“Nevertheless, the (Ulster Workers Council) strike also demonstrated in a distorted form and on a reactionary issue, the colossal power of the working class when it moves into action.”

In their own words:


“A socialist government would make a class appeal to the Argentinean workers. A Labour government could not just abandon the Falklanders and let Galtieri get on with it. But it would continue the war on socialist lines.”
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.

Introduction

This polemic was one of the documents at the founding conference of Socialist Fight in March 2014. It is part of a series establishing the revolutionary Trotskyist positions of the SF and LRCI and a contribution to resolving the crisis of leadership in the working class and to refounding and regenerating the Fourth International.

The Committee for a Workers International (CWI, of which the British section is the Socialist Party of England and Wales, SPEW) is a right centrist group of Trotskyist origins. The same is true of the International Marxist Tendency (IMT), of which the British section is Socialist Appeal (SA), which shares a common political heritage with the CWI in the person of Ted Grant, who developed the theoretical and political perspectives of both international groups from the late 1940s.

Grant’s basic political error is a failure to understand the state, either the capitalist state...
or the former degenerate workers’ state of the USSR or the various deformed workers’ states of Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia/Kampuchea and Cuba as they emerged after WWII. Ted Grant characterised a whole swath of left bourgeois nationalist regimes as deformed workers’ states basically because he crudely equated nationalisation with socialised property relations (socialist planned economy) and he did not understand the Marxist theory of the state at all in his later years, a point we deal in out pamphlet *The Marxist Theory of the State*. 

The Grantites therefore fail to understand or accept that the state under capitalism is the prime instrument of class oppression which has to be overthrown in revolution by the working class. Under pressure of long-term deep entryism in the Labour party this has led them to take a reformist position of socialism through parliament via an Enabling Act and to misidentify the forces of the capitalist state, the police, the army and prison officers as workers in uniform; just more state employees who are therefore entitled to form trade unions and be represented by their chosen shop stewards like any other workers. They see no problem whatsoever with the Prison Officers Association (POA) being part of the workers’ movement, when in reality these state forces should be expelled from the TUC. Their historic and ongoing role in torturing Republican prisoners in the north without a word of objection from the Grantites reveals their true relationship to the capitalist state.

In their defence they plead that the Enabling Act orientation is merely a transitional demand used to mobilise the working class and that the demand to unionise the state forces is, in fact, a clever Marxist tactic to split the army and police in time of revolution. So instead the revolution being the act of the working class itself led by the revolutionary party overthrowing the capitalist state it is the act of a left socialist government, Labour left in the case of the SA or some other left government like the Trade Union Solidarity Committee or maybe the No to the EU in the case of the SPEW. The role of the working class then is to defend the revolutionary nationalisation of the ‘commanding heights of industry’ which the ‘revolutionary’ government has already carried out. If the Trotskyist are a majority in this government the result is a healthy workers’ state, if they are a minority it becomes a deformed workers’ state.

**Workers in Uniform?**

Marxists reject the characterisation of the police, army or prisoner officers as ‘workers in uniform’. In 1905 Lenin was very sanguine on how to split the army and police in an insurrection: “The contingents may be of any strength, beginning with two or three people. They must arm themselves as best they can (rifles, revolvers, bombs, knives, knuckle-dusters, sticks, rags soaked in kerosene for starting fires, ropes or rope ladders, shovels for building barricades, pyroxylin cartridges, barbed
wire, nails [against cavalry], etc., etc.). Under no circumstances should they wait for help from other sources, from above, from the outside; they must procure everything themselves... To launch attacks under favourable circumstances is not only every revolutionary’s right, but his plain duty. The killing of spies, policemen, gendarmes, the blowing up of police stations, the liberation of prisoners, the seizure of government funds for the needs of the uprising—such operations are already being carried out wherever insurrection is rife, in Poland and in the Caucasus, and every detachment of the revolutionary army must be ready to start such operations at a moment’s notice”. [1]

And Trotsky clearly rejected such an approach also (there was a Social Democratic police chief in Berlin at that time as it was a political appointment):

“In case of actual danger, the social democracy banks not on the “Iron Front” but on the Prussian police. It is reckoning without its host! The fact that the police was originally recruited in large numbers from among social-democratic workers is absolutely meaningless. Consciousness is determined by environment even in this instance. The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker. Of late years, these policemen have had to do much more fighting with revolutionary workers than with Nazi students. Such training does not fail to leave its effects. And above all: every policeman knows that though governments may change, the police remains”. [2]

Of course we do not advocate such tactics as Lenin advocated above today but it is instructive to note that neither Lenin nor Trotsky regarded the state forces as workers in uniform in any way at all. It is a different matter when whole sections of an army or of the police begin to come over to the side of revolution. But then they cease to be state forces and became anti-state forces on behalf of the revolution.

In a polemic in 2006 against ‘Michael’, who subsequently split to join the International Bolshevik Tendency, [3] Lynn Walsh relied heavily on the attitude of Marx to the state and Transitional Demands in Germany in 1848, quoting from the Communist Manifesto and the later, Demands of the Communist Party in Germany (1848). [4] What he neglects to tell us is that the ONLY point in the Communist Manifesto that Marx felt obliged to alter is on the question of the state. Strategy for Revolution in 21st Century tells us:

“The experience of the Paris Commune in 1870 led Marx and Engels to revise one aspect of the Communist Manifesto, in their 1872 preface, the only time they ever felt it necessary to do so. In their words, “One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz. that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.”’ As Lenin would repeat later in State and Rev-
olution, this means that “that the working class must break up, smash the “ready-made state machinery”, and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.” [5]
The IBT replied to this at length in an orthodox Trotskyist document, *Marxism vs. ’Militant’ Reformism*, [6] with which there is little to disagree and whose arguments we therefore do not need to repeat. It serves as a useful supplement to this document, apart from obvious differences in method of approach to the working class. Failure to understand the Marxist theory of the state was the specific weakness peculiar to Grantism that led to the collapse of that tradition into right centrism in the late 1940s and early 1950s with the rest of the Trotskyist movement. In fact Grant was much better than most other groups in rejecting the capitulation to the political opportunism of Michel Pablo, the post-war central leader of the Fourth International, in regard to Yugoslavia up to that period, as we shall see later.

**How the Sparts see the DSM and the WASP**
The Grantite attitude to the state in Britain is mirrored in every country where the CWI or IMT has sections. Here is the account of the International Communist League (Sparts) of the activities of the DSM (CWI) and its front group the Wasp. Care needs to be taken as the ICL never countenances any tactical orientation to the working class via its vanguard at all; it is the most dogmatically sectarian of all the self-proclaimed Trotskyist groups. We would suggest the ability of the CWI group to remain in the ANC, albeit as a DEEP entry group, until 1996 was how they built their group; a clear revolutionary programme might have attracted far more repression but in reality the ANC do not distinguish between self-proclaimed Trotskyist groups. As long as an outside centre was maintained the entry tactic was at least a possibility. Total entryism is only possible for a brief period of a year or two. Nevertheless the account indicates our own position that they are reformists everywhere on the state: “According to the Daily Maverick (15 October), a meeting of wildcat strike leaders took place in Marikana, representing miners from several provinces. The article noted in particular the presence of the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), which has been active in the Rustenburg area. The DSM says that a national strike coordinating committee was launched on October 13 and that the committee is calling for a general strike on November 3. On October 19, Vavi and NUM officials were pelted with rocks by striking workers at AngloGold Ashanti’s mine in Orkney, North West Province. Earlier, several DSM members were detained by mine security and grilled by police after addressing the strikers. The workers’ movement must defend the DSM and all others victimized for their role in the miners struggle!

However, mineworkers and others need to be aware of the thoroughly opportunist history of the DSM, which is affiliated to the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI [in Canada, Socialist Alternative] headed by Peter Taaffe. The Taaffe group formed the Marxist Workers’ Tendency of the ANC, remaining inside this bourgeois party until 1996. In a speech in New York given shortly after the 1994 elections, Taaffe, then the leader of the British Militant Labour tendency, opposed the call for a workers’ party, saying: “The working class in South Africa has to go through the experience of an ANC government. The slogan of a workers’ party was an incorrect slogan in the period prior to the elections in South Africa. We wanted the biggest possible ANC majority” (WV No. 602, 10 June 1994).
The DSM emerged from its entrism inside the ANC when the latter’s “national liberation” credentials were starting to wear thin as a result of economic policies aimed at reassuring investors. Indeed, few if any left groups persist in uncritically cheerleading for the regime and its leaders, who are unashamedly riding the “gravy train.” But the DSM, like the other reformists who hitched their wagon to the Tripartite Alliance, maintains its class-collaborationist politics, which are at bottom the same as those of the SAPC and COSATU tops. This can be unmistakably seen in the DSM’s attitude toward the state (see the 1994 Spartacist pamphlet, Militant Labour’s Touching Faith in the Capitalist State). Just like their reformist big brothers, the CWI/DSM believes that the police are part of the workers’ movement.

In the 1994 speech cited above, Taaffe supported the cop union POPCRU (Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union), enthusing that “these very same black police who were tools of the apartheid regime, were radicalized by the situation.” His conclusion was: “We can neutralize the forces of the state and win them over.”

One can cite any amount of evidence disproving this suicidal illusion, the cop massacre of miners at Marikana being an obvious example. In the wake of that event, the DSM, in a 17 August statement titled “For a General Strike to End the Marikana Massacre,” violence-baited the Lonmin strikers, rebuking them for “killing first two security guards, on Saturday, and then two police officers on Monday” (quoted in a 23 August SSA statement published in WV No. 1007, 31 August). Now, in a 16 October statement, the DSM refers to a wave of workers’ militancy sweeping through the country, which supposedly includes “the police as well as the municipal workers”! Of the Taaffeites, it can truly be said that they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. The police, black and white, are enforcers for capitalist rule. We say: Cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!

The DSM calls for “nationalisation of the mines under workers’ control and management.” A black-centred workers’ government would expropriate the mines, banks, industry and land without compensation, while struggling to extend the revolution internationally. Such a government could only be put in place through the expropriation of the South African bourgeoisie as a class, i.e., through proletarian revolution. The DSM statement does not mention socialist revolution, and this is not an accident. They don’t believe that the workers must smash the capitalist state and replace it with a workers’ state. In Britain, Taaffe’s organization claims that industry will be nationalized through the mechanism of an “enabling bill” passed by the bourgeois Parliament. This is just a version of what the British Labour Party did after World War II: it’s social democracy, not communism. [7]

**The Marxist Theory of the State**

Of course every Marxist student knows Engels famous 1884 definition of the state: “The second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a public power which no longer directly coincides with the population organizing itself as an armed force. This special public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organization of the population has become impossible since the split into classes. The slaves also belong to the population; as against the 365,000 slaves, the 90,000 Athenian citizens constitute only a privileged class. The militia of the Athenian democracy was an aristocratic public power against the slaves, whom it kept in check; but to keep the citizens in check as well, a gendarmerie was needed as described above. This public
power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons and coercive institutions of all kinds, of which gentile society knew nothing.”

Fredrick Engels describes the state: “This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons and coercive institutions of all kinds, of which gentile society knew nothing”. [8]

In 1843 Marx in *On the Jewish Question* attacked the idea of a regime of rights in the French Constitution of 1793 partially on the basis that policemen were needed to enforce these ‘rights’:

“Security is the highest social concept of civil society, the concept of police, expressing the fact that the whole of society exists only in order to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his person, his rights, and his property. It is in this sense that Hegel calls civil society “the state of need and reason.” … we see that the political emancipators go so far as to reduce citizenship, and the political community, to a mere means for maintaining these so-called rights of man, that, therefore, the citoyen is declared to be the servant of egotistic homme, that the sphere in which man acts as a communal being is degraded to a level below the sphere in which he acts as a partial being, and that, finally, it is not man as citoyen, but man as private individual [bourgeois] who is considered to be the essential and true man”. [9]

So here we see that the policeman protects the property of the bourgeoisie against the worker as his central task, according the Marx. But there are all forms of state, the democratic, the totalitarian, the fascist and there are workers’ states. And it was on the analysis of the new workers’ states that appeared after WWII that Grant displayed both his adherence to certain Trotskyist principles and his weakness on the state. It is widely acknowledged outside his own ideological circles by any that are willing to make a serious objective assessment that his defence Trotskyism’s heritage on both Yugoslavia and China in 1949 were principled and correct in so far as they went.

In 1957 Bill Hunter produced his anti-Pabloite document, *Under a Stolen Flag* which must rank as a spirited defence of Trotskyism, albeit with the left centrist weakness we have analysed in *On the Continuity of Trotskyism*. However in Ted Grant *The Unbroken Thread* we find a curious gap in the history from the mid fifties up to the early sixties. As we learn from *A Brief biography in Revolutionary History* 2002: “In 1953 a split took place in the International, with Healy and Cannon leaving to form their own grouping. This left the International without a section in Britain. After some discussions, Ted’s group was recognised as the official British section. By the end of the year Ted again became full-timer worker, and a new magazine, *Workers International Review*, was launched”. [10]
Bill Hunter points out that this was on the basis of supporting Pablo, with whom he certainly disagreed:

“We must remark, in passing, that Pablo and Co. show scant courtesy to the little group in Britain which made an unprincipled fusion with last year. How now, Comrade G(rant)? You have justified your bargain – two professionals and a magazine, in exchange for a ‘section’ in Britain with a few ‘principles’ thrown in – by declaring that Pabloism has changed. This shabby covering has now been torn away by none other than Pablo himself. On Page 1 of its thesis the ‘International Secretariat’ informs us that: ‘more and more dramatic events have followed one another in the USSR, the Peoples Democracies and the capitalist countries since the 4th World Congress, have completely and brilliantly confirmed this analysis”. (i.e. the whole Pabloite war revolution nonsense – SF) [11]

(We will analyse how the CWI’s reformist theory of the state evolved from a relatively good position by Ted Grant in the late 1940s and early 1950s to today’s reformist one with a thin veneer of Trotskyism in a separate document, The Marxist theory of the state…)

The CWI’s pro-imperialism on Ireland

Nowhere is the theory of the state more needed than in the north of Ireland, nowhere is the Grant tradition as obviously capitulatory as there. We will examine the article from Militant on the 1974 Ulster Workers strike that brought down the Sunningdale Agreement which was proposing a timid reformist power-sharing agreement which would grant some modest protection against discrimination to the Nationalist, i.e. anti-imperialist, community in the north of Ireland.

In an article in the Irish Examiner, Welcome for Orange Order is one step on long journey, July 03 2012, Gerard Howlin comments on the reception given in the ballroom in Leinster House, in the Irish parliament, to the grandmaster of the Orange Order Edward Stevenson. Giving the historical background he comments:

“In 1795, as tensions mounted, a clash occurred called the Battle of the Diamond in Co Armagh. It was a nasty scuffle involving Catholic Defenders and local Protestants. It did, however, give birth to the Orange Order. If the Seanad chamber is a backdrop for the Protestant Enlightenment in Ireland, the order can be viewed, as one historian remarked, as the key force of counter-revolution. It was the political genius of the Order that it could hold dukes and dustmen in its popular but sectarian embrace.” [12]

The skilled Protestant workers, the institutionalise aristocracy of labour who have traditionally looked to Apartheid South Africa, to Zionist Israel and to the US deep South Jim Crow for inspiration, despised the poor ‘papist’ nationalist/Catholic workers and were always determined to form a cross-class alliance to deny them employment, housing, welfare and life itself whenever “croppy” became too uppity. But Militant pandered to them thus:

“At the same time once the effectiveness of the strike was demonstrated, it gained support from the Protestant working class. The five years of bombings and violence, together with the fear of being incorporated into a capitalist united Ireland, fuelled their support for the strike. Above all, it was the speeches of Gerry Fitt, with his sweeping characterisation of all supporters of the strike as ‘fascists’, and Wilson, with his infamous ‘spongers’ speech, and the use of the army in the petrol stations, which served to unite practically the whole of the Protestant population behind the UWC call.

But the strike was organised for reactionary ends. There were genuine fears on the part of
the mass of the Protestant working class that they were to become the new minority - discriminated against and permanently subjugated - in a capitalist united Ireland. But the leaders of the UWC - with their diatribes against ‘communists and Trotskyists’ - and their political allies, Paisley, Craig and West, played on these fears in an attempt to turn back the wheel of history to the pre-1969 situation. They wished to re-establish the Protestant Ascendancy - their own Ascendancy.

The strike was aimed not just against ‘Sunningdale’ and the ‘Irish dimension’, but in order to force back the Catholic population into the position they occupied before the Civil Rights campaign. Nevertheless, the strike also demonstrated in a distorted form and on a reactionary issue, the colossal power of the working class when it moves into action. The whole basis of life in modern society depends on the working class. Nothing moved in Northern Ireland without the permission of the working class.

Even bourgeois commentators, hostile to the aim of the strike, were forced to comment on the power and ingenuity displayed by the working class. Thus the Times correspondent commented on the situation in the Protestant Sandy Row district of Belfast...”Between fifty and a hundred men have operated a rubbish clearance service, going round in the backs of lorries while others swept the streets. At the weekend, brown paper rubbish bags arrived and 22,000 have been given to families in the past three days.” Connections were made with sympathetic farmers who supplied the areas with cheap food...” [13]

Amidst all the dross here this is the sentence that leaps out at you from that article: “Nevertheless, the strike also demonstrated in a distorted form and on a reactionary issue, the colossal power of the working class when it moves into action.” Who would express such admiration for a neo-fascist uprising? Would we admire the strength and discipline of Hitler’s Brown-shirts because this showed us what these workers could do if there were socialists and not fascists? And remember the material basis for discrimination in the north of Ireland. Here was the real aristocracy of labour that was originally gathered in 1795 in the Orange Order, whose declared purpose in its initiation oath is still to “counter-revolution”.

“Nothing moved in Northern Ireland without the permission of the working class” cannot but choke you. This “nothing” is primarily other workers, Protestants who had solidarity with nationalist workers and nationalist workers themselves who were assaulted with fascist enthusiasm by Loyalist thugs with the covert assistance of the British Army and the not-so-covert assistance of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The various bourgeoisies, from the Irish pro-imperialists to the bedrock of imperialist orthodoxy in the columns of The Times, of course, were not hostile to this strike, supported it but had to...
be careful in how they expressed their support, as Militant were. Hence the mutual admiration between Militant and the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie here: “Isn’t it great to have the workers going on strike for us instead against us for a change?” is the common theme here supported by Militant. Those in South Africa will recall Mangosuthu Buthelezi’s strikes against the ANC in Kwa-Zulu-Natal. Do we all remember how supportive The Times were to the 1926 General Strike and how it complemented the workers on their ingenuity etc? We though not! But to quote more:

“A sectarian catastrophe cannot be ruled out in Northern Ireland; particularly if the trade union movement fails to act now. But Marxists reject the siren voices who speak and write of the ‘inevitability’ of religious civil war. Events in Britain and Southern Ireland can exercise a profound effect in the North of Ireland. The worsening economic situation in Britain and its effects in Britain will provide the opportunity for cementing a class movement of Catholic and Protestant workers. But as in the past, these opportunities can be missed if the lessons of the last six years are not learnt. The bitter religious divisions between the working class will not be bridged by Christian homilies. Sectarianism will not evaporate if the trade union leaders act as if by ignoring it, it will go away by itself. The working class of Northern Ireland have demonstrated their colossal power during the May strike.” (our emphasis).

So workers participating in a reactionary fascist attack on other workers demonstrated the colossal power of the working class! This is the most outrageous sentence we have ever read for a group which claims to be socialist. It is true that an earlier article, whilst bad, was written in Ireland and at least had some clear opposition to the strike: “They were using that power for reactionary aims and to assist their own worst enemies, the Craigs, Paisleys and co. Let them use it together with the Catholic working class — and they will be an invincible force.” [15]

A measure of equality

But that was the very reason for the strike, they feared the “Catholics”, in fact all the political opponents of British imperialist occupation of the six north eastern counties of Ireland, would gain a measure of equality, they would be forced to stop discriminating against them and within their own ranks “Rotten Prods” would emerge to show solidarity with the nationalists and anti-
imperialists, as they did in the late teens and early 1920s. This labour aristocracy was not going to yield its privileges to anyone because they knew that covertly the entire British establishment supported them, including the trade union bureaucracy and the Labour party, whose left flank was guarded so assiduously here by the pro-imperialist Militant Tendency of Ted Grant. The strike was to stop the possibility of the nationalist community gaining that limited measure of equality and its success guaranteed just that for another generation at least. The “power of the working class” was exercised to prevent workers unity and the Socialist Party, whilst advocating unity, believes it can only be on the basis of the support for the British Empire. They are THE most pro-imperialist sect on the left (apart from the AWL, of course).

“Irish Marxists – gathered around the Militant Irish Monthly – are the only tendency in the Irish labour movement, on the basis of a Marxist programme and perspective, capable of furthering the process of re-arming the Northern Ireland workers on class lines”. [16] This is a complete lie. This utterly shameful article, still proudly displayed in the archives of the SP/CWI, displays this as a political current prepared to go to all lengths to defend the interests of British and global imperialism, and covering this up with a thin veneer of leftist pseudo-Marxist gobbledygook.

But that was 1974 what about today? The politics are the same, as Socialist Fight No 12 pointed out:

“In an article on 16 January 2013, Northern Ireland: Flag issue turmoil illustrates failure of the ‘peace process’ Ciaran Mulholland, CWI Northern Ireland, (the Socialist Party) gives us this on the riots:

“Whilst the total numbers involved are relatively small there is no doubt that the issue has acted as a lightning rod for widespread dissatisfaction with the peace process which has built up over time in the Protestant community. There is real and genuine anger among large layers of Protestants. There is a sense that “everything is going in one direction”, that is, Protestants are losing out to Catholics. In the view of many Sinn Fein are pushing too hard for concessions as Progressive Unionist Party (the PUP is linked to the UVF) leader Billy Hutchinson has argued “Sinn Fein are acting outside the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement”. This is the reason that the PUP have given for reversing their previous conciliatory approach on the flags issue. A banner displayed in the Mount Vernon, where Hutchinson works as a community worker, proclaims “North Belfast Against Cultural Apartheid”.

What ‘The Protestants’ and ‘The Catholics’ Believe

The stuff that “the Protestants” believe is completely false however as the article goes on to explain. They are blaming “the Catholics” who are sufferings a great deal more than themselves:

“At the same time many Catholics continue to believe that they are subject to sectarian discrimination. They hold that they are dealt with more harshly by the police. They believe that they are more likely to be poor and unemployed than Protestants for historic reasons, reasons of geography and because of the residues of sectarian discrimination, there are still differences between the two communities in economic terms. The poverty rate among Protestants at 19 per cent is lower than the 26 per cent rate for Catholics. In the three years to 2010 on average, 28 per cent of working-age Protestants were not in paid work compared with 35 per cent of Catholics.”

So the stuff that “the Catholics believe” is, in fact, true. But nonetheless we must be careful to avoid drawing any conclusion about
whose beliefs are correct and whose are far-right reaction:

“The views expressed in each community are sometimes true, or partially true. Sometimes however genuinely held beliefs are simply not true. The reason that such a complex situation can arise is that there are genuine interwoven grievances on both sides. The real problem is that the peace process has failed to deliver for working class or young people whatever their background. The peace process has failed because under capitalism genuine peace, and real economic advancement for working people, is not possible. Under the structures established by the Good Friday Agreement it is assumed that everyone belongs to one or other of two mutually exclusive communities. Under capitalism all that is possible is a sharing out of political power, and a sharing out of poverty and unemployment... Whilst all sections of the protestant community have been affected by the flag issue it finds its sharpest expression in the most deprived working class areas. The rioting and the road blocks are in part a distorted form of class anger directed at the unionist political establishment represented in the assembly and on the executive.”

But the problems predate the GFA and indeed the Orange state itself from 1921, although both made a bad situation much worse. It is a complete lie that the ‘two communities’ are equally to blame. In the medieval church that type of argument as it is made above was known as equivocation. [17] And “class anger” my arse. Was it class anger that drove some backward German workers to don Brownshirts and attack Jews? Leon Trotsky said they were the “storm troopers of finance capital” and that is what we are seeing emerging in Belfast. Of course it is a lie that Loyalist anger is directed primarily at the UUP/DUP and the police. However some rioters justified attacking the police because it had too many Catholics (by February 2011, 29.7% of the 7,200 officers were from the Catholic community). But anger is only directed against all these because they seen as slacking somewhat in their traditional job of discriminating against ‘the Catholics’.

In a 1999 review of Loyalists, by Peter Taylor Socialism Today told us that the PUP “initially moved in a socialist direction”. The Socialist party described the neo-fascist uprising that was the Ulster Workers’ Council strike of May 1974 was displaying “the latent power of the working class” in the “interests of the majority of the Protestant population” as they saw it; right or wrong we must respect this prejudice!

In October 1974 current PUP leader Billy Hutchinson, murdered Catholics Michael Loughran and Edward Morgan in Northumberland Street, Belfast (which links the Protestant Shankill to the neighbouring Falls Road, a Catholic area). Hutchinson has often stressed the importance of the working class nature of Loyalism and has argued in favour of socialism, he is an atheist and has never been a member of the Orange Order. The SP have always pandered to this neo-Strasserite [18] Loyalist ‘socialism’ – which opposes the rights of the nationalist community – a “socialism of idiots”, as SPD leader August Bebel famously described it c. 1890.

The Malvinas War; the CWI defends the Empire

If we scroll on eight years we come to the Malvinas war against Argentina in 1982. Again Ted Grant could be relied on the rush to defend the Empire threatened by an uppy semi-colony claiming back their national territory seized as a colony by the British Empire in 1690. Here is another shameful article in defence of Empire but also contain-
ing the key rejection of Marxism on the state and revolution:
“The Falklands war is not a reason for calling off the struggle against the Tories – on the contrary, the slaughter of the war and the additional drain on British capitalism, for which big business will try to make the workers pay, underlines the urgency of stepping up the struggle to bring down the Tory government.
The labour movement should be mobilised to force a general election to open the way for the return of a Labour government to implement socialist policies at home and abroad. Victory of a socialist government in Britain would immediately transform the situation in relation to the Falklands. The Junta would no longer be able to claim to be fighting British imperialism.
A socialist government would make a class appeal to the Argentinean workers. A Labour government could not just abandon the Falklanders and let Galtieri get on with it. But it would continue the war on socialist lines. First, a socialist government would carry through the democratisation of the British armed forces, introducing trade union rights and the election of officers. Working class interests cannot be defended under the direction of an authoritarian, officer caste, which is tied to the capitalist class by education, income and family and class loyalties. The use of force against the Junta, however, would be combined with a class appeal to the workers in uniform. British capitalism will probably defeat the Junta, but only through a bloody battle and at an enormous cost in lives. Using socialist methods, a Labour government could rapidly defeat the dictatorship, which was already facing a threat from the Argentinean working class when Galtieri embarked on his diversionary battle with British imperialism (our emphasis).” [19]

The above passage contains all the reformist repudiation of the Marxist position on the state as well as the gross national chauvinist pro-imperialism so characteristic of this sect. For instance the “workers in uniform” stuff was explicitly repudiated by Lenin and Trotsky in their writings on the capitalist state as we say above. And as for continuing the war if they were in government that is simply a piece of gross social imperialism, socialist in name but clearly imperialist in content to toady to British ruling class interests and placate British middle class and workers’ pro-imperialist prejudices. We recall the pressures of the time (having been assaulted for defending Argentina’s right to the Malvinas) but what good is a Marxist who cannot stand up to the pressures from his or her own ruling class? They are simply playing games.

Workers Power’s Document
The key elements of the reformism of Grantism under a thin veneer of Marxist gobbledygook are exposed in the 1989 document by Workers Power. Whilst not agreeing with many details in the piece it does address the essence of the group’s anti-revolutionary reformism:

“In place of the strategy of the proletarian seizure of power Militant puts forward the schema of a Labour government with a parliamentary majority and a socialist programme, implementing the transformation of society by legislative means. Peter Taaffe argues: . . . in the pages of Militant, in pamphlets, and in speeches, we have shown that the struggle to establish a socialist Britain can be carried through in Parliament backed up by the colossal power of the labour movement outside. This, however, will only be possible on one condition: that the trade unions and Labour Party are won to a clear Marxist programme, and the full power of the movement is used to effect the rapid and complete socialist transformation of society.

At the level of strategy this amounts to a parliamentary road to socialism via an established reformist party—that is a bourgeois workers’ party. Nowhere in the pages of Militant or its associated journals do we find any references to the need (in Britain) for workers’ councils as the organs of struggle and of proletarian power in order to effect the revolution. Nowhere do we find the argument for a workers’ militia as an alternative to the capitalists’ military machine. Nowhere do we find the call for a revolutionary party, distinct from all shades of reformism and centrism, as the necessary leadership for the proletariat in the revolution. Parliament and the existing organisations of the working class are deemed sufficient. Indeed, the job of workers’ organisations is merely to supplement and enhance the work of the left parliamentarians. Even these existing reformist led organisations are not cited as an alternative form of political power to Parliament.

As Taaffe explains: “The struggle to enhance the position of Labour in Parliament has always been supplemented by the struggle outside Parliament, both of the trade unions and the Labour Party.” This parliamentary strategy leads to a crucial error; the downplaying of the role of the working class, of its self-organisation as the key to its self-emancipation in the course of revolution. If anyone, particularly the reformist leadership of the Labour Party, were in any doubt about the Militant’s commitment to Parliament, Rob Sewell (now a leader of the rival IMT which retains the politically identical positions on the state –GD) repeated the essence of their position in an indignant reply to the reformist Geoff Hodgson: “The idea put forward by Hodgson that we want to ‘smash parliamentary democracy’ is completely untrue. Unlike the sectarian grouplets on the fringe of the labour movement we have stressed that a socialist Britain can be accomplished through Parliament, backed up by the mobilised power of the labour movement outside.” The swipe against the left in order to appease the right is a classic characteristic of centrism.” [20]

But perhaps they have advanced since those days? Not a bit of it. Now that they are no longer in the British Labour party they can feign well to the left of the IMT/British Socialist Appeal on domestic as well as international issues. But the essential reformist politics remain the same. They are still for the parliamentary road to socialism only now they are sure the Labour party cannot do it but a more radical, reformist workers’ party can perform this task and tread the path of the old Communist parties via parliament. This radical party is the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in Britain and the Workers and Socialist Party (WASP) in South
“No serious left force can advocate a policy of abstention where working people are subjected to murderous attack by a ruthless dictator like Gaddafi. Clearly, we had to give political support—the position of the Socialist Party and the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) from the outset—to the people of Benghazi when they drove Gaddafi’s forces from the city in a revolutionary uprising.” 

Socialism Today May 2011. The ‘working people’ (at least they had the good grace not to describe them as a ‘class’) celebrate the foul and counter-revolutionary butchery of Gaddafi on behalf of US imperialism and NATO on 20/10/2011

Africa, to name but two. The line is still the same, lacking even the radical posturing of Gerry Healy’s WRP in its strident denunciations of all such reformist ideas whilst cosying up to the reformist Ken Livingstone and defending his sell out of the in 1984 and toadying to Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein and the Ayatollah Khomeini.

**Libya and Syria Today**

In recent international questions they have been begun to adopt a third camp position, as can be seen in Libya and Syria. That is they support the imperialist sponsored ‘revolutions’ on the ground but denounce all open imperialist intervention. This is the classic “neither Washing nor Moscow” (or in these cases Tripoli or Damascus) but international socialism” line. They therefore seek the working class fighting in their own class interests which naturally, for them, means they

will not defend the semi-colonial regime against a proxy way by imperialist-sponsored forces. But it is at least refreshing not to hear the gross apology for imperialist-sponsored outright reactionary forces in Libya and Syria (Obama’s ‘revolution’) that we get from groups like their former comrades in the Socialist Appeal/IMT, The Socialist Workers Party (SWP/IST), the Mandelite Fourth International, the Alliance for Workers Liberty, Workers Power and the Austrian-based Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, (RCIT) on these questions. But they began in Libya as straight forward pro-imperialists:

“No serious left force can advocate a policy of abstention where working people are subjected to murderous attack by a ruthless dictator like Gaddafi. Clearly, we had to give political support—the position of the Socialist Party and the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) from the outset—to the people of Benghazi when they drove Gaddafi’s forces from the city in a revolutionary uprising.” [21] But the “people of Benghazi” were led by CIA ‘assets’ (who turned out subsequently to be liabilities) and were lynching Black workers right from the start. The flying of King Idris’ flag and the whole history of CIA sponsorship of these groups and leaderships should have been enough to identify who the ‘revolutionaries’ in Benghazi were. But with that un-repudiated history of pro-imperialism the shift is only a tactical one to capture those who are seeking genuine Trotskyist revolutionary politics and will not trouble too much to examine what they are really saying and how it gells with past positions. As Socialist Fight No 7 said: The Socialist Party (CWI) are somewhat more circumspect than their former comrades in the IMT:

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

So a more truthful approach, the ‘revolution’ was won with the assistance of imperialism. That has sorted out their former comrades in Socialist Appeal but one is left floundering by the idea that the “victory for the Libyan people was also a success for imperialism.” We know that was what they said on the TV comrades but it was a lie. You cannot advance imperialism’s victory and the victory of the working class at the same time; they are mutually exclusive, and one must advance at the expense of the other, a ‘zero sum’ rather than a ‘win-win’ situation we would suggest.

Of course the use of the word ‘people’ might mean that they accept that capitalists and workers have ultimately the same political and economic interests in faraway lands. But once you pay the first tranche of the protection money the Mafia will always be back for more.

The CWI take a similar third campist line on Syria today. This does put them to the left of those like the Alliance for Workers Liberty (who do equivocate, it is true), the Fourth International (Mandel) and Workers Power and the RCIT, who are still batting for their reactionary pro-imperialist ‘revolution’ abandoned now by the more pragmatic leftists.

The History and Genesis of the National Shop Stewards Network

The NSSN was founded at a conference called by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) on July 7, 2007. The proposal to re-establish a shop stewards movement came from an RMT sponsored conference to discuss working class political representation held in January 2006.

Its founding conference saw a dispute over Clause 3 of the constitution, which pledged not to interfere in the internal affairs of TUC affiliated unions. This effectively meant that no criticisms were allowed of the left trade union bureaucracy, whose mouth piece it was to become. Following a unanimous decision of the steering committee, on 22 January 2011, the NSSN held a conference to discuss launching its own anti-cuts campaign. A motion from a majority on the steering committee proposed establishing an anti-cuts campaign “bringing trade unions and communities together to save all jobs and services”, whilst a minority on the steering committee argued against the motion, opposing setting up an anti-cuts campaign and argued for “working with Coalition of Resistance, Right to Work and other groups, to build and launch a single national anti-cuts organisation early in 2011”. In the debate both sides had equal speakers and shared responsibility for chairing the debate which lasted two and a half hours, with the conference voting 305 to 89 to establish an anti-cuts campaign com-
mittee which was elected immediately afterwards.
So after four years of having successfully resisted attempts to delete Clause 3 at successive conferences in 22 January the NSSN split and became a more openly an obvious front for the TU bureaucracy. All non-SP members, apart from one or two, resigned from the Steering Committee. Here is Gerry Downing’s resignation letter:

I hereby resign from the Steering Committee of the NSSN because the decisions of the Special Conference of 22 January effectively meant that the NSSN had openly become a front for the left trade union bureaucracy. Such aspirations as it had to represent the independent interests of the rank-and-file of the working class was now totally abandoned. Despite its left posturing on correctly demanding of anti-cuts campaigns no platform for Labour councillors who vote for the cuts the fact is that no national trade union, right or left, has demanded that Labour councillors it sponsors, supports or influences vote against the cuts or refuse to implement them, let alone seeks to mobilise its members for industrial action to defeat the cuts, against Labour Councils where necessary.

In fact Unite has explicitly instructed its councillors to set legal budgets to implement the cuts and all other national union leaderships have a similar attitude. Therefore hollow left posturing by the NSSN SP leaders whilst covering up for these left bureaucrats is no opposition at all. The RMT now calls off legally endorsed strikes on “legal advice” that a judge MIGHT grant an injunction! The NSSN, in gaining the support of RMT General Secretary and having RMT President Alex Gordon on the Anti-Cuts Committee means the prospect of endorsing the illegal strike action and occupations now increasingly necessary to fight cuts and privatisation has all-but disappeared from the perspective of the NSSN. I therefore call on all serious trade union militants to build a rank-and-file movement independent of ALL TU bureaucrats and attend the London meeting on April 9th of those who supported Jerry Hicks for Unite General Secretary to found the Grass Roots Left in Unite and encourage such formations in all unions. Non-unite members who agree with the perspective welcome. Details of venue etc to follow.

Workers Power’s Jeremy Dewar made the following analysis:

“Gordon (Alex Gordon, RMT President at that time) claimed that the NSSN opposition wanted:

The NSSN conference to take a position on the Unite leadership campaign (presumably in support of Jerry Hicks)

The NSSN to oppose the Trade Union Freedom Bill on the grounds that it did not go far enough

To refuse a £5,000 donation from the RMT because this would put the NSSN in hock to that union’s leadership.

None of these claims are true. It was a smear speech, aimed at undermining the minority before the debate. Nevertheless, Gordon’s speech did more than show what an unprincipled bureaucrat he is, it showed that Crow and his cronies in the RMT bureaucracy had reached a deal with the SP leadership. Crow and co. would support the SP’s bid to split the anti-cuts movement with a rival campaign, in order to weaken the Socialist Workers Party (which they both hate, especially after a series of articles in Socialist Worker critical of the RMT’s leadership of the tube dispute) and secure the NSSN as uncritical cheerleaders of the left wing union leaders. [22]

As we wrote at the time: The SP have an almost totally compliant membership, clearly to the right of the SWP, for instance. if we ignore the odd cloud of doubt that passes
over the faces of leftists like Rob Williams and others when a particularly nasty piece of chicanery is imposed, like the forced split in the NSSN on the 22 January. Jane Loftus, a member of the Socialist Workers Party voted November 5 2009 to accept the interim agreement and call off the strikes, just as the strength of the postal workers was starting to be realised and she was forced to resign from the SWP as a result. But the SP backed this same sell-out deal with the usual lame excuses:

“But once they had a chance of looking at what was achieved by their mass strike action, many of the workers have drawn the conclusion that the deal (unanimously agreed it seems by the elected postal executive committee) does allow the CWU to regain some element of trade union control in the workplace and therefore does push back the attacks of the bosses. One local CWU leader in the South West wrote to his members: “We have forced a vicious employer back to the table”. He went on to say: “We know the interim deal does not settle every single problem in the industry but it gives us a foothold … Royal Mail set out to destroy your union. We are still here”. The idea, often put forward in the right-wing media, that workers are ready to strike at the drop of a hat is wrong. In this case many think the interim deal opens the way to the reversal of the attacks on them and their union.”[23]

The CWU are now proposing to accept privatisation because it is “illegal” to strike against it and will only seek to mollify some of the worst excesses of the deal afterwards. And Billy Hayes and Jane Loftus, CWU Gen Sec and President are still touring to left circles as part of an anti-cuts and privatisation opposition! Counterfire has no pretence at internal democracy so is a most fruitful arena for reformist demagogues like Tony Benn whose bottom line is the parliamentary road to socialism with the working class as a stage army who will assist in getting Labour governments elected. God forbid that they should do anything to seriously threaten capitalism or even seriously damage ‘the economy’ by any strike longer than one day.

The Socialist Party: “The sell-off of the remaining publicly owned parts of Royal Mail was completed over the last week. This represents the sad passing of the last remaining form of publicly owned communications”. Of course genuine revolutionary socialists, trade union militants and fighters for the class are not ‘sad’ at these betrayals at all but hopping mad and even more determined to expose these class traitors and replace them with a genuine revolutionary and fighting leadership.

The SP/NSSN Alibis Len McCluskey’s Betrayal At Grangemouth

The Socialist party Scotland statement, Trade unions must learn lessons from Grangemouth setback, on 25 October 2013 said:

“There was huge pressure on the shop stewards at Grangemouth following the closure announcement on Wednesday 23 October. More than half of the permanent workforce at the whole Grangemouth site had been told their jobs were gone. The oil refinery was closed. According to Ineos it would remain so, unless the union agreed to huge cuts in workers’ terms and conditions. The possibility of closure enduring was a real one. In addition, the Unite Scottish secretary, Pat
Rafferty, supported by the Unite general secretary Len McCluskey, was at that point urging that the union sign up to the company’s demands.

It laments more in sorrow than in anger McCluskey’s “mistake”. Then on the 28th on the Sunday Politics show hosted by Andrew Neil Bob Crow said he “takes his hat off” to Unite for saving jobs. On the 29th the Socialist party piece was reposted but “This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 25 October 2013 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.” The only difference we noticed was that the words, “supported by the Unite general secretary Len McCluskey” were gone so that it was all down to that nasty Unite Scottish secretary, Pat Rafferty. They really cannot fart now without Bob’s say so.

Of course they can attack the Labour party leaders and Miliband for starting the whole affair but that is because, unlike the Socialist Appeal, they are no longer in the Labour party. But essentially their politics are the same. So the SA can be fighting syndicalist and the SP can be fighting anti-Labour and still end up in the same place. They bow, like Rob Sewell, to Stalinist class traitor Jimmy Reid also. And of course there is no mention of their voting for McCluskey against Jerry Hicks in the election and no mention of a rank and file movement to defeat and replace the bureaucracy. However they did mention elsewhere the fact that Jerry Hicks got 80,000 votes as evidence of the strength of the left in Unite (which obviously excludes themselves as leftists in Unite). Even ‘sadder’, they thought, were the actions of Billy Hayes, another sponsor of the NSSN with Bob Crow, who likewise expects and gets no criticism in return: ‘The sell-off of the remaining publicly owned parts of Royal Mail was completed over the last remaining form of publicly owned communications’.

Of course genuine revolutionary socialists, trade union militants and fighters for the class are not ‘sad’ at these betrayals at all but hopping mad and even more determined to expose these class traitors and replace them with a genuine revolutionary and fighting leadership.

These are the affiliates of the NSSN: National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), Communication Workers Union (CWU), National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), National Union of Journalists (NU), Prison Officers Association (POA), Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU)

Notes

[14] Ibid.
[17] Equivocations and amphibologies in the medieval church imply an untruth that is not actually stated. In equivocation with strict mental reservation the speaker mentally adds some qualification to the words which he utters, and the words together with the mental qualification make it a true assertion in accordance with fact. (Wiki) We are unaware of what mental reservations comrade Mulholand might have made when he made that statement.[17] May 2011 edition (issue 148) of Socialism Today, Libya: the no-fly zone and the left, http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/11905
[18] Strasserism refers to the strand of Nazism that called for mass-action and worker-based forms of National Socialism, hostile to Jews from an anti-capitalist basis, to achieve a national rebirth. It derives its name from Gregor and Otto Strasser, the two Nazi brothers initially associated with this position. Otto Strasser was expelled from the NSDAP in 1930, while Gregor Strasser was killed by Hitler’s secret police, either the Schutzstaffel (SS) or the Gestapo (Geheime Sicherheitsdienst), during the Night of the Long Knives in June 1934 – watch your back, Billy!
Immigration Controls, Racism, the Socialist Party, No2EU and TUSC

In Point 11 of the Platform of the Socialist Fight we set out our internationalist perspectives:

“For socialists there are ultimately absolutely no progressive ‘national borders’ within the global monopoly capitalist system… Consequently we oppose all … campaigns to make a national alignment for jobs or industries as in the call for ‘British jobs for British workers’ that means capitulation to national chauvinism and so to the political and economic interests of the ruling class itself. Similarly in 2009, the No2EU campaign based its elective view on an opportunist British particularity in separation from the Europe-wide proletariat with reformist pleas under capitalism. There is nothing progressive in this and we must at all times patiently explain this fact to workers irrespective of national origin. We are therefore unreservedly for a Socialist United States of Europe.

And point 20 spells out our policy on immigration controls that flow from that internationalism:

“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.”

In SF No. 8 winter 2011/2012, we editorialised on the global capitalist crisis and the conflicts this was forcing between imperialist powers and semi-colonial countries. On the night of the 8-9 December 2011 David Cameron had vetoed the Lisbon treaty designed to solve the Euro crisis and was isolated 26 to 1 in Europe. How would the working class react to this major crisis? We opined:

“Crucially how would its combativity affect this power struggle? Would it be able to fight its own corner as a global class? To answer that we must discover how the trade union bureaucracies are reacting and to find this out we must look in the pages of the Communist Party of Britain’s paper, the Morning Star. The Star had nothing to say on Monday apart from a letter extolling the difficulties and the good position Workers Liberty were taking. But by Tuesday 13th Bob Crow spoke and the Star knew where it was going; with Cameron and the euro-sceptics. “It is no surprise 48 percent of the British people now support withdrawal (from the EU) with only 33% in favour of staying.” opined Bob. The Star
then quote Clacton Tory MP Douglas Carswell who “praised Cameron for putting the nation first” and followed this up with a call for a referendum.

And Communist Party general secretary Rob Griffits said: “Cameron’s stance is bound up entirely with defending the City of London against any new tax or regulatory regime, while Merkel wants to advance policies being dominated by the German banks.” On Thursday 15th Brian Denny, of No2EU was warning of a “green light for Germany to impose a common EU austerity policy and deepen the Germanisation (what a word, so redolent of British anti-German chauvinism!) of Europe” and finished up by demanding a “people’s movement to resist corporate power by demanding the repudiating of the debts of the banks and a referendum on EU membership to regain democracy here and across Europe”.

And on Friday 16 we were treated to Bob again demanding British jobs for British workers over the Bombardier Derby train contract: “ministers had no reason to carry on with a procurement process “loaded against Bombardier. Political inaction came together with EU diktat to deliver a hammer blow to train building in the nation that gave railways to the world”.

Clearly the Star and Crow are arguing here what is in the best interests of the British “nation”, i.e. they think they have a better plan to save capitalism, in this case sclerotic British Imperialism, than Cameron. As Charlie Walsh says on page 28 any defence of the Imperialist Nation State is a reactionary trap for the working class:

“So British workers should ally with one section of the British Imperialists (led by Clegg and Miliband) and place demands on another section (led by Cameron, who only sometimes gets things right, to abandon the City and turn to manufacturing. And we will achieve this by appearing to be better organisers of British Imperialism than the current misguided Cameron, to know what is good for it and to offer it very sensible and constructive advice; “look if you want capitalism to work as we do, this is how you must do it”. As Trotsky says:

“These wretched revolutionists, in a conflict with any serious enemy, think first of all of how to imitate him, how to repaint themselves in his colours, and how to win the masses by means of a smart trick and not by revolutionary struggle. A truly shameful posing of the question!”

No2EU and TUSC

The following are culled from the Weekly Worker, mainly from the Editor Peter Manson’s articles on Bob Crow, the RMT, No2EU and TUSC. They are vital evidence because participation in No2EU and TUSC depended on accepting the position of Bob Crow and the CPB on immigration; the CP accepted this with no problem, the SWP had a few but accepted it also as the price for participating in TUSC. However the death of Bob Crow on 11 March and the election of Mick Cash as his successor has altered the political landscape substantially. No2EU is
now a dead duck, as an RMT official announced in an off the cuff remark at a public meeting and the future of TUSC is also in question. A more rightist and opportunist coalition than TUSC it included the following groups in its 2009 launch by Bob Crow: Alliance for Green Socialism, Communist Party of Britain, Indian Workers’ Association, Liberal Party (rump left who refused to go along with the fusion with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1988), the Socialist Party, Socialist Resistance and Solidarity (Tommy Sheridan’s split from the Scottish Socialist party after the aligned with the state and Murdock to jail him).

Fortunately Left Unity refused to ally with TUSC at its last conference on the very correct grounds that this would also tar them with the racist anti-immigrant brush and the SWP has now launched an appeal for a united left electoral alliance to oppose Labour. Of course it will get the usual 87 votes against Labour but it places the SP in a dilemma and probably force TUSC to become a simple SP front, without the RMT, the CPB or the SWP as allies. Their opposition to all racist immigration controls will then be their sole responsibility and they will be forced into the open as supporters of immigration control, a Ukip-lite in all but name.

Apologies if some attributions to Weekly Worker are missed. The basic premise Manson seeks to prove in these articles is that the Morning Star/CPB, the late Bob Crow and the Socialist Party are capitulating to racism by use of the formula that they are opposed to racist immigration controls only and the SWP had also capitulating on this point until they abandoned TUSC and launched the call for a unite left slate at the May 2015 general election, despite having a correct formal policy of opposing all immigration controls because they are intrinsically racist.

The CPB has historically used this very formula to hide its capitulation to British capitalism itself, Manson recounts:

**From CPGB (as was) to SPEW**

“In fact the policy of the ‘official’ Communist Party of Great Britain (and, after it, the CPB) has been one of ‘non-racist immigration controls’ for over half a century. Here I am grateful to Dr Evan Smith and his website, Hatful of History, for having collated the statements of the CPGB on this question since the early 1960s. For example, Evans quotes the Communist Party weekly, Comment, which in 1963 stated that the previous year’s Commonwealth Immigrants Act must be opposed, because it was “not an act to control immigration in general”, but constituted “colour discrimination in immigration”.

This CPGB policy of non-racist (or, to use the terminology of the time, ‘non-racialist’) border controls was most clearly laid down in a 1965 statement, which declared: “Every government, whatever its character, and whatever the social system, will naturally make regulations concerning immigration and emigration. This is an understandable exercise of its power by any sovereign government. The Communist Party has never stood for general unrestricted immigration, but has always opposed racialism and racial discrimination in Britain.” In the same year a CPGB pamphlet informed its readers that the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act was “not an act introduced for normal immigration purposes, but designed to introduce an element of racial discrimination into the system of immigration”...However, by the time of the next Immigration Act in 1971, it was business as usual: “Governments have the right to regulate immigration and emigration”, declared a resolution published in Comment, but immigration policies introduced by both Labour and the Conservatives had been “racialist”, since
they were “directed specifically against black immigration”. This resolution demanded the repeal of the 1971 act, which was “a racialist measure”, and for Labour to “introduce new legislation relating to immigration on a strictly non-racial basis”.

In a CPGB pamphlet published at the end of the 70s, Vishnu Sharma actually engaged in a polemic (of sorts) against those to the party’s left who favoured open borders. Such people are just plain “foolish”, he said - they are “out of step with reality”. Although “Communists want to see … a world where there are no immigration controls of any kind”, the “first and urgent responsibility” must be to “turn the spotlight onto the racist character of the present laws”. Unity was needed to combat the “immediate causes of racial oppression”, but this cannot be achieved “under the slogan, ‘No immigration controls at all’”.

What struck me about this was its similarity to the position of the Socialist Party in England and Wales, as can be seen from the relevant section of its 2013 perspectives document, which the Hatful of History site helpfully reproduces:

“Of course, we have to stand in defence of the most oppressed sections of the working class, including migrant workers and other immigrants. We staunchly oppose racism. We defend the right to asylum and argue for the end of repressive measures like detention centres.

“At the same time, given the outlook of the majority of the working class, we cannot put forward a bald slogan of ‘open borders’ or ‘no immigration controls’, which would be a barrier to convincing workers of a socialist programme, both on immigration and other issues. Such a demand would alienate the vast majority of the working class, including many more long-standing immigrants, who would see it as a threat to jobs, wages and living conditions ….

“We have to put forward a programme which unites the working class in dealing with the consequences of immigration.”

This is, of course, pure opportunism: ‘While we in SPEW may believe in open borders (perhaps “may” is now the operative word), the working class is far too backward to agree with us.’ SPEW stands four-square behind the CPGB’s Vishnu Sharma: what matters is “unity”, and we just have to face facts - unity is only possible on the basis of ‘common-sense’ (i.e., rightwing) ideas.

SPEW too is part of the mainstream consensus, which would have you believe that people should have no right to live, settle and work anywhere on this planet; that, far from the whole world belonging to all of its people, it must remain divided up; that each nationality must protect its ‘own’ patch at the expense of outsiders. But for communists, for whom the common interest of the international proletariat is an absolute principle, this consensus is poison.

In that sense, SPEW, like the Morning Star’s CPB, is “aping Ukip”. It too is playing the same “fool’s game”.

**End of extract from Manson:** [http://weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1014/playing-a-fools-game/](http://weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1014/playing-a-fools-game/)
peter.manson@weeklyworker.org.uk

In an article in Weekly Worker, *Immigration controls kill* by Eddie Ford the politics of the Labour party on immigration controls is exposed:

**Yvette Cooper and Rachel Reeves.**
“Cooper, the shadow home secretary, announced on November 18 that under a Labour government a £10 surcharge will be levied on the 5.5 million annual visitors to the UK. In this way, she hopes, that will more than generate the £45 million needed to employ 1,000 additional guards to defend
our borders from illegal migrants and in general “restore public confidence in the immigration system”. For instance, she complained, Labour has discovered that 175,000 failed asylum-seekers may not be removed because the government has “limited resources”. Shocking. Instead, she promised Labour would be the “sensible”, patriotic voice expressing “people’s genuine concerns” - unlike the Tories or UK Independence Party, which want to up the “arms race of rhetoric” over immigration.

On the same day, Reeves, the shadow work and pensions minister, penned an article for the Daily Mail saying that Labour would clamp down on tax credits claimed by about 252,000 working European Union migrants - the period for which they are prevented from claiming out-of-work benefits would be extended from three months to two years. She said that Labour would also end the “absurdity” of child benefit and child tax credits being claimed for children living in other countries.

Reeves insisted that she would “never pander” to those who would deny the positive contribution that immigrants have always made to the country, arguing it was the Tories who were “desperately attempting” to “out-Ukip Ukip”. However, the Mail’s subheadlines were more accurate and honest, telling us about Labour’s “attempt to outflank Tories and Ukip on immigration” with its plans to “curb welfare tourism”.

Lastly lest we think the that other heir of Ted Grant, Socialist Appeal/IMT are far better than the SP/CWI here is their attitude to the reactionary 2009 Lindsey Oil Refinery strikes. It is identical with that of the SP. The following quote if from February 2009 and spells out their position clearly:

“The British workers are fighting to maintain wages and conditions in the industry. Though we don’t support the slogan, ‘British jobs for British workers,’ we support their fight. British workers are in effect being excluded from consideration for the job through the operation of the subcontracting mechanism. IREM will bring in their entire team to do the job. The job vacancies will not be advertised in Britain. In the relentless search to drive wages to the bottom, British workers are effectively being discriminated against by IREM. If that is not illegal, it ought to be.”

Socialist Fight statement on Lindsey Oil Refinery, 4 February 2009:

No support for these chauvinist, xenophobic strikes

“A trade union led by reactionary fakers organizes a strike against the admission of Negro workers into a certain branch of industry. Shall we support such a shameful strike? Of course not. But let us imagine that the bosses, utilizing the given strike, make an attempt to crush the trade union and to make impossible in general the organized self-defence of the workers. In this case we will defend the trade union as a matter of course in spite of its reactionary leadership.”

Trotsky 1939

Socialist Fight (SF) unequivocally opposes the ‘wildcat’ strikes and their outcome because they were called on the reactionary basis of ‘British jobs for British workers’ (Bj4Bw), it was on this xenophobic basis they were spread, with the assistance of the right wing media and on this basis they were tacitly endorsed by the entire Unite and GMB leaderships. And it was on this basis they were settled. We place the blame for this situation squarely on the backs of the reactionary Labour movement leaders; Gordon Brown and the Labour party leaders for endorsing the reactionary slogan, borrowed from the BNP, the Unite, GMB and other TU leaderships for tacitly endorsing and pursuing negotiations on that basis. A major weight of responsibility also rests on the shoulders of those left groups and organizations, the Communists Party of Britain (CPB), the Socialist Party (SP) and others who have acted as left apologists for these bureaucratic misleaders of the working class. When similar demands were made on the French TU leadership they immediately rejected them as reactionary chauvinism and insisted on demands like ‘we will not pay for the bankers/capitalism’s crisis’.

We reject the compromise of Keith Gibson of the Lindsey strike committee and the SP. This did not repudiate the original Bj4Bw demands, which were displayed so openly on the pickets. It was rather a cover for it, hoping we would forget, or close our eyes, to what they were really about. Gibson says that “Stewards and Union Officials asked to meet with IREM ASAP after Christmas to clarify the proposal i.e. would IREM employ British labour?” Then it explains that the walkout took place when “Shaws’ workforce were told by the Stewards that IREM had stated they would not be employing British labour” (rb on SU Blog 3 Feb). He admits here that the initial walkout was about the nationality of the workforce, not about wages, conditions or any of the other red herrings he and his apologists have been dragging across the trail ever since.

The SP motion, which then became the property of the strike committee and the mass meeting says “Union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled union members, with nominating rights as work becomes available”. That is simply Bj4Bw in another form. We reject the notion that “Union control of hiring is always preferable to the bosses controlling hiring. Enforcing an illegal closed shop would be a massive advance for the working class movement in this country”.

On what basis would the union nominate people for jobs? The only issue that may be in question is equal access to jobs, but that is down to the subcontracting system itself, not nationality. When socialist in British trade
unions fought discrimination against nationalists in the north of Ireland in the past they were always referred back to the Irish Region (Region 11, Northern Ireland in the case of the TGWU). Here, in the best workers traditions, Loyalist craft engineering unions (like we have here), with all their history of privilege and empire loyalty and contempt for other workers, ensured the nationalists did not get to join the craft unions and did not get jobs.

Discrimination proceeded swimmingly, all in the name of the best trade union practices, the power of the unions was consolidated and the NI ‘troubles’ ensued. This ‘union control’ is only a demand for ‘local’ communalist discrimination; the predecessor of the SP in Ireland was quite comfortable with that. And British and Irish based union leaders turned their heads away and pretended they just did not see. In a certain sense this demand is more reactionary than national chauvinism; presumable workers from the south of England, Wales and Scotland, let alone Ireland, would quickly be sent packing by our ‘local’ TU registrar of jobs.

As one comrade said, “But the SP states that it is the bosses who are setting one nationality against another. Yes but why play the same game? It is the BNP, say the SP, who are attempting to sever fraternal relations between workers from different nations, but the SP want union control of a register of locally skilled workers presumably to facilitate local jobs for local people. Some are trying to find socialist gold under this militant dross of nationalism. But that seems like an attempt at alchemy (BB). You cannot endorse the strikes and repudiate the aims, they are the same. If you endorsed and sought to spread these strikes you dealt a crippling blow to the British Labour movement.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Workers Power (WP) and SF are not siding with the government/bosses. The line-up is clear. The strikes had the enthusiastic support of the BNP, they have the support of the capitalist media, more enthusiastic the more you move to the right. The TU bureaucracy as a whole who would scarcely lift a finger to fight job losses or pay constraints while countless billions are handed over to bankers almost without conditions are enthusiastic supporters of these illegal but highly reactionary strikes.

The CPB, the SP and the TU bureaucracy supported it for entirely reactionary reasons. The bosses were ‘opposed’ because that is in their immediate short term financial interests, but they were not anything like as opposed as they would be if the plant was occupied, and the right of private property was thereby challenged, as in the Waterford Glass occupation. The government were ‘opposed’ but really not like they would oppose a real workers’ action, in the long term interests of the class as an international whole, like Gate Gourmet. They are for ‘law and order’ and against ‘trouble’ in general but if they have to have ‘trouble’ they could not get better than this from their point of view. Where were the threats to sequestrate the union funds, where
were the High Court judges’ injunctions, where were the brutal police attacks? Where is the class consciousness of those who cannot see the difference? And we reject with contempt those backward workerists who say we are siding with the Tories because Kenneth Clarke made an anti-racist statement criticising the strikers. Tory anti-racism bad, workers’ racism good, declare these political idiots.

It was entirely correct of the Campaign against Immigration Controls (CAIC) to picket the Unite HQ and SF endorses the action. The prejudices of localist craft trade unionists would have been easily overcome and the strike orientated in a healthy direction if it had got a lead from the top. But the Unite leadership reinforced their prejudices. Principled socialists should seek to argue and struggle politically with these workers to explain that workers cannot win in national, let alone local isolation.

The founding of the Labour party was a result of the great blows struck by the New Unionism inspired by the Bryant and Mays Match girls and the London Dockers (mainly Irish) against the privileged empire loyalism in these elitist unions. They would troop across Westminster Bridge a century ago in bowler hats to work in building sites, the same reactionary aristocracy of labour represented by the Ulster unionists; many of us believed that was its last redoubt.

The marginalisation (but not elimination) of this reactionary tradition allowed the Labour party to be founded as a bourgeois workers’ party (in Lenin’s famous characterisation) and this was a great world-historic advance for workers everywhere. The re-emergence of the ascendancy of craft unionism will destroy the Labour party as a workers organisation of any kind unless it is fought, and its influence halted and reversed. That defeat has not yet been inflicted on the working class but unless we fight these reactionary labour lieutenants of capital in our ranks now the future will be bleak. And that would be a world-historic defeat and a reversion to the 1870s, but in far worse circumstances.

TUC leader Brendan Barber applauded Brown’s British jobs for British workers speech, as did other TU leaders. In a sudden lurch to the right Unite and the GMB have adopted this line, they have allied with reactionary labour aristocratic unionist consciousness against the ‘lower orders’. And that is not just targeting Johnny Foreigner, it will target the unskilled and the unemployed and, ultimately it will rebound on its ‘socialist’ supporters too. All serious revolutionists will have to fight this reactionary bureaucracy by fighting to build a rank-and-file movement in the TU independently of the bureaucracy.

These were reactionary strikes for reactionary ends which were ‘won’ by ring fencing some 50% Bij4Bw, foreign workers were excluded from these jobs and a reactionary movement was put in train which could lead to the destruction of the entire working class and its organisations and all their historical gains. Fight them now, fight the reactionary leadership of the class who are responsible for this appalling situation or it will get worse. Do not try to find the silver lining; it is not there. They did mean what they said. If they occupied the plant and forged international solidarity that would be an entirely different strike, with entirely different leaders. To pretend otherwise is to defend the existing leaders and to prepare more defeats. This is differentiating the left in Britain; it goes to the core of class politics. Fight the reaction without reservations and you will find new revolutionists who will come forward to champion the interests of the class as an international whole.
What lies behind the advance of the politics of Stalinism in the British Labour movement? No Vote for Bob Crow’s No2EU Europhobia!

By A J Byrne 15/2/2009

We will show that the methods and politics of Stalinism have advanced in the British labour movement because of the strengthening of the hold of the TU and Labour bureaucracy over the working class and the progressive capitulation of the ‘far left’ groups to this bureaucracy via the medium of the CBP/Morning Star. It is our contention that this opens the ground for the advance of genuine revolutionary socialist politics which looks directly to the working class itself, increasingly disgusted with this bureaucracy and looking for a way to fight them.

Peoples Charter

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

It was first publicly touted by Mary Davies, veteran CPBer, in 10 January at the RMT convened conference on “the crisis in working class political representation”. Workers Powers Jeremy Dewar was there,

“Likening the Peoples Charter to the great Chartist movement in the middle of the nineteenth century she (Davis) said, “The Charter was not a party, but it was a mass, political, anti-government movement. Let’s start with extra-parliamentary struggle - the legacy of the Chartists.” The opposite, of course, is the intention, “How would it achieve its aims without laying down action proposals and promoting new forms of organisation - not just against closures, but for occupying plants and offices to stop them in the breach? Not just against the fascist British National Party’s racism, but for community self-defence to stop them taking over our streets? We need a programme for working class action, not a people’s charter aimed at uniting unions, workers’ organisations and the left with middle class parties like the Greens and Plaid Cymru.”

Lindsay Oil Refinery

To give meat to this development we had the chauvinist Lindsay Oil Refinery strikes beginning at the end of January culminating in the 24 February “foreigners out” demonstration. That the Socialist Party could have found themselves on a demonstration led by a Union Jack waving bigot desperately trying to drown out this ob-
scene chant from a labour movement event must have bothered their better members. The SWP initially rejected the chauvinism of Lindsey only to collapse into supporting the SP compromise by hailing SP member’s Keith Gibson leftist programme which everybody, crucially including the Unite bureaucracy led by Simpson, ignored because it did not repudiate the original Bj4Bw demands.

Similarly with the AWL, a good initial position but ended up hailing the “victory” at Staythorpe. Ditto the USFI’s ISG/Socialist Resistance and Permanent Revolution. So in the end only three groups stood against the chauvinist tide, Socialist Fight, a tiny group, Workers Power and the Spartacist League. The Campaign against Immigration Control (CAIC) also took a principled stance. The International Bolshevik Tendency were unable to take a position one way or the other, apparently because of internal problems on the issue. But there were many individuals who took a principled stance and stuck to it on the blogs, including members of the SWP and other groups and clearly some other were repelled but stayed silent through group loyalty.

**Unite’s Left Caucus**

Then we had to endure the spectacle of Unite’s Left Caucus on 21 February. This was again prepared by ultra Stalinist methods and politics. And then we moved on to the No2EU launch. Again prepared by the Stalinists themselves in secret, progressively allowing in other ‘leaders’, the same methods and largely the same individuals as the Peoples Charter.

From the outset there was absolutely no question of allowing any internal democracy. Its name was registered in advance with the Electoral Commission, there was no rank-and-file consultation, no voting, no election of leaders. This time groups were excluded by name on the basis of their position on Bj4Bw, the SWP, the AWL and the CPGB and unnamed ‘others’. Even those who opposed the chauvinism of Bj4Bw but hailed the “victory” of the workers won on that basis and tried to square the circle to remain in the loop were out in the cold. Those who took a consistent position were obviously deemed to be so barking mad as not to deserve consideration. Socialist Resistance was in a unique position, having taken the same position as many of the excluded groups (no to Bj4Bw, yes to the strikes for those aims) but they slithered in by the tradesman’s entrance as part of Respect. The SWP too was in somewhat of a dilemma. They were excluded by name but in Scotland, as part of the Tommy Sheridan-led Solidarity they could gain backdoor admittance. The Stalinist wanted Tommy, whose Saint Andrew’s Saltier was just as good as a Union Jack to them, so the SWP had to equivocate.

**Rediscovered principles**

However for the other groups excluded by name and for PR it was now time to put forward their undying political opposition to chauvinism and backward nationalism, having failed so miserably to do so over Bj4Bw. Martin Thomas for the AWL let rip; “The expanded platform published on the website of the No2EU campaign for the 4 June Euro elections denounces “the so-called ‘free movement’ of labour” in the EU and “the social dumping of exploited foreign workers in Britain”.

How can this be read as anything other than a “left” version of the chauvinist cry: “Kick out the Poles and other migrant workers”? As a macabre addition, the No2EU website has as its masthead, above all such policies: “It’s a black and white issue”. You have to assume that this is bungling tin-earedness rather than racism, but it is bungling tin-earedness of an exceptional order. The other question that arises is: how, where, and by whom was this expanded platform decided?”

PR’s Bill Jefferyes was even more dismissive. “It’s a half baked campaign with a reactionary programme. Socialists should not support it. These are the same union leaders who have not organised a single official strike against the
recession. It is utterly misconceived to believe that standing in the Euro elections, on a nationalist, not left wing at all platform, is a step forward. They will get a derisory vote. And while all the fuss is going on the recession will be claiming more jobs”.

But the top prize for double speak and hypocrisy must surely go to the USFI’s Socialist Resistance. Having listed horrendous problems with the platform they decide to support it anyway for no given reasons at all. They might just as well have openly admitted to being gross political opportunists—just do it! Here are the ‘problems’ they have spotted:

“The most significant of these is its top-down structure and method of organising... One (other) example is the rejection of “the so-called ‘free movement’ of labour”. We support the right of any worker to work anywhere, with the same rights, with equal access to jobs, and to hold the union leaders to account for not defending wages, pensions and working conditions.

An important political task which faces any left-wing campaign against the EU is to clearly separate itself from the much bigger right-wing nationalist campaign against the EU — led by the Tories, Ukip and the BNP. Otherwise things can go badly wrong! (!!!) No2eu has been weak (!!!) on this aspect. There is nothing in the large print on its leaflet which defines it as a left-wing campaign — and first impressions are important.

Most worrying was the decision of a key RMT organiser within the No2EU campaign recently to speak on a Campaign Against Euro federalism platform along with former Tory MP Teddy Taylor. This is a bad sign and needs to be corrected quickly. (!!!) No2eu has to make very clear that it is a campaign in favour of the rights of working people and has nothing in common with Tory or Ukip style euroscepticism (!!!).” (our !!!!)

There you have it. Stalinist methods and politics advance because these fake revolutionists capitulate to them and never fight for their own declared revolutionary politics which they are clearly progressively abandoning in lockstep with the LCR of France. In times of relative class ‘peace’ centrists such as these equivocate for decades, but in heightened class struggle, as it is now emerging, the hypocrisy of this approach is very vulnerable to apposite propaganda.

They have all-but lost the political ability to relate to the independent interests of the working class not mediated through the left TU bureaucracy. They are unable to see the relevance of revolutionary socialist politics in fighting for rank-and-file mobilisations that set the working class base against the bureaucratic superstructure to open up the space for the propagation of revolutionary ideas and the building of a revolutionary party. They have become conservative and opportunist behind their ‘Marxist’ verbiage, still victims of imperialism’s neoliberal offensive.
No Support for British jobs for British workers

By Charlie Walsh SF No 8, Winter 2011-12

We support the Bombardier workers in their struggle to defend their right to work, their jobs, wages and conditions. We call on workers to occupy their factory and they must call on the British and German working class and workers internationally, to support their struggle. We do not support the slogan ‘British jobs for British workers’.

As workers, socialist and internationalists, we say this slogan is an appeal to reactionary British economic nationalism. In an imperialist country like Britain, this slogan is politically toxic, chauvinist and racist even and is very, very dangerous. It infers that the problem of the working class losing jobs in Britain is not capitalism but foreign workers. This has echoes of the racist politics of the BNP, EDL, Ukip and extreme right Tories, some Labour party MPs and trade union leaders such as Bob Crowe. We are for jobs for all workers in Britain no matter where they come from. We don’t want to go back to the late 1940s and early 1950s when there were reactionary racist notices posted outside factory gates saying, ‘No Irish need apply’ along with the slogan ‘no Irish, no blacks, no dogs’ when Irish and black workers were trying to get a place to live. The working class in Britain must not go back to those dark days of prejudice, racism and discrimination against minorities like Irish and Afro-Caribbean.

And if the slogan British jobs for British workers were to gain political currency or be put into practice it would not be long before the capitalists were back again looking for redundancies and attacking wages and conditions. This crisis is not a British crisis but an international crisis. It is this crisis of capitalism internationally and its inability to meet the needs of the working class and sections of the middle class and not foreign and immigrant workers that is the cause of the crisis; it is that crisis that drives the capitalist class to attack the workers and their jobs and conditions.

The bottom line for the capitalist class is its profits, privileges, class interests and class control over the working class. All profits are made by exploiting the labour power of the working class internationally and extracting its surplus value. But when the worker is sacked or made redundant he no longer creates value and is condemned to a life of unemployment and poverty. Until capitalism is defeated by the working class and socialism is created there is no guarantee for the jobs for the working class in Britain and internationally. The natural allies of the working class in Britain are the working class internationally, while the sworn enemy of the working class in Britain are the capitalist class in Britain and internationally. Workers of the world unite all you’ve got to lose are your chains that tie you hand and foot to capitalism.

Remember during the miners’ strike in Britain the miners got support from the world working class, it was these workers who gave financial support and showed solidarity with the miners. Unlike the dockers and steel workers in Scotland who stood aside from the struggle and did separate deals with Thatcher and the Tories, as did the Nottingham miners; they all lost their jobs in the end.

Remember also the Liverpool dockers in their struggle in the 1990s to defend their jobs and conditions refused to allow the TGWU as was led by Bill Morris to control the dispute because they feared that the T&G bureaucracy would sell it out. Rather they turned to the international working class for solidarity and support and they got it in spades. Foreign workers are the only allies the working class in Britain can rely on.