The Liberation of Aleppo, above left and a very political placard on an anti-Trump demo in the USA makes the equation between pro-Zionism and anti-Semitism of the US ruling class then and now. Trump’s administration represents an existential threat to the organised global working class.

Ian Allinson, below left, represents the desperate necessity to mobilise the class against this global threat. John Lansman, right, and Len McCluskey, centre, represent the cowardly fake leftists who want to contain that fightback on behalf of capitalism itself via the corrupt bureaucratic leadership of the labour movement.
1. We stand with Karl Marx: ‘The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule’ (The International Workingmen’s Association 1864, General Rules). The working class ‘cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other sphere of society and thereby emancipating all other spheres of society’ (Marx, A Contribution to a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, 1843).

2. 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 re-double our efforts to forward the world revolution.

3. 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.

4. 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 capital-

ist state to ban fascist marches or parties; these laws would inevitably primarily be used against workers’ organisations, as history has shown.

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

ers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price.

6. 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 found-

ing the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group and 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.

7. 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 centrisrn. It is by orienting to the ranks of workers in struggle, struggles against imperialism, struggles of oppressed minorities against varied all forms of social oppression, as well as political ferment among intellectual layers radicalised through these struggles, that we will lay the basis for regroupments with forces interna-

tionally breaking with reformism, centrisn and various forms of radical populism/nationalism, and seeking to build a new revolutionary Marxist international party. ▲
Editorial: Brexit and Workers’ Democracy; waiting for 2020 will not save the NHS or the welfare state

The ruling classes of the world are split as never before on how to face its global crisis. Of course, we can take heart from the widening divisions in the ruling classes in Britain, the USA and France in particular and have good reasons to hope that this will engender confidence in the working class to fight and open up these divisions. But to do that we must have correct tactics and the pressure must come from below. They can still laugh at us now because we have no army.

Lenin wrote in Left Wing Communism in 1920:

“For a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way.”

But we are far from that now because other criteria are not present. The temper of the masses to confront the capitalist system is not present nor is there a revolutionary leadership, even in embryo. Instead the result of the Brexit referendum last June showed and exasperated the opposite situation.

Brexit essentially won by its appeal to national chauvinism and blaming immigrants. And even though those who wanted a left exit, the Lexiteers, were totally opposed to this outcome the victory of Trump reinforced those reactionary sentiments in sections of the working class. We must fight this reaction before it engulfs the whole class, via parliament or a second referendum or whatever. This may enrage the right wing but we must make our political stance against this by all means.

But we are conscious that unless the class begins a real fight against austerity and for the NHS these reactionary forces will increase their influence on the class. But Marxist know that that is the only force that can defeat reaction and open the road to revolution.

Simply playing the parliamentary game now and left triangulation to get Corbyn elected in 2020, which are John Lansman’s tactics, is bound to lead to disaster. Corbyn’s fight for a left Brexit looks certain to be defeated now. It was correct to fight via the courts for a vote in parliament against Theresa May who was intent on using the outcome of the referendum to impose her will outside of parliament. “The will of the people” wielded via the royal prerogative, a throwback to the old royal absolutism and divine rights of kings before Cromwell put an end to all that feudal nonsense by chopping off the king’s head in 1649, still has the stink of dictatorship about it.

The contempt for judges displayed by Trump and the Daily Mail, etc. is a point well made in Tony Greenstein’s blog that we have reprinted on page 6. And contempt for parliamentary democracy is another traditional far right position.

Of course, Marxists know that the working class can never win their socialist liberation through parliament. But that does not mean that bourgeois parliamentary democracy is simply a talking shop. Its very existence relies on the existence of the organised working class in all major countries today unlike before WWII. To hail the marginalisation of bourgeois democracy from the ‘anti-establishment’ right populists like Trump or France’s Marine Le Pen or Theresa May’s royal prerogative gambit is to support the right’s offensive against the class itself.

Corbyn is profoundly wrong to hold back struggles against the most important issues facing the British working class, council cuts and in defence of the NHS, to keep the likes of Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey on board. Delaying tactics whilst contributing to the trade union bureaucracies’ eternal tactics of holding the class back from the struggle is the ultimate mistake. On top of the £100 billion cuts already imposed since 2009 there is a further £12 billion of cuts to come, and the phasing out of the £18 billion central government grant to local authorities; councils will face a further cut of 6.7% in real terms by 2019-2020.

Local authorities imposing savage cuts up to now mentioned in an article in the World Wide Socialist Website by Margot Miller on 16 January 2017 include, Newham, Croyden, Lewisham, Birmingham, Manchester City Council Knowsley, Sheffield, Glasgow city council Torfaen Council in South Wales, Lincolnshire County, Bath Council and Southend, most Labour controlled. She adds “Just months after his election in September 2015, Corbyn and his closest political ally, Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell, sent a letter to all Labour councils demanding they abide by the law and impose austerity cuts demanded by the Conservative government.” The 2016 Labour Conference reinforced this edict.

If these cuts continue in the local authorities and the NHS up to 2020 both these causes will be lost; the welfare state and the healthcare system will be damaged almost beyond repair. Unless a serious fightback begins here electing Corbyn in 2020 will be futile. That is why a rank and file revolt in the unions, linking up with the new mass Labour Party membership, is vital.

And for that two things are vital. First a successfully outcome of the democratic grassroots Momentum conference 11 March. And secondly the election of Ian Allinson as Unite’s General Secretary, or at the least a substantial vote for him to come, and the phasing out of the £18 billion central government grant to local authorities; councils will face a further cut of 6.7% in real terms by 2019-2020.

Both are possible. And we do need both. On 13 January 2017, in an article, “Len McCluskey’s grip on Unite is far from assured, Union supporters of Jeremy Corbyn prefer him to the centrist Gerard Coyne. But there is a third man” the New Statesman challenges the bland, and untrue, assumption that McCluskey was the best supporter of Corbyn:

But on the key thorny issues facing the Labour leadership, Corbyn supporters might find they have more in common with Allinson.
On Surplus Workers, Colin Burgon and Malthus  

By Gerry Downing

On 19 January the Morning Star carried a page long article by Colin Burgon entitled Bring economical with the truth. Burgon is a former Labour MP who stepped down in 2010. The They workforyou website carried an analysis of his record in parliament since 1997. He voted for and against increased university student fees but his position as a ‘left’ is assured by his five visits to Cuba and Latin America on various ‘fact finding’ missions. His flights and/or accommodation were paid for by the UCATT solicitors O H Parsons, the host government or an NGO on one occasion. He paid for his flights at least once.

His article sought to justify immigration controls on the basis that “a surplus of workers drives wages down”. People were lying to cover up this very important fact that workers must be told, he felt. The reference to a “surplus of workers” enraged me but I wrote a moderate reply to increase the chance of publication and 300 words could not to justice to the subject.

Colin Burgon complains that we are not ‘analysing society in economic terms’ (Morning Star January 19) and this is causing the disconnect Labour is experiencing in our heartlands’ because ‘those who argue in favour of the free movement of labour in a capitalist society choose to ignore the simple reality that a surplus of workers drives wages down’. The concept of a ‘surplus of workers’ is the very dangerous one most infamously proposed by Malthus in 1798. Malthus's theory was that population growth would outstrip the growth in food supply, leading to poverty and famine. It was a direct criticism of the Malthusian theory that population growth leads to economic downturn and poverty, and it was later criticized by Karl Marx, who saw it as a capitalist attempt to control the working class and maintain low wages.

Burgon says ‘many working-class Labour supporters see free movement as helping to create an atmosphere of job insecurity and yet another way of holding down wages, terms and conditions’. He should have spent his six years teaching his shop stewards to blame capitalism and not other workers.

The Guardian recently reported that in 2012 developing countries received a total of $1.3tn, including all aid, investment, and income from abroad. But that same year $3.3tn flowed out. That’s why workers emigrate. The job of unions is to defend wages and conditions by uniting the working class to fight. And unity is impossible if we think other workers are stealing ‘our’ jobs, houses, healthcare or even ‘our women’. That was what Marx meant when he wrote ‘workers of the world unite!’

In the current election for Unite General Secretary only Ian Allinson defends free movement, Gerard Coyne and Len McCluskey are for immigration controls.

GERRY DOWNING NW2 ends.

But more needs to be said on the question of a surplus of workers. During the great Irish Famine of 1945-52 over a million starved to death whilst great quantities of food were exported from Ireland in a deliberate policy to clear the land by...
the Liberal Government of Lord John Russell from 1846. The previous Tory government made far greater attempts to stave off the famine, not for any humanitarian motives, but because they constituted the majority of the landlord class in Ireland and they had no wish to kill the goose that laid the golden egg for them. But the liberal Russell wanted to undermine the finances of his political rivals, a great portion of which came from their Irish estates.

And it was Malthus’ surplus population theories as developed by J S Mill’s ‘greater good’ theory which later morphed in to the neo-Darwinians ‘the survival of the fittest’ as developed by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and even George Bernard Shaw—Untermensch and Ubermench, Man and Super-man; surplus human beings were led into Hitler’s death camps.

Capitalism could make no profits out of these surplus human beings so their only value was their gold teeth, their hair and their skin for lampshades. The specific targeting of the Jews in that period arose from the necessity for the capitalists to divide the most powerful working class of the age, the German, against itself by proposing a bogus ‘other’ who was their oppressors and not the capitalist system itself. Once they had captured the state the final solution in outline began to appear.

For those who understand this truth the words and actions of the anti-Semitic pro-Zionist Trump administration against Jews, Muslims, Blacks, Mexicans, women, disabled, LGBTI, bourgeois democracy and against judges sends a chill down our spines.

Twenty eight years before the Irish Famine Malthus wrote a letter to the economist David Ricardo that the first object should not be the provision of relief for the poor but the dispossessions of the peasantry:

“the Land in Ireland is infinitely more populated than in England; and to give full effect to the natural resources of the country, a great part of the population should be swept from the soil into large manufacturing and commercial Towns.”

In 1846 Lord Palmerston informed the cabinet of the necessity for a new system after the Famine struck in the same vein:

“It is useless to disguise the truth that any great improvement in the social system of Ireland must be founded upon an extensive change in the present state of agrarian occupation, and this change necessarily implies a long, continued and systematic ejection of small holders and cottiers.”

It is reported that a shudder went through the entire cabinet at this coldly-delivered sentence of mass murder. As with all poverty and every famine since then all the means and all the technology exists to prevent a single human being starving or lacking clean water, adequate housing, education and healthcare from the cradle to the grave. Only the capitalist system, US-dominated modern imperialism, of private property and profit condemns them to their terrible fate. It is never, never, never surplus workers as Colin Burgon and his ilk would have it. We see now why he voted for the Iraq and every other war. (See Theyworkforyou extract opposite).

See Nothing Natural about this ‘disaster’ by Gerry Downing, https://socialistfight.com/2015/01/08/Nothing-natural-about-this-disaster/ ▲
private company) cannot be the deciding factor. Society is dominated by capitalist institutions and propaganda, universally hostile to workers. Only when workers can attend meetings, listen to arguments and debate issues before voting where they feel their collective strength can they overcome this disadvantage. This was Thatcher’s target; the Luton car park mass meeting and strike vote. Lansman is opposed to this tradition; only thus can they fight for a socialist future. This bureaucratic method of rule from above will ensure Corbyn will lose in 2020. He, and the whole labour movement, must begin to deliver on defeating austerity, the reason Corbyn was elected, twice, in the first place.

GERRY DOWNING

Ends.

What is Lansman’s Momentum?

As Tony Greenstein’s blog explains the imposed constitution allows for a 28-member National Co-ordinating Group. Only 12 of the places will be taken by the members with councillors, MPs, Police Commissioners even, taking up the rest, alongside 6 trade unionists.

“The NCG will only meet 4 times a year and in practice will have even less control over Lansman and ‘Team Momentum’ than the existing Steering Committee does today. Unsurprisingly, tonight’s Brighton and Hove members meeting passed a resolution (see below) rejecting these proposals.

“The Constitution is as bad and undemocratic as it can be. Of the 26 members of the new National Co-ordinating Group that will run momentum, just 12 will be elected by the 20,000 members. The rest will be Lansman appointees in essence or fixed between him and a number of power brokers. 4 will be MPs, Police Commissioners (!) or other elected Labour office holders. There is no guarantee they will even be on the Left. 6 will be trade union affiliates and another 4 will be ‘affiliated organisations’.


“Most of these groups represent no-one. They are not democratic. The World Transformed is not a membership constituted organisation. It does good work but in practice Lansman will use it and other similar organisations to obtain crony representation. Red Labour represents nothing but a blog. Left Futures is another name for Jon Lansman’s blog. CLPD is a small organisation, which Lansman will manipulate as is the Labour Briefing Coop. As for Compass, they aren’t even on the left and work with other parties, including the Lib Dems. Labour CND is a shadow of what it once was and is no longer on the left.” ▲

Workers in South Africa must hold these corporations accountable for their actions. The incestuous, criminally corrupt SACP/ANC/COSATU alliance is rotten to the core, and workers must abandon these criminal gangs which are holding workers to ransom for their imperialist masters, while feathering their own nests.

DEMANDS

Nationalise the Mines and the banks, under workers’ control
1. Lonmin must pay compensation to victims’ families
2. Begin a programme of adequate housing construction for workers
3. Prosecute the CEO of Lonmin for murders under his watch
4. Confiscate Lonmin Capital in tax havens
5. Charge Nathi Mthethwa, Riah Phiyega, Jacob Zuma, Cyril Ramaphosa with murder
6. Jail the killer cops

We call on all workers and poor people to fight for these demands and to join together to build a revolutionary workers party in South Africa Capitalism Kills, Inequality Kills, Greed kills, Compensation Now!! ▲

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
After the Marikana massacre five years ago, (where 44 people were killed during the strike at Lonmin’s Platinum mine on 16th August 2012, 34 shot dead while trying to disperse, while 10 people died before and after the massacre) the government set up an ‘inquiry’ (Farlam) which cost the working people in South Africa R153 million. This ‘inquiry’ failed to ask the right questions (who gave the order to issue guns to the police...and who ordered them to shoot to kill?) or to address the issues ---better wages and better living conditions for the mineworkers.

Nineteen mineworkers were arrested and charged with murder(!!) (although video evidence showed that it was the police who shot and killed the 34 miners) and malicious damage to property. Their trial was suspended awaiting the results of the inquiries.

The politicians have shares in the mines, so they cannot hold them accountable. The police and the striking miners were not asked to give evidence...

Five years later there is, still, no compensation for the victims’ families and for the injured miners. Farlam merely recommended another ‘inquiry’ to determine if the suspended National Police Commissioner Riah Phiyega was ‘fit for office’ (Even a blind person could see that she is not fit for office; there was no need for another inquiry).

The Claassen Board of Inquiry was set up and returned its findings two weeks ago. Claassen found Phiyega had lied to the Marikana Commission of Inquiry, was not fit for office and should be dismissed. Phiyega is challenging the findings and has filed for a review. It is clear that there can be no justice for workers and poor people under capitalism/imperialism-the source of the planet’s ever worsening inequality/poverty/environmental destruction. Meanwhile the housing that has been built for workers in Marikana is woefully inadequate both in numbers and scale.

Elsewhere in South Africa, the struggle against the destruction of the environment and the health consequences for the people continues.

Capitalism is a system which turns people against one another, privatising the world, poisoning the air and water, destroying lives and societies. In Xolobeni, a Mining application has divided the community. Mining force people to leave their land which is the source of their livelihood. Local communities receive no benefits in terms of, e.g., improved infrastructure, health or education services from large mining operations.

The small number of jobs it generates cannot justify the destruction it would cause. Many people are also concerned about the contamination of water sources as well as the negative effects of economic differentiation on social cohesion.

In Xolobeni, (as well as in Melmoth, Mokopane and Limpopo) anti mining activists are subjected to violence and live in fear of their lives. For over ten years now the Xolobeni community has resisted the development of a Titanium/Rutile/Zircon ores and other minerals mine, in an area of outstanding natural beauty.

The community has blocked drilling in the area, but powerful international capitalists in league with local collaborators are attacking activists. Many Chiefs have set themselves up in ‘Empowerment’ companies to enrich themselves from these mining contracts, at the expense of the majority.

In Xolobeni for e.g. The local chief was anti-mining until he was made director of Xolco a company which holds 26% “empowerment” shareholding in the Australian Mining Company MRC. Workers in South Africa are suffering from a serious lack of access to Justice and the state is using the police for repression in defence of inequality.

The chair of the resistance committee Sikhosiphi Rhadebe was murdered in front of his wife and his son on 22nd March 2016. This was not the first murder of activists in the community, as violence against those opposed to mining is widespread. Activists are attacked and arrested on trumped up charges.

On 7/2/17 five activists (former Lonmin workers) from the Marikana Solidarity Campaign (MSC) were in Court accused of a murder which took place on December 8 2016. One, Napoleon Webster, the Chair of the MSC was, according to witnesses, NOT present at the time of the murder.

See page opposite
Labour and the Trade unions: Defend the NHS, abolish PFI, fight together now! By Graham Durham (Unite the union)

The greatest swindle of the endless NHS crisis is the Tory claim that money is being invested in the NHS at record levels. In fact, NHS spending growth at 1% annually is way below the annual trend growth of spending up to 2010 of 4%.

This Tory starvation of the NHS, leading to bed shortages, closures and waiting lists, is reasonably well known. Indeed, the Labour Party’s current 10-year plan for the NHS identifies the need to inject cash into the NHS from the Time to Care Fund of £2.5 billion which will be raised by a mansion tax and other measures.

What is not yet well enough known is that Labour has another alternative way to raise many times that amount – simply abolish the PFI payments to banks by renationalising all NHS hospitals and property.

Over the next 30 years over £70 billion will be paid back to banks and financial institutions as a result of PFI deals. Under PFI, NHS hospitals are leased back to government by banks. Instead of a cost of £17.4 billion for usual government borrowing to build the hospitals, a further £52 billion is due to be paid back. These PFI schemes are a disastrous lead weight dragging down the NHS funding and services. The Tories began PFI in 1992, but it was of course the Labour government of 1997-2010 that dramatically expanded them and saddled the NHS with a permanent debt.

It is time for the Labour Party to acknowledge this terrible mistake by Gordon Brown and Tony Blair and end the leeching of NHS money to the banks. There will be an immediate windfall of £2.5 billion every year for the next 30 years, which will make the very modest investment programmes of the current Labour Health and Care plans seem inadequate.

Even before the great PFI leech was attached to the body of the NHS there were two other leeches, the equipment manufacturers and the drugs companies. A true socialist government would nationalise both of these and stop that massive leech, Big Pharma, in particular. The top 15 Big Pharma, headed by Johnson and Johnson, have a market value of over $2 trillion and cannot be effectively ‘nationalised’ as such, they are all international corporations.

Of course, the Tories, Lib Dems and their servants in the mainstream media will attack the proposal as communism or worse and predict that business confidence in government borrowing will be destroyed. Our response must be that it is the health of all our people that must come before the profits of banks and shareholders who are being robbed daily of a well-staffed NHS service.

Currently the NHS is trapped in a cycle of ‘Transformation Plans’ in which huge budget cuts are pre-determined and ‘clinical leads’ outline proposals for ‘streamlining’ and ‘efficiency savings’ which leave local services cash strapped and understaffed. The current round of these plans for 44 areas, have been exposed as 28 of them propose further hospital closures.

It is disastrous for our great NHS trade unions to rely on community campaigners fighting localised battles, often for individual hospitals at the expense of others, without exposing the Tory source of the disastrous PFI drain. What is needed is for the leaders of UNISON and UNITE alongside other NHS unions to join Jeremy Corbyn in a national campaign which demands an immediate end to PFI and stages joint strike action to protect all hospitals under closure and joint action to defend every part of the NHS workforce from attack. A combination of mass strike action and a clear political lead, explaining how the NHS will die unless we save it now, will drive back the Tories. ▲

Reinstate Jack Hallinski-Fitzpatrick and all 1,000 expelled Labour Party members

By a Harrow Labour Party member

The Labour Party witchhunt goes on unabated and seemingly unchecked by any of the lefts in the NEC or Westminster. All we have is the commitment that they are opposing it “internally” but as expulsions approach the 1000 mark it is time we had more public commitments and statements given against this repugnant stain on our Party’s character.

The Party machine is carrying out an organised witchhunt against known Trotskyists, the charge is membership of a proscribed organisation, the punishment is automatic expulsion with no right of appeal (‘auto-exclusion’). This is an affront to the basic principles of natural justice.

An instructive example is the recent case of young activist and Party member Jack Hallinski-Fitzpatrick who was readmitted to the Party in mid-January after a period of suspension dating back to last summer’s leadership election. The young activist is 23 years old and is the Youth Officer of the Harrow West CLP.

Yet only three weeks later was ‘auto-excluded’ by the Labour Party on the same accusations on which he had been readmitted. Namely, that he was a member of the Social Appeal and that this was incompatible with membership of the Labour Party. This is seemingly on the basis that this is a “proscribed” organisation because it emerged from the Militant tendency which was a proscribed organisation.

Before tackling the question of proscribed organisations, the Socialist Appeal has carried out its politics for 25 years without previously any issues under Smith, Blair, Brown and Miliband; is not proscribed and has never stood candidates against the Labour Party.

Allegedly membership of an organisation of this kind is a complete anathema to Labour Party membership as the Labour Party stands for democratic socialism and a broad defence of capitalism and not revolutionary socialism. This is completely hollow argument and exemplifies that this is no more than a witchhunt of socialists. When the Labour Party was established in 1900 the Marxist SDF played a key role, the constitution was developed under the influence of the Russian revolution which saw the adoption of Clause 4; this was the original socialist one not Blair’s neoliberal updated version.

The original Clause 4 stands unequivocally for socialism and yes stands squarely against the neoliberal wing of the Party; Blair, Mandelson and Progress. Our current Leader and Shadow Chancellor between them voted 1000 times against the neoliberalism of the Blair and Brown years and are working might and main to turn the Party in a socialist direction. The question is posed now; if you start with the Trotskyists, where does it end? The Party Leader, the Shadow Chancellor?

If membership of a separate organisation is the crime, why are
Corbyn's Disastrous Brexit Strategy: Labour’s slow moving car crash

Extracted from Tony Greenstein’s Blog, Socialist, anti-Zionist, anti-racist 8-2-2017

Support for Article 50 is a failure of principle and strategy

I t is with Britain’s relationship with the EU and Labour members’ relationship with Jeremy Corbyn. Corbyn was the Accidental Leader of the Labour Party. He only became Leader because no one thought he’d actually win and because Ed Miliband believed that allowing all of Labour’s members a vote would guarantee that the Left would never come to power.

There was, of course, a third factor. The unexpected victory of David Cameron in the 2015 General Election on 36% of the vote, which caused a political backlash in the Labour Party. If Labour’s Right misjudged the chances of Corbyn winning they also misjudged the mood of the country with their talk of aspiring Waitrose shoppers. The mood music was more that of the Clash than D:Ream. For most people things could only get worse.

The EEC before the accession of Eastern European countries. Indications of the changing mood were the Peoples’ Assembly march in June 2015. Large numbers of people felt that Cameron’s victory had no legitimacy. The Tories had only achieved a majority on the backs of the collapse of the Lib Dem vote. Cameron had no escape route from his rash promise of a referendum on the European Union. This backlash manifested itself in the doubling of Labour’s membership and the thousands of people who became registered supporters.

Corbyn is the first person to admit that he was not cut out to become Leader of the Labour Party. He might have been a serial rebel but he was also seen as a genuinely nice guy. Unfortunately this had its negative consequences as well. Although his niceness has been spun as straightforward, honest politics it has also meant that he lacks the killer instinct. This was painfully obvious when pitted against David Cameron, the Flashman of British politics, at the dispatch box each week. With Theresa May Corbyn has had an easier task, but still he hasn’t landed any killer blows despite her wooden performance.

Wishful thinking

But even more seriously is Corbyn’s inability to take control of the Labour Party. In the aftermath of his victory last September, he had the golden opportunity to send Iain McNicol, Labour’s treacherous General Secretary packing. This was a man who had not only tried to fix the vote but had gone out of the way to prevent him even standing. For a Labour leader not to have any control over his civil service is a fatal mistake. His failure to support the Left in the party has meant that the Right, although a minority, has managed to keep control of the Conference and the NEC.

There have also been policy failures. Corbyn should have made it clear that the railways would be nationalised within the first six months of a Labour victory and that compensation would be capped. Instead there is the absurdity of waiting for 15 year contracts to expire. He should have come up with a radical programme on housing – immediate return to security of tenure in the private sector, controlled rents and massive council house building. On utilities there has also been nothing in terms of the massive fuel poverty that people are suffering from. On all of these issues and more Labour’s message is muffled. The attack on benefits – from the abolition of Council Tax Benefit to the Bedroom tax – has been met with silence.

It should have been obvious, as Al Jazeera’s The Lobby has demonstrated, that the ‘anti-Semitism’ crisis was wholly manufac-
tured. His failure to call the anti-Semitism witch-hunt what it was, allowing a destabilising campaign to take hold just before the local elections, has severely weakened his leadership. Furthermore, Corbyn’s repeated proclamations that he will not tolerate anti-Semitism in the Party can only give the impression that there is a problem. He has completely played into the hands of his political enemies and it was embarrassing at the Zionist debate with Owen Smith for him to declare that he admired Israel’s ‘spirit and verve’ given his long work with the Palestine solidarity movement.

The biggest policy failure is the decision to support triggering Article 50 and to accept the inevitability of Brexit (which despite all the punditry may not be inevitable). As the article below from Socialist Action argues, the result of pulling out of the Single Market will be a serious decline in working class living standards. If May chooses to make Britain a tax haven then this will mean that with far less tax revenue not only will there not be enough resources to fund an expansion of the welfare state but a Labour government would be a rerun of previous austerity governments.

Access to the single market, both for manufacturing and the financial services is crucial. London faces the prospect of losing its role as the world’s leading financial sector to New York, Frankfurt and Paris. Companies which are located in Britain because of tariff free access to Europe will simply move. The fact that a narrow majority of people were fooled into voting against their own interests, for good reasons, by nationalist bile is not a reason to accept the decision. Parties exist to change peoples’ minds not to pander to their prejudices.

Those who thought that Lexit was a nice phrase will find out that hitching your wagon to Nigel Farage can only lead to disaster. That that is the position of Britain’s two far-left parties, the Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party, demonstrates how out of touch modern day Trotskyism is. It should have been obvious from the rash of racist attacks in the wake of the Brexit vote that the political mood was not one of an independent socialist Britain but a retrograde and nationalist little England (& Wales).

The idea that an independent British capitalist state is preferable to European capitalism is nothing more than an attempt to march backwards into history. Marx and Engel’s described this best in the Communist Manifesto when they wrote that feudal socialism was ‘half lamentation, half lampoon; half an echo of the past, half menace of the future; at times, by its bitter, witty and incisive criticism, striking the bourgeoisie to the very heart’s core; but always ludicrous in its effect, through total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history.’

Most of the Tory press is all in favour of Brexit

A beautifully poetic description of the belief that there is a nationalistic road to socialism. National or nationalist socialism isn’t exactly a road paved with glory, be it in Germany or Israel. The attempt to unify Europe economically and politically, which is the proclaimed goal of the European Union cannot succeed under capitalism. That should be obvious. But the attempt to try and attain that goal is progressive. For socialists to oppose it is backward and reactionary. The attempt to form a single currency is progressive but without economic and fiscal and thus political union, it is doomed as the recent crises have shown. The debate around leaving the EU was never going to be about anything else other than the wonders of an independent British capitalism. Theresa May’s humiliating itinerary, from Trump to Erdogan and Netanyahu shows how absurd this belief is that Britain can go it alone. Socialism has not been advanced one iota by Brexit or Lexiti. Unfortunately Tony Benn was wedded to the idea that Parliament could regain its sovereignty. It was an illusion then and it still is today.

What should be the position of Corbyn? He should be implacably opposed to withdrawal from the Single Market as it will have a devastating effect on the welfare state or what is left of it. Socialism is not best served by advocating policies that lead to a recession. The only argument that May has for leaving the single market is one of the EU’s three pillars – freedom of movement for workers. It isn’t an argument that Labour should avoid.

There is no mileage in competing with Farage. We should be saying loud and clear that the reasons people voted for Brexit, the industrial wastelands of the Midlands and the North were not caused by immigration but the free market principles of Thatcher. It wasn’t immigration that closed the mines and the shipyards but Tory economic policies. The same policies that UKIP represent.

It is no accident that the most reactionary section of the American ruling class, as represented by Trump, also fave Brexit. They want to see the break up of the EU because it will enable the US to gain privileged access on its terms to the European market.

The wiser members of the Labour left, including Dianne Abbot with her diplomatic illness can see this. Corbyn thinks that he will gain something by trying to compete with May and Farage on the terms of our exit from the EU. It is an utter delusion. What Labour should be doing is pointing out that the referendum campaign was won on the basis of a lie that can never be delivered. Your bonus from Brexit, £300m for the NHS turned to dust the minute the result was announced. With a base of 48%, it should be clear that a principled stance in opposition to Brexit can very soon, if not already be a majority position in the country. Corbyn could have won respect for a clear stance on this and not left it to the Labour Right. It is a failure of leadership of immense proportions.

The European Union came about because the capitalist leaders of Germany and France, Robert Schumann and Jean Monnet, wished to create the economic, political and social conditions that would prevent a recurrence of world war. At first this was via the Iron and Steel Community and the 1951 Treaty of Paris which morphed into the European Common Market via the 1957 Treaty of Rome and then the European Union with the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht when Euro-scepticism first began to poison the British body politic.

Corbyn has been heavily influenced by the petty nationalism of the Communist Party’s British Road to Socialism. There is still time for him to change course but I suspect not much time.
It seems to me that it is a political error to seek to use parliamentary manoeuvres and a second referendum imposed from above, to reverse last year’s referendum vote on the European Union. Marxists are opposed to little Britain or little England nationalism, which is in fact heavily infused with British imperial racism and nostalgia from part of the British ruling class for its days of Empire. In that regard, Trump’s ideology of ‘Making America Great Again’ is also shared by the pro-Brexit bourgeoisie and the right-wing populists and racists that make up UKIP and much of the ‘Tories’.

But neither can Marxists implicitly or explicitly endorse the European Union, or advocate any kind of political support for it. Advocating a ‘remain’ vote in last year’s referendum was a form of political support, even though critical, for this imperialist bloc. For that is what it is, there is no getting away with it. Despite the inclusion of Ireland and several semi-colonial former Soviet-bloc countries within it, it is dominated by a bloc between French and German imperialism, with a semi-detached Britain blowing hot and cold around the fringes, due mainly to the contradictions of Britain’s role as junior partner to the US on a global level, with the US in return protecting key economic remnants of Britain’s Empire (its so-called ‘invisible earnings’ which are key to British imperialism’s survival).

It is wrong for Marxists in principle to support British imperialism remaining in a regional imperialist bloc like the European Union. Equally, it would be wrong to advocate junking this particular alliance in favour of a closer and more exclusive relationship with US imperialism, which is the real upshot of Brexit. We are for the overthrow of both imperialist blocs by the working class on an internationalist basis, of solidarity with all workers, whether ‘indigenous’ or migrant, not even on a European scale, but rather globally. If we are nevertheless forced to choose between them, and cannot refuse to choose, then this becomes a tactical consideration.

It is wrong to project the EU as in some way progressive, as an expression of capitalism’s tendency to break down national barriers, in a contradictory and reversible manner. While that tendency does indeed exist under today’s capitalism as it always has, as Marx and Engels pointed out as early as 1847 (Communist Manifesto), capitalism today is not a progressive force and ‘advances’ in this direction will inevitably be accompanied by convulsions (the Greek horror was not incidental, but organic to the EU) and blowback from other organic elements of the system itself. Thus Trumpism, Brexit, Le Pen etc. are as much part of the system and its dynamics as the regime of free movement emanating from Brussels.

We are opposed to all restrictions on migrants and refugees as a matter of principle, not of tactics. But that equally means the restrictions imposed by the European Union on non-EU migrants as much as the restrictions that the Brexiteers hope to impose on EU citizens in the UK. We defend the gains of free movement that EU workers have gained from the EU, but that does not mean we have to endorse the EU’s particular scheme of doing things, which is based on a ‘Fortress Europe’ concept that can be just as brutal to outsiders as the nationalist-populist right. Indeed it would be wrong in principle to do so.

In that regard, there are tactical considerations in the aftermath of the referendum for the working class movement. And it seems to me that Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour leadership have broadly got things right. The principle is defence of migrant workers, and while Corbyn has shown some signs of vacillation under pressure on this, his policy still seems to me to defend EU migrant workers against the backlash and restrictions the Brexiteers want. Diane Abbot’s ‘diplomatic illness’, if indeed it was diplomatic, may have been a form of pressure on Labour to keep to the straight and narrow on that.

But it was correct tactically for Labour to vote for the triggering of Article 50, on the bare question of the withdrawal from the EU, accepting the result of the referendum as having some democratic legitimacy, while maintaining as a matter of principle opposition to anti-migrant measures and xenophobia, and the economic nationalism inherent in the demand for ‘hard’ Brexit and exit from the EU’s looser single market and customs union. In that sense Corbyn is right that the real fight begins now.

That this is a correct position is shown by the intervention of Blair, only a week before the Stoke and Copeland by-elections, to wreck Labour’s campaign. The demand for a second referendum to reverse Brexit, imposed from above will be counter-productive; it would likely lead to a more emphatic Brexit vote due to the perception of being imposed from above by the neoliberal elite that Blair personifies.

We should oppose the demand for a second referendum in current conditions on democratic grounds as an attempt to coerce the electorate to vote the ‘right’ way. It may be that experience will lead large sections of Brexiteers to change their minds, but demanding that they do so now (or else) is a gift to UKIP.

At the same time we should use that opposition as a lever to fight for equal rights for all migrants, the abolition of the foul restrictions of the rights of non-EU migrants that are often inhuman. We oppose these restrictions, not on the grounds of support for a pan-European imperialist neo-liberal bloc, but of working class internationalism.

- No to all restrictions on migrants and refugees!
- Down with UKIP/Tory populism and Blairite/EU pseudo-internationalism. ▲
Grassroots challenger Ian Allinson is on the ballot paper for Unite General Secretary. He is a workplace activist, standing against Len McCluskey and Gerard Coyne, two senior officials of the union, for Unite’s top job.

Socialist Fight and the Grass Root Left have no hesitation endorsing Ian and we urge all supporters to work flat out for his victory in the election. As we say in our editorial: “And for that (to begin the fightback against austerity) two things are vital. First a successfully outcome of the democratic grassroots Momentum conference 11 March. And secondly the election of Ian Allinson as Unite’s General Secretary, or at the least a substantial vote for him and the launch of a powerful rank and file movement in Unite and across all unions.”

It is completely wrong to argue for a vote for McCluskey for fear of splitting the vote and letting the right winger Coyne in. This to ensure Corbyn had the backing of a major trade union, McCluskey is only a very provisional Corbyn supporter, on Trident, on immigration controls and on opposing austerity. In any way other than verbally it is Ian Allinson that chimes with the essence of the Corbyn surge and not McCluskey. Only the Socialist Workers Party of the major left groups support Allinson. As with anti-imperialism and the liberation of Aleppo there are few clear anti-capitalist fighters today who are also anti-imperialists. A victory for Allinson would enormously strengthen the rank and file of Unite and all unions and give some substance to the fightback against austerity. He says:

While McCluskey and Coyne have been officials employed by the union for decades, Allinson is a workplace activist at Fujitsu in Manchester, where he has recently been on strike over pay, pensions and job security. He claims to be the only candidate who knows the experiences and frustrations of members first hand.

Allinson is the only candidate clearly opposed to Trident, and the only candidate arguing in favour of all workers’ rights to move freely and be treated equally. He has pledged to stay on his current salary if elected, arguing that a six-figure salary is unnecessary and gives ammunition to employers and the press when members are challenging fat cat pay. Allinson says:

“The problems of different wages and conditions that now obtain were deliberately connived at by the TGWU in 1993-4 to inhibit the development of a mass rank and file movement on the London buses, potentially one of the most powerful and militant sections of workers in the capital but now amongst the weakest, because of this policy of fragmentation and isolation.

Rate for the job

The aspiration for a “rate for the job” between companies ignores the disparity of pay within companies. Metroline now has 15 different rates of pay for “driving the same roads”, but workers had fought back against this in the past. In 2002 in Westbourne Park, the leading garage of Centre West, drivers struck work against the 13 different pay rates in this major garage and the others in the group. There were different pay rates for different routes depending on the tender price when routes came up for renewal ever three or six years. The success of the strikes had a beneficial effect and began to eliminate these differentials across London.

But Unite, which succeeded the TGWU in 2007, faced another problem, considerably exasperated by the manner of wage cutting and privatisation in 1993-4 referred to above. The close collaboration between company Convenors and many Reps with the managers meant that drivers got very poor service from Unite and they had begun to look to the RMT, traditionally a more militant union which
had maintained the wages and conditions of their members on the underground and rail. The buses used to be better paid than the underground up to the 1980s and by 1993 the pay was still broadly comparable. After the disaster of 1993-4 they fell back to some 20% behind. The RMT began to recruit massively and Unite began the campaign for equality of pay across London to defend their subs base. In other words, they began a fight to undo what they had conceded with only token resistance a decade and a half previously. At a rally during the campaign for equal pay in July 2008 the Chair, Steve O’Rourke, now Chair of the Regional Industrial Sector Committee (RISC) and London Bus Conference, said

“We are at round one, we do not expect to go more that round two before we get a knock-out”

And Peter Kavanagh, then Senior Regional Organiser, now Regional Secretary said,

“We have 28,000 organised who, if they get themselves together, if they stand shoulder to shoulder they will be one almighty army. We have described London busworkers as a sleeping army, no more, no more, we are on the march, we are organised, we are going to fight anyone that gets in our way, aren’t we?”

Well ‘no’ was the answer to that question because on 22 October 2008 14,000 bus-workers were pledged to go on strike but one small company in south London with only 1,000 drivers, Metronet, obtained an injunction against the strike and the convenors representing the rest of the busworkers immediately gathered and called off all the strikes, not even informing their own members in many instances; company notices appeared on management’s notice boards triumphantly telling drivers that the strikes were off.

That common pay claim was abandoned by the 2008 annual London Busworkers Conference. Now all the talk was about the abstract “principle” of Central Pay Bargaining without any reference to harmonising pay and conditions (no actual rate or set of conditions married to that was ever demanded, showing that this was merely another token campaign) and very soon they even stopped talking about that. No explanation was offered to the members.

But the reason was apparent to any independent observer: a letter from RMT General Secretary Bob Crow was posted up in all the garages by Unite branch secretaries; the RMT would no longer represent members on the London buses and RMT busworker members were instructed to rejoin Unite. There was no serious competition for union membership now, Kavanagh’s “almighty army” was left leaderless and as for O’Rourke’s “round two knock-out” the red corner threw in the towel and the blue corner won by a walk-over. This betrayal of London bus workers had dire consequences. Wage cutting swept the London buses with the acquiescence of the Unite left leaderless and as for O’Rourke’s “round two knock-out” they fell back to some 20%.
Ben from Oldham, is accused of two offences in violation of the British anti-terrorist legislation, Article 5 (1) (a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act 2006, which provides for criminal liability for participation in the preparation of terrorist acts, and Article 5 (1) (b) of the Act, which provides criminalize the promotion of a third party in the commission of terrorist acts.

He was interviewed by the BBC while he was with the Donbass militia in eastern Ukraine in October 2015, and was filmed saying he would be prepared to kill if his life was threatened, and he would see it as an act of war. Ben denied any involvement in military action, saying he had gone to the country to drive ambulances and at the time of the interview was trying to get away from the militia.

The case involves the conflict in eastern Ukraine where he went because he understood what was happening there and wanted to stop a fascist pogrom in east Ukraine. Of course, this is an intensely political case which requires all principles anti-imperialists to take a side.

The “legitimate government of Ukraine” was installed in a coup organised by the CIA and their allies, the NGOs funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which is in turn funded by the US Congress to do its dirty work abroad. The coup was led by outright fascists thugs who proudly display the WWII fascist symbols of Nazi collaborators. In fact, “the legitimate government of Ukraine” is the only government in the world to honour as a national hero a Nazi collaborator, Stepan Bandera, who slaughtered thousands of Jews on his own behalf and for Hitler.

“Historian Karel Berkhoff, among others, has shown that Bandera, his deputies, and the Nazis shared a key obsession, namely the notion that the Jews in Ukraine were behind Communism and Stalinist imperialism and must be destroyed. “The Jews of the Soviet Union,” read a Banderist statement, “are the most loyal supporters of the Bolshevik Regime and the vanguard of Muscovite imperialism in the Ukraine.” When the Germans invaded the USSR in June 1941 and captured the East Galician capital of Lvov, Bandera’s lieutenants issued a declaration of independence in his name. They further promised to work closely with Hitler, then helped to launch a pogrom that killed four thousand Lvov Jews in a few days, using weapons ranging from guns to metal poles. “We will lay your heads at Hitler’s feet,” a Banderist pamphlet proclaimed to Ukrainian Jews.” [1]

The Ben Stimson campaign notified us on Facebook: “Ben is on hunger strike from 8th February, his visits are restricted and he is locked in his cell in solidarity confinement for 23 hours a day. Ben needs letters of support. Please do not mention anything political or ask about why he’s being held as he won’t get the letters. He is allowed books etc. but nothing political.”

I have written to him three times and he has replied twice, the prison authorities confiscated the letters and the magazines I sent, because he is not allowed any political communications whatsoever. This is an outrageous attack on his civil liberties. It is clear from his two letters that he is subjected to the most outrageous mental torture and pressure in an attempt to brainwash him and break his spirit. For instance, he says that my letter or publication to him was stopped because it could “harm my rehabilitation”. It is now a thought crime to oppose the work of the CIA abroad. Ben is of Irish Jewish parentage and, of course, the sight of Nazi and Nazi Collaborator flags waving proudly in the ranks of the “the legitimate government of Ukraine” was too much for this proud and principled anti-fascist man. The left and every principled anti-fascist should rally to his cause!

Note


The “Decrees of Expropriation of the People,” Marx’s Capital and the Nature of the Coup d’Etat in Brazil

Coup02.htm

In the 2016 coup in Brazil, the objective is the same, the expropriation of the people and all their rights by imperialism on behalf of the great capital installed here, Petrobrás (the largest corporation in both Brazil and South America), as shown by the punitive measures against social security, labour, educational institutions, approved by the same coup parliament that approved impeachment.

The difference is that the British people only had their land to be stolen and almost no rights, the working people of Brazil today had hundreds of rights that were plucked through many struggles, blood and lives. As an economic objective, the coup seeks, “through the super-exploitation of the masses, to recover the rates of profits of the capitalists in Brazil.” ▲
The LRC has become a pusillanimous body, split between a section who want to maintain the organisation and fight to win the leadership of Momentum to a clear socialist programme and a section that either wants to dissolve the organisation or reduce it to uncritical supporters of the Corbyn /McDonnell leadership with little political independence. As John McDonnell is proposed as the Honorary President we expect the candidates we are supporting to turn the LRC into a fighting, activist organisation to inspire the new Labour party membership and the rank and file of Momentum to fight for real anti-austerity mobilisations and socialism.

The LRC National Executive Committee cancelled the 2015 Conference in breach of its own constitution. A fighting socialist body would have been delighted with the opportunity to give a lead to the new membership and influence Momentum in adopting the type of democratic structures it had itself. But, appalled by the prospect of this new membership surge coming under too much left wing and socialist influence, they cancelled the Conference and called a Special Conference on 20 February to water down its own democratic structures lest it put undue influence on Momentum and the new Labour leadership.

To our knowledge the Labour Party Marxists (LPM), the Grass Roots Left (GRL), The Irish Republican Prisoners Support group (IRPSG), Socialist Fight (SF) and many others had been refused affiliation on the basis that the NEC were not “satisfied that your organisation represented a body with a national membership base”. So, like Ian McNichol and the Compliance Unit, judgement was passed without a hearing and we could later appeal, after we had lost our votes and delegates at the conference, as expelled/suspended Labour members had in September at Labour’s Conference.

For the past several years the GRL has proposed motions on vital trade union issues, the IRPSG has proposed motions defending the democratic rights of Irish Republican Prisoners and most of these motions have passed and enriched the political culture of the LRC, likewise with the LPM and others. It is true some motions by SF and other groups tended to be more controversial and many were defeated but it is vital to protect minority leftist views in workers’ organisations; they may prove correct and indispensable for the whole movement later as it develops.

Certainly the LPM, the GRL and the IRPSG have a national membership base, GRL Chair Jerry Hicks got 80,000 votes, almost 40%, for Unite GS in 2013. Jerry lives in Bristol, Treasurer Ian Scott lives in Birmingham, Secretary Gerry Downing in London. We must elect a press officer from Downing in London. We must elect a press officer from Ian Scott lives in Birmingham, Secretary Gerry Downing in London. We must elect a press officer from Jerry Hicks got 80,000 votes, almost 40%, for Unite GS in 2013. Jerry lives in Bristol, Treasurer Ian Scott lives in Birmingham, Secretary Gerry Downing in London. We must elect a press officer from Birmingham.

We are all aware the Corbyn leadership comes under tremendous pressure to compromise with the capitalist establishment and their neo-liberal representatives in the PLP and the LP NEC. Despite the relatively good Chakrabarti Report the anti-semitism witch-hunts continue. Thousands were arbitrarily suspended or expelled, including Ken Livingstone and Jackie Walker, for spurious and baseless charges.

Right wing PLPers and their supporters can issue death threats to Corbyn in public without sanction. Birmingham Yardley MP Jess Phillips, said, “I won’t knife you in the back – I’ll knife you in the front”. Of course, such a threat, if issued against Angela Eagle, would result in immediate suspension and expulsion.

A defence that it was only a metaphor would be contemptuously rejected. Ukip and Tory members can switch to Labour without any trawls for past or present racist attitudes or genuine anti-semitism. Yet the response from Corbyn and McDonnell to all this is muted, to say the least.

Because of the continued domination of the party structures by the right wing the Labour party conference decreed that it is now a disciplinary offence for Labour councillors to actively oppose austerity, service decimations and job losses in Local Authorities.

Momentum made no serious attempt to organise for this conference in line with its pathetic outlook of not upsetting the right wing. Consequently, the right-wing Zionist Mike Katz, National vice-chair of Jewish Labour Movement (JLM), and the treacherous Deputy Tom Watson got standing ovations. That is an indictment of the cowardice of Momentum’s top leaders.

The LRC and, with LRC assistance to democratising it, Momentum must provide the very necessary counter pressure on the Labour leadership to take a strong stance on these questions. Unless the movement of both Corbyn surges begins to win some real victories for itself or at least engage in serious struggle it will wither and eventually die. We must seek to assist it to win these victories and thus inspire its forward momentum; it must begin to feel its own strength and relevance and we must not relegate it to the status of a stage army just

Socialist Fight Flyer against the banning of the IRPSG, the GRL and the Socialist Fight Group at the 2016 AGM: End the LRC political bans and proscriptions!
Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

To get Corbyn elected in 2020. To win it must become ideologically coherent itself. Therefore it cannot have the likes of Jon Lansman as an LRC NEC member or as the leader of Momentum. His victimisation of Jackie Walker with the disgraceful assistance of the Zionist Alliance for Workers Liberty, because his friend Jeremy Newmark was “upset” is intolerable. In April 2013 the employment tribunal judge Anthony Snelson said Jeremy Newmark’s evidence to it was “false, preposterous, extraordinarily arrogant and disturbing” after the failure of the attempt to sue the University College Union for harassment and institutional antisemitism.

Such condemnation by a judge would destroy the careers of most but the Jewish Chronicle stoutly defended the witch-hunter and, with others, promoted him to become the National Chair of the racist Zionist JLM. Now this ‘preposterous’ man is a constant presence on TV and the columns of the national press, all universally hostile to the new Labour party members and Corbyn.

Jon Lansman, who wants us to stop using the word ‘Zionist’ lest we offend Zionists, was not at all bothered about offending the Black Jewish woman Jackie Walker on the say so of this scoundrel. She was then subject to an appalling racist twitter storm and vile racist insults when she appeared in public. We must elect more militant and revolutionary leaders who are prepared to inspire and lead the vanguard of the class, the 600,000+ Labour members who might not have an advanced understanding of Marxism or the tendency of the rate of profit to fall but who can recognise the class enemy when they see it and were clearly advanced enough to reject the universal hostility of the entire capitalist establishment and their allies within the Labour party to vote for Jeremy Corbyn twice in a year.

They deserve a better lead than that given by the current LRC compromisers. The Momentum rank and file need assistance to democratise that body. Momentum’s prime task should be winning wards and GCs, electing Conference delegates, etc. and deselecting the Blairite MPs and councillors. With this must go the struggle to democratise the TUs by rank and file bodies and defeating the Blairite bureaucrats there.

Then we can have a left wing NEC actually supporting the leader and members. Corbyn will then be elected by a mass movement growing ever more confident in their demands for
Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group

Michael Holden Memorial Event
Friday 24 March,
The Cock Tavern, 23 Phoenix Rd, Kings Cross, London NW1 1HB
8 ’till late
Peadar O’Hanian has compiled a DVD of tributes to Michael from his comrades which we will show at the meeting followed by brief tributes to him from his comrades and friends.

Music from the evening will be provided by Tricia Kelly on accordion and Panama Dave on guitar.

Gerry Downing, Secretary of the IRPSG, will close the evening.

This is an extract from the obituary to Michael Holden by Cúnaid de Cántarng
The Irish Political Status Committee was founded by Michael and other comrades in 2000 to support Irish Republican prisoners who were not covered by the Good Friday Agreement. Michael and other IRPSC members wrote articles in the IRPSC newsletter which was sold in numerous Irish centres across Britain, and sent to prisoners in jail. Michael helped organise IRPSC activities such as public meetings and in pursuance of its aims members of the IRPSC picketed the Irish Embassy, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice. He was a lifelong Republican activist, who campaigned tirelessly for the freedom of Irish Prisoners of War (POWs), the withdrawal of the British army and the end of British interference in both the Free State and in occupied Six Counties. He campaigned against the criminalisation of the struggle for Irish freedom. Hence Michael spent most of his life dedicated to fighting for the Worker’s Republic and the campaign for Irish self-determination.

Michael helped develop the IPSC website. Michael was instrumental in organising IPSC activities which culminated pickets at the Irish Embassy, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice. When the IRPSC was formed in 2009 we continued this important work. An example of this was when Michael and the IRPSG Committee met with the Irish Ambassador in London to highlight the treatment of political prisoners in Portlaoise Prison.

In the course of Michael’s political activities, he endured police and intelligence service harassment, and was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and, like many others, was held in Pentonville Green police station but then released without charge. Michael amongst others Sinn Fein members discussed their experiences in a Channel Four Documentary ‘Support Communities’. The program dealt with the PTA and its efforts on the Irish community living in Britain. During the interview Michael states that the interrogators questioned him mainly about his legal but militant trade union and Republican activities.

Over the years Michael spoke on numerous radio stations in the USA and Australia and elsewhere to highlight the plight of Irish political prisoners. It was through Michael that members of the IPSC and later the IRPSC spoke at the International Symposium against the Isolation of Political Prisoners (2005, 2014 and 2016). Michael had been chair of the IRPSC since its foundation in 2009. Michael amongst others was a key source for the book Special Category, The IRA in English Prison written by Irish historian Roan O’Donnell.

Maghaberry Prison
Old Road
Ballinderry Upper
Lisburn
BT28 2PT
ROE 4: IRPWA
• John Paul Wootton
• Brendan McConville
• Martin Kelly
• Tarlach Mac Dhomhnaill
• Barry Concannon
• Jason Ceulemans
• Damien Harkin
• Neil Hegarty
• Nathan Hastings
• Seamus McLaughlin
• Gerard McManus
• Kevin Barry Nolan
• Barry Petticrew (in isolation)
• Seamus Kearney

Hospital Road
BELFAST BT8 8NA
• Sharon Rafferty
• Portlaoise Prison
• Dublin Road
• Portlaoise, Co Laois
• (E3 and E4)
• Eddie McGrath
• Kevin Braney
• John Brock
• Declan Phelan
• Michael Finlay
• Dean Byrne
• Sean Connolly
• Hubert Duffy
• Pierce Moran
• Bernard Dempsey
• Dessie Christie
• Brian Quinn
• Bob Day
• Nick McBenet

Magilligan Prison
Point Road, Co Derry BT49 0LR
• Tony Friel

Mountjoy Prison
North Circular Road,
Dublin 7
• Pat Barry
• Dóchas Centre,
North Circular Road,
Dublin 7
• Ursula Ní Sheanáin (Ursula Shannon)

Hydebank Wood
Hospital Road
BELFAST BT8 8NA
• Ciaran Burke
• Willie Jackson
• Stephen Hendrick
• Dean Evans:
• Tony Carroll
• Brian Walsh
• Nick Kendall
• Brian Cavlan
• Kevin Devlan
• David Rocket
• Tom Hughes
• Davy Jordan
• Michael Barr
• Cormac Fitzpatrick
• E4: Teach na Fáilte
• INLA
• Eugene Kelly
• Noel Mooney
• Non-INLA E4
• Michael McHugh
• David Murphy
• E2:
• Patrick Tierney
• Dalton McKevitt
• Joe O’Brien
• Charles Anthony Deery
• Garret Mulley
• Paddy MacDonald
• David Gallagher
• E2: Unaligned
• Colin Brady
• John McGeal
• E1: Unaligned
• John Daly
• John Keog
• Finton O’Farrell
• Declan Rafferty
• Séan Ryan
• E1: Limerick Real
• Sinn Féin
• Dean Fitzpatrick
• Stephen Fogarty
• Joseph Kirwin
• Buddy Nolan
• Ken O’Reilly

Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group List of POWs
Please correct and update prisoners’ list

Michael Holden at events organised by the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
The top table of the IRPSG meeting, Free the Craigavon 2, Tony Taylor and all anti-imperialist POWs on 17 February. From left is Steve Hedley, RMT Senior Assistant General Secretary (personal capacity) who spoke of his native Derry in the occupied 6 counties, defended the rights of the Republican movement and made the case for a 32 county Socialist United Ireland, whilst not endorsing some of the methods used, he did not support ‘armed struggle’ in these circumstances.

Jim McIntyre chaired the meeting very professionally for the IRPSG.

Cáit Trainor, leading Irish Republican and campaigner against the torture and ill-treatment of Irish Republican Prisoners spoke very eloquently on the struggles in the north of Ireland. Cáit used her address to highlight the ongoing internment of prisoners in Derry. Tony Taylor, a former POW he was arrested in March 2016 under the guise of a licence revocation and since that time has had no charge or allegation put to him, is currently being held in Maghaberry Prison with no charge or release.

The New Communist Party, supported by Solidarity with Antifascist Resistance in Ukraine and Socialist Fight picketed the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall, protesting against the Ministry of defence funding and training the Fascist-infested Armed Forces of Ukraine on 18 February. The Kiev regime has renewed its murderous assaults on the Donbass — see The latest developments in the Ukraine in Avant Gard, the paper of the Communist Revolutionary Action – Greece. P. 22

The Lucanamarca massacre By Tony Fox

In April 1983 Shining Path (SP) militants responded to the killing of one of their members by killing 69 people in Lucanamarca in the province of Huancasancos. They killed eighteen children, one only six months old, eleven women, some of whom were pregnant, and eight elderly people between fifty and seventy years old. [1]

Most of the victims died by machetes and axes but some were mercifully shot in the head. This was the first massacre committed by the Shining Path against the Peruvian peasantry. Countless others followed until the capture of Abimael Guzmán, the founder and leader, in 1992 effectively ending the reign of terror. Here he admits they carried out the massacre and justifies it by using the name of Lenin:

“In the face of reactionary military actions and the use of mesnadas (local defence squads against their SP ‘liberators’ - TF), we responded with a devastating action: Lucanamarca. Neither they nor we have forgotten it, to be sure, because they got an answer that they didn’t imagine possible. More than 80 were annihilated, that is the truth. And we say openly that there were excesses, as was analyzed in 1983. But everything in life has two aspects. Our task was to deal a devastating blow in order to put them in check, to make them understand that it was not going to be so easy. On some occasions, like that one, it was the Central Leadership itself that planned the action and gave instructions. That’s how it was. In that case, the principal thing is that we dealt them a devastating blow, and we checked them and they understood that they were dealing with a different kind of people’s fighters, that we weren’t the same as those they had fought before... If we were to give the masses a lot of restrictions, requirements and prohibitions, it would mean that deep down we didn’t want the waters to overflow. And what we needed was for the waters to overflow, to let the flood rage, because we know that when a river floods its banks it causes devastation, but then it returns to its riverbed. I repeat, this was explained clearly by Lenin, and this is how we understand those excesses. But, I insist, the main point was to make them understand that we were a hard nut to crack, and that we were ready for anything, anything”—Abimael Guzmán. [2]

They routinely assassinated state officials, trade union organisers, other leftists, including Maoists, voters in elections etc. On 16-7-84, a group of between 30 and 40 members of the Shining Path used pickaxes, hammers, stones and guns to slaughter around 100 villagers in several locations in the south of Ayacucho province, in a case known as the “bus of deaths”. They admired Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge, the genocidal rulers of Cambodia ousted by Vietnam. Fujimori’s Grupo Colina death squads landed him in the same prison as Guzmán now—they deserve each other. The SP is a culturally and politically reactionary movement. Notes


IRPWA message to the IRPSG meeting

We in the Irish Republican Welfare Association would like to thank the IRPSG for their invitation to speak today, an invite we were unfortunately unable to accept but we appreciate the offer to read out a statement on our behalf.

The IRPWA are a welfare body and we look after a number of Republican Prisoners in Maghaberry and Portlaoise Jails.

We strive to highlight the issues faced by these Republican Prisoners both collectively and individually according to their needs. At this present time the Republican Prisoners in Maghaberry face a number of issues.

**They have 3 core demands:**
- An End to Strip Searches
- An End to Controlled Movement
- An End to the Isolation of Republican Prisoners

While these are the core demands they also face other issues during their incarceration such as the lack of education provisions and the banning of the Irish culture within the jail by sectarian jail staff who also engage in petty but vicious treatment of Republican Prisoners and their families.

The IRPSG have recently highlighted the plight of 2 Republican Prisoners, Marty McGilloway and Luke O’Neill who are currently being held in isolation as the NIO (Northern Ireland Office) and the Maghaberry Administration refuse to move them to the Republican wing.

Marty will, thankfully, have completed his sentence soon and will be released in May. He has been held in isolation since 2012 and has been subjected to the harshest regime that any Republican Prisoner has ever had to endure in Maghaberry jail. He has completed his sentence admiringly refusing to allow himself to be criminalised by the Maghaberry Administration and shown everyone that he is a strong principled Republican who will endure the hardship inflicted on him; the isolation, the 24 hour lock ups, the strip searches, the loss of visits, rather than conform on a criminal wing.

Luke is, unfortunately, only a few months into his remand period and it could be between 3 and 4 years before he even goes to trial. He is currently taking a legal challenge against the refusal to move him to the Republican Wing and this is proving to be a long, drawn out process. Luke is currently on dirty protest and refuses to leave his cell to shower or make phone calls as he fears for his safety as unlike Marty who is held on the CSU (Care and Supervisory Unit) Luke is held in General Prison Population and has already had other prisoners housed there attempt to enter his cell to assault him. He is constantly threatened by the other prisoners who take great pleasure in shouting through the flap of the “Dirty Republican Bastards” cell and telling him what they are going to do to him when they get him. Recently Luke was also assaulted by the screws who brutally strip searched him after a visit leaving him with suspected concussion which he had to receive medical attention for. The treatment of Luke can only be labelled cruel and vindictive and is designed to break him mentally; a task they are finding impossible as Luke continues to be a principled Republican behind the wire and has taken in his stride all that has been meted out to him so far and we in the IRPWA are extremely proud of how he has handled his incarceration. He is an absolute credit to IRPWA.

While there is Republican Prisoners in Ireland there will always be issues that need highlighted and we in the IRPWA would like to thank you for allowing our voice to be heard here today.

Go Raibh Maith Agaibh.

At the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group meeting in London on Friday 17th February Aibhisint O’Athairne read out the Craigavon 2 Message to the meeting and added a few comments:

The message from Jo Donnelly, Chair of the Justice for the Craigavon Two Campaign:

**Justice for the Craigavon Two**

Firstly we’d like to apologise for not being able to be with you this evening, but would like to update the group on the progress of the case and campaign since Alec last visited in October of last year.

And many of you here tonight will already be aware of the gross injustice visited upon Brendan McConville and John Paul Wootton and the facts of a case that sees them head into their 9th year imprisonment for facts that of a case was never brought under the highly discredited Joint Enterprise doctrine.

The case of the Craigavon Two is a highly complex one and we would refer anyone seeking additional information to visit our website or Facebook page or to get in touch directly with the campaign. A campaign initiated and led by the two men and their families that is not aligned to any group or political organisation but yet remains independent in our fight for justice for Brendan, John Paul and their families.

Since we last visited in October we have had meetings with various organisations and political parties including Sinn Fein as we seek support in raising this case at all levels of society from grass roots support and through our so called political leaders and we are continuing to work with these groups ‘behind the scenes’ however this fight will not be an easy one, getting these doors opened is not an easy task such the level of corruption and collusion evident in this case but we must continue to work to do so bit by bit.

And it’s even more pressing that we increase the intensity of our work now as the lads face possibly their last chance at recourse, at receiving justice, with their applications to the Criminal Cases Review Commission.
The state of the working class and their organisations in Zimbabwe

By Ady Mutero, Revolutionary Internationalist League – Zimbabwe

In 2014 we wrote, “Historical events in the development of labour-capital relations have unequivocally established the fact that genuine and honest collective approach is the tried and tested method of achieving desired class results”. This remains true and even clearer today if one looks at the direction the world economy is going, inevitably (in the absence of organised independent, militant and democratic revolutionary labour force) the direction of monopoly capitalism, a period of over-production and under-consumption. Over-production and under-consumption prompted the scramble for markets in Africa by European capitalists.

The post-independence labour movement in Zimbabwe of the 1980s had a major defect in that it was in the armpits of the government. It was an extension of the ruling party and with such an arrangement there was absolutely no autonomous workers’ action and government could dictate the workers’ responses in labour disputes. That was a very dangerous situation hence when the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) led by Morgan Tsvangirai and company decided to break that umbilical cord which tied the labour movement to government; they instantly became working class heroes. The celebrated point being underscored from this experience is that of Labour Independence as a fundamental principle of progressive Trade Unionism.

The united ZCTU managed to effectively mobilize resistance against the neo-liberal attacks of ESAP and organized historical strikes, demonstrations and stayaways in defence of bread and butter issues. As a result, the labour movement became the epicentre of the struggle for both political and economic democracy and the ZCTU brand became a proud badge of honour for the Zimbabwean workers.

What then went wrong?

But the legacy of Morgan Tsvangirai to the labour movement was paradoxically to drag back the labour movement into the smelly armpits of the politicians and this time around those of the employers as well.

This was a clear case of ideological degeneration of the yesterday hero turned villain by unchecked selfish political ambition. The swallowing or absorption of the workers’ movement into the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) demobilized the militant ranks of the workers’ struggle which was nearing social revolution by 1997/1998.

Workers were told not to rely on their tried and tested militancy and collectivity but to now bank on voting in opposition politicians to represent their interests in parliament despite the fact that most of these politicians had class contradictions with the interests of the workers; the majority were businessmen, lawyers and middleclass intellectuals who had their own class interests to fight for. Workers’ irrefutable militancy was now channelled towards the myth of the parliamentary route to freedom. From the year 2000 to date, the tag or brand ZCTU became associated with opposition politics ahead of labour activism; in particular, they went into alliance with Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

All subsequent ZCTU administrations watered down real workers’ issues preferring to focus on propping up the MDC, thus entering into an unprincipled alliance with those they differ with fundamentally, and its leader Morgan Tsvangirai. With that new relationship came another major adulteration of progressive Trade Union principles, i.e. reliance on external funding for the labour movement’s activities. Donations usually are tied with conditionalities. Yet in order for members to have ownership and control of activities, it is imperative that they, the workers, fund their own activities. The ZCTU administration became reliant on donor funding which supported their MDC backing programmes. As a result the workers issues were abandoned and dissenting voices in the ZCTU leadership were ruthlessly and undemocratically purged.

In response to the ZCTU-MDC alliance, ZANU-PF created its own surrogate labour federation, the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) as a counter and in the process weakened, divided, and subordinated another section of the workers’ movement to the will of politicians. This marked the death of effective organised labour federations in Zimbabwe, as the environment became so polarized with either federation parroting the positions of their respective paymasters and handlers at the expense of workers’ genuine grievances.

It was now left to independent Trade Unions like the United Food and Allied Workers’ Union of Zimbabwe (UFAWUZ) to fight their own industrial sector battles in their corners. However, such divided and sectorial actions worked well to the advantage of the employers and government as they used the absence of a militant labour movement to accelerate neo-liberal attacks on labour and on the poor in general.

The splits that occurred in those Federations did not help matters either although a breakaway faction (Concerned Affiliates) of the ZCTU offered a glimmer of hope to the resurrection of a militant and vibrant radical labour federation. Among its (Concerned Affiliates) stated reasons for abandoning the ZCTU apart from the disputed flawed election, was the ideological bankruptcy of the ZCTU which was supporting neo-liberal politics as well as being an appendage of MDC.

As UFAWUZ at first we found it necessary to join this emerging and promising labour movement as its objectives, although on the night of our left, were in line with our union’s long standing position of maintaining the three important principles for Trade Unionism that is Unity (solidarity of workers), Independence (controlled by the workers themselves) and Democratic methods.
(collective decision making). After a few months as UFAWUZ we chose to dissociate ourselves from these comrades. (Maybe some would ask) Are we afraid of challenges? Can we not work with others? Do we have a purist mentality? Apart from the obvious operational challenges which face any new movement, the Concerned Affiliates proved to be a cocktail of ideologies and perspectives. Instead of rebuilding the labour movement from scratch and laying new and firm foundations, some in the leadership chose to waste time, resources and revolutionary energy pursuing a costly and odious legal battle to reclaim that “dirty” tag or brand of the name ZCTU. Our own analysis as UFAWUZ revealed that such a move was being done not to advance the workers’ struggle but that it was being done for sentimental and self-aggrandizement reasons by some in the leadership and that it ran parallel to the principles of Trade Unionism which UFAWUZ identifies itself with.

The Vacuum and Possibilities
The situation in Zimbabwe resembles that of what is obtaining at internationally. Internationally the world is impregnate with revolutionary possibilities. The only missing link, a crisis is of leadership leading organized, principled and class conscious organisations, movements or parties. In Zimbabwe, the absence of real alternative agenda to neo-liberalism have seen spontaneity and uncoordinated activities aimed at forcing the government to peacefully reform some perceived anti-working class policies or practices. This quest for democratic demands, with no or a lack of leadership, is quite often deviated from its concrete objectives, mostly later hijacked by agents of capitalist-imperialism.

However, the majority of the Zimbabweans no longer have illusions in the opposition politics as a panacea to their situation. This is regardless of the spirited attempts by the opposition to repack-age their failed policies and strategies.

What is to be done?
UFAWUZ believes that a regrouping of likeminded and radical unions is imperative to lay the foundation for a worker oriented and ideologically clear labour movement in Zimbabwe, capable of leading the fight for survival against the ever-increasing attacks by employers and the state. The organized labour should work closely with ideologically class conscious social movements including community based organisations, like the residents’ associations, the unemployed and socialist organisations. Interlinking our common struggles is vital in building global resistance to barbarism. Boundaries should be broken and replaced with common international structures of the oppressed. The events in developed countries in particular the recent USA election should rather serve as a clarion call for the world working class to be united and prepare themselves against the momentous fights ahead. In this phase of imperialism, a result of failure of consumption to keep with production (Hobson 1902:10), the only reasonable prescription is for the working class to collectively use their economic weapons, and cause a social revolution.

Unless the workers developed a program premised on the above fundamentals, 2017 and beyond can be a disastrous, a death knell for humanity. In the case of Zimbabwe, it will be a victory and permanence of counterrevolutionary and neo-liberalism.

One Solution – Revolution!

Socialist Fight: On the statement on the Fusion between RCIT and the Socialist League of Zimbabwe
On 3 February 2017, the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) and the Socialist League of Zimbabwe (SLZ) announced their fusion. The statement is standard leftist apart from the assertions of imperialist chauvinism that is the RCIT hallmark which identifies Russia and China as ‘Great Imperial Powers’. See points 9 “the Great Powers (China, USA, EU, etc.)”, and point 12 “Down with the interference by all Great Powers like US, EU and China!”. Point 12 goes on to: “Support the resistance of the people against imperialist crusaders and their local allies (Mali, Somalia, etc.).”

They could have added Uganda to the list and told us they are all US/EU stooge regimes and nothing to do with China at all but that truth would undermine their own false equation.

In Zimbabwe China managed to avoid the traps it fell into much of the rest of the continent in the 1970s, when under the guidance of Mao’s ridiculous Three Worlds Theory, ‘Russian Imperialism’ became the main enemy and anyone opposed to it and allied to the USA was preferred resulting in bizarre alliances with Mobutu in Zaïre and UNITA/Apartheid South Africa against the MPLA in Angola, to say nothing of supporting Pinochet in Chile when he was mass executing the entire leadership of the working class after the 1973 coup – after all these were only ‘Russian Social Imperialists’.

However, in Zimbabwe China supported Mugabe and the USSR supported the western-backed Nhko in the liberation struggle against Ian Smith and imperialism hence the favorable position China occupies in Zimbabwe today.

In many ways it is possible to equate Chinese involvement it Africa with aspect of 19th century colonialism but not with modern imperialism. And here we use the word “aspects” advisedly because China cannot directly militarily oppress, invade or occupy any lands outside its immediate periphery. Because, like Russia, it has only one aircraft carrier and that is only 60% of the size of one of the ten nuclear-powered supercarriers the USA possess and just about 40% bigger than the other nine US aircraft carriers, to say nothing of NATO and other US allies. There is absolutely no chance of China or Russia fighting a war with the USA and EU in Africa or South America.

Chinese companies are brutal employers in Africa, not least in Zimbabwe, meting out frequent violence to workers with brutal dictator Mugabe’s support but they provide vast infrastructures projects and other benefits to countries in Africa in order to be allowed to extract minerals and crops in fertile lands they purchased. This is capitalist exploitation but not the daylight robbery the US and EU performs on its victims via import controls, the IMF, World Bank, trade deals, etc. The Guardian recently reported that in 2012 developing countries received a total of $1.3tn, including all aid, investment, and income from abroad. But that same year $3.3tn flowed out mainly to western banks, very little to China.

Back in 2008 Zimbabwe’s Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Min-ister Patrick Chinamasa said of the elections: “Sanctions against Zimbabwe (were intensified) just before the elections,” while “large sums of money” were poured into Zimbabwe “by the British and Americans to bribe people to vote against President Mugabe.”

The goal, Chinamasa continued, is to “render the country ungovernable in order to justify external intervention to reverse the gains of the land reform program.” He described Morgan Tsvangirai and his MDC as an “an Anglo-American project designed to defeat and reverse the gains of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle, to undermine the will of the Zimbabwean electorate and to return the nation to the dark days of white domination”. Chinese investments have thwarted the West; the Zimbabwe economy has recovered due to this alliance. The Chinese companies are predatory capitalists but cannot be equated with western imperialism. ▲

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

United Food and Allied Workers’ Union of Zimbabwe with their banners in Mbare, Harare in 2015.
Over the last few days, the Ukrainian army has launched extensive attacks while the ferocious conflict is raging virtually all along the contact line between the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and the rest of Ukraine. It has been firing Grad rockets and heavy artillery at settled areas resulting in civilian casualties on a daily basis. In many cases, it has attempted to advance forces by conquering buffer zones. Besides the humanitarian crisis that could break out in the dead of winter, as water, electricity and natural gas infrastructures are being shelled, the region is menaced with an ecological disaster as the Ukrainian army is also firing at factories, chemical installations etc.

Chairmen of the People’s Councils of DPR and Lugansk People’s Republic (LPR), Denis Pushilin and Vladimir Dergiyarenko urged Russia, USA and Germany “to stop Ukraine and compel Poroshenko to cease criminal actions against Donbass people”. The Donbass People’s Republic head Zaharchenko, stated that Ukraine resumed hostilities in view of USA and Russia looking for “common ground”.

The Ukrainian authorities blame the escalation of the conflict on the PR and Russia. On January 31, Ukraine’s representative to the United Nations, Volodymyr Yelchenko, addressed the Secretary General of the United Nations “demanding from the Russian Federation to cease hostilities immediately and comply strictly with the ceasefire”.

On January 31, the Security Council of the UN published a statement of “grave concern” about the deterioration of the situation in Donetsk. The Russian Foreign Ministry in its statement accuses the Ukrainian authorities of armed provocations in Donbass. On February 1, a new meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) was held in Minsk, in which Germany, France, Russia, Ukraine and the Donbass People’s Republics participated.

Ukraine is one of the non-permanent members of the Security Council of the UN for 2016 and 2017. In February 2017 (i.e. a few days ago) Ukraine took over the Presidency of the Security Council. On 2 February the issue of the escalation in Donbass was to be discussed in a meeting of the Security Council, after the initiative taken by Ukraine, within the framework of Ukraine’s Presidency.

Poroshenko “cut short” his visit to Berlin in order to meet with Angela Merkel, “due to the emergency situation”. Prior to that though, he got around to telling her that the West should extend and tighten sanctions against Russia.

According to the Ukrainian ambassador in the USA Valerii Chalyi, Poroshenko is to travel to the US in February within the framework of Ukraine’s Presidency in the UN Security Council and he “might” meet with Trump.

Continuation of sanctions and turmoil in EU

On December 19, the European Council had decided to extend the sanctions against Russia for another six months, until 31 July 2017. In the Reuters related article it is mentioned that the President of the Council Donald Tusk stated that “some of our colleagues would probably prefer 12 months but…what is possible is to maintain our current format, which means six months”.

In that very session the European Council brought up the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement which had been rejected in the Dutch referendum in April. The Council “took into account the Dutch concerns” thus the amended agreement does not confer on Ukraine the status of a candidate country for accession to the European Union, nor does it constitute a commitment to confer such status in the future. In addition, it does not grant to Ukrainian and European Union citizens respectively the right to reside and work freely within the territory of the member states and Ukraine.

Nevertheless, it encompasses all the rest concerning free trade, security etc. The bill for the ratification of the new agreement was submitted on January 31 to the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament. Although there are doubts about whether it will be ratified before the Dutch elections in March, Ukrainian officials are optimistic that the ratification can be completed at the beginning of the year.

In the specific meeting of the European Council, it became apparent once more that some countries are in favour of a tighter “security policy” with regard to Russia (Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, etc.). These happen to be mainly the countries where the US army has been strengthening its military presence lately.

Recently, a paper authored by eight EU member states (Britain, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden) has reignited the “power competition” regarding the handling of the Ukrainian issue, calling for the USA to probe closer cooperation as a “partner” of the EU in promoting the “necessary reforms” in Ukraine. This constitutes a virtually overt questioning of the supremacy of the French-German axis in the political handling of the accession negotiations not to mention the Trilateral Contact Group. And this, while “Theresa ‘Brexit’ May” is currently seeking an alliance with Trump, pursuing an enhanced role for the UK
in the new state of order on the side of the USA.

Quoting the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung, the Russian news agency, TASS, reports that Berlin blames Kiev for the escalation in Donbass. Yet, neither the previously held political stance nor the latest statements of Angela Merkel indicate this. The article points to “sources” in the German government. But the government is bipartisan. And Süddeutsche Zeitung is social democratic. The Germany federal elections will be held in September. And we should also bear in mind that SPD (with its Minister of Foreign Affairs in the coalition government) does not particularly agree with the hard line of sanctions against Russia.

And this is all happening just the moment when the candidate of the French right wing running in the forthcoming elections, François Fillon, puts forward a political suggestion to Germany which actually says that “Trump is going to degrade the significance of the EU as a ‘partner’ of the US empire and intends to act more and more ‘directly’ in the name of the USA, dictating and enforcing the terms and conditions of the ‘alliance’ offered rather than ‘shaping them in cooperation’ with the Europeans. So, let’s do it like Trump but for ourselves! Let’s be the first to halt the sanctions, after all that was an American idea in the first place. If Trump wishes to impose US domination unilaterally, by promoting “divide and rule” amidst the countries within the EU, as well as in the relation between Russia and the EU, let’s do this first ourselves!

It is incredible how the line of the French right wing is reflected in the German social democracy while the French social democracy mirrors the German right wing…

The Empire’s stalemates and Trump

In its attempt to encircle Russia, the US empire found itself very close to a large-scale war, first in Ukraine and more obviously in Syria, facing a power correlation and a “scenery” which were anything but propitious; its tactics have led to an impasse. The political and military stalemate, in conjunction with the general financial and economic dead end brought about by the crisis, call for solutions. Trump, Brexit, the rise of the European Eurosceptic far right are nothing but the aftermath of these dead ends. These shifts do not fundamentally reverse the essential strategy on which the previous imperialist setting has been based. On the contrary, they show the logical outcome of that strategy.

Just like the far right Islamophobia, the walls, the deportations etc. stem from – and further evolve – the bow-tie, institutional ‘liberal’ Islamophobia of Obama and the EU, and in the same way that the far right, fascist cannibalism is the transformation of the liberal posh cannibalism, in the arena of geopolitics, Trump seeks to deepen and strengthen already existing aspects of the US imperial tactics and at the same time undo those aspects that failed, in order to preserve the essence of the empire strategy.

Trump’s policy targeting China is the follow up of Obama’s “pivot to Asia”. The tension between the USA and Germany is an enhanced version of the American-German frictions of the previous period (including a string of clashes between the IMF – Germany, US fines imposed on European corporations etc.) as the German Europe envisaged by Schäuble and Merkel is stirring up trouble. It’s high time for an American Europe, except that, due to the great recession, there will be no Marshall plan, just the military part, only on condition that the highest economic and political cost-benefit relation is ensured for the US.

Trump’s recipe in the Middle East boils down to the basic principles: Long live Israel and Saudi Arabia, death to Iran and its friends. Well, says Trump and his gang, we tried to kill two birds with one stone in the case of Syria. Things didn’t work out for us. We jeopardised a massive-scale military confrontation on a ground where our strategic enemies presented an undivided front. Let’s pull back or rather take a step sideways, try to cool down a bit in the heated zones where we are on the verge of sparking a military conflict with the Russians within an unfavorable context. We deploy the ideological-political features we have in common with Putin’s platform. We do our best to undermine the bonds the Russians are attempting to forge with the Iranians and the Chinese. Simultaneously, we make sure Eastern Europe is teeming with our military forces and we reorganize our forces “against terrorism” in the Middle East. And why not try to deploy the Russians to teach Germans a lesson and put them back where they belong. Should that involve keeping Assad where he is for the time being and stop grumbling all day long about the Crimean peninsula, so be it. Those who steered the ship so far identified themselves obsessively with the previous tactics and they turn hysteric thereby risking everything. We can be flexible and at the same time we do not renounce any of the options for a course of action.

The Empire’s headquarters are looking for new solutions across the board: in economy, society, politics, ideology, geopolitics. This calls in question all the previous settings, structures, functions and narrations of the Empire, even its own cohesion in the long term. There is a ferocious conflict taking place in the US, in the form of clashes and negotiations, between two directions. It has been for quite some time and it is escalating. Similar procedures are underway in Europe. Brexit and especially, the rise of Trump have further exacerbated this situation: the game is on.

Kiev is concerned and gets aggressive

At the beginning of the year in Ukraine, a discussion was stimulated by an article written by the oligarch Victor Pinchuk and published in the Wall Street Journal bearing the title Ukraine must make painful compromises for peace with Russia, which infuriated hardcore Maidan supporters.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
The escalation of the conflict in Donbass coincides with Trump assuming US Presidency and more specifically, with the phone call between Trump and Putin. After his recent meeting with May, Trump stated implicitly that “it is still rather early to consider lifting the sanctions imposed on Russia”.

The Washington Post is clearly following a Clinton, hysterical-against-Russia line in its interpretation of the situation:

“Putin is the one who escalates in order to test Trump, wear out Ukrainian economy just when it was showing signs of resurgence and despite the fact that the reforms are underway. He does not only aim at lifting the sanctions but also forcing the acceptance of a Russian sphere of influence including Ukraine. If Trump goes along with this, Putin will achieve a third objective: diminishing US global influence to the gain of Russia”.

Let’s not forget that Obama’s vice president, Joe Biden, just before Trump’s official rise to Presidency, chose to take his last foreign trip before leaving office to Ukraine, where he urged Trump not to lift the sanctions imposed on Russia and he also said that “the world community must stand as one against Russia”.

On January 24, Poroshenko urged the US administration to maintain the sanctions pointing out that “he wishes the bipartisan US support towards Ukraine to continue and he sees no correlation between potential progress in the Middle East and the situation in Ukraine”. In other words this means “Don’t use me as leverage for the Syrian issue”. That’s the statement he made while on a two-day diplomatic tour to Estonia and Finland. The armed forces of Estonia and Finland are conducting US backed military exercises aimed at confronting the “Russian menace”. A week before Poroshenko’s appeals to Trump, the US signed “defense cooperation agreements with Lithuania and Estonia to bolster NATO defences in the face of a Russian threat of aggression”.

Poroshenko sees that while the adjacent pro-American countries rise in value and grow more significant for the Empire, Ukraine is facing the possibility of turning from “the forefront of the Empire and the spearhead of the US imperialist aggression against Russia” into “leverage for negotiation” to be used in Trump’s “pro-Russian” manoeuvring as part of the new tactics of the US Empire within the context of the strategic goal of encircling, weakening and forcing Russia to submission.

Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty (that is to say, a medium embedded in the US administration) has recently published an article entitled “Anxious Ukraine risks escalation in creeping offensive”. The article pointed at Kiev and mentioned that “observers say the Ukrainians appear to be trying to create new facts on the ground” sensing that US support is waning and fearing that Trump could cut them out of any peace negotiations as he tries to ameliorate relations with Russia. The article went on to point out the risk of provoking a military response from Russia, as was the case with previous Kiev advances which led to devastating Ukrainian defeat in Ilovaisk in August 2014 and in Debaltseve in February 2015”.

Poroshenko is concerned that his country, until recently being the ground which confirmed “the solid bonds of the Western world” and a symbol of western firm resolution towards Russia, could be reduced to a pretext triggering further disintegration tendencies within the EU as well as a pretext for frictions between the US and Germany. Such tendencies and frictions have been simmering for a while. In the beginning, they emerged in an economic-political form (North vs South of Europe, Cameron- EU negotiations, Grexit and “This Is A Coup”, IMF at odds with Germany, US fines imposed on European corporations etc) but now they are transforming into overly political issues and progressively they acquire political representation and foreign alliances seeking out for new balances (Brexit, Trump, Le Pen, Fillon/ Visegrad group, the eight EU countries pushing for Ukraine etc).

Closely intertwined with the conversation about Pinchuk’s article, is another discussion in Ukraine, about whether Ukraine should raise a wall along the contact line with Donbass and whether it should be “virtual”, thereby sealing off Donbass or even real. The deputy speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, Oksana Syroyid – a member of the party of “Samopomich” which has 25 seats in the Parliament- believes that “the regions occupied by our eternal enemy, Russia, must be isolated economically as well as politically and judicially, we must build a virtual wall, have customs borders along the contact line and control any movement and goods transfer”. “Look”, she says, “Putin and Trump underestimate each other, they both hope they will take each other in, but this is not feasible and eventually they will clash”. Then, Ukraine will be invaluable to the world, Syroyid thinks, as this is the place where the world can stop Russia and the line must be drawn at Donbass.

All things taken into consideration, it does not look so much like a coincidence that the current aggression of the Ukrainian troops at Donbass seems to be aiming at erecting a choking wall around Donbass. By launching an attack against the Donbass, Poroshenko is trying to negotiate Ukraine’s role as a valuable partner of the West at a moment when the West is in a state of confusion and reconsidering its tactics. On the official twitter of Ukraine’s presidency, Poroshenko says: “the shelling is massive. Who would dare talk about lifting the sanctions in such circumstances?”

The new military attack of the neoliberal neo-fascist regime of Kiev must be crushed!

Solidarity with the struggling people of Donbass!

Victory to the arms of the People’s Republics of Lugansk and Donetsk! ▲

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
The French elections
By Viriato Lusitania

We should take a look of the situation in France and her international policy to understand them. In one word the Hollande government has aligned with and even tried to advance the imperialist’s-Zionists plans against Syria. They have failed miserably as it is known.

Internally Hollande’s period is one of an ever-increasing attack on workers with at least two main laws aiming to further liberalise legislations that could still in some way protect workers and their working conditions: the so-called Macron law and the El Kohmri law, both of which were opposed by the most combative layers of the working class.

Both laws passed without discussion in parliament and with the votes of the “left” wing of the PS (Hamon, and others) of the Socialist Party which had appeared cowardly and hesitatingly. To emphasise the point; there were no votes against Hollande or Prime Minister Manuel Valls on this.

The elections have been orchestrated to capture some interest from the vast layers of workers who don’t go to the polls. The main parties are the right which is called Les Republicains (LS), and the Socialist Party (SP) which has only that name but not the substance. However it still has a base in the middle strata of workers and every representative in parliament and the local authorities from that party coming from the upper layers of the petit and middle bourgeoisie.

The right’s “primaire” (primary election) was won by the one who has presented the most radical-liberal capitalist program, François Fillon. He is for sacking 500,000 workers of the public services, put an end to the Sécurité Social (Social security) and every measure to reduce the taxes of the bosses and freezing or reducing worker’s wages. He was elected by the more rightist layer of the bourgeois public opinion but his program has make such an uproar coming from the workers and even some middle-class layers that he has been forced to “put some water in his wine”. With such a program, he cannot win.

Internationally, Fillon is rather for an alliance with Russia and Germany …and that means against the US and …GB. The bourgeois, in every country, are quite divided between the ones who want to go with the Americans and the other who prefer Germany.

Now, he is involved in a scandal about public money he put in his wife’s pockets. For a candidate who has talked a lot about “honesty”, this makes disorder as the Frenchs say.

There is another candidate coming from the right, Marine Le Pen, who is now leading in votes intentions (25%).

With Fillon severely bothered by his “loss of credibility” and with another rightist candidate Macron, pushed forward by the mainstream press and the Finance capital (even if he says that he is not leftist nor rightist…) the opinion polls give him (20%) but he has not yet a public program (he cannot say he will be as tough as Fillon…) and no party behind him.

There is a real possibility that Marine Le Pen will win the election if Fillon abandons the fight and Macron comes second.

Her program is to pull out of the EU, go back to an isolated Franc and (although she doesn’t say this) brutally fulfil Fillon’s program, that is, it making the French economy “competitive” i.e. putting the maximum pressure on French workers’ wages and labour conditions putting a brutal touch to the rights of immigrant workers.

On the left, we have Hamon who has defeated Valls that was so abhorred by the working class. This shows a left turn in the P.S. opinion and shows also the progressive radicalisation of the whole society.

There are also the so-called “Trotskyist LO” which put forward a “communist” candidate. He is at 0.5% and Poutou NPA (if he can achieve the preliminary conditions) who has the same percentage. They have lost all they got some years ago, 10.5%, together. They are going to the bottom of their
“policy”, to the “néant” (nothing) because of their sectarianism. They don’t deserve even this few words.

Then we have Mélenchon, old horse of the PS who, feeling the changing winds, has for some years abandoned the PS and formed a so-called “Parti de Gauche” (Left Party) which is, in substance, himself.

He has a sort of left-social democrat-ecologist program (he can even accept whatever idea or personality if it goes in his direction). The PCF, the Communist Party, support him after an internal but rude decision taken by a little bit more than half its militants (some 60,000). It is not critical support but just support, an alignment. But many of their militants will not work for Mélenchon.

He is perhaps a sort of Sanders or Corbyn or Tsipras or Oscar Lafontaine but with French characteristics i.e. some franc-maçon ideas and inspirations, some “Trotskyism” (he was in his youth a “Lambertist Trotskyist”). Today he is fighting for a “new” 6th Republic, against the EU all this whole extreme left. He will get between 10 and 15 per cent of the vote.

In my view:
Macron will collapse at the end of the race, Marine Le Pen will get a good vote and have some chances to arrive first in the second round but if it is Fillon or another rightist (Fillon has said that if the judges put him in accusation he will demise) that follows second in the first polls, she will lose again. Mélenchon can come third with a chance and this is a good political card for the workers, not because his can be an alternative, only because this option (seen by the masses as an “extreme left option”) could be a pole to regroup the left political workers. If you have a party to work inside…

Or it would be Hamon who is third in the opinion polls at 23% but fading fast. This 23% is more mainstream media support than real support. He cannot separate himself from the “bilan”, the stench, of the PS’s actions in government. He is trying to sink Mélenchon with a cunning offer of a “union of the left” but Mélenchon, the wily old politician, does not fall for that trap.

Perspective?
The working class is psychologically preparing itself for the coming battles right now. The Fillon program has awakened many people to the danger of sacking 500,000 public workers (“fonctionnaires”). Putting so many workers on the dole will cause such problems, put so many others workers out of work, reduce every public facility, and privatise and make far more expensive health care and education, that the bourgeoisie is perhaps considering other options than Fillon. The French people will fight back.

The problem is that the whole bourgeoisie needs that program…We are heading for big class fights and/or a Bonapartist regime in France. ▲
1) The final liberation of Aleppo in mid-December 2016 is a defeat of the jihadist militias sponsored by the USA and its allies in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Libya, to name the most prominent. A victory for imperialism here would have dealt an enormous blow to the Syrian working class.

2) The defeat of US-dominated world imperialism based in Wall Street’s great finance houses and their allied transnational corporations and the subordinate imperialisms in Europe and Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada etc. is a victory for the world working class and all oppressed peoples of the planet. Of course, it is not a socialist revolutionary victory but it does strengthen the working class of Syria against imperialism and therefore ultimately against its own capitalist ruling class.

3) We reaffirm with Marx and Engels (at least since the “Irish Turn” in 1869, spelled out in Marx’s letter to Ludwig Kugelmann), with Lenin, the Bolsheviks and Trotsky the vital importance of the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations (as Lenin fought for so heroically in his last struggle on his deathbed. As he wrote in December 1922, “Exemplary punishment must be inflicted on Comrade Ordezhonikidze. The political responsibility for all this truly Great Russian nationalist campaign must, of course, be laid on Stalin and Dzerzhinsky [the head of the Cheka]. Unless Great Russian chauvinism was fought to the death, the party’s support for anti-imperialist national liberation movements would be completely hypocritical: we ourselves lapse … into imperialist attitudes towards oppressed nationalities, thus undermining all our principled sincerity, all our principled defence of the struggle against imperialism and, between Imperialism and semi-colonial world.”)

4) We absolutely reject the proposition that either China or Russia are imperialist powers in the Marxist sense as developed by Lenin in his 1916 work Imperialism, the highest stage of Capitalism and defended by all serious Marxists since then.

5) Therefore, we absolutely reject the proposition that the conflict in Syria and the whole of the Middle East and globally is a conflict between two equal and opposite imperialisms, US-dominated Western imperialism and China-Russia-dominated Eastern imperialism.

6) Since the end of WWII there is only one global hegemonic imperialist power, the USA, even though it is declining in influence and political and economic strength. All other imperialist powers are subordinate to that power, however unwillingly. The
The battleship ‘Aurora’, which fired the first shots in the Russian Revolution in October 1917.

dollar is by far the most important of world’s trading currencies, the US stock markets dominate the globe in alliance with the City of London; the US military and navy is stronger than the next ten nations combined; with its NATO allies, closer to 20. And technologically in almost every sphere they are far ahead; its 10 aircraft supercarriers (60% bigger than its nearest rival) and 9 nine landing helicopter dock carriers have as more deck space as the other aircraft carriers in the rest of the world combined. The US has upwards of 800 military bases throughout the globe. There is a presence of US military personnel in 156 countries and it has bases in 63 countries. The USA has built new bases in seven countries since September 11, 2001. Russia has eight bases, all except Tartus in Syria in former USSR countries. China has none at all.

7) This does not mean that global imperialism cannot be defeated. Since its defeat in Vietnam in 1975 it has largely relied on proxy forces to do its dirty work but such forces can turn on them; Osama Bin Laden was once a CIA asset and, even though the CIA celebrated the overthrow of Najibullah in Afghanistan in 1996, their creatures (Al Qaeda and ISIS) have turned against them there and in Libya, in Iraq, Syria and north Africa. Their defeat in Aleppo shows the limitations; ‘boots on the ground’ still suffers from the Vietnam syndrome. Public opposition prevented the bombing of Damascus in 2013 in fear of a repeat of the debacle of pushing million dollar helicopters overboard off Saigon in April 1975.

8) In giving unconditional but critical support to the Assad-led Syrian government and the Syrian Arab Army and its allied Russian, Hezbollah and Iranian militias against imperialism we do not ‘mix the red with the blue’, we do not give any of these bourgeois nationalist forces and militias political support against their own working class or spread the illusion that they want ultimately to defeat imperialism.

9) The Syrian, Egyptian, Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi, Lebanese, Israeli, Palestinian and Libyan working classes must forge their own revolutionary programme based on anti-Zionist anti-imperialist principles, workers’ councils for a Socialist United States of the Middle East and North Africa.

10) If we replace the name Chiang Kai-shek with those leaders of the current opponents of US-dominated imperialism Trotsky’s 1937 quote on the Japanese invasion of China retains its entire political essence today: “We need have no illusions about Chiang Kai-shek, his party, or the whole ruling class of China. It is the only party, the only state, the only army, the only peasants, the only workers. But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Japan for the remainder of the independence of China. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible. It is probable. It is even inevitable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoundrels, or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle.”

11) Bashar Hafez al-Assad has struggled for the remainder of the independence of Syria since 2011. Syria has broken the string of regime change offensives carried out by the US since the declaration of the 9/11 War on Terror by US President George W Bush in September 2011.


13) In all of these revolutionary socialists were for the defeat of the imperialist forces and for the victory of their opponents, however reactionary or right wing the leadership of these opponents were. This is the revolutionary socialist anti-imperialist tradition of the revolutionary Comintern up to 1922 and Trotsky’s position on China in 1937 (above) on Abyssinia in 1936 and against the Italian invasion and in 1938 against a hypothetical British invasion of Brazil led by the neo-fascist Vargas government.

14) In a war between imperialist power blocs we are dual defeatists on both sides, always for the defeat of our own and every other imperialist nation. This is the only internationalist Marxist position that can be defended. We stand in the proud tradition of Karl Liebknecht’s famous leaflet The Main Enemy Is at Home (May 1915) on that vital principle – “The main enemy of the German people is in Germany: German imperialism, the German war party, German secret diplomacy. This enemy at home must be fought by the German people in a political struggle, cooperating with the proletariat of other countries whose struggle is against their own imperialists”.

15) In all imperialist wars against semi-colonial countries, either by direct invasions and bombings or by use of proxy mercenary armies or both we are for the defeat of the imperialist power and the victory of the semi-colonial one. There are two important reasons for this stance: (a) a defeat for imperialism in its attack against a semi-colonial nation increases the self-confidence of the working class of that nation in dealing with its own ruling class and (b) perhaps more importantly it deals a great blow against the chauvinists attitudes of the working class in the imperialist country that are constantly reinforced by the capitalist political establishment there and their agents within the labour movement, the trade union bureaucracy and the leaderships of allied social democratic/Labour parties. The Vietnam syndrome after the liberation of Saigon in 1975 was a very valuable asset for revolutionaries; Aleppo after its liberation in December 2016 is a similar inspirational asset.

16) The defeat of imperialism everywhere requires a new International that is both anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist. To this aim we dedicate ourselves.

17) The complete liberation of Aleppo, all Syria, the Middle East and the planet will only occur through the socialist revolution against all capitalist governments. ▲
As a working class, we must unite all oppressed to oppose the imperialist ruling class at home and its imperialist makeovers around the world!

More than ever it is necessary to unify our class, women, whites, blacks, Muslims, Indians, Asians, Latinos, LGBTQ and immigrants against the rising police state. Donald Trump is an oafish, far-right racist, Islamophobic, sexist, misogynist homophobic, ablest bigot who rose to power with the support of a far-right constituency that includes white supremacists and fascist groups such as Ku Klux Klan. His victory has greatly strengthened these groups’ ideology as it has also happened in Britain after the Brexit, in Europe and internationally.

Racist attacks on immigrants are proliferating and are bound to advance strongly in the next years. We are for black self-defense, as the Black Panthers defended themselves in their fight against the police state that will get a big boost under Trump.

We must fight in this way as part of the struggle to build a revolutionary party on the basis of the multiracial proletariat throughout North America.

Most of the rustbelt states in the mid-west and in the upper northeastern where the economy was once heavily based on industry and manufacture, voted for Obama both in 2008 and 2012 under the belief that “Hope was on the Way!” The great majority of people in these states are no more racist than Northern English and Welsh workers in Britain are these days. Neither were most Hitler voters strongly anti-Semitic or anti-communist back in 1932. However, in both Britain and the US a large section of these people are now under the political influence of far-right and fascist forces, which are appealing for the allegiance of the lumpen elements of the class. This is a clear task where revolutionary leadership is needed to tackle this crisis.

Without a clear understanding of the death of the American manufacturing as a capitalist process, and without any revolutionary struggle against the capitalism and the ruling class, the working class from these old manufacturing belts bought into the argument that getting rid of immigrants would help to free more jobs for them.

The election of Trump is an indication of the rise of economic nationalism and protectionism and its consequent immigration control, which led in the past to WWI and WWII, proclaimed by serious representatives of the global ruling classes as a phase in history that would never happen again.

Trump Says Go Back, We Say Fightback!

In a first moment, the fightback posed by the oppressed has been on social matters, the ongoing racism in the USA, the police murders and cover-ups — actions that point out indeed that to American bourgeois society black lives don’t really matter as much as white lives.

And this all happened under the nation’s first black President. In fact, Obama’s failure to address this assault on black lives let alone reverse the declining living standards and appalling unemployment, which felt most acutely in the black inner city ghettos, sparked the Black Lives Matter movement back in 2013. The Native American movement at Standing Rock too is a stirring of the poorest and most oppressed in the USA. And it’s getting support from all the world’s oppressed, adding to the solidarity between Black Lives Matter and the Palestinians under
murderous assault in Operation Protective Edge in Gaza in July and August 2014. These two now are showing solidarity to the Native Americans’ battle at Standing Rock over the Dakota pipeline.

Trump threatens to build a wall along the US Mexico border has a purpose of terrorizing and taming immigrants; it is more profitable to criminalize them to increase class exploitation than to get rid of this category of empire slaves. Under the threat of deportation many of the oppressed immigrants will do any kind of work for any payment. This is clearly the main purpose of xenophobia; to set one part of the working class in competition against another.

What is not so transparent to native US workers is that after associating with their class enemy, the trap is sprung on them next. This is the system. More than ever our motto is “workers of the whole world, unite!”

A change that could ignite a fightback might come from the young Americans who are losing their respect for the god-like figure of the American president who represents the holy writ of the American Constitution through street protests which started to be held immediately after Trump was declared elected.

Saying no to Trump symbolizes an awakening call to all oppressed and working class and could materialize into a heartening leftism revival like in the Vietnam anti-war protest days. Even though Obama headed the imperialism agenda for eight years, nobody has ever asked him how many kids he had killed on a given day as they did Lyndon Johnson; they may well ask Trump this very same question at the first opportunity.

For an International Anti-Imperialist United Front

We criticize the dangerous illusions of pacifist that Putin and other bourgeois nationalist leaders and their supporters puts in Trump’s leadership. Imperialism, with Trump, will continue adamantly to defend its expansionist and neo-colonialist interests.

Trump takes up the old slogan of Roman imperialism “divide et impera” – divide and conquer. Trump came to divide Russia from China, white workers from blacks, all Latinos and Mexico from America.

The revolutionary task is to unify all oppressed and workers’ struggle against Trump and his ultra-reactionary agenda at the heart of the imperialist monster and everywhere else on the planet.

We call for a United Front in the U.S. and for an International 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 TU bureaucrats or the bourgeoisie that momentarily clash with the US and the EU and without abandoning the struggle for the socialist revolution and a revolutionary international party.

In this task, the Socialist Workers League and the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International bends its militant efforts and invites other revolutionary Marxist organizations to build together the World Party of Socialist Revolution. ▲
Youth of the world! Remember what did Bhagat Singh say by quoting a scholar in his article Yuvak (1925)? He said that: “It is an established truism that young men of today are the countrymen of tomorrow holding in their hands the high destinies of the land. They are the seeds that spring and bear fruit.” We also remember Com. Lenin saying: “...the youth that will be faced with the actual task of creating a communist society.

For it is clear that the generation of working people brought up in capitalist society can, at best, accomplish the task of destroying the foundations of the old, the capitalist way of life, which was built on exploitation. At best it will be able to accomplish the tasks of creating a social system that will help the proletariat and the working classes retain power and lay a firm foundation, which can be built on only by a generation that is starting to work under the new conditions, in a situation in which relations based on the exploitation of man by man no longer exist.”

Bhagat Singh himself stressed on the importance of youth movements. I recall his lines:

“The party requires workers which can be recruited only through the youth movement. Hence we find the youth movement as the starting point of our programme. The youth movement should organize study circles, class lectures and publication of leaflets, pamphlets, books and periodicals. This is the best recruiting and training ground for political workers.” (From the letter To Young Political Workers, written on February 2, 1931)

Well, what was the reason behind the younger generation containing enlightened youths like Bhagat Singh to rise in arms against the capitalist and imperialist order? What was their actual purpose, their philosophy? We can get the answer to both the questions in a nutshell by reading the following two passages from the historic court statement before the Delhi Session’s Court on 6th June, 1929 – written by Bhagat Singh and his comrade, Batukeshwar Dutt:

“By ‘Revolution’ we mean that the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice, must change. Producers or labourers in spite of being the most necessary element of society, are robbed by their exploiters of the fruits of their labour and deprived of their elementary rights. The capitalist concept of the revolutionaries being “blood thirsty monsters”! I, Rosa Luxemburg. 94), who did a similar action in the French Chamber of Deputies on 9th December, 1893. Bhagat Singh utilized the imperialist court to propagate his socialist ideal to the masses, that is, he learnt to use the so-called ‘legal’ platform for the so-called ‘illegal’ purposes. He, in the short span of his life (23 years and 6 months), was able to designate socialism as the greatest possible alternative before humanity, and he was quite clear on this issue.

His decision was well-thought-out. It was the result of the deep study of the world literature which he carried out during his college days, in underground and in jail. After carefully going through the works of Marx, Bakunin, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and others, he knew that the contradictions created by capitalism are bound to lead towards chaos. He understood that the brutal, barbarous and profit-hungry exploitation of labour by capital must cease at all costs. Bhagat Singh’s trust in the ideal of socialism is unforgettable. The few but notable actions of his lifetime were dedicated to that very ideal. He lived and died for the same.

By introducing the slogans of ‘Inquilab Zindabad’ (Long live Revolution) and ‘Samrajyavad Murdabad’ (Down with Imperialism) along with ‘Duniya ki maxdoor ek ho’ (Workers of the world, unite) and ‘Long Live the Proletariat’, Bhagat Singh unchained a new horizon in the Indian political arena. These slogans replaced the old nationalistic slogans of ‘VandeMataram’ (I praise thee, mother) and ‘Bharat Mata ki Jai’ (Victory for Mother India) with a thoroughly revolutionary socialist and internationalist mindset.

Being a declared atheist, Bhagat Singh openly wrote and spoke against communalism, casteism and religious fundamentalism by emphasizing on the concepts of ‘vasudhaiva kutumbakam’ (The world is one family) and ‘Vishv Prem (Love for the whole world). All these tell us only one thing, and that is: To do away with the bourgeois concept of the revolutionaries being “blood-thirsty monsters”!

From his childhood, Bhagat Singh was deeply concerned with the well-being of the workers and peasants. We should try to learn from him in this matter. Above all, we must always look towards the toiling masses in general. They are the hope, the sole sustainer of our socialist society. We need no petty concessions from the bourgeois and we should not pay heed to their prejudices; rather, we must try to understand, just as Bhagat Singh did, that the well-being and prosperity of the whole human race can be achieved only through the complete overthrow of the capitalist mode of production.

To proceed slowly but with right conscience is the correct way of achieving our goal: the goal of a world socialist republic!

“In this hour, socialism is the only salvation for humanity ... Socialism or barbarism!” – Rosa Luxemburg.

Long Live Revolution!

Down with Imperialism! ▲

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!
By ‘Revolution’, we mean the ultimate establishment of an order of society which may not be threatened by such breakdown, and in which the sovereignty of the proletariat should be recognized and a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and misery of imperial wars.

This is our ideal, and with this ideology as our inspiration, we have given a fair and loud enough warning.

If, however, it goes unheeded and the present system of Government continues to be an impediment in the way of the natural forces that are swelling up, a grim struggle will ensure involving the overthrow of all obstacles, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat to pave the way for the consummation of the ideal of revolution. Revolution is an inalienable right of mankind. Freedom is an imperishable birth right of all. Labour is the real sustainer of society. The sovereignty of the masses is the ultimate destiny of the workers.

For these ideals, and for this faith, we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned. At the altar of this revolution we have brought our youth as an incense, for no sacrifice is too great for so magnificent a cause. We are content, we await the advent of Revolution. Long Live Revolution!” – Com. Bhagat Singh (1907-31)

Comrades!

Importance must be given to one of the greatest socialist revolutionaries: Com. Bhagat Singh – a young man who shook the foundations of British imperialism.

Is it so? How did he accomplish that? I would try to seek the answer. His specialty and uniqueness lies wholly on his theoretical base. He initiated a new beginning in the history of India. To show his uniqueness in the history of Indian freedom struggle, I want to draw the reader’s attention to some of the major points. Let us concentrate on these points one by one and try to understand the great personality.

1. Bhagat Singh was unique. The storm which Hindustan Socialist Republican Association and Naujawan Bharat Sabha (the political organizations of Bhagat Singh and his comrades) created was revolutionary in the true sense of the term. Why? Because the earlier ‘revolutionary’ movements in India had no alternative, that is, they did not actually know what will happen after the British is driven out of the country. They were only fighting the alien/foreign rulers. This type of fighting, for Bhagat Singh, is not really ‘revolutionary’ in its nature. The Ghadarite Movement of 1914-15, for example, had an alternative. They were in favour of a republican form of government (influenced by the post-revolutionary American model). Similarly, Bhagat Singh and his Comrades were fighting not to replace one set of exploiters with another, neither they were fighting against any particular nation or race, but were fighting for a political-economic revolution which would reconstruct the whole society on socialist lines. For Bhagat Singh, Revolution is not a politics of bombs or pistols. It is neither some sort of sudden upheaval involving bloodshed. “Revolution necessarily implies the programme of systematic reconstruction of society on new and better adapted basis, after complete destruction of the existing state of affairs (i.e., regime)” and “the sword of Revolution is sharpened at the whetting stone of ideas.” The ideas being the ideas of Socialism and Communism, which would emancipate the suffering humanity from the deadly clutches of the exploitative capitalist regime, and would bring to birth a new society based on the principle of ‘each according to his ability, each according to his needs’, thus making the whole society free from all sorts of exploitation. As can clearly be seen in the activities of Naujawan Bharat Sabha or the Youth Society of India, created on March 1926 by Bhagat Singh and some of his comrades like Com. Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Com. Ram Chandra, aimed at organizing the workers and peasants in the country and preparing them for the upcoming socialist revolution. It proposed a red flag for India instead of the tricolour flag of the bourgeois Congress party. Other than that, it went to various villages in the country to awaken the masses against imperialism by spreading revolutionary consciousness. It also focused attention on the industrial workers and the need of understanding their problems and requirements.

2. Bhagat Singh was unique. In his letter ‘To young Political Workers (written on February 2, 1931), Bhagat Singh made some notes on Terrorism, Gandhism, Revolution etc. If we read the notes, and try to reflect for some time, we would be able to see that he is clearly opposing the rule of any sort of bureaucratic authority. He wanted the substitution of the bureaucratic authority by that of the masses. The organized workers and peasants, led by the vanguard party, must capture political power by using revolutionary means. His line of thinking is very similar to the Russian Soviet Model.

3. Bhagat Singh was unique. In ‘Why I am an Atheist’ (written on October 5–6, 1930) and many other writings, Bhagat Singh rejected any sort of fundamentalist approach. By quoting Wendell Phillips, Singh declared that: If there is anything that cannot bear free thought, let it crack. In this way, he developed a new way of thinking, i.e. revolutionary thinking, in which he discarded blind acceptance of any theory of philosophy. In Bhagat Singh’s opinion, we must accept something to be true or false only after rigorous reasoning. Outdated and baseless beliefs in the name ‘culture’ and ‘tradition’ should always be mercilessly questioned. To make our mind truly critical and open, we must make reason “the guiding principle of life”. “Because if faith [or mere blind faith] cannot withstand the onslaught of reason, it collapses.” By adopting this mode of thinking, we would be able to check the flow of reactionary ideas.

Bhagat Singh’s relevance

In the current international political scenario, the spectre of socialist revolution, as explicated by Bhagat Singh and his comrades in their letters and statements, roams every corner of today’s world; it haunts the ruling classes in power (the bourgeois), and continuously questions the legitimacy of their authority.