In Defence of Trotskyism No. 21

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Trump Triumphs: The global rise of the far right and fascism
Brexit plus, plus, plus

The forces of reaction face the revolt of the masses
Where We Stand

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

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

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

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

We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc.

Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price. Only union membership and pay rates can counter employers who seek to exploit immigrant workers as cheap labour to undermine the gains of past struggles.

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Immediate reaction to the election and the Trump administration

The election of Donald Trump on 8 November following the British Brexit vote on 23 June reflects a long delayed political reaction in the form of right wing populism.

The post-election period is politically dominated by two things in the USA; the huge number of demonstrations nationwide (and internationally also) and the appointment of the Trump administration, which includes many outright racist bigots and extreme rightists.

These demonstrations are under slogans like, “not our President” and include burning of the American flag. Burning the flag was illegal until 1969. The conviction that Trump will be an illegitimate President is based on the fact that Hillary got a million votes more than him and the very divisive, racist, misogynist, homophobic, ablest and chauvinist character of his campaign for the presidency. The last President who faced such a rejection of his election was Abraham Lincoln on 8 November 1960 which quickly led to the secession of seven states and the Civil War.

By 11 November cities which saw major demonstrations included New York city (several thousand people marched from Union Square to Trump Tower), Chicago, (several thousand people marched to that city’s Trump Tower) in Boston several thousand also, in Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, Seattle, Portland, Washington DC, St Paul, Minnesota; Richmond, Virginia; Kansas City; Omaha, Nebraska; and Austin, Texas.

The first appointment Trump announced was Jeff Sessions as attorney general. He has been identified by observers as one of the most right-wing and anti-immigration members of the Senate and his appointment can only be seen as a deliberate provocation to the demonstrators. In 1986, in a rare move, his nomination by Ronald Reagan to be a federal judge was rejected by Congress after several attorneys testified that he had made racist comments. The Guardian reports Justice Department official Gerald Hebert as claiming he describes the very moderate and conservative National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the American Civil Liberties Union as “communist inspired” and “un-American”.

A prosecutor, Thomas H Figures, told congress Sessions had thought the Ku Klux Klan was “OK until I found out they smoked pot”. Sessions said he had been joking and that the comment was so ludicrous he could not think anyone would take him seriously. Figures, an African-American, also testified that Sessions had called him “boy”. Sessions denied the claim.

“If you have nostalgia for the days when blacks kept quiet, gays were in the closet, immigrants were invisible and women...
stayed in the kitchen, Senator Jefferson Beauregard Sessions is your man,” Democratic representative Luis Gutiérrez said in a statement. He is due to succeed Loretta Lynch, the first African American woman to serve as attorney general.

Proposed CIA director is Mike Pompeo who shares hawkish views with Trump on surveillance and espionage. In 2012, he published a political article pleading: “Stop harassing the Koch brothers!” Then as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committees and the Energy and Power Subcommittee of the US Congress Pompeo defended oil billionaires Charles and David Koch, whose company is based in Kansas and whose employees gave $75,000 to Pompeo, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Then, Pompeo, the man who is to lead the CIA, was the chief congressman for the Koch brothers, the oil tycoons who sponsored the coup d’état in Brazil together with the conspirators of the MBL (Free Brazil Movement). This means that although the Koch brothers did not directly support Trump in the election, they will have their agent defending their international interests in the CIA, and in particular on Brazil.

The proposed National Security Adviser, one of his top advisers on foreign policy, is the retired general Michael Flynn, 57, a confidant who supports closer ties with Russia. Flynn held a job as head of the Defense Intelligence Agency but was forced out in 2014, reportedly because of his extremely hawkish views and chaotic management. He is also known as someone who acts on his own fabricated facts, which are dubbed “Flynn facts” in the US. One of the convenient “facts” he is spreading is that Sariah law is spreading in the US. This post will give him a public arena for pushing his anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant agenda in the country.

Rumoured nominees for secretary of state include the disgraced general David Petraeus. Former UN ambassador John Bolton and former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani are two more possibilities. Bolton and Giuliani rank among the most hawkish members of the party, and in September the latter said “anything is legal” in war. Bolton’s support for the invasion of Iraq, however, and Giuliani’s history with foreign wealth could prove a problem in
confirmation hearings.

Treasury secretary is speculated to be Steve Mnuchin, a 17-year veteran of Goldman Sachs and Trump’s campaign adviser for finance. Environmental Protection Agency is tipped to be Myron Ebell, a lobbyist who leads a group claiming to dispel “myths of global warming”. Defense secretary may be Stephen Hadley, a former national security adviser to George W Bush or Tom Cotton, a hawkish Arkansas senator and veteran who earned notoriety and derision for a threatening letter to the leaders of Iran. [1]

The appearance of an outright racist, Jeff Sessions, as attorney general, of Mike Pompeo as CIA Director, who is a defender of the barely legal Koch brothers, of Michael Flynn as National Security Adviser, who wants to use Russia against Europe, of Steve Mnuchin as Treasury secretary who is a Goldman Sachs man, and Myron Ebell, a climate denier as head of the Environmental Protection Agency tells us a tale of a determined reactionary agenda, despite all the mandatory diplomatic one nation noises after his election. All these nominations must be confirmed by Congress; there may be some rejections from the Republican controlled houses, but very few. We now know the character of the Trump administration; he will not move back to the centre in any significant way.

**Brexit plus, plus, plus**

This reflects and enhances a new stage in the political crisis which has gathered pace in Europe and the USA since the economic collapse of 2008. The far-right Front National in France has threatened since Jean-Marie Le Pen reached the run-off in the French Presidential election of 2002. In those states that embraced capitalism following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the USSR from 1989-91 outright fascist movements have emerged in the Baltic states, in Poland, in Hungary and they had their biggest victory so far in the Maidan coup in the Ukraine in February 2014. The Kiev government and its armed forces are now fascist infested. Far right leaders like Geert Wilders of the Party for Freedom in Holland and the populist Beppe Grillo, leader of the Five Star Movement in Italy, allied to Ukip, who is careful to avoid explicit fascist positions, are all growing forces. Advocacy of fascism is illegal in Italy but *The Social Movement – Tricolour Flame* is clearly fascist. Marine Le Pen of the Front National in France may win the Presidency in France in 2017.

Together with the advance of these far right populist parties openly fascist formations are politically and numerically advancing in the USA and Europe, most as factions within far-right groupings. The Tea Party in the US, UKIP in Britain, the Lega Nord in Italy and Jobbik in Hungary are advancing strongly. PEDIGA in Germany expect big advances in next year’s elections. Others like the Golden Dawn in Greece and Svoboda in Ukraine are more explicitly fascist parties. Golden Dawn have expressed admiration for the Nazi era and Nazi statesmen and for the collaborator Ioannis Metaxas of the 4th of August Regime (1936–1941). Svoboda openly display the black and red flags of the Nazi-collaborating Ukrainian Insurgent Army and sport the portrait of its founder, Stepan Bandera, the only Nazi wartime collaborator to be honoured as a national
hero (by the Ukrainian government in Kiev).

Donald Trump is a far-right racist, Islamophobic, sexist, misogynist homophobic, bigot but he is not a fascist. But behind him the fascist Ku Klux Klan and other fascist and far right groups are greatly strengthened, as they are in Britain after Brexit. They are already growing and are bound to advance strongly in the next years. The essence of a fascist formation; what distinguishes it from all other far right formations, is its determination to destroy all organisations of the working class, its trade unions, left and right, its political parties, mass reformist bourgeois workers’ parties, no matter how rightist led, smaller Stalinist and reformist groups, centrist groups [2] and genuine revolutionary formations. Mussolini, Hitler and Franco spared none of these. Not even the most right-wing class collaborating labour [3] traitors are of any use to a fascist regime. Such was Trotsky’s correct understanding of fascism elaborated in his writings and pamphlets in the late 1920s to middle 1930s.

Serious Marxist and Trotskyists reject the 1935 Seventh Comintern Congress definition of Fascism by Georgi Dimitrov. This Anti-Fascist Popular Front definition denies that all civil rights in a bourgeois democracy depend, not on ‘civilisation’ or ‘democratic values’ but on the organised strength of the working class and its ability to fight. He defined fascism thus:

“Fascism in power was correctly described by the 13th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (1933) as the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital.”

This is wrong because it facilitates the Popular Front theory at the Congress, which he expounded on behalf of Stalin, whereby the working class were to cease their class struggles against the ‘democratic capitalists’ to form a cross-class alliance to defeat fascism, thereby abandoning all aspiration for revolution to appease their capitalist allies. Note that it is not said to be a product of capitalism as a whole in crisis and collapse but only of a particular section, finance capital, and only of the ‘most reactionary’, ‘most chauvinistic’ and ‘most imperialist’ elements of finance capital. It should be mentioned that this targeting of finance capital in isolation from the whole class and system was also a strong feature of Nazi propaganda, only of course the ‘most reactionary’, ‘most chauvinistic’ and ‘most imperialist’ agents of USA finance capital were said to be … the Jews.

But of the 13.75 million votes that the Nazis got in July 1932 most were neither strongly anti-semitic not anti-communist but were from peasants and professionals who were suffering terribly under the depression, and only Hitler appeared as a strong leader who promised them eco-
nomic relief. By November their vote had fallen to 11.73 million whilst the working-class vote remained almost static at about 13.25 million, with the Social Democrats (SPD) bleeding 0.75 million votes to the Communists. There was no powerful revolutionary leadership to revive the working class to fight and defeat the Nazis, the SPD were a pillar of the capitalist establishment but the KPD identified them as the main enemy and they collaborated with the Nazis against them.

Even after Hitler came to power in January the KPD continued to proclaim “after the Nazis us” and launched no fight at all. The so-called revolutionary leadership of the best organised working class in the whole world, the KPD, went to the concentration camps, were executed or fled to exile in the USSR with no organised resistance whatsoever on Stalin’s and KPD leader Ernst Thälmann’s orders. The street fighting Antifa fought heroically but were left leaderless and easily defeated. Many subsequently went over to the Nazis, such was their low political level of understanding caused by abject reliance on Stalin and Ernst Thälmann to do their thinking for them, substituting physical force alone for political understanding and past KPD collaboration with the Nazis. No one expected the SPD leaders to mount any resistance whatsoever, though their street fighters, the Iron Front, too fought heroically but leaderless.

The international ramifications of Trump’s election
We note that Trump was a very enthusiastic supporter of Brexit, in contrast to Barak Obama. His quote, “Brexit, plus, plus, plus” makes it clear that he identified both moments as having the same political basis, empire chauvinism, anti-immigrant, racist, economic nationalist, protectionist, opposition to international trade deals and advocacy of the erecting of tariff walls etc. The poisonous opposition to rival imperialists in times of global recession that led to WWI and WWII is apparent. The US Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 deepened an already serious global recession and, with other similar actions to force the burden of the crisis on rival powers, caused the rise of Hitler and WWII.

We further note that Trump’s isolationism (“Americanisation not Globalisation”) is welcomed by some foolish leftists on the basis that Clinton was the more ferocious war monger who was far more likely to start WWIII. A little history lesson is necessary here for these comrades. Before WWI and WWII, the USA was isolationist. It eschewed foreign wars and turned inward. Its vast size made it difficult to invade and conquer and its abstention from WWI until intervening in the Western Front near the end, in December 1917, enabled it to extend credits to its British and French rivals and emerge as the world’s banker and relatively unscathed whilst Europe had destroyed great quantities of its economic, military and human assets. There is some debate on whether or not Trump was elected by the choice of workers.

To be one of only two possible candidates to be elected he was selected by a long process between several imperialist candidates and pre-chosen by an imperi-
alist “democracy” that is not democratic. This selection is the result of conditions imposed by the great capitalists who conduct a well-controlled plebiscite to legitimate one of its political representatives who will take care of torturing the workers and oppressed peoples of the world to extract the maximum profit possible. Trump does not represent a popular protest vote against the establishment; he was elevated to power within a very narrow range of choices established by the establishment itself after a funnel among more than a dozen candidates from the two wings of the imperialist party. What really elected him was the undemocratic system of two parties where the Electoral College decides an election. Trump was chosen to be the CEO of the world. Since when do workers choose who rules the world?

And even within that narrow margin, Trump won because the Democrats lost more votes rather than the Republicans won these presidential elections. Obama got 69.5 million in 2008; 66 million in 2012; And now, Hillary has only reached 61 million votes. Democrats have had 8.5 million fewer votes in the last 8 years. McCain got almost 60 million in 2008; Romney 61 million in 2012; And now, Trump has 60 million. Despite all Democrat wear and tear in the last eight years and the fact that Republicans were already in control of Congress, they got fewer votes than Hillary in the popular vote.

The dominant ideas are the ideas of the ruling classes. Dominant ideas supported by accumulated victories of the ruling classes bring about qualitative changes that impact consciousness, allowing conservative ideas to become reactionary. Capitalist appetites for overexploiting are whetted and they seek to extinguish rights previously won when the relationship of forces was more advantageous to workers.

The workers’ last victory with a social revolution that expropriated the bourgeoisie occurred more than 40 years ago, when Vietnam defeated US imperialism itself. Despite his anti-people program and all that he threatens against the population Trump got many votes. This corresponds to a setback in the consciousness of the masses as well. However, it is necessary to emphasize that this process is not homogeneous, it is unequal and contradictory, right-wing thinking grows and even without revolutionary direction the sympathies for left socialism grow, as Bernie Sanders’ candidacy demonstrated.
They are complementary contradictions and radicalizations, the unity of opposites, an elementary law of the dialectic.

There is a disbelief in the failing system of American democracy, and a greater crisis even of the system which explains how the richest 1% can advance their privileges against the oppressed. The aversion to politics allows fascism to increase its potential, because then the policy is controlled by the ruling classes and their agents. The forces of the right and fascism are not options chosen by the proletariat, but tools of capitalism itself and the crisis of bourgeois democracy to expand the exploitation of workers.

The USA emerged as a superpower in 1918, after it finally resolved its dilemma about whether to intervene in WWI on the side of Britain and France or on the side of Germany. Not principles but Germany’s foolish actions in attacking American shipping, particularly the Lusitania, decided that issue eventually. The Russian Revolution complicated things but the Stalinist counter-revolution there after 1924 effectively removed the threat of domestic revolution from the USA, Britain and everywhere else as the national communist parties rejected revolution on instruction from Stalin and were reduced to the role of border guards for the corrupt bureaucracy in the USSR. The unfinished war resumed in 1939 and the USA now emerged as the global hegemonic imperialist power after the devastation wrought on Britain, Continental Europe, the USSR, China and Japan by 1946.

However, revolutions did threaten in Poland, in Czechoslovakia, Northern Italy and Greece in 1944 to 1946, all suppressed by Stalin on behalf of imperialism or in alliance with it in the case of the latter two. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 removed the problems of the USSR as a degenerated workers’ state and as some form of an ideological alternative to capitalism, albeit understood by most workers as greatly flawed. It funded and ideologically encouraged national revolts against US imperialism in South Asia, Africa and Central America as pawns in a game with imperialism to ensure its own survival. Cuba’s intervention in Angola in 1975 on behalf of the Africa People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) against United States-backed interventions by South Africa and Zaire supported by Mao’s China was apparently without USSR permission at the beginning at least. These leaderships quickly capitulated and sought their place in imperialist heaven in various peace processes after 1991.

But one former British colony, the United States, became the main imperialist power on the planet. This obeyed the same laws of dialectics which also saw the transformation of the former workers’ states of China and Russia into capitalist powers in the 21st century. These laws are contained in the theory of permanent revolution and the theory of combined and uneven development developed by Leon Trotsky. The difference is that for the United States this profound modification was possible during its history in a period when the imperialist powers were still forming and the world market was still developing in the late 19th century. By a bourgeois revolu-
tionary break the US ceased to be a British colony. It converted itself from an agricultural-owning oligarchs’ economy to an independent industrialized country which would become a great power in 1918, at the end of WWI. Both in the USA and in China and Russia the civil wars and revolutionary break ensured a leap in the historical evolution of these nations. China and Russia had undergone deformed proletarian dictatorships which solved tasks of their bourgeois revolutions.

Unlike other smaller workers’ states that reverted to semi-colonies status after capitalist restoration (except Cuba and North Korea) China and Russia today benefited from another important law of dialectics: the transformation of quantity into quality. This means that both countries, after the period of initial setbacks in their economies after capitalist restoration (mainly in Russia until the crisis of 1998), could start from a superior structural foundation to occupy an unheard space in the world market because of state intervention in their economies during the economic recession of the imperialist powers caused by the crisis of 2008.

This structural foundation consists in the fact that China has the largest work force on the planet, and Russia is a huge producer and exporter of oil, gas and weapons. These advantages were inherited from the USSR and Stalinist/Maoist China. In addition, but no less important, both nations have nuclear independence.

In the first two world wars, while the great powers of European and Japanese imperialism destroyed each other, the US managed to confine the military conflagration to the territory of its continental rivals and benefited doubly when they came to sponsor both sides in the conflict and lend money to finance the reconstruction of the devastated countries. For both reasons they could present themselves as “protectors of the oppressed” against communism, Nazism, terrorism and all the enemies of “democratic” imperialism, which evolved to obtain the perfect justification to intervene and monitor the world as planetary policeman from the end of World War II.

This exceptional position occupied by the USA became obvious after World War I, and Trotsky allowed as a possibility “If we conclude that capitalist development is heading for a vigorous rise in Europe and around the world, this forecast would have several and therefore no insignificant practical consequences for our destiny. And today it is clear that if a rapid development of capitalism were possible, this could be fatal for us, and given certain conditions, it would be. It is for this reason that the issue of forecasting is of great importance. It can be achieved by using the materialistic method of analysis correctly. minority capitalist world could now generate a new ascent organic, and if found before a new balance as a basis for the further development of economic forces” [4]

In fact, the so-called glorious 30 years (1945-1975) where “Pax Americana” was established, were dialectically those that also enabled the greatest number of social revolutions in history, though still under non-Marxist leaderships. One third of humanity became workers’ states. In the other two-thirds of humanity there were also major resistance struggles, such as against the Vietnam War and for civil rights against racism in the USA. But,
combined with the witch hunting of McCarthyism to crush communism, there were also material elements that provoked an accommodation in the consciousness of the masses. The reconstruction of what was destroyed during World War II with US loans created a colossal economic and technological rise. “Theoretically, a rise of capitalism in Europe would create a colossal technology for the bourgeoisie and modify the psychology of the proletariat.” (Idem). In the United States this economic and technological development, from the parasitic draining of the resources of the entire planet, also provoked an accommodation in the psychology of the masses. The economic crisis of the 1970s brought an end to the glorious 30 years and the cycle of social revolutions, the last being Vietnam’s victory over the USA itself in 1975. Imperialism quickly adapted to the new times and went on the offensive all down the line with Reagan and Thatcher.

During capitalist recessions, too, the struggles of the workers suffer more defeats and they retreat into accepting the capitalist status quo. Under reformist and theocratic leadership revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua in 1979 remained within the capitalist framework. This retrocession, combined with the neo-liberal ideological offensive, created a qualitative leap in the capitalist restoration processes in the “socialist world” of the workers’ states between 1989 and 1991. However, despite all the political and ideological backlash in recent decades, the laws of dialectics, of unity of contradictions, spectacularly allowed an incomplete, contradictory evolution in consciousness of the masses; the ideals of socialism resurged even in a fragile form in the USA, being catalysed initially, and in a deformed way, by Bernie Sanders in the Democrats, one of the wings of the imperialist party itself. At the same time, Trump capitalizes on the discontent of the labouring masses with the regime led by the postmodern Democrats, deludes the masses with promises of employment and blaming the oppressed immigrant people who are trying to survive the aftermath of the capitalist crisis by selling their labour power in the big cities of imperialism.

Careful conservation of resources and assets during WWI and WWII whilst its rivals, including rival allies, exhausted themselves was the game and it is Trump’s game now. Brexit has sharpened the difference between the USA and Europe today. Trump wants to promote Anglo-American imperialism against Franco-German imperialism – “make America great again”. By supporting Putin against the EU, by recognising the Russian annexation of Crimea he hopes to begin a war
between the EU and Russia. Merkel and Putin are unlikely to cooperate. By attacking China in imposing 45% tariffs he hopes to split it from Russia. By breaking with NATO he hopes to get WWIII going without the USA and then to intervene on whichever side he judges most advantageous, thereby halting and reversing the historic decline of the USA.

It is a very dangerous game. If Trump proceeds with his promised infrastructure spending like Herbert Hoover’s New Deal of 1931–1933 it will be necessary to fund this by expanding its foreign debt by the sale of government bonds. The USA was a very wealthy creditor nation after WWI and WWII but now it is a massive debtor nation; its Federal debt and trade deficit are getting worse; it stands at $19.8 trillion now as Wikipedia relates:

“On November 7, 2016, debt held by the public was $14.3 trillion or about 76% of the previous 12 months of GDP. Intragovernmental holdings stood at $5.4 trillion, giving a combined total gross national debt of $19.8 trillion or about 106% of the previous 12 months of GDP. $6.2 trillion or approximately 45% of the debt held by the public was owned by foreign investors, the largest of which were China and Japan at about $1.25 trillion for China and $1.15 trillion for Japan as of May 2016.” [5]

In the period of the ascent of the economy there are many favourable factors, now in its decline everything conspires against it. Now, the dollar is under threat of losing its status as the trading currency internationally. If China and Russia carry out the de-dollarization of trade relations among themselves and with partners, the dollar will plummet as will US Treasury bonds; the debt of the United States will increase immensely and the insolvency of the largest planetary debtor will become evident. The large ballast of the economic power of the United States has been its military power. If Trump abandons that power and smashes NATO, it will not be long before a 21st century “fall of the Roman empire”, “barbarian invasions” and all exert irresistible force on the US Empire itself.

Trump says of China: “We can’t continue to allow China to rape our country, and that’s what they’re doing … But I tell the voters now, under a Donald Trump presidency I can promise the American people that we will forever be the rapists, not the rapees” [6]. If he imposes a massive tariff wall against Chinese goods, the 45% he threatens, China will not want, nor indeed be able, to purchase those bonds. Who will? Japan cannot make up that shortfall, Saudi
Arabia is now alarmed with Trump’s direction, Iran, Hezbollah and Assad are delighted because Russia is and will not be willing to assist the USA when they no longer purchase Middle East oil. Together with the promised wall on the Mexican border and a 35% tariff on Mexican goods, this would cause huge economic dislocation.

Printing dollars in these circumstances would cause hyperinflation because the prime danger of isolation is the rejection of the dollar, particularly the petrodollar, as the world’s trading currency by rebuffed trading partners. The US may now be self-sufficient in oil due to fracking and Canadian tar sands but economic advisors will be rushing to get Trump to understand the perilous nature of interfering with this global finance system which underpins the modern parasitic American economy.

However, this is all mere speculation because it is entirely unclear how much of this programme will get off the ground. He is unleashing forces he may not be able to control by the promises he has made and hopes he has engendered. This economic programme would cause the collapse of the US economy in very rapid order, and with it the its military spending, its five fleets, its ten supercarriers, its 1000 odd foreign bases and ability to police the world.

With Trump, Republicans have reached a historic level of control over the two houses of Congress, the Judiciary and the Executive. However, today it does not appear that the heterogeneous imperialist bourgeoisie, and not even the Republicans, will spend all its gunpowder in one shot. As Trump’s political spin is very large, financial capital, corporations, the mass media, the industrial military complex, drug trafficking, many sectors now linked to the Democrats will be affected by Trump. Injured opponents will see him as much an enemy as Putin. During the campaign, Hillary and almost the entire imperialist media accused him of playing the game of Russia during the election. Decaying imperialism cannot afford to follow the idiosyncrasies and adventures of a bankrupt millionaire, even though he has managed to become president. A plan B in the face of Trump’s course is today, immediately after the elections, a minority variant, but that will tend to gain strength if economically and politically Trump deepens the decadence of the American empire.

**Trump and the current cold war against Russia and China**

During the campaign, the Democrats and the mainstream media tried to demonise Trump, identifying him with Putin. In fact, the Russian President did back the Republican candidate. Trump announced a thawing of relations with Russia, which some activists of left prematurely celebrated as the end of the cold war. Shortly after the election, Trump and Putin agreed to “normalise” relations between the two countries and to seek a “constructive cooperation”. Trump might even be able to at some point agree with Putin on the division of Syria and pacifying the partition of Ukraine (Donbass).

But we do not believe that the clear intentions of these diplomatic movements at the top will resolve the dispute between imperialism and the Eurasian block. Trump wants to adopt a more isolationist position following growing breakdown of the world market. The future Govern-
ment of Trump will tend to take increasingly fascist forms. Meanwhile, the fight between the different internal factions of American imperialism – the oil barons, Wall Street, the Military Industrial Complex, manufacturing, media, corporations, multinationals, drug trafficking, etc. continues without a resolution. The elections were part of that fight but this dispute will not be settled by peaceful election.

In the intra-imperialist fight the different factions can resort to economic sabotage organized by the Federal Reserve or Wall Street, or by false flag attacks, organized by the CIA and the Pentagon against the international politics of another fraction.

This lack of resolution on which faction of US imperialism would be the hegemon postpones war and favours the Eurasian nucleus by giving it a historic time to prepare itself and acquire better conditions to fight WWIII.

Therefore, we believe that the tactics of the White House under the guidance of Trump tends to be the tactic of trying to divide opponents (European Union, Japan, China, Russia) whilst deciding internally which will be the dominant imperialist fraction.

Any attempt at world war today by the US would face them with new problems. For example, the threat made by several countries of international trade de-dollarization would mean a very serious economic attack against the US. As Folha do Trabalhador, the newspaper of our Brazilian section, said last June:

“The US profits from the dollarisation of the world economy because they print paper and buy what they want with it. The US imperialist economy will be hampered by the de-dollarisation of economic relations advocated by China and Russia. The printed paper would lose “value”. Dollars would not be accepted any more. Those who hold dollars would want to get rid of them, as they would be if devaluing, which would flood the market. All American Government bonds would not be worth anything either. There was no way to finance their purchases.

Foreign trade in dollars would evaporate. The financial market would explode. The American, Japanese and European economies would stagnate. And, therefore, also the ability of the US government to fund its war machine. It would dismantle the artificial guarantee (ballast) imposed by US military superiority in 1971. In the condition of “super Imperialism”, which Michael Hudson speaks of, the US despised the Bretton Woods agreement, established with England at the end of World War II” [7]
So what is the nature of the Brexit and Trump forces?

There are many who assert that the victory of Brexit represents a working class rejection of neo liberalism. And that Trump’s victory showed a working class in despair at the lack of an alternative to neo-liberalism. In Brexit the northern English and Welsh votes for Brexit were clearly working class votes, almost exactly those who had previously voted Labour but voted UKIP in the May General election, allowing the Tories to win. Miliband’s ‘Austerity Lite’ fell on deaf ears, they wanted something done now after eight long years of falling living standards and collapsing welfare and NHS and the growth of obscene social inequality. If no one was attacking capitalism itself and the ruling class, the only hope was getting rid of the immigrants so there would be more jobs for themselves. As we said in Socialist Fight No. 23, the journal of our British group:

“Polish and East European workers have been the targets: leaflets have been pushed through doors threatening ‘Polish vermin’ with violence. Polish cultural centres have been attacked and daubed with racist graffiti, and there have been a rash of violent attacks, including the disgusting murder of a Polish man, Arkadiusz Jóźwik, over the August Bank holiday weekend, in Harlow, Essex. This was followed up by another violent assault a week or so later in the same town.”

“Black and Asian people have been abused and threatened by pro-Brexit racists and told to ‘go home’. These incidents are just a small sample of a large litany of incidents. The Institute of Race Relations compiled a list of well over 100 incidents in the month after the referendum vote just by monitoring media. But even these are undoubtedly only a small fraction of what is actually going on. Many victims of abuse and even violent racial crime do not report such incidents because of justified distrust of the police and the legal system.” [8] [9]

Police murders of black people and the rise of the Tea party in the USA before Trump will be quickly followed by burgeoning of far-right movements. If Bernie Sanders were the candidate for the Democrats, he would have trounced Trump. Enough to record that in all the states where Sanders trounced Clinton in the Primaries Trump trounced Clinton on the 8th November. These were the same states that Reagan took from the Democrats far more convincingly in 1980, in what many thought was the end of the world then. Reagan took 44 states in a huge landslide against Carter. What followed was the beginning of the all-out assault for the hegemony of the neo-liberal agenda in a joint attack by Reagan and Thatcher, following her victory in 1979. The smashing of the air traffic controllers (PATCO) by Reagan, the victory of Thatcher in the Malvinas war in 1982, the defeat of the miners’ strike in 1985 and the fall of the Berlin war and the collapse of the USSR saw the victory of that neo-liberal agenda.

It has become the global economic wisdom since then, enforced by Tory and Labour, Republican and Democrat and their counterparts in every country apart from Iraq up to 2003, Libya up to 2011,
China, Cuba, North Korea and a very few others, all past or present war targets of the USA. Syria and Iran impose their own version of neoliberalism but do not allow the USA and EU transnationals free access to their markets, hence they too are targets. The election of Trump puts a large question mark against the survival of the ideology of Milton Friedman and the Chicago Boys, those Chilean economists of the 1970s and 80s who learned their trade at the Department of Economics of the University of Chicago under Friedman and Arnold Harberger or at its affiliate in the economics department at the Pontificial Catholic University of Chile following the Chile coup on 9 September 1973. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen pointed out these policies or privatising state assets and allowing the market free rein were deliberately intended to serve the interests of American corporations at the expense of Latin American populations.[10] Though that ideology will now be increasingly challenged from left and right it will live on as long as capitalism exists because it is a fundamental feature of that mode of production itself.

The rallying of the vanguard of the working class

Today also there is a clear rallying of the vanguard of the class to defend and mobilise the class because they are clearly aware of this growing danger. We have two Corbyn surges in 2015 and 2016 and now 650,000 members in Labour the clear majority of whom defied the entire capitalist establishment and their allies within the Labour party to vote Corbyn twice. If Bernie Sanders had got the Democrat’s nomination, he would have wiped out Trump. The Sanders phenomenon saw huge numbers of American workers identify themselves as socialists for the first time since Eugene Debs stood for President five times from 1900 to 1920, getting a million votes in 1912.

Most of the rustbelt states of the mid-west, also known as the manufacturing belt, whose economy is based mainly on heavy industry, voted Obama in 2008 and 2012. The majority are not irretrievably racists any more that Northern English and Welsh workers in Britain are today. Nor were most Hitler voters strongly anti-Semitic or anti-communist in 1932, as we pointed out above. But in Britain and the US a section are now under the political influence of far-right forces and fascists are clamouring for the allegiance of the most lumpen elements of the class. Clearly strong revolutionary leadership is needed to tackle this crisis.

For the British working class the task now is democratising the Labour Representation Committee, ending the bans and proscriptions of left groups which is possible now following the election of some new more leftist leader at the AGM on 29 October. For Momentum the February launch conference is vital and there are good reasons to hope this will go well. Of course, the twin tasks and reasons for fighting within the LRC is to democratise the Labour Party itself, its annual conference and its local General Committees in the individual constituencies and regions and the mobilise the working class against the cuts in local councils and the privatisation of the National Health Service. We are acutely conscious that Corbyn is a sincerely a reformist Labourite, but he is still a capi-
talist politician, wedded to the defence of the working class under capitalism and therefore to defending capitalism against the working class in revolutionary times. But he is the leftist leader of a bourgeois workers’ party who must be defended against the right wing capitalist establishment in society as a whole and within the Labour party itself. The elaboration of this requires a substantial document in which we will tackle these questions in detail.

Sanders is a fraud, a Democratic politician who never broke to the left of the Democrats as Debs did by reading Marx in prison. Sanders is an imperialist capitalist politician, who represents an imperialist party, the US Democrats. Throughout Sanders’ parliamentary life he was a staunch supporter of imperialist wars, supported the Gulf War, sanctions against Iraq in the early 1990s, then supported the bombing of Serbia, and so at that time his office was occupied by anti-war protesters.

He supported military operations in Haiti and Somalia, supports Israel against Hezbollah and Hamas, voted for war credits against Afghanistan and Iraq, defends US intervention in Syria now. Sanders capitulated to Hillary Clinton in the primaries and immediately after the election of Trump declared his willingness to work with the Republicans to help working families. Therefore, Sanders cannot be politically supported.

Faced with this trajectory whose precocious exhaustion was amplified after its defeat in the primaries, the demand is for a Labor Party independent of imperialism and the bosses.

In some ways, it’s better he didn’t win the nomination and win the election because now the demand for an independent Labor party becomes the main issue of the day for US revolutionary socialists. Illusions in Democratic Party politicians are substantially diminished so now we clearly need a mass workers’ party, an independent Labor party representing the trade unions. The potential is clearly there. The Sanders phenomenon highlighted the potential of the USA working class. But they desperately need their own leadership and political party. And to that object the entire socialist left in the US must orient themselves. They all must demand of all the trade union leaders that they begin forming a US Labor party now.

Corbyn is a capitalist and imperialist politician like Sanders, but Corbyn is also an anti-war political pacifist in the tradition of the British Labour Party of...
Kier Hardy, its founder, 1906-08, and George Lansbury, 1932-35. All Labour’s leaderships and governments were capitalist and imperialist. The party itself is a living contradiction, based on the grassroots workers’ organizations in the trade unions but distorted by the bureaucratic moulds that dominate the unions, the party and its parliamentarians, who are only the representatives of that bureaucracy in parliament, the opposite side of its coin. If bureaucratic unions are workers’ organisations, the Labour Party is a workers’ organisation with a capitalist/imperialist leadership, but with a base of organization and voting of the working class. The reason we call for a vote to Corbyn and not to Sanders lies in the nature of the British Labour Party as a bourgeois workers’ party, while the US Democrats are absolutely a bourgeois party.

Trotsky had a worked-out position on an independent Labor party in the USA. This means putting demands on the trade union leaders to break with the Democrats, while revolutionaries struggle within the movement to build a revolutionary party against the reformist leaders who would want a British-type Labour Party. But the big advantage would be to get the ear of militant workers alienated from the Democrats.

Between April and June 1938 Trotsky held three discussions On the Labor Party Question in the United States in Mexico City with James P. Cannon, Vincent R. Dunne and Max Shachtman in which he spelled out how to approach this question, who to place demands on and how to operate the united front and transitional method he had developed in his years as a Marxist revolutionary. [11] It is noteworthy that during these discussions Max Shachtman continually fails to grasp the essence of the transitional programme and method advocated here, always posing ultra-left objections against engaging with the workers with the demand for an independent Labor party, independent of imperialism and the bosses, when he felt, what was really needed was a revolutionary party. Trotsky patiently explained the method in detail and clearly both James Cannon and Vincent Dunne understood what was needed but Shachtman did not. Within a few months of the end of the discussion in June, in August, Shachtman published a joint article with James Burnham questioning the value of the Marxist method of Dialectical Materialism, [12] which was the beginning of the factional conflict in the SWP. Obviously, this was the very reason he found the dialectical relationship between advocating an independent Labor party and building a revolutionary party thereby so difficult to understand. The political differences with him developed leading to the split in early 1940.

Trotsky, in explaining the dialectical contradictions in the April discussion and how both workers and, doubly so, their
leader, find themselves caught up in this, says:

“Now we have a movement of tremendous importance – the CIO; some 3,000,000 or more are organized in a new, more militant organization. This organization which began with strikes, big strikes, and involved the AFL partially in these strikes for a raise in wages, this organization at the first step of its activity runs into the biggest crisis in the U.S. The perspective for economic strikes is, for the next period, excluded, given the situation of the growing unemployed ranks, etc. We can look for the possibility that it will put all its weight in the political balance.

“The whole objective situation imposed it upon the workers as upon the leaders – upon the leaders in a double sense. On one hand, they exploit this tendency for their own authority and on the other they try to break it and not permit it to go ahead of its leaders. The LNPL has this double function. I believe that our policy need not be theoretically revised but it needs to be concretized. In what sense? Are we in favor of the creation of a reformist labor party? No. Are we in favor of a policy which can give to the trade unions the possibility to put its weight upon the balance of the forces? Yes. … Yes, we propagandize this program in the trade unions, propose it as the basic program for the labor party. For us, it is a transitional program; but for them, it is the program. Now it’s a question of workers’ control of production, but you can realize this program only through a workers’ and farmers’ government. We must make this slogan popular.” (our emphasis).

But Shachtman just does not understand:

“How do you reconcile this with the original statement that we cannot advocate the organization of a reformist labor party? I would like to get clear in my mind what concretely does our comrade do when his trade union is affiliated to the LNPL and he is sent as a delegate to the labor party. There the question comes up of what to do in the elections and it is proposed: “Let us support LaGuardia.” [24] Concretely, how does the matter present itself to our comrades?”

Trotsky explains, in what is the crucial passage in the whole series of discussions:

“Here we are in a trade union meeting to discuss the affiliation to the LNPL. I will say in the trade union: First, the unification of the unions on a political plan is a progressive step. There is a danger that it will fall into the hands of our enemies. I therefore propose two measures: 1) That we have only workers and farmers as our representatives; that we do not depend on so-called parliamentary friends; 2) That our representatives follow our program, this program. We then map out concrete plans concerning unemployment, military budget, etc. Then I say, if you propose me as a candidate, you know my program. If you send me as your representative, I will fight for this program in the LNPL, in the labor party. When the LNPL makes a decision to vote for LaGuardia, I either resign with protest, or protest and remain: “I can’t vote for La Guardia. I have my mandate.” We get large new possibilities for propaganda... The dissolution of our organization is absolutely excluded. We
make absolutely clear that we have our organization, our press, etc., etc. It is a question of the relationship of forces. Comrade Dunne says we cannot yet advocate in the unions support for the SWP. Why? Because we are too weak. And we can’t say to the workers: Wait till we become more authoritative, more powerful. We must intervene in the movement as it is..."

And later Trotsky again puts forward this dialectical approach:

“I will not say that the labor party is a revolutionary party, but that we will do everything to make it possible. At every meeting I will say: I am a representative of the SWP. I consider it the only revolutionary party. But I am not a sectarian. You are trying now to create a big workers’ party. I will help you but I propose that you consider a program for this party. I make such and such propositions. I begin with this. Under these conditions it would be a big step forward. Why not say openly what is? Without any camouflage, without any diplomacy.”

James Cannon understands:

“Up until now the question has always been put abstractly. The question of the program has never been outlined as you have outlined it. The Lovestoneites have always been for a labor party; but they have no program, it’s combinations from the top. It seems to me that if we have a program and always point to it ...”

Trotsky agrees:

“First there is the program, and then the statutes that assure the domination of the trade unions as against the individual liberals, petty bourgeois, etc. Otherwise it can become a labor party by social composition, a capitalist party in policy.”

Cannon develops:

“It seems to me that in Minneapolis it’s too much an organizational struggle, a struggle for the control of the organization between the Stalinists and us. We have to develop in Minneapolis a programmatic fight against the Stalinists in the FLP, as we yesterday utilized the vote about the Ludlow Amendment.”

But Shachtman is still lost:

“Now with the imminence of the outbreak of war, the Labor party can become a trap. And I still can’t understand how the Labor party can be different from a reformist, purely parliamentary party.”

During the 31 May discussion Trotsky explains the three different ways trade unions were formed:

“In such countries as Germany, Austria, and especially in Russia where trade unions were unknown, they were initiated, constructed, and guided by a political party, the social-democracy.”

“Another type of development is that disclosed in the Latin countries, in France, and especially in Spain. Here the party movement and the trade union movement are almost independent of one another and under different banners, even to a certain degree antagonistic to one another. The party is a parliamentary machine. The trade unions are to a certain degree in France – more in Spain – under the leadership of anar-
chists.”

“The third type is provided by Great Britain, the United States, and more or less by the dominions. England is the classic country of trade unions. They began to build trade unions at the end of the eighteenth century, before the French Revolution, and during the so-called industrial revolution. (In the United States, during the rise of the manufacturing system.) In England the working class didn’t have its independent party. The trade unions were the organizations of the working class, in reality the organization of the labor aristocrats, the higher strata. In England there was an aristocratic proletariat, at least in its upper strata, because the British bourgeoisie, enjoying almost monopoly control of the world market, could give a small part of the wealth to the working class and so absorb part of the national income. The trade unions were adequate to abstract that from the bourgeoisie. Only after a hundred years did the trade unions begin to build up a political party. This is absolutely contrary to Germany or Austria. There the party awakened the working class and built up the trade unions. In England the trade unions, after centuries of existence and struggle, were forced to build up a political party.”

The point is this is to demonstrate how and when to intervene in these bourgeois workers’ organizations and, in the USA, when to put forward the demand for a Labor party, only in the late 1930s, when US imperialism was in obvious crisis and decline and the CIO, the new and far more genuine trade union formations, were caught up in the crisis described above. The last discussion in July was on the actual economic crisis in the USA and its likely duration and consequences. We now know that its consequence was war in September 1939, which the USA entered on 8 December 1941 following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on the 7th, two years and three months after WWII had begun. Trump has similar ambitions for the USA today in WWIII.

Of course, central to this tactic is the forging of the leadership of a revolutionary party. Never forget that central aim.

What prospects for an independent Labor party in the USA today?

Firstly the fightback begins on social matters, the ongoing racism in the USA, the police murders and cover up leading to the confirmation that indeed to American Society black lives did not matter as much as white lives. And this under the nation’s first black President. In fact the failure of Obama’s two terms to address any of this and to halt, left alone reverse the declining living standards and appalling unemployment, felt most acutely in the black inner city ghettos, sparked the
Black Lives Matter movement. It began in 2013,

“with the use of the hashtag

#BlackLivesMatter on social media, after

the acquittal of George Zimmerman in

the shooting death of African-American

teen Trayvon Martin. Black Lives Matter

became nationally recognized for its

street demonstrations following the 2014

deaths of two African Americans: Mi-

chael Brown, resulting in protests and

unrest in Ferguson, and Eric Garner in

New York City.” [13]

The Native American movement at Stand-

ing Rock too is a stirring of the poorest

and most oppressed in the USA. And it’s

getting support from the whole world’s

oppressed, adding to the 2014 solidarity

between Black Lives Matter and the Pales-

tinians under murderous assault in Opera-

tion Protective Edge in Gaza. And these

two now show solidarity with the Native

Americans’ battle at Standing Rock over

the Dakota pipeline.

Faced with this picture, our young section

in the USA, the Socialist Workers League

(SWL) argues that:

“More than ever it is necessary to unify

our class, whites, blacks, Indians, Asians,

Latinos and immigrants against the po-

lice state... for black self-defense, as the

Black Panthers defended in their fight

against the police state that cybernetically

arises for us smash. [As part of the strug-

gle for] building a revolutionary party on

the basis of the multiracial proletariat

throughout North America.” [14]

It’s also great to see young Americans los-

ing their respect for the god-like figure of

the President, representing the holy writ of

the American Constitution in the street

protests held immediately Trump was de-

clared elected. It is impossible to respect

Trump and this irreverence returning is a

heartening leftist reviving like in the Vi-

etnam anti-war protest days. Nobody

asked Obama how many kids he killed

today; they may well ask Trump at the first

opportunity. And someone even burned

an American flag!

These movements must and do find their

expressions within the trade unions. What

is the state of the US Labor movement

today? Back in 2007 we reviewed a book

by SEIU leader Andy Stern called Getting

America back on track: a country that works.

Andy Stern and Teamsters’ boss Jimmy

Hoffa led a 40% split in the AFL-CIO in

2005, forming a new TU federation called

Change to Win. In the book, he speaks of

workers “self-managing their work lives”

and predicts that “one in four workers will

be contingent employees [] or self-

employed by 2010. Individuals want more

flexibility in their jobs” (p38). We would

suggest that the “contingent employees”

would give a great deal to have far less
“flexibility” and more security. He is speaking of what is now called the gig economy and he was obviously a prime mover is assisting its development.

He spoke of his admiration for Lech Walesa and his “brave trade unionists” who had demonstrated the need for “free, democratic unions, in contrast to the government-dominated unions of the communist dictatorships” by winning the cold war and “destroying all obstacles to market capitalism” (p38).

Strangely in the preceding chapter he recounts his visit to China and the lavish reception given to his delegation by the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). He says: “The ACFTU’s willingness to transform itself to effectively counter the impact of globalisation has far-reaching implications for the workers everywhere” (p28). This is because they have resorted to traditional American tactics of ‘blacklisting’ foreign-owned enterprises that defied Chinese labour laws. Clearly the ACFTU cannot be one of those dreadful “government-dominated unions of the communist dictatorships”, as it is entirely in favour of “market capitalism”.

So much that it had to ask Wal-Mart to put up a token show of resistance when it initially requested the right to ‘organise’ its workers. This entirely bogus organisation of 150 million members makes sure that these stores and factories are not organised – the state itself is guarding Wal-Mart against the workers. Wal-Mart will not tolerate unions in its US stores and only concedes recognition in countries where the movement is strong enough to impose its will.

In June 2016 now former SEIU leader Andy Stern launched a new book called *Raising the Floor: How a Universal Basic Income Can Renew Our Economy and Rebuild the American Dream*. It has received considerable publicity in national radio and TV shows. He starred at the Democratic National Convention in a discussion with one Josh Zepps for a Facebook Live chat about the new direction of American politics. He is much admired in these circles, being praised as one who “broke the mould of a traditional union leader and was willing to experiment, take risks, and anticipate future trends.” In other words, he was a gross class collaborating bureaucrat who sold his members down the river at every opportunity. His theme now is that automation is now about to create a tsunami of job losses and there is little that can be done about it. As one reviewer, psychologist Michael Bader, says:

“If you buy Stern’s analysis of the magnitude of the catastrophe coming our way in the form of skyrocketing unemployment and underemployment driven by automation, artificial intelligence, robotics, and other new technologies, then you have to question whether traditional progressive solutions—stronger unions, a redistributive tax and regulatory system, a more activist government, and a broader and more effective social safety net—are sufficient to meet the challenge. If the answer is no, then radical ideas like the UBI start to break through our cynicism. In that case, we owe Andy Stern a debt of gratitude.” [15]

The UBI referred to is a universal basic income. The review on the Amazon site
enlightens us:

“The idea of a universal basic income for all Americans is controversial but American attitudes are shifting. Stern has been a game changer throughout his career, and his next goal is to create a movement that will force the political establishment to take action against something that many on both the right and the left believe is inevitable. Stern’s plan is bold, idealistic, and challenging—and its time has come.” [16]

The basic income policy was the main social policy of the government of the Workers’ Party in Brazil under the name of the Bolsa Família Program. The Brazilian Workers Party (PT) is proud to have temporarily removed 36 million people from extreme poverty with this program. The concept of “Minimum Income” goes back to “capital grants provided at the time of maturity” introduced in 1795 in the Agrarian Justice affects pamphlet by Thomas Paine, [17] the famous theorist who participated in the US and French Revolutions. In the pamphlet, he discusses the origins of property and the idea of egalitarianism, progressive elements of the infantile phase of bourgeois liberalism. But in the twentieth century, questions about ownership and equality were left aside by neoliberal theorists. Today it is a policy suggested by international organizations such as the UN and the IMF, which was reformulated by Milton Friedman under the name of “negative income tax” as reported by Abba Lerner in his work The Economics of Control. Such a policy is also applied as a product of the pressure of the impoverished masses and their struggles, but it is so miserable and limited that it cannot even be considered a reform in capitalism because it impacts only immediately and palliatively on the consequences of social inequality and not on the cause of this inequality, which grows and reproduces cyclically at the same speed as capital accumulates.

Marxists do not oppose elementary assistance to the most precarious sectors of the working class, including defending it against right-wing politicians who seek to reduce it or extinguish it where it is already applied, but both reformists and revolutionaries are not content with the neoliberal formula. The former advocate the extension of immediate assistance to all workers and with a value greater than that stipulated by the UN, paid for by progressive taxation of large fortunes and profits and stop there but revolutionaries
link this demand to the revolutionary expropriation of capital itself in their transitional programme. But we must be made clear that this reformist policy is directed primarily at containing the social revolt, to disorganize the struggle against the bosses and their government, by stimulating class collaboration with the supposedly benevolent and sympathetic state. Taking advantage of the quiescence and disorganization of the proletariat promoted by the PT, at the first opportunity, imperialism and its agents in Brazil expelled the PT from the government, carried out a coup d’état under the guidance of the corporations (the brothers Koch and George Soros) and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who unleashed a witch hunt against the PT, other left-wing parties and all the elementary rights of the working class, holding even more tightly to the “Bolsa Família Program.”

The United States has practiced this policy of minimum income since 1975 to achieve the quiescence of the most precarious sectors of the proletariat, which did not prevent the erosion of the income of all workers by 25% before 2008 and then an aggravation of this growing misery after the crisis. This “new idea” of the corrupt and mafia-linked US trade union bureaucracy is a miserable mistake. If you concluded that is just a load of old nonsense you were absolutely right, but some workers may accept it and we might then have to reassess how to relate to that situation. Trade union leaders and ex-leaders peddled such nonsense at the Democratic Convention. The fact that so many trade unions backed Clinton was one of the reasons why Trump won. We strongly suggest that the programme outlined by Trotsky above, in particular the slogan of job sharing with no loss of pay and shorter hours is one of the transitional demands to be fought for in the unions, together with a workers’ government and an immediate demand for an independent Labor party as the only way forward.

Xenophobia, blackmail in the service of the imperialist super exploitation

The US government estimates that there are about 11.3 million illegal immigrants in the United States. Behind the pro-immigrant rhetoric, Obama was the US president that deported the most immigrants in the last 30 years.

“A review by Univision Noticias of the numbers of deportations registered over the past 30 years shows that President Barack Obama is the leader who deported most people from the country in recent decades, more than Reagan, George Bush senior, Clinton, or George W Bush. According to data published by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), between the fiscal years 2009 and 2015, the number of deportees was 2,571,860.” [18]

The graph below is a striking confirmation of the historic rise in the rate of deportations under Obama:

“Barack Obama has called himself the “champion in chief” of immigration law reform. Latino activists, angry at his administration’s removal of illegal immigrants, have responded by calling him the deporter in chief. What do the data tell us?

“America is expelling illegal immigrants at nine times the rate of 20 years ago;
nearly 2m so far under Barack Obama, easily outpacing any previous president,” the Economist wrote in February 2014. “Border patrol agents no longer just patrol the border; they scour the country for illegals to eject. The deportation machine costs more than all other areas of federal criminal law-enforcement combined.”

Critics may declare President Obama soft on immigration, but as this Reuters graphic shows, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) data the Department of Homeland Security deported 414,481 people in fiscal year 2014, down from 438,421 the year before. Each year of the Obama administration has seen more deportations than any preceding president; the pre-Obama high of 358,886 removals in FY2008 came during President George W. Bush’s last full fiscal year in office.”

Yet despite carrying out the largest number of deportations in history, Obama has expelled less than 25 percent of illegal immigrants. The remaining 75 percent of the 11 million illegal immigrants are super overexploited and put pressure for the reduction of salaries on the rest of the US proletariat. Neoliberalism was the great champion of globalization. But it does not matter to the US that the undocumented are not to be legalised. It is necessary to keep them in the condition of illegal labour, of precarious proletarians living on the edge. Although all the bourgeois constitutions have in them the right to come and go, the only social class whose interests truly defend the right to migrate, to stay and to return anywhere is the working class, for them nobody is illegal. In the struggle to control their class consciousness imperialism seeks to use mass psychology to poison workers with phobias such as xenophobia and Islamophobia to play them off against each other.

Trump renewed his xenophobic blackmail and shortly after the election declared that he will deport up to three million illegal immigrants who have committed crimes in the United States. The illegal status is already a crime in itself for the empire, the non-payment of taxes (by the workers) is another serious crime for the imperial state. But you cannot even pay taxes to the state when you are made illegal by the state. Finally, the struggle for survival itself forces immigrants to do what they can clandestinely. In the end, most of the population, and not just the 11 million, are criminalised for something. This is followed by the encouragement of the glorification of their native class brothers and the state criminalisation of the organizing of resistance by the masses. This is the leaven of fascist reaction and the growth of terrorism by the increasingly police and militarized state.

Trump threatens to build a wall dividing the US from Mexico. We know that the main purpose of these threats is to terrorise and tame immigrants; it is more profitable to criminalise so as to increase class exploitation than to get rid of this category of empire slaves. Under threat of deportation many will do any kind of work for any payment. And that is the main purpose of xenophobia; to set one part of the working class in competition against another. After associating with your class enemy, it will be the traitor’s turn to be stripped as well. This is the system. More than ever our motto is “proletarians of the whole world, unite!”
The deportation policy is blackmail that immediately impacts on immigrant workers by forcing them to accept increasingly difficult conditions of exploitation, but then it also affects the white, black, documented native working class who are compelled to compete with immigrants in the increasingly precarious labour market and submit to the brutal downgrading of their wages as well. Therefore, native workers must overcome the intoxication of xenophobic ideology as a condition for defending their own wage conditions. That’s the only way out.

Xenophobia also has the goal of dividing workers into whites, blacks and Latinos. The immediate demands to oppose this manoeuvre are the defence of equal democratic, labour and union rights for all workers and equal pay for equal work. In addition in the US industrial protectionism will mainly affect Mexico, causing Mexican deindustrialisation and the return of manufacturing sectors to the US. In this perspective, the unity of the working classes of Mexico and the United States is sharply posed.

Many undocumented migrants may be expelled but they will still be a minority; most will be subjected to super-exploitation and remain as slaves or semi-slaves in the United States. The same is happening in Europe; redistributing human labour power for super-exploitation with a xenophobic discourse are used to frighten the proletarian refugees. Trump wants to reindustrialize the US by taking advantage of the devaluation of the work force, to vie with China for the competition for the lowest value of production. This is also what his slogan of “Making America Great Again” consists of. After years of exponential growth of misery in the US with the 2008 crisis, Trump will try to put the US back into world competition for the lowest cost of production. This is a process which has been growing for several years now. Known as ‘reshoring’ it links up with the movement of large manufacturing firms from well unionised northern plants in states like Detroit to southern states like Kentucky with no or very weak trade unions. The Economist reported in January 2013:

“The number of firms known to have “reshored” manufacturing to America is well under 100. Doubtless many more are doing so quietly. Examples range from the tiny, such as ET Water Systems, to the enormous, such as General Electric, which last year moved manufacturing of washing machines, fridges and heaters back from China to a factory in Kentucky which not long ago had been expected to close. Google has attracted a great deal of attention for deciding to make its Nexus Q, a new media streamer, in San Jose.”

Palestinian workers from Hebron at Tarqumiya Checkpoint in early 2015, Credit, Emil Salman
Trump aims to speed up this movement enormously. This new empire policy, resuming investment in production without abandoning speculation, will cause a new depression in wages around the world. The unity of the proletariat, native and foreign, black, white, Latin, Oriental or Muslim against the bosses in a Labor Party against imperialism is the best tactic to preserve the conditions of life, housing and wages of the proletariat of the richest nation on the planet.

Islamophobia and Zionism

There is more identity between Trump and Zionism than it seems. Israel’s Zionist imperialist ideology today is that which is most openly racist and resembles Nazism in the 21st century in the form of an oppressive and expansionist state. Trump announces the construction of a wall between the US and Mexico, but that does not mean that the US will prevent any passage of Latinos to work for the empire. So too how the various walls between Israel and Palestine do not prevent the passage of immense waves of Palestinian wage earners to work in Israeli cities. There are between 1 and 3 million illegal Latino migrants who travel from one side of the border to another regularly to work as temporary, underpaid and “invisible” farmworkers in the United States, which Woody Guthrie sang about so movingly in his ballad *Deportee* in 1948.

Israel policy of replacing Palestinian labour with ‘guest’ foreign workers, many from the Indian subcontinent, failed after *Operation Protective Edge* in July and August 2014. Many left the country then and they have not been replaced because of the appalling growth of far right and neo-fascist attitude towards Palestinians targeted them also. *Haaretz* reported in March 2015:

“The number of Palestinians from the West Bank working in Israel both legally and illegally doubled in the past four years to about 92,000 in 2014, in many cases displacing overseas guest workers, the Bank of Israel said yesterday.

But Palestinians working in Israel get paid less than their Israeli counterparts – even those working for the same employers – and few are getting pension and other benefits, the central bank noted. Palestinians entering Israel with a permit pay “significant” fees to Palestinian and Israeli labour contractors.”

As for Islamophobia, it embraces a double character, as well as being blackmail to depress wages internally; it also has the external function of deepening the criminal and historical association between US and Israel, which will tend to be strengthened at a higher level by Trump after the cooling of relations between Washington and Tel Aviv in the Obama era.

Trump was very well received at AIPAC, the main Zionist organization in the US, and not by chance, the Republican victory was celebrated in Tel Aviv even as it continued to be repudiated inside the USA and internationally by mass demonstrations. Trump was supported by sectors of the most reactionary fractions of the imperialist ruling class, evangelists and racists, Christian fundamentalists, “gusanos” (worms, as Fidel Castro dubbed the right wing Cuban exiles from 1959 concentrated in Miami, Florida) and the Israelis. Israel hopes Trump will live up to his campaign
promise to break agreements between Obama and Iran and from now on the new president will take a more lenient and permissive stance on Israel’s warmongering against the enemies of Zionism in the region.

According an Associated Press report carried by the Mail Online on 26 September when Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met for 90 minutes they discussed ‘military assistance, security and regional stability’. ‘Mr. Trump acknowledged that Jerusalem has been the eternal capital of the Jewish People for over 3,000 years, and that the United States, under a Trump administration, will finally accept the long-standing Congressional mandate to recognize Jerusalem as the undivided capital of the State of Israel,’ the Trump campaign said. ‘Trump recognized that Israel and its citizens have suffered far too long on the front lines of Islamic terrorism,’ they added in the statement. ‘He agreed with Prime Minister Netanyahu that the Israeli people want a just and lasting peace with their neighbours, but that peace will only come when the Palestinians renounce hatred and violence and accept Israel as a Jewish State.’ Trump also vowed ‘extraordinary strategic, technological, military and intelligence cooperation between the two countries’ if he’s elected.

The Mail Online also reported on 26 October that Donald Trump’s adviser on Israel David Friedman said that Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank were not illegal and he believed the candidate agreed with him. Trump was also “tremendously sceptical” about the prospects for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The United States has intensified criticism of Israeli settlement building in the West Bank in recent months, warning it is eating away at hopes for a two-state solution. No wonder there were celebrations in Tel Aviv!

Trump may lose US Latin American domains to China
After the crisis of 2008 the US lost dominance in the world market to China, Russia and its allies. Since the so-called “Arab Spring” it has embarked on a counter attack by every means. A series of coups d’états were unleashed in Honduras, Paraguay, Libya, Ukraine, Thailand, Brazil. In some countries, such as Syria, South Africa and Turkey, the coups did not triumph. Unlike in the past, the US has resorted less to military interventions and has orientated more towards parliamentary or judi-
cial coup d’états, it relies more on institutional political coups. This counterattack was most intense in the Latin American semi-colonies under Clinton as Secretary of State.

The end of the “cheap” financing of the debt snowball and the reception of speculative capital by the semi-colonial economies comes with the changes in the US Fed. In this sense, it is possible that the puppet governments of President Macri of Argentina and Temer, the post-coup leader in Brazil may have a fate like that of De la Rúa who was President of Argentina from 1999 to 2001 when he was forced to resign on 20 December over the banking panic and riots that followed. In 2001 the Argentine government lost its previous empathy from imperialism when the fraction of Wall Street capitalists represented by Bill Clinton was replaced by the fraction closest to the Military Industrial Complex and the four oil sisters within US imperialism, itself allied with Bush.

Be that as it may, nowhere in the world should we underestimate the rise of the extreme right and fascism. With the advance of the right and the blows of imperialism in several countries, if Trump, once considered so ridiculous that even sectors of the right could not imagine his victory, we must not dismiss reactionary politicians, defenders of the return of military dictatorship and torture, like Bolsonaro in Brazil, who is as boastful as Trump. In a country where the right does not have a leader, it can embody the fascist positions that are emerging as a solution to the country. The task for Brazil’s workers is to take advantage of all the contradictions of class enemies and the resistance of the masses to the dictatorship that gradually establishes itself in the country to build the Anti Imperialist United Front. For that it must create Popular Committees against the coup government in defence of their rights. In this struggle we must make a rigorous balance of the tragedy of the PT, overcoming its cowardly bourgeois orientation and build new organizations of masses free from the influence of the pernicious policy of class conciliation. In Argentina, the revolutionaries must invest their efforts in providing a Marxist and revolutionary programme to the workers in struggle against the Macri government, to overcome the mistakes of the Peronist, national and popular trade union bureaucracy.

Finally, there is the question of the countries that still maintain national-populist governments like Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia. It is necessary to combat the coup agents in every way, to demand the arming...
of all the people, to nationalize and expropriate all the means of production of the coupists. We must do so without sowing any political illusions in these Bolivarian governments that rely more on the bourgeois institutions of the State, the Army and the Judiciary than on the working population.

With this policy, as opposed to advancing towards socialism, self-defence of the masses, and the establishment of organizations of workers’ and peasants’ power, these governments strengthen the capitalist state. These political processes find themselves at a deadly crossroads; the revolutionaries stand for the united front to gain political influence over the masses and to build the workers’ and revolutionary party. These are the lessons of Pinochet’s coup against Allende in Chile in 1973.

In the case of Nicaragua where the Sandinista Front pushes for a pro-China policy, Daniel Ortega overwhelmingly won the last elections with more than 72% of the vote. The Sandinista Front pushed for a historic economic agreement between Nicaragua and China through the construction by the company Asian HKND Group of an interoceanic canal larger than the Panama Canal to boost international Atlantic-Pacific trade. This is a gigantic geostrategic project demonstrating Chinese advancement in Latin America while Trump announces the abandonment of the Trans-Pacific Free Trade Agreement.

In Nicaragua, it is for workers to strive with all their might to convert the country into a bastion of anti-imperialist struggle in Central America, but without submitting to plans of the Chinese capitalists to exploit their labour; and to organize their political independence from the Sandinistas. Historically the Sandinistas have been completely opposed to the transformation of the anti-imperialist struggle into the struggle for the socialist revolution and they are now a junior partner in the Chinese capitalist exploitation of the Nicaraguan workers.

Just like the Zionist lobby, the Cuban ‘gusano’ lobby played an active role in securing the presidency for Trump. This indicates that the inclination of US imperialism to surround Cuba and stifle the workers’ state is reinforced. After Trump’s victory, Havana took two unprecedented precautionary measures: they congratulated Trump and immediately announced a major military exercise of the Cuban Army and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

It is now necessary to unify all the struggles of workers and oppressed peoples against Trump and his ultra-reactionary project at the heart of the imperialist monster and everywhere else on the planet. We will do this through an Anti-Imperialist United Front with all the political forces that coalesce in practice in the fight against the empire, its multinationals and its agents, without feeding any illusions in the bourgeoisies that momentarily clash with the US and the EU and without abandoning the struggle for the international socialist revolution.

In this task, the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International makes the best of its militant efforts and invites the other revolutionary Marxist organizations to build together the World Party of Socialist Revolution.
Mexicans demonstrate on 1 September against Trump and unpopular President Enrique Pena Nieto for inviting him.

Notes

[2] In Marxist terms centrists are those Maoists, self-proclaimed Trotskyist and some other groups who continue opportunistically to use some aspects of the revolutionary programme whilst capitulating politically to a highly idealised memory of Mao, to liberal capitalism in general, the left trade union bureaucracy and/or the political Labour bureaucracy.
[3] In spelling style we have, for instance, used ‘Labour’ in the UK and ‘Labor’ in the USA and retained US spelling in quotes and UK spelling in the article as a whole.
[6] “[Rapee] is a slang American ghetto term for a girl who had been tied down and gang raped. Its use by a statesman of any order is truly appalling.”

workerssocial-istleague.blogspot.com.br/2016/07/usa-empire-racist-police.html
[18] Univation Noticias, Obama es el presidente que más ha deportado en los últimos 30 años, http://tinyurl.com/zl69soh
[22] Haaretz, Moti Bassok Mar 04, 2015, Number of Palestinians Working in Israel Doubled Over Four Years, Central Bank Says, Palestinians have been displacing foreign workers because they are more reliable and stay at their jobs longer, the central bank said. http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/premium-1.648266
[23] The Mail online, 26 September 2016, “The Donald in NYC and tells him a thing or two about building a wall while Trump promises Netanyahu he will recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital if he is elected,” http://tinyurl.com/jdrcsss
[25] Earlier in 2001 also the Slovak republic awarded De la Ilanband, Allende 1973 and Jeremy Corbyn
[26] Wiki, Big Oil, The supermajors are considered to be BP plc, Chevron Corporation, ExxonMobil Corporation, Royal Dutch Shell plc, Total SA and Eni, with ConocoPhillips Company also sometimes described as forming part of the group. http://tinyurl.com/j4pjupy
[27] James Armour Young, 27-4-16, Meet Brazil’s Donald Trump: He’s Deliberately Outrageous and He Wants to Be President, http://tinyurl.com/hqj3sw2