Imperialism Today: Libya, Syria, Ukraine, Russia, China, etc.

LCFI statements and articles from Socialist Fight

Two supercarriers in 2012, the USS Abraham Lincoln and the USS John C. Stennis, two of the ten nuclear-powered Nimitz-class aircraft supercarriers in service with the United States Navy. The US has five battleship fleets, the Second Fleet in the Atlantic, the Third Fleet in the Eastern Pacific, the Fifth Fleet in the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean, the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean and the Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific. No other nation gets a look in here.

This is a list of the aircraft carriers in service in 2013: USA 10, Italy 2, United Kingdom, 1, France 1, Russia 1, Spain 1, India 1, Brazil 1, China 1 and Thailand 1.
**Eight Indices of US-led World Imperialism**

**Socialist Fight 23/7/14**

1. **The US Dollar:** It is the trading currency for oil and almost every other commodity in the world. However there is a challenge now; Wiki: “the New Development Bank... is (a) multilateral development bank operated by the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as an alternative to the existing World Bank and International Monetary Fund. “The position of the dollar has given the US an enormous economic and political advantage over its rivals. Wars against Iraq, Libya, and Ukraine today are primarily launched to protect this privileged position which enables it to rob every other nation. This is the main driving force towards WWIII.

2. **The world’s leading financial centres:** New York tops the list with London very close behind in second-place followed by Hong Kong and Singapore. according the Global Financial Centres Index 15, March 2014. New York and London have dominated global finance for the past couple of centuries. 

3. **Top 2,000 multi-nationals:** We have abstracted these details from Forbes Global 2000 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forbes_Global_2000) for 2014: 1, United States 564, 2 Japan 225, 3 China 207, 4 United Kingdom, 91, 5 France, 66, 6 South Korea, 61, 7 Canada, 57, 8 India, 54, 9 Germany, 52, 10 Switzerland, 48, 11 Taiwan, 47, 12 Australia, 36, 13 Italy, 30, 14 Russia, 28, 15 Netherlands, 27, 15 Spain, 27, 17 Sweden, 26, 18 Brazil, 25, 19 Saudi Arabia, 20, 20 Ireland, 19.

   In 2004 when the list first appeared the US had almost 1,000 in the top 2,000. The decline is largely due to US transnationals locating their HQs abroad for tax avoidance purposes. Ireland’s 19 companies apparently place it in the same league as Saudi Arabia, a ridiculous comparison. In reality up to half of those ‘Irish’ companies are not really Irish at all except in name. Its top company in 2013 was Accenture plc; “engaged in providing management consulting, technology and outsourcing services”. It was 318th with a market capitalisation of $53.34 Billion. It had 257,000 employees in 120 countries, only 1,300 in Ireland. It is a US transnational, of course.

   And not only does the US have all these companies located abroad but the US dominate many others by virtue of its stock holdings. Some statistics on this would reveal the true nature of US imperialism’s domination of almost every aspect of the trade, commerce and lives of the majority of population of the planet. And those it does not fully dominate it demonises, organises coups and internal wars against for regime change and/or it bombs and invades them.

   Finance capital is interlinked in a global web of dominance spreading out from Wall Street and the City of London. If we take, for example, the role of Swiss banking it is not a secret that it has strong links with the City of London. Also important are the so-called ‘tax havens’ and money laundering centres, Luxembourg, Jersey, Guernsey, the Cayman Islands, the British Virgin Islands, etc.

   Finance capital plays a major role in the Spanish banking sector for example – there is the curious phenomenon of its relations to the Basque and Catalan banks, which are not really Spanish and behind much of the separatist agitation. Finance capital of British origin plays a big role in maintaining Gibraltar as a tax haven.

4. **Top Stock Exchanges 2013:** Here are the statistic for the top ten stock exchanges ($US billions) 1. NYSE Euronext, United States/ Europe, $14,085. 2. NASDAQ OMX Group, United States/Europe, $4,582. 3. Tokyo Stock
Exchange, Japan $3,478. 4. London Stock Exchange, $3,396. 5. Hong Kong Stock Exchange, $2,547. 6. Shanghai Stock Exchange, $2,058. 7. Deutsche Börse, Germany, $1,486. 9. Australian Securities Exchange, $1,386. 10. Bombay Stock Exchange, $1,263. Note the two US stock exchanges are as big as the next eight combined; with its allies it is absolutely dominant. (Moscow is not there at all. Although China is at nos. 5 and 6, but who owns these Chinese companies?).

5. Ranking by Gross Domestic Product: The ranking of countries by Gross Domestic Product, this time the top 10: (Millions of $US), World $70,201,920. 1. United States $14,991,300, 2. China $7,203,784, 3. Japan $5,870,357. 4. Germany $3,604,061. 5. France $2,775,518. 6. Brazil $2,476,651. 7. United Kingdom, 2,429,184. 8. Italy $2,195,937. 9. India $1,897,608. 10 Russia $1,857,770. Although China is No. 2 that must be seen in perspective of what is the per capita gross domestic product. China is 93 and Russia is 58 on that index.


7. Fleets and aircraft carriers: The US has five battleship fleets, the Second Fleet in the Atlantic, the Third Fleet in the Eastern Pacific, the Fifth Fleet in the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean, the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean and the Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific. No other nation gets a look in here. This is a list of the aircraft carriers in service in 2013: United States 10, Italy 2, United Kingdom, 1, France 1, Russia 1, Spain 1, India 1, Brazil 1, China 1 and Thailand 1.

8. Military bases: “The US operates and/or controls between 700 and 800 military bases Worldwide… (there is a) presence of US military personnel in 156 countries. The US Military has bases in 63 countries. Brand new military bases have been built since September 11, 2001 in seven countries. In total, there are 255,065 US military personnel deployed Worldwide.” (http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-worldwide-network-of-us-military-bases/5564). In addition, other NATO countries, such as France, the UK, etc. have a further 200 military locations within the network of global military control. The biggest “host” countries are those that once lost a major war in which the US was involved. Germany, Italy, Japan and Korea are the four biggest ‘hosts’. France and the UK mainly have bases in the remains of their colonial empires. (http://www.tni.org/primer/foreign-military-bases-and-global-campaign-close-them)

Russia currently has five military facilities in former Soviet republics (down from six since it incorporated the Crimea) and India has one in Tajikistan. China has no US-style overseas bases.
Mike McNair’s *Rethinking Imperialism* (Weekly Worker 980) [1] is third campist and his long historical analogies are a-historical. Like his AWL opponents in the original debate he reports on in 2004 his task is to deny what is specific about modern imperialism as analysed by Lenin and to elevate the secondary features to make bogus comparisons. What is different today is the domination of finance capital and its alliance with trans-national corporations and their domination of the entire planet.

There is no historical precedent for this which begun with the Great Depression of 1873 and was completed by the early 20th century. His description of Lenin’s position is wrong, in order to allow him to equate it with its opposite, the Stalinist opportunist popular front alliances with the national bourgeoisie (China 1927) and the trade Union bureaucracy (British General Strike of 1926) to the detriment of the working class in the oppressed nation and also in the oppressor countries.

Of course Lenin insisted on the split between oppressed and oppressor nations but the whole point here was that the oppressor nations were the home of finance capital and the monopolies and the oppressed nations were its victims, including the national bourgeoisie, a “semi-oppressed, semi-oppressing” class in his marvellously dialectical phrase.

Of course Lenin understood the concept of the Aristocracy of Labour, and of course it is true that more than just a narrow layer in the Imperialist countries benefits from the booty of empire. Nonetheless what is essential is the ideological domination of Imperialism over the whole working class and the opportunities that crises like the current one gives to revolutionaries to challenge that domination exercised today by the TU bureaucracies, from Len McCluskey to Bob Crow.

But it is absolutely untrue that “the logic of Lenin’s analysis is the alliance with the national bourgeoisie in the exploited countries; and in the imperialist countries the broad democratic alliance, including the petty bourgeoisie, against “monopoly capital”.

This describes unprincipled Popular Frontism and Lenin and the early Comintern were very careful to draw a very sharp distinction between the operation of both the Workers’ United Front and the Anti Imperialist United Front tactic and Menshevik-type class collaboration as practiced by Stalin and the degenerated Comintern post 1924. “No mixing of the red and the blue” was Trotsky line in China in the early 1930 as in the domestic class struggle, particularly after Dimitrov announced the changed line to the rightist popular frontist position in the last (seventh) Congress of the Comintern in 1935. [2] Stalin mixed the red and the blue and drowned revolutions in blood in China 1927 (through centrist opportunism) in Germany in 1933 and Spain in 1936-9 (these latter two through a conscious counter-revolutionary strategy).

Ian Donovan too is wrong in thinking that the UF or the AIUF is a political alliance although these must involve a certain degree of unavoidable temporary support for both the TU bureaucrats and the national bourgeoisie when they are in conflict with capitalist or under Imperialist attack (letters WW 981). Trotsky did not supersede the AIUF by a generalisation of Permanent Revolution [3] because he did not emphasise this in his analysis of why politically capitulating to Chiang Kai-shek led to the Shanghai massacre in 1927; the forces of world Imperialism was not involved in that particular incident.

But it is clearly the AIUF that he is defend-
ing in his 1937 letter on China to Diego Rivera against the Effelite third campists of the day:

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 Effelites cry. It is capitulation to Chiang Kai-shek! It is the abandonment of the principle of the class struggle! Bolshevism preached revolutionary defeatism in the imperialist war.

Now, the war in Spain and the Sino-Japanese War are both imperialist wars. “Our position on the war in China is the same. 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 Effelites 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.

We do not and never have put all wars on the same plane. Marx and Engels supported the revolutionary struggle of the Irish against Great Britain, of the Poles against the tsar, even though in these two nationalist wars the leaders were, for the most part, members of the bourgeoisie and even at times of the feudal aristocracy... at all events, Catholic reactionaries.

...To speak of “revolutionary defeatism” in general, without distinguishing between exploiter and exploited countries, is to make a miserable caricature of Bolshevism and to put that caricature at the service of the imperialists. [4]

Notes
[2] Trotsky opposed the Popular Front strategy because it subordinated the working class to the liberals capitalists here, thereby excluding a revolutionary strategy, the only way fascism could ultimately be defeated. The French Popular Front of 1936 and the Spanish Popular Fronts of 1936-39 the only ones claimed by their supporters as successes were, in fact, disastrous and led to massive defeats for the working class.
[3] This is how Trotsky explains his famous concept: “The Perspective of permanent revolution may be summarized in the following way: the complete victory of the democratic revolution in Russia is conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasantry. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which would inevitably place on the order of the day not only democratic but socialist tasks as well, would at the same time give a powerful impetus to the international socialist revolution. Only the victory of the proletariat in the west could protect Russia from bourgeois restoration and assure it the possibility of rounding out the establishment of socialism.”
The AIUF is the tactic, Permanent Revolution is the strategy for today’s Imperialist wars on the semi-colonial world
By Ret Marut

This piece seeks to defend, clarify and develop the theory of the Anti-Imperialist United Front (AIUF) and is in solidarity with those who have theoretically fought to do so in the past. Unfortunately many who have done so have failed to apply that theory in practice to actual wars by their own bourgeoisie.

In fact that contradiction between theory and practice has now become so acute over the question of support for the Nato-rebels in Libya that one of the foremost contributors to that communist task of theoretical clarification, Stuart King, former leader of Workers Power and now of Permanent Revolution, has been forced to admit to this author that he now repudiated his own vital contribution. The anti-imperialist united front: a debate with the GOR, 30/03/1986 [1] “I think I was wrong and the GOR were right then” he now says.

Workers Power/the League for the Fifth International may be forced to ditch their identical King-inspired if not written programme on this vital question. Other groups like the RSO who maintain an anti-imperialist line on Libya, and whose document on the AIUF was also clearly inspired by King will have to clarify why that correct if somewhat vacillating position on the AIUF was apparently inapplicable to Libya today. [2]

We will also polemically against the positions of both the Permanent Revolution Collective (CoReP), to which Socialist Fight was linked for a period, and against the League for the Revolutionary party (LRP) and its international tendency The Communist Organization for the Fourth International (COFI) because the latter use the document of the former in their internal educa-

tionals, one of their leaders informed this author. [3]

Therefore all criticisms of the CoReP apply equally to the COFI. The COFI are themselves specifically opposed to the AIUF, rigidly countering it to the Trotskyist theory of Permanent Revolution as the following extract shows,

“We reject popular fronts between the working class and bourgeois parties. The working class cannot share political power with even the shadow of the bourgeois; governmental alliances with such elements mean subordination to bourgeois politics. Party members may not occupy positions in bourgeois governments -- including those of “third world,” Stalinist and post-Stalinist countries as well as in the imperialist powers. We reject so-called anti-imperialist united fronts as a version of the popular front; they stand in absolute contradiction to the permanent revolution.” [4]

History of the AIUF

This goes back to the Comintern as first formulated by V. I. Lenin, in the Terms of Admission into Communist International, July, 1920.[5]

“8. Parties in countries whose bourgeoisie possess colonies and oppress other nations must pursue a most well-defined and clear-cut policy in respect of colonies and oppressed nations. Any party wishing to join the Third International must ruthlessly expose the colonial machinations of the imperialists of its “own” country, must support—in deed, not merely in word—every colonial liberation movement, demand the expulsion of its compatriot imperialists from the colonies, inculcate in the hearts of the workers of its own country an attitude of true brotherhood with the working population of the colonies and the oppressed nations, and conduct systematic agitation among the armed forces against all oppression of the colonial peoples.”

It was further clarified in the Theses on the national and colonial question, Minutes of the Sec-
and oppressed in the ‘third world’ and likewise seeks to make a bridge from that consciousness to the revolutionary programme.

By recognising the contradictions between oppressed and oppressor nations, between Imperialist nations and semi-colonial peoples and by recognising the healthy impulse of these masses in fighting the main enemy of all oppressed humanity, imperialist finance capital and its predatory armies and their local stooges and hired thugs, we seek to win their ears for the revolutionary Trotskyist programme.

Stuart King cites N M Roy when he understood the essence of the tactic, despite his wavering and later capitulation;

“The Fourth Congress caught Roy arguing a communist position and outlining quite clearly the importance of the AIUF”:

“We have to develop our parties in these countries in order to take the lead in the organisation of the united front against imperialism. Just as the tactics of the united proletarian front lead to the accumulation of proletarian strength in the Western countries and unmasks and discloses the treachery and compromising tactics of the Social-Democratic Party by bringing them into active conflict, so will the campaign of the united anti-imperialist front in the colonial countries liberate the leadership of the movement from the timid and hesitating bourgeoisie and bring the masses more actively in the forefront, through the most revolutionary social elements, which constitute the basis of the movement, thereby securing the final victory.” [7]

Trotsky explains the AIUF

Look at how Trotsky explains the AIUF, even if he does not use the term, in these three examples from the late 1930s.

1. Against James Maxton of the British Independent Labour Party (1936):

“Maxton and the others opine that an Italo-Ethiopian war is conflict between two rival dictators. To these politicians it appears that this fact relieves the proletariat of the duty of making a choice between two dictators. They thus define the character of the war by the political form of the state, in the course of which they themselves regard this political form in a quite superficial and purely descriptive manner, without taking into consideration the social foundations of both ‘dictatorships’.”
A dictator can also play a very progressive role in history. For example: Oliver Cromwell, Robespierre, etc. On the other hand, right in the midst of the English democracy (the Liberal) Lloyd George exercised a highly reactionary dictatorship during the war. Should a dictator place himself at the head of the next uprising of the Indian people in order to smash the British yoke — would Maxton then refuse this dictator his support? Yes or no? If no, why does he refuse his support to the Ethiopian “dictator” who is attempting to ward off the Italian yoke?

If Mussolini triumphs, it means the re-enforcement of fascism, the strengthening of imperialism and the discouragement of the colonial peoples in Africa and elsewhere. The victory of the Negus however, would mean a mighty blow not only at Italian imperialism but at imperialism as a whole and would lend a powerful impulse to the rebellious forces of the oppressed peoples. One must really be completely blind not to see this.”[8]

2. Against the Eiffelites on China, 1937

“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! Bolshevism preached revolutionary defeatism in the imperialist war.

Now, the war in Spain and the Sino-Japanese War are both imperialist wars. “Our position on the war in China is the same. 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.”[9]

3. And his oft-quoted position on Brazil in 1938:

“I will take the most simple and obvious example. In Brazil there now reigns a semi-fascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally — in this case I will be on the side of “fascist” Brazil against “democratic” Great Britain.

Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. 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!”

Leon Trotsky, Anti-Imperialist Struggle, is Key to Liberation, An Interview with Mateo Fossa, (September 1938)

Do you not recognise yourselves as James Maxton, the Eiffelites and the centrists here in all this comrades of the ICL, IBT, CoReP and the Cof? Do you not see how Trotsky scorned this counterposition, in reality a seeking to avoid the defeat of their own bourgeoisie in a predatory war against colonial or semi-colonial countries like Abyssinia, China, Brazil and Libya?

Look at how he finishes each quote (our emphasis), with expressions of scorn and exasperation at those centrists who cannot see what is at stake here, who counterpose the Permanent Revolution to anti-Imperialism, who take a backward worker-ist, ‘class pure independent’ position to hide their capitulation to Imperialism itself?

Equating AIUF with popular frontism

Everywhere the Spart “Family” equate the AIUF with popular frontism as does the CoReP, “the Anti-Imperialist United Front in Practice is the Popular Front” they say. It is for Stalinists and those centrists who have abandoned the transitional programme and method but not for genu-
by imprisoning, torturing and killing them. The bourgeois-nationalist regimes of Nasser and Qaddafi inevitably failed to address the felt needs of the masses.

To the “anti-imperialist united front,” we counterpose the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution, which holds that in the neo-colonial countries, the proletariat must lead all the oppressed masses in a struggle for socialist revolution against their “own” bourgeoisie, as part of an internationalist strategy for proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries. [10](our emphasis)

The Malvinas, when the ass’s ears poked through the orthodox Trotskyist hat

The “Family” all have the same reactionary chauvinist positions on the Malvinas conflict. They all refused to defend semi-colonial Argentina against imperialist Britain because “The Falkland war [sic] was an armed conflict between capitalist Argentina and rotten British imperialism. At no point in this war was the national sovereignty of Argentina put into question whereas the overthrow of their respective governments was in the interests of the British and also of the Argentinean working classes. For this reason communists put forward the position of revolutionary defeatism and fight for the defeat of their own bourgeoisie.”

This is only applicable to inter-imperialist wars, in a war against a semi-colony it amounts to great nation chauvinism.

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

And the rational for it all;

“the overthrow of their respective governments was in the interests of the British and also of the Argentinean working classes”;

is clearly wrong on both counts. Thatcher recovered from a disastrous opinion poll position due to her destruction of British jobs and manufacturing industry to sweep the next election because of it. This ideological victory set her up for her assault on the miners in 1985 and for her anti-union
laws and privatisation of public assets. And need we point out the dire political consequence of this for the British and world working class however much imperialism’s apologists on the far left might have sought to obfuscate their treachery by trumpeting the secondary gain of the overthrow of Galtieri.

The British working class were left ideologically leaderless by the national chauvinism of Labour leader Michael Foot and the other leaders, Reagan/Volker defeated the 1981-82 Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike...[12] Alan G,

“I agree with the Spart observation you quote as it is merely a statement of fact. I can categorically state that this does not mean any support for immigration controls by the US, Dutch or Belgian capitalist states. Whether or not this is also true for the Sparts I do not know but, like the IBT, I take no responsibility for the programme of the ICL”.[13]

This line is completely wrong. Whilst the IBT never call for immigration controls they sail so close to the wind here that it becomes similar to the AWL distinction between ‘supporting’ and ‘not opposing’ the bombing of Libya.

"However, on a sufficiently large scale, immigration flows could wipe out the national identity of the recipient countries"

What is the 'national identity' of Britain or the US? God Save the Queen and Hail to the Chief? How is this a statement of fact? It is a piece of reactionary hogwash designed to appeal to the backward national prejudices of the middle classes and the TU bureaucrats.

“Unlimited immigration as a principle is incompatible with the right to national self-determination”

Imperialist countries now have a right to self-determination against immigrants? This is racist to the core.

“An “open” U.S./Mexico border would not only introduce impoverished Mexican labourers to flood the U.S. labor market, becoming an unprotected pool for capitalist super exploitation, but would also lead to well-financed American “colonists” buying up Mexican enterprises and real estate…If, for example, there were unlimited immigration into Northern Europe, the population influx from the Mediterranean basin would tend to dissolve the national identity of small countries like Holland and Belgium.” (Workers Vanguard, Jan. 18, 1974.)

Reaction on Immigration Controls

Imperialism causes poor third world workers and peasants who are driven from their homes by starvation and oppression to seek refuge in the rich imperialist countries. This results in the whole Spart family going soft on immigration controls to defend the privileges of the aristocracy of labour. Here is the IBT defending the ICL who are clearly indicating their softness, to say the least, on immigration controls;

“However, on a sufficiently large scale, immigration flows could wipe out the national identity of the recipient countries. … Unlimited immigration as a principle is incompatible with the right to national self-determination… an “open” U.S./Mexico border would not only introduce impoverished Mexican labourers to flood the U.S. labor market, becoming an unprotected pool for capitalist super exploitation, but would also lead to well-financed American “colonists” buying up Mexican enterprises and real estate”
real estate” is also bogus, as if the Rio Grande/Bravo ever stopped them doing that anyway. “If, for example, there were unlimited immigration into Northern Europe, the population influx from the Mediterranean basin would tend to dissolve the national identity of small countries like Holland and Belgium.”

The dissolution of these priceless “National Identities” would take the form of shops selling paella, pasta and drinking Sangria and dodgy red wine and sleeping in the afternoons and stuff, we must suppose. What a terrible fate would befall these unfortunate nations. Far better to go for the McDonalds, the Coca Cola and the Big Mac!

Conclusion: the methodology of communism

We seek to combat the chauvinism that pervades the ranks of the working class in the Imperialist countries by facing them up to their internationalist duty to defend the workers of the semi-colonies against imperialist assault. It is that united front we seek to cultivate, not that of Stalinism and petty-bourgeois nationalists which capitulates to the conjunctural and feigned anti-imperialism of the nationalistic bourgeoisie. These may fight Imperialism today to preserve their own privileges by the use of anti-imperialist rhetoric only to sell out again tomorrow if the opportunity arises to enhance their privileges by another alliance with Imperialism. We have made that distinction very clear in the course of this document. In other words we seek to defend the method of the Transitional Programme; the AIUF is simply the logical extension of the United Front with workers in struggle just as the Comintern saw it in the early 1920s and as Trotsky defended up to his assassination in 1940. However the United Front in its two manifestations (domestic and in the semi-colonies) is not ‘only’ a tactic, which may or may not be applied depending on the circumstances, which for some is never now because that involves opposition to current petty-bourgeois prejudices. In that respect the RSO document is vacillating, allowing every concrete instance of a war on a semi-colony to be characterised as an exception depending on the vagaries of ‘public opinion’, applying to Saddam but not to Gaddafi because the mood of the petty bourgeois had altered in a major collapse since the 2003 mass mobilisation against the war on Iraq. [21]

The UF and AIUF are tactics that apply at all times except when the direct uprising takes place for the seizure of power and the masses are flocking to the revolutionary banner; in a sense it is wrong to characterise the UF as a tactic at all because it is the methodology of communism, its very mode of existence, its orientation to the global working class as a whole class, the only method that can mobilise that force that alone can overthrow capitalism.

Notes
[7] The anti-imperialist united front: a debate with the GOR, 30/03/1986,
[8] Leon Trotsky’s Writings on Britain, Volume III, Trotskyism versus Centrism in Britain, The Decline of the ILP (May 1936)
For the unconditional defence of Libya against Imperialism!

For a Military United Front with Gaddafi to defeat NATO and the CIA armed "rebels"!

No confidence in the government of Tripoli; only by arming all the people and by the permanent revolution can we win the struggle!

The global economic crisis has increased the appetites of Imperialism to appropriate the planet's riches by super exploiting the working class and recolonisation. Capitalist governments of the world have moved enormous sums of money from state coffers to large private capitalist financial intuitions in the name of saving capitalism's crisis cause by speculation. Now the bourgeois governments are seeking to recapitalise their coffers. For this, they force the working class to pay the price of this financial orgy. This payment is made through fiscal adjustments, the attacks on wages, and victories over unionised labor and the attack on social security, etc. It has also increased the cost of living for the masses, and increased inter-Imperial competition in the semi-colonies.

In Europe, from Greece to Ireland, popular resistance was restrained by pro-Imperialist party leaders and trade unions. In Wisconsin in the USA workers leaders linked to the Democratic Party did the same. In Latin America, so far, but not for long, the governments of the "centre left" are delaying and dampening social conflict by the control they exert over mass organizations. Obama ordered the start of the bombing on Libya when he was with the pro-Imperialist President Dilma Vana Rousseff, in Brazil.

In Africa the liberal bourgeois opposition to dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt made democratic transition arrangements to install new puppet governments to stabilise the country and keep it sympathetic to the U.S. and Israel. We do not consider these processes as "Arab revolution" or "democratic revolutions." These popular uprisings are genuine expressions of the outrage at price increases and increased oppression caused by the imperialist crisis which began in 2008 but Imperialism seek to divert these potential revolutionary situations enhance and extend its dominance in Africa and the Middle East.

If Imperialism cannot take ownership peacefully as in the fraudulent referendum that divided the Sudan, then the UN will come to occupy the country by military force and impose their fraudulent elections as happened in Ivory Coast. All this, with the support of the African Union and the ANC government in South Africa.

In Libya, Syria and Iran, Imperialism seeks to accomplish coups camouflaged as "democratic", by taking advantage of the "popular uprising" in neighbouring countries. In Iran, the U.S. and Israel seek to revive the reactionary "green revolution". In Syria U.S. Imperialism and its Zionist
enclave strive to create the same scenario of civil war to justify another military intervention. In Libya, Imperialism made a qualitative leap in its intervention. Not only by what it did after starting the "rebellion", but they had also prepared beforehand. A "revolt" in Libya is not any kind of revolution, but a counterrevolution, directed by Imperialism and supported and sponsored by the CIA. It is the continuation of a series of attempts to restore the monarchy and tribal privileges in favour of U.S. and European Union, which began shortly after Gaddafi took power in 1969 and continued sporadically since then. Not coincidentally, the flag of the "rebels" is the flag of the monarchy imposed by Imperialism, the flag of the puppet King Idris (1951-1969).

Rebel leaders in Libya were CIA agents from the beginning, as were the anti-Chavez coup leaders in Venezuela in 2002. Imperialism, headed by the U.S. and France, seek to balkanised Libya, as it did in Yugoslavia or to dominate it together, as in Afghanistan and Iraq. We have also seen this in Bolivia, where Evo Morales surrendered a larger share of the revenues from gas exploration to the pro-Imperialist coup makers in the east of the country.

Those who hold the naïve notion that what happens in Libya is a revolution of "masses" and a continuation of the riots in Tunisia and Egypt, they forget that the masses have been duped by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet Revolution (Czechoslovakia), the Orange Revolution (Ukraine) and all other 'revolutions' made in the CIA. They were all, in fact, counter-revolutions, sponsored by Imperialism.

Since the new escalation of Israeli attacks against Palestinians 20 Palestinians have been killed and 50 wounded in the worst Israeli offensive in Gaza for two years. It is the bloodiest attack since the 2008 military operation that killed 1,400 Palestinians. We are for the destruction of the Zionist state of Israel and for a multi-ethnic workers' and peasants' government a based on workers' and peasants' councils.

For 21 years Hosni Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) in Egypt was a member of the Socialist (Second) International (SI) alongside the New Zealand Labour Party, the Australian Labor Party and the British Labour Party. The SI only expelled the NDP in January 2011, after the mass demonstrations emerged that brought down Mubarak, but not the NDP. But true to its long history of defending British Imperialism British Labour leader Ed Miliband gave unequivocal support to the Benghazi rebels and to the bombing of Libya on the totally hypocritical basis that, "as internationalists we have both the responsibility and the opportunity to help enforce international law and save innocents from slaughter". Using Gaddafi's foolish threat of "no mercy, and no pity" he sanctioned the bombing which will result in far more deaths than Gaddafi could have caused, but, as an 'unintended consequence' will put the oil resources of Libya in the hands of western Imperialism to invest in the markets of Wall street and the City of London and divert it from schools, hospitals and welfare payments in Libya and investments in other African countries. Jim Murphy MP, Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary gave the cue that the rest of the soft-left in Britain and internationally have followed, "Inaction would have undermined the cause of freedom not just for the hundreds of thousands of people who have risen up against Gaddafi in Libya, but in other countries where people are also fighting for change."

And just so as we are left in doubt about the Labour party's position on Imperialism's murderers Murphy writes; "our thoughts should be with all British Forces around the world, including the more than 10,000 Britons in Afghanistan. Those undertaking courageous acts in the sky above Libya and in the Mediterranean should be given all the support they need because their bravery is what enables the UN resolution to be enforced and the Libyan people to be protected". There is, naturally, no concern about the civilians and fighters blown to pieces 'to save lives' in Iraq, Afghanistan or now Libya only concern and praise for the killers.

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 a bunch bourgeois turncoats from Gaddafi regime in favour of big business internationally.

Political groupings claiming to be Marxists who portray the popular uprisings in the Arab world as diverted "revolutions" are demagogues, who flatter and stupefy the masses while new pro-Imperialist bourgeois puppet governments are being stabilised. But the worst is when these groups in the name of supporting the Libyan masses in their struggle for democracy, combined with Imperialist war propaganda by the world media to cover up the CIA coup. Those who now refuse to establish a military front with Gaddafi externally and internally to defeat the interests of Imperialism, betray the struggle and the fight against global Imperialism and the genocidal state of Israel that massacres the Palestinians.

We denounce the main international revisionist currents that formally share the following positions:

1) characterise the existence of an "Arab revolution" or "democratic revolutions" in Africa and the Middle East
2) Support the pro-imperialist "rebels" in Libya

These include the USFI (NPA-France), LIT (PSTU-Brazil), ITU (Izquierda Socialista-Argentina), IMT (Socialist Appeal, Britain); CWI (Socialist Party Britain): 1ST (SWP, Britain); FT (PTS-Argentina); FLIT (LOI-DO Argentina); L51 (Workers Power-Britain)

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 clan.

The masses can have no confidence in the anti-Imperialism of Gaddafi. Therefore we demand the arming of the whole Libyan people against Imperialism and the reactionary opposition. We demand the unconditional defence of Libya against Imperialism and its agents. We demand a military united front with Gaddafi against NATO and the royalist, CIA agent, "rebels" who are politically similar to the pro-Imperialist Loyalists of the north of Ireland, the Inkatha Freedom Party of South Africa or, more closely, the Contras of Nicaragua.

This was the revolutionary tactics of Lenin and Trotsky before the Kornilov uprising, Kerensky's former general who tried to carry out a coup in Russia in August 1917. The Bolsheviks called for a united front and military weapons to Kerensky demanded at the same time that Kerensky be blamed for paving the path for reaction, and thus prepared a social revolution. Similarly, the reaction to the responsibility of Gaddafi for the coup will drive the masses to combine the tasks of the anti-Imperialist struggle with the democratic and socialist to move toward the establishment of a workers and peasants government where the pan-Arabism of Gaddafi has stopped. The victory over the counterrevolutionary Imperialist military offensive would not only be a huge boost for the proletariat Libyan who could settle accounts with the warlord of Tripoli, but would also give a huge impetus to the struggle of workers in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Ivory Coast, Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan against Imperialism and the native
capitalists.
The first step towards this is to fight in our own countries against the Imperialist bourgeoisie and semi-colonial Britain, Brazil, South Africa. We advocate the defeat of our own governments, as allies against Imperialist recolonisation of the world proletariat. We support the full right of the Libyan masses to seize the multinational British, Brazilian and South African companies and of all capital in Libya to nationalise them without compensation under workers' control.

- Defeat Imperialism, Fight for the sovereignty, unity and independence of Libya with the methods of permanent revolution!
- For a Military United Front with the Libyan army against pro-Imperialist INTC and against all groups sponsored by the CIA!
- Build Revolutionary Committees in all workplaces, colleges and regions against Imperialist intervention!
  - For Constituent Assembly based on these revolutionary committees.
  - For a Workers and Farmers Government!
  - In defence of the right to establish trade unions and the right to strike!
  - No immigration control, equal rights and conditions for all immigrant workers!
  - Workers' Control of work places and oil fields, food subsidies and essential goods, minimum living wage, full employment, expropriation of all enterprises and Imperialist capitals!
  - For strikes and occupations to prevent the movement of troops and munitions to attack Libya!
  - For a Socialist Federation of North Africa and the Middle East

Socialist Fight Motion on Syria to the Labour Representation Committee AGM on 23 November 2013

Negotiations with Russia and Iran disarm Syria of its chemical weapons and Iran from developing nuclear weapons and so prepare for a future attack against weaker enemies. They have been forced into a partial retreat because of:
1. The loss of the HoC vote on 29 August.
2. The likely defeat of Obama by Congress.
Public opinion did not buy the obvious lie that the ‘war on terror’ must defeat Al-Qaeda but Assad had to go by arming Al-Qaeda. The Sarin gas atrocity came at an obviously convenient moment.
Western Imperialism’s war aims in Syria are:
1. Increase its rate of profit by more direct economic control.
2. Defeat Hezbollah to protect its client Israel.
3. Prepare for a joint attack on Iran with Israel. Eleven jihadist rebels allied on 25 September to reject both the Western-backed NC and the FSA. Islamist militias manipulated by Western intelligence have been the battering ram for Western Imperialist foreign policy increasingly since the 1980s. There would be no mass civil war in Syria without Islamists imported by Saudi, Qatar, Jordan, Turkey, and ultimately the US, UK, and France.
Despite previous brutal pro-Imperialist tyranny by Assad defending Syria’s national sovereignty demands the victory of the Syrian National Army over US-sponsored forces. The LRC fights in the labour movement for the defeat of all Imperialist-sponsored forces. The defeat of this utterly bogus “revolution” will defend a relatively secular administration, strengthen the Syrian working class against Assad and dent chauvinism in US, Britain and France.
Egypt: On horses who live on the wind and revolutions which are simultaneously counter-revolutions

By Gerry Downing

When I was a child in rural West Cork my father told me a story of a man who had a horse and no fodder for him as winter came on. So he devised a plan to save him. He would teach his horse to live on the wind. All winter long he trained his horse in this technique until spring arrived. The horse was now fully trained but suddenly and inexplicably died.

This tale popped into my head when I read the story as related by several of the left and self-proclaimed revolutionary left of the “revolution” in Egypt that was going so excellently well that it overthrew the dictator Morsi but then suddenly went so disastrously and inexplicably wrong, like the poor horse in West Cork. General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi “stole” the “revolution”, the generals “hijacked” it etc. The Workers Revolutionary Party’s Marxist Review had a front page featuring those fireworks celebrations that were put on by the army supporters paid for, of course, by the Coptic Christian billionaire Naguib Sawiris who organised the coup and mass mobilisations in collaboration with the Tamarod, the CIA and the army:

“The mass movement created a huge crisis for the bourgeoisie and forced the army to step in and, after failing to reach any compromise with the Muslim Brotherhood, launch a coup to topple the Morsi presidency and replace it with a fake ‘interim’ government as a fig leaf for army rule.”

There is much nonsense talked today of revolutions in the Arab Spring. Political idiots like the IMT’s Alan Wood could hail a reactionary populist uprising of 17 million against Morsi in Egypt as a revolution and then be left with the awful task of explaining how a “revolution” could produce such terrible counter-revolutionary results. The WRP News Line came to the same conclusion “the revolution forced the army to overthrow Morsi” says Dave Wiltshire, lost in contradictions about his revolution that overthrew Morsi and then went immediately wrong – if the coup was the revolution then the coup was also the counter-revolution that restored the army dictatorship, they are the same act yet we must believe the self-same coup was simultaneously both a revolution and a counter-revolution!

Wiltshire then gives up completely and adopts the ‘plague on both your houses’ Effelite position [1], refusing to defend the working class and poor who support the MB who are now joined by every progressive fighter in Egypt. “the two wings of the bourgeoisie, representing the army and the Muslim Brotherhood are reduced to tearing each other apart while their imperialist masters look on in disarray”, he says. And then, having rejected participation in the actual struggle adopts the self-same ‘independent’ position as the SWP’s Revolutionary Socialists and pulls out the Trotsky quote in asserting the programme of Permanent Revolution, “countries with belated bourgeois development”.

In the same Marxist Review magazine Gabriel Polley explains how that great revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, had accomplished such wonders in Iran:

“Shi’s Islam has a long tradition of support for the oppressed, mostazafin, and the radical clergy articulated the demands of the revolution under the guise of religious doctrine. The outstanding leader of the opposition to the Shah was Ayatollah Khomeini”

And what of the Iranian working class, we might ask? If the Egyptian working class must lead the Egyptian revolution why is the Iranian working class denied this role? The answer to that lies in Gerry Healy’s manoeuvrings with the Arab bourgeoisie via Vanessa Redgrave, Alex Mitchell and others. They sanctioned the mass executions of leftists and trade unionists (“CIA agents”) to lionise Khomeini as above. The class character of the Iranian regime was correctly outlined in a statement of 12 February 1979 by the ICFI Political, still formally unrepudiated:

Millions of Iranians today follow Khomeini not because they desire the reactionary Utopia of an
‘Islamic state’ but because the Ayatollah symbolizes uncompromising opposition to the Pahlavi Dynasty and its autocratic rule.

But just over four years later the line was clearly rejected totally: “Whoever fails to see the social dimension of the Islamic Revolution in Iran will never understand its depth.”(News Line, February 28, 1983) [2] The anti-Pabloites of this ICFI tradition had become more Pabloite than the Pabloites themselves.

Workers Power’s Marcus Halaby manages to equate the coup which overthrew Morsi and restored the army with the coup of 2011 which overthrew Mubarak, thereby making a facile equation of a powerful revolutionary upsurge which forced the hand of the army and obliged them to concede a measure of democratic rights with a counter-revolutionary mobilisation of middle-class army supporters who demanded that the army topple Morsi. The army, of course, obliged because it had already ideologically won the mass movement to its side. This was a populist counter-revolution which set out to restore army rule and it succeeded in its aims. And it then immediately went on to attack its opponents, Morsi supporters in the beginning but now the whole of progressive Egypt.

It is best we leave the final word to the Revolutionary Socialist of Egypt, the SWP’s Egypt section from a report in WSWS:

Ahmed Shawki, editor of the International Socialist Review, declared, “The Tamarod movement broke the dam by providing a vehicle by which the mass of the Egyptian population were able to make Morsi pay a political price for his actions.” He was posed the question, “Military coups usually herald the defeat of the revolutionary process—they are often the most extreme representation of the counterrevolution. Does the military’s intervention to remove Morsi, appoint a new president and promise new elections represent the victory of counterrevolution?” He replied: “Absolutely not”.

Shawki described the army’s intervention as merely an effort to: “contain the movement... So while the military is in the streets and has overstepped the constitutional limits to its power, I believe that it will seek some means to quickly return power to a civilian authority. I don’t think it wants to hold state power”.

It is clear all these forces backed a horse that was about to die. But there is another horse who is alive and well, though he has suffered a serious defeat in this race won by the Egyptian army and its US allies. And that is the Egyptian working class. But surely it must develop a better revolutionary leadership than these idiots above who cannot distinguish genuine revolution from populist reactionary counter-revolution.

Notes


We oppose unconditionally the proposed Imperialist attack on Syria and are for its defeat. The fundamental task of the hour for all serious socialists and anti-Imperialists internationally is to defend the national sovereignty of Syria against this Imperialist attack which is launched with Zionist assistance (a big Israeli military delegation is in Washington right now discussing with Susan Rice) in order to assist their allies, the Free Syrian Army and the various al Qaeda rebels of the Al-Nusra Front etc. There are no revolutionary socialists or anti-Imperialists fighting Assad in Syria, talk of what might have been is to support a phantom revolutionary army in the face of the very obvious reality of this Imperialist war of aggression.

We have every reason to suspect that Sarin and mustard gas (the same as used by the U.S. in Vietnam) which killed hundreds of people was more the work of Imperialist terrorism in the region. Obama and the Imperialist mass media are seeking to ascribe the blame to the Syrian government and are using this to justify the attack. And the same pro-Imperialist forces, this time the KLA, fabricated a bogus tale of the Račak Massacre in Kosovo in 1999 (all the dead were KLA fighters) [1] to justify the bombing of Yugoslavia, just exactly as they are probably doing now with their Sarin gas “red line” and the Weapons of Mass Destruction lies used to justify invading Iraq in 2003 and the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964 used to justify the war in Vietnam. [2] It is also reminiscent of the Gleiwitz incident, a staged attack by Nazi forces posing as Poles on 31 August 1939, against the German radio station Sender Gleiwitz in Gleiwitz, Upper Silesia, Germany (since 1945: Gliwice, Poland) on the eve of World War II in Europe. This was used to justify the invasion of Poland in 1939. [3]

It has always been thus; the spiral of Imperialist barbarism tries to hide a crime by committing another, greater, crime. The Imperialist terror attack using chemical weapons against hundreds of children and adults in Syria occurred immediately in the wake of a
blatant coup in Egypt, followed by a bloody massacre of hundreds of the Egyptian oppositionists by the new pro-Imperialist coup government. Now, to cover the second crime, Imperialism threatens to bomb Syria, accusing it in a great hullabaloo of massacring their own people, when we know that since 2011 the U.S. itself has been supplying arms and other assistance to the terrorist mercenaries in Syria. The U.S. government has enlisted allies in the West and the Middle East and has transported huge killing machines by sea and air to commit genocide against the Arab peoples. They have used lies and media manipulation to accomplish this as in previous operations in Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and more recently in Libya.

We offer the traditional Marxist position of unconditional but critical support to Syria in this assault and in the war against the Imperialist-sponsored rebels. We must follow the tactic of Lenin and Trotsky to the threat of Kornilov in Russia in 1917. We are for crushing the mercenaries of the FSA and the Al-Nusra Front. We are for an Anti-Imperialist United Front (AIUF) with Assad. We demand that Assad arms the working class and call for the enlisting of all the people in the army against the mercenaries and Imperialism. But we do not support Assad. This is a matter of principle. The Leninist-Trotskyists have not supported in the past, do not support in the present nor will in the future support any capitalist government. As Lenin said:

“Even now we must not support Kerensky’s government. This is unprincipled. We may be asked: aren’t we going to fight against Kornilov? Of course we must! But this is not the same thing; there is a dividing line here, which is being stepped over by some Bolsheviks who fall into compromise and allow themselves to be carried away by the course of events. We shall fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, just as Kerensky’s troops do, but we do not support Kerensky. On the contrary, we expose his weakness. There is the difference. It is rather a subtle difference, but it is highly essential and must not be forgotten.” [4]

We reject the abject notion that Imperialism is sponsoring any type of a revolution in Syria, no more than it did in sponsoring and militarily assisting the overthrow of Gaddafi in Libya or in covertly supporting the army coup in Egypt. Those who point to the subsequent slaying of the American Ambassador in Libya a year ago or the US support for the Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi when he was in office forget that Imperialism has no permanent friends or enemies, only economic and geo-political interests. The Fundamentalists it supported in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 90s fought it later in Iraq and Afghanistan itself, those it sponsored in Libya turned against it in Mali, those it is now sponsoring in Syria via its client states in the Gulf, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, will later fight it in a new arena. But if the US overthrow Assad and defeat Hezbollah at the same time it will have gained its most important strategic geo-political war aim in the region: it will have removed the threat to Israel posed by Hezbollah, the best guerrilla fighting force in the region, and it will have prepared the next attack for regime change on Iran. That it will have facilitated the imposition of barbaric regimes who may confront Israel later is very much a secondary question for Imperialism; the CIA celebrated the fall of Kabul to the Taliban and the lynching of former President Mohammad Najibullah in Afghanistan in September 1996.

The United Nations is effectively a nursery talking shop whereby the Imperialists allow the assembled nations of the world to play with the toys of diplomacy on secondary questions whilst it gets on with its own business regardless of what they think. Western Imperialism bombed Yugoslavia in 1999
despite the fact that the UN Security Council did not sanction it. US Imperialism considers the UN its own thing, because it is the majority funder and provides its HQ. It is nothing but a back office of the Pentagon when it decides to act for world order under US terms. The split on the top table, the Security Council, is unavoidable and can no longer be postponed if Imperialism is not to relinquish its all-encompassing global predatory role - economically, politically and militarily. This must mean war against Russia and China in the medium term. The social consequences on every continent are nothing but collateral damage for this “alliance of robbers” as Lenin described the League of Nations in 1920.

We reject any characterisation of this attack or the war in Syria since 2011 as any type of an inter-Imperialist proxy war between US-led Western Imperialism and Chinese-Russian Eastern Imperialism. The US and its allies in the UK, France, Germany and Japan control the overwhelming majority of the economic and military resources of the planet and are as bellicose now as the Imperialist powers were before WWI and WWII. They are going to war because capitalism’s falling rate of profit means this is the only way to restore a higher rate of profit for their trans-national corporations and finance houses in Wall Street, the City of London, Paris, Hamburg and Tokyo.

Just the announcement of the attack on Syria has boosted oil prices. The commodity hegemony of the “Seven Sisters” oil barons controlled by the U.S. and Britain (Exxon, Mobil, Gulf, Socal, Texaco, Shell, BP), whose main partners in the Middle East, not by chance, are Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE, the major direct funders of the Syrian mercenaries. “In New York, the price of a barrel of crude oil for October delivery rose $3.23 to $112.24 a barrel, the highest since May 3, 2011. Already in London, the price of Brent crude oil for delivery in October, reached a maximum of six months, rising 26% to $117.34 a barrel. The United States, France and the UK are close to a military intervention in Syria, after the alleged use of chemical weapons in the country.” [5]

This war could well be the opening volleys of WWIII in what is essentially a global war for markets between the NATO bloc and the central opposition around Russia and China. The Chinese and Russian bourgeoisies are not strong enough to prevail in the fight for their own areas of influence. We see this in the successive retreats forced on China in Africa, first in Libya, then in Mali and more recently in the Central African Republic.

Compared to Western Imperialism the resources of Russia and China combined are puny indeed. This is a Western Imperialist-sponsored war and a counter-revolution which is currently engaged in ethnically cleansing the Kurds in northern Syria in order to declare an Islamic state based on Sharia law with all the terrible consequences for women, gays and lesbians and all minorities who are not sufficiently of the Sunni Muslim faith. The sponsoring of Sunni Muslim terrorism has been the main strategic orientation for the US via the CIA since the fall of Saddam made Shi’a Iran the main objective opponent in the region. The Special Activities Division of the CIA has carried out much Covert Action and “Special Activities” such as bombings of Shi’a civilians in Iraqi marketplaces to promote communal violence for its own ends. That is the reason for the obviously growing popularity of the Assad government not only among all the ethnic minority communities but also among the urban Sunni Muslims who wish to defend at least the level of secular rights and freedoms they have under Assad.

We therefore reject absolutely that this is, or is degenerating into, a sectarian Sunni/
Shi’a conflict no more than the conflict in the north of Ireland was/is a religious Catholic/Protestant sectarian conflict. Clearly the source and aggressive perpetrators are the Sunni-based Al Nusra Front, assisted by Imperialist secret agents and the main victims are the Shi’a and all other minorities, despite some instances of sectarian atrocities on the government side. This too parallels the course of the conflict in the north of Ireland; the pro-Imperialist Loyalists are the source of sectarian divisions and the main perpetrators of atrocities. Religion is always an ideological cloak beneath which people fight out their real material economic, social and political interests. The dividing lines in both conflicts, as in the entire semi-colonial world, are between the forces of Imperialism and the forces of anti-Imperialism. Revolutionaries are always unequivocally anti-Imperialist, just as Trotskyists were and still are unyielding defenders of the deformed and degenerate workers states. Indeed anti-Imperialism was at the heart of that defence.

Those who cannot seek the defeat of their own Imperialist war-mongers in this attack have fallen at the first hurdle and are of no use to the working class whatsoever. The kindest thing that we can say about them is that they are confusing the concepts of unconditional and uncritical support. Their main motivation in defending the bogus “Syrian Revolution” is to gain acceptance from the trade union bureaucracy, the social-Imperialist layer which is the main pillar of capitalism in the ranks of the working class.

We salute the heroism of the brave soldiers of the Syrian National Army who have suffered terrible casualties (up to 50% of the war dead) in defence of their country’s right to self-determination against this Imperialist-sponsored assault. They have every right to get their arms and other assistance from Iran and Russia; Imperialist Special Forces have been on the ground in Syria since 2011. From the ranks of these anti-Imperialist working class fighters may come the forces for the future revolutionary socialist party which will in its turn deal with Assad and his reactionary bourgeois nationalists whose economic policy was as anti-working class and as neo-liberal as any Imperialist country. We are confident that the pro-Imperialist rebels and their supporters will be consigned to the dustbin of history by these anti-Imperialist forces.

Of course principled revolutionary socialists and anti-Imperialists do not defend the record and practice of reactionary bourgeois nationalist governments like those of the “Supreme Leader” of Iran, Ali Khamenei, Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi or Bashar al-Assad. These were and are all brutal tyrants and as pro-Imperialist as domestic political conditions allow them to be. We can never forget the favour Assad’s father Hafez al-Assad did for the Zionists and Western Imperialism in procuring the terrible massacre of the Palestinian in the Tel al-Zaatar refugee camp during the Lebanese Civil War on August 12, 1976. And they have brutally oppressed their own working class, outlawing strikes and executing and imprisoning trade union leaders and imposing corporate state trade unions to oppress the workers. But there are oppressed and oppressor nations; Imperialist nations and semi-colonial nations. This is the essence of Imperialism according to Lenin. These humanitarian liberal social patriots who point to the terrible deeds of the semi-colonial tyrants and equate their crimes with those of Imperialism itself deserve universal contempt. They stand in the tradition of the “third campists” like Max Shachtman when proclaiming “neither Imperialism nor Assad but the working class”. This tendency now compromises the vast majority of self-proclaimed Trotskyist groups internationally.
Very few indeed continue to look on the reactionary rebels as revolutionaries or see a revolution hiding in the tail of that particular comet. We cannot fight for socialism in our own Imperialist country and accept the booty of empire extracted from the brutal oppression of semi-colonial workers and peasants as its source.

We stand unequivocally with Lenin on this question:

“That is why the focal point in the Social-Democratic programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the essence of Imperialism, and is deceitfully evaded by the social-chauvinists and Kautsky. This division is not significant from the angle of bourgeois pacifism or the philistine Utopia of peaceful competition among independent nations under capitalism, but it is most significant from the angle of the revolutionary struggle against Imperialism” [6]

If the bourgeois governments of Russia, China and Iran do not capitulate again before Imperialism, and Imperialism is consistent with their own interests, we may have a third world war. In this conflict revolutionaries did not seek out an ideal and comfortable third camp, they cannot be mistaken as mere pacifists. Neither do we have illusions in the bourgeoisies of Russia, China, Iran or Syria. The outcome for humanity will be barbarism if we do not prevail in the struggle to defeat the U.S. and its allies. We put our faith in the victory of the oppressed nations and the reconstruction of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution.

● Defend Syria’s right to self-determination, For the military victory of Syria against any Imperialist attack!
● Defeat the Imperialists-sponsored rebels of the Free Syrian Army and the Al-Nusra Front!
● Arm the entire working class and poor of the cities to fight Imperialism and its mercenary rebel proxy army!
● Build Revolutionary Committees in all work-places, colleges and regions against Imperialist intervention!
● For a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly based on these committees!
● In defence of the right to establish trade unions and the right to strike!
● For workers’ control of the work places and oil fields, for subsidies on food and essential goods, minimum living wage, full employment, expropriation of all enterprises and Imperialist capital!
● For a Workers and Peasants Government as part of a Socialist Federation of the Middle East!

Notes

[1] NATO’s Illegal War Against Serbia/ The Lies of The Račak Massacre In Kosovo, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-muEj_E0PY
[2] In 2005 the National Security Agency concluded that the Maddox had engaged the North Vietnamese Navy on August 2, but that there were no North Vietnamese Naval vessels present during the incident of August 4. The August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident, where U.S. warships were allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese PT Boats, was cited by President Lyndon B. Johnson as a legitimate provocation mandating U.S. escalation in Vietnam, yet Tonkin was a staged charade that never took place. This is an exact repeat of what Bill Clinton did in 1999, Bush and Blair did to attack Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 and we can be sure Obama is now doing in Syria. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Tonkin_Incident
The former American Trotskyist organisation, the Socialist Workers Party has in the past months abandoned all pretence at revolutionary socialism as it openly backs imperialist forces and fascist gangs in Ukraine. The past 50 years has seen the total degeneration of this organisation from the abandoning Trotskyism in favour of bourgeois nationalism and Castroism to finally becoming a voice for its own imperialist bourgeoisie. This position by the SWP is entirely in keeping with their history, after taking a principled stand against the Shachtmanites in the 1930s they had degenerated two decades later. Principled Trotskyists in the 1960s predicted the political trajectory of the SWP when under the leadership of Joseph Hanson it made an unprincipled merger with the Pabloite International Secretariat of the Fourth International:

Via Castro and Pabloism, Cannon arrived at exactly the point in methodology where stood Burnham-Shachtman in 1939-40. Instrumental in achieving this remarkable transformation was the same ‘radical milieu’ in the United States which had provided the steam for Burnham-Shachtman. To insist on the independent mobilisation of the working class behind a conscious Trotskyist vanguard would draw the accusation from these middle class radicals of ‘sectarianism’ [1]

The SWP today finds itself beyond the Shachtmanite position of sitting on the fence and like Burnham before has gone over completely to the side of US imperialism. Unable to support the mobilisation of workers in the eastern Ukraine against the fascist squads.

In the SWP newspaper *The Militant* they peddle the fiction that the victims of the Odessa massacre were murdered by Russian separatists and that the supporters if the Kiev junta attempted to save them from the inferno! Video evidence strongly contradicts this claim. Much of the reporting in *The Militant* is derived from such source’s as the *New York Times*, hardly unbiased coverage![2] Revealing the SWP’s na"ive appreciation of the US propaganda machine. It is therefore no coincidence that they should display such Russiaphobia reminiscent of the McCartherite witch hunt of the 1950s.

No mention is made in its pages of the symbolic fascist style of this massacre in Odessa, the burning of the House of Trade Unions with the anti fascists inside. Instead *The Militant* triumphantly proclaims: “Armed separatist bands in the east and south never got a foothold or were quickly driven out of the largest cities, including Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk, as well as Odessa.”[3]

The heroic anti-fascists in Odessa which included the class fighters the Union ‘Borotba’
revolutionary socialist organisation, are described as ‘vigilantes’ who ‘fled into the nearby Trade Union building’. [4]

Critical support is even given to an oligarch who whipped up his wage slaves into strike action in defence of national unity: “Rinat Akhmetov deployed workers from his two steel plants in Mariupol May 14 to join city cops……and oust separatist forces……Thousands of workers signed up.” [5]

The Donetsk Peoples’ Republic has now announced this oligarch is to have his property nationalised. Denying the role of fascist organisations such as Svoboda and the Right Sector, The Militant claims the population has been subjected to a: “Propaganda barrage from Russian media claiming the new government in Kiev was run by a ‘fascist junta,’” [6] Even some bourgeois media such as the BBC have occasionally acknowledged the fascist organisations dominating the Maidan movement which The Militant claims ‘energized working class people all across the country’, [7] terrorised would be the correct word.

The working class has actually rallied around the remnants of the October Revolution, and made progressive calls for expropriating the oligarchs. However The Militant declares the working class protesters as ‘separatist armed thugs’ who are ‘draping themselves with phrases and symbols from the Stalinist era’. [8] These symbols do not just represent relics of Stalinism they also recall to the working class the progressive nature of socialised property relations and planned economy in the albeit degenerated workers state of the Soviet Union. The SWP is of course blinded by Stalinophobia and is incapable of seeing this. The Donetsk and Luhgansk Peoples’ Republics votes for independence from Ukraine is dismissed by these middle class idiots: “The May 11 vote was organised by a small group of heavily armed paramilitary units”[9]

This is simply parroting the bourgeois press and its lies! Indeed The Militant quotes The New York Times that in this election there was: “A poster calling for rejection of the “European Jewish Choice” was hung near the ballot box” [10]

They supply no evidence of this claim and even if it is true they fail to mention that there is in Europe now a government which includes fascists in ministerial posts and uses fascist death squads to terrorise the population and especially the organised working class, and that is the Kiev government. It is also directed and abetted by the CIA and Nato forces. Imperialism is backing Ukrainian fascism, the small number of Russian fascists have the backing of no one.

US imperialism and its allies of the North Atlantic bloc are hell bent on exporting their finance capital to Ukraine. Accusations of Russian ‘imperialism’ do not stand up to justification when the world economy is dominated by US finance capital, extracting interest from the majority of the nations on the planet. This is why the American ruling class will back fascists in the Ukraine. As Trotsky explained: “Fascism is the cudgel in the hands of finance capital. The aim of the crushing of proletarian democracy is to raise the rate of exploitation of labour power.” [11]

The SWP has crossed the class lines and joined cheerleaders of its own ruling class, for revolutionary socialists we unequivocally oppose imperialism and fascism.

Notes
[7] ibid
[8] ibid
[10] ibid
We need to tackle the ideological justification advanced by both the pro Imperialist side and the fence-sitting third campist “neither Moscow nor the US/EU/Nato but the international working class” side; that both Russia and China are Imperialist states (“Eastern Imperialism”). Therefore any conflict between either or both of them and US-dominated global Imperialism (“Western Imperialism”) is a conflict between rival Imperialist powers and therefore revolutionary socialists should support neither in that war. We should advocate revolutionary defeatism for ourselves and for the Russian/Chinese working class, i.e. they should seek the defeat of their own bourgeoisie in order to combat the imperialist chauvinism that sweeps the masses in wartime via its main conduit in modern times, the Labour and trade union bureaucracy. We content that this is fundamentally wrong, that neither Russia nor China are Imperialist powers in the Marxist sense and that therefore in any conflict between Imperialism and these states it is necessary to form an Anti Imperialist United Front with them either singly or together if both are simultaneously attacked.

The balance of forces internationally is nothing like in the periods before WWI or WWII when roughly equal Imperialist power blocs faced each other; now the economic and military power is overwhelmingly on the side of US Imperialism and its NATO allies.

Now we say that in this conflict today in the Ukraine revolutionary dual defeatism is equal to national chauvinism in western imperialist countries because neither Russia or China are Imperialist countries, and it amounts to a demand that the Russian and Chinese workers refuse to defend themselves against US aggression.

We caution newer comrades against bandying about the term “Imperialism” as groups like the AWL does in imitation to how it is used in the bourgeois mass media. In Marxist terms “Imperialism” has a precise meaning and this is the rule of finance capital. We take this quote from Trotsky in 1939, when the old semi-feudal empires of pre-WWI were in the dustbin of history, to make that point:

History has known the “imperialism” of the Roman state based on slave labor, the imperialism of feudal land-ownership, the imperialism of commercial and industrial capital, the imperialism of the Czarist monarchy, etc. The driving force behind the Moscow bureaucracy is indubitably the tendency to expand its power, its prestige, its revenues. This is the element of “imperialism” in the widest sense of the word which was a property in the past of all monarchies, oligarchies, ruling castes, medieval estates and classes. However, in contemporary literature, at least Marxist literature, imperialism is understood to mean the expansionist policy of fi-
nance capital which has a very sharply defined economic content. To employ the term “imperialism” for the foreign policy of the Kremlin – without elucidating exactly what this signifies – means simply to identify the policy of the Bonapartist bureaucracy with the policy of monopolistic capitalism on the basis that both one and the other utilize military force for expansion. Such identification, capable of sowing only confusion, is much more proper to pettybourgeois democrats than to Marxists (our emphasis). [1]

Michael Pröbsting’s damn lies and statistics
But what about economically? Michael Pröbsting of the Austrian-based RCIT has produced a big pamphlet to prove, on behalf of the whole third campist crew, how wrong we in Socialist Fight and the LCFI are and that both are imperialist. He even calls his work, *Russia as a Great Imperialist Power*, [2] with a front cover cartoon of Uncle Sam facing a very angry Russian bear which is clearly just about to rip his head off. We would suggest that this is an illegitimate use of imperialist propaganda in a self-proclaimed Marxist magazine.

The work is replete with extensive charts and tables to statistically prove his point that Russia and China are the new rising Imperialist powers about to dominate the planet and the USA is the declining power, soon about to be eclipsed by these bear-like and yellow menaces, which are our own and everybody’s enemies and the real danger. Much of the work proves only that these are unequal societies, as were the former deformed and degenerated workers’ states, though not anything like as unequal as their successor capitalist states are now. But even the more relevant statistics and charts are one sided and very misleading (damn lies and statistics) as to the real economic relationships between Russia and China and global imperialism and who poses the military dangers.

Pröbsting says:
In sum, in less than two decades a number of Russian monopolies have been formed which exert a total grip on the country’s economy. Russia’s capitalism is probably more monopolized than most other imperialist economies. As we will see below in more detail, these monopolies are involved in all forms of businesses – starting with oil and gas extraction, metal mining and manufacturing, and up to finance. Lenin’s definition of an imperialist power is obviously applicable when it comes to Russia’s monopoly capital. [3]

But we must ask who owns these “Russian
monopolies”? The energy giant Gazprom is just over 50% state owned but most of the rest of the shares are in the hands of foreign capital. And most of the rest of the major “monopolies” in Russia and China which are listed as “state owned” are considerably less than 50% state owned, 25% being typical and as low as 13% in some cases. Of course western imperialists complain bitterly that this is grossly unfair, that they should be allowed free access to all shares and not just to the “B” shares that are freely floated. And Pröbsting can point to foreign direct investment (FDI) inward and outward and the “round tripping” of oligarch’s funds to Cyprus etc so they can reinvest them in Russia tax free but always he avoids the entire global picture in his eagerness to make his imperialist point.

For instance China and Japan are by far the two largest holders of US government stocks and bonds, which they are obliged to buy to offload their dollar surpluses and keep open the US consumer market, by far the largest in the world. [4] But these stocks and bonds only pay between 1% to 2% interest whereas the FDI of the US in Russia and China yields over 20% interest. [5] And the dollar as the trading currency for not only oil but most other commodities in the planet gives the US a huge advantage; some would say the most important of all its holds over the global markets. The continued threat to this global monopoly can be reasonably designated as the prime cause for the war against Iraq in 2003, against Libya in 2011 and against Ukraine in 2014. If the US loses this immense advantage their empire’s days are indeed numbered.

Combined with that are the successive bouts of Quantative Easing, i.e. devaluating the dollar which reduces the value of the dollar holdings of these two countries in particular, but also Japan, the Gulf States, Brazil and others. And there is the question of the gold holdings. It is rumoured that the US looted Libya’s gold reserves at the end of the war in 2011, it has not returned to Germany its gold bullion as Merkel requested in the end of 2012 [6] and it has just looted the entire gold reserve of the Ukraine on 7 March 2014, some $1.8 billion worth. [7] By these mechanisms the whole world is forced to subsidise the US economy.

A large portion of that subsidy from unwilling foreign trading partners goes on the US military which in turn is used to menace and/or invade any country that seriously threatens that monopoly. US military spending is kept high by the powerful military industrial complex (MIC) which President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned of in 1961:

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence -- economic, political, even spiritual -- is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. [8]

The MIC is now far more powerful than they were in 1961 and every US Senator and almost all Representatives are in the pay of the MIC lobby, which needs constant wars to keep profits and shareholders’ dividends high and their employees in work, as Eric Zuesse noted above.

Pröbsting says:

Today the Russian state-capitalist sector is crucial for the economy. It plays a decisive role among many Russian monopolies. For example, the state has retained Golden Shares in 181 firms. 15 State-backed companies account for 62% of Russia’s stock market.

But according the Russia beyond the Headlines:
Foreign investors continue to have a decisive influence over the Russian stock market. According to Sberbank KIB analysts, they own about 70 percent of free floating Russian shares. But Russian investors are still wary of the stock market after the 2008-2009 crash. One third of investors active in Russia are U.S. funds; another third are funds from continental Europe; and the remaining third are U.K. funds. The biggest foreign investor (more than $5 billion) has turned out to be the Norwegian Government Pension Fund, followed by Vanguard Emerging Markets Stock Index Fund (about $4.7 billion) and the Oppenheimer fund (with slightly less than $3 billion invested in Russian stocks). [9]

This makes quite clear that far from being Imperialist powers both Russia and China are no more than semi-colonial countries, albeit very large and advanced ones. They are not linked to the global web of US Imperialism in the same way as minor imperialisms like Holland and Belgium or allied to it in a more equal though still subordinate way like Japan, Germany, Italy, Spain and Canada. No, they are in the upper level of semi-colonial countries and recognise themselves as such by allying as the BRICS; Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

**Conclusion**

We have outlined the development of three distinct current within the far left, the right which has taken a pro-Maidan position on the Ukraine, the most extreme examples are the signatories of the *Statement of the Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign of Chris Ford*, Labour Representation Committee, Revolutionary Socialism 21, A World To Win, and Socialist Resistance (Fourth International) and a few more internationally like the CWI and the LIT (FI). The centre ground we have listed, some of whom had shifted sharply to the left over the Ukraine and those more consistent revolutionary Trotskyists who have taken a strong anti Imperialist line on Libya and Syria from the beginning. We have outlined our theoretical, economic and political rejection of the theories of the interna-

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**The US State Department's ridiculous propaganda war about China’s supposed ‘string of pearls’ and the complementary deranged view of the Liaison Committee of Communists: 1 May 2014: International Workers' Day Socialism or Death! For workers to survive, capitalism must die!**

“The two imperialist blocs led by the US and China are engaged in a life and death struggle for survival. They now pit workers against one another from Bosnia to Venezuela and threaten a new world war. The threat of such a war is most evident in the build up of US military encirclement of China in the Pacific. Never before has the alternative “Socialism or Death” carried the same urgency.” That’s what they are fighting for in Venezuela, is it?
tional class struggle being driven by the inter-Imperialist conflicts between Western US-led Imperialism and Eastern Imperialism of Russia and China. This includes even Venezuela where the conflict is the result of the incursions of China into the US backyard as the Liaison Committee of Communists ridiculously propose. [10]

We have proposed an international solidarity campaign to defend what is now the new Novorossiya Union of eastern Ukraine and its organised working class led by the Borotba Union and the Communist Party of the Ukraine. We have also proposed an Anti Imperialist United Front with the “devil and his grandmother” including Putin himself as the demands that working class should make on Russia to defend it against the fascist onslaught from Kiev. Lastly this orientation is primarily designed to build a new revolutionary socialist working class leadership as part of a reforged Fourth International.

- Defend the Novorossiya Union against the fascist attacks, smash the illegal Kiev regime installed by the USA/CIA!
- Form armed workers Militias to defend the premises and organisations of the working class!
- No faith in the corrupt oligarchs, nationalize their factories, transport systems and land!
- Smash the reactionary, pro-Western imperialist regime in Kiev!
- For an anti Imperialist United Front with all forces now fighting the fascists!
- Demand material assistance from Putin in arms and troops to defeat the US global conspiracy against Russia and China, Syria, Iran and Venezuela!
- Forward to the building of a Ukrainian revolutionary socialist leadership, a section of the reforged Fourth International!

Notes


[5] *Understanding China’s High Investment Rate and FDI Levels: A Comparative Analysis of the Return to Capital in China, the United States, and Japan Introduction*, Wenkai Sun, Renmin University of China Xiuke Yang, Peking University Geng Xiao, Columbia University (undated but seems to have been written in 2009)

“Over the last decade and a half, China maintained an investment rate higher than that of more advanced economies, including both Japan and the United States. Over the same period, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to the Chinese economy grew at an average rate of 19.97 percent per year, increasing from $3.5 billion in 1990 to $92.4 billion in 2008 United States International Trade Commission, Journal of International Commerce and Economics. http://www.usitc.gov/Journals/06_SunYangXiao__UnderstandingInvestmentFDI.pdf


[10] Liaison Committee of Communists: 1 May 2014: International Workers’ Day Socialism or Death! For workers to survive, capitalism must die!

“The two imperialist blocs led by the US and China are engaged in a life and death struggle for survival. They now pit workers against one another from Bosnia to Venezuela and threaten a new world war. The threat of such a war is most evident in the build up of US military encirclement of China in the Pacific. Never before has the alternative “Socialism or Death” carried the same urgency.” http://www.scribd.com/doc/220377248/MAY-DAY-Statement-Socialism-or-Death
In a recent post on the social networking site Facebook LRC leading member and supporter of the ‘Ukrainian Solidarity Campaign’ Michael Calderbank attempted to give political and even revolutionary weight to his reactionary position on the current crisis in Ukraine. Under the entry ‘What Trotsky had to say to the “sectarian muddleheads” who opposed the independence of Ukraine’ we have the following article by Trotsky from 1939 re-posted: Independence of the Ukraine and Sectarian Muddleheads. Above the link to Trotsky’s article Calderbank quotes what we must assume he sees as the significant paragraph of the text and the justification for his position and his opposition to those in the Labour movement who take the anti-imperialist/anti-fascist position:

“To speed and facilitate this process, to make possible a genuine brotherhood of the peoples in the future, the advanced workers of Great Russia must even now understand the causes for Ukrainian separatism, as well the latent power and historical lawfulness behind it, and they must without any reservation declare to the Ukrainian people that they are ready to support with all their might the slogan of an independent Soviet Ukraine in a joint struggle against the autocratic bureaucracy and against imperialism.”

This is Trotsky’s call for Ukrainian independence at a time when Ukraine suffered under the Stalinist bureaucracy, he made it clear though that it must be an independent ‘Soviet Ukraine’ as an ally militarily to the USSR. Later in his article Trotsky states that Ukraine ‘will herself desire and know how to reach the necessary economic agreement with the Soviet Union, just as she herself will be able to conclude the necessary military alliance.’

Trotsky was clear that independence must be bound up with preservation of planned economy and socialised property created by the October Revolution and, as such, would mean defence of the gains in the rest of soviet territory despite the rule of the degenerate bureaucracy.

The national independence of Soviet Ukraine would mean the plan could be tailored to the needs of the Ukrainian people and not the Kremlin bureaucracy, but they would still support the plan of the rest of the USSR because it would ‘know how to make the necessary economic agreement’ and therefore improve the rationality of the plan. Consequently an independent Soviet Ukraine would not only weaken the Kremlin bureaucracy but also improve the plan for Ukraine and thereby give an impetus to socialist development in the rest of the USSR.

Trotsky was clear that the bureaucracy’s strangulation of the Ukraine had turned many of the masses, such as the peasantry and petty bourgeois as well as workers and emigrants of Ukraine, away from socialism which they had previously supported. The official communist movement headed by the Kremlin bureaucracy had no answer to Ukrainian independence as it stifled national expression and implemented disastrous agricultural policies. The loudest voices in favour of Ukrainian independence were the fascists and religious reactionary leaders:

“Of enormous political importance is the sharp turn away from the Soviet Union by Ukrainian democratic elements outside the Soviet Union. When the Ukrainian problem became aggravated early this year com-
Imperialism today Page 31

munist voices were not heard at all; but the voices of the Ukrainian clericals and National Socialists were loud enough. This means that the proletarian vanguard has let the Ukrainian national movement slip out of its hands and this movement has progressed far on the road to separatism."

The answer Trotsky stressed was for the revolutionary workers’ movement to lead the desire for national independence as part of continuing socialist revolution, i.e. the political revolution against the Kremlin bureaucracy. In the case of Ukraine, to demand independence from centralised bureaucratic rule while defending the gains of the revolution and improving them by fulfilling the needs of the local population and to integrate with other Soviet republics as part of the ongoing development for socialism.

To ignore the desire for independence meant sections of the masses would be driven to bourgeois nationalism and fascism. Trotsky was therefore clear it must be an independent soviet Ukraine. This is in complete opposition to the Ukraine envisaged by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists led by Nazi Stepan Bandera. This position must be seen in the context of its time, the late 1930s on the eve of imperialist war and military threats to the USSR, the world’s first workers’ state.

Now we must examine Calderbank’s use or rather misuse of Trotsky’s article today. Firstly, he is of course using it completely in the wrong context; the USSR no longer exists and, obviously, this has thrown back consciousness of many workers’ in Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine is independent as a bourgeois republic, not a Soviet republic and its borders have altered several times since Trotsky wrote his article. It is not Trotsky who is wrong though but Calderbank who chooses to take the article out of context as justification for adopting an anti-working class position.

In the Ukraine now we have the corrupt but elected government of the oligarch Yanukovych deposed by an unelected coup-government comprised of ultra-nationalists and Nazi descendant organisations such as Svoboda. Yet these nationalists plan to give up even their bourgeois independence to the imperialists of the EU and United States. We now have the situation where the Ukraine could become another vassal of US imperialism where once it had been a vassal of the Kremlin bureaucracy, a worse prospect! It would of course then become a NATO member, strengthening US imperialism’s military presence right up to the Russian border.

Clearly the imperialism of the US and EU means no true independence for Ukraine. There was more independence under the local capitalists of Yanukovych. Imperialism will mean the domination of Ukraine and Ukrainian workers by the IMF and World Bank as well as US corporations. The economic deals local oligarchs had with Russian capitalists were more beneficial to the population than would be imperialist domination. Russia is not an imperialist country, it is undoubtedly a capitalist one but has offered a better economic deal to Ukraine. The EU offers de-industrialisation, privatisation, wage cuts, social security cuts and debt. Workers in Ukraine can look to Greece, Ireland and Portugal to see their future, behind which is the finance capital and military of the U.S., ever too keen to enforce compliance using local fascist gangs. What sort of independence is that? Calderbank is silent on these facts.

In the Donbass region, focused around Luhansk and Donetsk, there has been a groundswell of opposition by the working class to the Maidan and its coup-government which includes fascists. Calderbank’s lack of dialectical thinking means that he cannot conclude that today’s officially ‘independent’ Ukraine dominated by oligarchs and facing the domination of US/EU finance capital has developed its own internal movement for regional independence in the face of this imperialist onslaught. Trotsky’s method applied today means support for Ukrainian independence from US/EU imperialism and the self-determination of those regions which are at the forefront of the opposition to
imperialism and its fascist gangs. Trotsky warned in the article Calderbank cites as his justification that ‘the very independence of the Ukraine would not be long lived in an imperialist environment’ and that ‘imperialism can be overthrown only by the proletarian revolution.’ We see the proletariat of eastern Ukraine now in open revolution and expropriating the oligarchs, and Trotsky spoke of the Ukraine as having developed a strong working class: “A powerful and purely Ukrainian proletariat has been created there by the development of industry. It is they who are destined to be the leaders of the Ukrainian people in all their future struggles.”

This same proletariat has its very existence threatened and its own rights in particular the right to speak their first language. As mentioned earlier the borders of Ukraine have altered considerably since 1939 and many Russian speakers live in the east and have intermixed with Ukrainian speakers. The calls for Ukrainian independence and ‘national unity’ by Calderbank and the ‘Ukrainian Solidarity Campaign’ mean a centralised ultra-nationalist state which suppresses the rights of minorities. Trotsky also had something to say about these opportunist supporters of ‘independence: “Opportunism consists in a passive adaptation to the ruling class and its regime, to that which already exists, including of course, the state boundaries.”

Calderbank and his ilk would rather preserve the state boundaries as they are at the expense of the working class in eastern Ukraine, even though they have expressed their will for autonomy through a referendum on this issue. Opportunists such as Calderbank line up with Svoboda, the US and EU to condemn the working class resistance as ‘terrorist’ and influenced by ‘Russian agents’, yet nothing is mentioned of the fascist terror gangs, CIA agents and mercenaries operating in Ukraine. Finance capital again uses fascism to impose its domination and, unfortunately, many on the left have chosen to support imperialism in the way they did at the start of WWI a hundred years ago, expos-

ing themselves now as they did then as liberals and not Marxists at all.

Throughout the debates on this fundamental issue of support for the movement against imperialism in the Donbass, many leftists have been outraged at military methods and personnel being employed by the Donetsk and Luhgansk Peoples’ Republics and the fact some Kiev supporters have been kidnapped or tortured. The liberal prejudices of these middle class liberals and individuals such as Calderbank reveal their hostility toward the working class taking up the struggle against imperialism and fascism, in the course of such struggles that would mean enemies real or suspected will be given a hard time. This is a feature of revolution. They moralise about how ‘both sides are as bad’ and such arguments, the ‘moralizing philistine’s favourite method is the lumping of reaction’s conduct with that of revolution’ Trotsky noted about such leftists. (Source: Trotsky, L, Dewey, J, Novack, G, Their Morals and Ours, Pathfinder, 1973, New York, p13)

Of the middle class moralist, Trotsky wrote:

“Understanding neither the origin nor the sense of struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, discovers himself between the two fires, he will consider both belligerent camps with equal hatred. And who are all these democratic moralists? Ideologists of intermediary layers who have fallen, or are in fear of falling between the two fires. The chief traits of the prophets of this type are alienation from the great historical movements, a hardened conservative mentality, smug narrowness, and a most primitive political cowardice.”


This is a fitting description for Calderbank and the ‘Ukrainian Solidarity Campaign’ and the social strata they represent, namely the middle class and labour bureaucracy. Meanwhile the working class in the Donbass continues to fight the fascists and imperialists in its quest for survival and self-determination.
Ferguson; America’s continued contempt for Black Life

By Ailish Dease

Ferguson, a two thirds Black town in Missouri (one of the most segregated states in the US) made headline news on August 9th. Michael Brown (MB) an unarmed Black teenager was shot by a police officer after being stopped for walking in the street. His body was left in the street uncovered for four and a half hours. His murder sparked weeks of unrest.

A Pew poll [1] shows the racial divide here, 80% of African Americans (AF-Ams) felt the shooting of Michael Brown raised important issues about race but only 37% of whites did. Black people’s interaction with the police involves mostly disrespect, harassment and violence.

The persistence of negative stereotypes and images that perpetuates assumptions of Black inferiority reduces the chance for the majority of white people to empathize with the Black experience (Dr. E. Bonilla Silva “Racism without Racists” 2009)

USA Today reported Federal Crime Stats that an unarmed Black person is killed every 28 hours by police. security guard, or self-appointed vigilante. Michael Brown’s shooting is not an isolated event. 18% of the Black people killed in that period were under 21 years of age, compared to 8.7% of Whites. So what happened in Ferguson is just business as usual for the police.

Immediately after the killing of MB, the police, the politicians and the Media attempted to smear the character of Michael Brown. Whenever there is a Black victim of police brutality the Media always try to make out that it was their own fault. Michael Brown is being put on trial for his own murder. All the smears came after, in order to justify the killing.

The same thing happened with Trayvon Martin. Michael Brown was systematically dehumanized, the Media was invested in making the police officer the victim instead of the dead teenager. Six witnesses have given almost identical accounts of what happened to MB. He was unarmed, had his hands up and was shot six times.

The initial story from the police for every single unarmed AF-Am they shoot is ALWAYS the same: “He was going for my weapon, I felt threatened”. Until the video is released, then the story changes and continues to change as more evidence is released

Initially the chief of police attempted to sell the fiction that MB was stopped for strong arm robbery, when in fact he wasn’t. The shop owner said no robbery occurred and neither the owner nor an employee called the police.

Before Ferguson police released the identity of the cop (Darren Wilson) who killed Michael Brown, they released a video which was ‘edited’ by the police. The chief of police finally admitted that he lied about the part which was “edited”. The part of the video cut out of the version released by the cops showed Brown paying for the cigars. The confrontation was over him not showing ID. The cops only contacted the store owner the day they released the video

Darren Wilson was in a police force before Ferguson, in Jennings, where the white police force was all fired because:

Law enforcement in the town were reportedly overwhelmed with complaints about racial bias, harassment, strained relations between the nearly all white police officers and a community that was 89% Black… at least five other police officers and one former officer in the town’s 53-member department have been
named in civil rights lawsuits alleging the use of excessive force. In four federal lawsuits, including one that is on appeal, and more than a half-dozen investigations over the past decade, colleagues of Darren Wilson’s have separately contested a variety of allegations, including killing a mentally ill man with a Taser, pistol-whipping a child, choking and hog-tying a child and beating a man who was later charged with destroying city property because his blood spilled on officers’ clothes.” [2]

Darren Wilson’s supporters have raised over half a million dollars for him on ‘gofundme’ and the Support Darren Wilson Facebook page got 42,000 “likes” in a week.

Historians estimate that during the late 19th and early 20th century, 2 – 3 Black people were lynched every week in the American South. (100 Years of Lynchings by Ralph Ginzburg). As late as the 1920s Lynched Black bodies would be left hanging on public display for days or weeks to terrorise Black people. In this same way Michael Brown’s body was left uncovered, his brains spilled onto the street, rotting in the baking sun for over four and a half hours. This was one of the reasons why the execution of Michael Brown was a flashpoint because of this historical memory (echoing down the centuries) that it evoked.

At least one so-called ‘socialist’ site in their first report on the killing did not bother to state that Brown was Black. Obama and Holder did not say how Michael Brown was killed. Not to say how Brown was killed is an attempt to disconnect this from the historical narrative, the history of lynchings, Jim Crow, harassment and all kinds of terror unleashed on Black people since they were brought to America against their will.

The brave people of Ferguson peacefully protested against the murder of Michael Brown, but they were met with assault rifles, armoured tanks, rubber bullets and teargas. A riot broke out and there was looting. The media (whose only interest is sensationalism) blew this up. Black people were condemned for being “violent”.

Americans refuse to accept the facts of their own long history of violence. They can’t accept the gravity of their crimes. Genocide—giving smallpox infected blankets to Native Americans and thus wiping out whole Nations. Slavery and Jim Crow up until the 1970s, the Tuskegee experiment 1932-1974. [3] America is 238 years old and has been at war for 215 of those years. America has been killing and stealing from every other nation on earth. So it is a bit rich for Americans to be blaming Black people for violence.

Of course no American alive now is responsible for what was done to the Native people etc. but they have benefited from the outcome, witnessing the injustices and the inequality they should do something about it.

More important the repression and violence that Native and Black people are being subjected to will happen to ordinary working Americans when they decide to stand up for their jobs/better working conditions/against the warmongers, or when the dollar crashes.

The violence in Ferguson has its roots in the lack of jobs and no way out of the poverty trap. A recent report from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) notes that:

Black unemployment has been twice that of whites for 50 years, this gap hasn’t closed at all since 1963. Back then, the unemployment rate was 5 percent for whites and 10.9 percent for blacks. Today, it’s 6.6 percent for whites and 12.6 percent for blacks. In 2011, 27.6 percent of black households were in poverty — nearly triple the poverty rate for whites.” 40 percent of Black children in America are growing up beneath the federal government’s notoriously inadequate poverty level. [4]

The government’s botched priorities are evident in the fact that the Department of Defense budget request for fiscal year 2012 was for $553 billion, an increase of $22 bil-
lion over the 2010 appropriation. This money could have been better spent creating jobs and on job training and education for people throughout America.

Some Black people are also complicit in upholding the system of racism, having internalized the idea of Black criminality/inferiority. Preachers/politicians/hustlers like Al Sharpton have the nerve to lecture the people of Ferguson who are the victims of violence instead of confronting the SOURCE of that violence. “America is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world” (Martin Luther King) Where is Sharpton’s criticism of capitalism, racism and militarism?

These misleaders of the Black community claim that Black people need to vote more, if they had voted then they could have had more Black policemen etc. This nonsense is beyond belief, there are many cities with Black Mayors and Black police where Black people are treated badly, it’s not just about cops. Black people have voted … they even voted for a Black president! And they are worst off than they were...

Black elected officials and Black cops do NOT change the nature of the Capitalist/imperialist state. It changes nothing in Black working class experience under persistent US racial apartheid and inequality. It merely serves to legitimize the armed occupation of the Black communities. Black people are waging a struggle against systematic and institutional Racist oppression and economic exploitation and part of this is class war.

In the 1960s the Black Panther Party had warned about the creeping militarization of the police. They were facing down SWAT Teams and snipers then for organizing the community against police brutality, providing free breakfast programs and free healthcare services which the state should provide but doesn’t. Now things are so much worse with each war since then, the state has given more military hardware to local Police departments, preparing for the war to come on the Civilian population.

On October 9th 2014 new protests have erupted in St Louis after an off-duty police officer working for a private security firm in St. Louis fatally shot an 18-year-old black man…. These murders will only end when these police are charged with murder and all costs are taken from the police pension funds.

The people of Ferguson by their determination to stand up for Justice exposed the United States police State and all its military apparatus to show the world America’s war of Terror on Black people.

Notes
[1] Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social science research. http://www.people-press.org/about/
[3] The Tuskegee syphilis experiment was an infamous clinical study conducted between 1932 and 1972 by the U.S. Public Health Service to study the natural progression of untreated syphilis in rural African American men who thought they were receiving free health care from the U.S. government... They were never told they had syphilis, nor were they ever treated for it. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the men were told they were being treated for “bad blood”, a local term for various illnesses that include syphilis, anemia, and fatigue... As part of the settlement of a class action lawsuit subsequently filed by the NAACP, the U.S. government paid $9 million (unadjusted for inflation) and agreed to provide free medical treatment to surviving participants and to surviving family members infected as a consequence of the study. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuskegee_syphilis_experiment
NGOs and their role in former colonial countries
By Ailish Dease

Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are often religious based entities doing undeniably “good” work mainly in less developed countries. It is hard to argue against groups trying to provide healthcare etc. to poor people … But the NGOs dependence on funding from their governments and global corporations, which has interests in mining and sweatshop development in these countries means that they actually perpetuate the cycle of underdevelopment and contributes to the peoples’ suffering.

The way that NGOs are structured and the bureaucracy and paperwork involved plus the expectations of the donors makes it almost impossible for them to work with poor working class people in these countries.

NGOs tend to work with the educated elite who know what to say to please the donors and how to put things to get funding [1]. Most NGOs ship in their own workers to the country they claim they are trying to “help” instead of using the workers already there. Tens of thousands of people are delivering “aid” in these developing countries performing functions which should be done by the native people themselves.

The NGO view of “development” is a series of projects for the poor not a struggle for justice and rights. The fact that poverty is structural and is produced by unequal social relations in society and in relations between rich and poor countries is ignored.

NGOs do not challenge the mining companies which displace peasants from their land in order to steal their land and destroy the environment and poison the water. They don’t challenge the companies hiring police to mete out retribution to anyone who resists this theft.

If we look at Haiti which seized Independence in 1804, (in the only successful slave rebellion in history) having been severely oppressed and underdeveloped due to the horrifying experiences of slavery colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Haiti has more NGOs per capita than any other country in the world (10,000) [2]. Yet the people do not have access to a reliable supply of clean water. (70 percent of NGO funding comes from the U.S. state)

In his book Travesty in Haiti 2010 Tim Schwartz [3] explains how the dynamics of food aid and charity aid really work in Haiti (he tried twenty five publishers before he got it published). Schwartz shows that if you track food aid that’s dumped in some parts of Haiti and look at when it was given and how it was given, it was mainly in times when Haiti’s production was strong. There might have been a drought, a temporary drop in local production, but “aid” comes a year or so later when production has bounced back.

Haiti could be completely self sufficient in food with collectivization of resources and national investment. But US surplus rice subsidized at 40% of its value is dumped in Haiti, and Haitian rice farmers are not allowed to protect their own crops; this has virtually destroyed the rural economy. The same fate was to befall the Haitian sugar and coffee industry.

Destroying food sovereignty in the global South is a common practice used by the North through International bodies like the World Bank and IMF.

The aim is to keep the South dependent on the North and create a market for exports deceptively labelled “food aid” in order to conceal the real intent which is “dumping”. The neo liberal policy has been to impoverish people in the countryside, force them into the slums (in a variation of primitive accumulation) where they will be desperate enough to work in absurd conditions for a few dollars a day.

In 1990 there was a massive popular political mobilisation in Haiti which formed a party with a clear agenda which was strong enough to win the presidency but was a threat not only to the establishment in Haiti but throughout the region. This Movement came into being without a clear political organisation, without a military wing, with no money and no international connections. It faced two serious problems, one political and one military.

Firstly, the political problem was how to get
some political unity in the parliamentary system so they could pass the legislation they had a mandate to pass.

Secondly was the military problem, if they were able to make progress on the political front, what to do about the army, which the US had reconstructed in 1915 (when it occupied Haiti for 20 years) and which has functioned as a power broker for the local elite ever since.

In 1991 there was a political impasse which prepared the ground for a vote of no confidence in the government.

The army was waiting to move in, and did so in September 1991. Aristide was overthrown, over 5000 people were killed, (mainly the best grassroots activists), Aristide was forced to leave the country, the army re-invented itself as a power broker and since the people were divided the army was able to stay in power. The people of Haiti are faced with a combination of foreign and local businesses buttressed by a massive international army of some tens of thousands of troops there for the long term, plus 15,000 private security guards and a profusion of other security forces. So the majorities of the people are on one side and the army are on the other.

On 12 January 2010 the worst national disaster in the history of the western hemisphere, a seismic tremor of 7.0 magnitude shook Haiti and in 35 seconds over 230,000 people were dead and a million and a half were homeless. Earthquakes in Chile and Japan measured higher on the Richter scale but took far fewer lives because they had adequate shelter due to high standards of building regulation.

In the aftermath of the quake the US sent troops to Haiti unlike the Cubans and Venezuelans who sent doctors and health workers in an attempt to save as many lives as possible.

The disaster merely laid the ground for international intervention, for foreign companies to exploit the situation for their own profit in collaboration with powerful local interests.

US troops were sent to Haiti after the earthquake primarily to secure the use of cheap Haitian labour for the multinational capitalist companies
and to support those companies to exploit Haiti’s national resources.

Troops are there so that multi national corporations can plunder Haiti’s riches, its uranium 238 and 235, gold, silver, marble, strategic metals, iridium, coal, copper, and the oil cache that some geologists claim is larger than that in Venezuela. (see http://smarteconomy.typepad.com/) [6]

The World Bank has now volunteered to help rewrite the Haitian Constitution to enable easier access for foreign mining companies

By imposing a weak and unpopular government which can be dismissed as corrupt, the US ensures that Haiti serves the world as a disaster training ground for NGOs and international troops, while transnational reconstruction companies (disaster capitalists) make a killing from the lavish contracts.

Ordinary people from all over the world donated to NGOs to help the Haitian people. The Red Cross (the biggest NGO in Haiti) raised $500 million in donations while CARE raised $50 million (both have spent only 10-15%) and other charities received considerable donations. Very little of the money donated has been spent on needy Haitians, a lot of the money has been spent on building 5 star luxury hotels in Haiti.

There has been a huge gap between the generous assistance promised by the international community and the pledges honoured up to now.

The billions of dollars in aid further marginalised the state and social organisations. The government only got one percent of the funds. What happened was a massive appropriation of Haitian sovereignty. The Haitian people were not allowed to collectively determine the priorities for the next phase. 80% of Haitians are small farmers yet less than 3% of the money pledged is to go to agriculture.

The Centre For Economic and Policy Research July 2, 2013 (5) analysed the $1.15 billion pledged after the January 2010 earthquake and found that the “vast majority of the money” it could follow “went straight to US companies or organisations, more than half in the Washington area alone.”

Most of the NGOs in Haiti have failed to oppose or expose institutions creating the conditions of impoverishment in the developing world. They fail to challenge political decisions made in the west that are fuelling this poverty.

Some NGOs like Haiti Grassroots Watch are doing good work, while others such as Batay Ovriere are mere stooges for imperialism [7]. Representatives of this union group were brought to Europe where they met with Caribbean Labour Solidarity and other trade union groups, they were the most reactionary group of workers we had ever met. These workers believed in wage slavery and American exceptionalism. At points in the meeting there was total silence because we were stunned by their pro imperialist positions.

Davis 2006 p75-76 [8] has said NGOs are “soft imperialism” explaining how NGOs are now a functional part of the World Bank network becoming “captive to the agenda of International donors”

Notes
[7]. See Jeb Sprague’s Coup payoff in Haiti: BO’s smoking gun—the $100,000 NED grant. He exposes BO relationship to the “democracy promotion” programmes of the USA in Haiti that served as a launching platform for the coup. He states that BO has receives a grant of U$100,000 from the NED, and that is why BO has failed to denounce effectively the repression of Lavalas militants in the slums. http://argentina.indymedia.org/news/2006/01/365224.php
ards sporting the Miliband slogan “cuts too far too fast” on their hi viz vests. What are the mobilising marching chants appropriate to this inspiring idea; “An injury to one is an injury to one and that’s all, and that’s all”, “cut some not all, cut some not all” and, “cut their jobs, not our jobs, cut their jobs, not our jobs, do dah, dah do dah”? But bureaucrats save their fiery speeches to hide a sell-out and no one is on the streets (page 5).

But what of the left Trotskyist groups, surely they are putting these bureaucrats under extreme pressure and thereby providing an alternative mobilising focus which will force them to act? Unfortunately this is not the case either. As we say on page 5, “In the current struggle for the leadership of the anti-cuts movement between the SWP, their right-wing split, Counterfire, and the Socialist Party the game is entirely about securing the patronage of left trade union bureaucrats and reformist politicians who will oppose the cuts, denounce them viciously and passionately but nonetheless implement them in the end (or are implementing them now) rather than seek to mobilise their members and the mass of the working class itself to physically resist the cuts by strikes and occupations.”

We therefore counterpose to this race to secure the allegiances of these fake left trade union bureaucrats the tactic of building rank-and-file bodies in the trade unions to fight the bureaucracy and mobilise the grassroots. On May 6th the Grass Roots Left will hold its founding conference precisely to fight for that perspective.

But we cannot fight this global crisis alone in Britain. And it is becoming clearer that not only are our ‘revolutionary Trotskyists’ not able to fight the trade union bureaucracy at home but most are unable to oppose its foreign wars in any consistent way whilst some give them outright support. Look at Charlie Walsh’s anti-Imperialist letter on page 9. How many of our ‘revolutionaries’ can take such a stance against the British army and their own bourgeois and its foreign Imperialist adventures?

Look at the sorry tale outlined in The soft left’s foolish illusions in Benghazi’s rebels on page 20. From the far right of the spectrum, the AWL (of course) followed closely by the USFI/Socialist Resistance, the SWP, the SP, Socialist Appeal and Workers Power no one can even approximate to a revolutionary approach to this Imperialist war. The entire spectrum assumes that the Libyan rebels are or were in the beginning some type of revolutionaries, part of a two stage ‘democratic revolution’ or ‘Arab Revolution’, that the main enemy to this ‘democratic revolution’ was Gaddafi (or at least he was as bad as the rebels at the start, as the Spart family say). Therefore, as the first revolutions were going so well in their first stage not dominated by anti-Imperialism and anti-Zionism, pro-Imperialism would do just fine for now in the ‘Libyan Revolution’ for getting rid of Gaddafi; we could leave socialism to a later stage.

Sarkozy jumps in the polls having imposed his man in a French coup in the Ivory Coast, Cameron will defeat the anti-cuts movement all the more easily with the patriotic support of the TU bureaucrats and half-hearted soft left opposition to the war on Libya. Opposing bombing whilst patriotically sponsoring the rebels is looking for Imperialist booty to protect British living standards and modify the worst aspects of the cuts by making the poor and oppressed of Libya and the entire semi-colonial worlds pay — “cut their welfare, not our welfare”.

Look at William Blum’s quote on the top of this piece. Now think of how this monster is to be slain. Look at the three people on the headline strap of the Coalition of Resistance’s handout on the March 26th demo. How could Tony Benn, a reformist politician, totally hostile to revolutionary politics, how could Caroline Lucas, an MP of the bourgeois Greens or arch bureaucrat Len McCluskey lead the fight against the cuts and this assault by global finance capital here or in foreign wars? Asking the question is answering it.

The degeneration of the left is apparent in its failure to fight the TU bureaucracy on the cuts and the attack on Libya. We need a new internationalist revolutionary party to fight this crisis. Socialist Fight is dedicated to this fight. We have lost many friends and allies because this crisis has forced their politics into the open. However we are pleased to say that we have found new and better comrades in Britain, South Africa and Brazil who we are confident will not buckle under the current ideological assault of neo-liberal Imperialism.
The fight against the cuts and against Imperialism’s war on Libya is one struggle! 1/5/2011

"Capital prowls the globe with a ravenous freedom it hasn’t enjoyed since before World War I, operating free of friction, free of gravity. Will this mean any better life for the multitudes...? ‘By all means,’ says Capital, offering another warmed-up version of the ‘trickle down’ theory, the principle that the poor, who must subsist on table scraps dropped by the rich, can best be served by giving the rich bigger meals."

--William Blum, Killing Hope

The capitalist crisis that began over two years ago is working its way through to the working class and poor. At the behest of global finance capital capitalist governments across the globe are following up cuts in wage and conditions with vicious attacks on the post-war welfare states. But bankers, still arrogantly paying themselves huge bonuses, have devastated the economies of the smaller nations, Iceland, Greece and Ireland with Portugal next for the chopping block. And they have gone to war with Libya to rob another relatively prosperous third world country like Iraq used to be, correctly calculating this will draw the trade union bureaucrats even closer to them. And still the fightback is nothing like what is needed to defeat this attack.

Back in 1938 Leon Trotsky pointed to the problems and tasks facing the world working class and poor in fighting for its socialist future. The objective prerequisites for a socialist revolution were ripe, he wrote, but warned in the opening sentence, “the world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat” and later warned of “the opportunist character of proletarian leadership: its petty bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony”. He concluded his introduction by the observation that “the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership”. Unless revolutionaries seriously tackle the struggle against the TU bureaucracy and their parliamentary expression, the Labour parties internationally, we cannot solve the question of building a revolutionary leadership for the class.

We have explained how Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey makes big bluster against the cuts whilst arranging behind the scenes to implement them. At a meeting with about fifty of its Councillors, including Council leaders and Labour group leaders, on 12 November in Leeds he got Gail Cartmell to instruct them to carry out all the cuts by setting legal budgets whilst hypocritically protesting. In Lambeth wild rumours began to circulate that ONE Labour Councillor, Kingsley Abrams, was intending to vote against the cuts. Such was the determination of Unite that no struggle against the cuts at all (other than puerile protests) should manifest itself that Regional Secretary Steve Hart attempted to get him to vote for the cuts. In the end he abstained, much to the displeasure of our ‘left’ Regional Secretary. Six ‘left’ Labour Councillors in Hackney, Barry Buitekant, Michelle Gregory, Linda Kelly, Deniz Oguzkanli, Ian Rathbone, and Patrick Vernon signed a statement against the cuts. They would, “support a campaign to defeat the policies of this government through public protest, opposition and defiance. We would like to see local Councils across London leading the charge and refusing to adopt cuts budgets as a result of government enforced policies.” All voted for the cuts budget on 2nd March. Just to make sure that he did not whip the demonstrators into a revolutionary frenzy McCluskey had Unite’s stew-

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