. (On 4th August 1914 the German Social Democrats, the largest self-declared revolutionary Marxist party on the planet, voted the war credits to the Kaiser to enable WWI to begin its mass slaughter of the youth of a whole generation to solve its crisis of the rate of profit).

Even in Libya a defeat for Imperialism would not have returned it to the status quo. Gaddafi had been obliged to promise the renationalisation of the oil industry and had armed the masses. As Trotsky argues over Brazil,

“If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers!”

The central point of our previous statement (Statement on Libya by the Liga Comunista of Brazil, the Revolutionary Marxist Group of South Africa and Socialist Fight of Britain, 21 April 2011) was the Military Anti-Imperialist United Front (MAUIF). Our position was Leninist because we kept our complete independence from Imperialism and Gaddafi. With this position we had a huge advantage over other groups. We honour Trotskyism whilst others “Trotskyists” have betrayed its essence. We believe that the MAUIF is the best continuity of the defensive tactics of Bolshevism and Trotskyism: Russia 1917 (Kornilov), Germany 1933 (Adolph Hitler), Abyssinia 1935 (Haile Selassie), China 1937 (Chiang Kai-shek), Brazil 1938 (Getúlio Vargas).

It is important to abstract the lessons of this struggle over Libya. This defensive concept has a wide application to other similar situations. A defeat of the remaining workers states of North Korea and Cuba, of any other oppressed semi-colonial nations or of any of the guerrilla organisations, military fighting imperialism; Irish Republicans, Colombian FARCS, the Taliban, the Iraqi fighters, Maoists in India and Nepal, etc., is a defeat for the global working class in their fight against their own ruling classes; the anti-imperialist struggle is an absolutely essential part of the class struggle. At the same time we cannot be identified with those fake Trotskyists like Michel Pablo, Ernest Mandel, Guillermo Lora, Nabil Moreno, James Cannon, Joseph Hansen, Pierre Lambert, Pierre Frank, Alain Krivine, Gerry Healy etc. who ideologically and politically capitulated to Stalinism and to semi-colonial petty-bourgeois nationalists like Tito, Mao, Ben Bella in Algeria, Castro, Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein, Yasser Arafat, etc. and many others. We have to make the class differences in the orientation of our fight against the Imperialism. But we demand critical but unconditional defence of the bureaucratised workers’ states, all oppressed nations and all the guerrilla organisations fighting against Imperialism. This is the touchstone by which we judge all international movements; for or against global finance capitalism, i.e. Imperialism, the prime enemy of all progressive humanity.

Like the early Comintern we regard this as the natural extension of the United Front (UF) tactic in the domestic class struggle; with the trade union and labour movement leaders in struggle against the bosses where possible, without and against them where necessary to carry the struggle to victory. This is the UF from both above and below; demands on the
South Africa's Mini Revolt

South Africa is experiencing its own mini revolt because of the global crisis linked to the war in Libya. Of course it is the complete betrayal of South Africa to is experiencing its own mini revolt because of the global crisis linked to the war in Libya. Of course it is the complete betrayal of the black masses by the ANC government of Zuma which has fuelled this uprising but it has a new champion, ANC youth leader Julius Malema who is now seeking to fill the role that Winnie Mandela once filled. He has been given only a warning and partial court cost after he was found guilty of singing “shoot the boer”. However it was still charged with expulsions from the ANC together with the entire ANC national leadership, Malema’s deputy Ronald Lamola, secretary-general Sindiso Magaqa, his deputy Kenetswe Mosenogi, treasurer-general Pule Mabe and spokesman Floyd Shivambu.

He faced charges of bringing the ANC into disrepute, sowing divisions within the party and for his comments that whites are criminals. His real crimes are to challenge Zuma for the leadership of the ANC and calling for nationalisation South Africa’s mining industry. On June 16 at a Youth Day event he accused whites of “stealing land” said, “The only option is to take the land without compensation, if you refuse to give us an alternative”.

Of course this is demagogic grandstanding but it does reflect the growing anger of the masses at the increasing inequality of a society which is now among the most unequal in the world, worse than it was under apartheid.

According to the Times live online on 11 September Malema, “scored a minor political victory over Zuma after the cabinet expressed displeasure about the Botswana government’s recognition of Libya’s national transitional council. While Malema has been charged for ill-discipline for advocating “regime change” to remove Botswana’s “puppet” government, he found allies in the cabinet on Wednesday.

The Minister of International Relations, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, briefed the cabinet about Botswana’s decision to break ranks with the African Union position not to recognise the Libyan council as the country’s interim administration. Apparently cabinet members were angry about Botswana’s move, although the cabinet released only a mild statement restating South Africa’s commitment to the AU’s road map on Libya.”

This reflects also not only the upsurges of the masses in South Africa against Imperialism but also SA affiliation to the BRICS group which with Germany is now a rising imperialist rival power bloc in increasing conflict with the more bellicose and blood thirsty imperialist bloc of the US, UK and France. Malema has also distanced himself from China, the memory of the 1977 debacle when China found itself on the side of Jonas Savimbi’s UNITA and the invading Apartheid army in the Angolan civil war is still fresh in South Africa.

In other words he is seeking to manoeuvre between imperialist powers and is looking for a form of neo-Keynesian capitalism at home, not to direct the anger of the masses against capitalism itself. The challenge to Zuma is building.

Where We Stand – Socialist Fight EB

1. 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” (The International Workingmen’s Association 1864, General Rules).

2. The capitalist state consists, in the last analysis of ruling-class laws within a judicial system and detention centres overseen by the armed bodies of police/army who are under the direction and are controlled in acts of defence of capitalist property rights against the interests of the majority of civil society. The working class must overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a workers’ state based on democratic soviets/workers’ councils to suppress the inevitable counter-revolution of private capitalist profit against planned production for the satisfaction of socialised human need.

3. We recognise the necessity for revolutionsaries to carry out serious ideological and political struggle as direct participants in the trade unions (always) and in the mass reformist social democratic bourgeois workers’ parties despite their pro-capitalist leadership when conditions are favourable. Because we see the trade union bureaucracy and their allies in the Labour party leadership as the most fundamental obstacle to the struggle for power of the working class, outside of the state forces and their direct agencies themselves, we must fight and defeat and replace them with a revolutionary leadership by mobilising the base against the pro-capitalist bureaucratic misleaders to open the way forward for the struggle for workers’ power.

4. We are full in support of all mass mobilisations against the onslaught of the reactionary Con-Lib Dem coalition. However, whilst participating in this struggle we will oppose all policies which subordinate the working class to the political agenda of the petty-bourgeois reformist leaders of the Labour party and trade unions.

5. We recognise that class society, and capitalism as the last form of class society, is by its nature patriarchal. In that sense the oppression of women is different from all other forms of oppression and discrimination. Because this social oppression is inextricably tied to private property and its inheritance to achieve full sexual, social and economic freedom and equality for all we need to overthrow class society itself.

6. We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist and fascist attacks by any means necessary. Self-defence is no offence! We support ‘No Platform’ for all fascists but never call on the capitalist state to ban fascist marches or parties; these laws would inevitably be primarily used against workers’ organisations, as history has shown.

7. We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and Imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price. Only union membership and pay rates can counter employers who seek to exploit immigrant workers as cheap labour to undermine the gains of past struggles.

Socialist Fight is in the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International with the Liga Communista of Brazil. It is produced by this Editorial Board: Gerry Downing, Ray Rising, Charlie Walsh, Carol Foster and Aggie McCallum.
Israel’s war on Palestine and the ‘Arab Spring’
By Ret Marut

Israel’s war against the Palestinian nation has led to its increasing isolation. This lynchpin of US policy in the region now faces hostile masses in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa. The radicalisation of the Egyptian working class and that of the whole region is shown by the emergence of powerful anti-imperialist sentiments which were initially held back by the petty-bourgeois leadership of the revolt at the beginning of 2011 and confused by the war on Libya.

Israel itself faces attacks on four fronts:

i) The Egyptian masses forced the breaking of the siege of Gaza in May as Wikipedia reports “Egypt opened the Rafah border crossing permanently on 28 May 2011. Women of all ages and men aged below 18 and above 40 are able to enter Egypt without a visa, although there are still severe restrictions on the movement of personnel and goods to and from Gaza. In practice, however, a great deal of goods are smuggled in through tunnels between Egypt and Gaza, and the quantity of goods smuggled in has increased greatly since the Egyptian government took power in early 2011.” This has now been followed up by the sacking of the Israeli Embassy on 9 September following the murder of five Egyptian border guards and Palestinian fighters by the Israeli army. This follows the car bomb attack on 7 September on the UN headquarters in the Egyptian capital, Abuja on 26 August. Although it was carried out by the Islamist group Boko Haram (figuratively, “Western or non-Islamic education is a sin” according to Wikipedia), who are fighting to establish Sharia law in Nigeria its attacks are clearly directed in this instance against a symbolic presence of western imperialism.

ii) Even more worryingly for the US and Israel, Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Cairo on 12 September in the first visit of its type in 15 years because the former saw Turkey and Israel at loggerheads over Israel’s refusal to apologise for murder of 9 Turkish activists by Israeli commandos on the Mavi Marmara on 31 May 2010. Erdogan has promised to supply Turkish naval escorts for humanitarian aid ships bound for the Gaza Strip. But it is one thing for Israel to slaughter Palestinians at will, it is quite another to visit national humiliation on these terms. And our humanitarian aid will not be attacked or blocked as are the operations of the US military base in the region rent-free, which is the location for Centcom, the US military command centre for the Middle East and Central Asia… the Arab League, which consists of old American allies Saudi Arabia and Egypt, pledged in July to “take all necessary measures and to rally needed support of all world countries, starting with members of the security council, to recognize the state of Palestine…and to win full membership of the United Nations. In addition, the Former Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the US recently revealed that “There will be disastrous consequences for U.S.-Saudi relations if the United States vetoes U.N. recognition of a Palestinian state,” said Prince Turki who is believed to reflect the thinking in Riyadh.”

iii) The internal revolt in Israel is causing a huge political crisis. Upwards of 400,000 demonstrated in Israel on 3 September in a movement that began on the housing question and then moved on to outright opposition to the entire neo-liberal agenda of Netanyahu. Clearly part of the uprising in the entire region it raises the possibility of united class struggle between Jewish and Palestinian workers and thence with the working class of the entire region.

Whereas demonstrations against war have been frequent in Israel this is the first mass demonstration on social issues. And as such it has attracted Palestinians in big numbers with placards in both Hebrew and Arabic; from Haifa and Afula in the north of the country to the international tourist resort of Eilat in the far south. But the issue of Palestine itself was not mentioned by the Tu bureaucrats leading the march; in fact Ofer Eini, the leader of the Histadrut, did everything to keep the demonstrations within reformist bounds, as the petty bourgeois leaders had done in Egypt. But they may not be able to achieve this. Impressed Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti had called for mass marches on 23 September, the day of the call for the UN vote on statehood for the Palestinians and the PA has been forced to echo his call. They have called for millions to attend, clearly hoping for mass Jewish participation. The campaign will be called “Palestine 194”; Palestinians would be the 194th member of the UN. Any sizable Jewish participation will be disastrous for Ofer Eini and Netanyahu.

According to Wikipedia: “Ben-Orat Yemini, an editor at Maariv, used his 26 August 2011 weekend column to report a strong left-wing turn of the protests that would attempt to connect the ‘social justice’ to the events leading up to anticipated September protests on the West Bank. Yemini revealed an agreement summarized after protest leaders met with left-wing leaders and anarchists including the heads of The National Left and Peace Now to discuss combining activities such as marches to the ‘border’ and to bring the Palestinians into the protest.” The new Grab for Africa, as well as the Grab for the Middle East has now established a pattern; internal opposition calls in outside help from imperialism, regional stogies give their support, without the votes of South Africa, Nigeria and Gabon the No Fly Zone resolution would not have passed through the UN Security Council. And so the US war making can begin to install the new more-western friendly regime. Now the counter-revolution moves on to Syria. Despite the brutality of this regime it is as clear as it was in Libya in February that the US, Turkey, Saudi and Lebanon have now dominated the opposition whose agenda is pro-imperialist. They really have hijacked this uprising now (none of them were revolutions). And Turkey, lest we get the impression that there is anything genuinely anti-imperialist in its (temporary) opposition to Zionism, is seeking to take the leading role in forging the pro-imperialist oppositionists into a united grouping capable of forming a pro-western government. According to the WSWS website, “It has therefore hosted several conferences of Syrian dissidents in an attempt to form a unified opposition with which Turkey and the major powers can do business. Last week, Syrian oppositionists meeting in Turkey announced the formation of the Syrian National Council, consisting of 94 members and with Burhan Ghaliun as president.”

But the danger of the whole uprising degenerating into fratricidal religious and ethnic warfare, like in Iraq, is clear. And the US and Turkey’s confidences for obvious reasons, their nationals are being bombarded in Turkish Kurdistan as we write and Saudi Arabia is financing Sunni Salafist armed militants against the minority Shia and Alawite sect of Assad and the military generals. And oppositions are also seeking assistance from the Egyptian military. And, of course, the US itself is funding oppositionists and intervening through the CIA.

Of course the ultimate target is Iran, the other major power in the region with huge oil resources vital to both the US and to China. The difficulty for Imperialist intervention is that there is no special area controlled by Syrian rebels to give them a bridge head from which to advance a ground assault. And an intervention by the troops of any other regional power like the Saudis or Turkey would mean that Iran would be obliged to go to war immediately to defend its ally, Assad. Unfortunately the intervention of the working class as an independent force is not likely here, unlike in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain. The Syrian revolt now belongs to Imperialism, so we must offer our critical support to Assad in another Military Anti-Imperialist United Front.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
Those who ‘howled along with the wolves’ and those who took a neutral position on the war in Libya

Statement by the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International (LCFI) 14 September 2011

Let us now accuse those who ‘howled along with the wolves’, using the same ideology and often the very phrases used by imperialist leaders themselves to welcome the national humiliation and subjugation of another semi-colony by imperialist finance capital. These have had their 4th August moment in taking the side of the counter-revolution. What effect can this have on their orientation to the class struggle if these centrist groups cannot seek the defeat of their own ruling class and its allies in a war against a semi-colony?

What revolutionary perspective can now guide work in the TUs, in the anti-cuts groups, in the Labour/Social Democratic parties etc if imperialism cannot be opposed in a war on a semi-colony? This must now be only radical reformism at best with all that implies; capitulation to left TU leaders and Labour reformism and opposition to rank and file mobilisations. If you cannot tackle Imperialism at its highest expression then you cannot fight in the working class as revolutionaries.

What revolutionary perspective can now guide the work against the UN occupation of Haiti led by Brazil, and all the evictions and repression to achieve the World Cup 2014 in Brazil? We must build a revolutionary workers’ opposition to the government Dilma which stands out as one of the best managers of capitalism in Latin America, forcing workers to pay for the crisis.

As reaction triumphs in Libya petty-bourgeois parties are on the side of that triumphant reaction preparing further cuts against the workers. They reproduce the war propaganda of imperialism with a left gloss.

In the twentieth century, we have known the Social Democracy, Menshevism, Stalinism and Pabloism. They tended to make opportunist alliances with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism, the monarchy and landlordism. At the beginning of this century, in the war for domination of Libya, we see a new development, self-proclaimed Trotskyist groups who are in favour of a united front with imperialism, the monarchy and tribal landowners against the Gaddafi regime and for the recolonisation of Libya.

The Leninist tactic of defeatism is used in revolutionary propagandists to promote revolutionary crises by undermining the faith of the working class in their ‘own’ capitalist class. Do we need to say which of the two great remaining global classes were strengthened politically by the fall of Tripoli? To ask the question is to answer it. The vultures gathered in Paris at the start of September to pick over the economic and political corpse of Libya. Premature celebrations by Imperialism and their bogus leftist stooges maybe but they have all tied their fates to Imperialism now. They are no longer revolutionaries and Trotskyists; they bring shame on our names, they are renegades from the cause every bit as bad as Kautsky was in his day.

The International Workers League (LIT)

The IWL (LIT), the South American political followers of the late Nahuel Moreno, produced a statement by the International Secretariat of the IWL-Fi, on 24th of August 2011 proudly headlined,

“Great victory of Libyan people and of the Arab revolution People in arms demolish the Gaddafi regime!”

And it goes on in nauseating fashion to support this ghoulish capitulation to the masters of life until we get to this purple passage explaining in ‘dialectical’ terms how a victory for world Imperialism is in reality a victory for the forces of the world revolution,

“…Consequently, Imperialism staked directly on his fall. This is the great contradiction of the process. In the middle of a civil war – an element that did not occur in either Tunisia or in Egypt – Imperialism was compelled to intervene militarily in order to defeat Gaddafi... The contradiction is that, within military scope, there was a United Front between but with directly opposite ultimate aims: the masses wanted to free the country from oppression and Imperialism wanted to stop the revolution so as to be able to keep on looting the wealth of Libya and the Middle East.

Imperialism has won with IWA support and “the masses” (led by pro-imperialists) will now begin to stop them “looting the wealth of Libya and the Middle East”? And pigs might fly! Of course now the real robbery begins, Gaddafi was just not making anything like the concessions they needed so now they have what they want. For the IWA have taken the Queen’s shilling are now the Queen’s men, as the Victorians used to say.

The LI are Objective and Subjective international scoundrels in the service of imperialism on Libya. They directly supported the occupation of the Libyan Embassy in Brazil by royalist agents of the CIA! The PSTU, the main party of the LIT, protested at the Libyan Embassy in Brasilia with the Libyans royalists CIA. The PSTU camouflage the pro-imperialist invasion as the ‘democratic’, “Our members were in Brasilia in front of the embassy demanding the Dlma government immediately break diplomatic relations and cease and trading with Libya, so long as this dictatorship exists” (PSTU site, 19/08/2011).

Aliance for Workers Liberty

This is what those absolute political scoundrels the AWL, apologists for global imperialism, Zionism and the Loyalists in Ireland, have this to say, “The NATO intervention helped them by preventing the crushing of the uprising at a critical point. That is a good thing. But this victory does not belong to NATO, who intervened for their own reasons. It belongs to the Libyan people who fought and died to get rid of Qaddafi and who remained resolute in the face of conditions far worse than any more-anti-imperialist-than-thou demagogy on the British left will ever have to face.

We know Imperialism will only act in its own interests, and if and when it intervenes it will do so using its...”

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
own, blundering, means. We offered NATO no positive support, trust or confidence. But when such an intervention is all that stands between the continued existence of a revolutionary movement and its annihilation, it is irresponsible and morally degenerate to simply demand that it ceases, or to oppose it ever taking place. We believe that the gains of the uprising vindicate that view (my emphasis). Imperialism was inept at not bombarding effectively, complained many former leftists, hence “blundering”. And to demand that the imperialist bombing of Libya ceases or to oppose it ever taking place is MORALLY DEGENERATE!!!

In a piece that could only be written by someone with no practical allegiance to imperialism indeed the desire to google beyond the propaganda of Sky News or the BBC Workers’ Power in the name of its International the League for the Fifth International (LFI) produced the following statement on 22 August, “The victory of the Libyan Revolution’s first phase. The revolution in Libya is making a huge advance. A combination of an uprising in Tripoli and a fast advance by rebel fighters on the city has captured large parts of Libya’s capital from Gaddafi and his murderous regime. The rebels’ advance into Tripoli was apparently helped by the defection of the commander of the city’s defences, who secretly agreed with the rebels to open the gates and withdraw his forces. Both Gaddafi’s sons have been captured.”

This is a complete lie. Apparently our author just did not notice all those NATO bombers or indeed no one told him about all those Special Forces and troops from Qatar and UAE directing his ‘revolution’. Then he was his finger lest we ignore the ‘dangers’.

“Now the question is what a post-Gaddafi Libya will look like. How can the NATO imperialists, who backed the Benghazi based National Transitional Council (NTC), be prevented from stealing the fruits of the people’s revolution? There is a very real threat that the NATO powers will impose a pro-western government on Libya, led by former officials, police, military and security officers from the old regime. Defending the independence of Libya from imperialism is the next stage of the revolution.”

So, “There is a very real threat that the NATO powers will impose a pro-western government on Libya”. Did they not do that back in February without any apparent opposition apart from a bogus anti-intervention banner, “No foreign intervention – Libyan People Can Manage it alone” most probably flown in by the CIA?

Some of the larger groups who supported the rebels are now back pedaling and attempting to put a gloss over their betrayals by warning of the dangers posed by the rebels and being far from enthusiastic over the fall of Libya.

Socialist Appeal (IMT)

Whilst reporting approvingly on the fall of Tripoli Socialist Appeal (IMT) omits to mention the presence on the ground of all those Special Forces and makes light of the influence of Imperialism. They tell us, “Without this air cover the task of the rebels would have been more difficult. However, it is not the case that NATO won the war. The war was fought and won by the rebel fighters on the ground. This is an important fact and one that will determine what happens in the next stages.”

An obvious lie, without NATO they would have lost within a week. They then say “The Libyan people did not fight to remove one gang of corrupt gangsters merely to replace them with another, even more rapacious, gang, workers and youth of Libya! You have shown your courage and ability by your actions. Do not allow anyone to snatch victory from your hands. Trust only yourselves, your own strength and your own revolutionary organizations! The overthrow of Gaddafi was only the first step. The real Libyan Revolution starts now.”

The counter revolution is triumphant and you must only hope the world does not keep reminding you of what you were helped to impose on the people of Libya as that tragedy now unfolds.

The Socialist party (CWI)

The Socialist party (CWI) are somewhat more circumspect, “While many Libyans are celebrating, socialists have to be clear that, unlike the ousting of Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak in Egypt, the way in which Gaddafi has been removed means that a victory for the Libyan people was also a success for Imperialism. Without NATO acting as the rebels’ air force or the soldiers’ weapons, organisation and training that NATO and some other countries like the feudal Qatar autocracy supplied, Tripoli would not have fallen to the rebels in the way that it has.”

So a more truthful approach, the ‘revolution’ was won with the assistance of Imperialism. That has sorted out their former comrades in Socialist Appeal but one is left floundering by the idea that the, “victory for the Libyan people was also a success for Imperialism!” We know that was what they said on the TV comrades but it was a lie. You cannot advance Imperialism’s victory and the victory of the working class at the same time, they are mutually exclusive, and one must advance at the expense of the other, a ‘zero sum’ rather than a ‘win-win’ situation we would suggest. Of course the use of the word ‘people’ might mean that they accept that capitalists and workers have ultimately the same political and economic interests in far away lands.

But once you pay the first tranche of the protection money the Mafia will always be back for more.

The Socialist Workers party

The Socialist Workers party have a similar problem with Imperialism. Having backed its ground troops they are obliged now to warn against the inevitable consequences of their betrayal, 24 Aug 2011, “As Gaddafi’s brutal regime collapses… Don’t let west hijack Arab Spring. The intervention of the Western powers is a real threat to the Arab revolutions. It allows the dictators to pose as defenders of national -independence. In fact it is the dictators, who have relied on the West’s support for decades, who ensure the grip of Imperialism. Neither NATO nor its planes can bring liberation. The only way to win real freedom and democracy is by our own hand—solidarity within the Arab revolutions. Anti-Imperialism is in the fabric of the Arab political movements. We cannot separate the fight for democratic freedoms from the struggle to defeat Imperialism.”

All very well but really how can you now begin the fight the enemy as assisted to come to power? To whom are you directing your appeals? To the ex-Gaddafi TNC agents of Imperialism? Or to the Islamists now

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

Perhaps the world’s most famous anti-imperialist sculpture, the fist of a defiant people crushing a US warplane, erected to show Libya’s defiance after the 1986 bombing and assassination attempt on Gaddafi, is torn down by the pro-imperialist rebel army—oh what a great ‘revolution’ won for you by world Imperialism!
fighting them for control of the booty? You can scarcely complain if you invite the wolf into your house to kill the rat and he eats your child.

**The Mandelite Fourth International**

The theory expounded by Gilbert Achcar (who is a leading ‘Trotskyist’ of the Mandelite Fourth International) is that the lack of sufficient bombing by NATO was so blatantly discriminatory and showed such a lack of enthusiasm for the ‘revolution’ that, far from trying to overthrow Gaddafi, they were actually helping him to survive and thereby subverting the legitimate aims of the hired racist murderers of the western oil companies. It is a right wing neo-con attack on Imperialism with a very transparent gloss of leftist. In fact it just about the type of thing for apologist for imperialism that Kautsky used to make after the Russian Revolution. Here Achcar bitterly complains of the lack of bombing by approving quoting from the Specator:

“Oh Andrew Gillian could write accordingly in the Spectator (4 June): For all the ritual incantations about “intensified” attacks and “heaviest bombing yet,” the bombing is and always has been relatively light. Across the whole operation, the number of NATO strike sorties—only a proportion of which actually result in air strikes—has averaged 57 a day, less than half the number in the alliance’s very similar mission in Kosovo, and a mere fraction of what the US and Britain did in Iraq.”

**The NPA position**

As for Franc’s New Anti Capitalist party Kumaran Ira reported on the WSWS September:

“France’s New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) has applauded NATO’s war to topple the regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, praising it as a victory for democracy. On August 22, it published a statement, “Gaddafi has fallen, now it is for the people to decide.” It declared, “The fall of the dictator Gaddafi is good news for the people. The NPA is in full solidarity with the revolutionary process that is continuing in the Arab region.” The NPA’s claim that the ouster of the Gaddafi regime by NATO’s imperialist intervention is “good news,” let alone a “revolutionary process,” is a reactionary political lie.”

Indeed France’s right wing President Sarkozy has implemented all of the NPA’s demands in this war, recognising the NTC as the legitimate government of Libya, supplying arms to the rebels and assisting them by blanket bombing the brave Libyan soldiers who struggled against such overwhelming odds to defend their country against Imperialist assault. Although they have criticised Gilbert Achcar at times they are essentially no different to him.

We concur with the conclusion of the WSWS article, “In the final analysis, the basic position of the NPA on the Libyan war is no different from that of the most powerful and reactionary sections of world imperialism. Like the Bush administration did while invading Iraq, the NPA advances the lie that imperialist war can help bring about democratic change. It has placed itself squarely in the camp of social reaction.”

**FLTI (LOI-Argentina, WIVL-SA)**

The FLTI angrily attacks the positions of the Trotskyists RMG-BC-MF so as to present the NATO mercenarism as “revolutionary.” And they tell so many lies:

“With the help of the intelligence and logistics for the U.S. Fifth Fleet and the Yankee imperialist army Kadaffi tries to crush the heroic revolutionary upsurge of the masses” (OOL 12, Part II). Delirious and suffering from shock the FLTI present the ridiculous surrealist message that imperialism is sponsoring Gaddafi against imperialism itself and the insurrection to overthrow Gaddafi!

“These teachers of red Qina Msbenzi, Socialist Fight and the Communist League, want us to believe that imperialism wanted to overthrow their strong man in Libya” (Qina Msbenzi, Socialist Fight and Communist League of Brazil march with the imperialist agent Gaddafi against the Libyan masses)

“The masses smashed the state Institutions in the East (something which caught imperialism by surprise) and when they were marching on imperialism sent mercenaries from Chad and Niger to prevent Gaddafi from falling.” (Ibid.)

“While there is a petty bourgeois influence in the militias that does support the NATO invasion, there is a LEFT WING that is openly against Gaddafi, against any intervention by NATO and against capitalism.” (Ibid.)

“The Intervention of imperialism would have been openly against the masses and to support the Gaddafi regime.” (Ibid.)

“The Bolsheviks never called for weapons for Kerensky” (Ibid.). But the did place demands on him as follows,

**Revolutionary Socialist Organisation**

The Germanophile Revolutionary Socialist Organisation (RSO) is based in Austria, Germany and Switzerland with close ties to Lutte Ouvriére in France. Its position of Libya is similar to the LO and in practice is neutralist. The RSO-Alliances on Anti Imperialism 19 May 2007 is very principled and detailed, obviously drawing on the work of Stuart King’s The Anti-Imperialist United Front: a debate with the GOR 30/03/1986. However the Theses defines the AIUF too narrowly,

"Without therefore excluding the abstract possibility of an Anti-imperialist united front within the..."
meaning of the Fourth World Congress the solution must after all be attributed in a very limited role, even in the propaganda.”

But that is a position that could be argued out in a single organisation or international group. However, until Permanent Revolution and Workers Power (with whom they have no relations now) the group obviously have such internal difficulties that they are unable to take any position at all on Libya now. Their first statement was written by Stefan Horvath (RSO Vienna) on 23 February 2011 and was fair enough for someone who obviously knew little about the country but was trying. It finished with the following:

“But there are even less independent organisations of the working class here than in Egypt or Tunisia, let alone domestic revolutionary workers parties. And so it will be difficult to direct the revolution in a socialist direction. Nevertheless if the mass movement in Libya should succeed to overthrow the hated head of State, it will be another milestone in the development of consciousness of the oppressed in the Arab region. And this is not to be underestimated.”

Well we could excuse that if we suppose he did not know the history of the region and had not noticed the enthusiasm with which world imperialism and Arab reaction was supporting these rebels even then. We did not get another statement until a month later, and this statement risibly avoided all controversial issues entirely.

“The pleas of Western Governments and their journalists are once again humbug and serve the interests of imperialism. However, solid: Petroleum, natural gas, strategic control of the region and getting rid of a suspicious regime. We are against this imperialist military campaign and hope that it ends for the gentlemen in Paris, Washington etc. in a disaster. Our basic positions on the anti-Imperialism can be found here” Wednesday, 23 March 2011, (link to RSO AIUF Theses supplied).

And there it has finished. There is nothing further on Libya apart from a plea to defend the refugees, not even on the fall of Tripoli. But you have to apply your theory to concrete reality and say where you stand. In the face of the fascist IOU stance, in practice a neutral position between the rebels and Gaddafi, the RSO has been unable to take any stance on this most vital question for the global working class which has split the left internationally between apologists for imperialism and the NATO rebels and principled anti-imperialist Trotskyist fighters. Thus is a total dereliction of the internationalist duty of the RSO.

The Lutte Ouvrière

The NPA are very similar to the Communist party of France in their warmongering chauvinism in support of the imperialist adventure in Libya. LO, in contrast seem very left-wing. They have not organised any demonstrations against the war or urged any industrial action but they have strongly opposed the bombing. LO make the point that the working class was centrally involved in the struggles against the western-backed dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt, even if under the leadership of the middle classes but as Lutte de Classes points out in Libya the working class is;

“largely composed of immigrants coming from neighboring countries and from the rest of Africa, from Turkey, from Bangladesh or China, has been devastated by the effects of the civil war and find itself completely atomized and quite often forced to flee the imperialist’s bombardments and the pogroms which it is the victim from all sides, especially from the opposition.”

But LO are very soft on the rebels. They say that “help(ing) the rebels give some credit to the imperialists leader’s democratic speeches.” It is incredibly naive to give credit to the imperialists as if they were really bringing ‘freedom and democracy’ to the country. And they do not attack the reactionary stance of the NPA and the PFLP. Nowhere does the LO advocate military defeat for the own ruling class in this war or call for an Anti-imperialist united front with Gaddafi against both the rebels and NATO. As old Karl Liebknecht says the main enemy is at home but not apparently for the LO.

The LRP/JSI Joint Statement

In their 8 April A Joint Statement by the League for the Revolutionary Party (U.S.) and the Internationalist Socialist League (Israel/Occupied Palestine) we find the following position;

“The masses typically launch their struggles still burdened by pro-capitalist leaders and move at times openly pro-imperialist leaders – that do not represent their interests. One of the tasks of revolutionaries is to take the masses’ side whenever they are fighting in their self-defence and for progressive aims, no matter how they are being misled. But revolutionaries do this always with the purpose of not only building the best immediate defence but also to expose the treacherous role of pro-capitalist leaders and ideas. In terms of a general revolutionary approach, the struggle in Libya is no exception.”

By the 8 April it was already crystal clear which side world imperialism supported and why, they had begun mass bombing on 19 March. We will dismiss with contempt the ludicrous notion that Imperialism supported the ‘revolution’ in order to defeat it. This argument is so wrong because it ignores the masses support for Imperialism and its intervention and takes as proof of anti-imperialism the single banner—“NO FOREIGN INTERVENTION—Libyan People Can Manage it ALONE.” This was almost certainly supplied by the CIA and ALL rebels supported the “no fly zone” resolution – those that were opposed quickly learned to keep their mouth closed to stay alive.

And by then also the lynchings and beheadings of black workers had become common, which is still ongoing in rebel-held territory. And how can we possible refer to rebels as “the masses” and not consider the pro-Gaddafi masses, almost certainly the mass of the Libyan population before the fall of Tripoli? There was no chance that the rebels could mobilise anything like the two million strong demonstrations in Tripoli before it fell, and remember those were courageous manifestations of anti-imperialism in a city under siege.

And really comrades we cannot think of a single instance of a fight against imperialism where “the masses typically launch their struggles still burdened by pro-capitalist leaders – even at times openly pro-imperialist leaders”. Using the word “struggle” here neatly avoids asking what it is there are struggling for.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
But of course the "masses" in this instance are fighting on the side of imperialism, that is "their struggle" and it is the duty of all serious Trotskyists to oppose these reactionary and counter-revolutionary masses.

"With their military intervention, the imperialists inserted themselves in the struggle as the main overall enemy and working-class internationalists stand for their defeat, supporting protest actions against the intervention and opposing all steps toward the seizure of power by forces like the TNC who base themselves on imperialist support. Instead, revolutionaries have to continue to fight for the independent organization of the workers and against Libya, and more than ever advocate the strategy of international workers' revolution as the only solution."

The line of advocating the strategy of international workers' revolution as the only solution in opposition to the military anti-imperialist united front was denounced by Trotsky thus,

"In my declaration to the bourgeois press, I said that the duty of all the workers’ organizations of China was to participate actively and in the front lines of the present war against Japan, without abandoning, for a single moment, their own program and independent activity. But that is "social patriotism!" the Eiffelites cry. It is capitulation to Chiang Kai-shek! It is the abandonment of the principle of the class struggle!... The only salvation of the workers and peasants of China is to struggle independently against the two armies, against the Chinese army in the same manner as against the Japanese army." These four lines, taken from an Eiffelite document of September 10, 1937, suffice entirely for us to say: we are concerned here with either real traitors or complete imbeciles. But imbecility, raised to this degree, is equal to treason." (my emphasis)

Joint Statement by the HWRS, CWG, RWG, RKOB

Humanist Workers for Revolutionary Socialism (USA), Communist Workers Group (Argentina), Revolutionary Workers Group (Austria) Just look at this absolutely hilariously reactionary tract:

"The Libyan revolutionaries who had taken a strong anti-imperialist position in the early days of the rebellion had little choice but to enter into a military bloc with NATO against the semi-fascist Gaddafi. At this point the semi-fascist Gaddafi regime has been defeated by the insurrection. It remains to be seen the extent to which the revolutionaries[1] have illusions in 'democratic' imperialism or how far their opposition to imperialism takes on the form of Islamic radicalism." (my emphasis)

To defeat the TNC and its imperialist backers the revolutionary forces must continue the armed struggle at this point directly against imperialism, and all the pro-imperialist factions of the national bourgeoisie squabbling for the imperialist franchise, to finally win national independence and set the example for the other Arab states in their ongoing national, anti-imperialist revolutions.

Note from the RKOB: ...We also believe that the sentence — "The Libyan revolutionaries (…) had little choice but to enter into a military bloc with NATO against the semi-fascist Gaddafi," — is misleading. In fact it was a weakness of the Rebels that they did not look for an alternative strategy and did not issue a strong appeal to the mass movements in the Arab countries and the international workers movement for volunteers and material and military aid." September 10 2011.

So the RKOB signed the statement whilst disagreeing fundamentally with it! And they did not appeal to the working class because they were lynching and beheading them from day one of the 'revolution' and already had a far better ally, World Imperialism. Of course the "semi-fascist Gaddafi regime" was defeated by NATO, the counter-revolutionary rebels whose popular support was never tested, stood no chance without NATO bombers.

We hope that this assessment of the crisis of Trotskysim has helped those who wish to fight for genuine, orthodox Trotskyism and will lead you to reject the arch-reactionaries who howled along with the wolves and also those who could not take a principles stand for the Military Anti-Imperialist United Front with Libya against world Imperialism.

Grass Roots Left National Conference

Birmingham 12 noon to 4pm
Saturday 5th November 2011
Comfort Inn Conference room, Station Street, B5 4DY. [Opposite New St Station]

UCATT election for General Secretary: ‘why it effects all of us’ & a financial appeal.

You may be aware of the election for the General Secretary of UCATT. Nominations have finished and the balloting of members begins on 18th November.

There is only one candidate who pledges to take an average wage if becomes GS. Only one candidate who believes in direct action and actually takes part in direct action.

Only one candidate believes that the grass roots, rank and file member are the most important element of any trade union organisation. Only one candidate would make employers sit up and take notice. That candidate is Mick Dooley.

Now tell me we would not all be better off if Mick Dooley won the election and became General Secretary of UCATT and that is why we should help.

The election has been forced upon UCATT following Mick Dooley’s successful challenge in proving illegal malpractice surrounding the previous election in 2009. [Sounds familiar] didn’t we do that something like that with Derek Simpson] The union appealed the decision and lost. However in the mean time UCATT has sacked Mick Dooley. As I write this note we await Mick’s tribunal result against the unfair dismissal.

Mick Dooley is contesting the election and without any doubts stands a great chance of winning, the other main candidates can be best summed up as ‘establishment hacks’.

However all of this has taken its toll financially and a call is now being made to supporters who want to see UCATT as a fighting union.

Please make a donation for the funding and to do any thing you can to support Mick Dooley in this vital election.

Donations to: ‘Friends of Mick Dooley’
Lloyds bank: Sort code 30 97 84
Account number: 41395168

The Bookshops that sell Socialist Fight

London Bookmarks, 1 Bloomsbury Street WC1B 3QG.
Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London, N1 9DX.
New Beacon Books, 76 Stroud Green Road London,
Rebecca Books 131 Crwyd Road, Cardiff, CF2 4NH.
Word Power Books, 43-45 West Nicolson Street, Edinburgh, Scotland,
B5 4DY. [Opposite New St Station]
Glasgow Barrett Newsagents, 263 Byres Road, Glasgow, G12 8TL
October Books 243 Portwood Road, Southampton, SO17 2NG.
Books Upstairs, 36 College Green D2, County Dublin, Ireland,
Berlin Schwarze Risse, Gneisenaustr. 2a, U-Bhf , Mehringdamm
Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
The riots, the left and the sectarian

By A J Byrne

Between the 6th and the 10th of August 2011 the anger of the oppressed youth in England exploded. It was sparked by the police murder of Mark Duggan in Tottenham and the frustration at the lack of a future, the abolition of the EMA (education maintenance allowance), removal of the prospect of University education from the children of the working class and lower middle class, the police brutality and the next looming recession which removed any hope of a future. Looting was simply appropriating what consumer society now denied them. And the savage regime of sentencing showed the true social values of capitalist society - two men who promoted a riot via Facebook which never happened got four years. A woman who had not taken part in the riots received five months for receiving a pair of stolen shorts. Manchester police used Twitter to celebrate that five month sentence.

It is undoubtedly true that the artificial repression of the class struggle by the trade union bureaucracy was the cause of the outbreak in this manner. Of course it was unorganised and could not be organised in the form it appeared, although on Monday 8th Nottingham Canning Circus Police Station was attacked with firebombs as were other stations and police cars, displaying an awareness of the police’s role in maintaining inequality. Bankers and corrupt politicians can rob the working class blind and are rewarded by their peers with enhanced status. As a result, the repression of the working class must pay and face the prospect of being conscripted into a new war if the experiences of the decades before WWI and WWII are anything to go by.

As with the cuts and the war on Libya the attitude of much of the ‘revolutionary left’, was to defend private property and the status quo. Although unorganised riots cannot fundamentally challenge capitalism, as we saw in 2001-2 in Argentina’s piqueteros and the Banlieu riots in France in 2005, nevertheless this brings a new layer of youth into confrontation with the police, they learn the brutality and the appalling injustices of capitalist society and become steeled for the inevitable massive confrontations bound to emerge as the class moves into confrontation with the state itself.

Initially this will be through its primary organisations, the trade unions but serious confrontation will raise the need for broader forms of workers councils. The lessons learned by the experiences of police brutality during the great miners’ strike are still there in the British working class.

Of course the riots were not “solely the product of a criminal underclass”. As one university lecturer remarked in a letter to The Guardian if one of his students gave such an answer to a question of why riots occurred frequently in France in the late Middle Ages, for example, they would fail the exam.

One publication which took what was an apparently principled stance on the riots was David North’s WSWS website. In an article by Chris Marsden he correctly highlighted the reactionary stance taken by the CPB’s Morning Star, the Socialist Party and the Weekly Worker. The Morning Star demanded that, “Homes and businesses must be protected, which means that police have to have resources to contain violent outbreaks.” The Socialist Party (SP), wanted to “restore order.” And the Weekly Worker complained of youth having “wrecked wanton destruction” and of the “anti-social gangs that lurk on our council estates.” It too praised small shopkeepers who had “succeeded in driving away the rioters” as a model for the “left” to “build permanent self-defence units” to “provide our own protection against rioters, looters, English Defence League hooligans and—yes—police thuggery.” That is they are all conservative defenders of the status quo.

However the extreme sectarianism of the group now emerges when they take their criticisms of these groups, and the trade unions to the extent of saying they are not part of the working class. Marsden now attempts to lump the centrist groups with the reformist groups with the capitalist parties and thence with the state forces in an orgy of sectarianism not seen since the Stalinist Third period of 1928-35. We have highlighted our criticisms of the rest of that article.

CM: “For more than a quarter of a century, the unions have collaborated in a historic transfer of societal wealth from the poor [fails to distinguish between the leaders and the ranks Ed] to the super-rich and a narrow, wealthy layer of the upper-middle class. The latter is the privileged social layer represented by the trade union leaders. And it is this same layer for which the ex-left groups speak.”

It fails to distinguish between leaders of these centrist groups and the ranks so there is no tactics to win any of them to genuine revolutionary politics, the old WRP did not win a single recruit from other left groups since the early 70s, we think – North absolutely will never and does not want to win any of these comrades who spend their life fighting for what they believe to be the path to revolution with enormous self-sacrificing dedication. – ‘ex-left’ is a meaningless term, have they now become right wingers? No, they are centrist, inconsistent reformist/revolutionaries.

CM: “Their leading lights are, for the most part, either firmly ensconced within the trade union apparatus—often at the highest level—or in academia and various local government departments. They do not genuinely view the unions as an agent of social change, but as the best means of suppressing the class struggle and safeguarding the existing order. They employ socialist phraseology only in order to oppose any movement that threatens to break out of the political and organisational straightjacket of the trade union bureaucracy.”

This is describing an ongoing process as a finished relationship. – We have highlighted this process, see SWP capitulates to TU bureaucracy p 4 but not as Chris does here. I know there is much opposition within the SWP to this. We can claim we assisted in getting the SWP to overturn its own leadership and support Jerry Hicks instead of Len McCluskey in the Unite Gen Sec elections last year (or course North would say we cannot support the left against the right because neither of them are revolutionaries. Trotsky though otherwise in that TP now joned by North,

CM: “Patrolling the streets, negotiating with the police, determining sentencing—such are the political ambitions of the ex-left.”

That is total slander, it is correct to point to the appalling vacillations of a sharply moving centrist leadership, to say they are now as bad as the fascist as this sentence implies is total political confusion and ly ing propaganda of the worst variety.

CM: “Workers and young people should take note. This was their response to a few nights of rioting. In the event of the emergence of a serious revolutionary threat to capitalism, these forces will take their stand on the side of the ruling class and its repressive state apparatus.”

This is to predict an outcome that is not predetermined. Who will become reactionaries and who will rebel is partly predetermined. Who will become reactionaries and who will rebel is partly predetermined. Who will become reactionaries and who will rebel is partly predetermined. Who will become reactionaries and who will rebel is partly predetermined.