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

How fares the Revolution in Libya? Wiki tells us the sorry tale of where a failure to defend anti-imperialist principles leads.

“In June 2014, elections were held to the Council of Deputies, a new legislative body intended to take over from the General National Congress. The elections were marred by violence and low turnout... Armed supporters of the New General National Congress occupied Tripoli, forcing the newly elected parliament to flee to Tobruk. Libya has been riven by conflict between the rival parliaments since mid-2014. Radical Islamist fighters seized Derna in 2014 and Sirte in 2015 in the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. In early 2015, neighbouring Egypt launched airstrikes against ISIL in support of the Tobruk government.”

Below is the result of the ‘revolution’ supported by imperialism and the ‘left-Trotskyist’ groups addressed in this pamphlet, Workers Power, its 2011 split, the Austrian-based RCIT and the US/New Zealand/Zimbabwe group the LCC
Where We Stand

1. WE STAND WITH KARL MARX: ‘The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule’ (The International Workingmen’s Association 1864, General Rules).

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

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

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

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

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Stalinophobia and Stalinophilia: Three trends in Trotskyism and three trends in Stalinism

On Ukraine there are three positions that claim the name of Trotskyism; a Stalinophile one, a Stalinophobic one, and a true Trotskyist one. The first one relates to its fringes, and to the fringes of Stalinism (in Britain at least). This stance is more or less uncritical support for Putin and the Donbass leaders. Many have been falsely accused of it many times by Michael Calderbank of the Labour Representation Committee majority and others elsewhere to cover their own tracks politically. The only self-proclaimed Trotskyist groups who have this position are the Posadists, and the Socialist Action. The USA Workers World party belong here as do the Freedom Socialist party. Its corresponding Stalinist tendency is the CPGB (ML) of Harper Brar. Moving left from that, in domestic British politics in many ways but clearly rightwards on imperialism is that whole range of petty bourgeois centrist groups of Trotskyist origin, the AWL, the USFI (Socialist Resistance), the SWP, Workers Power (and the Austrian-based RCIT, whom Laurence Humphries joined) the Socialist party and Socialist Appeal in Britain, together with those groups internationally like the French NPA and the Latin American Morenoites. All these took shocking imperialist positions on Libya and Syria and most compounded it on Ukraine. They cannot even seek dual defeatism as one would be obliged to do in a straightforward inter-imperialist conflict. This is a constantly right moving grouping of social chauvinist but there are two exceptions that we know of.

The exceptions are Workers Power and the SA who have taken a relatively good position on the Ukraine after very bad lines on Libya and Syria. The sponsorship of open fascist grouping by Anglo American imperialism shook them and impelled them to the left somewhat. But they remained centrist and not Trotskyists because they failed to seek the defeat of their own ruling class and the victory of the Donbass. They failed to celebrate the victory of the anti-imperialist forces at Debaltseve. This grouping includes the RCIT, (who never made it as far left as the WP and SA on defence of the Donbass) and can be called left Shachtmanite, the “neither Washington nor Moscow but the International working class” groups. The CPGB (Weekly
Worker) are also approximately in this grouping. They characterise Russia and China as imperialist and have a pusillanimous view of the conflict as we have analysed in our articles on Workers Power [1] and Laurence Humphries defection to the RCIT. [2]

They tend to postulate a pure syndicalist working class outside of nation and history, neither pro-imperialist nor anti-imperialist but “the independent working class”. Such a mythical Shachtmanite entity has never existed and never can. Workers are either pro-imperialist when they belong to imperialist nations or anti-imperialist if they belong to semi-colonial nations. Leaving aside the actual state forces themselves and their paid agents and the TU bureaucracy who are paid agents of the state of the second order (sometimes directly by MI5, Joe Gormley etc), and the bourgeois workers’ parties who are capitalist and imperialist parties of the second order.

The task of the revolutionary party is to develop the global class consciousness of the class, always there in embryo, by forging solidarity with the Ukraine Antifascists Resistance for example and clarifying the issues in conflict.

**Stalinism and Stalinophobia**

And now to Stalinism and Stalinophobia. We noted three trends also in the New Communist Party (NCP) public meeting on 26 February. The CPGB (ML) with its position on immigration close to UKIP, socialism in a single country taken to extremes. But reflected to some degree in the other two. They had a new publication ‘proving’ Joe Stalin was right about the Moscow Trials of 1936-9. But they are definitely for the defeat of Anglo-American imperialism and the victory of the Donbass. Both they and the NCP celebrated the victory at Debaltseve, the only political group outside Socialist Fight /LCFI who did so. They do no work in the British Labour movement, having the traditional Maoist scorn of all metropolitan working classes as simply bourgeois.

The NCP sounds very good on the Ukraine but the article on the London bus strikes was comparable to the Workers Power article (who have moved right on domestic politics); it accepted the bona fides of the Unite bureaucracy, doing their best for the drivers victimised by the bus companies. The notion that this bureaucracy might be complicit in this victimisation was just not considered. An ultra-left piece of propaganda against a decent body of comrades. You cannot be both consistently anti-imperialist and consistently anti-working class at the same time, though many groups try. At some point the contradictions mature and one dominates over the other.

And so to the Morning Star, whose two spokesmen spoke for SARU quite well, obviously leftist representatives of that party. But seriously, examine any copy of the Morning Star and it is clearly the mouthpiece of the TU bureaucracy, the apologists for all left bureaucracies and mild critics only of the right bureaucrats. And very mild and half-hearted critics of Labourism. The revolution is a distant memory, just reformism’s dream unconnected with everyday politics. But in conflict against imperialism Stalinism must be critically supported, just as we support Labour against Tory. To choose imperialism against what is after all just as much part of the working-class movement as the British Labour party is class treachery, taking Stalinophobia to the extent of outright anti-communism and social chauvinism. The Communist party fight Fascism in the Ukraine because it is obliged to in order to survive and because of its history, just as Gaddafi, Assad, Saddam, the Taliban, al-Qaeda and ISIS fought or are fighting it. Although all were previously clients of imperial-
ism. Can we seriously suggest that Stalinism is more or less counter-revolutionary than the British Labour party, for instance? They are both counter-revolutionary international currents, but in very different ways, as we have attempted to outline above. In that difference, just as in the conflicts between Anglo American imperialism and Franco German imperialism, revolutionary Trotskyism must seek its path. Because from this critique revolutionary Trotskyism must reforge and regenerate itself.

Notes
[1]. Workers Power’s backsliding on Ukraine http://socialistfight.com/2015/03/04/workers-powers-backsliding-on-ukraine/

Addendum:
Trotsky: Theoretically it is possible to support the Stalinist candidate. It is a way of approaching the Stalinist workers. We can say, yes we know this candidate. But we will give critical support. We can repeat on a small scale what we would do if Lewis were nominated. Theoretically it is not impossible. It would be very difficult, it is true — but then it is only an analysis. They, of course, would say, we don’t want your support. We would answer, we don’t support you, but the workers who support you. We warn them but go through the experience with them. These leaders will betray you. It is necessary to find an approach to the Stalinist party. Theoretically it is not impossible to support their candidates with very sharp warnings. It would guide them. What? How?
Kay: But in Boston the Stalinists wouldn’t even permit us to enter their hall. They even threw our comrade outside.
Trotsky: I know. They have even shot at us. But some tens of thousands of workers are with them. I don’t know exactly how many. It is very difficult to determine. Of course, we would suffer the indignation of Burnham. Shachtman would say, “See, I predicted it — capitulation to Stalinism.” There would even be considerable aversion in our ranks. But the question is the Stalinist workers. The working class is decisive. With guarantees, warnings, why not consider it? Is Browder a worse rascal than Lewis? I doubt it. Both are rascals.

“Is Browder a worse rascal than Lewis? I doubt it. Both are rascals.”
On 27 February Laurence Humphries announced his resignation from Socialist Fight Group (SFG) and that he had joined the Austrian-based Revolutionary Communist Internationalist Tendency (RCIT). The comrade had been disaffected from some time because we had failed to recruit and because his own political analyses on the history of Trotskyism and Gerry Healy’s entry work in the Labour party was rejected by the group as a whole. He had failed over the past year to get a supporter to form a tendency or faction despite strong efforts, which were constantly reported to us. The fact that he has now joined a group who have even more differences with him on these two points makes his resignation appear as an unprincipled manoeuvre to gain a leadership position as the RCIT’s sole representatives in Britain with no one to oppose him.

The RCIT and Imperialism in Libya and Syria

We must first look at the differences between the RCIT and the SFG and our international grouping the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International (LCFI). The RCIT was expelled from the League for the Fifth International (LFI, Workers Power’s International) in mid-2011, just as the war in Libya raged. In a letter in 2012 the RCIT list the following criticisms of Workers Power, with which we would agree:

1. It is the duty of Marxists to make clear which class character political forces have. The leadership of the LFI has NOT made clear which class character the liquidationist, petty bourgeois split has.

2. This happens because of the adaption from the leadership of the LFI towards the petty-bourgeois milieu! In the united front/Anticapitalist initiatives projects which WPB joined they don’t have a sharp revolutionary profile and are very soft in criticizing centrist forces or don’t criticise them at all in public. They are even talking about the “revolutionary left” when they mean the centrist left. [1]

The “liquidationist, petty bourgeois split” referred to is the group who departed Workers Power early in 2012 and of whom Mark Fischer wrote in Weekly Worker on 6/12/12: This politically ‘shy’ shell of this group has a political kernel to it, of course. That is, the adaptation of the comrades around Simon Hardy and Luke Cooper, who collectively walked out of Workers Power earlier this year, to the anarcho/autonomist/ left-liberal milieu that WP once cynically sought to recruit from.
Our first opposition to the newly formed RCIT group from mid-2011 was on Libya. Up to that point they completely agreed with Workers Power. They argued in the autumn of 2011:

“The civil war in Libya and the arguments of sectarian “anti-imperialism”

In the second part of this article we want to deal with one of the most recent examples of sectarian confusion: the condemnation of the Libyan Revolution in 2011 in the name of “anti-imperialism.” The RCIT supported the popular uprising since it was a democratic revolution against the reactionary bourgeois dictatorship of Gaddafi. We argued that revolutionaries should fight inside the rebel movement against the bourgeois leadership of the TNC, since the later tried – together with NATO imperialism – to contain the revolution and reduce it to the regime-change. We called for the deepening of the revolution by the formation of workers’ and popular councils and militias and its transformation of the democratic into a socialist revolution. We therefore emphatically opposed the NATO attacks.

…However, the sectarian “anti-imperialists” sided with the reactionary Gaddafi regime and supported it against the popular revolution. Examples of organizations which adopted such a reactionary position are the Liaison Committee of the Liga Comunista (Brazil), the Revolutionary Marxist Group (South Africa) and Socialist Fight (Britain) [3] or the ICL/Spartacists, the Internationalist Group/LFI of Jan Norden or the Stalinist group “Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)”.” [4]

In our reply we pointed out that the SFG/LCFI had differences with ICL and the IG/LFI on Libya and major differences with the CPGB (ML), who were uncritical (at least publicly) supporters of Gaddafi in Libya, and now of Assad in Syria and Vladimir Putin and the right nationalist Donbass leadership. By autumn 2012 it was obvious to the most naïve political person that things had gone badly wrong not only for the ‘revolution’ bit but more especially for the ‘democratic’ bit: women were now caged, bought and sold and have lost all the rights they had under Gaddafi (and their lives if they did not like that). Sharia law was now advancing menacing in all sectors with developing tribal warfare. The slaughter of minorities since then, particularly the appalling public video they have shown of the beheading of 21 poor labourers because they were Coptic Christians signals the further advance of the “democratic revolution” we must suppose. Of course all sides are pro-imperialist ultimately, they were just fighting for who would be the local strongman to represent the interests of imperialism.

This is how the RCIT assessed the outcome of their ‘democratic revolution’ in the autumn of 2012, our interjections were almost involuntary:

“The failure of sectarian “anti-imperialism” in the West: Some general considerations from the Marxist point of view and the example of the democratic revolution in Libya in 2011 Naturally, since then there have been more cases of conflicts and liberation struggles in which imperialist powers have attempted to interfere (Syria, Ukraine, etc.)… We should only add here that, since the original writing and publication of the article, events in Libya have completely confirmed our analysis (oh FFS, really???? ED). As is well-known, those pseudo-“anti-imperialists” who defended the dictator Gaddafi at the time of the popular uprising against him and his regime – who behind their “anti-imperialism” are actually hiding their pro-Russian and pro-Chinese social-imperialism (absolute nonsense, who noticed the threat to the Libyan and African masses from Russia and China? ED) – predicted that NATO’s military intervention would transform Libya into a Western colony (it has only destroyed it entirely, which is far better, we must suppose – ED). Contrary to
these fantasies, the unfinished democratic revolution (Unfinished?? Please do not finish this monstrous ‘revolution’- ED) in Libya led to the killing of the US ambassador and the flight of the embassies of all the great Western powers from the country (by the CIA sponsored jihadists who turned on them for jihad! ED). These events do not deny the setbacks and difficulties for the completion of the revolution caused by the competing petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leaderships of nationalist and Islamist persuasions (you can hum it! ED). Only the formation of a revolutionary party which can lead the working class on the road of class struggle to the socialist revolution can push aside these obstacles (obstacles that you have helped to create – ED). Our decision to republish the essay at this time, following some English language editing, is due to our conviction that the method of analysis described herein is a vital resource which allows revolutionary Marxists to correctly evaluate extremely complex political and military situations and to derive the appropriate tactics in world increasingly torn by imperialism’s attempts to interfere in struggles for liberation. (This is a ‘struggle for liberation’? you have lost your marbles entirely, Michael Pröbsting – ED)”[5]

We have only to mention the struggle in Syria to see how well that ‘revolution’ turned out. It is perhaps apposite to mention the position of Yossi Schwartz. He chose the Sunni Jihadists as the vehicle for the ‘revolution’ in Syria and we all know how well that ‘Marxist analysis’ has turned out. He claimed in 2013: Thus it is clear that at least until now the Western imperialists have not armed the rebels and the reason they have not armed the rebels is because they do not trust them as many of them are Islamists. The problem the imperialists have in Syria is the relative strength of the Islamists in the mass movement.[6] The LCFI replied: “Of course Imperialism has armed the rebels, both on their own accord and via Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. They have not supplied them with heavy weapons or air cover; apparently Syria’s air defences are very sophisticated. And it is true that they are nervous about what the fundamentalist might do to Israel and the reaction of Russia, China and Iran.

The great “Democratic Revolution” in Libya so uncritically supported by the RCIT and Workers Power turned out to be not so democratic for slaughtered black workers and for women’s rights, to put it mildly!

Yossi’s criticism amounts to a demand that Imperialism arm the FSA now; he may get his wish soon. But the next statement brings out his capitulation very clearly:” [7]

And here it is: “At this conjuncture of history in Afghanistan, in Palestine, in Mali the imperialists are on one side and the Islamists on the other. This of course can be changed and this would not be the first time in the history of the last 100 years that the Islamists would serve the imperialists. But today the Islamists are fighting against the imperialists and today Revolutionary Marxists are on the same side as the Islamists in the conflict against Assad’s tyranny without giving the petit bourgeois or bourgeois secular or religious forces any political support (our emphasis).” [8]

Yossi, you could not make a worse political
analysis of the situation in Syria if you deliberately tried, we would suggest.

Laurence joins his Epigones; the history of Trotskyism and the Labour party entryism

As we mentioned at the start comrade Laurence’s initial points of disagreement makes his decision to join the RCIT very strange as they have even greater differences with him on these points than the SFG/LCFI has. Let us take his position on the history of Trotskyism first. In early 2014 Laurence wrote a document entitled: THE EPIGONES DESTROY TROTSKY’S INTERNATIONAL 1940-1953, A REPLY TO WORKERS POWER. [9]
The document seeks to be ‘balanced’ and shows that the comrade had seriously studied the period. Nevertheless he managed to come to a conclusion that rejected both the position of Workers Power, and therefore the RCIT, who continue to defend the positions of Workers Power up to when they were expelled from the Fifth International in mid-2011, and of his own group, the SFG/LCFI, by asserting that the continuity of Trotskyism went with Healy, Lambert and Cannon and the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in 1953.

“I have answered the questions that WP has posed around the need for a party and a disciplined fight to establish orthodox Trotskyism against Pabloite Revisionism. The 1953 split was a principled defence of Trotskyism against liquidation and revisionism and was therefore a definite continuity of Trotskyism.” [10]

This conclusion directly contradicts the position of the SFG/LCFI which he has outlined earlier in the same document:

“It (the ICFI 1953 split) should be critically supported as an attempt to defend the heritage of Trotskyism against the liquidationism of Pablo and his supporters, whilst pointing to its weaknesses and inadequacies. Primarily these consisted in a refusal to assess their own role in the post war degeneration and therefore conduct a self-criticism which would have helped to ward off any repeat of those errors. A failure to do that saw all three currents of the IC revert to some version of Pablo’s errors.” [11]

We can only assume he does not understand what ‘critical support’ means and that a refusal to assess their own role in the post war degeneration designated the ICFI as a centrist current. The issue of critical support arises because we are obliged to support a left current against a right current because of the content of their criticisms and because their followers really believed they were conducting a fight for Trotskyism. Just as you would give critical support to a left trade union bureaucrat against a right trade union bureaucrat in an election, ‘critical’ really is the operative word. You cannot correct errors if you do not critically reassess them. IDIOT No 9 On the Continuity of Trotskyism, which was approved at the founding conference and by the LCFI, sets out our position on these questions.

The RCIT, with Workers Power, their political co-thinkers up to 2011, take no sides in that 1953 split. That is a Shachtmanite position, neither Washington nor Moscow etc. That semi-state capitalism position results in them simply counter-posing their own group to the centrists and results in no active intervention whatsoever in the crisis of post war Trotskyism apart a purely propagandist one. Thus defence of the ICFI in 1953 as the continuity of Trotskyism leads Laurence to defend the expulsion of the Oxford group around Alan Thornett and John Lister in 1974, who later founded the Workers Socialist League. He does acknowledge the undemocratic nature of the split although he has yet to apologise to Alan Thornett for the ‘liberating’ of internal documents from his flat on Healy’s instructions and his continued
amusement at the phrase used by Healy to justify all the beatings and other thuggery employed against the group and other before and later, “we are a hard group and we visit people.” He objected to my pointing out this history, seeking to deny and justify it at the same time.

But he agreed with Healy’s central charge against the group that they were liquidating into the Labour party because they correctly pointed out that WRP catastrophism (the country always faced the imminent threat of police-military dictatorship) was simply nonsense to avoid the real task of formulating transitional demands and the application of the transitional method within the trade unions and the Labour party to place demands on leaders and set the base against them in struggle.

Whilst at the same time he defended Healy’s open capitulation to Labour reformism during Healy’s own period of entryism. For instance he defends Healy in an article entitled REVOLUTIONARIES AND THE LABOUR PARTY – REPLY TO WORKERS NEWS (Workers Internationalist League) SEPTEMBER 1994. In the name of an attack on the defunct WIL it was, in fact, an attack on the political basis for the entry work of the SFG in the Labour party into which he wished to liquidate, as Healy had done. He defends Healy here:

“The article asserts ‘The Healyites in practice built a right-centrist tendency around the paper Socialist Outlook which in fact engaged in wholesale adaption to left reformists and Stalinist fellow travellers’. The WIL is here engaged in massive generalisations without any evidence whatsoever. The fact of the matter is that Healy and his group were attempting to win centrist leftward moving elements in the Labour party. They did form alliances with Braddock and Bevan, but these were tactical questions. There is no doubt that in its Politics and practice Socialist Outlook was a Trotskyist paper and it won plenty of workers to its cause to fight the right wing inside the Labour Party.” [12]

And then he goes on the quote Bob Pitt’s criticisms of Healy, which we had quoted approvingly, seemingly unaware that this material is damning him:

“Thus Bevan’s speech to the 1952 Labour Party conference was hailed by Socialist Outlook with the headline ‘Bevan Gives the Lead that Workers Want’. Bevan’s election to the NEC on a record vote, and the replacement of right wingers Dalton and Morrison by the Bevanites Harold Wilson and Richard Crossman, the front page editorial stated, was ‘the clearest indication’ that the rank and file wanted socialism.

A month later, next to a message of support from Michael Foot on behalf of Tribune, the paper carried the headline ‘Aneurin Bevan Demands a Real Socialist Policy’. Yet, by Socialist Outlook’s own admission, Bevan had done no more than defend political positions which were commonplace in the Labour Party before 1945, and he had made it plain that he had no desire to wage a serious struggle against the rightwing.

The chief conditions for success, as enumerated by Healy, were: 1. complete reliance on the organised power of the working class. 2. No confidence in Britain’s capitalists or America’s imperialists. 3. Finish without delay the job of nationalising, democratising, and reorganising industry along socialist lines. 4. Put into effect a Socialist and democratic foreign policy.’ This programme, which was to be implemented by a future Labour government, was, Healy wrote, ‘the only road to workers’ power and Socialism in Great Britain’. After all, the FI leadership did take the view that, in addition to Socialist Outlook, the British section should publish ‘a theoretical organ, openly defending revolutionary Marxism’ only to have their repeated requests to this effect ignored by Healy. Indeed, Pablo himself would subsequently criticise Healy’s adaptation to Bevanism as an ‘opportunism application’ of the entry tactic! [Excerpt from Bob Pitts The rise and Fall of Gerry Healy].” [13]

This whole section shows Healy as an un-
principled opportunist maneuverer in the Labour party, by any criteri-
on, far worse than anything he had wrongly charged the Thornett group
with. And yet Laurence seems blissfully unaware of this. We can only
assume that this is how he intends to operate within the Labour party
now if he sees nothing wrong with all that back then.

The actual resignation letter
Now to the actual resignation letter. In it Laurence adopts all the posi-
tions of the RCIT in opposition to positions he had advocated himself
barely a month ago. He has done this to make himself acceptable to
the RCIT – the position of dual
defeatism on the Ukraine, that the Donbass
and its leadership are simply proxy armies for
Putin and the claim that Russia and China are
Imperialist powers of equal danger to hu-
manity as Anglo American imperialism.
The RCIT/Fifth International said Russia
was a “Moribund Workers State” under Yelt-
sin when it was the most obviously pro-
Western and privatising all state assets to the
corrupt oligarchs (as also in Ukraine), to the
delight of Western imperialism. Then, when
Putin came to power in 2000 and began to
adopt measure in defence of Russian capital-
ism against the USA suddenly they decided
that it was a capitalist and what’s more an
imperialist nation. So by a strange coinci-
dence we are asked to believe now that it was
political confusion that led them to adopt the
ridiculous ‘Moribund Workers State’ theory and so defend the set-up in the former USSR
that had pleased Western Imperialism so
much. And then when Western imperialism
was so disgusted with Putin because he
would not do as US imperialism told him
suddenly political clarity was achieved and
Russia was a nasty imperialist power, equally
as bad of the USA, or worse maybe with all
its homophobia etc. And all this had nothing
to do with abject capitulation to the ‘public
opinion’ of the petty bourgeois milieu in
which they operated. And perish the thought
that the ridiculous “Moribund Workers
State” theory was a consequence of them
declaring that they stood “arm-in-arm with
Boris Yeltsin” outside the White House dur-
ing the Yanayev coup in August 1991.
The RCIT demonstrate again their outright
capitulation to US-led imperialist propaganda
in the following extract on Ukraine today:
“The situation changed qualitatively when, in July-
August 2014, the Ukrainian army gained huge
military advances and brought the Donbass republics
close to defeat. At that moment the Putin government
decided to massively intervene. Moscow replaced the
leadership of the People’s Republics and put in charge
Russian as well as pro-Russian politicians from the
Donbass region who had a history of being loyal
instruments of Moscow. In addition, the Putin gov-
ernment deployed thousands of troops in the eastern
Ukraine thereby tipping the balance of forces and
helping the Donbass republics regain substantial

Boris Yeltsin atop a tank outside the white house on 19
August 1991, Workers Power and therefore the RCIT
stood “arm-in-arm with Boris Yeltsin” they said; “arm-
in-arm” with a counter-revolution in capitulation to the
petty-bourgeois milieu in which they operate, in fact.
ground. In early September, Moscow imposed a ceasefire. The August intervention of the Russian imperialist state marked a qualitative turning point, as we have outlined in the RCIT’s analysis of these events. From that moment on, the uprising has been transformed into one which is predominantly a tool of an imperialistic Russian foreign policy.” [14]

There is no proof for the assertion that: “Moscow replaced the leadership of the People’s Republics (with those) who had a history of being loyal instruments of Moscow” or that “the Putin government (sic!) deployed thousands of troops in the eastern Ukraine”. No doubt that Russia seeks to direct the struggle and that they allowed thousands of VOLUNTEERS to enter the Donbass but to echo John McCain’s propaganda on this is unforgivable as it is the political decision to then withdraw unconditional support from the Donbass whilst it was under such vicious attack from fascist led forces who were slaughtering the civilian population in the cities of the east. We categorically reject the proposition that this war is one between rival imperialist powers. For instance the RCIT say:

“In addition, the Minsk Agreement demonstrates once again the character of the military conflict in the eastern Ukraine as a proxy war of rival Great Powers. It is not the separatist leaders and the Kiev government which negotiated the agreement, but rather the leaders of the two biggest Western European imperialist nations opposite Russian imperialism on the behalf of the former.” [15]

Whilst this might seem better than the outright national chauvinist positions taken by the likes of Socialist Resistance (USFI), the Alliance for Workers Liberty and the majority leadership of the Labour Representation Committee nonetheless it is profoundly in error. In particular we reject the proposition that the fighters of the Donbass have become simply a proxy army for Putin (just as we rejected this in Libya in 2011 and in Syria since then). The only proxy armies in these three conflicts are US/EU proxy armies; the Benghazi rebels, the Free Syrian Army and the jihadists of the Al-Nusra Front and the ISIS and the Kiev regime and its fascist infested army. Libya, Syria and the Donbass fought or are fighting genuine wars of national liberation against imperialist aggression despite the fact that they are led by reactionary bourgeois nationalist politicians. They have a right to get arms and assistance from anyone who will supply it, including Russia in the case of Syria and the Donbass.

The RCIT says:

“Instead, they have to pursue a dual defeatist position, i.e., to wage a struggle on two fronts: against the imperialist bourgeoisie of the US and EU and their Kiev marionette, as well as against Russian imperialism and their stooges at the head of the Donbass.”
And then go on to take an openly Shachtmanite position in its list of demands at the end of their article, The Minsk Agreement and the Civil War in the Ukraine; “Down with the reactionary, pro-Western imperialist regime in Kiev! Down with the Putin regime and its puppets in the Donbass republics!” and “Neither Brussels nor Moscow! For an independent workers’ republic!” they say and draw the same conclusions in almost the same words as Max Shachtman did against Trotsky and Trotskyism in 1939 and subsequently.

This is profoundly incorrect, it will not assist the working class in its struggles against US imperialist aggression. It will only spread defeatism and confusion. If taken seriously that position would have dire consequences for the working class of the Donbass and the revolutionary socialists in the region fighting for the leadership of the working class. It would demoralise them and undermine the position of a working class growing in confidence and class consciousness following their great victory at Debaltseve.

Laurence’s final complaint is that the Liga Comunista and the Coletivo Lenin (whom he does not mention) advocated a vote for Dilma Rousseff, the Workers Party leader, against Aécio Neves in the Presidential election and the RCIT man in Brazil wanted us to cast a null vote. Considering that the masses would have faced a direct agent of US imperialism if Neves had won as opposed to a victory for Dilma which maintained at least a measure of national independence and defence of workers’ rights (as in the Yeltsin, Putin dichotomy above) it is criminally irresponsible not to take the principled anti-imperialist united front stance that they did. The fact that Laurence has now gone along with all this nonsense shows him as a pro-

found opportunist who is unable to fight for his own position openly. He desires to be the ‘leader’ of the RCIT group in Britain. As comrades can see from the above he cannot even lead himself, so unsure is he about what his own political line if from one day to the next.

It is noteworthy that we have lost two comrades from the old WRP that we won mainly on rank and file work in the trade unions. Unfortunately we lost both over the same question; imperialism. Ray Rising adopted to Bruce Wallace’s reactionary position on the Ukraine. Wallace has retained the unregenerated syndicalist and pro-imperialist positions
of Ted Grant on all the foreign wars of UK imperialism from the Malvinas to Ireland to Libya, Syria and Ukraine. Similarly Laurence Humphries has indicated that he is now comfortable with the RCIT group that has such an appalling line on imperialism, the latest example of which is their pro-imperialist stance on the Ukraine. It was noteworthy that both comrades have never broken from the old Healyite national chauvinism position on Ireland. Both were unenthusiastic, to say the least, about the work of the Irish Republican Poisoners Support Group. Support for the anti-imperialist struggles of Irish Republicans, no matter what our political differences may be with them, is obligatory for all English socialists. And not just support, but active participation in solidarity work, especially for the POWs today.

Notes
[3] [12] 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! Statement on Libya by the Liga Comunista of Brazil, the Revolutionary Marxist Group of South Africa and Socialist Fight of Britain, 21 April 2011; in: Socialist Fight No. 6 (2011), p. 36
[4] Liberation Struggles and Imperialist Interference, (originally written in Autumn 2011, republished in 2012 with a foreword by Michael Pröbsting, repeating the original pro-imperialist stance and refusing to learn any lessons at all), http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/liberation-struggle-and-imperialism/
[5] Ibid.
[8] Victory to the Revolution in Syria!
[10] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
Workers Power’s backsliding on Ukraine
By Gerry Downing 4 March 2015

When the League for the Fifth International (LFI) was founded in 2003 this represented the victory of the semi-state capitalist Fifthist line. Workers Power took this step because they saw the World Social Forum and the European Social Forum as the movements which would build the new supra-class International. The split documents from the minority in 2006, Platform of the international tendency in the L5I [1] explain this further turn away from the working class and Trotskyism in detail, but from an anti-Leninist perspective. Their ‘orthodoxy’ covered their own retreat from the working class, unlike the recent right split by Simon Hardy and Luke Cooper, who don’t even try. The 2006 split in essence charged the majority with being grossly opportunist in pursuing the original opportunist Fifth International orientation. [2]

In 2011 Workers Power were absolutely unequivocal about their support for the US/EU/Nato sponsored uprising in Libya. How ridiculously reactionary that political line as outlined by Richard Brenner now seems in the light of subsequent developments. He even demands the murders of Gaddafi and his sons, and Nato and its Libyan allies were quick to oblige:

"After the fall of Gaddafi revolution must go deeper, Richard Brenner Wed, 31/08/2011 – 18:00
Gaddafi has been defeated – now the fight is on to save Libya from NATO and the oil grabbing western powers, writes Richard Brenner
NOW THAT Gaddafi has fallen the Libyan Revolution must go deeper and break up the remains of the old regime – popular committees need to stop the new NTC government and the NATO powers from stealing the fruits of the people’s victory. The entry of the rebels into Tripoli spelled the beginning of end for Gaddafi. The dictator’s offer to arm the people of Tripoli against the rebels went completely unanswered – because the masses were already in the streets celebrating his downfall. Hardly surprising. In Tripoli in the early days of the uprising, Gaddafi’s forces had already murdered between 200 and 700 unarmed demonstrators. Like all victorious uprisings the Libyan Revolution will have to crush the remaining elements of the old regime including Gaddafi and his sons. They should not be tried but put to swift revolutionary justice.”

Socialist Fight and the LCFI are proud of the stance we took at the time. Just the title of the work should suffice to show the absolutely irreconcilable class differences between us and Workers Power. We will leave the impartial reader to make up their own minds; what triumphed in Libya, a “democratic revolution” or a Nato-sponsored counter-
revolution? To ask the question is to answer it. This is the title and first strap line of our April 2011 statement:

“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! Statement on Libya by the Liga Communista of Brazil, the Revolutionary Marxist Group of South Africa and Socialist Fight of Britain,” 21 April 2011; in: Socialist Fight No. 6 (2011), p. 36 [3]

This obscene grovelling to imperialism by Workers Power was followed by a similar one in Syria, where ‘the revolution’ covered everything from the secular pro-imperialist Free Syrian Army to the Saudi/Qatar/US sponsored jihadist. Anyone could make this ‘democratic revolution!!!’ to get Assad it seemed. Unfortunately Assad was critically supported by all the minority groupings and the majority of Sunnis in the cities who did not want to accept the fate of Libya and succumb to Sharia law on the machinations of the USA/CIA. They have been successful in that up to now.

And it seemed as the geo-political war aims of the White House expanded that Workers Power would take the same stance on Ukraine. Initial signs were not good; the first article that appeared was of the “neither Moscow nor Berlin” Shachtmanite type. But the appearance of outright fascists on the EuroMaidan and sharp criticism from Socialist Fight seemed to spook them and now the line changed sharply to the left and they began to support the resistance in the East and expose the far right and fascist character of the coup that overthrew the elected government and the genocidal war that the new president Poroshenko has launched against the Russian-speaking Donbass.

But that was a year ago. A new turn was necessary and that appeared most clearly in an article that appeared online on 10 January and in the February print edition (with some differences). [4]

The first item of concern in the article is in the description of the EuroMaidan itself:

“Thus, when the former president, Viktor Yanukovych, delayed signing the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in November 2013, the hopes of a large part of the population for economic growth and democratic reform through closer integration with Europe were dashed.”[5]

The EuroMaidan is shamefacedly legitimised here, although these illusions are exposed later in the article it does not say here that, in fact, the aspirations of a large section of the crowd in the EuroMaidan that were not ideologically directly by far right or fascist forces was to join the EU to be allowed emigrate to countries like Britain and Germany where they would be able to get better wages than in Poland and Romania.

“Crimea had been annexed by the Russian Federation, civil war was raging in the Donbas region,

The Sun celebrates Workers Power’s “swift revolutionary justice”.

Page 16 Revolutionary Communism: Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin or Mao?
Ukraine had signed the free trade Association Agreement and a new government ruled in the Verkhovna Rada.” [6]

The phrase “Crimea had been annexed by the Russian Federation” suggests that the transfer of Crimea to Russia was not the democratically expressed choice of the people of Crimea but an act of aggression by Russia (Nicholas Sarkozy has a better take on it than this) and the attack in the “Donbass region” against a civilian population was a “civil war” and not the population defending their rights against CIA-sponsored fascist battalions.

This is how the article describes the government elected in October 2014:

“October duly saw a fresh cohort of MPs returned to parliament, with the opposition Party of Regions reduced to a rump. Negotiations to form a government ended with five of the six parties represented in parliament signing up to a coalition agreement which set accession to Nato, economic “reform” and the promotion of national-patriotic values as its main priorities.”[7]

Note the legitimacy of these elections are not challenged, the violent thuggery, attacks on the Communist party and all defenders of the Donbass opponents are not exposed at all. These are presented as free and fair elections. But the consequences of this endorsement appears a few paragraphs later:

“However, a look at the ministers appointed to carry through the government’s programme reveals that}

EuroMaidan has so far done little to shake up the patronage, clientelism and mutual interests that have long determined the composition of Ukraine’s governments. The failure of EuroMaidan to establish durable democratic or working class structures that could have mobilised opposition to a new establishment government is in large part to blame for this. It also says something about the class nature of the dominant layers of the movement.” [8]

Note here that the print version in WP February 2015 has a different version of the above paragraph:

“However, patronage remains in place. And it says a lot about the class character of the dominant forces in the EuroMaidan that this “revolution” did not establish structures that could have mobilised opposition to a new government of oligarchs.” [9]

Having accepted the legitimacy of the October elections both versions logically follow. The online version is an obvious attempt to soften the impact of the print version but both are easily the worst and most revealing sections of the entire article. In some ways the ‘softening’ makes matters worse. Marxists never kow tow to bourgeois democracy, we do not accept the legitimacy of any form of bourgeois parliamentary elections, recognising it as a form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie whilst revealing the illusions of the working and middle class are a given moment in time, and so worthy of study. See Lenin’s The Renegade Kautsky and Trotsky’s Terrorism and Communism for extended exposes of the fraud of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. But this election was wholly undemocratic, even by bourgeois standards and we cannot accept in any
way the legitimacy of its outcome. And to express surprise in the print version that the election “did not establish structures that could have mobilised opposition to a new government of oligarchs” is the equivalent of a naive religious Christian expressing surprise that the Devil does not say his prayers.

And in the online version:
“The failure of EuroMaidan to establish durable democratic or working class structures that could have mobilised opposition to a new establishment government is in large part to blame for this.”[10]

Doh! As Homer Simpson might say, a far right fascist led coup that overthrew a democratically elected government turned out to be undemocratic! And we surely do not expect “working class structures” from a neoliberal government infested with far right nationalists and fascists. They do not allow potential revolutionary forces to arise who might cut their own throats! Who would have thought it?

Of course they might argue that they were trying use the Transitional Method to win over the forces referred to in our first comment above on your “hopes of a large part of the population for economic growth and democratic reform through closer integration with Europe”. But the first duty of a Marxist is to tell the truth to the working class not pander to their illusions in this ridiculous way. The truth that we might present thus: “you were conned into following a far right and fascist coup because you though that EU membership would either allow to emigrate to countries where you could get good jobs or they might allow you to sell your agricultural produce at a far better price. These are lies, you will get none of these things. These fascists have only led you to far worse poverty and economic and social devastation. And they are sending your sons and fathers (conscription is up to 59 years now!) to be slaughtered in a genocidal war against your brother and sisters and their small families in the Donbass, a war you rightly do not believe in. Rise up against them, make common cause with your brothers and sisters in the Donbass and overthrow these oligarchs and this will then enable them to overthrow theirs. You are already revolting against conscription. Finish the job’.

The following passage is a consequence of portraying Russia and the West as rival imperialist power where a ‘deal defeatist’ position is at least plausible:
“For ordinary Ukrainians, rival attitudes to the civil wars of the 20th century and to the legacy of the USSR and Nazi occupation, are deeply rooted and have consequences for how they see their status within Ukraine today. For the oligarchs, these competing ideologies are merely tools to be cynically used in their clan struggles for control over the state which is used both as a source of personal enrichment and a means to repress their opponents. The escalation of inter-imperialist tension provoked by the grinding world economic crisis has brought Russia and the USA into conflict, first in the Middle East and now in eastern Europe. Their struggle for influence has shattered Ukraine’s oligarchic consensus and unleashed the poison of nationalism.” [11]
This “on the one hand there are pro-Western oligarchs, on the other hand there are pro-Russian oligarchs, they are equally as bad (true as far as it goes) sets up the next section for a far more reactionary position on the war:

“As a result, although the working class in the east retained its relatively privileged position, as compared to the more agricultural west, it did not achieve this through its own independent mobilisation but rather by remaining reliant on the nexus of business interests, official trade union bureaucracies and a political class inherited from the planned economy.” [12]

This amounts to a contemptuous rejection of the working class and its organisations who had succeeded, to some limited degree in the East, in maintaining some aspects of the old Soviet Welfare State; “the cunning and unprincipled dogs only maintained their living standards by unprincipled manoeuvres” is the thrust of the above paragraph. This next section is far worse:

“This reliance is now reinforced from both sides; by the existence of an ultra-nationalist regime in Kiev, which promotes derogatory views of the consciousness of the working class in the east and by the apparent coincidence of interests in, for example, defending heavy industry in the east. The escalating social and economic crisis in Ukraine will expose the tensions in this relationship. The task of socialists in Ukraine is to exploit these tensions, exposing the fact that all the oligarchs and the competing imperialist powers have a common cause in keeping all sections of the working class politically reliant on the representatives of the capitalist system. The creation of a working class party that can give leadership to the youth and poor farmers of the whole country and is politically independent of all the oligarchs is the most urgent priority. This means a party that advocates socialist revolution to put the economy under the control of the working class, organised by democratic workers’ councils and defended by the armed population in place of the police, army and secret services loyal to the capitalist state. This is the only way that the working class can end its exploitation and reorganise production to meet the needs of ordinary people instead of filling the Swiss bank accounts of thieving oligarchs.” [13]

This whole section is a reassertion of the Shachtmanite position of Neither Washington nor Moscow but the international working class. No understanding that a defeat for imperialism here would be the best possible outcome for the working class in the Donbass, in Ukraine and Russia, the whole of Europe and the working class in all the imperialist countries as well. As those who have read Trotsky’s In Defence of Marxism (1939) know that Trotsky fought a year long battle against Max Shachtman to retain the position of defence of the USSR against imperialist attack despite the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy because of its class character as a Degenerate Workers State. This after the Hitler Stalin pact and the Invasion of Finland by Stalin turned middle class and academic public opinion against the Soviet Union, particularly a layer of intellectuals who had rallied to the cause of the Russian Resolution. Workers Power and its offshoots, like the 2011 split the Austrian-based RCIT, had always been a semi state capitalist group (at some points approaching revolutionary Trotskyism as in the early to mid-1980s in particular).

Nowhere in this whole piece is there an identification of the USA as the aggressive Imperialist power or its geostrategic goal of world domination via wars, bombings and hired proxy armies. They failed that test too on Libya and on Syria and have reverted to third campism after a brief flirtation with revolutionary politics on the Ukraine. They make no defence of the Donbass in this article, despite its leadership. The reference to “rival nationalist agendas” in the following passage highlights their ap-
approach:
“The task of socialists in Europe and Russia is to aid this struggle by opposing the attempts of their own ruling classes to subordinate Ukrainian workers to rival nationalist agendas, to impose their placemen and proxies as leaders and to force Ukraine to choose between exploitation at the hands of one or other of the imperialist camps.” [14]

NO, No, No, that is NOT what the war against the Donbass is about. Has Workers Power now accepted that the Donbass militias are simply a proxy army for the Russia, as the RCIT has? Despite its leadership the base of the Donbass militias is working class increasing growing in class consciousness, especially since rejecting the purpose of Minsk 2 and defeating the proxy imperialist army at Debaltseve. The following paragraph does attempt to take the other side to some extent:
“This means an intransigent struggle against the militarisation of eastern Europe by Nato, countering the imperialist propaganda offensive and mobilising working class opposition to government support for the austerity offensive of Kiev’s ultra-nationalist regime.” [15]

But none of the above follows from this. And it does not take any military side with the Donbass. So it’s ok to undermine the war effort of Kiev but no need to call for the victory of Donbass. This is the ultimate logic of trying to equate Russia and the USA as rival imperialist powers. At the Workers Power Capital in One Day on 28 February Peter Main finished with a speech in which he sought to portray China as the ‘Yellow Peril’ or rather as having a “string of pearls”; a series of military bases through the world. I was forced to interject from the audience that China has no foreign bases, none at all (and NATO has upward of 1,000 I might have said). Michael Roberts, on the top table as a Marx’s Capital expert, nodded his agreement. The real nature of the US Defence Department’s propaganda about China’s “String of Pearls” is debunked by no less than those bold Chinese Communist party propagandists in The Economist in a far more balanced article:
“In the eyes of some Indians, Colombo is part of a “string of pearls”—an American-coined phrase that suggests the deliberate construction of a network of Chinese built, owned or influenced ports that could threaten India. These include a facility in Gwadar and a port in Karachi (both in Pakistan); a container facility in Chittagong (Bangladesh); and ports in Myanmar. Is this string theory convincing? Even if the policy exists, it might not work. Were China able to somehow turn ports into naval bases, it might struggle to keep control of a series of Gibraltars so far from home. And host countries have mood swings. Since Myanmar opened up in 2012, China’s influence there has decreased. China love-bombed the Seychelles and Mauritius with presidential visits in the Annexation of Crimea by Russia? “We saw people coming to vote cheerfully in a very bright mood, ATAKA MP Adrian Asenov said. According to Denitza Gadzheva most people in Crimea wanted to join the Russian Federation. She noted that the streets were full of people waiving the Russian flag. The patriots appealed their proposal for declaration to be passed in Parliament guaranteeing Bulgaria’s neutrality in case of future military actions in the Ukraine conflict.”
2007 and 2009 respectively. But since then India has successfully buttressed up these island states and reasserted its role in the Maldives. Besides, China's main motive may be commerce. C. Raja Mohan, the author of "Samudra Manthan", a book on Sino-Indian rivalry in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, argues that China's port bases partly reflect a desire to get easier sea access for trade to and from west China.”[16]

Socialist Fight has explained in detail what is wrong politically and economically with saying that the world is characterised by inter imperialist rivalries between Western Imperialist and Eastern Imperialism in our Eight Indices of US-led World imperialism. This is point 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.” [17] 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.” [18] [19]

Notes
[1] Permanent Revolution, Platform of the international tendency in the L5I http://www.permanentrevolution.net/entry/306
fight-no-6.pdf
[5] Ukraine’s new Government…
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[10] Ukraine’s new Government…
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
The Liaison Committee of Communists (LCC) is an international grouping consisting of the Communist Workers’ Group of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the Communist Workers’ Group (USA) and Revolutionary Workers’ Group (Zimbabwe). Until March 2010 it was a member of the Internationalist Leninist/Trotskyist Fraction (FLTI), the leading group of which was the LOI of Argentina, led by Carlos Munzer. Socialist Fight had a brief relationship with the FLTI following our revolutionary position on the Lindsey Oil Refinery strikes for British jobs for British workers in early 2009 (see No support for chauvinist, xenophobic strikes in SF No. 2).

But Munzer only wanted a branch in Britain and allowed no differences or discussion. When we began discussions with the Groupe Bolchevik (GB) of France (Permanent Revolution Collective) led by Philippe Cothoun Munzer demanded we stop at once. We had stuff to learn from them, we felt, and refused, hence the break. In fact the FLTI were correct about the pro-imperialism of the GB as we subsequently discovered over Libya and also correctly attacked the SF position on Israel AFTER they had decided to break relations with us. A more comradely intervention would have allowed us to correct our position sooner. In this regard the LCC are totally correct; the FLTI is an appallingly bureaucratic centralist international.

However this does not solve the question that was central to the 2010 split in the FLTI, is China an imperialist country or a semi-colonial capitalist one? In this split and on this question the FLTI are substantially correct against the LCC. Moreover it is the programmatic conclusions that the LCC and the RCIT (but not the Workers Power group even if drifting in that direction, see the two earlier article in this journal) draw from their characterisation that is so reactionary. Here is their bald assertion:

“We clearly say over and over again that China is as reactionary as US imperialism. US imperialism is still hegemonic and its defence of its global interests must bring it into collision with an ascendant China. This is why we changed our position of China’s dual character in which we could defend it from a direct US attack, to that of a rapidly emerging imperialist rival that could not be defended in any situation. That is why we are for the defeat of both China and US.” [2]

The FLTI argue against this, substantially correctly:
This new imperialist offensive to re-colonize China together with its plan of privatization has split the Chinese bourgeoisie of the “red mandarins”. One faction is allied through the finances and the stock market to the US-UK financial capital and is for the immediate beginning of the privatizations. The other faction thinks that they could lose the source of their incomes as administrators of the broke state-owned companies. They also fear the Bonapartist Chinese regime’s sure loss of social base and consequentially that of the CP of the “red businessmen” in a layer of the working class that still maintains its gains in the state industry (nursery, health insurance, etc.).

Russia and China entered the world economy thoroughly ruined. Russia had a brutal devaluation of the Ruble, a restorationist bureaucracy who stole more than 200 billion dollars by making them flee out of the country to the safes of the Citibank and JP Morgan Chase, sharing out the state enterprises while leaning on the cannons of the counterrevolutionary coup of August 1991 launched by the mafia and the thugs of the old restorationist bureaucracy; all that led Russia to backwardness, to a lifespan of 50 years and to wars and genocides like that of Chechnya; meanwhile in Balkans the capitalist restoration was imposed by massacres like in Bosnia and bombs like those of NATO on Belgrade.

That Russia in ruins that lost Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, the ex-Muslim Republics where the 40% of oil lies, that is surrounded by US military bases established in those republics, with 49% of its oil and gas managed by the German BASF through that front firm called Gazprom, is called pompously “imperialist Russia”. China that buys raw material and supplies of cereal, agro-industry, minerals and intermediate goods from the world market and in the semi-colonies from the own US, Australian, Canadian, French and England transnationals (that control Africa and Latin America), while financing the US monstrous deficits and foreign debt, and its labor force has been used by the international finance capital to sink the salary of the world proletariat like a comparative advantage is called pompously new “imperialist” power.

It is imperative to tell the truth to the world proletariat. If it buys, sells, covers deficits, bailout banks, lends for production, buys for the sake of third parties and administers slave labor, that is not monopolist capital that is not parasitism: it is to work under a master, it means being a privileged employee to the international finance capital.” [3]

We are aware that the ‘Spart family’ (the ICL, the IBT and the LFI) regard China as a deformed workers’ state still and we have polemicized against this position in In Defence of Trotskyism No 1. It is true that in that journal we were ourselves undecided as to the nature of China, we never took a hard position and did reprint a piece from Living Marxism that asserted that both China and Russia were imperialist. However the formation of the LCFI and discussions with our Brazilian and Argentinians comrades have clarified our position. We now hold that Russia and China, together with countries like Greece and Portugal and some of the former Iron Curtain countries are neither Imperialist nor semi-colonial countries but countries of Intermediate Development, with features of both imperialism and semi colonies which cannot become imperialist unless the USA suffers defeat in a major war and/or a catastrophic economic decline. We distinguish them from minor imperialist powers like Holland, Sweden or New Zealand or advance semi-colonies like Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. Very important in this definition is NATO and the alliances of imperialist powers under the hegemony of US finance capital and transnational corporations.

We are also aware of the similar position of the Revolutionary Tendency. A leader of the RT, Steve Argue, puts this position on Russia and China, with which we would agree in all substance. It is largely in line with the LTFI arguments above:
On Russia

“Today, the relatively weak capitalist class that has developed in Russia since the Yeltsin capitalist counterrevolution in 1991 is standing up, in its own national self-interests, against a U.S. engineered and fascist infested coup government in Kiev. That government hates Ukraine’s national minorities and seeks to hurt the entire working class of Ukraine through imposing the austerity and other dictates of the IMF, EU, and USA. It is a deadly threat to the working class of Ukraine and is a dagger aimed by the U.S. imperialists at Russia itself. A victory by relatively weak Russia against U.S. imperialism will be a blow for the world’s working class which suffers under deeply under the terror and exploitation of U.S./E.U. imperialism. An anti-imperialist victory in Ukraine will also serve to protect the oppressed Russian nationality of Crimea, protect Russia from imperialism, and protect the deformed workers state of Belarus.”

On China

“For many on the left, China’s investments bringing development to numerous underdeveloped countries are seen as a form of imperialism. This ignores a few basic facts. First of all, the vast majority of these investments are by the Chinese mainland state run banks or other state owned sectors. Instead of being short-term speculative investments based on the profit motive, as imperialist capitalist investments are, they are investments that seek needed commodities for China’s economy which is still largely planned and socialist. Unlike the USSR’s planned socialist economy, which was built in a resource rich country, China is now building up its economy, largely through the vast advantages of socialist planning, in a country that is relatively resource poor. To do so they must invest in other countries in order to import needed resources for their collectivized enterprises back in China.”

“The false notion that China is imperialist...
only aids U.S. and Japanese counterrevolutionary aggression directed at the People’s Republic of China. Likewise, the lie that Russia is imperialist only aids western imperialist ethnic cleansing of the Russian speaking minority in Ukraine, imperialist aggression against the people of Syria as part of an intervention that formed ISIS and continues to back religious fanatics against the Syrian and Kurdish people, and aids imperialist sanctions against Belarus with its remaining socialist economy, as well as other western imperialist acts of aggression against the world’s working class and farmers.”

“To extract these resources China makes investments. For many in Africa and Asia these investments in schools, roads, railroads, and other needed infrastructure and enterprises are generally seen as a welcome change from the neglect and underdevelopment imposed by the imperial capitalists. This is not to say that there have not been abuses, but these well-known abuses have come from the small minority of private Chinese enterprises functioning abroad.” [4]

So we can see that whilst we differ from the ‘Spart family’ and from the Revolutionary Tendency that China is a deformed workers’ state and from the LTFI that it is a classic semi-colony nonetheless in programmatic terms we all agree to defend both Russia and China against imperialist attack. There is the basis for a united front with these forces on this question. The LCC do not agree on this so there is no basis for a united front with them on this question.

**Dire consequences for the new LCC**

This reactionary position had dire consequences for the new LCC. By 2011 and the Nato assault on Libya they were characterising the uprising of the Benghazi reactionaries as a ‘popular revolution’ and Gaddafi as the main agent of imperialism in Libya, which ridiculous position they still hold.

We have nothing to retract from our polemic against them in Socialist Fight No.6, Spring/Summer 2011:

**“Statement of the Liaison Committee**

In the Statement of the Liaison committee of the CWG (NZ) and HWRS (USA) Imperialism: Hands off Libya! The US and EU are planning a military intervention to protect their oil interests! (from the rebels??) we get the following:

“Libya is on a knife edge poised between victorious workers revolution that can defeat both the dictatorship and Imperialism, and turn the Arab Revolution into socialist revolution in the whole region, and the counter-revolution that will halt, reverse and defeat the Arab Revolution and prevent the formation of a United Socialist States of North Africa and the Middle East. The outcome will depend on whether or not the international working class can stop the US and EU Imperialists from invading Libya and imposing a new compliant national leadership. The aim of the Transitional National Council is to steer Libya during the interim period that will come after its complete liberation and the destruction of Gaddafi’s oppressive regime. It will guide the country to free elections and the establishment of a constitution for Libya.” [11]

This is a total capitulation to Imperialist propaganda, particularly the ridiculous notion that not only was there something called “the Arab Revolution” which was above class, but that it moved forward of its own objective volition irrespective of the leadership that it had and that the counter-revolution was represented only by Gaddafi and not world imperialism. And why would they have to invade to impose “a new compliant national leadership” when they already supposedly had one? And the notion that the Imperialist-sponsored and CIA directed and funded ITNC was going to “guide the country to free elections and the establishment of a constitution for Libya” is just too silly for words; an idealistic and unachievable aspiration for a bourgeois republic and a two stage revolution.

They repeat as fact the obvious lies of the rebels:

“Such was the ferocity of this repression, em-
ploying the Special Forces and foreign mercenaries, that its failure to intimidate and defeat the unemployed youth rebellion forced the military to split. The defection of the Generals who had long been cronies of Gaddafi was forced only by the rebellion of the rank and file soldiers who refused to fire on the masses and were in turn executed by the Gaddafi forces.”

Where is the evidence for these lurid claims? There is none because it is a complete lie.

“We call on the Arab revolution that is under way in Egypt and Tunisia, and is beginning to rise up in Algeria and in the Middle East, to immediately send material and military aid to the liberated part of Libya to strengthen the revolution against the regime’s extreme repression, to complete the revolution and stop mass murder of workers on an even greater scale.”

No need for that, Imperialism is on the case on your behalf.

“We call on the workers in the Imperialist countries to take immediate steps to oppose the military intervention in whatever form in Libya. Imperialism is the No 1 enemy of the Libyan people. Gaddafi is a creature of imperialism. His 1969 revolution had the guise of a national socialist liberation but in reality it installed a national bourgeois crony capitalist regime to serve imperialism.”

And now the biggest lie:

“Imperialism is the No 1 enemy of the Libyan people. Gaddafi is a creature of imperialism.”

The Liaison Committee cannot see the contradictions between Imperialism and bourgeois nationalist regimes, the Leninist distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations, and can imagine no good reason apart from subverting the ‘revolution’ for them to sponsor the rebels. This is indeed becoming a very tangled web. The truth is that what the Liaison Committee correctly labels a “national bourgeois crony capitalist regime” is at severe odds with Imperialism because there is a very great deal left of the Libyan revolution of 1969 worth defending and the masses now increasingly rallying to Gaddafi realise this. And the ranks of the rebels realise this also, they do not know why they are fighting, which is why they appear so cowardly and half-hearted in their struggle. Installing puppets for Imperialism is not a strongly motivating ideal so they run away from the first sound of gunfire.

And now the slander directed at Socialist Fight and our fellow anti-Imperialist revolutionaries (There isn’t any other kind!):

“All those who on the left who gave support to Gaddafi in the name of Communism or Trotskyism and were responsible for disarming the Libyan people in their long resistance to Gaddafi must be exposed and condemned. They share a large part of the blame for the failure to build a revolutionary workers party in Libya and the others states of the region to play a leading role in the Arab Revolution.”

It is true that Gerry Healy and the WRP did capitulate to the Arab bourgeoisie and that the present-day WRP continues that line. But Healy’s most vociferous opponent before the 1985 split was Sean Matgamna of the AWL. He supported Imperialism against the same Arab bourgeoisie and he has continued the same line ever since.

Although we totally denounced Vanessa Redgrave’s attempts to bring the AWL to court for this I and another Central Committee member in the post-split WRP refused an invite from Matgamna to speak at a public meeting denouncing Redgrave because we would not be associated then or now with an attack on Gaddafi from the right. The nonsense about “disarming the Libyan people” from those who are now the spokespeople for Imperialism is just total nonsense as is the stuff about the “Arab Revolution.” [5]
In fact we missed the reference to “foreign mercenaries” above, the lie that was used to justify the wholesale lynching of black African workers who staffed the oil industry from the very beginning and clearly signalled the vile reactionary and racist character of this pro-imperialist counter-revolutionary rebel uprising. The notion that this was in reality an inter-imperialist conflict between ‘Western Imperialism’ and ‘Eastern Imperialism’ (Russia and China) will be contemptuously dismissed by serious Marxists and committed anti-imperialist militants worldwide.

**The rest of the LCC document**

The document begins thus:

“Facing a chronic global crisis of capitalism and intensifying inter-imperialist rivalry between the US and China blocs”

The previous two article in this publications and the arguments of the LTFI and Steve Ar- guge rebut this starting point. Then it goes through the turgid rituals of accusing all his opponents of being centrists and not understand- ing the dialectic. Like the one about Gad- dafi being imperialism’s agent whilst they were murdering him above, we must suppose. If you failed to see the logic in that you had capitulat- ed to ‘empiricism and pragmatism’ apparently. We have “materialist roots in the imperialist petty bourgeoisie” unlike Dave Brown (Redrave), the Sociology lecturer (retired) who undoubtedly penned these line.

Then it goes on to accuse the LCFI of Hea- lysis with no attempt to prove this and then goes on to assert that the whole LCFI is guilty of ‘national Trotskyism’ for not supporting the USA and its proxy wars in Libya, Syria and Ukraine. We are “social imperialism, adapting to Bonapartist dictators such as Gaddafi, Assad and Putin as the enemies of US imperialism” whereas the LCC is supplying Anglo American imperialism with its alibies for war against its rivals, we have no hesitation in charging.

“For both tendencies national self-determination as a bourgeois democratic right is always ‘progressive’ even if it is a counter-revolutionary ‘democratic dictatorship’ of imperialism” asserts Dave and we categorically refute this charge. This is a correct charge against both the RCIT and the Workers Power international but the LCFI and the SF before it has tirelessly unmasked this wrong position on the three Baltic States, Bosnia, Kosovo, Tibet, the Uigars etc. It is a totally false charge.

The next extract is a reals peach:

“So the LCFI regarded Gaddafi’s rule in Lib- ya as a genuine expression of self-determination against imperialism despite Gad- dafi’s role in serving US imperialism and emerging Chinese imperialism. The LCFI de- nied the agency of the rebels fighting Gaddafi as an agent of imperialism by painting them as CIA agents or jihadists. Today the rebels are fighting both the US puppet Hefter and the newly branded Islamic State (IS) in Libya. The logic of this has escaped the LCFI because it cannot imagine that Arab and other masses in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are capable of carrying through permanent revolu- tion against both imperialism and against the reactionary Islamic jihadists who are the agents of imperialism. One key aspect of social impe- rialism is its Eurocentrism, expressed today as Islamophobia.” [6]

It is, of course, a complete lie that “the LCFI regarded Gaddafi’s rule in Libya as a genuine expression of self-determination against imperialism” as even a curtsy glance at our state- ments on Libya from 2011 will show. In fact we polemicized strongly against those, like the WRP (News Line) and the CPGB (ML) who do just that and those like the ‘Spart Family’ that took a neutral position between the Ben- ghazi proxy imperialist counter-revolutionaries before the Nato bombing began.

And the notion that the rebels were “fighting Gaddafi as an agent of imperialism” is just too
hilarious for words; imperialism was bombing Gaddafi and succeeded in murdering him because he was their agent and they were also sending in special forces, including some 5,000 Qatari troops to assist the rebels who were their sworn enemies because, seeing as they were genuine revolutionaries, what else could decent imperialists do? The poor old confused CIA needs assistance from Dave Brown in New Zealand who could instruct them on how to stop making such silly mistakes!

The next bit is just as bad. The praise the RCIT for being on the ‘right’ (read ‘wrong’) side in Libya and because they did “not call for the rebels to form an AIUF with Gaddafi against NATO, unlike the LCFI”. But something has gone badly wrong, surely. “Don’t be so pessimistic, we have only suffered a small set back”:

“The permanent revolution has since stalled in Libya (you can hum it!! SF) but so has imperialism which is unable to defeat the resistance and find a new bourgeois regime that can replace Gaddafi. This stalemate can only be overcome and the permanent revolution completed in Libya with the revival of the Arab revolution led by the workers’ and poor peasants’ armed resistance in Syria and Palestine, supported by internationalist workers.” [7]

This is a prayer because now something called the “permanent revolution” will soon be “completed in Libya with the revival of the Arab revolution.” We would respectfully suggest to comrade Dave the Permanent Revolution is a programme of revolutionary Trotskyism and not an objective process that can proceed through the medium of reactionary jihadi worshippers based in Tripoli with the support of Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. They are just as reactionary as the other ‘revolution’ represented by the CIA asset, the “US puppet Hefter” supported by Egypt and Qatar or that promoted by the ISIS forces there. It is obvious to even the most politically naive person that NATO has destroyed Libya with the support of the LCC and the RCIT, to name just a few, just as it has destroyed Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya and is currently destroying Ukraine. And they have many more wars in the pipeline. But for the LCC these are all “stalled revolutions”.

And what are we to make of the following paragraph:

“However, the RCIT’s slavish application of the bourgeois democratic schema as progressive can be seen in Egypt when the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (SCAF) dismissed the Muslim Brotherhood, elected to power on a reactionary constitution that defended the military regime. The Muslim Brotherhood was a weak Islamic bourgeoisie of the bazaar seeking to replace the dominant military fraction. The RCIT called this dispute between two fractions of the bourgeoisie a coup against ‘bourgeois democracy’ and an ‘historic defeat‘ for the working class when the election of the Muslim Brotherhood did nothing to advance the interests of the working class. This was proven by
the millions of workers who marched against it. Such ‘bourgeois democracy’ was in reality a reactionary bourgeois regime seeking to appease imperialism and imposing a theocratic barrier to revolution. Its removal meant that the SCAF was now seen openly as the power base behind the Mubarak regime and that it had always been the dominant fraction of the national bourgeoisie.” [8]

The RCIT took a very good position on the Egypt coup and the LCC an unbelievably bad one. So in the coup perpetrated by Abdel Fattah el-Sisi against the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood President Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi on 3 July 2013 the LCC not only took no side but positively welcomed it because of the, “millions of workers who marched against it” and “Its removal (what a weaselly word for that bloody coup! – SF) meant that the SCAF was now seen openly as the power base behind the Mubarak regime and that it had always been the dominant fraction of the national bourgeoisie.” This is an absolutely reactionary position. Thousands of poor workers were slaughtered and hundreds have been sentenced to death for the elementary ‘crime’ of defending their democratic rights and the LCC supports this! And all leftists and workers’ organisations suffered severe repression. This is easily the most degenerate and reactionary political position in the whole document, and there are many!

We do agree with the LCC about the manner in which the Workers Power tradition (including the RCIT) elevate ‘democracy’ over the defence of the nationalised property relations as shown in the USSR in August 1991 when they stood arm-in-arm with Boris Yeltsin outside the White House in Moscow and we have said so repeatedly. But there’s more:

“We define ‘democracy’ today as concerned only with ‘workers democracy’. Lenin talked of the epoch of the bourgeois ‘national democratic’ revolution as the formation of states unifying national markets. In the epoch of imperialism where monopoly capital dominates, nations and the ideology of nationalism are reactionary forces that divide the international proletariat. National oppression in the imperialist epoch has only one historic solution, the socialist republic within a world-wide union of socialist republics. This was the goal of the Bolsheviks before the Russian Revolution was isolated and bureaucratised. It was the program of the healthy Fourth International while Trotsky lived. Unconditional defence of the Soviet Union as part of the world revolution would usher in the epoch of the ‘international proletarian revolution’.” [9]

Profoundly in error

In terms of Marxism this is profoundly in error. We have seen above what is the consequences of a failure to defend the democratic rights of workers under a bourgeois democratic system against a coup from the far right military. This opening idiotic statement means we should have no ‘side’ in the Hitler coup in 1933, in the Franco coup in 1936 or the Couculs’ coup in Greece in 1967, for example. The point of course is that a ‘bourgeois democracy’ entails certain democratic rights for workers which military/fascist coups eliminate and we really do have an unequivocal side in that! And no serious Marxist would write that, “nations and the ideology of nationalism are reactionary forces that divide the international proletariat” without distinguishing between the nationalism of the oppressor and that of the oppressed, without supporting the struggles of oppressed nations against oppressing nations without acknowledging that this is the real meaning of Lenin’s imperialism which he tirelessly fought for. Instead Dave Brown turn the theory of Imperialism into its opposite, a Left Communist/Anarchist reductionism this is too cowardly to defend oppressed nations from imperialist attack, regardless of the leadership that they have.

Trotsky in 1937:

“But we, Marxists and Bolsheviks, considered the struggle of the Rifians against imperialist
domination as a progressive war. Lenin wrote hundreds of pages demonstrating the primary necessity of distinguishing between imperialist nations and the colonial and semi colonial nations which comprise the great majority of humanity. 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.” [10]

In these matters the LCC constantly repeats the mantra that what is needed in all countries is the socialist revolution led by a revolutionary Trotskyist party and we can take no sides on anything unless we have that. They then put forward the Shachtmanite/Eiffelites line to excuse their failure to defend oppressed nations against imperialist attacks and the democratic rights of the working class against far rights coups in Egypt and Ukraine.

Trotsky again against the Eiffelites in the same article:

“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 Eiffelites 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.” [11]

The LCC on Bosnia and Libya

One of the great puzzles for the LCC is the very good and revolutionary position taken historically by the forerunner of the CEG USA, the LTT / Workers Voice (WoVo) in San Francisco led by Dov Winter on Bosnia in the 1990s and the completely opposite and reaction position it went along with in 2011 on Libya and Syria. Dov Winter took a courageous and correct stance against Workers Power line at the time and the evidence that that tradition lives on in the CWG in the very good article it produced in February 2014. [12]

The following is the comment Gerry Downing wrote on that article when he was struck so forcefully by that contradiction:

“I have read this article and it is excellent. It is the historically correct in line with the principled stance taken by your antecedents under Dov Winter against Workers Power line at the time and the evidence that that tradition lives on in the CWG in the very good article it produced in February 2014. [12]

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On 9/9/14 this Greek car ferry was hired as a last-minute accommodation for Libya's embattled parliament, which had fled the country's civil war to the eastern town of Tobruk, The Guardian reported.
Whether the ex-Yugoslav states were still deformed workers states by 1995 and 1999 is a moot point. I am sure they were not nevertheless the principle remains the same. It seems to me that it is on this point you have fallen down. Trotsky includes them (deformed workers states and semi-colonies) in the same paragraph in the Transitional Programme: “But not all countries of the world are imperialist countries. On the contrary, the majority are victims of imperialism. Some of the colonial or semi colonial countries will undoubtedly attempt to utilize the war in order to cast off the yoke of slavery. Their war will be not imperialist but liberating. It will be the duty of the international proletariat to aid the oppressed countries in their war against oppressors. The same duty applies in regard to aiding the USSR, or whatever other workers’ government might arise before the war or during the war. The defeat of every imperialist government in the struggle with the workers’ state or with a colonial country is the lesser evil.” I therefore do not see how you can be so right on Bosnia against Workers Power/RCIT and so wrong in agreement with them against Libya, Syria and the Ukraine. There seems to be two CWGs, one which can write that Bosnia document and another which thinks the Gaddafi was the main enemy in Libya and the revolution won a great victory there in alliance with Obama. And can take a third camist position on the Ukraine and fail to see what the Bosnian article sees. Socialist Fight has written an article on the Ukraine and Bosnia out in a few days. It recognises that Workers Voice took a principled stance against at that time. This is an extract from that: I was an opposition member of the International Socialist Group (British section of the Mandelite Fourth International) at the time but more in political sympathy with both the Workers International League, British section of the Leninist Trotskyist Committee (led by Richard Price) and the International Trotskyist Opposition (led by Peter Solenberger in the US and Franco Grisolia in Italy). The latter took the principled position on the Balkans as seen in the internal opposition document in the USFI, [13] as did Jose Villa, an oppositionist in Workers Power and his Latin American comrades in the Liaison Committee of Militants for a Revolutionary Communist International. Also principles oppositionists to WPB at the time were their US section Workers Voice in San Francisco, who failed to make a fusion with the LCMRCI, and the WRP of Greece. [14] The line of the WIL and LTT was gravitating towards that of Workers Power and I went along with that at the time. I am now certain that the ITO, the LCMRCI, WoVo and the EEK were far more consistently Trotskyist at the time.” [15]

Conclusion
We will leave the detailed defence of the political struggle in Brazil to our comrades there except to point out the obvious mistake that the LCC again make by equating the anti-imperialist united front with the popular front. This is to deny that Brazil is a semi-colonial nation, albeit an advanced one. Our Brazilian comrades have used the tactically flexible method of the Transitional Programme to relate to the mass movement’s correct political instincts of anti-imperialism. Brazil’s history of pro-imperialist coups and regimes demands this type of flexibility and our comrades have utilised the Leninist principle brilliantly, maximum flexibility in tactics, unyielding defence of principles. The result of this approach are well known; it is the victory of the Russian Revolution.

Now let us conclude with the theoretical arguments the LCC present in asserting that China and Russia are imperialist nations whilst, at the same time, correctly rejecting the Workers Power/RCIT contention that other imperialist powers, South Africa, for example, have emerged since WWII. Apparently this is because the degenerate and deformed workers’ states of Russia and China enabled the development of the productive forces to such an
extent that even the restoration of capitalism in these lands was not sufficient to allow them to regress into semi-colonies; they remained Independent Countries (whatever that is).

Therefore the process of permanent revolution (that objective programmatic thing that needs not programme or revolutionary leadership) has allowed them to develop as imperialist powers. We consider this to be absolute rubbish. Of course it is not the export of capital alone, although the Russian variety is exported simply for the avoidance of taxes by oligarchs in the main and both export not to dominate markets and oppress countries but to secure raw materials for their home industries. Nor is it monopolies, alone nor is it the political leadership of the regime nor the division of the planet into spheres of influence alone nor is military might alone but the mutual reciprocal relationship between all these factors that makes a country imperialist. And that really IS dialectical comrades of the LCC. We are entirely confident that this document has conclusively proved that you are wrong on this issue on all counts.

Notes
http://redrave.blogspot.co.uk/2015/04/russia-china-and-unfinished-permanent.html
[2] Ibid.
[4] Revolutionary Tendency, 1 March, Russia and China Are Not Imperialist, By Steven Argue
http://historyandcurrentcontext.blogspot.co.uk/2015/03/russia-and-china-are-not-imperialist.html
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[15] Ibid. Comment on the above article.

Khalifa Haftar’s army now controls much of the eastern half of Libya. The CIA asset seeks to take over Libya on behalf of the USA in alliance with General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt and Qatar.