“The fight between MUD (Democratic Unity Roundtable) and the government is not about the lack of basic goods and medicines. It is about the choice of society ... The MUD’s opposition is a smokescreen. If its leaders want to impose their project, let them stand candidates in the 2018 elections. Let them convince the majority of the Venezuelans.

... Why aren’t the ‘guarimbas’ (burning street barricades) condemned abroad? Why do foreign countries oppose vandalism when it happens to them, but call it heroism when it happens in Venezuela?

... There are political prisoners in Chile and Argentina. Black people keep being killed in the United States. Nobody is talking about them. When political activists demonstrate in Spain, and elsewhere in Europe, they get clobbered over the head for having done no wrong of importance compared with what the hooded guys get up to in the streets of Venezuela.

**Socialist Fight** Where We Stand (extracts)

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 monopsonies 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).

9. We are completely opposed to man-made climate change and the degradation of the biosphere which is caused by the anarchy of capitalist production for profits of transnational corporations. Ecological catastrophe is not ‘as crucial as imperialism’ but caused by imperialism so to combat this threat we must redouble our efforts to forward the world revolution.

11. We also support the fight of all other specially oppressed including lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people and the disabled against discrimination in all its forms and their right to organise separately in that fight in society as a whole. In particular we defend their right to caucus inside trade unions and in working class political parties. While supporting the latter right, we do not always advocate its exercise as in some forms it can reinforce illusions in identity politics and obscure the need for class unity.

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

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 centrism. It is by orienting to the ranks of socialist workers in struggle, struggles against imperialism, struggles of oppressed minorities against various all forms of social oppression, as well as political ferment among intellectual layers radicalised through these struggles, that we will lay the basis for regroupments with forces internationally breaking with reformism, centrist and various forms of radical populism/nationalism, and seeking to build a new revolutionary Marxist international party. ▲

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**Contents**

Editorial: Greetings to the comrades of the LCFI meeting in Brazil .................................................................Page 3
Justice for the Odessa Fire victims!, End British military aid to Ukraine! .................................................................Page 4
Class politics returns in British general election 2017........................................................................................................Page 5
Bogus ‘left wing anti-Semitism’ in Labour .........................................................................................................................Page 9
Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group ......................................................................................................................Page 12
Major assault on the workers’ movement by Marcon ........................................................................................................Page 14
No to US imperialism’s war on Syria and North Korea! .....................................................................................................Page 19
Greetings to the LCFI conference in Brazil ......................................................................................................................Page 18
South Africa: No to the ouster of Zuma ............................................................................................................................Page 19
Centrist tack left on Venezuela ............................................................................................................................................Page 20
Venezuela advances against the coup ....................................................................................................................................Page 21
May’s coalition partners: the DUP ........................................................................................................................................Page 22
Grenfell: Tory Murder; Arrests and Inquest Now! ............................................................................................................Page 24
Dialectics is the science of movement and change ...........................................................................................................Page 25
Falsifier of the History of the Russian Revolution: Lars T Lih ..........................................................................................Page 28
Photo Montage .......................................................................................................................................................................Page 32

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

The world stands in imminent danger of nuclear holocaust stemming solely from the desperation of US imperialism to preserve its eco-

nomic and political position as the global hegemonic imperialist pow-

er. Trump tells us that U.S. nuclear power is, “now far stronger and more powerful than ever” because he has taken steps to “renovate

and modernize” it. “Hopefully we will never have to use this power, but there will never be a time that we are not the most powerful na-

tion in the world!” he asserts.

On August first Sen. Lindsey Graham said that President Trump is willing to go to war with North Korea to stop it from being able to

hit the American mainland with a nuclear weapon.

“There is a military option: to destroy North Korea’s nuclear pro-

gram and North Korea itself. He’s not going to allow — President

Trump — the ability of this madman to have a missile that could hit

America.

“If there’s going to be a war to stop him, it will be over there,” Gra-

ham continued. “If thousands die, they’re going to die over there.

They’re not going to die over here — and he’s told me that to my

face.”

Of course, such a war would not cause “thousands” but millions of

casualties nor would it be possible to contain it “over there”. Re-

member the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June

1914 was “over there” but it all too quickly became “over here” for

the entire generation of youthful soldiers and civilian who died in the

conflagration of WWI, entirely caused by inter-imperialist rivalries.

Graham went on to say that the president “doesn’t want a war” —

but would be willing to start one that would kill millions of people in

the region if it came down to it.

By 9th of August Trump was in full war cry: “North Korea best not

make any more threats to the United States. They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen.”

North Korea’s responded by foolishly threatening a missile strike on

the US Naval Base in Guam in mid-Pacific, which added fuel to

Trump’s warmongering agenda.

“Over there” is the city of Soul and the Japanese con-urbanisations.

But China simply cannot allow regime change in Pyongyang or allow

South Korean/US troops and missiles on its border. Mao Tse Tung

was obliged to go to war in 1950 because he recognised them, as Zi

does today, that China is the ultimate target and not just North Ko-

rea.

Moreover, war is Trump’s prerogative as Senator Graham asserts

against Senator Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska), who said that a “pre-emptive

war” on the Korean peninsula “would require the authorization of

Congress.” “There’s nothing in the Constitution limiting the ability to

use force to protect America,” Graham told radio host Hugh Hewitt

on Thursday.

Trump is “mentally” ready to pre-emptively strike North Korea “if

negotiations fail, I think he’s there mentally, he has told me this.”

On 10th August Trump said that his “fire and fury” warning to

North Korea may not have been “strong enough.”

And here lies the source of the current stand-off with Kim Jung

UN and North Korea, with Bashar al-Assad in Syria, with Iran, with

Putin’s Russia and with Zi in China. This is the reason behind the

terrible slaughter inflicted on the population of Mosul, the monstrous

assault by US and UK backed and funded forces on Yemen and the

whole Middle East crisis now over Qatar, involving Israel (covertly

for now), Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Libya, Bah-

rein and the Maldives on the one side and Iran, Turkey, Syria, Hez-

bollah and Russia on the other signifies the real target here is Iran.

But can Turkey and Russia remain aloof whilst the US asserts it total

power in the region?

And the Senate and House of Representatives has forced Trump to

initiate new sanctions of Russia which has upset the EU greatly and

Germany and France in particular. These sanctions will wreak havoc

on European energy companies and so they are obviously not just

aimed at Russia but at the EU as well. It is aimed at the huge natural

gas pipeline between Russia and Germany across the Baltic called

Nord Stream 2. It is owned by Russia’s Gazprom but also has Euro-

pean investors

And the EU is bound to respond. EU chief executive Jean-Claude

Juncker warned in late July that: “If our concerns are not taken into

account sufficiently, we stand ready to act appropriately within a mat-

ter of days. ‘America First’ cannot mean that Europe’s interests come

last.”

Trump has already imposed tariffs on EU imports to protect the

American steel industry so trade tit-for-tat retaliations are now sure to

follow. And on Congress’s insistence Russia’s so-called annexation of

Crimea and funding of the so-called “terrorist separatists” in the

Donbass is another military flashpoint. NATO has been conducting

provocative war exercises in all countries bordering Russia and beef-

ing up deployments of US and UK troop and armaments there. Rus-

 sia has been obliged to respond in kind.

Apart from Brazil Latin America escaped WWII directly and Brazil

was only tangentially involved. It looks far different this time around.

As we have analysed the US is seeking to reverse the losses suffered

after fightback of the late 1990 and the first decade of this century

and the economic collapse after the 2008 debacle. Venezuela is in

Trump’s crosshairs also; he told reporters on Friday 11th that he

would not “rule out a military option” for Venezuela.

All the elements for WWII are now in place in these four flash-

points.

How stands the global working class in the face of

these developments?

Britain has seen enormous political changes over the past two years.

The election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader in September 2015

and again in 2016 showed a leftist surge in the vanguard of the British

working class. The membership of the party went from under

200,000 to over 600,000 and rising in that time, making it the biggest

social democratic party in the world in proportion to population.

The shedding of the ‘unelectable’ tag in the voting surge in the June

general election was entirely down to the two opposing manifestos,

the Tory one so arrogant at its 25% lead at the beginning that its class

hatred was naked and the Labour one, soft left reformist as its pro-

gramme of nationalisations and ending public sector pay restraints

and abolishing student tuition fees was nevertheless it was a change of

political direction against neo-liberal policies of Tony Blair and Gor-

don Brown.

However, we must be clear that although Jeremy Corbyn is the

most leftist and pacifist Labour leader ever he is nonetheless a de-

fender of the capitalist state and ultimately an imperialist politician.

Although he has the overwhelming support of the youth there is as

yet no major industrial strike struggle to back his political advance,

nor is he calling for one.

But inevitable it will come as the crisis deepens. Then we could get
a situation like the 1936 Popular Front government in France. All our efforts must be to provide the revolutionary leadership for that struggle when it comes. A unique combination of national circumstances has created the Corbyn phenomenon. No other social democratic party leader in Europe of globally is in his position now. But it is surely an integral part of the world crisis. We glimpsed the possibility in the Bernie Sanders surge, even though this was in an outright Democratic capitalist party nonetheless the possibility of a

USA Labor party emerged again for the first time since the 1930s; ‘socialism’ is no longer a dirty word in the USA.

All these developments oblige serious revolutionaries to redouble their efforts to re-forge the scattered remnants of Trotsky’s Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

So, the warmest solidarity greetings to our comrades in their conference and we look forward to continued collaboration and ever closer comradely relations in the months and years ahead. ▲

Justice for the Odessa Fire victims!, End British military aid to Ukraine!

The explicitly anti-Semitic fascist Ukraine Azov Battalion funded by the USA and UK since January 2016.

especially in the Baltics, Ukraine and Hungary. In recent years, the United States has purposely ignored the glorification of Nazi collaborators, the granting of financial benefits to those who fought alongside the Nazis, and the systematic promotion of the canard of equivalency between Communist and Nazi crimes by these countries because of various political interests.”

However far right Zionists like the Vaad of Ukraine, a Jewish communal body favoured the move. Vyacheslav A. Likhachev, speaking on behalf of the Vaad said:

“I appreciate this decision. It must be clearly understood: there is no kind of ‘neo-Nazi Ukrainian milita’ now. Azov is a regular military unit subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It is not irregular division neither a political group. Its commanders and fighters might have personal political views as individuals, but as an armed police unit Azov is a part of the system of the Ukrainian defence forces, Russian aggression is a much bigger threat than Azov, it is necessary to clearly distinguish between the Azov regiment and political projects related to its former commander (Stephan Banders – SF, our bolding).”

Not many in the Ukraine want to make such a spurious distinction. Jews now as then are differentiated not only as pro and anti Nazi but politically more importantly as leftist working class poor and wealthy rightist Zionists. “Of course, manifestations of neo-Nazism in Ukraine are unacceptable”, Likhachev hypocritically says. “But it has nothing to do with the question of assistance to the Ukrainian armed forces.” - Really???

We demand the British government ends all support for the fascist-infested Kiev regime!

Justice for the Odessa Fire victims!
End British military and other aid to the Ukraine government!

Solidarity with people of the Lugansk and Donetsk Republics!

End the far-right reign of terror in Ukraine!
Down with the Kiev puppet government!
Solidarity with anti-fascists in Ukraine!

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
The widely proclaimed return of two party politics in this election is the return of class politics in Britain. The statistics show the middle ground is giving way; Conservative (Tory) at 42.4% was its highest share of the vote post war since 1983. 1959, at 49.4% and 1955, at 49.7% are the Tory post war highs. Labour’s at 40.2% was its highest since 2001. Its highest post war was 1951 at 48.8%. Their share in 1945 was 47.8% and in 1966 it was 47.9%. These are the comparisons of Labour to Tory percentage shares since 1974, with the Prime Minister and party elected:

1974 (February, Wilson, L): 37.2% to 37.9%, 1979 (October, Wilson, L): 39.3% to 35.8%, 1983 (Thatcher, C): 43.2% to 43.2%, 1987 (Thatcher, C): 30.8% to 42.4%, 1992 (Major, C): 34.4% to 41.9%, 1997 (Blair, L): 43.2% to 30.7%, 2001 (Blair, L): 40.7% to 31.7%, 2005 (Blair, L): 35.2% to 32.4%, 2010 (Cameron, C): 29% to 36.1%, 2015 (Cameron, C): 30.4% to 36.9%, 2017 (May, C): 40.2% to 42.4%.

Similarly, the overall votes for Labour, first in the table, fell under the neo-liberals Blair and Brown but began to rise under the slightly leftist Miliband and rose dramatically under Corbyn. And class polarisation is also shown in the Tory vote:

1997: 13,518,167, 9,600,943
2001: 10,724,953, 8,357,615
2005: 9,552,436, 8,784,915
2010: 8,606,527, 10,703,754
2015: 9,347,304, 11,334,576
2017: 12,874,985, 13,667,213

This confirms the leftist surge in the working class that moved first via its vanguard when they elected Corbyn in the 2015 and again saw off the Blairite right wing in 2016 when they tried to oust him. It is worth mentioning that he secured the 35th nomination from MPs and MEPs necessary to stand in 2015 with less than two minutes to spare. The right-wingers who nominated him did so in the hope that he would get only a few percentage and this would utterly humiliate and marginalise the left in Labour. And the result itself was secured because the Collins Report into the reasons for the loss of the 2015 general election instituted a US-style primary vote system of “one member, one vote” and “registered supporters”. This gave the vote not only to new members but also to supporters on payment of a minimal £3 fee.

Such was the contempt the Labour right wingers and TU bureaucracy had developed for the mass of the working class that they fully anticipated that when it came to electing a new leader these new members and supporters would do what the right-wing mass media and the Blairite right wingers told them and the left would be wiped out. It proved to be a monumental miscalculation when Corbyn, initially at 500 to 1 to win the leadership, swept to victory with almost 60% of the vote and increased it again a year later despite mass expulsions of left wingers and raising the affiliation fee from £3 to £25. However, the right-wing Blairite bureaucracy remain firmly in control of the National Executive Committee and most party structures.

Ultra-leftists say we must not vote Labour. By the same token we should not have voted for Clement Attlee’s Labour government in 1945 that brought the welfare state and the National Health Service. That government was certainly no better politically than Corbyn’s Labour, but even though it defended the British Empire in foreign wars the working class were right to vote for it against Churchill’s Tories. Does the mass movement unleashed by Corbyn count for nothing? Are these millions of left-moving working-class masses not worth a mention or a second thought? They are the hope for the revolution. And the only way to relate to them on the 8th May was to vote Labour. This Lenin understood in 1920 and Trotsky and all serious Trotskyists have understood since. But those who have contracted the infantile disorder that Lenin polemised against so well in 1920 will have none of it.

**Corbyn: an imperialist politician with a leftist manifesto and a mass class following**

Although an imperialist politician nonetheless Corbyn is a Labour leader with a mass working class following who are now becoming enthused for socialism. It would be impossible for a Tory leader to make a speech such as he made after the Manchester bombing blaming it on the situation in North Africa and the Middle East. Though it was pacifist it still had that modicum of truth that the mass media and all warmongering imperialists have furiously denied.

A Tory landslide would have been a disaster for the working class. A Labour victory has advanced the class consciousness of the class towards revolution. Corbyn has a bigger percentage of the vote than Brown or Miliband and Tony Blair’s third election in 2005. Shifting the body politic to the left significantly will supply the water for the revolutionary fish to swim in. Thatcher knew that and drained the fish tank and we lost a whole generation of revolutionary socialists because of her success.

The huge increase in Labour party membership to 600,000 (800,000 now after the election) was not reflected in the opinion polls and the mass media and Blairites maintained a relen-
less attack on Corbyn such that when the election was called by Theresa May in April Corbyn trailed by 24% and the right-wing Labourite were constantly working for his defeat in order to restore their own corrupt relationship with the capitalist system and its brokers. But a combination of factors combined to reverse all this in a historic reversal of fortunes for the ruling class.

During the election the BBC was legally obliged to give Corbyn equal exposure during the election. Although its bias was obvious they could not prevent his message getting across. His campaigning techniques of mass rallies sidestepped the media and appealed directly to the mass of the oppressed. Then the contrast between the two manifestos was very clearly class based. The Tories clearly promised class warfare against the poor and even on some of its own supporters in the dementia tax for example.

Corbyn’s manifesto at last overcomes the rightist charge against the left from Michael Foot’s 27.6% 1983 manifesto as “the longest suicide note in history”. In reality, it was the Falkland factor, the 1981 split from Labour by the SDP’s “Gang of Four” and a reviving economy and not the leftist agenda. And Tony Blair’s 1997 42.4% could have been increased by a genuine leftist manifesto, it was not the rightist agenda that won the vote but the class surge against the Tories. Neo-liberalism has suffered its first serious reversal in a major metropolitan country and this will have its consequences worldwide, just as Thatcher and Bush pioneered neo-liberalism in the early 1980s.

The working class, the youth and poor and those in bad health voted Labour to try to salvage the NHS and other public services, for the education benefits promised and also for the end of tuition fees and student loans. The Labour vote amongst those aged under 25 was 72% compared with just 43% in 2015. Record numbers signing up to vote for the first time, many of them students. This included more than 600,000 people registering on the final day before registrations closed, of which two-thirds were aged between 18 and 34.

Those with disabilities understood at first-hand the need for a good NHS. It is necessary to put an end to the brutality of austerity within the benefits system. Those being crucified by it need changes urgently. And the housing crisis is obviously exacerbated by Tory greed and exploiting the somewhat ignoble aspirations of some workers to buy their council house and enter the property market at the expense of the poorer sections of the class. Homelessness has more than doubled during the last seven years. The Trussell Trust foodbanks report for the financial year 2016-2017 revealed that they gave 1,182,954 three-day emergency food supplies to people in crisis. They provide are only about 40% of all foodbank supplies in Britain making the total close to 2.5 million handouts, a truly shocking statistic.

A part of the reason for the increase in Labour votes was the three terror attacks in London and Manchester which exposed the collaboration of the Tories with terrorists who they used to overthrow Gaddafi and are attempting the same with Assad in Syria. The Moazzam Begg case in 2014 was widely known where the former Guantanamo internee returned from Syria to be arrested by police and charged with terrorism in Syria only to be released on ‘national security’ grounds; he was MI5’s ter-

Wiping out Ukip and decline of the LibDems and SNP

The 2015 election saw the LibDems devastated, reduced to 8 seats from 57 in 2010 and 62 in 2005. Although 2017 saw an increase in seats to 12 its vote share fell again from 7.9% in 2015 to 7.4% in 2017. But the sharpest indication of class polarisation in 2017 was the wiping out of Ukip, marginalised in every constituency, having won the EU elections in 2014 with 27.5% and 23 MEPs compared to Labour’s 25.4% and 18 MEPs and the Tory’s 23.9% and 18 MEPs. They played a crucial role in securing the Brexit vote on 23 June 2016. The right wing anti-immigrant surge represented by Brexit is now unravelling also. Its right wing has gone to the Tories and its left back to Labour, thereby partially overcoming their own previous rightism. It is not the case that Corbyn’s agreement on triggering Article 50 to begin the Brexit negotiations or his backsliding on immigration controls won those wayward voters back but the alternative anti-austerity manifesto proposed an implicitly class struggle against capitalism itself as we explained above.

The sharp decline of the SNP vote, like Podemos, Syriza and others also indicated and strengthened the class movement. They followed the politics of the Occupy Movement; parties and movements of ‘neither of the left nor the right’ reflecting the political confusionists of the declassed petty bourgeoisie. As its right wing splits off to the Tories and its left to Labour now the progressive role played by that Labour manifesto is clear.

Labour correctly rejected the ‘Progressive Alliance’ proposed by many of its supporters, the Greens and the SNP, Plaid Cymru and many deluded far leftists. This was a vital element in Labour’s good showing and has to be maintained in future elections if the leftist surge is to be maintained. For instance, many regretted that the Tory Zac Goldsmith beat the Liberal Democrats in Richmond Park by 45 votes and Labour took 5,773 votes there. “If they had stood down here, in St Ives, and elsewhere then the Tories wouldn’t have even managed a minority government with the DUP” runs the argument.

In the French Presidential election of 2002 the run off was between Jacques Chirac and Jean-Marie Le Pen. The French left and most of the far left advocated a vote for Chirac to stop Le Pen. The politics of supporting a rightist, of indeed a leftist capitalist politician to stop a fascist or indeed a far rightist is a disastrous mistake because it fails to recognise the cause of the rise of the far right in the crisis of capitalism and it abandons class politics in the struggle against degenerate capitalism. It is known in communist terms as popular frontism and can only
sow political confusion. The vote of the French far left fell disastrously after that mistake, from over 10.5% to less than 2% in the last Presidential election. And still most far leftists repeated the mistake of 2002 and called for a vote for Marcon against Marine Le Pen.

**Progressive but not Revolutionary**

Of course, Corbyn is an imperialist politician. A genuine anti-imperialist politician would always be for the defeat of his own and every other imperialist power in all wars as Trotsky observed. A pacifist like Corbyn is simply against all wars unlike a revolutionist who acknowledges war is endemic to capitalism in crisis and cannot be avoided but must be used to break the pro imperialist ideology of workers in metropolitan lands who think their living standards depend of winning foreign wars “in the national interest” which is code for benefiting from the booty of empire. For this reason, Trotsky was for the defeat of Italy in its invasion of Abyssinia in 1936 of Japan in 1937 and, hypothetically, Britain if it invaded Brazil in 1938 although in all three cases the opponents were barbaric reactionary regimes, a good deal worse than Gaddafi’s or Assad’s.

But let there be no doubt that the manifesto was not revolutionary or did not come anywhere close to providing a working-class or anti-capitalist perspective.

The Labour manifesto conceded to the Blairite right on Trident, on immigration controls, on supporting the struggle for a united Ireland and against British occupation of the six north eastern counties of Ireland. Corbyn allowed a free vote on attacking Syria. Its reformist premise, seeking to revive the crisis ridden capitalist global economy in Britain alone, cannot ultimately work. Keynesian economics cannot succeed in this revival because the crisis is endemic to capitalism’s falling rate of profit so it cannot be peacefully solved within the bounds of the capitalist system.

There is always a solution to every capitalist crisis if resolutions fail; WWIII which would destroy vast quantities of capital and vast numbers of workers to allow a small section of the richest monopoly capitalists to begin anew the grim business of exploitation on a higher rate of profit. Such were the reasons for WWI and WWII and the logic is in play again ever sharper.

**Brexit in confusion**

May will now lead Brexit negotiations in a seriously weakened and confused position, not at all, “secure and stable.” Her mantra “no deal is better than a bad deal” never made sense. EU Commissioner Gunther Oettinger said on 9 June, “We need a government that can act. With a weak negotiating partner, there’s the danger that the negotiations will turn out badly for both sides...I expect more uncertainty now.”

The pound fell immediately when the exit poll showed a hung parliament. Labour won also in some surprising places which need explaining. For instance, they took Plymouth Sutton and Devonport, the naval port, Canterbury, Tory since formation in 1918 and Shroud in Gloucestershire, all with huge swings approaching 10%. Reasons here seems to be relatively affluent voters who were remainers in the EU referendum fearing the consequence of May’s hard Brexit.

Both the Tory party and the Labour party and now in turmoil over Brexit. A strategy for a hard Brexit now seems to have been defeated and the soft Brexit may well have overwhelming support in the House of Commons. That means fundamentally retaining in the single market. If Britain retains the single marker then it will become increasingly attractive to reject Brexit via a second referendum. It the SNP’s hope of a second referendum are dealt a blow by this election the second referendum has been given the kiss of life, despite the marginalisation of the LibDems.

The Labour right are now marginalised in turmoil. They spent two years trying to oust Corbyn by saying he was unelectable. Now we know he is more electable than either Brown of Miliband or Blair in his last election. We face the prospect of another election within a year if not months.

**May’s coalition partners: the DUP, corrupt Loyalist bigots**

May’s partners in government, the Irish Loyalist Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) are by far the most right-wing, backward in social attitudes and bigoted in Parliament. Their cynical corruption in the Renewable Heat Incentive scandal, the ‘Cash for Ash’ scandal. Only the latest of a series of appalling corruption scandals engulfing the DUP. The main concern of the UK government is to prevent exposure of all these scandals and the emergence of the political conclusion that this is an illegitimate state. The scandal was a supposed ‘green energy’ subsidy scheme which resulted in, for example, one supporter of the DUP getting a payment of £1 million simply for heating an empty barn. Some £490 million were or will be lost in this way.

It is impossible to conclude that this was a ‘mistake’ but Arlene Foster, the leader of the DUP, refused to resign as First Minister until Martin McGuinness, her deputy and leader of Sinn Fein resigned and forced the collapse and the new elections. Previous DUP First Minister, Peter Robinson, was continually mired in scandal after scandal. His wife, Iris, had an affair with a teenager and it was claimed he knew Iris got £50,000 from two developers for her lover in exchange for contracts. A police investigation found him innocent of all wrong doing, naturally. Then TD (south of Ireland member of parliament) Mick Wallace alleged he had benefited financially
Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

from the National Asset Management Agency (Nama) properties sale from corrupt speculators seized by the Irish government following the 2008 financial crisis. Allegedly payments were made to him and others from ‘US investor’ who mopped up the properties with their political assistance. Again, the missing millions were explained away by a less than rigorous inquiry. He eventually went in January 2016 amid all these scandals to be replaced by Arlene Foster, who was almost immediately embroiled in her own corruption scandal.

Such corruption could not happen in Britain itself and the guilty parties would surely face not only loss of office but a long prison stretch in Britain itself. But this is the illegitimate state of ‘Northern Ireland’ and the British parliament and Sinn Fein tolerate such behaviour, as do the Irish government in Dublin, to keep the status quo intact and retain the British occupation of Ireland.

The DUP are homophobic, anti-abortion misogynists and Christian religious fundamentalists with strong historic and current links with loyalist death squads. Having mercilessly attacked Corbyn and McDonnell for allegedly supporting the IRA the hypocrisy of allying with these vile reactionaries to retain office is obvious. Moreover such an alliance is highly unstable and is bound to fall apart at the first serious test. This time we absolutely must defeat the right on the NEC, and secure deselection of all Labour candidates. The September Conference of Labour in Brighton is absolutely crucial to make advance there.

Grassroots Momentum

According to Glasgow Grassroots Momentum in Scotland where open rightist Blairites (e.g. in Renfrewshire East) stood the Labour vote went backwards but the pro-Corbyn left of the party made significant gains with two Campaign for Socialism members elected in Midlothian and Coatbridge, Chryston & Bellshill. But “what is most encouraging is the clear sign of the beginning of a push back by a section of the youth and working class against both the Scottish and British nationalism of the SNP and Tories throughout Britain. Those of the Scottish left who called for a Labour vote in England and SNP vote in Scotland should be ashamed of themselves for helping keep out good socialist candidates like Matt Kerr in Glasgow South West. They can’t accept a resurgent Labour movement led by socialists as that would disprove the rubbish they’ve been peddling for decades. For these left nationalist leaders, the dustbin of history beckons for the rank and file and the wider Scottish working class, join Labour and help us transform the party into a mass socialist party!” they say. It is clear that Scotland is as bad as if not worse than the rest of Britain in the domination of the Blairite right.

It is critical now in the aftermath of this election to focus on the forces within Labour that can really begin the tasks to establish democracy within the party and the trade unions, so much tied up with the Labour party that they are opposite sides of the same coin politically. The TU bureaucracy is the bedrock of Blairism and an unreliable ally at best of Corbynism. John Lansman’s official Momentum is an obstacle to winning these goals, he has opposed deselection of the right-wing MPs who are vicious opponents of Corbyn, he has opposed any democratic structures within Labour and conducted an outrageous coup within Momentum itself, arbitrarily abolishing its structures and imposing a new constitution. And he was able to do this because he ‘owns’ Momentum as a private company, all the assets and income is his personally or belonging to his chosen stooges. And Corbyn and McDonnell have endorsed this behaviour.

Only the Labour Representation Committee and Grass Roots Momentum have the necessary democratic structures seriously to engage in this task. Allied to this is Ian Allinson’s rank and file network in Unite the union which has the potential to supply the vital connection between the ranks of that trade union and the Labour party. Let us participate in a serious way in these organisations.

Westminster voting intention and chart above showing the predicted seats from UGov 18-19 April 2017:
CON: 48% (+4), LAB: 24% (-1), LibDem: 12% (-), UKIP: 7% (-3)

And the bitter truth for the British ruling class on 8 June; class politics was suddenly back with a bang!
Bogus ‘left wing anti-Semitism’ in Labour

On 26 July, the Jewish Chronicle ran an article by Lee Harpin signalling that it was resuming its racist witch hunt against the former MP for Brent East and London Mayor Ken Livingstone and the Labour left. [1] The article is obviously a ‘plant’ by right-wing sources in Labour and the National Executive Committee, whose Compliance Unit has arbitrary powers of expulsion without hearing or right to appeal and only gives Livingstone such rights because of his high profile. Disgracefully Jeremy Corbyn indicated he wanted a second disciplinary hearing against Livingstone last April when the NEC extended his suspension from one to two years under pressure for the Zionist lobby saying: “Mr Livingstone’s failure to apologise for “grossly insensitive” comments had been “deeply disappointing”” Harpin, a ‘senior reporter for the Jewish Chronicle’ relates. The Zionist are demanding his expulsion because he spoke the truth about the relationship between Zionism and the Nazis before and in the first years of WWII.

Harpin tells us, in an ‘exclusive’:

“Ken Livingstone is facing a new investigation by Labour’s disciplinary panel over comments he has made since he was suspended from the party for linking Adolf Hitler with Zionism. Labour sources have confirmed to the JC that another probe into the former Mayor of London “is under way”. It is said to centre on claims against Mr Livingstone since he was first suspended from the party in June 2016 and also his failure to show any remorse. If found guilty of the new charges Mr Livingstone would almost certainly face expulsion from the party.”

The article goes on to tell us that Labour was taking the new investigation “very seriously”, that a leading QC has been appointed to conduct an assessment of the charges and they related to media remarks he made after his suspension, like his remark the “you cannot apologise for telling the truth” presumably. More than a 1,000 Jewish Labour party members signed a letter to the Guardian basically demanding that he be expelled for telling the truth about the Hitler-Zionist relationship, we are reminded. Significantly Harpin, who obviously knows more about the internal machinations of the NEC that Corbyn or McDonald, informs us that, “after taking legal advice, those bringing the new complaints against Mr Livingstone are believed to have been advised not to revisit the original remarks on Hitler and Zionism”; the truth is unchallangeable and we are left wondering who are “those bringing the new complaints”, funded by the Israeli Embassy, perhaps? Of course, leaking such internal party matters to a hostile press seeking to influence the outcome of the inquiry against Livingstone and by extension all expelled and suspended members and their supporters in the new Labour party membership and ultimately against Corbyn himself itself should itself be a disciplinary matter but of course no such probe will take place without serious pressure from party members.

And then we learn that Livingstone’s opponents are outraged he was not expelled. Signatories of that Guardian letter mentioned by Harpin included, “Luciana Berger MP, former deputy mayor of London Nicky Gavron and chair of the Jewish Labour Movement Jeremy Newmark.”. Berger is a leftist Zionist, scarcely hard line, has come under pressure because she never asked a question about Israel in the Commons. She was appointed Shadow Minister for Mental Health by Corbyn but resigned on 27 June 2016 in the push to oust him. In 2010, she was parachuted into her constituency of Liverpool Wavertree by Ed Miliband. She stayed with the sitting MP Jane Kennedy and her partner, Labour official Peter Dowling, during the selection process, which was run by Dowling. The completed ballot papers were returned to Kennedy’s home address; we do not know what security obtained and who counted the votes but local Labour party members were very upset and made a great brouhaha about the process but, of course, Labour’s NEC found it to be flawless. Nicky Gavron is Jewish and was deputy mayor to Livingstone twice and, although like Berger she often toes their line, she certainly is not a hard-line Zionist either. Her mother’s experiences under Hitler might have led to some doubts about whether so-called far left Labour anti-Semites are really worse than the Nazis, as some claim.

But Jeremy Newmark certainly is a hard-right racist Zionist. In 2013, he assisted in a bogus case of anti-Semitism against the University and College Union (UCU) which outraged the judge Anthony Snelson so much that he remarked that Mr Newmark’s evidence was: “false, preposterous, extraordinarily arrogant and disturbing”. We can now appreciate why the Labour party rights and the Zionists are so wary of facing Livingstone in court; it is, after all, a very difficult legal proposition that his telling of the truth about the relationship between Zionism and Hitler had upset very powerful friends of the right wingers in Labour so much and had damaged their standing and he should be expelled for it. Courts do have a legal obligation to abide by truth when established beyond reasonable doubt, unlike Labour’s NEC.

Jonathan Arkush, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, thinks relations between Labour and “the community” (i.e. himself as their spokesman - GD) had reached “a new all-time low”. And they did not control that particular NEC subcommittee; Harpin’s ‘deep throat’ further grassed that one Russell Cartwright a “hard-left for Labour Party Democracy group (sic) who had previously campaigned for Mr Livingstone” was one of the three-person panel. Well now he might even have spoken to him at length on occasions when he was an MP or Mayor of London so strong suspicion must fall on
him and about 100,000 others with that shameful record. That Cartwright or the CLPD are “hard-left” is news to Labour party members but for the JC anyone to the left of Genghis Khan, or indeed London Mayor Sadiq Khan, is “hard left”.

**Evening Standard and Times of Israel weigh in**

In the Evening Standard of the 17 March 2016 Joseph Watts wrote: ‘Most Jews can’t trust Labour’. He reports Arkush as saying: “It confirms the belief we have had for a long time that there is a real problem of anti-Semitism on the far left, which now eclipses the anti-Semitism that we have always seen coming from the far-right.” That the genuine fascist anti-Semitism of the far right is worse than the bogus ‘anti-Semitism’ of the left, which is in reality criticism of the racist state of Israel, is an outrageous claim which Zionism makes which runs throughout its whole history, as we shall show. [2]

But following the general election of 8 June the Corbyn surge in the working class as a whole now fueled greater anti-Semitism, according to the Zionists. On 21 June, the Times of Israel ran a piece about an Al Quds demo in London by Cnaan Liphshiz. His subhead ran: “Corbyn did not join this year’s Al Quds march, though he has attended in the past, Labour’s surge in UK election fans anti-Semitism fears for some Jews”. [3] The “some Jews” turned out to be three who were “troubled by the Labour Party’s recent electoral successes despite its perceived failure to tackle anti-Semitic vitriol in its ranks”. And further “London Mayor Sadiq Khan — a Muslim Labour politician who on his first day in office reached out to the city’s Jews — allowed hundreds of protesters to march Sunday at an anti-Israel event with flags of the Hezbollah terrorist group.” A dark shadow of suspicion now falls on Sadiq also, significantly “a Muslim Labour politician”.

One of the three horrified was Sharon Klaff, “69, a yoga teacher and Jewish mother of two” who thinks that, “there probably isn’t a place for me here as a Jew. And I’m kind of wondering where’s the place of anyone who belongs to Western, democratic civilization.” Watts tells us that Klaff attended an unauthorized counter protest against the annual Al-Quds march. Right wing Zionists and fascists have counter protested this Iran-sponsored event in the past, together with the Alliance for Workers Liberty a few years ago, who were somewhat embarrassed to find themselves protesting the pro-Palestinian demonstration shoulder to shoulder with fascists so they were forced to join the march for safety, where they were not welcomed either, amusingly. Is Jeremy Corbyn really Adolph Hitler or the CLPD are “hard-left” is a question.

Number two was “David Hirsh, a British Jewish columnist and prominent sociologist at the University of London, who wrote in a column in The Jewish Chronicle titled “Antisemitic Politics is the New Normal.” He believes “We were unable to stop anti-Semitic politics being normalized on the left and we were unable to stop it from moving into the mainstream.” So David is also fearful of the 1932 scenario but this time it will be the left who are attacking the Jews and nothing to fear from the actual fascists, who are far more benign, as Arkush had assured us, it seems.

And number three was ‘Jack Mendel, a journalist who covered the march for the Jewish News of London, made light of the situation on Twitter, where he wrote about a photo he took of three marchers draped in Hezbollah’s flag. “Awkward! Three people came in the same terror flag. There’s a certain sense of helplessness when Hezbollah’s terror flags fly in my city”, Mendel wrote. Hezbollah are the group who gave the Israeli army a mauling when it invaded south Lebanon in 2006; the organisation itself is legal although its armed wing of the same name is classified as “terrorist”, i.e. a group who gave the state terrorist Israeli army a bloody nose.

So, a pro-Palestinian demonstration of a few hundred alarmed the entire Jewish population, we must believe. Ironically the photograph accompanying the piece showed a small crowd with two banners, one pro-Palestinian and the other held aloft by orthodox Jews, immediately identifiable by their dress, bearing the slogan, “Judaism rejects the state of Israel and condemns its criminal siege and occupation”. More anti-Semitic, self-hating Jews it seems?

**An alarming rise in anti-Semitic incidents says CST**

But isn’t there an alarming rise in anti-Semitic incidents over the past year? The figures produced by the Zionist Community Security Trust (CST), record 1,309 incidents of anti-Jewish hate last year, compared with 960 in 2015, a rise of 36%. The previous record number of incidents was in 2014, when 1,182 were recorded. This was during the July/August 2014 Operation Protective Edge where the United Nations reported that 2,220 Palestinians had been killed, of whom 1,492 were civilians (551 children and 299 women), 605 militants and 123 of unknown status, almost 11,000 were wounded, including 3,374 children, of whom over 1,000 were left permanently disabled. 66 Israeli soldiers were killed, 5 Israeli civilians (including one child) and one Thai civilian were killed and 469 IDF soldiers and 261 Israeli civilians were injured. We might expect that some who were outraged at this wanton massacre used language that was not quite politically correct and that was the reason for the reported high level of anti-Semitic incidents.

The CST founding Chairman is Gerald Ronson, one of the Guinness Four convicted for share-trading fraud in 1990; one charge of conspiracy, two of false accounting, and one of theft. He was fined £5 million and given a one-year jail sentence, of which he served six months. He failed to get the conviction overturned despite a long legal battle. But his criminal record did him no appreciable harm; he got his CBE in the 2012 New Year Honours for ‘charitable services’; his was a ‘white-collar’, respectable crime not to be taken seriously at all, we are all at it, only a few of us get inadvertently caught. No news agency doubts his CST stories, of course. [4]

If the report of the 1,309 anti-Semitic incidents in 2016 is correct we should first put them in the post Brexit context which saw an alarming rise in hate crimes against immigrants and ethnic minorities in general since the referendum. The Independent reported a 41% increase in race crimes recorded by regional police forces rose by up to 100 per cent in the months following the Brexit vote, new figures show. Dorset saw the greatest increase, with the 104 offences logged...
between July and September 2016 equating to double the total from April to June. … In total, 10 force areas saw rises of 50 per cent or more.” [5]

But how was the 36% arrived at? It is CST figures, not police statistics. The CST are good enough to tell us that the number of antisemitic incidents reported to them by the police was only 34% of the overall incidents recorded by CST in 2016, compared to 32 per cent in 2015 and 30 per cent in 2014. The rest are phone calls and email messages and verbal reports with no apparent way to determine the veracity of the reports or even identity of those reporting in the majority of cases. However, they do say that they rejected 791 reports of anti-Semitism as false, so they do have some standards, apparently or that could be a figure given to make the rest of the unchecked and uncheckable incidents more credible. They say there were:

“107 violent antisemitic assaults reported to CST in 2016, an increase of 29 per cent from the 87 violent incidents recorded in 2015 and the highest number since 2010, when CST recorded 115 violent antisemitic assaults. None of the violent incidents recorded in 2016 were classified as Extreme Violence, which would mean incidents that involved grievous bodily harm (GBH) or a threat to life”.

And here the real bogus nature of the whole exercise is apparent. Because there is no record of an anti-Semitic murder in Britain this century or last online. And no attempted murders or even serious injury in recent years. Everything recorded is a push or a shove at most and anti-Semitic remarks, some very reactionary such as every racial and ethnic minority suffers from native bigots everywhere. Even in the 1947 anti-Semitic riots in England and Wales following the British hanging of the three members of the Jewish fascist organisation Irgun in Jerusalem and the retaliation hanging of two British Army sergeants by the Irgun no one was killed, although there was damage to property and Jews were injured in these race riots.

The Institute of Race Relations relations that in the twenty years after April 1993 that there were at least 105 deaths with a known or suspected racial element. “Whilst the majority of the murders that we recorded involved attacks in the street, eight came from attacks on people in their homes. Of these, several were arson attacks”. There are no such Jewish deaths in Britain that we can find for a century at least (please correct if this is wrong), Jewish people are not victims of “left-wing anti-Semitism” and such oppression they do suffer is far less than that suffered by the Black, Muslim, Irish and other ethnic minorities in general. And seriously threatening oppression comes exclusively from the far right and from outright fascist groups. Anti-Semitic remarks and tirades from leftists come as a result of genuine, if politically unsophisticated, outrage at the murderous actions of Israel against the Palestinians. This was what Naz Shah MP was guilty of in 2014. No one dared to criticise her of this during the slaughter of the Palestinians in Operation ‘Naj Shah MP was guilty of in 2014. No one dared to criticise their oppression is vastly over-reported as we have seen above. The 87% of Jews who intended to vote Tory compared to the 13% who intended to vote Labour at the last election means the police take their complaints far more seriously than those from the poor and oppressed; that is a reflection of social class and very little to do with the so-called Anti-Semitism of Labour. But, of course, not all Jews are wealthy or influential and when they are in trouble and victims of Anti-Semitism the ‘respectable’ Jews turn their heads away and pretend not to see. Such is the case of Ben Stimson, as we shall report in the next issue.

**Notes**

[1] Lee Harpin, Jewish Chronicle, 26-7-17: Ken Livingstone faces new investigation after Hitler comments
Labour confirm probe into Ken’s conduct and comments after his suspension from party will go ahead https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/ken-livingstone-faces-new-investigation-after-hilter-comments-1.441974


Gerald Ronson CBE and convicted fraudster (L) with Home Secretary Amber Rudd (C) and CST Deputy Chairman Lloyd Dorfman CBE, March 2017.
We also support CFS’s more detailed statement of the issues and RSF’s statement that: issued statements on 31 July in his defence. We concur with National Congress, are representing him. have supported him. Though unaligned the Irish Republicanacist Party, Republican Sinn Fein and Continuity Sinn Fein. The Republican Network for Unity, the Irish Republican So-ballinderry Upper, Lisburn BT28 2PT Armagh: Dee Duffy Shea Reynolds Ciaran Magee Brendan McConville Sean McVeigh Luke O’Neill (held on a non-political wing on protest)

**List of Republican prisoners looked after by Irish Republican Prisoners Welfare Association (IRPWA, 17-3-2017):**

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**Statement from the Irish Republican Support Group in London**

**Support the democratic and human rights of hunger striker Dónal Billings**

2 August 2016

The IRPSG unreservedly supports the democratic and human rights of unaligned 68-year-old Republican POW Dónal Billings in Portlaoise prison and demands that he be allowed back into the E1 landing with no restrictions on his rights. The Republican Network for Unity, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, Republican Sinn Féin and Continuity Sinn Féin have supported him. Though unaligned the Irish Republican National Congress, are representing him. Both Republican Sinn Féin and Continuity Sinn Féin have issued statements on 31 July in his defence. We concur with RSP’s statement that:

“Sinn Féin Poblachtach utterly condemns the removal of Dónal Billings from E1 landing, Portlaoise Gaol. Dónal is a lifelong Republican. He is incarcerated for actions against normalisation, and the occupation of part of Ireland. His service to the Republican cause is longer than that of some of those who had him removed from the landing are alive.”

And

“We call for Dónal’s immediate re-admittance onto E1 and the cessation of all bullying of the independent POWs and those Republicans whose numbers are low in the gaols of Ireland. While all Republican groups have their differences, it has always been the case that we agreed to unity on POW issues, the recent divisive actions make such unity difficult and this can only have a knock-on effect for the POWs themselves. When all is said and done it plays directly into the hands of the imperial partitionist States we all oppose.”

We also support CFS’s more detailed statement of the issues involved because President of Continuity Sinn Féin Seamus O’Sullileabhain and terminally ill veteran Republican Sean O’Neill visited him on 11 July:

“Dónal made a VERY BRAVE stand he refused to be bullied into having members of an organisation sit with him on all visits to listen into private conversations and intimidate his visitors (even the prison officers do not do this).”

After his visit, he was interrogated by members of this organisation aligned to the I.R.P.W.A trying to determine what the visit was about, they then went on to demand that Dónal was not to speak Gaelic on private telephone conversations or to other prisoner’s, staff or prison governors. (The simple reason is they don’t speak fluent Gaelic or understand their native tongue.) Furthermore they refused Dónal permission to attend mass on Sunday thus not allowing him the right to practice his religious beliefs. When Dónal wanted to go to the library as he is an avid reader he was again met with you do not have permission from OC of the landing Tony Caroll. It finally came to a head and Dónal Billings has been forcibly removed from the republican landing and put over to the criminal wing.

Dónal Billings has taken the only option left to him as a republican and he has commenced his hunger strike. He will not be criminalized. He has the right to follow his republican convictions. He has the right to legal counsel without a stranger to sit in on his visit. The right to follow his religious beliefs freely without interference. He has the right to education. The right to a private life.

MOST IMPORTANTLY HE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED AS AN INDIVIDUAL HUMAN BEING.”

The IRPSG supports the rights of all Republican POWs regardless of history or alignment. If they are imprisoned for activities against the occupation of the six north eastern coun
ties of Ireland by Brutish imperialism and are for a united Ireland it is the duty of all Irish republican and all socialist and anti-imperialists in Britain and internationally to support them. These are our founding principles from 2009. In mid-2015 we supported the rights of CSF to be regarded as political prisoners despite many objections. In Socialist Fight No. 20, Autumn 2015, the IRPSG published the following statement:

“Leading Republicans have objected to the inclusion of Continuity Sinn Fein in the list of POWs, making various allegations of criminality against them. However, the IRPSG cannot discriminate, CSF are self-declared Republicans and Joe Lynch has written two letters to us asking to highlight their situation. He has outlined the case of Sean O’Neill, also from Limerick, who is 76 years old and suffering from bowel cancer and is not receiving proper medical care. We cannot in conscience deny them our assistance.”

In May of this year we issued a statement in support of RSF member Gabriel Mackle:

“The Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group (IRPSG) in London recognises Gabriel Mackle, due for release shortly, as a genuine Irish Republican POW. We defend him against the appalling treatment meted out to him by the prison authorities outlined above by RSF. We defend his right to return to the republican wing of Maghaberry and continue to demand political status for him, for all CIRA and every other Republican POW in Maghaberry and elsewhere.

In keeping with our founding principles of 2009, advocated and constantly strongly defended by our founder leader, the late Michael Holden, we refuse to distinguish between and/or favour one section of the Irish Republican movement over another. If imprisoned for Republican activities against British Imperialism or its agents they are deserving of our full support and will get it.”

We were aware in both instances that our stance incurred the opposition of a section of Irish Republicans but we felt that it was necessary to defend those founding principles if we were to maintain credibility with all Republican POWs and assist in forging a united POW regime in the prisons. Similarly, we are aware that this statement will find many opponents but we do not seek cheap popularity.

The IRPWA has issued a statement today, 2-8-17, accusing the situation and polarizing positions. Some of those statements were personal and served only to attack, without justification, the leadership on E3/E4, the IRPWA, their supporters and families of Republican Prisoners. I too felt some of the things said about me were untrue. These comments should not have been made and were not helpful to me or other Republican Prisoners in Portlaoise Gaol.

The IRPWA are never consulted with on any matter when it comes to the running of the Republican Landings and nor, as a welfare body, would we expect to be”. Whatever the case these actions, clearly ongoing since Gabriel Mackle’s case – this has been reported as the reason John Paul Wootton and other have left the republican wing in Maghaberry – shows the need to re-establish the unity of all POWs and an end of one section attempting to claim that they are the ONLY IRA and the ONLY republicans.

As a non-aligned organisation if we can assist in any way in resolving this issue by negotiations we are willing to go to Ireland immediately and convene such a meeting. It would be a truly shocking thing if Donal Billings were to die on hunger strike protesting not what the British or Irish state have done to Ireland and to him but because he was the victim of the bullying and harassment by other Republicans.

Signed:
Gerry Downing, Secretary IRPSG
Annette Maloney Chair IRPSG

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Donal Billings

Irish Republican National Congress
Statement from Portlaoise Gaol August 7, 2017

I Donal Billings, wish to clarify a number of issues regarding recent events in Portlaoise Gaol. As a long standing Irish Republican Activist, I have a right to serve my time in E Block as an Irish Republican Prisoner.

At the core of recent difficulties was a breakdown in relationships between the other non-aligned prisoners housed on E1 and myself. I had previously been refused accommodation on E2 and so the leadership of E3/E4 were invited to mediate in the dispute on E1. Unfortunately no satisfactory resolution could be found and I was moved to A-Block.

Subsequently statements and comments appeared on social media and elsewhere which were not prompted or released by me or the IRNC and served only to inflame the situation and polarize positions. Some of those statements were personal and served only to attack, without justification, the leadership on E3/E4, the IRPWA, their supporters and families of Republican Prisoners. I too felt some of the things said about me were untrue. These comments should not have been made and were not helpful to me or other Republican Prisoners in Portlaoise Gaol.

I asked the IRNC to represent myself and to meet with the E3/E4 leadership, with a view to my return to E1. Following these discussions I am prepared to return to E1 and I formally ask the leadership of E3/E4 to use their influence with the non-aligned prisoners on E1 to ensure their block on me is lifted as soon as is practically possible.

My return to E1 ensures my political status and rights as a Republican Prisoner and vindicates my good name. I thank the IRNC and the leadership of E3/E4 for their assistance and patience and the honourable way they dealt with this difficult situation. I reserve the right to protest against the prison regime in the future as I see fit.

-Statement Ends

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The IRPSG regret to announce that Annette Maloney has resigned as our Chair for personal and health reasons. We thank her for the good work she has done for us and will shortly meet to elect a new Chair. Gerry Downing 7-8-2017

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
After winning the presidential election in a country where the president is a sort of constitutional king, in the so called Fifth Republic, Macron has won the Legislature, the Parliamentary elections, with a full majority. But 60%, mainly of the working class, distrust him and his program. Turnout was 48.70% in the first round and 42.64% in the second. These are record lows and the lowest-ever votes for the centre-left and centre-right in the legislative elections. In the worker’s constituencies, these abstention percentages went from 70% to 90% with 70% being a low average. If we add that to those who didn’t vote for his party “La République en Marche” we see that this is very far from an enthusiastic endorsement of his policies; his candidates got only 32% in the first round and 49%, in the second. The other parties, the conservatives or “La Droite” (LR, Les Republicains) or the France Insoumise, (Defiant France, Mélenchon) or the PCF (Parti Communiste Français) or the PS Socialist Party or the National Front (FN) have taken more than half of the actual vote but, with the present electoral system in France, they got just a tiny number of MPs. He was elected President by 66% but just over 49% of the registered electors and his MPs by a far lesser margin, just 21% of potential voters.

Marcronism; a reconstitution of French politics
This Macron government, backed by the Finance capital that is his base, the whole bourgeois in fact and a team of communicators, think-tanks and experienced advisors should answer a pressing need for beleaguered French capitalism. If they are to have a chance to keep themselves in the hotly contested search of markets and profits, they must pocket a bigger share of the worker’s money defence of the workers and employees as his headquarters was a lot of people recommend by his sponsors, think tanks and advisors, with people mainly coming from “la droite”, Les Republicains to the Macron government.

In its public agenda today, which is not what is in their projected agenda which goes very much further, there are two big laws to be implemented. The ‘reform’ of the Labour Code (le Code du Travail) and making the State of Emergency Laws an integral and definitive part of the French legislation. Of course, both come together and the first needs the second.

The ‘reform’ of the Labour Code will chain the worker by hand and foot to the bosses, rendering even the law or the national union -bosses’ agreements ineffectual against the will of the bosses. This is to be accomplished by fake “negotiation” in every individual workplace under the threat of redundancies. Today in many workplaces workers are living in a regime of terror from their bosses’ who use the threat of redundancies against them. They have absolutely no possibility to resist the pressure for wage cuts, longer working hours, worsening conditions and so forth. The only, quite hypothetical, defence but a one that bosses fear yet and workers trust even if the practical results are minimal, is the Labour Code. The bosses’ association has make an adamant requirement to finish with every measure that could in the least serve for a minimum defence of the workers and employees against the employers. The reform of the Labour Code has not only a worker-bosses’ importance but, as Mélenchon has said, it is the “cement for all French lifestyle” that is, is at the base of the compromise between the bourgeois and the best payed layers of the working class, the labour aristocracy. Anecdotally during the election campaign, you should hear some quite hard conservatives people with more foresight and political experience speaking against such an adventurous move by their class.

This could be an atomic bomb exploding in the face of everyone and there will be a reaction when people see the actual consequences of that very risky bourgeois move. In some way is a sign of the degree of adventurism of the French bourgeois class because they feel they face little political opposition and they expect, or more likely feel their own desperate need to go ahead...into the unknown.

The other measure that amounts to a reinforcement of the repression goes naturally with the first Labour’s Law and should try to kill in their infancy the massive demos that will follow the first Union’s call against this “loi sclérate”, the “shameful law”. We should expect then all the ‘tricks’ of the Prefectures, that is all sort of “provocations” coming from the power accompanied with all sort of arrests and repressive measures on behalf of the fight against terrorism... and of the State of Emergency. But the most conscious layers of the people know this and is ready to fight the reform of the Labour’s Code and the “Lois liberticides” liberticial laws, when the factual events “fall on their heads”.

Against the Macron government we have an array of parties:

The Conservatives (LR and UDI)
Amongst the opposition, MP’s 136 out of 577 are the conservatives. Naturally, many of them are quite in agreement with the Macron program, its public and its disguised agenda (perhaps even worse with attacks against the pensions system, the people’s on the dole payments, the health service system, their international agenda make of following Merkel or Washington if it is question of fighting the Russians, etc.) and there is already a split in ranks of their MP, a fraction going to the Macron government so as not to miss this opening opportunity for personal profit... but the more farsighted ones are betting in the coming months on a quick fall in Macron’s popularity, which is wholly built on ‘communication tricks’... and it is a good bet IMHO.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe
The Macronites; Pandora’s Box
The MP’s of the Macron movement are quite a funny lot. This could give their boss some headaches. Some six months ago, before his election, Macron had not got a party or a movement of his own. All that he assembled as his headquarters was a lot of people recommended by his sponsors, think tanks and advisors, with people mainly coming from
the technocratic, elite, bureaucratic part of the right or rightist socialists but with little political experience apart from one or two of them. One of them has been appointed chief of the new MPs to counsel them but mostly to control them and there is a need… As the quasi-official paper “Le Monde” put it, “in general, the so-called ‘civil society’ represented by ‘En Marche!’ is composed of CEOs, doctors, lawyers, attorneys, private councillors, and middle ranking political managers. The ‘République en Marche’ is the one of superior social categories and superior professions, dynamic managers and ‘notables’ (important people) in the provinces.” As Medaipart has written “La REM is a …world of people that is doing pretty well, even more than pretty well, as the main poll’s base of Emmanuel Macron” Their social origins are also quite clear. As Le Monde writes almost 40% comes from the “grandes écoles” the big bourgeois scholarly establishments that form the political and administrative elite of the French state apparatus. These people furnish first class service personnel to the big French corporations, to the French state administration, to industry, to trade and finance and scientific research. This narrow sociological stratum is tied up to the big capitalist groups or the French state administration. It depends on them. It is fed by them and will, naturally, do the political will of the administration councils of the big capitalist companies who are now sternly demanding an acceleration of the Sarkozy-Hollande politic of transfer of the public wealth to them. But it may not turn out so well. Many of the new MPs, even if they have the aforementioned background, are politically quite naive and it could be expected that some of them will find themselves totally out of sorts with what they think that it was all about. They want “a change” a “renouvellement” (a renewal) of political culture and of France itself as against the old culture of always “for the bosses” but in harder way now. There could be in for some surprises because these people also have a heart and a mind and may not be so easily manipulated as the “grosses têtes” (the “big egg heads”) think they will. There is such a big change on the agenda that there could be some people who just do not accept what is coming in matters like public liberties and the whole stability of the French social fabric. There are amongst them also research and scientific people which are used to thinking and are not used to being treated as mere pawns. The many illusions that exist in the lower ranks of the “En Marche!” will vanish for some when the shine come off and the real Macron politics appears. To put more hot sauce on the picture, today, when I was writing this paper, there were two important facts concerning the Macron government. Three of the most prominent ministers coming from the MODEM (centre-right group that helped Macron to be elected) have resigned or declared they are not willing to participate in the new government. This is less than two months after the presidential election we have a ministerial and political crisis. The reasons are not clear at all, but for the press they come from some minor legal problems concerning mismanagement of parliamentary money allocated for other reasons than the legal ones. It can be political grounds also but it is too soon to fully know. The other fact is the constitution of a parliamentary group coming from the conserva-
tives (LR and UDI) to support Macron, giving the government and his policy and its public opinion, a still more to the right spectrum perception of French politics. There is a frenetic run between this right and the right wing of the Socialists to win the favors of macronism and to support his politics. But there are more chances that the right wins this race. The Socialists (PS) (The French ‘Labour party’), the PS, has split itself in a quite bigger ‘Macronite’ fraction (all the right, almost as in GB) which will give a vote of confidence to the new government. Here we should put a question mark because if the Macron program who has deluded many well-intentioned people gets unmasked for the majority of the working classes (and it is beginning to happen), these same people will turn 180° to vote against. This is the profound nature of these people, save their jobs as politicians and de-
lude the working class. There is another side or fraction that, for the moment, vacillates because perhaps some are willing to go to the Mélenchon movement but not the majority, not even a fraction because the Mélenchonite movement, La France Insoumise, (the Rebel France) has come too soon/ and is too young a move-
ment to attract old bleached horses under the service of the bourgeois from the ‘left’. Perhaps there could be one or two good socialist MPs who are still attached to their worker’s root that could move to the left, pushed by the socialist base.

Les Insoumis, or La France Insoumise is the Mélenchon movement (FI) It is a difficult to define because it is a very loose movement composed mainly by petit bourgeois and workers layers with a habit of left voting. Most of them were ancient socialist and communist voters and even old leftists coming from the “Trotskyist” and “Maoists” movements. As they say here “des vieux soixant-huitards” (old sixty-eighters, reference to the 1968 movement). There is also many youngsters that in both elections voted Mélenchon by a very large majority in some way similar to the Corbyn vote in the UK. They are young, enthusiastic and taking up their very first arms in the political arena. They are the marching battalions and the future of the Mélenchonites…if they get the necessary communist political education. Mélenchon comes from the French Trotskyist Lambertist group in his youth, he is now 65, but mainly he has make his political life in the PS. The Lambertists have infiltrated many of their best militants into high places; Jospin, the old Prime Minister of Chirac, Cambadélis recently first secretary of the PS, Mélenchon himself and others. To no use at all. Some of them having become outright rightists. Mélenchon has been a senator, a minister and other high posts in the state apparatus. But some years ago, he broke with the PS and with Hollande because of “its rightists trend” and look to constitute a “new left” a new Labour party, (“Le Parti de gauche” the Left Party). Mélenchon worked out some agreements with the PCF that backfired because de PCF preferred the PS and were looking to maintain their local and national elected members. In this presi-
dential campaign, with a program mainly just left social dem-
The “extreme-left”

Lutte Ouvrière is a sectarian caricature of “Trotskyism” and the NPA seems like a fish out of the water struggling for some air and doomed to die or go into a profound coma. They have no national policy at all despite firing their feeble arrows against… Mélenchon. It is hardly of some use to speak of them. I got the impression they do not understand the minimum of politics. The practice of the LO is a sort of anarchosyndicalism sui generis preaching “Trotskyist” or “Marxist” generalities, the exact contrary of Marxism and in the international arena supporting indirectly the imperialists aggressions. As for New Anti-Capitalist Party NPA I know not what to say. They presented a tenth of their previous candidates for the Legislatives, they lack militant work and money and it is very difficult to understand their policy if they have one, albeit to comment on political life, say everywhere, as LO do also, they are just a tiny minority…pitiful also as they miserably presented themselves. Of course, and from the beginning they are totally wrong in international questions, shamefully leading the right wing in these matters. The times that comes will be hard fighting ones, because the fight that comes, with a bourgeoisie fully prepared and determined to win, could only, and necessarily could be faced by the resistance of masses of workers in the streets and in the works fighting for a general strike for socialism as a good program. Shall we see it? That is a question that lodged in the leadership of the working class and is, as it has been stated before, the main question of the moment. ▲

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
No to US imperialism’s war on Syria and North Korea!

By Tony Fox

Donald Trump’s election in the US in November was on the basis of ‘America First’ and racist attacks against Mexicans, Muslims, women and every target reactionary forces traditionally use to divide the working class. His visit face over Syria after the alleged Sarin gas attack by Assad on 4 April with the launching of 59 Tomahawk Cruise missiles on 7 April added to the bellicose threats to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) makes the world a very dangerous place now.

On 13 April, the US dropped the biggest bomb since the nuking of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the 6th and 9th of August 1945 on north eastern Afghanistan. The Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb was considered too destructive in all its wars since WW2 because of the outcry over destruction of the Japanese cities. Clearly this bomb was dropped to demonstrate to all its rivals, Syria, Iran, North Korea, Russia and China, that the USA was in war mode and ready to commit the most extreme crimes against humanity. The bomb is the equivalent of 20,000 pounds of high explosives and wipes out everything within a radius of 1,000 yards, killing people up to 1.7 miles away.

The pretext for the cruise missile strikes was an alleged chemical attack on the town of Khan Sheikhun, for which the US blamed the Syrian government without any evidence. There is no reason to believe that this story is anything but a provocation by the CIA and/or its proxy Salafi-Jihadi armies to justify its intervention. The Syrian government (which categorically denied the accusations) had absolutely no interest in carrying out such an attack - unlike the opposition, which has no future unless Western bosses rush to its rescue.

Note that we are talking about the very same opposition that has repeatedly used chemical weapons in the past, something that has even been admitted by UN officials [1] and that the incident took place on the second the day of the international Conference in Brussels on supporting the future of Syria and the region – a conference co-chaired by EU foreign affairs chief, Italian woman Federica Mogherini with the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the participation of more than 70 countries and international organisations.

The USA has a long record of staging similar incidents to justify its interventions (remember the Iraqi maternity unit in which babies that were allegedly thrown out of their incubators in Kuwait in 1990, the non-existent weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in 2003, Gaddafi’s “black mercenaries” in 2011 etc.).

The USA have now returned to their previous objective and threaten Syria with further military attacks. Just a few days before the US strikes, the US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson stated that Assad’s fate was to “be decided by the Syrian people”, which was a major concession on the US objective of regime change in Damascus. The redeployment of a US navy strike group off the waters off the Korean Peninsula (after some delays!) together with the barrage of threats about putting American nukes in the South Korea, decapitation strikes against Kim Jong-un and regime change in the DPRK marks a sharp escalation of the US war threats in Asia.

The USA and NATO who have been constantly organizing to surround, effect regime change and break-up the Russian Federation and China, especially since the fall of their puppet Boris Yeltsin in 1999. Trump is now back in line with overall imperialist policy. Trump would have been impeached by now if he had not fallen into line with the second Cold War strategy moving inexorably towards WWIII. Impeachment still looms.

The very attack on Syria was already a threatening shot across the bows of North Korea. Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Trump at Mar-a-Lago, his mansion in Palm Beach, Florida on 6 and 7 April. Trump boasted he had developed an “outstanding relationship” with him. The missile barrage occurred on the night of the 6th but China made no real objections.

“Its U.N. ambassador, Liu Jieyi, never mentioned the suspected chemical weapons attack in Syria, or the U.S. airstrikes, at an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council on the 7th. Liu focused instead on the need for a political solution to the six-year Syrian conflict. The only other foreign leader to be hosted at Mar-a-Lago during Trump’s presidency so far is Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a close U.S. ally” (on 10/2/17). [2]

The Chinese leadership is playing a dangerous game here, overthrowing the North Korean government could result in US troops and missiles on their border, the very thing they went to war against the USA and UN-sponsored invasion in 1950 to prevent.

Those of us who happened to be born in the countries of the imperialist West have a special obligation to contribute to the development of an anti-war movement that will not tolerate even the slightest amount of violence by ‘our’ government leaders against third world countries. “The nation that oppresses another nation forges its own chains” as Karl Marx wrote in 1870.

Notes
Dear comrades!

The number of communists who still remember that “the enemy is within” seems to be steadily declining in the countries of the Western Empire, with many comrades embarking on various quests of searching for the enemy abroad, in various “dictators” or mythical entities such as the Russian or Chinese “imperialism”. At the same time, a lot of comrades in the oppressed countries cannot make a fundamental distinction of who the main enemy is, and for some reason seem to have become incapable of understanding the difference between Allende and Pinochet / Dilma and Temer / a class-collaboration government vs a US-backed, clear-cut bourgeois one.

In this context, we cannot but warmly salute the principled internationalist stance you take in many important international issues, such as the Libyan, Syrian, Ukrainian and Korean issue, and in general your firm opposition to the imperial war drive, whether direct or by proxy. We also wish to commend your position against the coup that ousted the PT government in Brazil last year within the framework of the wider counter-revolutionary offensive against the peoples of Latin America, as the efforts of the Empire to reassert its declining dominance intensify. Although our class camp has suffered some important defeats in various battles in Latin America, we are convinced that the outcome of the war is yet to be decided.

A hundred years since the October Revolution, we feel that issues like the above are central in drawing the class line today – as was the issue of one’s stance towards the war preparations of ‘their own’ bourgeois class back in 1914.

We are also happy to note that our comrades in Britain see the rise of Corbyn for what it actually is, without glossing over it and – especially – without becoming uncritical cheerleaders. The Left in Britain seems to have become capable of understanding the difference between Allende and Pinochet / Dilma and Temer / a class-collaboration government vs a US-backed, clear-cut bourgeois one. The wider counter-revolutionary offensive against the peoples of Latin America, as the efforts of the Empire to reassert its declining dominance intensify. Although our class camp has suffered some important defeats in various battles in Latin America, we are convinced that the outcome of the war is yet to be decided.

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We wish to emphasize on what we consider an important lesson of revolutionary politics, vindicated by the Greek experience of 2010-2015: the revolution does not come through the escalation of spontaneous struggles, nor when a reformist or left-wing social-democrat is pressured from the left. It can arise only on the basis of a conscious plan that is carried out by forces that are fully aware of their purpose. Whenever these forces were weak, no kind of resistance has resulted in a final confrontation with the ruling class and the bourgeois state, regardless of how massive or “class-oriented” it may have been. The element that connects the revolutions from 1789 until today is the existence of conscious political subjects that played a major role in them, while at the same time taking responsibility for the day after.

Regarding the Greek issue, we are sorry to say that our class camp has not yet recovered from the defeat it suffered after the reformist illusions of SYRIZA about win-win solutions crashed on the wall of the global capitalist crisis. Although it is not the primary choice of the bourgeoisie, the SYRIZA-led government gets their job done. The huge, militant demonstrations of 2010-2012 and the massive wave of radicalization belong to the past. The defeat on the streets combined with the bankruptcy of the parliamentary road and the full capitulation of SYRIZA to the dictats of the Greek bourgeoisie, the EU and the IMF has left the biggest part of the proletariat demoralized and in the search of individual solutions, especially in the absence of a credible working class political alternative. The bourgeoisie escalates the assault against workers’ rights, tearing apart what remains of the ‘welfare state’ and making clear that the era of the social contract and of a certain arrangement between classes is gone for good. Without underestimating the battles that need to be fought or abstaining from them, the vanguard and the movement need to understand that the time of social protest and class struggle within the acceptable bounds of the previous period is over. The SYRIZA experience provides further proof that there is no way forward but the intransigent struggle against the bourgeoisie and its state.

As the crisis of capitalism, that is raging with no end in sight, coupled with the explosive escalation of NATO aggression threaten to spark a new world war, the tasks ahead are great and require common action between revolutionaries at an international level. Dear comrades, we send you our militant solidarity for the struggles ahead.

Revolutionary greetings, Communist Revolutionary Action.

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Greetings to the comrades of the Frente Comunista dos Trabalhadores – Brasil (FCT) and Tendência Militante Bolchevique – Argentina (TMB) and wishing them a victorious pre-Conference this weekend.

At this moment in history when the global left is weakened and incapable of responding to the harsh onslaughts of imperialism against the working class in a meaningful and organisational way, the FCT assumes the task of Vanguard of the Trotskyists and points the way for the workers to advance the class struggle.

While Capital reorganizes itself, imperialism send out indications of internal crisis and loss of direction, accentuated by the constant crises of the Trump administration. Trump appeals to American patriotism and calls for allies in the Middle East to foment a new war in the service of the empire.

Imperialism continues its mission to realign Latin America in subordination to their agenda of greater accumulation of goods and exploitation.” The manoeuvres of the soft blows, in Argentina and Brazil, means the working class suffer hard blows, with losses of their historical conquests.

Within these perspectives, the FCT sets out to build a revolutionary vanguard international organization, signaling the need to regroup the working class to overcome class collaboration and to understand the onslaughts of imperialist agents in Brazil and in the world with the Marxist principles of Leninism and Trotskyism.

Go forward in the fight in the way to the international conference in August!

Ana Souza, for the Socialist Workers League/USA

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
South Africa: No to the ouster of Zuma! By Tony Fox

We must locate the move to oust President Zuma in South Africa in the current stage of the crisis of global imperialism. In the 1990s, following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the USSR, imperialism triumphantly pushed forward its agenda globally to increase the exploitation of the working class domestically and the semi-colonial world. In Latin America by the late 1990s there began a fightback from the masses that brought a number of leftists regime to power; Chávez in Venezuela in 1999, a popular uprising overthrew Fernando de la Rúa in the Argentine in December 2001, Lula in Brazil in 2003, Tabaré in Uruguay in 2005, Evo Morales in Bolivia in 2006, Correa in Ecuador in 2007 and Fernando Lugo in Paraguay in 2008.

In contrast in South Africa, the ANC used the Government of National Unity to impose the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) neoliberal strategy in June 1996. In the 1999 elections Thabo Mbeki took office, the National Party lost two-thirds of its seats, and the Democratic Party (now the Democratic Alliance, DA), became the official opposition, and to it most of the apartheid white racist National Party supporters gravitated. It had been the party of liberal whites, and now gained new support also of some middle-class blacks. The coloured and Indian components of the Tricameral Parliament (1984-1994) plus the NP are more to the liking of global imperialism than the ANC now.

The imperialists are shifting alliances in South Africa to the party that contains the political bones of the white liberals Helen Suzman and Harry Schwarz together with those of Vorster, Botha and de Klerk. Could the whiff of racism from the Cape coloured and the National Party be expelled by the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa?

ANC Western Cape Secretary Faiez Jacobs had tried to play the race card but the DA has beaten them to it; some almost made it to the top table in Tricameral. Jacobs said:

“Coloured people are still enslaved with feelings of inferiority. This thing of not being white enough or black enough, of not being South African enough, is a common theme, whether real or perceived, there is a feeling of marginalisation.”

There is no real international perspective in the programme simply to remove Zuma. He is corrupt, he is degenerate, Gupta has bought his soul, his regime is ‘Zupta’, he has to go and so has the ANC, sing the capitalist mass media, his soul, his regime is ‘Zupta’, he has to go and the National Party be expunged by the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa.

ANC Deputy Secretary General Deputy Secretary General of NUMSA indicates that they are refusing to go along with this move against Zuma:

“What class forces stand to gain the most from this important site of struggle? ... In as much as we must analyse the class forces at play, we must also use the crisis and popular feelings of ordinary people to concretely benefit the working class and build working class hegemony... Not staying aloof from inter class struggles and alliances, the working class should however never aid an agenda that replaces one butcher with another. The world knows all too well what Cyril Ramaphosa's role was in Marikana and the mass murder of mineworkers by the South African Police Services in 2012. The cold reality is that some who are calling for Zuma to fall are actively campaigning for Ramaphosa to become the next South African President.”

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In the recent mobilisation before the secret vote failed to remove Zuma the parties involved were: the African Christian Democratic Party, the African Independent Congress, the African People’s Convention, the Congress of the People, Agang S.A, the Democratic Alliance, the Economic Freedom Fighters, the Inkatha Freedom Party and the United Democratic Movement, together with the Freedom Movement and Sav S.A.

This screams pro-imperialist Popular Front. And yet it is to this pro-imperialist mobilisation the centrists of the Workers and Socialist party (WASP, CWI) align themselves. Leading members Ahmed Jooma and Shabanc Khan, in an article in April, Platform of the left bloc in the Zuma must go campaign, denounce the NUMSA stance as “ultra-left”. But NUMSA are merely third campists; they refuse follow the logic of their analysis and take no sides between “one butcher and another”. Jooma and Khan say:

“The Popular Front is the main strategic weapon of the bourgeoisie to tie the hands of the working class to the interests of the bosses... The Anti-State Capture Movement has been organised largely by the Social Movements/NGO’s and parliamentary political parties. It has attracted various classes and ‘races’ to march against state capture; the white upper middle classes, the upper sections of the black petty bourgeois, the middle classes in general, the working class and poor have all joined the protests. The class character of these movements is not as important to ordinary people as the fact that they are ready to take up the fight practically and immediately.”

This is what old Joe Stalin used to call “dialectical” i.e. complete self-contradictory nonsense. Why does it not matter to the working class oppressed who leads them and where they are going? Why join this Popular Front, “the main strategic weapon of the bourgeoisie to tie the hands of the working class to the interests of the bosses”? This reminds us of the very foolish Irish republican song of the 1970s which says: “If I’m on the one road, maybe the wrong road, but we’re together now, who cares?”

We should not support this push against Zuma; we should identify Cyril Ramaphosa and the DA as the representatives of the main enemy of the South African masses, global, US-led imperialism.

No to the ouster of Zuma! Build a mass workers’ party to overthrow capitalism in SA and internationally!
Louis Proyect sums up his rejection of Trotskyism in 2013 thus:

“In my view we need to unite everybody on the left however they view the Castro brothers, Hugo Chavez or Evo Morales… But on the questions of how Cuban society is organized and how the population deals with the contradictions of trying to build a just society in an unjust world, that can be dealt with in the back pages of a theoretical magazine. But the most important task facing the left is to unite across ideological lines and to build a leadership based on its ability to have led people in battle, not on their priestly grasp of what went wrong in the USSR, Cuba, Venezuela, Angola ad infinitum, ad nauseam.”

We would suggest the theoretical issues raised above are vital to understand or else we would soon become uncritical third world radicals in the US SWP Hansen/Barnes tradition with no understanding of how to mobilise the working class anywhere in their own defence. Mao, Castro, Allende, and Chavez did not do this; there is no substitute for revolutionary Marxist leadership, i.e. Trotskyism.

On 8 July Mike Gonzalez, Professor of Latin American Studies at Glasgow University, published an article, Being Honest About Venezuela. In 2013 he was the UK SWP’s expert on Latin America but left the group over the Martin Smith sexual abuse scandal in 2013 when the Revolutionary Communist Group were “limp,” while his words were “imp,” while The Telegraph accused of him of recourse to “post-truth.” Corbyns’s crime was to be “very sad” about lives lost in Venezuela in recent months and to condemn violence committed “by any side.”

“Gonzalez says the same (as Ed Royce, senior Republican) in a more mealy-mouthed manner: under Chavez “There was no open process of decision-making… Political discussion was increasingly polarised. Public denunciations replaced debate. And power was becoming concentrated on Chavez and his immediate circle.’ Where’s the difference?”

Well there is an important difference which escapes the uncritical third wordism of the RCG. Any criticism of Chavism is support for counter-revolution in their eyes. Of course, there really are legitimate criticism of SWP/Cliffism since they refused to defend North Korea against imperialist aggression in the early 1950s. In 2013 the SWP was significantly worse than today, as the RCG pointed out in the same article:

“Mike Gonzalez has long acted as a mouthpiece for US imperialism in Latin America. From Socialist Workers Party platforms he called for the overthrow of the revolutionary government in Cuba, citing the uber-reactionary Cuban-American National Foundation as a source. The CANF is a terrorist organisation which has supported the Contras in Nicaragua and UNITA in Angola. It works to destabilise the government of Cuba and has links to the CIA.”

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

Gonzalez’s 2017 article has no pretence of defencism against imperialism, concluding thus:

“The Left outside Venezuela can help rebuild the movement by participating in an honest accounting of what went wrong. As socialists, we are not required tochoose the lesser evil. Rather, we should support those in struggle developing the basis for a genuinely democratic (i.e. capitalist—TP) society.”

This is third campist and abject political cowardice. Yes, you do take sides, refusing to support a semi-colonial country against an imperialist sponsored coup attempt despite the reactionary nature of the leadership is not wisely not picking “the lesser evil” but actively siding with the US. Truly shameful article.

The UK SWP itself has a better position. Dave Sevell’s article on 7 August Military habe attacked in Venezuela as right wing government observes:

“A successful coup by the US-backed Venezuelan right would be a disaster for the working class. Their attempts to violently roll back the clock on the left’s reforms must be opposed”

As they did in Vietnam the centrist opportunists of the SWP are able to tack to the left in conformity with the leftist Corbyn movement. They really are obliged to stand to the left of left reformism or members will just join Labour. True to form the Morning Star article on 8 August endorses Corbynism:

“Corbyn has had the backbone to stand up for his principles when many colleagues settled for a quiet life, nodding through overseas wars, support for despotic monarchies and cruel cuts to welfare benefits. His calm but firm dedication to principle informs his refusal to be stumped into a similar one-sided approach to the situation in Venezuela as that adopted by Jones, Smith, Spellar, Field and their ilk. The Sun berated him for “weasel words.” For the Daily Mail his words were “limp,” while The Telegraph accused of him of recourse to “post-truth.” Corbyn’s crime was to be “very sad” about lives lost in Venezuela in recent months and to condemn violence committed “by any side.”

MS endorses Corbyns’s pacifist refusal to take sides on imperialist aggression unless their own interests are directly threatened.

The International Viewpoint, article on 11 July 2017, by Claudio Katz, A challenge for the left, is not at all bad, reflecting their opportunism too in tacking to Corbynism with relative orthodox Trotskyist positions after their reactionary ones on Libya, Syria Ukraine etc.

“Our main enemies are the right and imperialism and to defeat them is always a priority. This elementary principle must be reaffirmed at critical moments, when the obvious can become diffuse. Whatever our criticisms of Salvador Allende, our central battle was against Pinochet… The government’s errors are not on the same level. Those who make the enormous error of identifying the two sectors confuse responsibilities of a different nature. The government’s mistakes have been verified in the inoperative change of banknotes, the inadmissible external indebtedness or the lack of control of prices and contraband. But the collapse of the economy has been caused by the wealthy who manipulate currencies, trigger inflation, manage imported goods, and discourage the provision of basic goods.”

In the Ted Grant family of UK Socialist Appeal/IMT and the Socialist Party/CWI differences are closing. The IMT capitulated to Chavism from the start but the CWI always tucked slightly to their left. Now there is the added imperative to stand to the left of Corbyn’s third campism. SP’s Serge Goulart, on 2 August in In Defence of Marzism, Venezuela: the advancing counter-revolution and how to fight it:

“The fascist bourgeois opposition, with the support of North American and European imperialism, threatens to crush the Venezuelan revolution and to wreak its achievements. … This ultra-reactionary opposition must be defeated now, and only the workers’ revolutionary initiative can achieve this. Maduro’s government is completely incapable of facing the counter-revolution. Indeed, it is actually undermining the revolutionary forces by trying, at all costs, to maintain capitalism and making conciliations with the bourgeoisie.”

Even Socialist Appeal’s Jorge Martin’s article also on 2 August, Venezuela after the Constituent Assembly elections,conciliation or revolution? whilst not explicitly detailing any of the problems of Chavism, nevertheless advocates more radical solutions than they have up to now:

The Constituent Assembly would only make sense if it was to be used in order to take decisive action to solve the current crisis, which has its roots in the deep economic recession. Only with a clear revolutionary programme is it possible to go forward. … This program would rekindle the enthusiasm amongst the masses because it would start to address the key problems of the economie and provision crisis. Such a program would have to be backed up by the revolutionary organisation of the people in the working class and poor neighbourhoods and their armed self-defence, following the example of the Popular Defence Brigades. They should be combined with the full mobilisation of the reserve of the Bolivarian Armed Forces and the close fratremisation of armed workers and peasants with its ranks.

Thearticle by our comrades Humberto and Leon opposite outlines the proper balance to be drawn between opposition to imperialism and critical defence of Chavism; the anti-imperialist united front (AIUF). ▲
Venezuela advances against the coup
Expropriate the property and the media belonging to the right-wing coup plotters!
By Humberto Rodrigues and Leon Carlos

Imperialism and the right-wing opposition have accelerated their coup plans. Early on 6 July a military mutiny was crushed in the Paramacay base in the central city of Valencia. Venezuela is the third largest economy in South America, here is concentrated the largest known oil and gas reserves on the continent and here the class struggle is more acute today. Venezuela has elected a Constituent Assembly which is much more representative of the Venezuelan people than the coup-making Congress. However, we have no constitutional illusions; this does not mean the power of the Constituent Assembly constitutes workers’ power. Supported by imperialism, the coup plotters are getting stronger all the time. Workers cannot be satisfied with the limits of the bourgeois “Chavista revolution”; the emancipation of the workers will be achieved by the workers themselves.

The Maduro Government faces a chronic political crisis arising from an economic impasse that Chavism cannot solve. The origin of this impasse lies in the sabotage the US to bring down the price of oil, Venezuela’s main product for export. This manoeuvre aims to weaken all the countries we call petro-states, such as Venezuela, Iran, Russia, Ecuador, Bolivia, etc. Iran, Russia, Ecuador, Bolivia, etc. [1] The right and most of the businessmen, agents of imperialism, sabotage economy to destabilize the political climate. In a painstaking process that has dragged on for nearly two decades, right has denounced Chavism as “squallid” and they have advanced to the point of winning the majority in Congress. [2] as a consequence, the Executive, sabotaged by the right-wing legislature, convened a Constituent Assembly to drain the powers of Parliament governed by the coup plotters.

The conflict in Venezuela could develop into a civil war as in Syria. There are already thousands of refugees who have crossed the border into Brazil. This movement, like the Cubans boatpeople or Syrians refugees, is used as propaganda against the regime of Maduro by the international media, including the coup plotters in Brazil. There is already an economic war against Venezuela. This war combines the depression of oil prices by dumping, economic sanctions on the part of imperialism and its agents, like the international bodies governed by the international agents of imperialism (Organization of American States [OAS], Mercosur [3]) and the manoeuvres of creating shortages by their coup plotters agents within the country.

Against the constituent Assembly and in defence of the current Congress coup plotters, the puppets of the great imperialist corporations in the region seek to continue the suspension of Venezuela from Mercosur, as yet another sanction to strangle their economy and rely on the vote of the right-wing governments of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Tabaré in Uruguay. [4]

Chavism was born as a fraction of the army in popular resistance of various social classes against the foreign imperialist oppression in Venezuela. Although it nationalized 1,168 companies between 2002 and 2012, these nationalised companies were compensated; this strengthened the Venezuelan capitalist state but not the power of workers over the state. “Communal Councils” administer a few basic services such as water, cleaning, transportation, schools, hospitals, food production and distribution but workers’ self-management is accomplished in only a few companies in the country.

Chavism does not politically represent the independence of the workers from the capitalist class; rather it leans on the contradiction between the workers and the multinational corporations that want to plunder the country. Chavism is not intended to overcome either the capitalist state or the capitalist system, though they claim to be socialist. And not to advance toward socialism through revolutionary means favours their reactionary adversaries who prepare a violent civil war backed by the US, which if victorious, will recolonise the country. A coup in Venezuela would consolidate the rise of the right in Brazil and Argentina and would increase pressure on Nicaragua, Ecuador and Bolivia.

The approval of the Constituent Assembly, despite the sabotage of the opposition and the international media will be followed by further attempts of coups and civil war provoked by the defeated bourgeoisie in the polls and on the streets. That the Venezuelan people must be prepared to face a possible civil war we learn from what is happening in the wider world. The peoples of Latin America must unite against the U.S. attempt to make Venezuela the new “Syria, Libya or Ukraine” this year. The Chavista strategy is not aimed at expropriating the bourgeois right, a necessity for Venezuelan society to end the food shortages and terrorism in the media criminals organised by the coup plotters. Chavism is more limited than were the Sandinistas during the 1980s who expropriated the lands of the dictator Somoza in Nicaragua.

Peron, Vargas, Allende and, more recently, Zelaya, Lugo, Dilma, [5] all of them, prefer to be beaten and to disarm, not to arm, workers who are waging a struggle against the right. But there are differences between the full and shameful capitulation of the PT in Brazil and the resistance, although limited, of Maduro or Assad because, as we see, the last two are still in power and Dilma was overthrown by a parliamentary coup. Chavism performs the tasks of a democratic revolution [6] that can only be consolidated by revolutionary workers’ power outlet and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which overcomes Chavism itself.

That is why we call on Chavism not to oppose the expansion of the Bolivarian National Militia (a contingent of one million Chavist civilians voluntarily registered in the national defence registry) towards the armament of all working people.

Some countries present themselves as Venezuela’s allies against imperialism and its agents, such as Russia, China and Iran. We advocate that these countries provide advanced weapons, technology and military training to reduce Venezuela’s
vulnerability to imperialism and its Venezuelan agents. In addition, the workers must take the initiative, and organize direct action to confiscate the warehouses and the weapons of the coup plotters. At the same time, the vanguard of the workers must organize themselves in a single block, a military united front politically independent of the Chavist PSUV and without placing any political trust in Maduro. The emancipation of the workers will be the work of the workers themselves. This is the why the social revolution in Venezuela must advance.

Notes
[1] Petro-states are capitalist states that rely on large reserves of oil and gas, energy matrices of capitalism on the planet. Although they establish deals with large corporations to export oil, on the other hand, they need to defend participation in oil income and so come into conflict with the multinational oil companies. The armed forces of the petro-states are almost always part of a state oil-military complex.
[2] In the parliamentary elections of December 2015, the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) won 109 of the 164 general seats and all three indigenous seats, which gave them a supermajority in the National Assembly, while the Great Patriotic Pole (GPP) the wider alliance of the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) won the remaining 55 seats. Voter turnout was 74.17%. This was obviously a serious reversal for Maduro, after his close election, his base in the poor, crime-ridden barrios was melting away. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venezuelan_parliamentary_elections_2015.
[3] Wikipedia, Mercosur, (Spanish: Mercado Común del Sur, Portuguese: Mercado Comum do Sul, Southern Common Market) is a sub-regional bloc. Its full members are Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Venezuela is a full member but has been suspended since December 1, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercosur
[5] Juan Perón: Thrice elected President of Argentina, serving from June 1946 to September 1955, when he was overthrown in a coup d'état, and then from October 1973 until his death in July 1974. Getúlio Vargas: President of Brazil during two periods: the first was from 1930-1945, when he served as interim president from 1930-1934, President from 1934-1937, and dictator from 1937-1945. After being overthrown in a 1945 coup, Vargas returned to power as the democratically elected president in 1951, serving until his suicide in 1954. Salvador Allende: First self-proclaimed Marxist in Latin America elected President of Chile in 1970. On 11 September 1973, General Augusto Pinochet overthrew and murdered him in a coup d'état supported by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). José Zelaya: President of Honduras from 27 January 2006 until 28 June 2009. During the 2009 Honduran constitutional crisis, he was seized by the military and sent to Costa Rica in a coup d'état. Fernando Lugo: President of Paraguay from 2008 to 2012. Previously he was a Roman Catholic priest and bishop, serving as Bishop of the Diocese of San Pedro from 1994 to 2005. In 2012, he was removed from office through an impeachment process that neighbouring countries deemed a coup d'état. Dilma Rousseff: 36th President of Brazil from 2011 until her impeachment and removal from office on 31/8/16.
[6] Advances of the Bolivarian regime: Laws on land ownership were enacted in 2001 and 2014. 3,700,000 hectares were delivered and 10,200,000 hectares were regularized under the administration of peasants, organized communities and so-called socialist enterprises, nationalized enterprises, co-managed by the state and by workers or cooperatives. In 2005 the country was declared by UNESCO as territory free of illiteracy after educating 1,500,000 people. With the hydrocarbon law, the state regained control of PEDEVESA and increased the taxes that the multinationals should pay to the Venezuelan state. Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA) (Petroleum of Venezuela) is the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company.

May’s coalition partners: the DUP, the political wing of the UDA and UVF death squads

By Gerry Downing

May’s partners in government, the Irish Loyalist Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) are by far the most right-wing, backward in social attitudes and bigoted in Parliament. The Agreement signed on 26 June gives an extra €1 billion in funding to Northern Ireland, and pledges not to change the triple-lock on pensions and axes the proposed means-testing for the winter fuel allowance along with other empire-defending measures in return for their 10 votes.

The cynical corruption in the ‘Cash for Ash’ scandal is only the latest of a series of appalling corruption scandals to engulf the DUP. The main concern of the UK government is to prevent exposure of all these scandals and the emergence of the political conclusion that this is an illegitimate state. The DUP are homophobic, anti-abortion misogynists and Christian religious fundamentalists with strong historic and current links with loyalist death squads.

We can thank George Osborne’s Evening Standard for the lowdown on just three of them: Emma Little-Pengelly, Belfast South: 37-year-old mother of three is a first-time MP and sole woman in the DUP’s Westminster line-up. She was a special adviser for Rev Ian Paisley and his successor Peter Robinson. Her father Noel Little was a member of the Ulster Resistance involved in a foiled plot to procure weapons for loyalist paramilitaries. Sammy Wilson, East Antrim: Another former figure in the Northern Ireland Assembly, this 64-year-old courted controversy in 2016 when he was recorded allegedly agreeing with a member of the public who said “get the ethnics out”. He denied the claim. David Simpson, Upper Bann: A Free Presbyterian, he has voted against same sex marriage stating: “In the garden of Eden it was Adam and Eve it wasn’t Adam and Steve.”

The Irish News reported on 23 June that, A former loyalist paramilitary commander turned supergrass has pleaded guilty to 200 terrorist offences, including five murders. Gary Haggarty, the ex-chief of the Ulster Volunteer Force’s notorious north Belfast unit, admitted the litany of crimes as part of his deal with the State to give evidence against fellow terrorists. As well as the five murders, the 45-year-old, who is currently in protective custody, admitted five attempted murders, including against police officers; 23 counts of conspiracy to murder; directing terrorism; and membership of a proscribed organisation, when he appeared before a judge at Belfast Crown Court. Haggarty, who worked as a police informant during the Troubles, was interviewed more than 1,000 times by detectives in one of the biggest and most complex cases ever undertaken in Northern Ireland.

We shall see from this appalling account that state collusion with the UDA, UVF and other Loyalist death squads was routine and the DUP was no more that their political representatives. And the 1986 Ulster Resistance paramilitary alliance of all these murderous mobs is where they all met.

Having mercilessly attacked Corbyn and McDonnell for allegedly supporting the IRA ‘terrorists’ the hypocrisy of allying with the party which is no more than the political arm of the
Loyalist death squads of the UDA and UVF is obvious. The DUP party have shared platforms loyalist paramilitaries. In 1996, former MP Rev William McCrea stood at a Portadown rally alongside LVF leader Billy Wright. This ruthless paramilitary group, which split from the UVF in 1996, was responsible for scores of murders.

In the mid-1980s the DUP also had close links with Ulster Resistance, set up in response to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The group was launched in 1986 at a rally in the Ulster Hall in Belfast addressed by then DUP leader Ian Paisley. Peter Robinson, who at the time was his party’s deputy leader, was later photographed at another Ulster Resistance rally wearing its red paramilitary beret.

The group collaborated with the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), Red Hand Commando (RHC) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) to procure arms. In June 1987, the UVF stole more than £300,000 from the Northern Bank in Portadown. The money was used to buy 206 Vz. 58 assault rifles, 94 Browning 9 mm pistols, 4 RPG-7 rocket launchers and 62 warheads, 450 RG-D-5 grenades and 30,000 rounds of ammunition which arrived at Belfast docks from Lebanon in December 1987. The weapons were then transported to a farm between Armagh and Portadown, to await collection by the three groups.

In 2014 the DUP and other unionist parties were also criticised for joining the UVF-linked PUP in signing up to a ‘graduated response’ following the banning of an Orange Order parade in Ardoyne, north Belfast. The ‘graduated response’ later failed to materialise after the PUP, TUV and Ulip withdrew their support for the pan-unionist group amid allegations of ‘betrayal’ over parading.

In June 2017 Arlene Foster was criticised over meeting UDA leader Jackie McDonald just days after the 28 May murder of rival Colin Horner in a supermarket car park in Bangor in an UDA breakaway feud.

Serving police officers who attacked the Rock Bar in Granemore in June 1976 using guns and a bomb packed with nails and pieces of metal actually escaped in a police car. Lying on the ground, having been machine-gunned in the stomach, one survivor noticed his would-be killer was wearing police boots. Another gang member returned to the scene an hour later in uniform to take statements from survivors.

The Glenanne Gang was a secret informal alliance of Northern Irish loyalist extremists who carried out shooting and bombing attacks against Catholics/Irish nationalists in the 1970s, during the Troubles.

Most of its attacks took place in the area of Armagh and Tyrone referred to as the “murder triangle”. It also launched some attacks elsewhere in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. The gang included British soldiers from the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), police officers from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and members of the Mid Ulster Brigade of the illegal Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).

Twenty-five British soldiers and police officers were named as having been part of the gang. Details about the group have come from many sources, including the affidavit of former member and RUC officer John Weir; statements by other former members; police, army and court documents; and ballistics evidence linking the same weapons to various attacks.

Since 2003, the group’s activities have also been investigated by independent inquiries: the 2006 Cassel Report, and three reports commissioned by Irish Supreme Court Justice Henry Barron, known as the Barron Reports. A book focusing on the group’s activities, Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland, was published in 2013. It drew on all the sources, as well as Historical Enquiries Team investigations.

Lethal Allies claims that permutations of the group killed about 120 people – almost all of whom were “upwardly mobile” Catholic civilians with no links to Irish republican paramilitaries. The Cassel Report investigated 76 murders attributed to the group and found evidence that British soldiers and RUC officers were involved in 74 of those. RUC officer John Weir claimed his superiors knew he was working with loyalist militiants but allowed it to continue.

The Cassel Report also said that some senior officers knew of the crimes but did nothing to prevent, investigate or punish those responsible. It has been alleged that some key members were double agents working for British military intelligence and RUC Special Branch. Attacks attributed to the group include the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, the Miami Showband killings, and the Reavey and O'Dowd killings. Even though UVF members were almost certainly involved in Dublin and Monaghan bombing in 17 May 1974, the British government continued with its plans to de-proscribe the organisation a week later. Most who have examined the evidence conclude that the MI6 directed the UVF in that bombing.

Many of the victims were killed at their homes or in indiscriminate attacks on Catholic-owned pubs with guns and/or bombs. Some were shot after being stopped at fake British Army checkpoints, and a number of the attacks were coordinated. When it wished to “claim” its attacks, the group usually used the name “Protestant Action Force”.

And over all this state counterrevolution stood the DUP, from Ian Paisley to Peter Robinson to Arlene Forster. Their goal was to maintain the illegitimate state of “Northern Ireland”, to continue repression of the nationalist minority, now moving dangerously close to 50% of the population and to maintain the border and thereby Britain’s imperialist domination over the whole of Ireland. The Coalition/Alliance reveals the truth of Britain’s occupation of the north of Ireland and the appalling methods used to maintain that occupation. ▲
The Grenfell fire will forever remain etched in the minds of not only the people of Britain but that the world over. The sheer scale of its tragedy and the unimaginable horror for the victims demonstrates clearly for all to see that working-class lives don’t matter in the pursuit of a quick profit. Put very starkly this was a tragedy that could so easily be avoided.

The official death toll is 79 as we go to press and there were 65 hospitalised. Such is the anger that the wanton deaths for profit have caused not just amongst the local population but much wider that the real scale of death and its number has yet to be released.

There were approximately 600 people who lived in Grenfell tower and that means there are 450 that are missing. The number of dead could possibly be on an unprecedented scale and provoke a level of anger that may not be easily contained.

Speaking at the Day of Rage protest a local resident said that: “They’re telling us it’s 79. We’re not stupid… it’s in the hundreds.” she believed the authorities were releasing news of the deaths ‘bit by bit’ to avoid a riot.

There are a variety of reasons that the building burned so quickly and the fire spread so rapidly causing such horrific devastation. In this article we don’t have the room to touch on the full details.

To cut corners there was no sprinkler system installed, only one staircase by which to escape. There were no proper fire doors installed in the building. Regulations state that all tower blocks being built must have fire doors on the flat, the stairwell and the riser doors, which give access to the pipes. Therefore, the fire brigades advice to stay in the flats was based on that but due to no fire doors it spread so rapidly.

Put simply there was no protection in place for the residents of Grenfell Tower. The austerity drive of the Tories of the last 7 years has brought devastating cuts to the fire service. In London 10 fire stations, 27 engines and 500 fire fighters. Boris when questioned on the cuts told the interviewer to “get stuffed”.

But the root of this fire can be laid to blame at the foot of the local Government and national Government and the privateers. The building regulations were changed by Thatcher in 1986, she downgraded the level of protection a building required and from that moment on the doors opened to the profiteers.

The cladding that was a major cause of the fire has now been found on 600 other UK public properties and is being removed. Whole blocks are being evacuated in Camden causing further anger and panic, this will occur elsewhere as the work goes on.

But really what is revealed here in the tragedy of Grenfell Tower is the wanton disregard for working class life in the pursuit of profit. We cannot wait for 28 years like the magnificent Hillsborough families. We demand arrests and an inquest now!

The memory of Bush looking out of the window of Air Force One as it circled over the devastation of Katrina is on a par with May refusing to meet the residents of the area and the far from rapid response to the disaster. The Government are widely seen as abandoning the residents offering just £10 per day and housing them in sports halls. Bush never recovered from his Katrina moment its likely this fire will be viewed as Teresa May’s Katrina moment. Uncaring heartless representative of a class only interested in profit.

In contrast, the message offered by our Labour Party lead-

er that this has proved that austerity kills and that every one of the deaths should have been avoided. Corbyn has really caught the mood and epitomised it with this comment made in the debate in the House “working-class people’s voices are ignored, their concerns dismissed by those in power.”

There exists in society at present a real mood that is so sadly encapsulated by the Grenfell tragedy that we as a working class have been pushed back so far, driven to the limits and beyond in the pursuit of profit that enough is enough. There is a real thirst for an alternative which is demonstrated by the popularity for Corbyn and his simple straightforward anti austerity message and one of a programme of hope based on mild socialist demands. This really speaks to people at present.

Corbyn’s demand that empty properties in Kensington owned by the rich should be seized to house the homeless of the Grenfell Tower met with widespread support. “It can’t be acceptable that in London we have luxury buildings and luxury flats left empty as land banking for the future while the homeless and the poor look for somewhere to live.

It represents a real yearning in society for an alternative for a message of change that a better world is indeed possible. When the masses begin to see their class exploitation so clearly as they do now and reach out for the alternative it is indeed a moment to be seized.

We as socialists in the Labour party have an historic and urgent task to win this mood over to Labour as members as activists. It is only through that task that we can build a Party capable of playing the decisive role in the move towards a socialist change.

It may well be that when we look back the tragedy of Grenfell tower so horrific in its spectacle may prove to be the moment from which there was no return and revealed for all who yearned for change angry at society that it was clearly based on naked class exploitation of us the working class.

As Ben Okri writes in the closing words of a new poem:

In this age of austerity
The poor die for others’ prosperity.
Nurseries and libraries fade from the land.
A strange time is shaping on the strand.
A sword of fate hangs over the deafness of power.
See the tower, and let a new world-changing thought flower.
Dialectics is the science of movement and change

Reply to Joanne Telfer’s Dialectics, class consciousness and the philosophy of praxis
By Gerry Downing 20-7-17

The great error in Joanne’s piece is not understanding that dialectics is the science of movement and change, how all things, including our own thoughts, move, how and why they change. Cliff Slaughter was quite right on this matter in 1962, despite later degeneration.

“Lenin very specifically says that the self-movement of things through the struggle of opposites is the science of dialectics. This is the logical consequence of the understanding that dialectics is the self-movement of reality, and of the concepts reflecting reality, and not an external logic which imposed its own distinctions and comparisons on reality. Dialectics is the theory of how reality sorts itself out, with growing human knowledge seen as the latest development of this reality, rather than a way of sorting out reality. Hegel is quoted by Lenin to this effect: “Thinking reason, however, sharpens, so to say, the blunt difference of diverse terms, the mere manifoldness of pictorial thinking, into essential difference, into opposition. Only when the manifold terms have been driven to the point of contradiction to they become active and lively towards one another, receiving in contradiction the negativity which is the indwelling pulsation of self-movement and spontaneous activity.” [1]

Absolutely central to that is the recognition of movement as a property of matter; there is no movement without matter, there is no matter without movement. Self-movement is a property of matter and does not require an outside force to set it in motion or stop it; matter has always moved and it always will. The source of movement is the unity and conflict of opposites within every phenomenon, natural and human. Thought itself is a natural phenomenon, matter which thinks via the movement of micro electrical impulses between brain cells, not a mysterious process only understood as a gift from a god in the sky. [2]

All things are only at rest relative to one another; they appear so because they are moving at the same rate and in the same direction. Rest on the planet earth is relative whilst that planet is hurtling through space. Equilibrium in the class struggle and in human class consciousness is dynamic which inevitably will break to reveal its essence at certain points under certain circumstances. Accident, i.e. the emergence of Jeremy Corbyn as the leader of the Labour party in 2015, his re-election in 2016 and Labour’s consequent record-breaking surge in the 2017 general election, is how necessity reveals itself.

And if we are not satisfied with how Marx and Engels dealt with this most essential of philosophical concepts for Marxism let Lenin speak on what he did contribute; On the Question of Dialectics:

The same is true of Engels. But it is “in the interests of popularisation...” and not as a law of cognition (and as a law of the objective world).

In mathematics: + and −. Differential and integral.
In mechanics: action and reaction.
In physics: positive and negative electricity.
In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.
In social science: the class struggle.

The identity of opposites (it would be more correct, perhaps, to say their “unity,”—although the difference between the terms identity and unity is not particularly important here. In a certain sense both are correct) is the recognition (discovery) of the contradicto-

ry, mutually exclusive, opposite tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature (including mind and society). The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world in their “self-movement,” in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Development is the “struggle” of opposites. The two basic (or two possible? Or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, and development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).

In the first conception of motion, self - movement, its driving force, its source, its motive, remains in the shade (or this source is made external—God, subject, etc.). In the second conception the chief attention is directed precisely to knowledge of the source of “self” - movement.

The first conception is lifeless, pale and dry. The second is living. The second alone furnishes the key to the “self-movement” of everything existing; it alone furnishes the key to “leaps,” to the “break in continuity,” to the “transformation into the opposite,” to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new. The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.

NB: The distinction between subjectivism (scepticism, sophistry, etc.) and dialectics, incidentally, is that in (objective) dialectics the difference between the relative and the absolute is itself relative. For objective dialectics, there is an absolute within the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry, the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute (the boldings are ours, the italics are Lenin’s). [3]

Joanne asserts dialectics is merely the laws of thought as developed by Hegel and ‘stood on their feet’ by Marx — i.e. he accepted the dialectical laws of Hegel but saw him as an objective idealist who understood the origins of thought in the ‘Absolute Idea’. Marx only accepted them as laws of thought alone, we are urged to believe. [4] But that revisionist Engels in his book The Dialects of Nature illegitimately extended this to the whole of nature. This book was written between 1878 and 1882, while Marx was still alive but not published until 1925 in Russian and German in the USSR. Because it was not published while Marx was still alive that was how Engels got away with it until Jean-Paul Sartre stumbled to the scoundrel in 1960 in his book Critique of Dialectical Reason and finally exposed the fraud for what he was, supposedly. It was true that the fraudster smuggled some of this stuff past Marx himself in his book Anti-Dühring published in 1878, five years before Marx died. Joanne explains:

“It’s important to note that this (Dialectics of Nature - GD) was not published during his lifetime and was unfinished but what Engels is clearly trying to do here is to take the Hegelian dialectical method and claim that this is the same process governing physical reality. It’s true that within natural science there are opposites, acid and base, metal and non-metal, prey and predator but not only do these opposites in the material world not behave dialectically,
nothing useful can be obtained by attempting to apply dialectical logic to them. Jean Paul Sartre writes at length about this, remarking that even if there are some sort of dialectical laws at work in natural science, there is as yet very little information to back this up. Others including Lukács and Gramsci were aware that this was a mistake but significantly Engels’ manuscripts were discovered and published by Soviet researchers during the Stalinist era... This approach also appears in the section devoted to dialectics in Anti-Dühring …. Engels had ceased work on his dialectics of nature in order to write a polemic against Dühring at the request of Marx who was preoccupied with writing Capital. Clearly some of Engels’ postponed project crept into this polemic but whether or not Marx actually agreed with this approach to dialectics we may never know. Marx’s health by this time was failing and impeding his own progress”

It was a little more than some revisionist stuff that “crept into this polemic” which Marx was supposedly too ill or stupid to recognise. This was a division of labour, not only did Marx correspond with Engels on Anti-Dühring in several exchanges of letters but he edited the entire work and wrote Chapter 10: From Kritische Geschichte in Part II: Political Economy. And that stuff on dialectics was very specific; it is quite famous as part of the popular pamphlet Socialist, Utopian or Scientific, which every serious Marxist must study. And it was not the only piece. In fact, the entire work is permeated with this outlook which Joanne is attempting to make us believe the dullard Marx just failed to spot. Here is some of that stuff which is extraneous to Marxism, we must believe:

“When we consider and reflect upon nature at large or the history of mankind or our own intellectual activity, at first, we see the picture of an endless entanglement of relations and reactions in which nothing remains what, where and as it was, but everything moves, changes, comes into being and passes away. This primitive, naive but intrinsically correct conception of the world is that of ancient Greek philosophy, and was first clearly formulated by Heraclitus: everything is and is not, for everything is fluid, is constantly changing, constantly coming into being and passing away. …To the metaphysician, things and their mental reflexes, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other and apart from each other, are objects of investigation fixed, rigid, given once for all. He thinks in absolutely irreconcilable antitheses. “His communication is ‘yea, yea; nay, nay’; for whatsoever is more than these...” [Matthew 5:37. — Ed.] For him a thing either exists or does not exist; a thing cannot at the same time be itself and something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another, cause and effect stand in a rigid antithesis one to the other.

…Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasing daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, nature works dialectically and not metaphysically. But the naturalists who have learned to think dialectically are few and far between, and this conflict of the results of discovery with preconceived modes of thinking explains the endless confusion now reigning in theoretical natural science, the despair of teachers as well as learners, of authors and readers alike.

An exact representation of the universe, of its evolution, of the development of mankind, and of the reflection of this evolution in the minds of men, can therefore only be obtained by the methods of dialectics with its constant regard to the innumerable actions and reactions of life and death, of progressive or regressive changes. And in this spirit the new German philosophy has worked. Kant began his career by resolving the stable solar system of Newton and its eternal duration, after the famous initial impulse had once been given, into the result of a historic process, the formation of the sun and all the planets out of a rotating nebulous mass. From this he at the same time drew the conclusion that, given this origin of the solar system, its future death followed of necessity. His theory half a century later was established mathematically by Laplace, and half a century after that the spectroscope proved the existence in space of such incandescent masses of gas in various stages of condensation.

And there is in Anti-Dühring, in the whole of Part I, the section on philosophy, chapters 3 to 8, which we must believe also escaped Marx’s attention: Chapter 5: Time and Space, Chapter 6: Cosmogony, Physics, Chemistry, Chapter 7: The Organic World, Chapter 8: The Organic World. (Conclusion). All that stuff is not about the human brain at all or at least not about the functioning of the brain as a separate thing from nature itself. Chapter 5 ends amusingly thus:

“Herr Dühring admits that absolute identity cannot of itself effect the transition to change. Nor is there any means whereby absolute equilibrium can of itself pass into motion. … so long as present-day mechanics holds good — and this science, according to Herr Dühring, is one of the most essential levers for the formation of thought — it cannot be explained at all how it is possible to pass from immobility to motion. But the mechanical theory of heat shows us that the movement of masses under certain conditions changes into molecular movement (although here too one motion originates from another motion, but never from immobility); and this, Herr Dühring shily suggests, may possibly furnish a bridge between the strictly static (in equilibrium) and dynamic (in motion). But these processes take place “somewhat in the dark”. And it is in the dark that Herr Dühring leaves us sitting.

This is the point we have reached with all his deepening and sharpening — that we have perpetually gone deeper into ever sharper nonsense, and finally land up where of necessity we had to land up — “in the dark”. But this does not abash Herr Dühring much. Right on the next page he has the effrontery to declare that he “has been able to provide a real content for the idea of self-equall stability directly from the behaviour of matter and the me-

Vladimir Lenin left Zurich in 2 April 1917 in the famous sealed train. Here he studied Hegel in great depth and developed the understanding the revolutionary relationship between subject and object that enabled him to turn the Bolshevik party around via his April Theses to face the second October revolution against the conciliating party tops, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Kalinin and Stalin.
chanical forces" {D. Ph. 82}. And this man describes other people as “charlatans”!
Fortunately, in spite of all this helpless wandering and confusion “in the dark”, we are left with one consolation, and this is certainly edifying to the soul: “The mathematicians of the inhabitants of other celestial bodies can rest on no other axioms than our own!”

In a passage which attempts to rubbish the dialectical ideas of motion and change Joanne tells us: “With the negation of the negation rendered controversial (a controversy which continues to this day) and the transformation between quantity and quality being merely an example of a dialectical relationship, what we are left with is the interpenetration of opposites, that we can wear around our neck in a Tao symbol, Stalin’s official dialectic and thus the official Soviet philosophy and the one handed down through the entire Third International is reduced to Heraclitian (Heraclitus circa 500 BC) philosophy “everything flows”.

Marx’s authentic dialectic becomes lost in this fog because he situates it not in the abstract fantasy of an Absolute spirit (as in Hegel) and not in the general motion of matter as in Engels but in the historical journey of living human subjects in tandem with their natural and constructed environment. To situate in in context and appreciate its real relevance we need to rediscover it within the concept of historical materialism where it really applies and in order to do this we must situate it within a philosophy of praxis.

Of course, all serious Marxist dialecticians defend the triad as set out by Engels:

It is, therefore, from the history of nature and human society that the laws of dialectics are abstracted. For they are nothing but the most general laws of these two aspects of historical development, as well as of thought itself. And indeed, they can be reduced in the main to three:

The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa;
The law of the interpenetration of opposites;
The law of the negation of the negation.

All three are developed by Hegel in his idealist fashion as mere laws of thought: the first, in the first part of his Logic, in the Doctrine of Being; the second fills the whole of the second and by far the most important part of his Logic, the Doctrine of Essence; finally, the third figures as the fundamental law for the construction of the whole system. The mistake lies in the fact that these laws are foisted on nature and history as laws of thought, and not deduced from them. This is the source of the whole forced and often outrageous treatment; the universe, willy-nilly, is made out to be arranged in accordance with a system of thought which itself is only the product of a definite stage of evolution of human thought. If we turn the thing round, then everything becomes simple, and the dialectical laws that look so extremely mysterious in idealist philosophy at once become simple and clear as noonday. [3] Lenin regarded Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC) as a founder, with Plato, of dialectics, certainly not one whose study would Lenin (c. 535

and Werden, generally speaking, can be without repetition, without return to the point of departure, and then such motion would not be an “identity of opposites.” But astronomical and mechanica

terrestrial) motion, and the life of plants, animals and man— all this has hammered into the heads of mankind not merely the idea of motion, but motion precisely with a return to the point of departure, i.e., dialectical motion.

This is naively and delightfully expressed in the famous formula (or aphorism) of Heraclitus: “it is impossible to bar the twice in the same river”—actually, however (as had already been said by Cratylius, a disciple of Heraclitus), it cannot be done even once (for before the whole body has entered the water, the latter is already not the same as before).

And the words of Heraclitus: “The world was created by none of the Gods or men, but is eternally living fire and will always be so” (ibidem). [5]

But there was a good reason to repudiate Engels, Lenin and Trotsky on dialectics (and pretend the idiot Marx just didn’t understand), it seems. Joanne had already indicated where she was going with her dialectics above:

“Jean Paul Sartre writes at length about this, remarking that even if there are some sort of dialectical laws at work in natural science, there is as yet very little information to back this up. Others including Lukács and Gramsci were aware that this was a mistake but significantly Engels’ manuscripts were discovered and published by Soviet researchers during the Stalinist era”.

Well both the USSR and China published vast quantities of the unpublished words of Marx, Engels and Lenin together with cheap reprints of classic Marxist texts which educated whole generation of Marxists and marks them out as progressive social formations, despite their counter-revolutionary Stalinist leaderships. You go with Lukács, Gramsci and Jean Paul Sartre, with a nod to Althusser and a distorted Karl Marx, Jo-anne, I’ll oppose them with the properly-understood works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Notes

[1] THE A W A K E N I N G – Quantum Mechanics of the Human Brain and Consciousness: “The brain consists of about 1.3 kg. of grey matter which is made up of hundreds of billions of specialized cells known as neurons which have electrical properties akin to those of transistor circuits in computers. Like in transistor circuits these cells are interconnected and there are trillions of such neuron-neuron connections in the brain. Like in transistor circuits electrical signals are transmitted through neurons by unidirectional electrical pulses which are excited, modulated, or inhibited by pulses in other neurons, and passed on to other neurons.”

The Real Points at Issue in April 1917

The real distortions Lars T Lih (‘All power to the Soviets!’, April 20) uses to prove his ridiculous theses are to misrepresent the programme of the Bolsheviks pre-April 1917, to misrepresent Lenin’s stance in April 1917, to hide the capitulation of Kamenev, Stalin, and M. K. Muranov to the Provisional government before April and to rip the debate out of its international context. He obscures the real issues by vague phraseology in April 1917:

“Kalinin endorsed the Soviets as a vehicle for the class vlast of the workers and peasants, à la old Bolshevism. Nevertheless, he did not endorse Lenin’s own personal enthusiasm about the Soviets as a higher type of democracy… As soon as the Soviets and their mass base grasped these realities (as the Bolsheviks believed them to be), they would take “full and complete vlast [svia polnota vlasti] into their own hands. Insofar as the revolution is going to develop and to deepen, it will come to this: to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry”.

If we ignore the pretentious use of Russian phrases “The class vlast of the workers and peasants” is a theoretical and political nonsense phrase; the ‘revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry’ was the central thing that Lenin’s April theses rejected. In Marxist terms this refers to a capitalist government in a capitalist state. Lenin could not be more explicit that he was totally opposed to this programme of April 1917:

“Whoever now talks only about the ‘revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry’ has lost touch with life, has, in virtue of this circumstance, gone over, in practice, to the petty bourgeois against the proletarian class struggle; and he ought to be relegated to the museum of ‘Bolshevik’ pre-revolutionary antiquities (or, as one might call it, the museum of ‘old Bolsheviks’).

And the April theses were NOT ‘old Bolshevism’. Writing in 1905 Lenin spelled out the ‘old Bolshevik’ position:

“By participating in the provisional government, we are told, Social-Democracy would have the power in its hands; but as the party of the proletariat, Social-Democracy cannot hold the power without attempting to put our maximum programme into effect, i.e., without attempting to bring about the socialist revolution. In such an undertaking it would, at the present time, inevitably come to grief, discredit itself, and play into the hands of the reactionaries. Hence, participation by Social-Democrats in a provisional revolutionary government is inadmissible. “This argument is based on a misconception: it confounds the democratic revolution with the socialist revolution, the struggle for the republic (including our entire minimum programme) with the struggle for socialism. If Social-Democracy sought to make the socialist revolution its immediate aim, it would assuredly discredit itself … It is the march of events that will “impose” upon us the imperative necessity of waging a furious struggle for the republic and, in practice, guide our forces, the forces of the politically active proletariat, in this direction. It is the march of events that will, in the democratic revolution, inevitably impose upon us such a host of allies from among the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, whose real needs will demand the implementation of our minimum programme, that any concern over too rapid a transition to the maximum programme is simply absurd.”

It could not be clearer here. It was to be a bourgeois revolution to bring about a bourgeois republic led by the working class based on the ‘minimum programme’ i.e. reforming capitalism (as opposed to the Menshevik programme of a bourgeois revolution led by the liberal bourgeoisie against Tsarist absolutism). Any attempt to carry out a socialist revolution would “inevitably come to grief, discredit itself, and play into the hands of the reactionaries”.

First capitalism must be developed for a whole historic period – not just a few months – to build up the forces of the organised working class and to make the economy ready for the socialist revolution. Such was the political wisdom inherited from Karl Kautsky and German Social Democracy, unchallenged until Trotsky’s 1905 Permanent Revolution and rejected by Lenin in his April thesis. This is Trotsky’s very different outlook in his 1906 work, Results and Prospects:

“The political domination of the proletariat is incompatible with its economic enslavement. No matter under what political flag the proletariat has come to power, it is obliged to take the path of socialist policy. It would be the greatest utopianism to think that the proletariat, having been raised to political domination by the internal mechanism of a bourgeois revolution, can, even if it so desires, limit its mission to the creation of republican-democratic conditions for the social domination of the bourgeoisie. The political domination of the proletariat, even if it is only temporary, will weaken to an extreme degree the resistance of capital, which always stands in need of the support of the state, and will give the economic struggle of the proletariat tremendous scope.”

These are two counterposed views of historical perspectives for the Russian Revolution. It would indeed be a bourgeois revolution, Trotsky assessed then, but one that could not sus-
tain itself without expropriating the bourgeoisie and making the socialist revolution – hence the uninterrupted, permanent revolution. No whole historic period of consolidating the bourgeois republic and building up its resources was possible, and, contrary to Lars, a few months is NOT an historical era in which the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry reigned: dual power reigned in this period which had to be and was settled in the immediate future in favour of one class only. Fully aware of this Lenin now abandoned the first, ‘old Bolshevik’ perspective and adopted the second in his April theses.

The Lars T Lih School of Falsification

13-5-17

Lars T Lih continues his falsification of the history of the Russian Revolution. (WW, All Power to the Soviets 4 May). And it becomes clearer that he is seeking to defend the politics of Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Kalinin and rubbish those of Lenin and Trotsky.

The April Theses is imbued with internationalism. That is why Lenin proposed to change the name of the party to the Communist Party and to form a new international. The Third Communist International, the Comintern, was proposed for the first time here because the goal he sought was world revolution.

We would cite the foreword that Lenin wrote to Nikolai Bukharin’s, Toward a Theory of the Imperialist State in 1915 and his own 1916 Imperialism, the Highest stage of Capitalism as the two works that gave Lenin that fundamental understanding of the interconnectedness of the whole world economy, the struggle against imperialism as a truly global one and one which could not be won in a single country. That profound internationalism was the necessary theoretical preparation for the April Theses that brought Lenin and Trotsky together theoretically and politically. It is very telling that both Lars T Lih and Eric Blanc confuse this matter; theirs is a bogus internationalist perspective.

No, Lenin claimed, we must have our socialist revolution now because the class consciousness of the Russian working class is international and constitutes a part of the world revolution. This is part of their quest to discredit Lenin and Trotsky and rehabilitate the rightist Bolshevik opponents of the great Socialist Revolution of October 1917.

And now for what is perhaps the biggest lie of all from Lars in ‘All power to the soviets!’, April 20:

“The reception of the April theses by party activists can be divided into three categories. First are the positions that were NOT CONTR OVER SIAL, because they expressed a BOLSHEVIK CON SENSUS. The goal of soviet power was definitely one of these widely-shared positions, along with the imperialist nature of the war, NO CONFIDENCE IN THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND REJECTION OF ‘REVOLUTIONARY DEFEN CISM’. These positions - by far the most important - did not lead to any pushback. On the contrary.”

Oh, but the upper-cased section did lead to the mother and father of a ‘pushback’ because when Lenin returned in April he found Pravda under new editors Kamenev, Stalin, and M. K. Muranov. They had ousted the editors of Pravda, Vyacheslav Molotov, and Alexander Shlyapnikov, who had a strong anti-war position against the Provisional Government. The new editors produced their first edition on 15 March with strong “revolutionary defencist” support for the Provisional Government “insofar as it struggles against reaction or counter-revolution”. They followed through this capitulationist line with a call for a unification conference with the internationalist wing of the Mensheviks. Kamenev’s first editorial said:

“What purpose would it serve to speed things up, when things were already taking place at such a rapid pace?” and on March 15 wrote: “When army faces army, it would be the most insane policy to suggest to one of those armies to lay down its arms and go home. This would not be a policy of peace, but a policy of slavery, which would be rejected with disgust by a free people …. While there is no peace the people must remain steadfastly at their posts, answering bullet with bullet and shell with shell.”

And that is outright political capitulation on the most crucial question of all for revolutionary Marxists; what attitude to take to our own imperialist bourgeoisie in war? Louis Proyect tells us that on 16 March Stalin wrote, “the slogan, ‘Down with the war’, is useless,” “Obviously”, says Proyect, “this position contrasted sharply with the views expressed by Lenin in his “Letters from Afar,” and it is not surprising that Pravda published only the first of these and with numerous deletions at that. Among crucial phrases censored out was Lenin’s accusation that “those who advocate that the workers’ support the new government in the interests of the struggle against Tsarist reaction (as do the Potresovs, Gvozdevs, Chkhenkeli, and in spite of all his inclinations, even Chkheidze [all Mensheviks]) are traitors to the workers, traitors to the cause of the proletariat, [and] the cause of freedom.”

Kamenev and Stalin surely understood the target of his ire included them as well. So definitely a whopping lie here from Lars T.

In my next letter, I will deal with Kautsky in 1906 and the attempts by Zinoviev and Stalin to suppress the minutes of the Bolshevik Conference of March 1917 before Lenin returned and the devastating minutes of the meeting of Bolshevik Central Committee of 1 November 1917 in which Lenin launched into a very angry denunciation of the treachery of Zinoviev and Kamenev and the ‘conciliators’ and in which he accused them of treason. And Lars thinks this is “not controversial???” In the 1937 Introduction to his Stalin School of Falsification Trotsky assess Stalin’s position in this crucial period thus:

“How did the present Centrists and, above all, Stalin, conduct themselves on this question? In the nature of things, Stalin was a Centrist even at that time. He occupied a Centrist position whenever he had to take an independent stand or to express his personal opinion. But this Centrist stood in fear of Lenin. It is for this reason that there is virtually no political trace of Stalin during the most critical moments of the ideological struggle – from April 4, 1917, up to the time Lenin fell ill.”

It is clear that Lenin and Trotsky led that revolutionary struggle and nor Lars T’s pathetic conciliators, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Kalinin, Lunacharsky, Stalin et al.
Falsifiers Rumbled

12-6-17
In this reply to Lars T Lih I will concentrate on two incidents. First the recovery of the Session of the Petersburg committee of the Social Democratic Labour Party of Russia (Bolshevik), November 1 (14), 1917 and second the revelation of Zinoviev that the struggle against ‘Trotskyism’ was planned by him, Stalin and Kamenev in 1923-4

There was an attempt to wipe from the historical record the struggle within the Bolshevik Central Committee by deleting that whole day’s minutes and then having to renumber the pages to cover this up. Unfortunately for the falsifiers they forgot to alter the previous day’s minutes which scheduled the next day’s meeting and they did not manage to destroy the rushes of the minutes of that day, which fell into Trotsky’s hands. And it is obvious why they had to alter this record; it gave the lie to all the minutes of that day, which fell into Trotsky’s hands. And it is obvious why they had to alter this record; it gave the lie to the whole day’s minutes and then having to renumber the pages to cover this up. Unfortunately for the falsifiers they forgot to alter the previous day’s minutes which scheduled the next day’s meeting and they did not manage to destroy the rushes of the minutes of that day, which fell into Trotsky’s hands. And it is obvious why they had to alter this record; it gave the lie to all their attempts to slander Trotsky. Trotsky tells us:

“We publish herewith the minutes of the historic session of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks held November 1 (14), 1917. The conquest of power had already been achieved, at any rate, in the most important centres in the country. Within the party, however, the struggle over the question of power had far from terminated. It had merely passed into a new phase. Prior to October 25, the representatives of the Right wing (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Kalinin, Lunacharsky and others) argued that the uprising was premature and could lead only to defeat. After the victorious insurrection, they proceeded to argue that the Bolshevik party would be unable to maintain itself in power unless the Bolsheviks entered into a coalition with the other Socialist parties, i.e., the Social Revolutionists and the Mensheviks. During this new phase, the struggle of the Rights became exceptionally acute, and terminated with the resignation of the representatives of the Right wing from the Council of People’s Commissars and from the Central Committee of the party. It should be borne in mind that this crisis occurred only a few days after the conquest of power.”

This is Lenin’s furious response:

“The question of the armed insurrection was raised at the October 1 session of the Central Committee. … However, certain [old] members of the Central Committee came out in opposition. This grieved me deeply. Thus, the question of power has been posed for a long time. Couldn’t we now renounce it because of the disagreement on the part of Zinoviev and Kamenev? The insurrection was immediately necessary. Comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev began to agitate against the insurrection, and we began to look upon them as strike breakers. I even sent a letter to the Central Committee with a proposal to expel them from the party.

I expressed myself sharply in the press when Kamenev made his speech in the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. On August 6 (19), he also spoke on the subject of the Stockholm International Socialist Conference, which the Conciliationists proposed to convene in the summer of 1917 for the purpose of expediting the conclusion of peace by the Socialist parties exerting pressure upon their respective Governments] … Kamenev spoke in his own name in favour of participating in the Conference [despite the decision of the Central Committee of the party not to participate in the Stockholm Conference. – L.T.] to assume a severe attitude toward them …

… As for conciliation, I cannot even speak about that seriously. Trotsky long ago said that unification is impossible. Trotsky understood this, and from that time on there has been no better Bolshevik.”

During the period of the United Opposition - 1925-27 - Zinoviev revealed how they had planned the rewriting of the history of the revolution and the vilification of Trotsky. This is Trotsky’s account of what was revealed in The Stalin School of Falsification:

After the formation of our bloc with the Leningrad Group, during one of the conferences, in the presence of several other comrades, I put substantially the following question to Zinoviev:

“Could you please tell me whether the so-called literary discussion against ‘Trotskyism’ would have taken place, if I had not published The Lessons of October?” Without the slightest hesitation, Zinoviev replied: “Yes, indeed. The Lessons of October served only as a pretext. Failing that, a different motive would have been found, and the discussion would have assumed somewhat different forms, nothing more.”

… At the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of July 14 to July 23, 1926, Zinoviev said: “I have made many mistakes. But I consider two mistakes as my most important ones. My first mistake of 1917 is known to all of you … The second mistake I consider more dangerous because the first one was made under Lenin. The mistake of 1917 was corrected by Lenin and made good by us within a few days with the help of Lenin, but my mistake of 1923 consisted in …”

…In this manner, Zinoviev admitted his mistake of 1923 (in waging a struggle against “Trotskyism” and even characterized it as much more dangerous than that of 1917 – when he opposed the October insurrection).”

Of course, Zinoviev and Kamenev reverted to their old tricks and made their response to Lars T Lih even more difficult. They could not have been aware of the true nature of Zinoviev’s mistake.”
once the United Opposition fell apart when they capitulated to Stalin in 1928 and denied their own too-honest confessions. I think everyone must acknowledge this is Lenin in his best fighting revolutionary form handing out a merciless ear-bashing to the Rights whom Lars T Lih would like to try to persuade us were the real heroes of the Russian Revolutions. It is clear that Lenin and Trotsky led that revolutionary struggle and nor Lars T’s pathetic conciliators.

Lenin: “I view this as treason” 20-7-17
Once again, we are faced with another falsification by Lars T Lih WW-Supplement, June 29 2017 Corrections from up close). Here we learn that, “The Petrograd Bolsheviks nudged Lenin’s letter (From Afar - GD) in the direction of the April theses’. To summarise the Lars Theses here Lenin was utterly clueless on the real situation on the ground in Russia, and Kamenev and Stalin had to edit his first Letter From Afar so as not to make him look a complete idiot.

Lars gives us a list of who was on the EB with the ousted Shliapnikov and Molotov first and third and the Editor in Chief, Kamanev and his close allies Stalin and Muranov fourth, fifth and sixth, as if the turnabout had not happened.

And that board contained Lenin’s sister and Aleksandra Kollontai, who were so supportive of Lenin that they would surely never betray him. And he might have added Lenin’s own wife, Krupskaya, did not support him on this in the beginning:

“No prominent Bolshevik leader supported his call to revolution, and the editorial board of Pravda took the extraordinary step of dissociating themselves and the Party from Lenin’s proposals. Bogdanov characterised the April Theses as “the delirium of a madman”; Nadezhda Krupskaya concluded: “I am afraid it looks as if Lenin has gone crazy.” Slavoj Žižek, quoting Lenin by Hélène Carrère d’Encausse in the London Review of Books.

Pravda under Shliapnikov and Molotov was absolutely anti-war but the line was immediately changed in mid-March to support for the war and the Provisional government:

“Under Kamenev’s and Stalin’s influence, Pravda took a conciliatory tone towards the Provisional Government—“insofar as it struggles against reaction or counter-revolution” (Stalin)—and called for a unification conference with the internationalist wing of the Mensheviks. On March 14, Kamenev wrote in his first editorial: What purpose would it serve to speed things up, when things were already taking place at such a rapid pace? Marcel Liebman, Leninism under Lenin, p.123.


On March 15 he (Kamenev) supported the war effort: “When army faces army, it would be the most insane policy to suggest to one of those armies to lay down its arms and go home. This would not be a policy of peace, but a policy of slavery, which would be rejected with disgust by a free people.”

On 16 March Stalin wrote: “The slogan, ‘Down with the war,’ is useless’. We must suppose Lars T choses to ignore this evidence or else perhaps he wishes to deny their authenticity because I have not checked the original Russian as he has done?

Kamenev led the opposition to Lenin’s call for the overthrow of the government. In Pravda he disputed Lenin’s assumption that “the bourgeois democratic revolution has ended,” and warned against utopianism that would transform the “party of the revolutionary masses of the proletariat” into “a group of communist propagandists.” A meeting of the Petrograd Bolshevik Committee the day after the April Theses appeared voted 13 to 2 to reject Lenin’s position.” Spartacus Educational, Russia, Events and Issues: 1914-25, April Theses, http://spartacus-educational.com/RUSapril.htm

Trotsky reminded us that Permanent Revolution and the April Theses were viewed as complementary while Lenin lived:

“My books The Year 1905 (with the criminal foreword [Radek had found great errors in the foreword in his desperate attempts to appease Stalin in 1927 - GD]) and The October Revolution played the role, while Lenin was alive, of fundamental historical text-books on both revolutions. At that time, they went through innumerable editions in Russian as well as in foreign languages. Never did anybody tell me that my books contained a counterposing of two lines, because at that time, before the revisionist volte-face by the epigones, no sound-thinking party member subordinated the October experience to old quotations, but instead viewed old quotations in the light of the October Revolution.”

Lenin himself accused Kamenev and Zinoviev of treason four days after the successful revolution on October 25:

“And now, at such a moment, when we are in power, we are faced with a split. Zinoviev and Kamenev say that we will not seize power [in the entire country]. I am in no mood to listen to this calmly. I view this as treason. What do they want? Do they want to plunge us into [spontaneous] knife-play? Only the proletariat is able to lead the country”

Five times mention of Kerensky is cut from Lenin’s original, so determined were the right wingers to defend their relationship with him. As proof, he tells us Stalin was proud of the role he played because he allowed the authentic Letter from Afar to appear in Lenin’s Collected Works in 1949:

“If the usual story of Stalin and Kamenev’s censorship of Lenin is true, Stalin’s publication of Lenin’s draft would be equivalent to a guilty man returning to the scene of the crime and planting new evidence of his own guilt. How plausible is this account of Stalin’s motives? Shouldn’t we assume that, surprising as it may seem, Stalin was proud of the job he and others did in preparing Lenin’s article for publication?”

Do we really have to point out that in 1949 no one dared to criticise Stalin about anything and he was quite free to say black was white and everyone immediately agreed with him or else execution or exile to the Gulag quickly followed? And are there some examples of the earlier editions of Lenin’s CWs being falsified? The 1949 volume 31 did not have its English translation until 1965, for some strange reason. Stalin was really proud of having executed every critic or potential critic by then.

Having cut out all mention of “the Potresovs, Gvozddevs, Chkhenkelis, and in spite of all his inclinations, even Chkheidze [all Mensheviks] are traitors to the workers, traitors to the cause of the proletariat, [and] the cause of freedom” there can be no doubt but that the motivation was not to upset the Provisional government whom Pravda was now supporting in the war against Lenin’s furious opposition. And not to make the obvious comparison with the almost identical political position of the Pravda EB. And if that is not historical falsification I do not know what is. ▲