Defend Gerry Downing, Tony Greenstein, Naz Shah, Ken Livingstone, Jackie Walker and the rest against the Tory/Blairite/Zionist Witch Hunt!
Michael McKevitt - Justice Denied

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

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). The working class ‘cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other sphere of society and thereby emancipating all other spheres of society’ (Marx, A Contribution to a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, 1843).

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Is now a small pamphlet since Issue No. 6, available at Housmans Bookshop 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX, on the Website or by post.

14. 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.

19. As socialists living in Britain we take our responsibilities to support the struggle against British imperialism’s occupation of the six north-eastern counties of Ireland very seriously. For this reason we have assisted in founding the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group and we will campaign for political status these Irish prisoners of war and for a 32-county united Socialist Ireland. We reject two nations in Ireland theories.

21. We are for the re-creation of a World Party of Socialist Revolution, a revolutionary international, based on the best traditions of the previous revolutionary internationals, critically understood, particularly the early Third and Fourth Internationals, with their determination to combat and overcome both reformism and centrist. It is by orienting to the ranks of workers in struggle, struggles against imperialism, struggles of oppressed minorities against varied all forms of social oppression, as well as political ferment among intellectual layers radicalised through these struggles, that we will lay the basis for groupings with forces internationally breaking with reformism, centrist and various forms of radical populism/nationalism, and seeking to build a new revolutionary Marxist international party.
The victory of Sadiq Khan in London, along with the clean sweep that Labour have made in the mayoralities of Bristol, Liverpool and Sal-ford has boosted the leadership of Jeremy Cor-byn. Despite a lower percentage of the vote than in 2012, at a higher point in the previous electoral cycle, Labour hung onto most of its council seats in England and Wales, as well as key councils in both the North and South of England. This is far from the disaster that the Blairite and Zionist saboteurs were hoping to bring about with their collaboration with the Tories on the ‘anti-semitism’ smear campaign. The working class was not fazed by the sound and fury of the traitors and racists, and turned out to vote Labour any-way. In fact as this article is being written, it looks like Tory losses were more than Labour, despite media hype about large imminent Labour losses and Tory gains.

Labour did marginally less well in Wales, and the Scottish result was a disaster with Labour being pushed into third place in Holyrood. But the Scotland results were the product of a different dynamic; Scottish Labour is not led by the left, and the damage whereby Labour lost most of its working class base to the SNP was done long before Corbyn. The Tories in Scotland seem to have gained from a tactic of trying to appear not to be Tories and just opposing a second Inde-pendence referendum. Given the dire state of Scottish Labour confronting the task of recon-quering its working class base, it looks like the Tories may have gained a bit at the SNP’s ex-pense; it just failed to keep its majority in Holy-rood.

However, there is a long way to go before La-bour can seriously give expression to working class discontent against the Tories and lead a mass working class movement that can cause them to collapse. The lack of political will of the Cor-bynites to deal decisively with the fifth column in their own ranks could still cost the working class dear.

Racist Witch-Hunt is Sabotage

The spurious right-wing campaign against ‘anti-semitism’ and support for ‘terrorism’ in the La-bour Party shows how far Labour has to go. From the expulsions, suspensions and smears against leading left figures such as Ken Living-stone, to the fusillade of suspensions of MP’s, Councillors and ordinary members for supposed ‘anti-semitism’, Labour has been convulsed by a witchhunt against supporters of the victims of Zionist racism.

This had to become a racist witchhunt, since the oppressed position of the Palestinian victims of Zionism would inevitably evoke a greater echo and sympathy from advanced elements of other peoples oppressed by imperialism. This was borne out by the obscene humiliation and extraction of a Moscow-Trips-style ‘confession’ from Naezem Shah MP, the suspensions of Councillors Aysegul Gurbuz, Ilaya Aziz, Salim Mulla and Shah Hussain, and latterly the suspension of Jackie Walker, a leading black Momentum activist, who is also of Jewish descent.

There is a continuum of this with the vilifica-tion of the tame pro-imperialist Sadiq Khan as a cohort of pro-IS ‘extremists’. The Tories have been taking the piss knowing their Fifth Column in Labour will back them.

There is a continuum of this witch-hunt with the vilification of the tame pro-imperialist Sadiq Khan as a cohort of pro-IS ‘extremists’. The Tories have been taking the piss knowing their Fifth Column in Labour will back them.
New Labour’s treachery. Everyone remembers forced academisation of all schools gave birth to especially since there is talk of an all tors including in emergency care, Hunt found that Hunt may not be able simply to impose the contract. After the recent two day strike of Doc- ting point, cause a massive crisis and provide a pretext for doing away with a ‘failing’ NHS. But it already regularly work 100 hour weeks. This is a working job designed to drive doctors to breaking point, cause a massive crisis and provide a pretext for doing away with a ‘failing’ NHS. But it is not working, the popular backlash is immense, and now it appears possible that for legal reasons Lansley’s NHS and Social Care Act in the government’s attacks on the NHS are hardly -run body, making it into a quasi-autonomous ‘agency’ who purposes involve promoting ‘competition’ not patient care and multiply- ing the private elements in the NHS many times over.

Hunt’s latest attacks are aimed at accelerating the crisis that has resulted, attacking and exacerbating the unsafe hours of Junior Doctors who already regularly work 100-hour weeks. This is a wrecking job designed to drive doctors to breaking point, cause a massive crisis and provide a pretext for doing away with a ‘failing’ NHS. But it is not working, the popular backlash is immense, and now it appears possible that for legal reasons that Hunt may not be able simply to impose the contract. After the recent two day strike of Doctors including in emergency care, Hunt found himself under pressure to return to negotiations, especially since there is talk of an all-out Junior Doctors’ strike.

Then there are the teachers. The threat of forced academisation of all schools gave birth to a movement among teachers for strikes against this Tory project, which is only an extension of New Labour’s treachery. Everyone remembers that academies were the invention of Tony Blair and David Blunkett; that they took Education away from elected local politicians and into the hands of carpet salesmen, used car dealers, and religious businessmen types. The take up for ‘free schools’ or do-it-yourself academies under the previous Coalition was not enough, so a total handover of the education system to business is now the Tory aspiration.

They now say schools rated as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by OFSTED will not be forced to become academies. Co-ordinated strikes between teachers and junior doctors had already been mooted. This scared the government enough to partially back down. We need to force them to abandon all these attacks completely, though the extension of strike action in solidarity with the NHS, with teachers, and everyone else targeted by the government.

The fact that the government is has now mooted a part-nationalisation of the Tata Steel plant in Port Talbot, after the Indian steel consortium put it up for sale or closure, with the destruction of yet more working class communities in Wales and elsewhere along with what is left of the British steel industry, shows their weakness. Past Tory and Blairite governments allowed manufacturing to go to the wall without looking back, notoriously with Birmingham’s Longbridge car plant under New Labour. That the government is mooting this is a sign of weakness. It should be capitalised on by the working class with strikes, occupations and demands for full nationalisation under workers’ control.

Overall we see a weak but viciously reactionary government, much weaker than the Con-Dem coalition that preceded it, confronted by a slowly reviving labour movement whose political expres- sion (Labour) has taken a significant step to the left, but is facing potentially crippling sabotage from a bourgeois Fifth Column.

Left Weakness and Conciliationism

The greatest weakness of the Labour left that is now in the saddle is its conciliationism. The fail- ure of the Labour leadership to get a grip on the reactionaries who still control the ‘compliance’ machinery of the party, that is, the machinery of anti-democratic expulsions the Blairites put in place to protect their criminality from the members, speaks volumes.

But this is self-defeating, as the creation of an anti-democratic attitude to left-wing political dissent, which it damages despite this to consoli- date its hold and begins to move against the stranglehold of the neo-liberals over the PIP, it will take new forces and organisations within the Labour Left organising separ-ately from the Corbynite mainstream. There is the tame reformism of the Corbyn-McDonnell leadership itself. Corbyn’s tame “congratulations” to “Her Maj- esty” the Queen on her 90th Birthday was an index of his refusal to make his formal re- publicanism mean anything in practice. The obedience training from the Tory Press over the national anthem has had its effect. Then there is the ques- tion of Labour Councils and Cuts. A classic case of this is over the closure of Carnegie Library in Lambeth, South London, which produced a spir- ited opposition including the occupation of the library by local residents, trade unionists and Labour Party members. The Labour council went to court to force the protesters to leave. We did not hear any word of support for the protesters from the Labour leadership.

This is linked to the economic policies of John McDonnell, which where councils and cuts are concerned, demand that they ‘stay within the law’, and set legal budgets while campaigning to place responsibility for the cuts on the Tory government. No doubt this was what Lambeth council were doing. It’s no help to workers facing deci- sion of public services though. On the national scale, this finds reflection in McDonnell’s ‘Pledge of responsibility’ to ‘balance the books’ over the lifetime of a Labour government. This is coupled with a call to borrow capital funds for investment in infrastructure and gradually grow the British economy through suThis is a conh Keynesian schemes out of the so-called debt crisis that the Tories have used as the rationale for the last six years of vicious attacks on the working class and the poor.

Such policies are hardly a fighting lead against austerity. They are the fundamental flaw of La- bourism, it’s pathetic, dogmatic commitment to gradualism, which when the capitalist system is in crisis, means collaboration with attacks on the working class. The fact that the Labour Left, now tenaciously in power, is showing signs of this prac- tice undermines the need for a revolutionary cur- rent to emerge within Labour, and within the working class movement more generally.

The occupation of the Carnegie Library in Lambeth: The Labour council went to court to force the protesters to leave. We did not hear any word of support for the protesters from the Labour leadership.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
Partial Tory back-down on Academies Bill
By Angela Wood, Labour activist.

Although the Tories have partially backed on their academies plan; they will no longer be forced academisation for successful state schools nonetheless the main thrust of the attack on state schools and local democracy continues. It was no accident that George Osborne announced the forced academisation of schools in his Budget of 16 March 2016. The attempt to force every primary and secondary school in England to become academies was part of the world-wide neo-liberal agenda. Like the attack on doctors’ employment conditions in the NHS, the aim is to drive down the rights and pay of teachers and open up the education ‘market’ to private competition in which all power is transferred to private companies, Multi Academy Trusts, and ultimately to the usual round of corporations such as Virgin, Serco etc.

It is a tragic truth that the academy programme, removing schools from local authority co-ordination and support, began in the office of the then Labour Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in the late 1990s. David Blunkett, the then Secretary of State for Education, insisted that a clause permitting academies be inserted in the Queen’s speech telling stunned colleagues that ‘Tony has some rich friends who will invest in some schools’. Despite warnings from educationists and socialists that the academy route would eventually hand the Tories an easy way to privatise education, complaint local Labour councils were bribed with capital money to hand over some of their secondary schools often schools in poor condition in working-class areas. Today Blunkett claims that this limited plan has nothing to do with the now abandoned Tory plans for every school, but as Michael Gove told Ed Balls in a TV debate before the 2010 General Election ‘we are going to take the best idea on education Labour ever had and offer it to all schools bringing in private finance, management and ownership’.

As so often, Blairism paved the way for a disastrous sell off of state assets and an end to public accountability.

The Tory plan was that all schools, including every primary school, would be an academy by 2022 with proposals in place before the next General Election in 2020. Governance of the schools would be handed to Multi Academy Trusts and, of course, parents would be stripped of their right to elect parent governors. The main thrust of that attack continues. As now the academy chains will be totally unaccountable to local communities with no right of schools to leave their sponsors. Only the Education Secretary will have the power to change academy ownership.

The proposal will transfer up to £70 billion of public assets including valuable land to the private sector. Although currently academies only lease this land there have already been attempts - such as one defeated in Newquay to sell £12m of land to Tesco - to breach these conditions. Clearly sell off of education public land and assets perfected under water privatisation etc. will follow in due course.

There will be no impact on education standards of these changes - academies are not performing better than existing state schools and, despite reluctance to challenge underperforming academies, even OFSTED is regularly reporting failures in academies. Nor will the test and data obsessed education system in England allow innovation in academies or even allow children to enjoy learning. Instead the Grad grinding of education with its uniforms, homework loads and stressful testing at least annually will accelerate to no benefit to children or students.

In order to soften up the cost profile of education for the market, pay and conditions for teachers will be under attack. Although some individual schools have staged campaigns against privatisation/academisation often supported by parents, all the teacher trade unions have generally sat back allowing 5,000 schools to transfer to academies. The teacher trade union leadership has focused instead on signing deals with academy chains but as bullying management regimes are a feature of many of the chains speeding the exodus of teachers out of the profession, many ‘agreements’ have proved worthless.

Finally the NUT, the most active and militant of the teacher trade unions (in a generally compliant sector), has woken to what the forced academisation will mean. With no local authority role and the exposure of education to the corporate neo-liberals, teacher conditions of pay and holidays will come under attack.

Building on the increased employment of unqualified teachers in schools, the whole notion of a qualified teacher may be abolished. Teacher working rights, currently set out in the ‘Burgundy Book’, will eventually disappear as corporate owners repeal maternity rights and other contractual rights to the bare legal minimum.

For all these reasons, public asset stripping, the takeover of schools by the ‘business’, the negative impact on pupils and the attack on parents’ rights and the destruction of employment rights leading to poorer and less motivated teachers and more leaving the profession everyone must welcome the decision of NUT Conference to force a strike ballot against the academisation proposals. The ballot for strike action in the first week of July must be supported and other trade unions - NAS/UWT and ATL pressured by their members to join in. We must demand that this proposals are carried through. The danger now is that teachers’ unions will present this partial back down as a total victory and will not fight the remaining pernicious parts of the Bill with and serious intent.

The July strike must be the beginning of sustained national strike action not a mere sop along the way to accepting academisation.
Since this article was written the Tories have partially backed down on compulsory academisation and has agreed to reopen talks with the junior hospital doctors. But the so-called U-turns are only partial, the main thrust of the attacks remain. The doctors’ talks are on a limited agenda of Saturday and overtime working. Junior doctors are in dispute over far more issues and the academisation agenda proceeds.

On Tuesday and Wednesday the 26th and 27th April junior doctors in the NHS were on strike against health minister Jeremy Hunt’s determination to impose a contract on them that would make their unsafe and unfair working conditions, even more unsafe and even more unfair. It was the fifth time in four months that Britain’s 50,000 plus junior doctors had been out on strike against these austerity-led proposals that are part and parcel of the Tory governments attacks on the NHS and ordinary working people as a whole.

Having been provoked into strike action five times by the government it was the first time that they had not provided accident and emergency cover. This meant that this service was provided by consultants. A fact that the government and its well-heeled backers in the Tory press didn’t go out of their way to make clear. On top of this the government and those same media outlets have made ludicrous claims that the junior doctors and their organisation, the British Medical Association, are trying to topple the government.

Most thinking members of the public support the junior doctors and are appalled at the tax evading antics of the super-rich (including very prominent members of the Tory government). They would surely like to see this corrupt cabal toppled. However to pretend that the agenda of the junior doctors and the BMA is to topple the government is beyond farce and has done nothing but stiffen the resolve of those taking part in the strike action.

Although the image of a politically motivated workforce putting patients’ lives at risk in the cause of bringing down the government may have had a superficial impact on some of the most backward sections of society who are apt to believe the first and the easiest thing they are told, even the establishment carefully weighed opinion polls indicate that there are a mere 57% of the public who continue to give their backing to the doctors. Those, who clearly see through this blatant propaganda, will have their resolve to win hardened. When more and more of those who have initially fallen for this nonsense realise that they have been lied to, yet again, those guilty of this breath taking deceit will lose what last vestiges of trust remain.

Perhaps it is worth re-stating a few facts:

- There are 54,000 junior doctors. With the exception of consultants and GPs all other doctors are referred to as junior doctors.
- 98% of them voted to reject the new contract as unsafe and unfair. If implemented it means working more nights and weekends, with less rest and less pay making the service more dangerous for doctors and patients alike.
- Hospitals are currently required to monitor how many hours doctors are working. The contracts that the government are going to impose removes that requirement.
- The doctors are not fighting for a pay rise. At present, after five years training a doctor’s basic wage is £22,636. Clearly the already dangerous number and unsocial hours junior doctors work means that sum is enhanced. However under the new contracts some doctors stand to lose up to £7,500 a year.
- It is estimated that the NHS needs another 6,000 doctors if it to remain still just to cope with the extra demand. The reality is that if the government get away with this doctors will be leaving the NHS in their droves.

On the picket line at Lewisham a junior doctor called Sarah explained to Socialist Fight that junior doctors are already providing a seven day, twenty four hour service, contrary to the picture that the government are trying to paint by claiming they are trying to introduce a seven day twenty four hour service. She went on to point out that junior doctors were already at breaking point “It is absolutely clear that doctors are spread too thin”.

The doctor went on to explain that, “more investment was needed to pay for more staff to cope with increasing workloads”. Sarah also pointed out that the new contract that Jeremy Hunt was attempting to impose was riddled with gender inequality, “for example pay progression being affected by female doctors on maternity leave”.

When Sarah was asked about support from other NHS unions and the labour movement in general she explained that if the doctors were defeated all groups in the NHS would be picked off one by one so there was an urgent need for solidarity. She also explained the fantastic support of the teachers from the NUT was the sort of support that was needed. The teachers had held spontaneous joint demonstrations with the doctors a few night previously in central London.

The teachers issue was the compulsory academisation of schools but the teachers instinctively knew that although this is two battles it is all part of one war against austerity.

When asked about support from the Labour party Sarah said that she did not know a great deal about labour politicians but that the backing that the doctors had received from Jeremy Corbyn had been first class. Unions should be balloting for national action on their own issues, like the proposed compulsory academisation of schools local authority cuts or pay issues and ensuring any industrial action is coordinated with the doctors strike action.

There is total disgust with the antics of the ruling elite and their lame duck Tory government and massive support for the doctors. If the anti-austerity movement is to forward it is clear what action needs to be taken.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
By Richard Wise, Labour Activist.

The Momentum group grew out of the marvellous grassroots campaign that arose to deliver the election victory for Corbyn in last summer’s leadership election. During the campaign’s Corbyn’s 100 rallies the last one was the night before the result in his own constituency of Islington. These rallies attracted two types to them in their many thousands. They attracted ex-party members who had dropped out at various stages of the Blair years and over various critical policy decisions, Iraq, foundation hospitals etc. The second group was a wave of new people attracted to Jeremy Corbyn’s anti-austerity message and agenda and the air that this opened up for discussion and debate. This air space had been crushed by 20 years of Blairite control of the Party machine and thus any debate had been squashed and managed.

What occurred during that summer is summed up nicely by John Trickett, a Corbyn-supporting MP:

“Equally remarkable as the election of the new leader was the movement of at first hundreds, then thousands, and eventually tens of thousands of people coming to public meetings to discuss politics. Then they moved into that venerable political institution: Labour Party. The commonly held view had been that ideology, politics, and political parties were all perishing away. This consensus was shaken to its foundations, as was the rest of the political landscape when this new spontaneous movement emerged.” (Guardian 25/09/2015)

At its height this movement at best estimates 16,000 volunteers came together to deliver the Corbyn victory. These volunteers formed themselves into local groups up and down the length and breadth of the land. In our borough from the first meeting of a half dozen we held regular meetings of 30 or more with street stalls where there was a genuine enthusiasm with people signing up throughout the campaign.

The other aspect that attracted the new wave and ex-members was the idea that Corbyn advocated of “a new kind of politics” indeed this was the theme of the Party conference in September. This was about opening up debate and full unhindered debate with participation as opposed to the control and spin of the Blair years and thereby lied the attraction for the ever increasing numbers who supported Corbyn.

After Corbyn won his historic victory becoming Labour leader the Momentum group was launched to continue and build on the Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership campaign. Build on the enthusiasm and sought to maintain the volunteers as activists in a wider movement to support Corbyn now as leader. The founding statement of Momentum is:

“Momentum exists to build on the energy and enthusiasm from the Jeremy Corbyn for Labour Leader campaign to increase participatory democracy, solidarity, and grassroots power and help Labour become the transformative governing party of the 21st century.”

Momentum go on to explain how they will do this:

“Encourage those inspired by Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership campaign to join and get involved in the Labour Party. Facilitate and coordinate the building and support of organisations that can make concrete improvements to people’s lives, thereby demonstrating how collective action and Labour values can transform our society for the better. Organise inclusive events, rallies, meet ups and policy consultations for political education and mass mobilisation for a more democratic, equal and decent society.”

These are all wonderful sounding statements and aims for Momentum who seized the initiative of protecting and then developing the legacy of the Corbyn4Leader movement. But what the reality has been far removed from an adoption of “a new kind of politics” and a failure beyond a few well attended local Momentum meetings to even maintain the volunteer network of Corbyn supporters never mind develop it.

Unfortunately what we have witnessed is as far from “a new kind of politics” as we can get. Momentum has from the outset sought to control the direction of the post Corbyn election movement and channel it in a suitable direction. In fact what has seen participation dwindle only eight months later is indeed a negation of the very participation that was the main attraction in the heady days of last summer.

Although there are 100 or so local groups of Momentum there has been no founding conference to elect the National Committee and the Steering Committee itself was never elected in that way. There is an absence of democracy within Momentum with the sole purpose of allowing Jon Lansman and supporters who lead Momentum to control the political and organisational direction of the left movement around Corbyn.

In the borough Momentum that grew out of the local Jeremy4Leader group at no point was there an invite to send a delegate to a national conference to elect the national committee. The only invite we have received is an invite to send two representatives to a London meeting. Initially described itself as “network of people and organisations that will continue the energy and enthusiasm of Jeremy’s campaign”. But it is far from that. It has now been decided by the un-elected national committee that it has moved away from an open supporters’ network to one of a membership based group. This has obvious flaws in that particularly for new activists surely it can only sow confusion in being a member of Momentum and then separately encouraging them to join the Labour Party as well. And having adopted a membership method that comes without a genuine democratic structure control can only be from the top down.

The reality of Momentum is that the control has to exist from the top down in order to defend the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn but without criticism and also to support and defend the political agenda of the leaders of Momentum most notably Jon Lansman. This is not to take anything away from the tremendous work and campaigning of local groups but sadly that work has little to do with the national Momentum and the direction it wishes to take itself in.

“So from the founder of the Momentum (John Lansman, above) we have a demand that Livingstone should leave politics altogether. This apparently does not prejudice any ongoing investigation by commenting at this time as the statement asks the members to do and nothing more. This is hypocrisy and furthermore a basic denial of Livingstone’s right to natural justice and a fair hearing regarding the issues surrounding his suspension.”

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
Defend Jackie Walker
By Gerry Downing

Jackie Walker, a central leader of Momentum, has been suspended at the behest of the Zionist bigots that run the Jewish Chronicle. I have political differences with her I'm certainly not going to emphasise nowadays but she merely spoke the truth. You are now required to lie about history to save yourself from these utterly bogus charges of antisemitism.

When she spoke these elementary truths, she should have said “Zionists” instead of “Jews” should she? How could she? Zionism had nothing to do with it, it didn’t even come into being until the late 19th century, certainly not a century earlier.

A wealthy section of the Jewish bourgeoisie with control of bank capital (“moneylenders”) provided much of the finance for the slave trade. That is a historical fact. And read Abram Leon’s book *The Jewish Question, A Marxist Interpretation* to understand why and how this occurred historically. But understanding this or even voicing the historical facts is now a crime in the Labour Party that gets you stigmatised as antisemitic.

Defend Jackie Walker, Tony Greenstein, Ken Livingstone, Gerry Downing, Naz Shah and all the Muslim Labour councillors and every other victims of this racist Tory, Blairite right Labour, Zionist Labour Friends of Israel and the Jewish Labour Movement against these attacks.

If a black woman of Jewish ancestry cannot protest the 14 million odd victims of the slave trade, cannot compare, if she wanted, the 10 million slaughtered in the Congo by King Leopold of Belgium with the holocaust 6 million and ask why the latter is the greatest crime ever committed and the former not worth more than a short paragraph in history’s text books, if that, how can the Labour Party survive at all as any kind of a progressive representative of the working class and the organised labour movement?

Let Unite and the other trade union funders of Labour call a halt to this farce right now.

And Jon Lansman has endorsed this, the racist witch hunt of one of his closest comrades, because as a black woman she defended her ancestors?

Surely it is clear that any leftism he might have aspired to is mediated through a right wing pro-Zionist global outlook. We must know now that if we don’t hang together we will hang separately. Defend the victimised black socialist activist Jackie Walker! ▲
Gerry Downing: Letter to Labour Party NEC appealing against my re-expulsion from the Party

16/03/2016

Dear comrades,

I am in receipt of your letter of 10th March, re-expelling me from Labour after my earlier successful appeal last year. What I am first seeking to appeal against is the lack of due process in the procedures as put forward in the letter. This is contrary to Labour Party democracy in a double sense: one is that prior to this expulsion and the previous one, no proper hearing was held and I was not invited to put my case to the body that decided the expulsion. In both cases, this was an anti-democratic procedure that is a disgrace to a party that claims to want to be a force for defending democracy in British society. The letter also says that ‘no appeal is possible’ from this latest expulsion.

This lack of due process is contrary to the democratic traditions of the working class movement that the Labour Party is supposed to politically represent. It is rather like the extremely undemocratic procedures that have been rife at times in those trade unions with the most corrupt, bureaucratic leaderships, such as the EETPU under the late Frank Chapple, to give a notorious example.

This anti-democratic procedure (no hearing before expulsion; no right to appeal) was initiated by the Labour Party leadership of Tony Blair, which was involved in extensive criminality against working class people at home and abroad. Such as most notoriously the Iraq war, where the Labour Party leadership bore responsibility for over a million deaths caused by the unprovoked invasion. It was also involved in terrible abuses of democratic rights such as torture and extraordinary rendition, and even complicit in the American sexual abuse of Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib prison. So it is hardly surprising that a party whose leadership did things like this evoked procedures that show contempt for the seemingly more mundane democratic rights of ordinary Labour Party members at home. If Labour is really trying to improve itself from the days of Blair, it needs to adhere to due process, proper hearings before expulsion, and full rights to appeal.

Previously the appeal body (NEC Panel) decided that support for Socialist Fight, the Marxist publication and trend that I support, was compatible with membership of the Labour Party, since it has never stood in elections against Labour in the past and had no intention of doing so in the future. This is still true, contrary to the sole charge in the letter that I am in breach of Clause 2.1.A of the Labour Party’s rules on supporting “a political organisation other than an official Labour Group or unit of the party”.

If this description is now deemed to apply to Socialist Fight, it also logically applies to Progress, or for that matter the Labour Friends of Israel. I note that unlike these two organisations, Socialist Fight has no external sources of funding whatsoever.

Now, a new ‘evidence’ is fraudulent. The Letter claims that ‘new evidence’ has emerged about the nature of Socialist Fight. But all material mentioned as being supposedly ‘new’ was in the public domain when the original appeal took place. Even in its own terms, if taken at face value (which it should not be, see later), this implies either negligence in carrying out original appeal, or more likely a political fix to appease David Cameron.

I openly stated my revolutionary socialist beliefs in the original Twitter profile that was the basis for my original expulsion, and did not in any way disavow those beliefs in making my original appeal – in fact I reiterated them. My revolutionary Trotskyist views were taken into account by those who granted the appeal and all my political positions were available to them. There is no ‘new evidence’ that was not available to the people who granted my previous appeal.

Morally the original appeal should stand, according to the basic norms of the British legal system among others, when an acquittal can only be overturned in the event of genuinely new evidence, which was not available to the original trial or appeal, being found. The claim of ‘new evidence’ is fraudulent.

Now I will deal with the real politics underlying my summary and anti-democratic expulsion. Three accusations were made against me and Socialist Fight by David Cameron, the Tory blogger Paul Staines (Guido Fawkes), and various right wing Labour MPs and media people. These were: (1) that I am a 9/11 apologist. (2) that I am a supporter of Islamic State. (3) That the material published by Socialist Fight on the Jewish Question is in some way ‘anti-Semitic’.

All these allegations are false and mendacious. I will demonstrate this below.

First there is the question of Socialist Fight’s militant anti-imperialism. I note that Jeremy Corbyn has stated that the Tony Blair-led Labour government was involved in war crimes in invading and occupying Iraq, and has called for Blair to be extradited to The Hague for trial. Yet Tony Blair is still allowed to be a member of the Labour Party. I note that among the most vociferous political figures demanding my expulsion were people who supported the Iraq war. As anti-imperialists Socialist Fight and I oppose all wars against semi-colonial countries by imperialist powers such as Britain and the United States, and defend the peoples and institutions targeted. We consider that they are all lesser evils to imperialist rape and pillage. Complementary to this, we oppose all attacks on civilians anywhere, such as 9/11 and the more recent massacre in Paris last November.

The 9/11 attack and imperialism’s wars in the Middle East

A large, and hypocritical fuss was made about some phrases in a recent Socialist Fight article by me that was in fact debunking so-called ‘9/11 Truth’ beliefs, i.e. that the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in September 2001 were carried out by the US government and/or the Israelis. In debunking this I talked about the motivation of the attackers and the crimes of Western imperialism, in particular the sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s that led to the deaths of over half-a-million Iraqi children.

When Madeleine Albright was US ambassador to the United Nations in May 1996 she was asked: “We have heard that half a million children have died. I mean, that’s more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?” She replied “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price — we think the price is worth it”. Obviously to achieve political objectives of the USA through sanctions in that peri-
od. The death toll from the 2003 invasion of Iraq was reported from various sources to be in excess of one million.

I noted that it was the thirst for vengeance for such crimes that drove such people and that however much you abhorred the loss of civilian life in the 9/11 attacks, you could not condemn the rage and motivations of those affected by the mass murder of Arabs, including children, by the West in carrying out its objectives. And you had to say that condemnation had to be directed to those who reduced the relatively advanced lands of Libya, Syria and Iraq to rubble by destroying their infrastructure for ‘regime change’ for ‘peace, justice and democracy’ which never came and will never come from that source.

But this was not a statement on an event that had just happened. This was an article discussing motivations, and conspiracy theories, involving an event that happened nearly 15 years ago. In other words, it was discussing a historical event in broad brush, generalised terms, not taking a position on something current. When it comes to events as they occur, it is clear Socialist Fight condemns indefensible attacks on civilians. I quote the statement that Socialist Fight issued about the Paris attacks in November 2015, which make our position on this abundantly clear:

“Socialist Fight condemns utterly the barbaric terrorist attack carried out on Friday 13 November in Paris, which has left around 130 dead, and another 300 injured, 80 critically. These came only hours after other bloody actions targeting Shia Muslims in bombings in Beirut, where 41 died, and Baghdad, where 26 were killed.

We condemn these actions as bloody crimes against the French, Middle Eastern and international working class, and indeed the civilian populations more generally. We extend our profound condolences, sympathy and solidarity to the families and friends of the murdered victims and the wounded.

As Marxists we are totally opposed to methods of individual terrorism however ‘anti-imperialist’ the motivation of the perpetrators may be. The inevitable consequences of this is civilian casualties, intended or not. And the attacks never weakens imperialism, it ALWAYS strengthens the repressive forces of the capitalist state against the working class and its aspiring revolutionary leadership. This attack in Paris is qualitatively worse than the Charlie Hebdo massacre because however misguided that was a least it was against targeted victims who they held to be in some manner, however distorted, responsible for the wars in the Middle East and North Africa. This attack was for openly reactionary motives specifically targeting defenceless civilians which can only result in increased Islamophobia and repression of the entire working class and further moves towards a police state.” (http://socialistfight.com/2015/11/17/the-paris-massacre-impersonals-chickens-coming-home-to-moot)

There is no contradiction between this statement, about a recent and contemporary event, and my statement about the motives of the attackers in September 2001. I was referring to the events that motivated the attackers, you are being driven by Western crimes against the Arab peoples. There is abundant evidence that it was the crimes of the US led forces in Iraq and sanctions regime that led the previously pro-Western Al Qaeda Network led by Osama bin Laden that previously fought on the US/UK side in Afghanistan against the USSR, to turn against the West.

ISIS and Imperialism

The second point concerns my statements about Islamic State (ISIS). It is a principled position of Marxists that we oppose all attacks by imperialist forces, that is, the armed forces of advanced Western capitalist countries, on the peoples and regimes of dependent, third world, semi-colonial countries. We consider the Western countries, so long as the long established capitalist ruling classes in those countries remain the real ruling power in society (which is true even under reformist Labour-type governments under capitalism) to be by far the main predatory force in the world.

It has not changed since the heyday of the colonial empires, though the successful struggles for independence since WWII have modified the way that this predation is carried out. We therefore, as a matter of principle, support the right of indigenous forces in such countries to resist imperialist attacks. We say that it is the duty of the workers’ movement in imperialist countries to assist them in defending themselves when possible. This is the meaning of the phrase about ‘tactical military assistance’ that has been so often quoted, again out of context. In the current situation such assistance would most likely take the form of political strikes against a given war. In a developed revolutionary situation, more might be possible.

If this is considered impermissible in the Labour Party, let me recall that the Labour Party was split down the middle over the issue of armed resistance to British colonial rule in the days of the Irish war of Independence before 1921. More recently under Tony Blair, a Labour government, jointly with the administration of George W Bush, committed a terrible crime in invading Iraq in a blatant neo-colonial war. The Iraqi people, and indeed its government, had every right to expect support from working class organisations in the West to resist the conquest.

The Iraq war led to chaos in the entire region. The destruction and de-stabilisation of Iraq spilled over into Syria with the outbreak of the Arab Spring. The West, along with close allies in Israel and also Saudi Arabia, backed some of the Islamist forces that spilled over from Iraq in a very cynical policy aimed at overthrowing the Assad regime. Similar things happened also in Libya, this time with direct Western military intervention, and unlike in the Assad case, actually succeeded in overthrowing Gaddafi. The result: murderous chaos.

A Guardian article on 25 October 2015 record that Tony Blair admitted the rise of ISIS was due to the Iraq invasion of 2003:

Blair indicated that he saw merit in the argument that the Iraq war was to blame for the rise of Islamic State (Isis), “I think there are elements of truth in that,” he said when asked whether the Iraq invasion had been the “principal cause” of the rise of Isis. He added: “Of course you can’t say those of us who removed Saddam in 2003 bear no responsibility for the situation in 2015.”

Abraham Leon: The Jewish Question

Our tradition is rooted in the ideas of Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky and particularly the Belgian-Jewish Trotskyist Abram Leon, the author of The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation (1942) and a heroic leader of working class clandestine resistance during Nazi occupation in WWII, who for his activities was murdered by the Nazis in Auschwitz.

Then there is the furore about the Jewish Question. Many of the allegations made against me and Socialist Fight are libellous and would not stand up in a court of law. Our tradition is rooted in the ideas of Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky and particularly the Belgian-Jewish Trotskyist Abram Leon, the author of The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation (1942) and a heroic leader of working class clandestine resistance during Nazi occupation in WWII, who for his activities was murdered by the Nazis in Auschwitz. Contrary to various ignorant innuendos and amalgams made by unscrupulous and often racist people both inside and outside Labour, my views of and those of SF on this are based solidly on a long tradition of socialist and Marxist thought and have nothing to do with Zionism.

It should not even be necessary to defend oneself against such smears in this day and age. I thought we had moved on from the terrible days of Stalinist domination when left-wing people had to defend themselves against unscrupulous allegations of support for fascism. But we are living in a period where those who defend Palestinian rights are coming under anti-democratic attack on a wide scale from pro-Israel forces in Western societies. If you believe that all peoples are equal, and the right of Palestinian Arabs not to live in conditions of impoverished exile from their own country, and be massacred on a regular basis, then you must be concerned to unearth the political roots of these attacks on democratic rights.

Israel’s supporters (including those in the Labour Party) say that Jews have every right to steal land from the Palestinian people by force and mass expulsions, and have the right to ‘defend’ the territory so taken by force from their victims in the name of fighting ‘terrorism’. The argument goes that this is acceptable because of the genocidal committed in Europe by the Nazis in WWII, and because of the origin of the Jewish religion in Palestine and the existence of two Jewish states there around 2000 years ago. In the face of all these ideological arguments, in which Jews and Zionism as a form of Jewish nationalism feature very heavily, we in the Labour Party and the left are supposed to defer to the ‘Friends of Israel’ and refrain from analysing the Jewish question independently of them on pain of being accused of anti-Semitism.

I disagree. I think these are fundamental attacks on democracy and anti-racism. I support the right to return of the Palestinian refugees, a position endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 and 1974, which would result in a narrow but clear Arab majority in historic Palestine and make any ethnic-based state impossible. And in a democratic party opposed to racism, I would have every right to argue my point of view against others.
For me the Jewish Question is inseparable from the Palestinian Question and has no meaning without that. Israel says it is the Jewish state, and claims to represent all Jews. Israel’s supporters in the Labour Party both support that claim as the moral basis of Israel’s ‘case’ against the Palestinians, and at the same time lie that any attempt to analyse the real relationship of Jews to Israel is in some way ‘anti-semitic’. This is a deeply hypocritical position.

In particular, it is inseparable from the drive to suppress pro-Palestinian activism in the UK and other Western countries. Apparently it is unacceptable to question whether organised ethnocratic politics is involved in this and influences Western governments. But it can be clearly demonstrated that part of the capitalist classes of important Western countries, including the US and the UK, have a material stake in the maintenance of the Israeli state against the Palestinian people. The mechanism of this is a well-known racist law, the 1950 and 1970 Law of Return, which says that any person born of a Jewish mother anywhere in the world is entitled to Israeli citizenship by birth. Whereas any non-Jew born to parents of Palestinian refugees driven out of Israel proper in or since 1947-48, which even then amounted to over two-thirds of the Palestinian Arab population, is entitled to nothing at all. Of course there is no Palestinian Law of Return for the 6.5 million exiled so brutally from their homeland since 1948.

In practice the state in all capitalist societies is dominated by sections of big capital who are tied to a particular state, particularly by ties of residence and/or citizenship. This is so pronounced that in 1914 in Europe, different national ruling classes, defined in this way, fought each other for domination and killed millions of workers in the process. In Israel, the state is partly “owned” in this way by Jewish capitalists overseas with dual citizenship according to the racist Law of Return. This is the material stake just referred to. This section of the capitalists has over decades since WWII acquired a broad authority among the Western ruling classes and the clout to exert great political pressure in Western countries.

This is why Palestinian solidarity activity is being increasingly banned in a number of Western countries, including many US states, the UK, and most notoriously France. This is the material basis of Zionist power in Western societies.

Part of this banning of Palestine solidarity activity is the attack on me and the denial of due process and right of appeal. This is entirely alien to Labour movement democracy. It is however in the spirit of Israeli racist tyrannical practices such as ‘administrative detention’ where ordinary Palestinians who dissent from Israeli oppression and abuses are locked up without rights of appeal. A little bit of Israeli contempt for democracy has been imported into the Labour Party.

The mechanism for this is the Labour Friends of Israel, which is a racist, anti-Arab Zionist ‘party within a party’, aiming to garner support for the ongoing Naqa’ba against the Palestinians and to suppress sympathy with their plight by a mendacious narrative that says that solidarity with Palestinians is driven by Nazi-style race hatred against Jews. Ironically, this narrative is a prime example of a technique pioneered by the Nazis; Goebbels’ technique of the Big Lie.

…The narrative that Israel is ‘the only democracy’ in the Middle East is another Big Lie. It is the only ‘democracy’ in the world established by expelling the majority of its native population and replacing them with armed settlers. It is not a democracy, but an ethnocratic tyranny of the worst sort. Any support for this is contrary to the interests of the working class for whom drawing a class line against racism is of the highest necessity. Un-proscribe the militant socialist, anti-imperialist and anti-racist Socialist Fight trend! And hence restate myself as a Labour member with full rights, as part of restoring democracy and due process in the Labour Party.

The four are Noam Chomsky, Norman Finkelstein, Michael Marder, and Tariq Ali who have argued that the characterization of anti-Zionism as anti-semitic is inaccurate, sometimes obscure legitimate criticism of Israel’s polities and actions, and is sometimes a political ploy to stifle criticism of Israel.

Professor Noam Chomsky argues: “There have been long efforts to identify anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in an effort to exploit anti-racist sentiment for political ends; “one of the chief tasks of any dialogue with the Gentile world is to prove that the distinction between anti-Semitism and Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism

Finally on the question of what is anti-Semitism and what is anti-Zionism and the difference between the two, so assiduously confused in the allegations against me and Socialist Fight. I would cite four leftist authorities to defend me, Socialist Fight and the Labour party in general against the false charges laid against us in the present wide-ranging witch hunt initiated by the far right blog writer Guido Fawkes (aka Paul Staines) and David Cameron.

“Whenever Israel faces a public relations dilemma such as the Intifada or international pressure to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict, American Jewish organizations orchestrate this extravaganza called the anti-Zionism. The purpose is several-fold. First, it is to discredit any charges by claiming the person is an anti-Semite. It’s to turn Jews into the victims, so that the victims are not the Palestinians any longer. As people like Abraham Foxman of the ADL put it, the Jews are being threatened by a new holocaust. It’s a role reversal — the Jews are now the victims, not the Palestinians. So it serves the function of discrediting the people levelling the charge. It’s no longer Israel that needs to leave the Occupied Territories; it’s the Arabs who need to free themselves of the anti-Semitism. —http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/5104

Anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are not a distinction at all,” Israeli diplomat Abba Eban argued, in a typical expression of this intellectually and morally disreputable position (Eban, Congress Bi-Weekly, March 30, 1973). But that no longer suffices. It is now necessary to identify criticism of Israeli policies as anti-Semitism — or in the case of Jews, as “self-hatred,” so that all possible cases are covered.” — Chomsky, 1989 “Necessary Illusions”.

Philosopher Michael Marder argues: “To deconstruct Zionism is … to demand justice for its victims – not only for the Palestinians, who are suffering from it, but also for the Zionists Jews, “erased” from the officially consecrated account of Zionist history. By deconstructing its ideology, we shed light on the context it strives to repress and on the violence it legitimises with a mix of theological or psychological reasoning and affective appeals to historical guilt for the unendingly horrific persecution of Jewish people in Europe and elsewhere.”

American political scientist Norman Finkelstein argues that anti-Zionism and often just criticism of Israeli policies have been conflated with anti-Semitism, sometimes called new anti-Semitism for political gain:

“This is extracted from the Anti-Zionism — Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Zionism

FraternallyerryDowning. ▲

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
Hillsborough and a city that dared to fight
By Roy Bentham Blacklist Support Group Football Supporters Federation National Council and Hillsborough survivor, 26 April 2016

The precursor to the disaster was Orgreave and the conduct of the establishment and the puppeteering of the South Yorkshire Police which directly affected us on that beautiful spring day

This day will be remembered for generations to come for one amazing event.

A city and its people were exonerated. File it along with 15th April and 12th September 2012 when the HIP report was commissioned at the Anglican Cathedral and endorsed by none other than the Prime Minister who once went on record saying families and campaigners were like a blind man looking for a blind cat in a dark room.

Yesterday was a little like semi-final morning; there was a perverse sense of anticipation on what significance the days event would throw up. In a humble office surrounding which had been converted into a coroner’s court in the office quarter of Warrington East at around 11.30am, a keen sense of anticipation prevailed.

Nothing could prepare me or anyone else present for what was to come. After bringing the nine members of the jury in we cut straight to the chase. I personally felt overwhelmed by all manners of emotion once Lord Gouldring read the verdict. I personally felt overwhelmed by all manners of emotion once Lord Gouldring read the verdict. I personally felt overwhelmed by all manners of emotion once Lord Gouldring read the verdict. I personally felt overwhelmed by all manners of emotion once Lord Gouldring read the verdict. I personally felt overwhelmed by all manners of emotion once Lord Gouldring read the verdict.

Within that contribution he said crisply and clearly “Unlawful killing”. The hundreds of families and survivors packed into this surreal setting gaped and an audible sigh of relief reverberated around the crammed room. He then proceeded to give out the other judgements which stipulated we got the 14 results we were looking for. I broke down unable to grasp the significance of his words. I felt relief, I felt elation, I felt sadness, and ultimately reflect. All manner of feelings were coursing through my veins and it hit me like a bus.

Since the disaster I’d wrestled with my conscience over where the blame lay and why we ordinary working class people had been tarnished. Here I was witnessing total vindication.

It was to some intents like winning 10 cup finals in one day. My great schoolboy friend Brian who helped me escape the clutches of pen 3 and gave me the chance to write this still finds it hard to grasp how lives can be lost going to watch a match. We didn’t talk about Hillsborough for 20 years as a result.

What we witnessed on the Leppings Lane terrace will be with us till we join those who perished on that fateful day I guess and that’s another legacy we all have to live with as survivors. However yesterday was a weight lifted. My tears soon turned to those of joy as I saw the radiant faces of those who’d bore the burden of that miscarriage for 27 years. I’ll run that by you again. 27 years. The more I think of that the more astonishing it was to get that result.

Everton Football Club said it was the greatest result ever which shows crucially solidarity in its purest form. The hugs and kisses with the families rinsed me. I felt weak at the knees but strong in my heart. Reds and blues had fought as brothers in arms. These amazing people are the very fabric of society and had been shamefully denied repeatedly by the establishment. We’d trud this long road to justice together and campaigned long and hard over four decades and this was the verdict we’d been longing for. The HJC, HFSG, Hope for Hillsborough and the dearly departed Anne Williams all fought for the same outcome within the British legal system. Unlawful killing. Their courage knows no bounds and seeing it closely is so uplifting to the soul. It should also give everyone hope that wrongs can be righted.

The precursor to the disaster was Orgreave and the conduct of the establishment and the puppeteering of the South Yorkshire Police which directly affected us on that beautiful spring day.

Thirty years after Orgreave the result of that inquiry was a whitewash. Will Hillsborough produce a better result?

After sleeping on it and going back to work this morning my thoughts are now drifting towards accountability. This chapter is closing but the next one will be all about bringing those culpable for the day’s events and subsequent cover up to the dock. As a football supporter I can only say that the 15th April 1989 and the 26th April 2016 findings went way beyond 22 players kicking a ball about.

We are now looking into how the authorities viewed and viewed not just supporter but working class cities as a whole. My overriding message to all is raise a glass to the 96 souls who were taken watching their beloved Liverpool Football Club in a game we all love and fight for a better future within the beautiful game. As we witnessed yesterday, a city dared to fight and got the result.

What better legacy could those who left us at Hillsborough leave for us and our children.

Blacklist Support Group leader Roy Bentham Refuses compensation offered

On 9 May Unite the union reported that they had achieved a ‘blacklisting’ victory; a £10 million pay-out to 236 workers. Pay-outs would range between £25,000 and £200,000. The claim had been going through the courts for five years; 44 construction companies were involved including big firms like Balfour Beatty, Carillion, Costain, Kier, Laing O’Rourke, Sir Robert McAlpine, Skanska UK and Vinci PLC.

In 2009 a raid by the Information Commissioner on the offices of a firm called the Consulting Association unearthed a blacklist of 3,213 construction workers and environmental activists.

However the Liverpool Echo reported on 10 May that one of the central leaders of the Blacklist Support Group (BSG), Merseyside carpenter Roy Bentham, had indicated that he was refusing his £35,000 offer, describing it as ‘measly’ because he wanted more light shone on the actions of the construction companies involved in the blacklisting.

The Echo reported Roy as saying: “Justice wouldn’t come just through compensation, this grand scale conspiracy needs a big light shining on it to bring full closure. I have suffered 14 years of blacklisting and what I want is an apology. I’ll be representing myself here on in. As good a result as this is for those seeking only compensation, my view has always been that it gets the construction companies off the hook and the scandal gets swept under the carpet. Justice as we know only too well up here on Merseyside only comes with accountability. I’m pinning my faith in the British legal system to deliver that.”

The BSG has always demanded a public inquiry into this. Obviously blacklisting is still going on and always will but it should be illegal and those who practice it should be fined and jail. After all they have destroyed workers’ lives, workers whose only crime was to fight to defend the wages, terms and conditions and health and safety of their fellow workers, often in the teeth of union officials who were the bosses’ friends. Outrageously it was revealed in the course of this case that certain of these same union officials were complicit in putting their own members on the blacklist, some of whom may still hold union office in Unite and elsewhere. But the public inquiry might inhibit that type of widespread discrimination to a certain degree.

Activists should demand a workers’ inquiry irrespective on whether of not they get a proper public inquiry. If was conducted by a respected barrister at least it would be able to highlight the practice, indict the guilty union officials and set some standards to fight back against this appaling pracitce.
Defend Malia Bouattia against the Andrew Coates/AWL pro-Zionist/imperialist attacks
By Gerry Downing

This is the courageous left-wing Algerian Muslim anti-racist and anti-Zionist fighter Malia Bouattia, the newly-elected President of the National Union of Students. This is the first real left NUS student leader for decades. Wes Streeting MP, a rabid Blairite witchhunter against Corbyn and the left, was President in 2008–10. She has faced attacks from the Tories, the Zionist lobby, the right wing in Labour and bogus ‘leftist’ like the pro-Zionists Andrew Coates and the AWL. Coates’s assault on her in his Tendance Coatey blog finishes:

‘The Gerry Downing/Socialist Fight style anti-imperialism of fools which led, and justified a rejection do (sic) support for the Kurdish people in their hour of need signals a broader problem’.

The Andrew Coates/AWL attack on Malia stemmed from her understanding that US imperialism is the main enemy as opposed to the AWL, who always portray the local tyrant as the main enemy. They thought it good to covertly support the US bombing on behalf of the Kurds on the basis that they were fighting for their liberation. Given the group’s pro-Zionism and universal back-handed support for imperialism in every conflict it was not too difficult for Malia to spot their covert attempt to smugle in a pro-imperialist motion to tie the NUS to that agenda.

Their efforts came to nought and it is enormously heartening to see not only a left wing President of the NUS but a consistent one in international anti-imperialist politics. And if that outrages Andrew Coates and the AWL, that is a very good indication that she is on the right lines.

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

The 10 Commandments of Rational Debate

We should observe these in the upcoming political battles in class struggles.

1. Thou shall not attack the person’s character, but the argument itself. (“Ad hominem”) Example: Dave listens to Marilyn Manson, therefore his arguments against certain parts of religion are worthless. After all, would you trust someone who listens to that devil worshipper?

2. Thou shall not misrepresent or exaggerate a person’s argument in order to make them easier to attack. (“Straw Man Fallacy”) Example: After Jimmy said that we should put more money into health and education, Steve responded by saying that he was surprised that Jimmy hates our country so much that he wants to leave it defenceless by cutting military spending.

3. Thou shall not use small numbers to represent the whole. (“Hasty Generalization”) Example: Climate Change Deniers take a small sample set of data to demonstrate that the Earth is cooling, not warming. They do this by zooming in on 10 years of data, ignoring the trend that is present in the entire data set which spans a century.

4. Thou shall not argue thy position by assuming one of its premises is true. (“Begging the Question”) Example: Sheldon: “God must exist.” Wilbert: “How do you know?” Sheldon: “Because the Bible says so.” Wilbert: “Why should I believe the Bible?” Sheldon: “Because the Bible was written by God.” Wilbert: “WTF?”

Here, Sheldon is making the assumption that the Bible is true, therefore his premise – that God exists – is also true.

5. Thou shall not claim that because something occurred before something else, it must be the cause of that thing. (“Post Hoc/False Cause”). This can also be read as “correlation does not imply causation”.

Example: There were 3 murders in Dallas this week and on each day, it was raining. Therefore, murders occur on rainy days.

6. Thou shall not reduce the argument down to only two possibilities when there is a clear middle ground. (“False Dichotomy”) Example: You’re either with me, or against me. Being neutral is not an option.

7. Thou shall not argue that because of our ignorance, the claim must be true or false. (“Ad Ignorantiam”). Example: 95% of unidentified flying objects have been explained. 5% have not. Therefore, the 5% that are unexplained prove that aliens exist.

8. Thou shall not lay the burden of proof onto him that is question ing the claim. (“Burden of Proof Reversal”) Example: Marcy claims she sees the ghosts of dead people, then challenges you to prove her wrong. The burden of proof is on Mar cy, not you, since Marcy made the extraordinary claim.

9. Thou shall not assume that “this” follows “that”, when “it” has no logical connection. (“Non Sequitur”) Similar, but the difference between the post hoc and non sequitur fallacies is that, whereas the post hoc fallacy is due to lack of a causal connection, in the non sequitur fallacy, the error is due to lack of a logical connection.

Example: If you do not buy this Vitamin X supplements for your infant, you are neglecting your duty to her.

10. Thou shall not claim that because a premise is popular, therefore, it must be true. (“Bandwagon Fallacy”) Example: Just because a celebrity like Dr. Oz endorses a product, it doesn’t make it any more legitimate. ▲
Women’s Rights under Attack from America to Ireland (North and South) By Ella Downing

Abortion was back on the political agenda recently when it emerged that a young woman who procured for herself medication to induce an abortion was handed down a suspended sentence. You would be forgiven for thinking this happened in America but the reality is that this is in the UK. Northern Ireland still has a near blanket ban on abortion, even in cases of rape, incest and foetal abnormality which is putting women who find themselves with an unwanted pregnancy in a very harsh situation indeed.

This 21 year old woman plead guilty to inducing her own abortion and to the outrage of many women rights campaigners was given a three months suspended sentence.

Abortion rights are of exceptional importance to working class women as an child, wanted or otherwise, comes with huge expense. Women of means have historically been able to access abortion when it was illegal, but poorer women found themselves in the hands of extortionate backstreet abortionist, with all the risks which that entails. We take for granted in the United Kingdom that we have safe and inexpensive access but in America the rules are similar in many states to Northern Ireland.

In March of this year another young women, Purvi Patel, was sentenced to twenty years in prison by the US state of Indiana on flimsy evidence for procuring her own abortion. There is some question over whether she miscarried or used chemicals she’d bought to induce an abortion, but this isn’t the problem. It is the punitive approach to women in this situation which is at fault that was highlighted by the fact that Donald Trump, now presumptive Republican nominee for President, said women who have illegal abortions should be punished. He famously changed his position on abortion for thinking this happened in America but the reality is that this is in the UK.

This reminds us of the case of Savita Halappanavar who died in the Republic of Ireland in 2012 when complications from a septic miscarriage should have been treated with a termination and were not. Instead a moralist, with all the risks which that entails. We take for granted in the United Kingdom that we have safe and inexpensive access but in America the rules are similar in many states to Northern Ireland.

As in Ireland there have been many Polish scandals, includ-

The terrible situation of women in Poland

In June 2015 the Dutch abortion activists of Women on Waves successfully flew a quadcopter drone carrying abortion-inducing pills into Poland, a country where abortion is virtually outlawed. They sent the abortion drone to two women associated with the Polish feminist organisation Feminoteka, who were waiting across the river in Slubice, Poland. The drones carried mifepristone and misoprostol, two drugs that have been approved by the World Health Organization since 2005 as a safe and effective way to terminate a pregnancy. Anti-abortion activists threatened the two Polish women with violence.

Following the restoration of capitalism in 1989 anti-abortion laws were introduced into Poland in 1993. Poland now has one of the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe: abortion is only available in cases of grave foetal defect, rape/incest, or threat to the life of the mother, and only within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. This law replaced communist-era laws that made abortion widely available. It was termed a “compromise” between the proponents of a total ban and those who wanted a public referendum on the matter.

But now a new Bill, pushed by a pro-life foundation and the Ordo Iuris legal institute, would make abortion illegal in all circumstances. Doctors who performed an abortion could be punished with jail terms of up to five years. The only exception would be the “unintended” death of a foetus while saving a woman’s life.

The Catholic Church in Poland (95% Catholic) has always championed this reactionary cause. And a new government has just come to power; the right-wing Law and Justice party (PiS), who are dominated by the Church. Since 1993 legal abortions have been replaced by very dangerous backstreet abortions; legal abortions fell from about 100,000 to under 1,000. Many women travel to Germany, Slovakia and the Czech Republic for abortions, a parallel with Irish women, north and south, who have to flee to Britain.

As in Ireland there have been many Polish scandals, including a 14-year-old victim of rape similar to the ‘X’ case in Ireland. The European Court of Human Rights fined the Polish government heavily for two of these cases.

But there was widespread outrage at the proposal to turn the draconian abortion laws into an outright ban. 85,000 people had signed up for the Facebook page of a protest group, Dziwuchy dziewuchom, (Women for Women). In big protests on 4 April, hundreds of men and women walked out of Mass when priests read the Church’s official letter supporting the abortion ban. And just as women in Indiana have been protesting new abortion restrictions and invasive demands for information by forming “Periods for Pence” and notifying the governor of the status of their menstrual periods, women in Poland have overwhelmed the Polish prime minister’s Twitter and Facebook feeds with details of their “Difficult Period.” There is massive opposition to this new draconian Bill.
“A Dow Jones Business Report online article quotes the Monday, Jan 25, 2016, ArcelorMittal email as saying, “Our operations in Sestao are facing such challenging market conditions—caused by a significant increase in cheap steel imports from China and a heavy fall in prices—that keeping the plant open in the current economic environment is not viable.” The announced closure adds it to a roster of mills in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States that have been closed in the previous six months, with the accompanying announcements all pointing to overcapacity in China as an underlying reason.” [1]

Of course the “overcapacity in China” is not the “underlying reason” for these closures but the current crisis of the capitalist global economy that began in 2008 and is now reasserting itself with renewed force. But all bourgeois economists and scribes take as read that absolutely nothing should or can be done about this global crisis caused by falling profit rates globally. Past attempts to overcome by enormously expanding debt, particularly the quantitative easing tactic in the USA and now Europe since the 2008 crisis have now reached their limits; unserviceable debts are now an additional crisis in themselves.

Therefore the demands placed on the Tory government for nationalisation of the steel industry are only correct as far as they go. They are insufficient and self-defeating if they are not accompanied by occupation to demand nationalisation under workers’ control and pan European and global solidarity with all workers in struggle in Britain and internationally.

The Chinese steel factories are now beginning to close. China posts slowest economic growth in 25 years. China produces half the world’s steel now and ‘restructuring’ will mean the loss of up to half a million jobs according the Chinese government sources but others say up to 2 million jobs will have to go. Chinese ‘dumping’ is in the context of US tariffs against Chinese steel and the real threat of massive industrial struggles in the whole of China if job losses on this scale occur here and in other related industries.

“Good if China reduces capacity and suffer huge job losses, but it may be too late to help the Port Talbot workers unless we move instantly to prevent ‘dumping’ of Chinese steel” say all the bourgeois commentators.

Former Tory cabinet minister Ken Clarke pointed out the obvious implications that the Chinese would take retaliatory measures to prevent the ‘dumping’ of British and European products if Britain and Europe did that. “But they are unfairly subsidising their steel to dump it” explain all those who demand the Tories do just that to save Port Talbot. The latest noises from the Financial Times are that a global trade war has already begun with all its dreadful implication for world peace.

And the trade union leaders and many on the reformist and centrist left hum from the same hymn sheet. The arguments for the global planned economy and international class struggle were never more necessary than now.

Reject all narrow nationalist solutions of import controls and immigration controls. Port Talbot steel workers, Chinese steel workers, one struggle, one fight, one central enemy, global imperialist capitalism.

If we want to find the Chinese and Spanish equivalents of Port Talbot we might pick the privately run Songting Steel factory in China was closed last November, resulting in about 7,000 job losses and the two electric arc furnaces (EAF) at Sestao complex near Bilbao, Spain reported on above.

Start to think the unthinkable again; we need a world revolution to solve this world crisis of capitalism. We know that the objective fact that only WWIII will restore the falling rate of profit of global capitalism will more and more assert itself in the minds of the leaders of world imperialism.

Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton have reached this conclusion, with Trump out trumpeting Clinton by a hair’s breath. But even an ideological struggle for the global working class is not now apparent except from isolated individuals. Never was the need to reconstruct and rebuild the Fourth International more necessary objectively. Revolutionary optimism and boldness in ideology and actions to accomplish this are now demanded of all who set ourselves that goal.

Port Talbot steel mill threatened with closure – Occupy it now!

Notes
Ireland from the USA to give perjured evidence
paying a notorious informer imported into
trial the Irish state had no qualms using and
formers are hated and detested everywhere
never clearer than at this trial. Police in-

factor by those in authority, and this was
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create them will read it with deep disap-
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Michael McKevitt with a mixture of sadness
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The foreword in this document was written
Michael McKevitt who was at that time serv-
ment was published by a committee

- cut even to those

- tell

- dental’ evidence against some suspects.
Colm Murphy a local businessman was tried
and convicted but quickly released when it
was revealed the Guarda (Irish police) had
actually forged the interview notes used in
his case. Another ‘suspect’ Sean Hoey was
also put on trial and found not guilty - and
Seamus Daly had the case against him
thrown out!

It was against this background of muddle
and incompetence that the McKevitt case
was eventually conducted. Michael
McKevitt was never at any time questioned
about events in Omagh. In fact the charge
against him was of ‘directing terrorism’ - the
usual catch-all charge when there is no
evidence of anything else. His trial turned into
a farce and he was forced eventually to
dismiss his council and refused to appear in
court for sentencing. He was found guilty
and sentenced to twenty years imprison-
ment. It’s worth mentioning here that when
the informant David Rupert was first
approached by MI5 his response was - “tell
me what to do, make it worth my while, and
as long as the benefit overrides risk in my
view it will be done to the best of my abil-
ity.” And so it was!

Michael McKevitt was released from
Portlaiose prison on Easter Sunday, 27
March 2016, but his campaign for justice is
on-going and his case will eventually be
heard at the European Court of Human
Rights. So far he has waited sixteen years.
Justice delayed is justice denied. We wish
him well and every success.

“THERE MAY WELL BE TIMES WHEN
WE FAIL TO PREVENT INJUSTICE,
BUT THERE MUST NEVER BE A TIME
WHEN WE FAIL TO PROTEST.”

By Michael Holden IRPSG

On June 22nd 2006 a sixty page docu-
ment was published by a committee
charged with exposing the framing of Mi-
ichael McKevitt who was at that time serv-
ing a 20 year sentence in Portlaoise Prison.
The foreword in this document was written
by the renowned human rights activist and
clergyman Desmond Wilson. Wilson made
it clear he was convinced beyond doubt that
the prisoner Michael McKevitt was not only
innocent but the victim of a frame-up, and
laid the blame fairly and squarely at the
doorstep of the Garda Siochana (Irish po-
lice), the British Special Branch MI5 and the
American FBI.

“Reasonable people,” Wilson wrote “will
read this account of what is happening to
Michael McKevitt with a mixture of sadness
and anger.” He went on to say - “people who
value good legal systems and appreci-
ate the courage of those who struggled to
create them will read it with deep disap-
pointment.” We know now that there is cer-
tainly been proven to be the case.

The injustice openly displayed during the
McKevitt trial was clear-cut even to those
with only a basic knowledge of the legal
system in either Britain or Ireland. All
through Ireland’s long and tragic history
justice was never considered an important
factor by those in authority, and this was
never clearer than at this trial. Police in-
formers are hated and detested everywhere
and none more so than in Ireland - even by
those who pay them. Yet at the McKevitt
trial the Irish state had no qualms using and
paying a notorious informer imported into
Ireland from the USA to give perjured evi-
dence at this trial which resulted ultimately
in the wrongful conviction of Michael
McKevitt.

The informer in this case was David Ru-
pert - a well-known criminal and petty
crook with a history of embezzlement. He
was a career informant who had worked for
the FBI for thirty years. Despite this
knowledge the Irish state agreed to use this
man and convince others to believe the

he would give at the trial.

During his paid soujourn in Ireland Ru-
pert claimed he forwarded all what he con-

sidered to be relevant information to his
paymasters in London. He told MI5 that a
republican group planned to bomb the
town of Omagh in County Tyrone and on
August 15th 1998 an explosion did occur in
Omagh resulting in the deaths of thirty one
people and many injuries.

A subsequent inquiry established that the
Irish, British and American intelligence ser-


services had information prior to the bombing
which could have prevented it happening -
despite telephone warnings being given
forty minutes beforehand. But the RUC
(deliberately or otherwise) moved people
towards the bomb - instead of away from it
- and claimed later the information known
to the intelligence services had not been
relayed to them - even though intelligence
headquarters GCHQ had been monitoring
the conversations of the alleged bombers as
they drove the bomb into Omagh town.
The Police Ombudsman Report later
slammed the RUC’s own investigation.

What transpired afterwards became a
farce. The RUC had (according to them-

selves) obtained ‘circumstantial and coinci-

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
Hesitant Comrades: The Irish Revolution and the British Labour Movement


Geoff Bell has done the whole British Labour and socialist movement and the Irish republican socialist and labour movement a great service by producing this meticulously researched and laboriously compiled work. He examines in great detail the relationship between all sections of the British labour movement and Ireland and also examines the Irish labour movement and its relationship to the anti-imperialist struggle from 1916 to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 6 December 1921. And it is a sorry tale of gross class treachery to the cause of the British, Irish and International working class in the service of the British Empire with just a few exceptions; Sylvia Pankhurst of Workers’ Dreadnought fame in her communist phase and the young Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) when it responded to the sharp chidings of the Comintern and one leading member, T.A. Jackson, whose book Ireland Her Own is a classic defence of the revolution in Ireland with all the economic and social factors fully understood. Other individuals also deserve praise at least for their humanitarian opposition to Lloyd George’s reign of terror by the Black and Tans from early 1920 to July 1921. Alongside these must be placed vanguard sections of the British working class who demonstrated their potential to lead the whole class on occasions on the Irish question and Irish working class and revolutionary nationalists when a strong anti-imperialist leadership who followed the leadership of James Connolly and the revolutionary Comintern emerged. We will examine Bell’s own political outlook also.

But the majority of the Labour movement bureaucratic leaders, to a greater or lesser degree, defended the interests of the British Empire and its right to exploit Ireland taking into account the constraints placed upon them by their own base of support in the working class and its degree of radicalisation. Bell details how these conditions were modified and reinforced in resolutions and statements of labour movement conferences, congresses and leadership statements as the British working class itself radicalised, particularly in the years 1920-21.

Bell examines the Labour party and its leading influences. The Independent Labour Party (ILP) leader and first Labour party leader, the pacifist Keir Hardie. He had upset Henderson and Snowden by his unequivocal support for Larkin and the Dublin Lockout (he also lent James Connolly £50 to re-launch the Workers Republic [originally launched by Connolly in 1898] in 1913) but following his death in 1915 subsequent leaders were committed to 1916 and following. The other major influence in Labour was the Fabian Society, Sidney and Beatris Webb and George Bernard Shaw, himself an Irishman. These were super-patriots of the British Empire and the leading ideological influence, although they lacked the organisational strength of the ILP. Their journal, The New Statesman, founded in 1913, is the best indication of the politics of this group. Bell tells us they referred to the 1916 Uprising as, ‘the miserable and abortive Sinn Féin Rebellion’ displaying their ignorance (Sinn Féin had nothing to do with the Rising, in fact they opposed it) and their chauvinism. They did oppose the execution of Roger Casement and conscription in Ireland but Ireland can have Home Rule if she likes, but Ulster must be excluded with a call that such a solution be imposed ‘with or without Irish consent’ (p120). James Connolly’s closest comrades on the left in Britain was surely the Socialist Labour Party in Scotland and The Socialist, the paper that Connolly himself had founded in 1901 and passed on to George Yates to edit when he departed for America in September 1903. There was no obituary for Connolly on his execution in the paper he himself had founded. For three years it had no coverage of substance on Ireland when that obituary finally appeared. The reason is clear, Bell tells us, ‘taking a stand on the Rising would always have been difficult in Glasgow which had seen much inter-worker religious sectarian strife in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’. We reject Bell’s ‘excuse, ‘Quite simply, for what it considered so-called reasons, it could not support it or Conolly’s involvement’ … so ‘it preferred to say nothing’. Sheer political cowardice and capitulation to pro-imperialist prejudices (NOT ‘inter-worker religious sectarian strife’ or ‘socialist reasons’) was the explanation (pp. 19-21).

How fared the new CPGB and its immediate predecessor organisations? Following the stern words from Karl Radek at the Second Congress of the Comintern in July 1920 telling them that Ireland and not Russia had to be their priority, the British Labour oracles on the subject of Ireland … a man out to pose as a “statesman” and to run with the hares and hunt with the hounds all the time keeping an eye on a job, a future and a salary, the miserable dodger”

According to Charles Diamond, owner/editor of the Catholic Herald: “J. R. Clynes was ‘one of the tenetest Labour oracles on the subject of Ireland … a statesman in the mould of Gladstone’”

The Communist Party of Great Britain and the lack of discussion on Ireland in the founding conference of the CPGB on 31 July 1920, which did find time to discuss the massacre of Jewish communists by Poland, Romania and Hungary and the prohibition of alcohol.

Belfast Confetti

The starkest example of Labour movement treachery is the events around the terrible pogrom against nationalist workers in Belfast in July 1920. On p. 85 et seq. Using the murderous missiles known as Belfast confetti, metal disks, nuts, bolts, large rivets etc. from the shipyards fascist gangs drove out 10,000 nationalist workers from the Belfast shipyards and 1,000 nationalist women from their workplaces. Equal targets were the ‘Rotten Prods’ who were union shop stewards and officials who defended their organisations. 53 people were killed as a result. Well over 100 died in Belfast in 1921 and 1922 as a consequence. The Carpenters Union fought back valiantly but the TUC sold it out. On 12 September Harland and Wolff responding to the Carpenters Union made no reply to their very reasonable demands ending discrimination on political or religious grounds but proposed a further meeting with all the unions involved and the Vigilance Committee; the Loyalist thugs who were still driving out the nationalist workers had been given official recognition by the management, in effect. The union responded by calling a strike on 18 September. Only 600 of the 2,000 union members responded to the strike call; correctly the union promptly expelled the 1,400 scabs. Only 4 branches of the union are recorded as opposing the expulsions. 45 branches passed resolutions of support. The Brit-
ish working class, at least those organised in that union, had not been found wanting in class soli-
darity with their victimised Belfast comrades, rejecting all ‘loyalty to Empire’ propaganda plead-
ing of the mass media in those revolutionary years. (pp. 88-89).
On 21 September the TUC appointed three union leaders to go to Belfast ‘with plenary pow-
ers’. These were J. Hill of the Boilermakers, A.A. Purcell of the Furniture Trades and A. Pugh of
the Iron and Steel Confederation. They had gone to ensure the reemployment of the expelled
workers but ‘we came to the conclusion there was one problem that had to be overcome in view of
the general situation’ which was not the
reemployment of those forced from their work-
place, but ‘the dispute which existed between the executive of the woodworkers (Craftsmen Union)
and their people in Belfast’ Pugh explained later. These absolute treacherous scoundrels had
stabbed the victims in the back and begun champi-
oning the cause of their oppressors. The TUC
gratefully accepted their report.
A strikes against the Black and Tans took place
in January 1921, 400 miners at Giffnock colliery
near Glasgow staged a 24-hour strike ‘as a protest
against the [British] terrorism in Ireland and to
demand the withdrawal of all British forces used
against the Irish people’. In April 1920 the Liver-
pool branch of the Irish Self-determination
League (ISDL) organised a very successful unoffi-
cial dock strike in their port against the imprison-
ment of Irish political prisoners in Woomwood
Scrubs. But the TUC continued to refuse any
support to these unofficial actions. And when
official actions were threatened they moved swift-
ly to isolate and defeat them. Apart from the
Belfast dispute there was the threatened strike by
the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers
and Firemen (ASLEF) over the murder of three
train crew, two of whom was its members, by
the Black and Tans in Mallow, Co. Cork on 31
January 1921. ASLEF immediately demanded an
inquiry and, with obvious serious intent, threat-
cened a national strike if it was not held. At this
stage of the struggle direct industrial action
against the British Army was seriously proposed in
many unions with widespread support.
The Daily Herald, edited by George Lansbury,
Bell tells us, hoped it would be the start of more
general action: ‘If ASLEF can protect its mem-
bers by a strike threat, British Labour can save
Ireland by the same weapon. Only the threat
must not be a bluff. One society has shown the
way. It is for Labour as a whole to follow.’ On 17
February, L. Pugh, speaking in the I.L.P., said
the Broom Labour Leader, correctly blamed the leader-
ship, ‘the apathy of the working class movement
is a disgrace’ and hoped that the ASLEF dispute
would rectify the situation, ‘the locomotive engi-
ners have shown what they can do – if they will’ (pp. 143-144).
But J. Thomas rode to the rescue of the
Empire as usual. The NUR, whose members were
also locked in Mallow, passed a motion on 11
February referring the question to the
‘Parliamentary arena’, i.e. the right wing Labour
leaders had the ball in their court, The Times re-
ported with relief. So the Executive of the Labour
party called for an enquiry on 15 February and so
did the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC on
the 16th but no mention was made of a strike;
both wings of the Labour movement had dis-
owned ASLEF’s strike call. Will Thorn MP
(Casement’s hound), James Sexton and J.R Clynes
opposed the strike, the latter opining that, ‘bad as
the situation is in Ireland, public opinion is not
prepared for a settlement of Irish troubles by
means of a strike’. He thereby implicitly acknowl-
edged that a settlement by mass strike action was
possible and this was a live issue amongst British
workers and, because this would be a defeat for
the British Empire, he would do everything in his
power to prevent it. So the labour movement
leaders moved with great speed to isolate ASLEF
who were forced to withdraw the strike threat on
17 February.
If the sympathy of the British working class was
so strong from mid-1920 to mid-1921 why did it
die then? On 15 April 1921 the Empire loyalist
Thomas delivered another blow to the British and
international working class. The owners of the
newly re-privatised mine proposed massive wage
cuts and the miners’ executive called for a strike
of the Triple Alliance, miners, railway workers
and transport workers that had been in existence
since 1915. They called the strike, the government
declared a state of emergency and moved troops
for confrontation and the leaders of the Triple
Alliance called off the strike. That date goes down
in history as Black Friday. So it was that Thomas
and the right wing Labour traitors now moved on
to deal with the next, and perhaps greater prob-
lem for the British ruling class, Ireland.

Special Conferences and Congresses
The Special Party Congress of the TUC in July
1920 was called to discuss direct action by the
trade unions against the British military in Ireland.
In May 400 NUR members in Dublin refused to
unload what they thought were munitions for the
British Army. NUR leader J. H. Thomas was on
the ball in defence of the Empire as usual. He
instructed his men to return to work in order ‘to
give the labour movement the opportunity of
acting on their behalf’. Outrageously Bell opines that,
‘Thomas’s return to characteristic caution
was understandable’ because ‘the railway workers
action did have far reaching implications for the
British and Irish trade union movement’.
By the time the Parliamentary Committee met
on 16 June NUR members in Dublin had been
sacked for ‘blacking’ British munitions. Thomas
told the meeting, he was ‘being pressed by other
trade unions to assist its Irish members’ (which
obviously he was very reluctant to do). The Par-
lamentary Committee called a Special Congress
to ‘discuss the application of direct action to
Ireland’. Just one month before Labour Party had
passed a motion in favour of unqualified self-
determination for Ireland, against the wishes of
the leadership, J. H. Thomas, of course, spoken
against at the party conference. But now his un-
ion, the NUR, moved the major resolution at the
TUC’s Special Congress. The TUC leadership
panicked because a strong motion from the Min-
ers Union was tabled at the Conference so the
TUC leadership elicited what was in effect a
wrecking motion from the NUR. Both motions
passed but the ambiguity between the two al-
lowed Thomas and his ilk to play on that and
pretend that only the NUR motion was im-
portant.
Bell concludes that:
Thomas could also be criticised for declining to press
the resolution on direct action passed by the Special
Congress. However, in this he was not alone. The
resolution had called for unions to organise ballots in
order to carry out this action. There is no record of
any affiliated union doing so. This unanimity
suggests it would be wrong to see the reason for the
unwillingness of the TUC to act on Ireland residing in
the figure of J. H. Thomas or the Parliamentary Com-
mittee in general.
No, on the contrary it would be absolutely correct
to see the reason for the unwillingness of the
TUC to act on Ireland residing in the figure of J.
H. Thomas or the Parliamentary Committee in general
because they were the leadership when there
was a clear wish for action and, led by
Thomas, they sabotaged it. It was a heinous act of
class treachery.
Just a month before, on June 1920 the Labour
party Conference resolved on ‘British military
withdrawal’ from Ireland and ‘absolute and free
self-determination’. The leaders immediately set
about subverting and reversing this decision and
they succeeded in the Special Conference of De-
cember called to discuss unemployment and Ire-
land, but basically to overturn the June Congress
resolution. An Empire loyal resolution was draft-
ed by the NEC, who decided in advance that no
amendment to it would be allowed. Labour Leader
was subsequently criticise the conference for
being an ‘almost entirely a platform affair’, but
with no counter position permitted the resolution
was overwhelming carried. So confronted with a
Congress decision that went against their wishes,
they called a special conference with only their
motion allowed and all rights of amendment
abolished to serve the cause of the Empire. Simi-
larly with the 1921 Conference ten local Labour
party motions were ignored and the Special Con-
fERENCE motion was the only one allowed. And we
all think Blair was the worst and most undemo-
cratic Labour leader!
Finally how does Bell deals with the question
posed in the title of his work, Herisant Conrads.
Who were these hesitant comrades, whom must
we essentially blame for the failure to support the
struggle in Ireland in her hour of need, the leader-
ship of the British working class or the class it-
self? As Marxists we will always blame the leader-
ship but Bell reaches the opposite conclusion in
his Conclusion. Of course with the Truce in July
and the Treaty in December 1921 it was clear that
the Sinn Féin leaders themselves were willing to
compromise on Britain’s terms. They was no
longer an inspiring fight against British imperial-
ism to inspire the British working class to fight
themselves against that same enemy. There was
no ‘new and more powerful leadership’ for them
to rally to; the new CPGB was too small and too
politically confused to provide that. If no ‘new
and more powerful leadership’ emerges when the
working class are ready to fight they MUST fall
back into despair and disillusion. They cannot
possibly lead themselves as every Marxist under-
stands. There was none apparent in Britain in the
crucial period correctly identified by Bell above,
from mid-1920 to mid-1921, as we have seen from
our analysis of the best of them, provided by
Bell himself. ▲

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
We have just celebrated the centenary of the Easter Rising in Dublin and commemorated the executions of the 16 leaders, 14 in Dublin, one in Cork and Rodger Casement in London in August. Amongst the most fought over question amongst Marxists is was James Connolly right to participate in the Rising at the head of the Irish Citizen’s Army? Nationalists seek to portray him merely as an Irish patriot and deny his socialist internationalism. Stalinist seek to paint him as a two-stage revolutionists; he had abandoned the goal of the socialist revolution and now sought only a nationalist victory like they have done since they rejected Leninism in 1924. We will seek to show that neither of these interpretations is correct; Connolly remained true to the cause of international socialism, and, despite the limitations of his understanding of Marxism, he was striving towards an understanding of the essence of Lenin’s April Theses and Trotsky’s Permanent Revolution.

Was James Connolly an Irishman or a Socialist first?

This question was posed in The Irish Opinion—The Irish Labour journal on 15 December 1917 as a question frequently asked “in country districts”. The journal carried a stout defence of the Bolsheviks on p. 31 and on p. 33 a powerful defence of Connolly. He was, the author D.R says, “the spirit of the revolution incarnate” who proudly proclaimed that “I stand for constitutional agitation in times of peace and for revolution in times of war”.

Connolly’s last words to his daughter Nora before his execution on 12 May 1916 were “The Socialists will never understand why I am here, they all forget I am an Irishman”. Who were those socialists, what they stood for and how they reacted to the 1916 uprising and the subsequent Tan War from January 1919 to December 1921 and the Civil War from February 1922 to May 1923 we might wonder. Geoff Bell reveals the sorry details in his new book Hesitant Comrades, reviewed on p.17.

And although a hundred years of political and theoretical struggle has ensued since then it is certain that his actions are as little understood or supported by most of those claiming the mantle of socialism and Marxism now as they were then. In fact during the great leftists upsurge that swept Ireland and the world from 1916 to 1923 we might wonder, Geoff Bell reveals the sorry details in his new book Hesitant Comrades, reviewed on p.17.

So why did Connolly lay emphasis on his Irishness in that terrible circumstance? Surely a social-

ist and a revolutionist should have shunned the politics of bourgeois nationalism and concentrated on liberating the working class in Ireland and Britain against the capitalists and not embark on a foolish and unwinnable uprising with the representatives of the Irish class enemy?

He defended his stance in writings and speeches from his return to Ireland in 1910. In the course of these he developed at least in outline the correct theory of Permanent Revolution, that only the working class could lead the national struggle to victory and that it needed to process that struggle through the Workers Republic for it to survive. It is true that in identifying capitalism as a foreign import into Ireland by Britain, in not seeing the differences between working class and peasants, not seeing the emergence of the working class in Ireland from the late 18th and early 19th centuries as a new and therefore revolutionary class with its own separate interests quotes like “The cause of labour is the cause of Ireland, the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour” allowed much diversity in his interpretations.

But as far back as 1898 he correctly identified the combined tasks of national liberation and socialism in Ireland:

“If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole army of commercial and individual institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs. (…) Nationalism without Socialism - without a reorganisation of society on the basis of a broader and more developed form of that common property which underlay the social structure of Ancient Erin - is only national recrancy.” (Connolly, Socialism and Nationalism, p.25)

Connolly clearly saw the need for both strike struggles and armed defence of that struggle; he formed the Irish Citizens Army precisely to defend workers on strike against their bosses and the Dublin Metropolitan police during the 1913 Lockout. They were only armed with hurley sticks and other non-lethal weapons then, as was the practice during the Irish theatre of the industrial militancy known as the Great Unrest that swept Britain and Ireland from about 1910 to the outbreak of WWI. Herbert Asquith, the Prime Minister, reported to the use of the army and navy in Wales, Liverpool and elsewhere during that great outburst of anger by the working class against the capitalism that had brought them to such poverty and humiliation with the collaboration of their own trade union leaders in the period of ‘class peace’ that spanned the end of New Unionism of the 1890s to 1910.

But the ICA armed themselves with rifles thereafter, particularly after the Curragh Mutiny of February 1914 indicated that the British state would always side with treasonous Orange men and British Army officers against Ireland’s right to self-determination. Whilst the leaders of the treasonous Orangemen and the Curragh Mutineers were rewarded with places in the House of Lords and with promotions Irish nationalists were executed and hanged for their ‘treason’ in 1916.

But Ireland was different despite its greater deprivation or more correctly because of it. Its militancy was certainly as powerful but because of the peculiarities of its historical development its trade unions were saddled with a union bureaucracy in the north that were even more wedded to the defence of Empire than their British counterparts. An aristocracy of labour based on Loyalist Protestant workers in skilled engineering jobs, descendants of planted Scottish and English colonists from the early decades of the 17th century. These remained infected with a supremacist ideology against nationalist Catholic workers and they were the dominant majority of the province of Ulster, which was then the most industrialised part of Ireland.

Following the defeat of Ireland’s bourgeois revolution in 1798 the divide and rule tactics of the Empire encouraged and promoted discrimination against the native Irish peasants in the whole of Ireland at first and then against nationalist/ Catholic workers when industrialisation took off in Belfast and other places in the north of Ireland from the middle of the 19th century. Periodic riots to enforce this and fallback by nationalist against this took place in Belfast and elsewhere. The years 1857, 1864, 1872 and 1886 saw serious riots. I believe my own grandfather, an RIC constable, was sent north from his station in Cork city to quell the latter. So when Jim Larkin and later James Connolly led Ireland’s Great Unrest they faced different problems. The Larkin-led militancy began earlier, in 1907, and from the beginning they were confronted with a dual aspect problem; the loyalty of Protestant workers to the Empire in defence of their own privileges and the loyalty of the British trade union bureaucracy and their Irish agents to that same Empire as the source of their privileges also. But the latter had a far smaller base of loyal collaborators in Britain itself, the struggle for the New Unionism from about 1888 had shifted class consciousness albeit on a syndicalist basis significantly to the left, but they were enormously strengthened by that base in Ulster. So when Randolph Churchill famously played the Orange Card in 1886 against Gladstone’s Home Ruler Bill he, and later imperialist divide and rule practitioners, found ready allies in the trade union bureaucracy and later in Labour party leaders. The divide and rule tactic was so often the most important tactic for the survival of the Empire back then and it is still internationally at crucial junctures for all imperialism today.
Of course Larkin was apparently spectacularly successful in overcoming the prejudices of Loyalist workers up to the 1913 Dublin Lockout and even in 1919 the legacy of that struggle survived in the great Belfast strike of that year. But the strike itself was not in an all-Ireland context; workers will often fight for sectional privileges whilst absolutely rejecting collaborating with their own fellow workers whilst a supraman, aristocracy of labour mentality is undefeated. And so it transpired in July 1920 with the terrible pogroms against nationalist workers in the shipyards and elsewhere where some 11,000 were driven out of their workplaces by their fellow workers with their murderous metal projecticles called Belfast Confeti, which slaughtered 53 of them. Connolly knew it was coming.

In the newspaper Forward, on 2 August 1913 he spelled out why you must fight reaction to the death and not conciliate it and seek to make a deal acceptable to it. There are many today, the Socialist Party and others, who would do well to ponder the legacy of that struggle survived even in 1919 the legacy of that struggle survived, which in the midst of the most hostile surroundings have fought to keep the faith in things national and progressive.

Just a few weeks before the Uprising Connolly addressed the Irish Citizens Army in language that demonstrated irrefutably that his understanding of the combined tasks was not a ‘two stage’ theory of national liberation now so the workers must wait. No; it was the revolution in permanence/April Theses of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky:

In the event of victory, hold on to your rifles, as those with whom we are fighting may stop before our goal is reached. We are out for economic as well as political liberty.” (Greaves, Life and Time of James Connolly, p. 403)

Notes

[1] Trotsky: On the events in Dublin (this links provides two articles by Trotsky and one by Lenin on 1916).

[2] On February 22, 1886, Conservative Party politician Lord Randolph Churchill, father of Winston Churchill, gave what many consider one of the single most destrucive speeches in Irish history, inciting militant loyalists at Ulster Hall in Belfast. “Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right,” he proclaimed to a crowd before he even arrived at Ulster Hall.

[3] Whilst we may criticise Connolly for his backwardness on the oppression of women and his tendency to conciliate German imperialism what do we make of the following scurrilous attack on him in the journal If Not News repaired in Russia. Those pacific and internationalist sentiments were interspersed with praise of the German Empire, and racist stereotypes of Russians. An article “Diplomacy”, published in Workers’ Republic on 6 November, praised the “peace loving” German Emperor, who was an innocent victim of their yelled nationalist slogans, waving Is-
The Dördüncü Blok and the CoReP: some historical truths

By Gerry Downing

Our comrades of the Dördüncü Blok in Turkey have come into political conflict with the comrades of the Permanent Revolution Collective (CoReP). The CoReP was a Trotskyite group in France, which is a split from Pierre Lambert PCI/OCI, the parent group with sections in Austria and Peru. Socialist Fight was in political collaboration with that group because of agreement on work in mass reformist parties. When the war in Libya began in 2011 we took completely opposite views of what was happening.

For me the appearance of the flag of King Idris everywhere signalled that this was a pro-imperialist movement; King Idris had been a stooge monarch imposed on Libya by the British and Americans after WWII. Gaddafi overthrew him in 1969. When stories emerged of mass lynchings of Black Africans by these “revolutionaries” that settled the question for Socialist Fight. The CoReP saw the Benghazi rebels as leading a revolution of some sort so a split occurred on this matter. We therefore sought better and more anti-imperialist international comrades than these and, with the help of an Austrian representative of an Irish Republican group, we found the Liga Communista di Bologna. With their help we produced a long analysis, Military United Front but no political support for Gaddafi against the assaults of Imperialism and its agents, the reactionary Libyan rebels and followed up with The soft left’s foolish illusions in Benghazi’s rebels, in Socialist Fight No. 6, 2011. [1]

In the latter article we wrote:

The ideological collapse from the standpoint of orthodox Trotskyism of these self-professed Trotskyists who took this line (supporting the Benghazi rebels — GD) could not be greater. They completely ignore the fight for ideological leadership of the masses, have accepted outright reactionaries as leading a “democratic revolution” far better than the much maligned Michel Pablo, Ernest Mandel or Gerry Healy ever did. They, after all, chose leftist opponents of Stalinism and Imperialism in the beginning as adequate substitutes for revolutionary Trotskyism to carry forward the objectively unfolding world revolution, at least until the late 70s when Healy picked Arafat and Saddam Hussein and he, the USFI and others backed the fundamentalist Ayatollah Khomeini, who propagated anti-Imperialism as the source of their power. Our current jokers are telling us that outright, self-declared reactionary pro-Imperialists are leading this so-called revolution and implicitly that the movement is so powerless that it can do away with the need for conscious revolutionary leadership entirely and be represented adequately by its open opponents. A more foolish political scenario is impossible to imagine. Some even warn us not to put any trust in them (but, of course, do not fight to overthrow them, we cannot change horses in mid-stream, they are ‘democrats’ after all, are they not?). These former leftists are attempting to perpetrate wholesale fraud on the world working class.

And we had a special word for the Permanent Revolution Collective, CoReP:

One group of comrades, the CoReP, with whom we have had fraternal relations, asked this of us:

“We agree to support Gaddafi against Imperialist armies. But we cannot agree to support any bourgeois despot coming from the army against his own people’s upsurge, as Gerry did in name of SF well before Imperialist intervention. If there was a real revolution led by Nasser or Gaddafi, who needs the permanent revolution strategy and a revolutionary workers party here?”

“His own people’s upsurge” was a putsch organized by extreme reactionary leaders, whose political credentials these comrades did not even think worth checking. Because obviously this objectively unfolding revolution had no need of revolutionary leaders, reactionary ones were just as good. And then they accuse us of capitulating to Nasser and Gaddafi! (Of course the Socialist Fight article did not give uncritical support to Gaddafi against the rebels, the support was critical and against the internal agents of imperialism as well as their allies, the imperialists bombards themselves.

These ‘revolutionaries’ (some still follow The Guardian in designating them thus) called in imperialist bombing of their own country and people, have made the country’s oil resources available to Imperialism in return for puppet status, just as their ideologue whose flag they wave, King Idris, did up to 1969. Neither did they enquire why these ‘revolutionaries’ felt it necessary to slaughter all those black workers. We would suggest it was because their leaders knew their racism and wished to encourage it by talk of ‘black mercenaries’ to ensure that the working class could not influence events in any way. Of course politically the working class could not have any independent existence when one group of workers were killing another, minority group. The working class was thereby ideologically and politically defeated at the outset of this ‘revolution’.

These comrades think that there is still a huge political difference between the imperialist war planes that bomb Gaddafi’s army and his civilian citizens, who propagated anti-Imperialism as the source of their power. Our current jokers are telling us that outright, self-declared reactionary pro-Imperialists are leading this so-called revolution and implicitly that the movement is so powerful that it can do away with the need for conscious revolutionary leadership entirely and be represented adequately by its open opponents. A more foolish political scenario is impossible to imagine. Some even warn us not to put any trust in them (but, of course, do not fight to overthrow them, we cannot change horses in mid-stream, they are ‘democrats’ after all, are they not?). These former leftists are attempting to perpetrate wholesale fraud on the world working class.

And we had a special word for the Permanent Revolution Collective, CoReP:

One group of comrades, the CoReP, with reaction of the CoReP concludes:

“Thus Libya workers will be able to defeat the bourgeois dictatorship and contribute to the socialist Federation of the Middle East and North Africa where Arab, Berber, Turkish, Jewish, Kurds, Saharawi, Persian, etc. will remove all the borders inherited from colonialism.”

Without fighting global imperialism, correctly identifying the local agents of Imperialism and making a Military United Front bloc with Gaddafi against it and its local agents the revolution cannot advance at all. You are only contributing to the political confusion and lining up with every Imperialist power and every reactionary Gulf state who were slaughtering their own genuine revolutionaries.

Following this the CoReP published a long document, still online, called Open Letter to Socialist Fight Supporters, “Those with the will to do so may view it here” [2]

Here is a short extract from the many complaints lodged against us:

On the other hand, he (Gerry Downing) forgets his own advice when he writes about the so-called “Gains of the Revolution”: The gains of the 1969 revolution led by Muammar Gaddafi... (Socialist Fight no 6, p. 15) We put forward the following programme in defence Libya and the remaining gains of the 1969 revolution... (p. 19) We would have to defend the gains of the revolution... (p. 22) There is a very great deal of the Libyan revolution of 1969 worth defending and the masses now increasingly rallying to Gaddafi realise this... (p. 23) The rebels are immediately threatening all the gains of the 1969 revolution... (p. 24) Gaddafi’s government is still defending the gains of the 1969 revolution... (p. 26) The only revolution possible is “the dictatorship of the proletariat”... but there was in 1969 in Libya a revolution without proletariat. “The bourgeoisie cannot lead a revolution...” but Colonel Gaddafi could. It is hardly surprising that comrades Downing compares Libya to a workers’ state.

Of course I did not just compare it to a workers’ state but defended it against imperialist attack and that of its agents as a semi-colonial oppressed country. Those two articles from SF No. 6, Spring/Summer 2011 stand today as proof of the correctness of the stance we took. Libya today is what the revolution of the Benghazi rebels has led. It is surely not necessary to spell out in detail who was right and who was wrong back in early 2011.

Notes


Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
I've not so much that I can't think of positions to take but it actually seems questionable to want to get involved in the circus that is U.S. electoral politics. There are state-wide leftist parties who do run and have gotten some local offices, but they're either foul, or just toothless. Including socialist Kshama Sawant on the Seattle City Council. She is in with the Democrats. I saw another interview with her several days ago, the premise of which was whether to support Sanders or not, i.e. to set up what would amount to being a pressure group within the Democratic Party. It was between her and a former Democratic mayor of Seattle, Mike McGinn, about whether to keep supporting Sanders or throw your weight behind Hillary Clinton. [1]

The ex-mayor was for backing Clinton to beat Trump. Main point Sawant was making was to keep supporting Bernie, as a way to crack the monopoly of power that the U.S. Democratic Party. This was a rationale for what she stands for as councilwoman. But a) aside from said former mayor being obviously foul, and b) Sawant was making make a good point that no, no one who was not just another capitalist candidate with a passed on smile is a strategically smart way to take on Trump and even if she did get elected, she shouldn't and wouldn't deliver on her so called promises, and you would just end up pushing more people Trump's way or towards people like him... but effectively, she was still putting herself and others in the position of being a pressure group on the Democratic party. She wasn't criticizing Sanders at all, when she should have done so.

My position? It's your ballot for right now. There is not going to be a good side to take, and it probably will be Clinton versus Trump. There isn't and never has been a Labor party in the U.S. and even then, there would be questions around how it would be formed. I think it would be worth the time of a revolution in the U.S.to get involved if that happened, but to also keep their eyes and ears peeled and reserve the right to object and criticize. But, hmmm... advocating to form a Labor party? I think that is very tricky and playing with fire...maybe, but again, in a way that raises transitional demands, and it would maybe only be a propagandistic position.

The SWP in the U.S. generally does put up a candidate for President in the U.S. every election. So do the Northites and both have done so this time. But mainly as a propaganda operation. I'm not the time period politically in the U.S. to do anything more serious than that, but there is also the basic consideration of U.S. electoral politics being a meat grinder that would compromise any serious socialist candidate both by its nature, and because, despite Sanders's call for a political revolution and the excitement it has generated, it remains to be seen where it will go.

Right now, it just looks like Sanders is being the misleader he essentially just is, and channelling it all into the Democratic Party, obviously rendering the Sawant's push an idiotic one. What remains of Occupy in the U.S.? Also backed Sanders, but they have mostly gone into social welfare work. And no, “the movement isn't everything”. They're engaged quite often in building and helping to organize struggles within potentially promising situations while raising demands and being critical; the whole united front deal, but it remains to be seen where the momentum behind Sanders goes.

It's not like I can take ever so right and proper political position from behind my computer and take myself remotely seriously. Pontificating from on high is how it would feel, when being a pretensions snit isn't my thing. I'll figure something out, but I want to keep doing my homework and think things through. So what I have a better idea of why I'm saying what I'm saying...and have it be something I won't regret sticking my neck out for. But yes, if you wanted a concrete position, you have one.

Of course we need a more cogent letter about Trump, the U.S. political system, the historical precedents to Trump, but what is supposedly so shocking to everyone worldwide or to a lot of Americans as far as his racism, xenophobia, sexism. This is just inimical to propping up imperialism both in manufacturing consent to it in the U.S. or in any Western imperialist country, or it being part of the structure that keeps neo colonial countries in their place, and bolsters the economic machinery of global capitalism.

What Trump expresses is an element of imperialism in any U.S. policies that render Trump nothing new, only existing in the context of the present moment of history.

This situation can have a potentially revolutionary impulse but like anything else, we would need actively to intervened in it, and on that we hope would help to decide where it went. ▲

On Optimism and Pessimism, On the 20th Century and on Many Other Issues

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

Notes
https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1901/ss/20thcent.htm ▲
Brazil: A coup by imperialism against the workers and the tasks of the communists in the new cold war

By Humberto Rodrigues, “Folha do Trabalhador” newspaper, Communist Workers Front, Brazilian section of LCFI.

The impeachment push to overthrow the government of the PT in Brazil has been orchestrated since 2013. It is a parliamentary coup d'état to take out the PT government at any cost. Corruption crimes which the PT was accused of have been proven to be practiced by all his tormentors and on a much larger scale. The bourgeois opposition lost the last four presidential elections in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014. These political representatives of the bourgeoisie, supported by imperialism, can only regain the presidency of Brazil by subverting the functioning of the current presidential government system, even though Brazilian bourgeois democracy is extremely limited. This was only possible after the unification of the entire bourgeoisie as a class against the PT, aggravating the dictatorship of capital.

The economic crisis is also an instrument of political struggle. It was not only the reduction in imports of commodities by China that weakened the Brazilian economy and caused the recession. The fall in oil prices to one third of the amount that it sold at two years ago (a barrel of oil dropped from $110 to $30 US dollars) was caused by manoeuvres performed by the US. The main objective was to weaken their opponent petro-states, many of whom are organic members or associates politically of the BRICS, whose economies rely on that commodity, such as Russia, Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia etc. The US became the world’s largest oil producer in 2015, surpassing Russia and Saudi Arabia. It began to export also, which Washington had banned since the oil crisis in the 1970s.

Petrobras, the Brazilian state giant oil company has consistently been the victim of legal and speculative attacks lava jet (a judicial anti-PT operation dubbed “operation car wash”). Behind these attacks are the rating agencies and investment risk assessors of big finance capital; speculators like George Soros and the Koch brothers, magnates of US oil, which also fund the schemers to install military dictatorships in the Latin American continent in the 1960s and 1970. That was a preventive manoeuvre of imperialism during the Cold War against the then existing workers’ states to prevent the expansion of the influence of the Cuban revolution on the continent. Now, in a more sophisticated and orderly manner, imperialism holds parliamentary coups to install military dictatorships in the Latin America. We live in another cold war, the enemies are new bourgeois powers and the current schemers seek to re-impose US influence on the continent, which is visibly weakening in the twenty-first century.

The crisis of 2008 in US and Europe opened up space for expansion of imperialism on the planet. The 2008 capitalist crisis triggered a US and EU economic slowdown on the world market. It was then that a group of countries led by China and Russia, the BRICS, of which Brazil is part, occupied this space. The constitution of capitalist imperialism of the rival bloc was possible because right in front of Brazil, India and South Africa, China and Russia are nations that have become capitalist powers. China and Russia combine exceptionally in their make-up:

1) an unparalleled mass of workers and energy resources;
2) because unlike the semi-colonies that are unable to resolve outstanding bourgeois tasks and are subjugated by imperialist oppression, China and Russia carried out the bourgeois historic tasks during the period in which they were workers’ states through bureaucratic and distorted proletarian dictatorships;

3) the crisis of 2008 and the economic downturn of imperialism opened up space in the world market for China to import from other countries what the imperialist metropolises in recession stopped buying, and for Russia to broaden its energy sales (gas and oil) and improve their armaments.

In 2009, China became the largest exporter and importer of goods to Brazil. Since the year 2015 Brazilian trade has been dominated by the successively leading capitalist powers on the planet at the time, Portugal, England and then the USA.

As of 2015, the economies of the five members of the BRICS account for 20% of world GDP and the exchange between them corresponded to $250 billion. Capitalist relations between the BRICS states are dominated by the export of goods, especially commodities and on the export of capital. The bourgeois powers of China and Russia have imperialistic pretensions, but they are not as yet imperialist.

For Marxists, imperialism is characterized by the export of capital and is the expansionist policy of finance capital. Thus, capitalist relations between the BRICS themselves and between BRICS and other non-imperialist countries are relations of bourgeois exploitation of workers, against which we fight, but not relations of imperialist domination. In every fight, we always take the side opposed to imperialism. However, even though in this fight we are on the side of the oppressed country or people against imperialism and its agents, we always pursue our struggle to build a revolutionary workers’ party for the conquest of workers’ power.
imperialist counter-attack now against the very members of the BRICS, imperialism moves all its pawns, trade war, speculative attack, economic blockade, sponsors challenging candidates and harassment by civil war. To resist this counterattack many countries formed the resistance block headed by Russia and China. This began the intensification of the conflict which is the new cold war, this time between capitalist states. This cold war already sees conflicts and indirect military intervention of the forces of imperialism and used at the same time to control other nations. The US profit from the dollarized world economy because they can print paper and buy what they want.

The US imperialist economy will be harmed by the de-dollarization of economic relations advocated by the BRICS. Printed papers lose “value”. As a consequence they would no longer be accepted. Those who keep dollars would want to get rid of them because they would be depreciating, which would flood the market. All US government bonds will be worthless. It would be impossible to finance their purchases. Foreign trade in dollars would evaporate. The financial market would explode. The American, Japanese and European economies would be wiped out. And as a consequence the US government’s ability to finance its war machine.

If the artificial ballast imposed by the military superiority since 1971 is dismantled, then the “Super Imperialism” acquired by the US and spoken of by Michael Hudson, the Bretton Woods Agreement established with England at the end of World War II is lost. (Hudson, M., 2003. Super imperialism: The origin and fundamentals of US world dominance (2nd ed.). London, UK: Pluto Press.)

That is why there is such a great struggle to prevent the establishment of alternative currencies, or multilateral organizations to replace the IMF and the World Bank.

In April 2016, the imperialist counterattack entered its second phase. Honduras, Paraguay, Thailand, Libya, Ukraine, were on the margins of the BRICS. Now, the attack is directed against the weakest members, beginning with South Africa and Brazil. The replacement of the dollar standard for gold would be immensely beneficial to South Africa. Imperialism lost a battle for Zuma’s impeachment in South Africa and won another in Brazil against Rousseff, already salvaging by its strike against Petrobras.

In Brazil, the schemers have infiltrated and hijacked the demonstrations which began against the work of bourgeois technocrats and by imperialism itself. It certainly was not the work of the totalitarian dictatorship. The aim is to isolate the Workers’ Party by forcing prisoners to perform the work of bourgeois technocrats and by “winning vigilantism” on the streets to produce evidence to criminalise Dilma, Lula and the PT. This judicial operation, commanded by a young judge in collaboration with the CIA and the FBI, was mounted in the state of Paraná, the state’s best federal control with the PSDB party born of a rupture of the PMDB that best represented the interests of imperialism since the fall of Collor in the early 1990s. [1]

The crisis of 2008 ruptured the “balance of inter-state relations” and opened the period of an inter-capitalist cold war

“In the economic sphere these constant disruptions and restorations of the equilibrium assumes the form of strikes, lockouts, revolutionary struggle. In the sphere of inter-state relations the disruption of equilibrium means war or – in a weaker form – tariff war, economic war, or blockade.” Trotsky, Report on the World Economic Crisis and the New Tasks of the Communist International’ 1921

The 2008 crisis enabled the existence of a new balance of power in the relationship between states. Although this continues to dominate the planet, imperialism does so in a less favourable situation, cannot do to Syria in the second decade of this century what they did to Afghanistan and Iraq. Obama may act as ostentatious as Bush and is forced to resort to what some analysts in calling “hybrid war” [2]. The last of the direct military intervention of the forces of imperialism that resulted in the overthrow of a ruler was in Libya. Since then, they have been acting increasingly via mercenary increasingly barbaric agents (the Islamic State) and fascist (Ukraine), etc.

The 1964 coup in Brazil was driven by the US as a preventive measure, in the midst of the cold war of the US vs. USSR, after the triumph of the Cuban revolution, the first anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist revolution in Latin America. Washington feared the contagion of the continent by the Cuban revolution and orchestrated coups and dictatorships in most Latin American countries, starting with Brazil.

The 2016 coup in Brazil, with its similarities and differences with other devious manoeuvres carried out in the current decade, is also part of the preventive reaction of imperialism amid the current cold war. The fact that the US is going through its presidential elections influences the parliamentary-judicial way and the gradual pace that this struggle is taking as they await the
changing of the commander-in-chief of the imperialist forces. Not surprisingly, politics is now dominated by the White House’s efforts to gain time in the diplomatic field for the reestablishment of relations with Cuba, for Iran’s nuclear disarmament and for the ceasefires in Syria and Ukraine to work. At the same time, imperialist agents, supported by such instruments of hybrid warfare as the mainstream media, are making advances in Latin America by using the political exhaustion of the semi-bonapartist and populist governments in Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia and Peru to overcome electoral defeats via parliamentary machinations.

The PT capitulates to these constitutional coups against the presidential elections to install their government to legitimise repression. The vice president conspirator against Rousseff, is Michel Temer (PMDB [1]), and the conspirators are composed of almost all the parties of the system and will have a majority in both houses of Congress, but cannot muster the strength to impose the coup program that advocates privatisation, wiping out democratic rights and social programs, etc. Temer attempts to struggle the social movements by economic means and by criminalisation. He will support the “anti-terrorism” legislation which was commissioned by the US and adopted by Dilma. This is a pre-bonapartist provisional government of fear, an intermediate step towards a government supported by a police-military dictatorship, legalized at the polls and supported by a middle class social consensus in the midst of a witch hunting process aimed at wiping out the PT.

Sectors of the bourgeoisie and imperialist coupists in Brazil are preparing for the post-Temer regime. So these schemers feel the need to hold new election to legitimise their new repressive regime, which imposes the program of the coup by getting rid of historic rights and the winning the renewal of full control of the country by imperialism. Today there is almost a broad political consensus from the party of the “Democrats”, the main party of the military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985, including Lula and sectors of the PT, to the pseudo-Trotskyst PSTU (LIT), who are all advocate early elections. This is a “democratic” trap that at this moment only legitimise the coup.

We must win the battle in the streets to defeat the manoeuvres from top. Without understanding the international basis of this coup attempt, the PT keeps on digging their own grave, betting on conciliating the bourgeoisie. Although it has become bourgeoisieised in recent decades, the PT was reminded that it is a bastard party born of the bourgeois parties in Brazil. Rousseff was a guerrilla fighter who took up arms against the military dictatorship. And Lula, although he originated from the proletarian, only advanced socially because he achieved state office. The rules governing the relations between the countries in peacetime are different from the rules of war. Under the command of imperialism, the PT was isolated within the bourgeoisie.

All attempts of PT to prevent the coup through the bourgeois methods of class collaboration failed. The PT project is lost because the rules which worked during “Pax Americana” and allowed the social pact to operate during a decade of the federal governments of the PT do not work anymore in the current cold war. The PT relies more in the palatial negotiations between the bourgeoisie and not on the strength of the working population, whom the PT is afraid awaken to struggle and which it can no longer control. Thus they abuse their own social base and believe they can keep doing this without being punished by history. However despite all their betrayals, mistakes and capitulations, the struggle against the coup becomes more powerful every day. This bourgeois cowardice of the PT seems to be leading us, the worker, to an increasingly expensive tragedy. There is no shortcut to the class struggle. At this moment either we crush the putchists or we will be crushed.

This is not to make a choice between street fighting and “institutional struggle”. The parliamentary or judicial struggle is where imperialism and the bourgeoisie enjoy a huge advantage. Without giving ground to the enemy in any arena, we put all our best efforts into winning a real fight on the ground where the masses can participate fully with their fighting methods, protecting our occupations, offices and members against right-wing attacks, sweeping the fascists off the streets, organizing strikes in every workplace against phishters and any attack against our achievements and rights. Thus, the victory in the “enemy camp” will be a by-product in the victory of the masses in the streets. If the enemy does not capitulate in the institutional field, as it has done several times in history, its resolutions will not avail to the mobilised people organised to enforce their historical interests. No government will be sustained, no law will be implemented against this power.

No trust in the PT! Build the general strike supported by popular workplace committees including education and housing! In their fight against the coup, the most organized section of the working class come to the fore in the greatest saga of struggle against the rightists of all the history of Brazil. Sectors of the vanguard of the class that were quite during the last few decades have now begun to move powerfully in 2015 and 2016. This is very important and needs to be harnessed by the revolutionary, despite the fact that the PT and the CUT have refashioned the old Brazilian Popular Front, established in 1989 and abandoned the class struggle in favour of this broad bourgeois fronts with businesses, industrialists and parties that have been the backbone of the bourgeois governing elite since the military dictatorship. Constructs such as the PMDB, who aim to use the mass movement as their bargaining tool to pressuure the bourgeois coups into a negotiated solution within the frameworks of the three powers of the capitalist state. However, this limited policy is not enough to stop the march of reaction.

Nor will general strike bravado work; only the actual construction of the general strike can offer any real resistance to the head of the imperialist offensive. It is necessary to organize the working class, the youth and all the masses at each workplace, the students and neighbourhood to face up to the coup by creating popular committees as units of the anti-imperialist united front, against the coup and against the fascists.

These extraordinary bodies of mass organization will build the confidence of the masses in the new political directions which will be able to take the fight against right-wing attacks and the new government coup to a truly political general strike. These committees encompassing trade unions, schools and universities must get rid of the bureaucratic protection and pro-government forces of the BPF leaders and be based on the broadest workers’ democracy. Only thus can they function as instruments of struggle to protect us against the attacks which threaten our social programs historical rights.

Despite the fact that we in the FCT have been warning of the coup since 2013, the PT and Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), which controls most of the mass organizations, only make meaningless bravado and thus demobilise popular resistance. Thus the offensive of the pro-imperialist right moves on to eliminate one by one the main labour and social achievements of the history of the country’s class struggle. In this offensive by imperialism against the workers, the workers’ leaders capitulate to the coup, disarms popular resistance and calls on the masses to avenge the coup by voting for Lula in early elections in 2017. It is a trap for the proletariat...

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

On the morning of April 6, British plainclothes police raided two houses in London. Two people were detained and the Anatolian People’s Culture Centre on Seven Sisters Road occupied by uniformed police. The people detained were released that night but the police occupied the centre for a few days longer, then sealed it up.

This practice is common in Turkey and sometimes is used against Turkish and Kurdish centres in Germany, but this is the first time anyone can recall it being used against a centre from Turkey in this country. Although out on bail, the two people arrested have been charged under the Terrorism Act 2000 and also the updated version of the law issued in 2006. (I should add that this legislation was all brought in under the Labour government, leaving me somewhat indifferent to calls now to support Labour in its time of need.) I was staying with one of the people charged and though not charged myself, the police confiscated my mobile phone.

The closure of the centre, however, was not overtly based on this, but rather upon antisocial behaviour legislation, as emerged from a court case on April 22 at Westminster Magistrates’ Court, which resulted in the centre being closed for three months.

In protest against these developments, a tent has been set up opposite the centre, and well-wishers are welcome to come and visit the protesters.

There has been an increasing pattern of state repression against revolutionaries from Turkey resident in Europe, to say nothing of the situation inside Turkey itself. This has long been the case in Germany, which has millions of people living there whose roots lie in Turkey, and in addition to this the German government has particularly close relations with its fascist Turkish counterpart. After Germany, the UK is Turkey’s main trading partner in Europe. In the past few years arrests and police raids have happened in a wide range of other European countries. Quite often the repression follows a visit to the country in question by a Turkish president, prime minister or lower-ranking official, who presumably demands that action be taken.

Not so long ago there was a visit to the UK by the prime minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoglu. The protesters against this repression have suspended a banner outside their tent, declaring that if activities like assisting the community from Turkey resident in London, campaigning against youth gangs and drugs are crimes, then they are going on to continue to commit such crimes. The somewhat beleaguered Cameron government in the UK is considering the adoption of “anti-extremist” legislation, to add to an already formidable body of “anti-terrorist” laws on the statute book. The condition of Britain, not least in London, is conducive to social pressure and even social explosions, and the government probably feels it needs all the repressive legislation that it can pass.

In this climate, those who are targeted and those who might be targeted, ultimately all those who are against the status quo, must seek common ground and not only stick together but act together. People in Britain have often paid a high price to obtain rights and they now risk having these rights taken away from them, under the disguise of combating “terrorism” and “extremism”.▲
mer government, the Kirchnerism political group formed by the supporters of the late Néstor Kirchner. The whole of the labour movement, despite increasingly bureaucratic control, is forced to fight against the right wing populist macrismo. This fight may become the spur for a new working class and anti-imperialist struggle. Workers should organize themselves independently to halt attacks by the Government of Macri and his mounting attacks on workers. All as part of the construction of a revolutionary workers party.

From Britain

In Britain the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour party last September following the victory of Davis Cameron’s Conservatives in May signalled a sharp turn to the left by the vanguard of the British working class. But immediately the whole establishment launched an onslaught on the new leadership. Corbyn and the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance minister) John McDonnell retreated before it and sought to appease the reaction, promising to sign the national anthem, bow to the Queen and apologising for praising the great Irish revolutionary Bobby Sands.

This has reached a crescendo with the current assault by the Conservatives, by the Labour right wingers in the organisation called Progress and by the Zionists of the Labour Friends of Israel (LFI) and Jewish Labour Movement (JLM), formally Poale Zion, British supporters of the Israeli Labour party, a Zionist organisation. The suspension of former London mayor and National Executive of the Labour party Ken Livingstone and Member of Parliament (MP) Nazreen Shah, a Muslim woman, from the Labour Party on phoney allegations of anti-semitism, i.e. anti-Jewish racism, is a dirty Blairite/Zionist manoeuvre and part of a coup strategy of exploiting anti-Arab and pro-Zionist prejudice in the workers’ movement to destroy the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn.

Ken Livingstone’s response to this also merits the firm defence of the left. It is greatly to his credit that he opposed the ridiculous allegations of ‘anti-semitism’ against Naz Shah and went repeatedly on television to do so. It is a sign of a demented witchhunt when a refusal to join in kicking the original target gets you dragged to the top of the hate list as the next victim.

What is worse is that the Labour leadership under Corbyn and John McDonnell have effectively capitulated to the coupists over the issue of the phoney allegations of anti-semitism, setting up an enquiry under the respected civil libertarian and ex-Liberty Director Shami Chakrabarti that takes as its starting point the assumption that the Zionist allegations are true, that Labour has a ‘problem’ with anti-Semitism, and merely enquires into how to deal with the supposed ‘problem’. A ‘problem’ that does not actually exist.

Yet the Labour leadership, centred on Corbyn and McDonnell, defer to these racists despite their past history as supporters of Palestinian rights. They are capitulating to the ruling class in doing so. Zionism is hegemonic among the ruling class of the imperialist world as the main ideological form that racist ideology takes today. Stop all the expulsions of socialists and opponents of Zionist racism from the Labour Party. Reinstate the expelled. Proscribe, and expel the supporters of three neo-liberal and/or Zionist organisations that are effectively a fifth column and a threat to the workers movement itself: Labour Friends of Israel, Jewish Labour Movement, and Progress.

The British working class is responding to the onslaught of the Conservative government. The magnificent strikes by the junior hospital doctors is ongoing with overwhelming public support, because it is well understood that this is a defence of the National Health Service itself. And the teachers unions may begin strike action shortly in opposition to the proposal to make all school academies, it to privatise them under the control of big business and not local authorities. The Conservatives are in deep crisis over the European Referendum with the anti-immigration and economic nationalism (import controls) section threatening to overthrow Cameron if the referendum on June 23 votes to leave they EU. Never was revolutionary leadership more necessary to lead the masses to victory.

♦ For revolutionary workers’ solidarity across the world!
♦ The emancipation of mankind based on our struggle for a Communist world is the only way forward!
♦ Rebuild the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution!
♦ Long Live The Socialist World Revolution!

Communist Workers Front (FCT)—Brasil
Dördüncü Blok—Turkey
Tendencia Militante Bolchevique—Argentina
Socialist Fight—Britain. ▲

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
LRCI May Day Statement to the workers and the Oppressed: Fight for a communist world

From Turkey
We stand on the brink of an unprecedented barbarian world. Capitalism is facing a crisis on a global scale that will shake the world. Depression and slump, wars and revolutions are the harbinger of a new century; those are the times we face now.

The war and tragedy in Syria is giving birth to a world war, driving millions of the oppressed, the exploited onto the streets millions and forcing them to flee across the Mediterranean in makeshift rafts. The lifeless body of the hundreds and thousands are washed up and pulled from the water. They can expect no better future from this system than these miserable refugee-concentration camps. Imperialism has an insatiable appetite for these wars. They disregard the right to life of millions of the poor, they don’t hesitate at anything. This is what capitalism promises humanity!

We now faces the stark choice; barbarism or socialism! Beginning in 2011 in Tunisia the “Arab Spring”, when a young man burned himself to death in protest, unemployed young people became the eye of the storm. The “Arab spring” during this period saw millions of people, especially in Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria sweep onto the streets, the same wind, with supporters in Iran, the Musawi’s Hezbollah in Lebanon and in Istambul’s Taksim Gezi Park.

The same wind of the 99% swept the U.S., imperialist metropolitan Spain herself, Brazil and saw workers uprisings in Greece, France, United Kingdom, World Cup protests and the urban poor in Germany in riots mainly aimed at fighting against exploitation.

The first part of the imperialist counter-attack was the deviation from the “Arab Spring”. Mass protests against the economic crisis, but lacking in revolutionary directions, or even proletarian leadership, were hijacked by agents linked to bourgeois right in favour of the re-colonization of the country by imperialism. Movements like Tahrir Square in Egypt, and Taksin Square, Turkey, effectively questioned the pro-imperialist dictatorship, but were crushed and finally were used by governments to pursue and assassinate the Kurdish opposition in Turkey and physically exterminate the largest mass party of Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood, even after that party had won the presidential elections in the country and agreed to transition agreed with the military.

From Brazil
In Brazil the coup that is underway promises not only a geopolitical victory for imperialism but a much deeper social counterrevolution where the largest proletariat in Latin America is concentrated. The agents of imperialism are now taking advantage of the demobilization and demoralization caused by PT governments to criminalize trade union and to compromise the social vanguard. Despite the fact that the FCT, section LCFI, issued warning against the ongoing coup since 2013, the resistance was organized when it was too late and the PT and PCdoB, which controls most of the mass organizations, are now only demobilizing popular resistance.

Thus, the offensive of pro-imperialist right moves to eliminate one by one the main labour and social achievements of the country’s class struggle because, only on the base of overexploitation of the masses can the capitalists recover their profits rates in Brazil. In this offensive of imperialism against the workers, the workers’ leaders capitulate to the coup, disarms popular resistance and calls the masses to avenge the coup by voting for Lula in early elections in 2017!

It is a trap into which the proletariat is being led by the PT. Once the strike is finished, the coup government will stress the witch hunt against the very same PT, Lula and the whole mass movement for many years to remove all possibility of the return of PT and any leftist government. This proves the need for the workers to establish a anti-imperialist united front, but the anti-coup movement must march towards a political organization independent of the PT, the CUT and start to build the revolutionary workers’ party.

From Argentina
In Argentina the new right wing government of Macri who broke with the approach that Argentina had been taking with the Eurasian core of Russia and China and has oriented towards the United States, a fact which has influenced the elections in Bolivia, Peru and Venezuela. Workers are resisting the openly pro-imperialist attacks of the Macri Government. Attacks that lead to the growth of unemployment and wage cuts. On 29 April the unions - all controlled by the bureaucracy - convened a mobilization to protest the layoffs, etc. More than anything as a way to divert the pressure from their bases by playing a “protest” profile to Macri. All this in the midst of the witch hunt against all the representatives of the for-