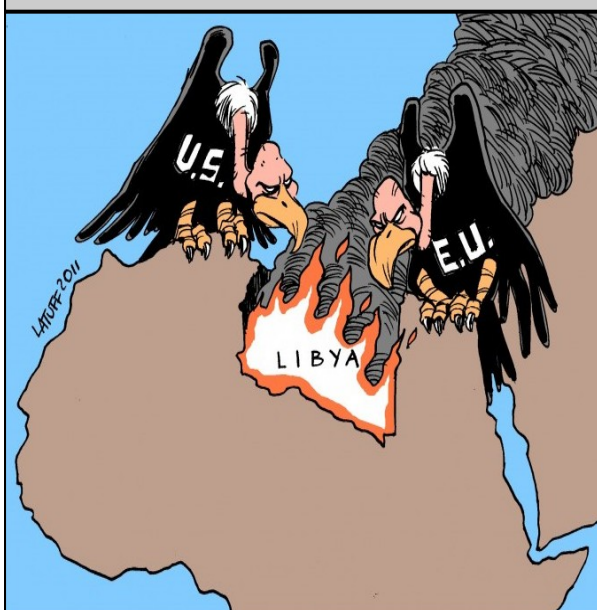


Socialist Fight

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Libya: Military United Front but no political support for Gaddafi against the assaults of Imperialism and its agents, the reactionary Benghazi rebels



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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the SF EB.

Unity is strength, L'union fait la force, Es la unidad fuerza, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, اتحاد قوت است, đoàn kết là sức mạnh, Jedność jest siła, ykseys on kesto, युनिटि श्रू-नी, Midnimo iyo waa awood, hundeb ydy chryfder, Einheit ist Stärke, एकता शक्ति है, единство наша сила, vienybės jėga, bashkimi ben fuqine, אחדות היא כוח, unità è la resistenza, 団結は力だ", A unidade é a força, eining er styrkur, De eenheid is de sterkte, الوحدة هو القوة, Ní neart go chur le céile, pagkakaisa ay kalakasan, jednota is sila, 일성은이다 힘, Workers of the World Unite!

The fight against the cuts and against Imperialism's war on Libya is one struggle!

Editorial

"Capital prowls the globe with a ravenous freedom it hasn't enjoyed since before World War I, operating free of friction, free of gravity. Will this mean any better life for the multitudes...? 'By all means,' says Capital, offering another warmed-up version of the 'trickle down' theory, the principle that the poor, who must subsist on table scraps dropped by the rich, can best be served by giving the rich bigger meals."

--William Blum, Killing Hope

The capitalist crisis that began over two years ago is working its way through to the working class and poor. At the behest of global finance capital capitalist governments across the globe are following up cuts in wage and conditions with vicious attacks on the post-war welfare states. But bankers, still arrogantly paying themselves huge bonuses, have devastated the economies of the smaller nations, Iceland, Greece and Ireland with Portugal next for the chopping block. And they have gone to war with Libya to rob another relatively prosperous third world country like Iraq used to be, correctly calculating this will draw the trade union bureaucrats even closer to them. And still the fightback is nothing like what is needed to defeat this attack.

Back in 1938 Leon Trotsky pointed to the problems and tasks facing the world working class and poor in fighting for its socialist future. The objective prerequisites for a socialist revolution were ripe, he wrote, but warned in the opening sentence, *"the world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat"* and later warned of *"the opportunist character of proletarian leadership: its petty bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony"*. He concluded his introduction by the observation that *"the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership"*. Unless revolutionaries seriously tackle the struggle against the TU bureaucracy and their parliamentary expression, the Labour parties internationally, we cannot solve the question of building a revolutionary leadership for the class.

We have explained on page 4 how Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey makes big bluster against the cuts whilst arranging behind the scenes to implement them. At a meeting with about fifty of its Councillors, including Council leaders and Labour group leaders, on 12 November in Leeds he got Gail Cartmell to instruct them to carry out all the cuts by setting legal budgets whilst hypocritically protesting. In Lambeth wild rumours began to circulate that ONE Labour Councillor, Kingsley Abrams, was intending to vote against the cuts. Such was the determination of Unite that no struggle against the cuts at all (other than puerile protests) should manifest itself that Regional Secre-

tary Steve Hart attempted to get him to vote for the cuts. In the end he abstained, much to the displeasure of our 'left' Regional Secretary. Six 'left' Labour Councillors in Hackney, Barry Buitekant, Michelle Gregory, Linda Kelly, Deniz Oguzkanli, Ian Rathbone, and Patrick Vernon signed a statement against the cuts. They would, *"support a campaign to defeat the policies of this government through public protest, opposition and defiance. We would like to see local Councils across London leading the charge and refusing to adopt cuts budgets as a result of government enforced policies."* All voted for the cuts budget on 2nd March.

Just to make sure that he did not whip the demonstrators into a revolutionary frenzy McCluskey had Unite's stewards sporting the Miliband slogan "cuts too far too fast" on their hi viz vests. What are the mobilising marching chants appropriate to this inspiring idea; "An injury to one is an injury to one and that's all, and that's all", "cut some not all, cut some not all" and, **"cut their jobs, not our jobs, cut their jobs, not our jobs, do dah, dah do dah"**? But bureaucrats save their fiery speeches to hide a sell-out and no one is on the streets (page 5).

But what of the left Trotskyist groups, surely they are putting these bureaucrats under extreme pressure and thereby providing an alternative mobilising focus which will force them to act? Unfortunately this is not the case either. As we say on page 5, *"In the current struggle for the leadership of the anti-cuts movement between the SWP, their right-wing split, Counterfire, and the Socialist Party the game is entirely about securing the patronage of left trade union bureaucrats and reformist politicians who will 'oppose' the cuts, denounce them viciously and passionately but nonetheless implement them in the end (or are implementing them now) rather than seek to mobilise their members and the mass of the working class itself to physically resist the cuts by strikes and occupations."*

We therefore counterpose to this race to secure the allegiances of these fake left trade union bureaucrats the tactic of building rank-and-file bodies in the trade unions to fight the bureaucracy and mobilise the grassroots. On May 6th the Grass Roots Left will hold its founding conference precisely to fight for that perspective.

But we cannot fight this global crisis alone in Britain. And it is becoming clearer that not only are our 'revolutionary Trotskyists' not able to fight the trade union bureaucracy at home but most are unable to oppose its foreign wars in any consistent way whilst some give them outright support. Look at Charlie Walsh's anti-Imperialist letter on page 9. How many of our 'revolutionaries' can take such a stance against the British army and their own bourgeoisie and its foreign Imperialist adventures? Look at the sorry tale outlined in *The soft left's foolish illusions in Benghazi's rebels* on page 20. From the far right of the spectrum, the AWL (of course) followed closely by the USFI/Socialist Resistance, the SWP, the SP, Socialist Appeal and



Just to make sure that he did not whip the demonstrators into a revolutionary frenzy McCluskey had Unite's stewards sporting the Miliband slogan "cuts too far too fast" on their hi viz vests.

Workers Power no one can even approximate to a revolutionary approach to this Imperialist war. The entire spectrum assumes that the Libyan rebels are or were in the beginning some type of revolutionaries, part of a two stage 'democratic revolution' or 'Arab Revolution', that the main enemy to this 'democratic revolution' was Gaddafi (or at least he was as bad as the rebels at the start, as the Spart family say). Therefore, as the first revolutions were going so well in their first stage not dominated by anti-Imperialism and anti-Zionism, pro-Imperialism would do just fine for now in the 'Libyan Revolution' for getting rid of Gaddafi; we could leave socialism to a later stage.

Sarkozy jumps in the polls having imposed his man in a French coup in the Ivory Coast, Cameron will defeat the anti-cuts movement all the more easily with the patriotic support of the TU bureaucrats and half-hearted soft left opposition to the war on Libya. Opposing bombing whilst patriotically sponsoring the rebels is looking for Imperialist booty to protect British living standards and modify the worst aspects of the cuts by making the poor and oppressed of Libya and the entire semi-colonial worlds pay — **"cut their welfare, not our welfare"**.

Look at William Blum's quote on the top of this piece. Now think of how this monster is to be slain. Look at the three people on the headline strap of the Coalition of Resistance's handout on the March 26th demo. How could Tony Benn, a reformist politician, totally hostile to revolutionary politics, how could Caroline Lucas, an MP of the bourgeois Greens or arch bureaucrat Len McCluskey lead the fight against the cuts and this assault by global finance capital here or in foreign wars? Asking the question is answering it.

The degeneration of the left is apparent in its failure to fight the TU bureaucracy on the cuts and the attack on Libya. We need a new internationalist revolutionary party to fight this crisis. Socialist Fight is dedicated to this fight. We have lost many friends and allies because this crisis has forced their politics into the open. However we are pleased to say that we have found new and better comrades in Britain, South Africa and Brazil who we are confident will not buckle under the current ideological assault of neo-liberal Imperialism.

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

Why we need to build the Grassroots Left as a powerful rank-and-file movement in the trade unions

By Gerry Downing

Class Struggle

We can do no better than read Brian Pearce's article *Some Past Rank-and-File Movements*, (1959) <http://www.marxists.org/archive/pearce/1959/04/rankandfile.htm> in particular the following passages:

*"To the epoch of 'defence, not defiance' corresponded the emergence of a generation of trade union leaders of a different type from those who had laid the foundations in the bitter days of the Combination Acts and Tolpuddle. It was between these 'sober, business-like' men and sections of the capitalist class that the political alliance was forged which, in different forms and phases, has been with us ever since – "the bourgeoisie cannot rule alone"...These trade union leaders saw their task as essentially one of peaceful negotiation with the employers, and this gave rise to a whole network of social relations separating them off from their original class. Assured of a permanent position with a secure income, the trade union officials – 'a closely combined and practically irresistible bureaucracy', as the Webbs called them in their book *Industrial Democracy* which Lenin translated while in exile in Siberia – soon found their different life-experience reflected in a different outlook on the class struggle. In the Webbs' *History of Trade Unionism* the account of the career of a typical official given to the authors in 1893 by a member of one of the great craft unions is quoted:*

Whilst the points at issue no longer affect his own earnings or conditions of employment, any disputes between his members and their employers increase his work and add to his worry. The former vivid sense of the privations and subjection of the artisan's life gradually fades from his mind; and he begins more and more to regard all complaints as perverse and unreasonable.

The Daily Telegraph reported the following in March 2009:

"Derek Simpson, 64, the joint leader of Unite a close political ally of the Prime Minister, has spent several nights at the five-star Waldorf Hilton hotel in London - 600 yards from his office. The union has defended Mr Simpson's use of the hotel, saying that its performance would be undermined if "the union prioritised cheapness of accommodation above appropriate facilities and location". It comes at a critical time for Mr Simpson. Members of Unite will vote next week on whether he should win re-election as leader of the Amicus half of the union. Mr Simpson has been heavily critical of "fat-cat" bankers, such as Sir Fred Goodwin, the former Royal Bank of Scotland chief executive. Since 2003, Mr Simpson has

had the use of an £800,000 grace-and-favour house owned by the union in Hertfordshire."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/4903243/Derek-Simpson-Unite-union-boss-stays-in-luxury-hotel-suite.html>

I believe this makes the case for a rank-and-file movement better than any propaganda I can produce.

It is necessary to reject what is called the syndicalist version of the rank-and-file where a group seeks to educate, mobilise and agitate for industrial action whilst not standing for any union position at all on the basis that power always corrupts. This outlook results in a division of labour, the bureaucrat is safe in his office and the rank-and-filers mobilise the members when necessary as an adjunct to the bureaucrat, whilst bitterly criticising the corruption of the bureaucrats in their propaganda. An example of this is the Counterfire introduction to the Brian Pearce article *Some Past Rank-and-File Movements* by Alex Snowden in which he attempts to make the article mean the exact opposite of what it does. His opening sentence is:

"There are two basic divisions inside the trade unions. One is the division between left and right - including contests between left-wing and right-wing candidates for leading positions in the unions. The other division is between the bureaucracy and the grassroots members".

This completely contradicts the whole purpose of Pearce's piece. As if there were two separate and unconnected compartments of the class struggle; the battle between left and right in the trade unions and the battle for the soul of the rank and file. This 'left' he is referring must therefore be a bureaucratic anti-rank and file left. And Pearce's article points out precisely that; the treachery of the left trade union bureaucracy. What happened to 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). Is not the Introduction simply a rational for his support for the left bureaucrat McCluskey against the rank-and-file candidate Jerry Hicks?

Then says:

"This doesn't mean abandoning trade unions as mass organisations; nor does it involve completely ignoring the often important left-right contests at the top of the unions. It's about building the independent strength of grassroots members as a counterweight to the bureaucracy's tendency to sell them short" (emphasis added).

But then he goes on to quote Trotsky who says the complete opposite:



Alex Snowden: "Radical redistribution of wealth is therefore needed. The scale of inequality is itself related to a series of (Tory then Labour) government policies." This reformist outlook leads him to contradict the revolutionary rank and file perspective in Pearce's article and try to smuggle in reliance on the left bureaucracy; a totally incorrect counterposition between the ranks and "left-wing and right-wing candidates".

"(We) should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists; but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organisations corresponding more closely to the problems of mass struggle in bourgeois society."

Trotsky was not talking about acting as a "counterweight" against "a tendency to sell them short" by the bureaucracy, a ginger group of good democrats but building a fighting current in the trade unions to defeat the bureaucrats and oust them and replace them by rank-and-file leaders who are answerable to the rank-and-file group.

Of course we will critically support left candidates who are not our members on the basis of the united front tactic against the right bureaucrats. This is because such candidate talk more left, proclaim to be on the side of the workers more than the pro-boss right bureaucrats and it is necessary for the ranks to learn about these in the practice of the class struggle. For instance if Jerry Hicks was not standing in the last Unite election it would have been correct to support Len McCluskey, despite his fake leftism and hypocrisy because, whilst we may understand this well, the ordinary membership do not and will not until they begin to struggle themselves in strike actions, occupations etc.

So it is not a question of electing better leaders but of mobilising the ranks to fight for their own interests by defeating ALL their bureaucratic opponents within the trade unions leaderships.

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

Build a Real Rank-and-File Movement independent of ALL TU bureaucrats!

By A J Byrne

Despite all its protestations the National Shop Stewards Network was never a real rank-and-file body. It was always an adjunct to the left trade union bureaucracy. Its founding principles made it clear that it sought no political or organisational independence from them but wanted as many General Secretaries on board as possible—there were six originally and it is now sponsored by the RMT, PCS, CWU, NUM and POA. That was the meaning of point 2 of its 'founding basis' (2006) only, "bona fide rank and file TUC affiliated trade union workplace representatives" could be members—no place for rank and file workers or victimised opponents of the bureaucracy.

And point 3 was humiliating in its kow-tow: "It would not encroach on the established organisation and recruitment activity or interfere in the internal affairs and elections of TUC affiliated trade unions or the functions of the TUC".

The Socialist Party has decided to use the vehicle of the NSSN to launch its own All Britain Anti-Cuts Campaign, so forcing a split, whilst correctly exposing the hypocrisy of those Labour Councillors and their apologists who protest but make the cuts nonetheless. So it is apposite to examine their own hypocrisy.

In the first place they complain about the lack of democracy in the CoR Conference whilst running an annual NSSN Conference themselves which was just as undemocratic. And whilst criticising the Labour Councillors who are making the cuts whilst protesting they are apparently too politically naive to see through the division of labour performed by Len McCluskey who is doing the exact same thing whilst hypocritically protesting the opposite (see below). We must set ourselves the task of building a real rank-and-file opposition now beginning in Unite and then in all other unions.

Unions warn of massive wave of strikes (but not if they can help it!)

Unite general secretary Len McCluskey vows to work with students to fight government's austerity agenda" headlined Matthew Taylor in guardian.co.uk, Sunday 19 December 2010 (<http://coalitionofresistance-leeds.org.uk/?p=259>). And he finished:

"Unite has signed up to the Coalition of Resistance campaign group which brings together unions with local anti-cuts campaigns across the country, he said, adding that the challenge was now to persuade people that there is an alternative to the cuts."

"Unless people are convinced not just that they are hurting – not hard to do – but also that there is a coherent alternative to the Cameron-Clegg class-war austerity, then getting millions into action will remain a pipe dream."

He praised Ed Miliband for "drawing a line under the party's Blairite past", but called for a clearer dividing line between Labour and the government based on a "positive growth and tax justice programme" to tackle the deficit. A key part [of the alternative] must be a rejection of the need for cuts. 'What do we want? Fewer cuts later on', is not a slogan to set the blood coursing."

McCluskey said the TUC's national demonstration on 26 March would be a "critical landmark" in the campaign against the government's plans".

But behind the bluster and rhetoric from McCluskey, designed to pose an alternative to the TUC's craven capitulation, here is what he is really planning behind the scenes. In this report from Unite's meeting with its Councillors Gail Cartmell (new career for one failed Gen Sec candidate) instructed them to carry out all the cuts by setting legal budgets whilst hypocritically protesting. They liked it:

"I was at a UNITE Cllrs network meeting on 12th Nov and there was about 50 Cllrs present including a number of council Leaders and Labour Group Leaders etc. At this meeting it was made very clear that UNITE does not expect or support illegal budgets this time round. It was also made clear that Cllrs should implement the cuts but what was expected was that they would involve the unions (all of them) to try and mitigate the effects. What UNITE along with the Labour Party would do is continue to campaign against the cuts. It was made very clear to the "top table" that we need a clear message re the cuts from the Party and the union agreed to work on this including at the NPF."

"Gail Cartmell was the main union speaker and I must say I was surprised in just how strong the "toe the line" message was but it went down very well with those at the meeting!"

In an interview with *The Socialist* on 1 December, after his rousing anti-cuts speech at the Coalition of Resistance on 27 November Len set out his vision of the road forward:

"We've been told for over 15 months now that there is no alternative to the cuts. At the last general election the three major parties put forward a cuts agenda. So at the moment ordinary working people feel that, although they don't want these cuts, they are being forced into believing that there's not really anything we can do about it, we've got to accept the cuts. Our task is to reject the cuts - not only because they're morally wrong and economically dangerous, that's not good enough. We can't just sloganise against the cuts, we have to explain that there is an alternative."

But this 'alternative' is only "economic growth and dealing with



Gail Cartmell; "Gail Cartmell was the main union speaker and I must say I was surprised in just how strong the "toe the line" message was but it went down very well with those at the meeting!"

tax". This is a bogus long term Keynesian strategy in defence of 'mismanaged' capitalism. Right now there is no alternative apparently because that would mean not setting legal budgets and encouraging strikes and occupations which might threaten the future of capitalism!

"We have to put people before profit. The People's Charter has demands about a fairer tax system and spells out alternatives. We need to arm our members and members of the general public so that they understand that there is an alternative." He says.

The People's Charter makes no demands on union leaders to resist any cuts right now but banks everything on the illusory parliamentary road to socialism, and getting a Left Labour Government elected sometime in the distant future which will put back what has already been taken! In reality if these cuts succeed then Cameron will be re-elected with a massive majority as the middle class recognise 'reality' and blame the working class for making matters worse by uncoordinated resistance and 1979-style discontented Winters. Len McCluskey's task, and that of all TU bureaucrats, is to ensure that any resistance is uncoordinated. Now is the time for a rank-and-file movement independent of ALL TU bureaucrats!

Grass Roots Left Supporters Conference

11.30 to 4pm

Room 3E, University of London Union,
Malet Street, London WC1.

WWW.grassrootsleft.org email, jerry-hicks4gs2010@yahoo.co.uk, tel 0781 782 7912

The struggle for the leadership of the anti-cuts movement

By A J Byrne SF Flyer 4 February 2011

In the current struggle for the leadership of the anti-cuts movement between the SWP, their right-wing split, Counterfire, and the Socialist Party the game is entirely about securing the patronage of left trade union bureaucrats and reformist politicians who will 'oppose' the cuts, denounce them viciously and passionately but nonetheless implement them in the end (or are implementing them now) rather than seek to mobilise their members and the mass of the working class itself to physically resist the cuts by strikes and occupations. The SWP leadership now understand they were outmanoeuvred for the allegiance of the RMT left bureaucracy by the SP in the NSSN split. Ian Allison explain their desperate volte face thus:

"As I think most of you are already aware, though the SWP members who were NSSN officers resigned, the rest of the SWP members on the Steering Committee are intending to go to the next meeting to push the unity argument once again. I know that not everyone will agree with this approach, but we have decided this is better to keep the focus on the core issues and not allow the SP to distract it into something about the SWP as they tried to do in December."

We have detailed the hypocrisy of Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey who talks a very fighting opposition to the cuts whilst organising Labour Councils to make sure that these very same cuts are successfully imposed by the setting of legal budgets. But let us look at just how far these defenders of capitalist intuitions and 'stability' are prepared to go to ensure their own place in the status quo.

Two of the speakers at the People's Convention are former SWP members. They are Jimmy Kelly, the Secretary of Unite the Union in Ireland and Jane Loftus, CWU President. Both made their exits from the SWP in Ireland and Britain under differing circumstances but basically to advance their own careers in the union bureaucracies.

The difficulty is that the SWP has a leftist membership, suspicious and distrustful of their own leadership after the Respect fiasco. An internal SWP revolt forced them to support Jerry Hicks in the Unite Gen Sec election after a year's vacillation. This got them into serious trouble with the bureaucrat's front, the United Left and career prospects for aspiring SWP bureaucrats were dimmed. This post in the Socialist Unity blog shows the dilemma of the SWP leadership:

"It's funny really because I became very close to joining them not so long ago until I was advised that being an SWP member would do me more harm than good if I were to get on in Unite. So I have decided to channel my leftism into the Labour Party which is something that every trade unionist should think seriously about."
Comment by Moorky — 12 June, 2010.

Brother Moorky knows what side his bread is buttered on in 'getting on' up the greasy poll of the bureaucracy.

Jimmy Kelly exited the SWP as a consequence of the Belfast Airport affair. He actually sought to jail SP member Gordon McNeil (twice) after he fought on when an Industrial Tribunal found these shop stewards and union members were sacked in collaboration with the TGWU bureaucrats. Here is the account from April 2008:

"The SP's Gordon McNeill stated "Jimmy Kelly attacked Margaret Thatcher for refusing negotiations with the H-block hunger-strikers in the 80s, but today he refuses to talk with members of the union who have been forced to go on hunger-strike to get justice. We were sacked after a union official, with the support of the leadership, repudiated our strike action in 2002 at a secret meeting with our former employers. The union seems happy enough to talk to the employers, but won't talk to its members". Issued on behalf of Gordon McNeill, Madan Gupta and Chris Bowyer."

We can be certain that the SP members did not head many H-blocs hunger-strike committee. They certainly downplayed this conflict forced on them by the intransigence of the victimised workers.

This is how Socialist Democracy in Ireland describes how the big unions secured the acceptance of the Croke Park Agreement:

"The approach of trade union leaders is epitomised by SIPTU president Jack O'Connor. Initially not publically committing himself either way, he gradually built up the arguments for acceptance, until he and the SPITU executive made a formal endorsement of Croke Park, and then became its most enthusiastic supporters. Jack O'Connor made a series of firebrand speeches at public events denouncing the Government's economic policies, yet at the same time urging support for them. The more trade union leaders capitulated and accommodated to the demands of the Government and employers the more militant they sounded."

The left bureaucracy is just a bit cleverer than the right in Ireland and Britain but Kelly and McCluskey arrived at the same place as the right in the end. On the 28 May 2010 the 6,000 public sector members of Unite in the public service in Ireland voted to reject the Croke Park deal following the recommendation of Jimmy Kelly. But the votes of big unions, Impact and SIPTU, forced through the deal. But on 28 June Irish television reported: Unite to co-operate with Croke Park deal:

"The Unite trade union, which represents 6,000 workers in the public service, has decided to co-



SIPTU president Jack O'Connor: "The more trade union leaders capitulated and accommodated to the demands of the Government and employers the more militant they sounded."

operate with implementation of the Croke Park Agreement, despite members voting to reject it... it was decided that Unite would enter the implementation process to protect its members from any victimisation that might occur. Regional Secretary Jimmy Kelly warned that members would expect to see reimbursement of pay cuts commencing early next year."

Indeed. And pigs might fly! Jimmy Kelly is now calling for a general strike in the indefinite future to oppose the cuts he has decided to implement now. The SWP, endorse his reformist Keynesian alternative strategy and two-faced dodges by reporting it without a comment:

"The Unite trade union has proposed a general strike in opposition to the Government's economic programme and in support of an alternative strategy. The union has also proposed a campaign of civil disobedience including the non-payment of any water or property taxes introduced in the forthcoming budget. Irish regional secretary Jimmy Kelly said the union would be putting its proposals for national strike to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in the weeks ahead."

The SP have an almost totally compliant membership if we ignore the odd cloud of doubt that passes over the faces of leftists like Rob Williams and others when a particularly nasty piece of chicanery is imposed, like the forced split in the NSSN on the 22 January.

Jane Loftus, when a member of the SWP in November 5 2009, voted to accept the interim agreement which call off the strikes just as popular support and the confidence of the union membership was growing; support committees were mushrooming as the left relished a

real chance to fight the system. She was forced to resign from the SWP under pressure from an outraged membership as a result. But she was invited to the platform by the SWP leadership, thus implicitly portraying her action as understandable. The SP, who have a much worse record of capitulation to the left bureaucracy because of its docile membership, backed this same sell-out deal, which open the door to complete privatisation, with these lame excuses:

"But once they had a chance of looking at what was achieved by their mass strike action, many of the workers have drawn the conclusion that the deal (unanimously agreed it seems by the elected postal executive committee) does allow the CWU to regain some element of trade union control in the workplace and therefore does push back the attacks of the bosses. One local CWU leader in the South West wrote to his members: "We have forced a vicious employer back to the table".

The CWU are now proposing to accept privatisation because it is "illegal" to strike against it and will only seek to mollify some of the worst excesses of the deal afterwards. RMT Gen Sec Bob Crow regularly accepts outrageous court injunctions against strikes. He even curbed his militant members by calling off a strike due for 4 February 2011 by RMT members at Arriva Trains Wales following legal advice on the "changing nature of the anti-trade union laws" - not even

waiting for an injunction! And Billy Hayes and ex-SWP'er Jane Loftus, CWU Gen Sec and President, are still touring the left circuses masquerading as part of an anti-cuts and privatisation opposition!

The CoR has no pretence at internal democracy so is a most fruitful arena for reformist demagogues like Tony Benn whose bottom line is the parliamentary road to socialism with the working class as a stage army whose only role is to get another Labour governments elected. Reformists like Benn, McDonnell and Corbyn, however sincere, will never do or advocate anything to threaten capitalism or damage 'the economy'.

Because if socialism can organically develop from capitalism it follows that this capitalism must be thriving and successful before it can deliver a really decent 'welfare state' - "Labour governments always run out of money" opponents say, i.e. they are always tied to capitalism itself. Serious revolutionaries know that crisis is endemic to capitalism and in order to achieve socialism we must mobilise the whole class to



The CWU are now proposing to accept privatisation because it is "illegal" to strike against it and will only seek to modify some of the worst excesses of the deal afterwards.

overthrow it, which possibility we are now seeing in Egypt. So reformist and bureaucrats seek to portray revolutionaries as 'troublemakers' who will undermine all this by seeking to conduct the class struggle through to the overthrow of capitalism itself.

- Occupy and strike to defeat the cuts!
- Develop the local anti-cuts campaign into a real united democratic national campaign!
- Build a real revolutionary internationalist socialist party!

Interview with West Belfast IRSP Candidate, Jim Gorman

By iskra1916

Socialist Fight is happy to reprint this interview because we feel that the IRSP has made big developments in recent years, that crucially it both rejects the Good Friday Agreement and is dedicated to mobilising the working class on a political and revolutionary socialist basis; "the class struggle and national liberation struggle cannot be separated" as Jim says below. Of course, as Trotskyists, we have big political differences, for instance we think that the politics of "Wolfe Tone, Marx, Lenin, Connolly, Mellows, Costello and Ta Power" are contradictory and the list ignores theoretical lessons of the prodigious struggles of Leon Trotsky in co-leading the Russian Revolution and defending its heritage until his assassination in 1940 by Stalin's agent.

Nonetheless we extend out warmest solidarity to the comrades in struggle and will continue to fight for political status for their and all republican prisoners via the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group as a communist obligation despite political differences we have with the IRSP and differences on politics and the method of struggle with other heroic republicans fighters.

Jim Gorman is one of 5 Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) candidates who are standing in the local council elections on May 5th, 2011. In Derry city, Lucy Callaghan is standing in Northland and Martin McMonagle in Shantallow. In Strabane, in West Tyrone, the IRSP candidate is local community worker, Paul Gallagher. In Belfast, Paul Little is standing in the North of the city and Jim Gorman is standing in the West. The specific electoral area that Mr Gorman will be seeking to represent is known, officially, as 'Lower Falls' which includes the 'wards' of:

1. Whiterock
2. Upper Springfield
3. Beechmount
4. Clonard
5. Falls.

Jim, who has a young family and is deeply involved with a whole range of community groups

and campaigns, took time out from his busy schedule, which now includes canvassing, meetings and essential party work, to give this short but exclusive interview. This will be the first time in 30 years that the IRSP have contested local council elections in the North of Ireland, the last time the party fielded candidates was during the 1981 H-Block Hunger Strike, when the party won two seats on Belfast City Council and came tantalisingly close to gaining a third.

Iskra: What is the core ideological standpoint of the Irish Republican Socialist Party?

Jim Gorman: We are a working class revolutionary party in the tradition of Wolfe Tone, Marx, Lenin, Connolly, Mellows, Costello and Ta Power. The 'Ta Power' document is at the heart of the IRSP's politics.

Iskra: What are the objectives of the IRSP?

Jim Gorman: Our prime objective is to work towards a united, 32 county Democratic Socialist Ireland. The Socialism that we believe in is

the type that liberates all working class people.

Iskra: What makes the IRSP different from other contemporary Irish Republican parties?

Jim Gorman: The party is guided by the analysis of Ireland's first revolutionary Republican Socialist, James Connolly. We believe that the class struggle and national liberation struggle cannot be separated. Unlike other Irish Republican parties, we are the only party that upholds Connolly's scientific socialist analysis.

Iskra: As the first IRSP candidate to stand in local elections in Belfast for 30 years, does this mean that the party has embraced electoral politics?

Jim Gorman: No, the IRSP does not believe that there is any parliamentary road to Socialism. We know the limitations of the bourgeois electoral system, the IRSP is an anti-Imperialist Party that seeks to remove British Imperialist interference in Ireland's sovereignty, as an aspect of the wider class struggle. However, the working class

people of West Belfast deserve principled Republican Socialist representatives who will not desert them to enter the professional political 'caste.' The IRSP decided to stand candidates in the local council elections, partly due to pressure from our support base in various areas of the North of Ireland

Iskra: Are the IRSP campaigning on the same issues as they did in 1981?

Jim Gorman: In 1981, the IRSP were at the forefront of the H-Block campaign and we championed the rights of political prisoners to be treated as such. During the 1981 Hunger Strike, three of those ten brave men who gave their lives on Hunger Strike, Patsy O'Hara, Kevin Lynch and Mickey Devine, were Irish Republican Socialists. In 2011 we still stand squarely behind Irish Republican prisoners.

Iskra: Do you think you will be elected in the council electoral area, known as 'Lower Falls?'

Jim Gorman: The response that I have received in West Belfast has been very, very encouraging and I have every reason to believe that come the polls, on May 5th, I will have the privilege of representing the people of West Belfast in the city council chamber. Don't forget, the IRSP throughout the years have had such a close a relationship with the working class people of one of the districts that I will be standing in, Divis, that it was once colloquially referred to as 'the planet of the Irps!' People in the area know that the IRSP will never desert them!

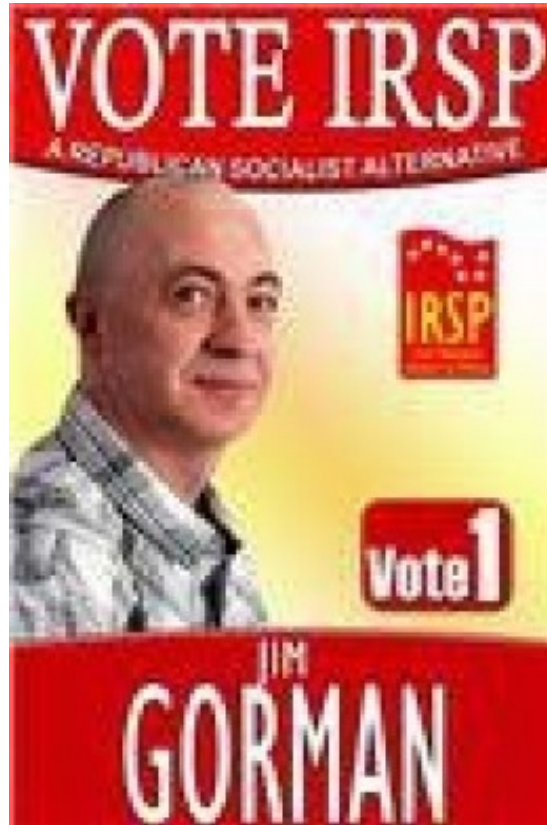
Iskra: What are the most pressing issues that effect the area you are a prospective councillor for?

Jim Gorman: In short, poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunities - West Belfast has been used and For example, in the Beechmount ward, 64% of the residents left school with no qualifications and nearly half of the unemployed are classed as 'long-term' unemployed! In the same area, nearly 3000 kids are growing up in homes where income support is the only money coming in. Similar figures accompany the Clonard, Whiterock, Upper Springfield and Falls wards, in fact Whiterock is rated as the most 'deprived' ward in the North

of Ireland but it's access to essential services such as health provision, is rated as one of the worst. These near 'Dickensian' figures are a disgrace in the year 2011 and the people of West Belfast deserve better.

Iskra: How is the IRSP's local election campaign progressing?

Jim Gorman: I will be the first to admit that personally and as a party, this has been a sharp learning curve but it has been a fantastic experience not least due to the encouragement that I have received from party colleagues and of



course, our supporters in West Belfast. Local people know the IRSP and they know our history of championing the rights of Irish working class people. We have received very, very positive feedback from local voters and I am quietly confident that we will see the beginning of a change in the make-up of local councils come May 5th. As a party we are firmly rooted in reality, so we know the limitations of council

elections and elections per se, however, even the greatest of journeys begins with one small step.

Iskra: On a personal level, how has the election campaign been for you?

Jim Gorman: Well, as the father of a young family, the elections have been a challenge - but a challenge I am well up for and it is brilliant that I have my family's full support! Even the youth football team who I coach are delighted that I am standing in the elections. I have got a great response from first time voters, an 18 year old who knows of my coaching work stopped one of our party canvassers the other night and said "when Jim gets elected, he can represent us young people too - he will be like our voice!" With support like that and incentives like that, I am convinced that I am doing the right thing.

Iskra: Just to finish off this interview, which political figure inspires you most?

Jim Gorman: It would have to be the late, great Seamus Costello, who was an outstanding Irish Republican Socialist activist and the IRSP's co-founder. Seamus would have been the model for any revolutionary socialist activist and we will not see his likes again. Seamus knew the limitations of bourgeois elections but he viewed them as an important tactic and a means to an end, as I recall, he famously said:

"I favour guerrilla tactics in parliament the same as I do in other respects. I favour them in local elections and local government bodies, they've proved successful there. And I see no reason, why, with a few TDs or MPs, of the right calibre, pursuing the right policies, why they cannot destroy the confidence of the people within these institutions and bring them tumbling down in ruins."

Seamus Costello laid the foundation stones of the Irish Republican Socialist Party in 1974 and now, all these years later, in 2011, the IRSP continues to owe it's allegiance to, and seeks to represent, the Irish working class.

Iskra: Many thanks, Jim, for taking time from your busy schedule - good luck on May 5th!

@ Iskra 7th April 2011

Bloody Sunday March in Derry will NOT be the last

Omayr Ghani reports that other republicans will continue the event.

Ceasefire blog: <http://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/category/politics/irish-times/>

Sinn Féin and families of the victims of Bloody Sunday decided that the 39th anniversary march on January 30 would be the last due to the recent publishing of the Saville Report which cleared all 14 men murdered by British Paratroopers of wrongdoing

after decades of false accusations against them by the British Army and Government.

The move has caused consternation among some relatives of the victims such as Liam, brother of the murdered Jim Wray, who declared "For as long as there's breath in my body, I hope that I will be marching to remember those killed on Bloody Sunday. It doesn't matter whether there are 10 or 10,000 marchers in future; it's the principle." Kate Nash, sister of another victim asserted the decision to end the march "was dropped on us like a ton of bricks, completely unexpectedly. Who decided the march should end and why? Sinn Féin runs the

march, so obviously it's Sinn Féin who are stopping the march - I don't know the reasons for that, so I can't answer that question. The only people it would serve is the British Government because it's an annual reminder of the atrocities they committed in Ireland."

Thus the idea put forward by Sinn Féin that there is no longer any reason to mark the events of Bloody Sunday rings hollow and subsequent anniversaries are likely increase tension between them and independent republicans (as currently happens with Anti-Internment bonfires that Sinn Féin now oppose) who will continue to march on 30 January.

Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group page: Statement from Republican POWs, Maghaberry jail

March 23, 2011

"We the Republican POWs currently incarcerated in Maghaberry jail, Co Antrim would like to update the general public on our struggle for political status. From the Stormont Agreement in 1998, we have endured conditions such as 23-hour and sometimes 24-hour lockup, physical assaults, degrading strip searches and the denial of our basic human rights.

We have made attempts to tackle those problems using dialogue. We quickly discovered that the Brits had no interest in dealing with our concerns. This left us with only one option: protest.

For almost five months we endured even worse than

before, which resulted in a dirty protest. Eventually with the support of our friends, family and comrades our voice was heard and an agreement was reached. This agreement on August 12, 2010 included the abolition of controlled movement through a phased basis; the induction of free association and the end of strip-searching: i.e.

Phase 1: No random strip-searching will take place on the way to domestic and legal visits and video link from SSU;

Phase 2: No rub-down searching internally within the Republican wing;

Phase 3: The prison will introduce a new search facility for Republican prisoners which will remove the requirement for routine strip-searching, all Republican prisoners are required to go through a 'BOSS' chair.

Phase 1 was to be introduced straight away with phase 2 to follow in December 2010 and finally phase 3 was to be complete in early 2011.

So far we have seen a relaxation of controlled movement with only six men allowed out on the landing at any given time instead of the previous number of three. Free association has been established with Republican prisoners allowed out from 8.30am – 8.00pm in the

yard.

However this is not enough. We are now three months past the due date for Phase 2 and upcoming for Phase 3 and still no movement for an end to controlled movement or strip-searching.

Strip-searching is still ongoing with the practice of forced strip-searching and physical assaults on Republican prisoners. We have raised these matters with the facilitation group on a number of occasions over several months, our patience has run out over these matters. The BOSS chair is in place which removes the requirement for degrading strip-searching, but still the screws are forcibly strip-searching Republican POWs.

We decided to refuse to comply with these degrading strip searches any more. We will not stand by and let the screws renege on the agreement, we want this agreement introduced in full or we will be forced to take further action.

Thirty years ago this year our comrades in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh resisted such criminalisation which resulted in the deaths of ten young brave men. Many others suffered unspeakable horror in their fight for political status. We ask the public, our comrades and supporters to remember them and ensure that this will not happen again."

**Political Status for Irish Republican prisoners!
Free all anti-Imperialist political prisoners!
30th Anniversary of the Hunger Strikes Meeting
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1
7.00 pm Tuesday 3 May 2011**

Speakers

- Sean Holihan, chair of the James Stephens/Roger Casement Cumann Republican Sinn Fein
- Lee Jasper, Secretary National Assembly Against Racism
- Subhajyoti Ghosh, South Asia Solidarity Forum
- Yasmin Cass, Free Mohammed Hamid Campaign
- Speaker from Free Mumia Abu Jamal Campaign
- Faiz Baluch, Baluchistan human rights activist
- Michael Holden, Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group
- Chair: Gerry Downing, Secretary IRPSG

"They have nothing in their whole Imperial arsenal that can break the spirit of one Irishman who doesn't want to be broken" - Bobby Sands

List of anti-Good Friday Agreement Republican Prisoners in Ireland, north and south and abroad

(please send us updates)

**Maghaberry
Maghaberry Gaol
Roe 3
Old Road
Ballinderry Upper
Lisburn
Ireland
BT28 2PT**

- Colin Duffy - Lurgan
- Harry Fitzsimmons - Belfast
- Sean McConville - Lurgan
- Damien McKenna - Lurgan
- Gary Toman - Lurgan
- Brendan McConville - Lurgan
- JP Wooton - Craigavon
- Jason McCormack - Craigavon
- Colie Avery - Lurgan
- Turlough Mc Allister - South Armagh
- Paul Mc Caugherty - Lurgan
- Kevin Barry Nolan - Co Cavan
- Gerard McManus - Letterkenny
- Damien McLaughlin - Ardboe
- Sean Carlin - Belfast (IRSP)
- Joe Connor - N Belfast

- Willie Wong - Armagh
- Tony Rooney -Belfast
- Darryn McCallion - Derry
- Brendy Conway - Belfast
- Martin Corey - Lurgan
- Joe Barr - Strabane
- Stevie O Donnell
- Sean O'Reilly - Belfast
- Robert O'Neill - Belfast
- Stephen McAllister - Belfast
- Christopher Nash - Lurgan
- Martin McLoone - Derry
- Mark McGuigan - Omagh
- Daniel Turnbull - Omagh

**Portlaoise
Portlaoise Gaol
Portlaoise
County Laoise
Ireland**

- E-2**
- Patrick Tierney - Armagh
 - Liam Rainey - Wexford
 - Tom O'Hanlon - Derry
 - Jackie Bates - Wexford
 - Ciaran Dunne - Dublin

- Ken Donohoe - Dublin
- Tony Hyland - Dublin
- Robbie Kearns - Wexford
- Michael McDonald - Co. Louth
- Michael McKeivitt - Dundalk
- David Jordan - Tyrone
- Toirealach MacDhómhnaill - Fermanagh
- Cormac Fitzpatrick - Monaghan

E-3

- Derek Brady - Dundalk
- John Brock - Dublin
- Sean Connolly - Dublin
- Anthony Crowley - Cork
- Bernard Dempsey - Dublin
- Aidan Hulme - Co. Louth
- Robert Hulme - Co. Louth
- Jim McCormick - Co. Louth
- Thomas Morris - Dublin
- Fintan Paul O'Farrell - Co. Louth
- Barry Petticrew - Belfast
- Declan John Rafferty -

Co. Louth

E-4

- Liam Grogan - Kildare
- Darren Mulholland - Dundalk

IRSP prisoners:

- Owen Clail
- Denis Dwyer
- Eugene Kelly
- Paul Kelly
- Paddy Wall
- Thomas Kelly
- Gerard Kelleher
- Neil Myles
- Jonathan Keogh
- Noel Mooney
- Gareth Bryne
- Anthony Lee

Other Gaols

- Eddie McGarrigle
- Johnny McCrossan
- (IRSP) The Grove
Castlereagh Gaol
Castlereagh,
Co Roscommon
Ireland**
- Kieron Doran,
Ecrou 293249,
Block A, Cellule 119,
Paris-la-Santé.
- Michael Campbell
- LUKISKES PRISON
Lukiskiu bstr. 6
Vilnius, LT 01108
Lithuania**



IRSP picket on 7 August 2010 which Rickard attended.

Obituary:

RICKARD COLLINS

Rickard Collins aged 47 from Leamington died suddenly on Friday 8 April 2011. Rickard was a member of the Coventry and Warwickshire Socialist Alliance and was a life long socialist activist. His family was from Clonakilty and he was very proud of his Rebel Cork background. Indeed his support for the struggle against British occupation in Ireland led him to support the Troops Out Movement and more recently the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group. He will be remembered for his support in many labour movement protests against injustice and oppression. Rickard had a keen and perceptive interest in socialism and regularly attended Workers Power rallies and meetings. As a friend and comrade I will miss his good company and comradeship.

Rest in Peace, Rickard

Bernie McAdam, Workers Power and IRPSG

Where now for the left in Ireland – revolutionary struggle or reformist parliamentarianism? By A J Byrne

The outcome of the February Election

The biggest voting swing in the Irish general election on 25 February in percentage terms was from Fianna Fail (more anti-British nationalists) (-24%) to the Labour party at 9.3%, closely followed by Fine Gael (more pro-British nationalists) at 8.8%. Sinn Féin's increase was a modest 3% and the United Left Alliance (ULA) an even more modest 2.6%. But there was still a big left swing in Dublin especially. [1]

The bulk of the votes lost by Fianna Fail were working class and these did not go just to the right and Fine Gael (less than 9%, mainly the rural, non working class vote) but left to Labour, over 9%, Sinn Fein, 3%, ULA, about 4.5% and left leaning independents also about 4.5%. Fine Gael got a shocking 64.8% in Mayo but only 16.8% in Dublin North West. That was the only constituency where they failed to win a seat (Ireland operates a PR election with 3, 4 or 5 seat constituencies). In contrast Fianna Fail took only one Dublin seat out of 47 where the Labour party approached 50% and the combined left vote was about 60%. Those identifiable as left got around 42% of the vote in the state for the

orientated, parish pump politicians; Ireland's traditions of often corrupt local patronage and the PR system favours these. So the hope for the socialist future resides in the 'revolutionary' ULA and the new workers party they are promising to found does it? We will examine its programme and three critiques of that to determine the answer. The three critiques are those of Socialist Democracy (SD), the Irish Republican Socialist party (IRSP) and Cork-based Alan Davis of the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT). [2]

The ULA programme

The ULA programme begins, "There can be no just or sustainable solution to the crisis based on the capitalist market. Instead we favour democratic and public control over resources so that social need is prioritised over profit." Number two promises to unite all the oppressed "in the struggle to change society"; but change to what? "Make change happen, yes we can?"

There follows a laudable series of leftist demands, defending immigrants, equality for all, don't pay the bankers, tax the rich, oppose 'stealth taxes' which force the poor to pay proportionally most and tax the rich, defending health care and all public services etc. All very correct and laudable. But there is no mention of the national question and no mention of socialism. So it is not exactly expropriate the capitalists. These are just a left reformist demands for getting elected on the voters outrage and are almost totally unrealisable whilst the international bankers control the capital needed to produce for need and not for profit. And there is the question of how the state itself, including its armed forces and Gardai (Irish police) not to mention the prison officers, some of whom have joined the Socialist Party, who are central to the ULA, would react to such a programme.

The programme finished with this:

"An important part of this is the urgent need to reclaim and rebuild the trade unions and to mobilise the power of workers through mass action. The approach of Social Partnership has left workers defenceless and has led to a massive transfer of wealth from workers to employers and must be scrapped. Our elected TDs will give full support to those unions and workers who oppose the Croke Park deal and will use the Dáil to raise the real issues that affect ordinary working people."

Whilst correctly targeting the Social Partnership which was annual agreements between TU

Results of the 2011 Irish general elections:

Party	Leader	Total Votes	Percent	swing	Total
Fine Gael	Enda Kenny	801,637	36.1%	increase 8.8%	76
Labour Party	Eamon Gilmore	431,798	19.4 %	increase 9.3 %	37
Fianna Fáil	Micheál Martin	387,362	17.4%	decrease 24.2%	20
Sinn Féin	Gerry Adams	220,660	9.9%	increase 3.0%	14
United Left Alliance		57,139	2.6%	increase 2.6%	5
Independents		287, 171	12.9%		14

bureaucrats and the Government, bosses organisations etc to eliminate strikes which resulted in ever-increasing social inequality there is no identification with the struggles of workers against the bureaucrats who sell them out every time. And the reference to giving "full support to those unions and workers who oppose the Croke Park deal" is there to butter up to the likes of Unite's Jimmy Kelly, who implements the Croke Park Agreement whilst 'opposing' it as against SIPTU's Jack O'Connor who always supported it, similar to the almost non-existent divide between the leftist Unite and the rightist Unison in Britain, a difference of little more than words and more or less militant members (see page 5 for these details).

Socialist Democracy

The first critique we will look at is that of Socialist Democracy (SD) the Irish section of the Fourth international. Only it is not a critique at all, it is a total collapse to the reformism of the ULA and very disappointing, given the previous history of the group. Where is the outrage at the lack of opposition to the Good Friday Agreement, so well argued by SD in the past. Where is the appreciation of the need to unite the class struggle and the national question via Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution? It seems this paean was written by leftist liberal reformists:

"We need a new Republic, a second Republic, a WORKERS REPUBLIC! We need to return to the promise of James Connolly and the fight for our independence in 1916."

Well really comrades if all the study of Lenin and Trotsky has left you back in 1916 you deserve to stay there with your anti-working class phrases like "the ownership of Ireland would belong to the people of Ireland and that all the children of Ireland would be cherished equally". What people of Ireland? Cowen, Kenny and their banker friends like Dermot Gleeson and Eugene Sheehy of Allied Irish Bank and Brian Goggin and Richard Burrows of the Bank of Ireland? And you think these should be treated equally with Irish workers? An impossible aspiration and a truly reactionary programme for a socialist group to aspire to. This is backward nationalist rubbish; "all the children of Ireland would be cherished equally", more anti-



first time ever; Fianna Fail and Fine Gael took 84.3% in the 1982 election.

But what kind of 'lefts' are these? Sinn Fein pitched quite 'anti-banker, don't pay' in this election, taking big votes around the border and in its rural heartlands of Kerry, Waterford and North Cork, the Midlands and west Dublin. But the reality of a party heavily compromised on the national question and in a conservative austerity-imposing administration in the north of Ireland gave the lie to all its promises. Labour rose to 35% in the polls last September when they were making left noises about opposing the bankers but they threw all that away in conjunction with their TU backers when they became 'responsible' by angling for a coalition with Fine Gael and promising to implement austerity to pay the IMF, etc only at a slower rate with a minor reduction in the interest rate. The independents are generally community

Continued on page 29

The "Help for Heroes" campaign attempts to normalise and legitimise the acts of violence of the British Imperialist state

By Charlie Walsh

Over the last year or more an organisation called "Help for Heroes" was set up in Britain in support of the British armed forces involved in the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. The British armed forces, the military wing of British Imperialism and the boot boys of the Ruling Class in Britain, invaded and occupied Iraq and Afghanistan causing the dislocation of millions of people in both countries and caused death and destruction on a massive scale.

These British armed forces, in collusion with the USA and other NATO members, dropped thousands of tons of high explosives on the heads of the people in both countries, they used B52 and other fighter bombers, helicopter gun ships, hell-fire missiles, tanks and guns to kill and maim, terrorise, torture and abuse many many hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Afghani men, women and children. The night raids on Iraqi and Afghani families were intended to terrorise and cower these people. The use of the death squads of the SAS and SBS to carry out the secret assassinations of alleged insurgents in both countries often ending up with the deaths of innocent men, women and children, reminiscent of the way the British Army behaved in Ireland.

I ask the question: Do the above atrocities carried out by the conquering British armed forces make them "heroes"? Are the British soldiers who threw an Iraqi youth of 17, an asthmatic who couldn't swim, into a canal, walked away and watched him drown, also "heroes"? Are the British squaddies who kicked and beat to death the Iraqi hotel receptionist, Baha Mousa, leaving 98 assault marks on his body also "heroes"? No British soldier has yet to be arrested and charged with his murder. Are the British paras who murdered 14 unarmed civil rights demonstrators in Derry in 1972 also "heroes"?

The "Help for Heroes" campaign attempts to normalise and legitimise the acts of violence of the British Imperialist state, state terrorism carried out by the British armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and seeks to glamorise and make acceptable the actions of the British armed forces by calling these military actions "heroic" and those doing the killings and terrorising "Heroes".

This jingoism and glorification of war and death is best encapsulated in the macabre death ritual at Wootton Bassett in Wiltshire for the returning dead soldiers, and in the military parades by the returning military regiments in the towns and cities of Britain. How arrogant and superior these squaddies must feel, full of pride, returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with no respect and scant regard for the feelings of the people that they occupied, oppressed, killed, orphaned, tortured, and abused. I would submit that killing or injuring people does not make you a "hero" or your actions "heroic".

Racism, jingoism, reactionary nationalism and war mongering have always been at the forefront and at the heart of all British Imperialism's wars of conquest against many countries down the years of its 'glory' days of the British Empire or should I say the darkest inglorious days of Empire; whether in South Africa India, Ireland, Egypt, Aden, Cyprus, Malaya, Palestine, Kenya et al. For example during the Kenyan struggle for Independence, British interrogators castrated Kenyan prisoners as part of their abuse and torture of Kenyan freedom fighters, while hundreds of thousands died from torture, hunger and disease whilst held in detention camps.

The British armed forces are made up in the main of working class youth who are brainwashed, indoctrinated, dehumanised, lied to, groomed and brutalised into becoming killers for Capitalism and Imperialism, mere cannon fodder in the cause of 'Queen and Country'. These same squaddies, whilst in the service of Imperialism are also the sworn enemy of the working class and its class interests.

The interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, like all Imperialist interventions, were carried out in order to seize control of the oil and gas and other raw materials. In a sentence, to steal the natural resources in Iraq and Afghanistan and to use both countries as bases from which Imperialism can protect its interests, strategic, economic, political and military. Remember what Winston Churchill said: "Britain has no permanent friends and no permanent enemies just permanent interests". So spoke the true voice of British Imperialism.

Not only does Imperialism invade, occupy and bomb a country back to the stone age, Vietnam, 1990 Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan today, it also lies through its teeth just as its representative Blair did over Iraq's alleged 'weapons of mass destruction'. The real reason for invading Iraq wasn't to bring bourgeois democracy to Iraq but to overthrow Saddam Hussein and his regime. And why? Because for as long as he remained in power, he as President had control of Iraq's oil wealth, which he nationalised in the 1980's; and only by overthrowing him and his regime could Imperialism get its greedy hands on Iraq's oil wealth. Today in Iraq over one million people are dead and five million children orphaned because of Imperialism's war for oil and strategic interests in that country. And I



"Just a few years after the defeat of Hitler came the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya - a mass armed rebellion by the Kikuyu people, demanding the return of their land and freedom. The draconian response of Britain's colonial government was to detain nearly the entire Kikuyu population of one-and-a-half-million - to hold them in camps or confine them in villages ringed with barbed wire - and to portray them as sub-human savages.

From 1952 until the end of the war in 1960 tens of thousands of detainees - and possibly a hundred thousand or more - died from the combined effects of exhaustion, disease, starvation and systematic physical brutality. Until now these events have remained untold, largely because the British government in Kenya destroyed most of its files.

For the last eight years Caroline Elkins has conducted exhaustive research to piece together the story, unearthing realms of documents and interviewing several hundred Kikuyu survivors. *Britain's Gulag* reveals what happened inside Kenya's detention camps, as well as the efforts to conceal the truth. Now, for the first time, we can understand the full savagery of the Mau Mau war and the ruthless determination with which Britain sought to control its empire."

News from Nowhere, Liverpool's Radical Community Bookshop.

would imagine that the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan do not view the British armed forces as "heroes" or their acts of terrorism against them as "heroic".

Sad to say but not surprised that that all Trade Union leaders in Britain and the Labour and Trade Union bureaucracy support unconditionally Imperialism's wars of conquest. While the Stop the War coalition adopts a pacifist and non-revolutionary position on Imperialism. Any Marxist worth the name would call for the defeat of Imperialism and campaign with the working class on the slogan "The enemy is at home" not the poor, oppressed and exploited masses in Iraq and Afghanistan.

KARL MARX wrote in relation to Ireland thus: "A country that oppresses another cannot itself be free". He further stated, again in relation to Ireland, that for as long as the working class in Britain supported its 'own' ruling class against an oppressed nation and people, it can never free itself as an oppressed and exploited class from the shackles [the political, economic and ideological shackles] that tie it hand and foot to Capitalism/Imperialism.

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

Political prisoners in India: An Overview

By Subhajyoti Ghosh (Britain South Asia Solidarity Forum)

Internationalism

For the last several years, the Government of India and the various state governments have been pursuing the policies of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. India is projected as one of the brightest emerging economies of the world, pronounced in the same breath as China.

However, this anti-people policy of reckless liberalisation is being pursued in a brutal manner ... and despite all the pomp and glory projected by the obliging media; it has led to the plunder of natural resources.

Hunger, malnutrition and death have become the everyday experience of the people facing wide spread displacement from their homes and habitats. Few can definitely say how many millions of people have perished to death on a day-to-day basis. Wealth is being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands and the vast sections of the masses have been left impoverished, deprived and discriminated.

With their backs pushed to the wall the people of the Indian sub-continent protested in their own ways, either spontaneously or through their organisations. People have been fighting for their land, livelihood, for fundamental social transformation, for the right to self-determination of the nationalities, for the empowerment of women and against social injustice, displacement and discrimination. In the face of people's resistance, which is natural and just, the state lets loose a reign of terror in all parts of the sub-continent. Thousands upon thousands of people have been killed by the security forces and millions of people have been put behind bars.

Today, these people constitute the majority of India's political prisoners!

Probably all of us in this room are familiar with the name of Binayak Sen – a medical doctor and human rights activist languishing in a prison of Chattisgarh state. Last month, a court in Raipur found him guilty of helping the Naxalites charged him with connections with a banned Maoist organization and sentenced him to life term. This incident has generated huge protests against the Indian state – both within and outside the country- and the overseas protests are mostly spearheaded by the people of Indian origin, that's another interesting aspect.

Now Binayak Sen is probably the most high-profile Political Prisoner in India now – or if we can use the nomenclature of Amnesty International, we can call him a 'Prisoner of Con-

This is the speech made by Subhajyoti Ghosh of the Britain South Asia Solidarity Forum at the Bloody Sunday Anniversary meeting in London on 31st of January 2011. In response to a question at the end of his speech he said that estimates of the number of political prisoners in Indian jails were in the region of two lakh (200, 000) although there were no official figures and Indian states often criminalised prisoners to avoid conceding political status.

science'. Whatever it is, we have to remember he's just one of the thousands of political prisoners ... and there is no reliable statistics about their exact numbers even! Almost all the state governments in India are reluctant to describe the detainees as political prisoners ... because as per statute, they are supposed to offer some special status and facilities to this special category of prisoners. But in practice, the Political Prisoners never get their due rights and almost always some criminal charges are brought against the Political Prisoners to deny them their rights.

Another interesting phenomenon in India is – irrespective of the colour of the Governments, almost all the states are equally harsh and brutal in its treatment of political prisoners. Rightists, leftists, centre-rights or centre-lefts, or socialists – all political parties are equally responsible for this and that led to a very sorry state of affairs throughout the country.

For example, Binayak Sen has been persecuted by Raman Singh-led BJP Govt in Chattisgarh. BJP represents the pro-Hindu ultra rightist force in India, and leftists in the state have mobilised movement demanding Dr Sen's release. But unfortunately where leftists are in power, like say in the state of West Bengal, the situation is no different. On the contrary, West Bengal is one of the states where the number of political prisoners is too high and allegations of human rights abuse by the communist-ruled state are countless.

So in this issue, BJP and CPI(M) are on the same boat, and India's oldest political party Congress, is no exception either. When Congress was in power in the disputed state of Indian-administered Kashmir, several political activists were arrested and detained for months without trial. Congress-ruled Maharashtra state indis-

criminally used the infamous 'TADA' act in the nineties and many purely political cases were fabricated with a terrorism angle.

In fact mainly two sections of the people have been identified by the Indian state as the main targets of its so-called war against terror—the Maoists or Naxalites whom the prime minister of India has described as the 'single largest threat to internal security' and the Muslims who



Activists of Democratic Students Union participate in a march to demand the release of renowned paediatrician and social rights activist Binayak Sen in New Delhi on January 30, 2011.

are being portrayed by sections of the media as 'terrorists', 'ISI agents' or 'SIMI' (Student Islamic Movement of India) members.

By consciously adopting this vilification campaign, the State is extracting social sanction to do whatever they wish to with its armed forces. Anyone who dares to speak against the policy of the Indian state in regions such as Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra are potential Maoists. People fighting against displacement, for their livelihood, for a square meal in these regions cannot be from any other section or independent but Maoists!

Secondly, the politics of the recent spate of bomb blasts in various states of India have pointed to ominous portends in the future. The bomb blasts that happened in the states of Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan all have a strange coincidence when it comes to the response of the Indian state. The spate of bomb blasts has added fodder to the

blitzkrieg of the so-called war against terror of the Indian state.

Little wonder, the Muslim community whether it is the so-called Bangladeshi, Hyderabadi or of any other identity has become easy targets. The police and the anti-terrorist squads are silent on the number of illegal detentions and torture of the Muslims that they have so far committed. The media is abuzz everyday with increasing instances of arrests of Muslims under this or that blasts thus catering to the campaign of vilification of this community. Many Muslims are languishing in this connection without any cases charged against them thus becoming easy prey to be booked in cases in the future!

There are three major instruments in the hand of state to put these political detainees behind bars – and these are three pieces of draconian legislations ... Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), Public Safety Act (PSA) and some similar minor acts. Only purpose of these legislations is to suppress and stifle political dissent among the most oppressed and exploited people of the subcontinent.

In different regions of the sub-continent jails are thus being filled with political prisoners and the living conditions in these prisons simply beggar description. The prisons in India are not the so-called 'correctional homes', but places where human beings are turned into animals. There are many cases where prisoners have been languishing in the prisons not only for years but even for decades without trial. Long periods of prisons life inevitably take its toll on human mind and body.

Just recently, on the Occasion of International Human Rights Day— Political Prisoners in Medinipur Central Jail, in the state of West Bengal, started their Indefinite Hunger Strike on 10th December 2010 ... and showing solidarity to their comrades, nearly 150 political prisoners in different jails of the same state—also started hunger strike on the same day for an indefinite period. The irony is —The Indian government calls these prisons 'Correctional Homes', however the appalling situation in these homes forced the inmates to start indefinite hunger strike.

Faced with such a situation, the democratic and conscientious people of the sub-continent decided to form a committee which will stand up against state oppression and raise its voice for the unconditional release of all political prisoners. The *Bandi Mukti Committee (BMC)* of West Bengal has been working on the same issue for the last seven to eight years and this has helped to formulate the policy of the newly formed committee.

The meeting of the preparatory committee was held in January 2008 and thus the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners (CRPP) was formally constituted at the Inaugural Conference held on 31 March and 1 April 2008 in Delhi. A sixty six member executive committee with members representing the various regions of the sub-continent was elected. The first meeting of the executive committee was held on the 5th June 2008.

Since then, the CRPP and some fellow organisations are fighting for the cause of the unconditional release of the political prisoners and bringing about changes in periods of sentences,



The Red Corridor. As of 2009, Naxalites are active across approximately 220 districts in twenty states of India accounting for about 40 percent of India's geographical area. They are especially concentrated in an area known as the "Red Corridor", where they control 92,000 square kilometres (Wikipedia).

jail manuals and for improvement of prison conditions.

We, the **Britain South Asia Solidarity Forum**, are fully behind this effort. We appeal to all sections of the people to join this effort and work for the cause of all prisoners in general and political prisoners in particular, irrespective of their political or organisational differences. If one is committed to the betterment of the humanity then that concern should be the driving force to be part of such a movement to carry forward the task of the unconditional release of the political prisoners, not to mention the improvement of the prison conditions.

Where We Stand – Socialist Fight EB

1. We stand with Karl Marx: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule' (The International Workingmen's Association 1864, General Rules).
2. The capitalist state consists, in the last analysis of ruling-class laws within a judicial system and detention centres overseen by the armed bodies of police/army who are under the direction and are controlled in acts of defence of capitalist property rights against the interests of the majority of civil society. The working class must overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a workers' state based on democratic soviets/workers' councils to suppress the inevitable counter-revolution of private capitalist profit against planned production for the satisfaction of socialised human need.
3. We recognise the necessity for revolutionaries to carry out serious ideological and political struggle as direct participants in the trade unions (always) and in the mass reformist social democratic bourgeois workers' parties despite their pro-capitalist leaderships when conditions are favourable. Because we see the trade union bureaucracy and their allies in the Labour party leadership as the most fundamental obstacle to the struggle for power of the working class, outside of

- the state forces and their direct agencies themselves, we must fight and defeat and replace them with a revolutionary leadership by mobilising the base against the pro-capitalist bureaucratic misleaders to open the way forward for the struggle for workers' power.
4. We are full in support of all mass mobilisations against the onslaught of this reactionary Con-Lib Dem coalition. However, whilst participating in this struggle we will oppose all policies which subordinate the working class to the political agenda of the petty-bourgeois reformist leaders of the Labour party and trade unions.
 5. We recognise that class society, and capitalism as the last form of class society, is by its nature patriarchal. In that sense the oppression of women is different from all other forms of oppression and discrimination. Because this social oppression is inextricably tied to private property and its inheritance to achieve full sexual, social and economic freedom and equality for all we need to overthrow class society itself.
 6. 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! We support 'No Platform' for all fascists but never call on the capitalist state to ban fascist marches or parties; these laws would inevitably primarily be used against workers' organisations, as history has shown.
 7. We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers

and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price. Only union membership and pay rates can counter employers who seek to exploit migrant workers as cheap labour to undermine the gains of past struggles.

Socialist Fight is produced by the following Editorial Board:

Gerry Downing, Ray Rising, Charlie Walsh and Aggie McCallum.

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The Red Flags of Hope Still Fly on the Roof of the World

By Aggie McCallum

Women's Oppression

Socialist Fight Editorial Board member Aggie McCallum analyses the central role the struggle for women's liberation is playing in the revolution in Nepal

Nepal – a country where 70% of its people lived in dire poverty. 64% of its children suffered malnutrition. 65% of the land was owned by the rich while the masses of its population owned only 10%. Women were excluded from many jobs; not entitled to received inheritances; not allowed to own land; 60% were uneducated and the caste system was particularly cruel to the Dalit women.

All these conditions flourished in Nepal under the monarchy. Now after the revolution the king, who appeared on all accounts to ignore the suffering of his people, is travelling the countryside hoping to return to power. The ruling class, which never acknowledged their need to live off the backs of the poor, (although that is the historical case with every ruling class in every country on the planet), look to preserve their power and cry out for the return of the monarchy. Astonishingly under the monarchy 32,000 child laborers worked in stone quarries to help their families survive. And it gets worse as 27% – an estimated 2.6 million – children in Nepal worked as child laborers of which approximately one million of them work without pay and many work without rights, bonded to an employer for a set period of time. The age range of these children my research tells me, range from 6 years to 14 years. A quality education under the monarchy was available only to the elite ruling class.

The revolution

No other revolution in history has had women play such a key role. Of the thousands of fighters it is claimed that 40% were women. Young women enthusiastically committed their lives to the fight against oppression and to the ideals of the revolution. Many of them were captured and tortured and died for their belief in a better life and are among the many martyrs. These daring women were an unexpected resource for the Maoists leaders.

I include an extract from a well known interview in 2004 with the CPN Maoist leader Comrade Prachanda by a journalist Li Onesto from the Revolutionary Worker newspaper. Li Onesto was particularly interested in the role and development of the Maoist women. She asked Comrade Prachanda to talk about the problem in developing women leaders in a country where oppression of women had been deeply built into the economic and social relation.

He told her:-

'Before the Initiation, the woman question was not so seriously debated in our party. That was our weakness. And in our society, male domination, feudal relations have prevailed for a long time. In general terms we agreed, yeah, the woman question is important. As communists we know these things. But in a concrete sense, in a serious sense, I will say that before the Initiation we were not so serious on the woman question. And because we were not serious, therefore, many woman comrades were not at the forefront of the movement. There were some women sympathizers and some organizers, but there was not much effort to develop the women comrades.

Then right after the Initiation, I saw the sacrifice women were making in the main region, in the struggling zones – their militancy, their heroism, and their devotion. When I saw women masses come into the field, then we started to debate seriously the woman question.'

Comrade Prachanda went on to talk about the problems they confronted in getting women involved and developing their leadership. He said that they were beginning to discuss organizing collective childcare – and how to deal with issues such as lack of birth control and illiteracy among women.

The Maoists, once they recognized the need to empower women, lost no time in developing strategies for their liberation. In 2002 *Ireland's OWN* printed a piece on International Women's Day by journalist Li Onesto. She went deep into the guerrilla zones of the People's War and witnessed the extreme poverty. She witnessed women rising from nightmarish oppression and joining their men in the fight against a corrupt and oppressive regime. As she travelled through the guerrilla zones she saw revolutionary men doing tasks traditionally done by women. She saw People's Courts hear and address land disputes – land that had been stolen by corrupt politicians. The land was returned to the rightful owners – many were to widows and single women. She saw rapists and those involved in exploiting women in the sex trade brought to justice. (<http://irelandsown.net/womensd14.html>)

The current turmoil in Nepal threatens the hope of a better world. Will the lives sacrificed be in vain? Will the dream die? Forces for a return to the monarchy remain strong. Dirgha Raj Prasai, former Member of Parliament writes from Kathmandu...an article called '*Nepalese Maoists and Current Situation in Nepal*'. Without qualification he name-calls the leaders of



No other revolution in history has had women play such a key role. Of the thousands of fighters it is claimed that 40% were women.

the People's War...i.e. power mongers; corrupt; opportunists; killers...and so on. He calls for powers like the USA, European Union and others to sound against them. (Luckily I could find no evidence that Nepal has any significant oil-fields).

Constantly through his paper Prasai uses a belittling term when referring to elements related to the People's War.... The so-called People's movement. The so-called founders of the Republic Nepal. The so-called new Nepal – Federal Republic Nepal. The so-called 'Civilian Supremacy' (his inverted comas). The so-called big parties. The so-called leaders....and so it goes.

In his opinion the only democratic solution for Nepal is the return of constitutional monarchy – with strengthened parliamentary democracy. (In 1990 Nepal moved from a monarchy to constitutional monarchy after widespread unrest in the kingdom). As I read his words I couldn't help but wonder, other than off loading his anger, what he expected the name calling would achieve. The brave men and women who moved against the wealthy elite and the powerful ruling class and the monarchy, with little more than their passion and belief in a better world would undoubtedly ignore a voice tainted with hate.

Almost immediately the revolution became entwined with the fight against women's oppression. It has been inspiring people worldwide, to witness women rising from one of the most oppressed groups on the planet to fight for not only their personal freedom but for the freedom of their country and its future. Women leaders have emerged from the aftermath into the world spotlight and one of the most inspiring is Comrade Pavati. Her books '*The Question of Women's Leadership in the People's War in Nepal*' and '*People's War and Women's Liberation in Nepal*' allow significant insights into empowering the oppressed – particularly and mainly women. She also identifies obstacles remaining. Issues that need to be address and

challenged for the future progress of this liberation. Although I do not own copies of her books I have read snatches of them.

Many women from around the world are writing about the women of Nepal. Analysing the conflict, identifying previously unrecognized issues and seeking answers to what empowers and how to empower women. Reecha Upadhyay, a graduate of the New School University International Affairs Program writes:-

There is a need for nation states and the international community to effectively deal with issues women face during conflict times such as gender-based violence, rape as a tool of war, women's access to rule of law in post-conflict situation, and the feminization of war....these issues are extremely important for Nepal's future. Nepali women must not be placed within a homogeneous framework and should be examined within a diversity of identities and position as women from different castes face different forms of oppression and freedoms. She concludes:-.....the responsibility of the Nepali state lies in empowering its civil society to construct its own path of peace and justice and to end the

archaic feudalist and crony monarchy rule that even today continues to support structures of gender and caste oppression.

Maoists have seen firsthand the force that women can bring to a revolution...and they welcomed that force and benefited from it. However they were not expecting it...yet almost a century ago another great leader did identify the power of women.

On Wikipedia I note that Lenin was the first world leader to give equal status to women. Investigating further it comes into focus that Lenin had identified the status of women as a major issue in building a new world. Extract from a letter written from Afar, Zurich March 1917 by Lenin confirms this:-

If we do not draw women into public activity, into the militia, into political life; if we do not tear women away from the deadening atmosphere of household and kitchen; then it is impossible to secure real freedom, it is impossible even to build democracy, let alone socialism.

But the speech he wrote for the second anniversary of the Great October Revolution must

surely stir the hearts of all men and the hopes of all women:-

Down with the liars who are talking of freedom and equality for all, while there is an oppressed sex, while there are oppressor classes, while there is private ownership of capital, of shares, while there are the well-fed with their surplus of bread who keep the hungry in bondage. Not freedom for all, not equality for all, but a fight against the oppressors and exploiters, the abolition of every possibility of oppression and exploitation – that is our slogan.

Freedom and equality for the oppressed sex!

Freedom and equality for the workers, for the toiling peasants!

A fight against the oppressors, a fight against the capitalists, a fight against the profiteering kulaks!

That is our fighting slogan, that is our proletarian truth, the truth of the struggle against capital, the truth which we flung in the face of the world of capital with its honeyed, hypocritical pompous phrases about freedom and equality in general, about freedom and equality for all.

Declaration, from back page

Libya. In the hunt for "Gaddafi mercenaries" they seek to demoralise the work force in the country, preparing it for the super exploitation in a new era of extreme Imperialist plunder. The Libyan "rebels" are a bunch bourgeois turncoats from Gaddafi regime in favour of big business internationally.

Political groupings claiming to be Marxists who portray the popular uprisings in the Arab world as diverted "revolutions" are demagogues, who flatter and stupefy the masses while new pro-Imperialist bourgeois puppet governments are being stabilised. But the worst is when these groups in the name of supporting the Libyan masses in their struggle for democracy, combined with Imperialist war propaganda by the world media to cover up the CIA coup. Those who now refuse to establish a military front with Gaddafi externally and internally to defeat the interests of Imperialism, betray the struggle and the fight against global Imperialism and the genocidal state of Israel that massacres the Palestinians.

We denounce the main international revisionist currents that formally share the following positions:

1) characterise the existence of an "Arab revolution" or "democratic revolutions" in Africa and the Middle East

2) Support the pro-imperialist "rebels" in Libya These include the USFI (NPA-France), LIT (PSTU-Brazil), ITU (IzquierdaSocialista-Argentina), IMT (Socialist Appeal, Britain); CWI (Socialist Party Britain); IST (SWP, Britain). FT (PTS-Argentina); FLTI (LOI-DO Argentina); LSI (Workers Power-Britain)

It was the anti-working class, neoliberal policies of Gaddafi during the last decade that paved the way this reaction. Gaddafi has established new agreements with Imperialism, destroying the gains of

the process of nationalisation of the means of production and post-1969 energy resources. Gaddafi banned trade unions and strikes and made racist anti-immigrant agreements with Berlusconi, he has sponsored the election campaign of Sarkozy and privatized and made auctions with the energy resources of Libya. Thus, the caudillo of Tripoli has lost popularity with the Libyan and African population and fuelled the appetite of sectors of the native bourgeoisie to negotiate directly with Imperialism, freeing up Gaddafi clan. The masses can have no confidence in the anti-Imperialism of Gaddafi. Therefore we demand the arming of the whole Libyan people against Imperialism and the reactionary opposition. We demand the unconditional defence of Libya against Imperialism and its agents. We demand a military united front with Gaddafi against NATO and the royalist, CIA agent, "rebels" who are politically similar to the pro-Imperialist Loyalists of the north of Ireland, the Inkatha Freedom Party of South Africa or, more closely, the Contras of Nicaragua.

This was the revolutionary tactics of Lenin and Trotsky before the Kornilov uprising, Kerensky's former general who tried to carry out a coup in Russia in August 1917. The Bolsheviks called for a united front and military weapons to Kerensky demanded at the same time that Kerensky be blamed for paving the path for reaction, and thus prepared a social revolution. Similarly, the reaction to the responsibility of Gaddafi for the coup will drive the masses to combine the tasks of the anti-Imperialist struggle with the democratic and socialist to move toward the establishment of a workers and peasants government where the pan-Arabism of Gaddafi has stopped. The victory over the counterrevolutionary Imperialist military offensive would not only be a huge boost for the proletariat Libyan who could settle accounts with the warlord of Tripoli, but would also give a huge impetus to the struggle of workers in Tunisia,

Egypt, Bahrain, Ivory Coast, Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan against Imperialism and the native capitalists.

The first step towards this is to fight in our own countries against the Imperialist bourgeoisie and semi-colonial Britain, Brazil, South Africa. We advocate the defeat of our own governments, as allies against Imperialist recolonisation of the world proletariat. We support the full right of the Libyan masses to seize the multinational British, Brazilian and South African companies and of all capital in Libya to nationalise them without compensation under workers' control.

● **Defeat Imperialism, Fight for the sovereignty, unity and independence of Libya with the methods of permanent revolution!**

● **For a Military United Front with the Libyan army against pro-Imperialist INTC and against all groups sponsored by the CIA!**

● **Build Revolutionary Committees in all workplaces, colleges and regions against Imperialist intervention!**

● **For Constituent Assembly based on these revolutionary committees.**

● **For a Workers and Farmers Government!**

● **In defence of the right to establish trade unions and the right to strike!**

● **No immigration control, equal rights and conditions for all immigrant workers!**

● **Workers' Control of work places and oil fields, food subsidies and essential goods, minimum living wage, full employment, expropriation of all enterprises and Imperialist capitals!**

● **For strikes and occupations to prevent the movement of troops and munitions to attack Libya!**

● **For a Socialist Federation of North Africa and the Middle East**

Military United Front but no political support for Gaddafi against the assaults of Imperialism and its agents, the reactionary Benghazi rebels, Socialist Fight 18/3/2011

Libya Crisis

The world economic crisis has produced a string of uprisings in the Arab world beginning in Tunisia which has inspired the oppressed of the world. They were produced by the fightback of the international working class; the French strike waves, the Greek strikes, the British the Irish student fightback to mention a few. The Arab uprisings in turn have produced a powerful response from the US working class in Wisconsin and elsewhere to the massive onslaught of US finance capital. The latter may prove by far the most significant in the long run if it presages the re-awakening of that most powerful of all sleeping giants, the US working class. But the Arab events have produced the most dramatic results so far and have also posed the greatest test for Marxists.

Many self-proclaimed revolutionary socialists have failed this test on the question of Libya in particular. But their orientation to the events in Tunisia and Egypt, falling for Imperialist demagoguery about 'freedom' and 'democracy' and the 'democratic revolution' have prepared this failure, as well as the previous history of some in accommodating to Imperialism in the Balkans on the basis of 'humanitarian intervention'. But freedom and democracy for whom and to do what? In a class-dominated world there can be no such non-class slogans, international finance capital wants freedom and democracy smash the organisations of the metropolitan working class and to open up the economies of the semi-colonial world to its unfettered penetration, to reduce these countries to the state of Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and the Congo. The international working class must deny them this freedom and democracy if they are to survive and advance to world revolution.

In many cases this involves forming a military block, a Military United Front without political support, with the most brutal of dictators, Ahmadinejad of Iran and Gaddafi of Libya, who at least defy the dictates of international finance capital to some extent. We must emphasise that this cannot involve giving any political support to such regimes; we must not put our heads in the noose of the national bourgeoisie as Stalin did with the Kuomintang which led to the horrific massacre of the Shanghai Soviet in 1927. No 'victory to Gaddafi' slogans are permissible, just as Trotsky never said 'victory to Stalin'. At the same time it is an unpardonable dereliction of revolutionary duty by the so-called Trotskyist 'revolutionaries' that they accept the bona fides of the Libyan Interim Transitional National Council (ITNC), whose slogans are 'Freedom, Justice and Democracy'. The vast majority never question the politics of this Council and the few that

do, like Workers Power, do not allow these questions to make any difference to their support for these obviously counter-revolutionary scoundrels.

The method we will employ in this piece is that which Trotsky used in his defence of the USSR as a degenerate workers state. That is we will attempt to defend the gains of the 1969 revolution led by Muammar Gaddafi which deposed King Idris without defending the character of or means used by Gaddafi in doing so and only defending him in direct conflict with Imperialism and its agents and never against his own working class. In like manner Trotsky defended the gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution in the USSR against Imperialism and capitalist restoration without defending Stalin or the corrupt bureaucracy represented by Stalin. Of course the analogy is limited in that property relations were never overturned in Libya however the interests of world Imperialism were severely curtailed and continue to be so to this day, a fact that all our leftist 'rebel' supporters studiously ignore.

Not any type of revolution but a counter-revolution

We must emphasise at the outset that the uprising in Libya is not any type of revolution but a counter-revolution, with an Imperialist-backed and CIA sponsored leadership. It is a continuation of a whole series of reactionary attempts to restore the Monarchy and tribal privileges on behalf of US and western Imperialism which began soon after Gaddafi took power in 1969 and have continued sporadically ever since. The only flag flown by the rebels is that of the Imperialist-imposed monarchy of King Idris (1951-69). This uprising has become in fact the central stratagem of Imperialism to counter and defeat the great progressive uprising in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain in particular, all of which have a powerful working class at their base and therefore the inherent possibility of moving towards socialist revolution if a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership can emerge to lead on this on the political perspective of Trotsky's Permanent Revolution.

The left took the side of the rebels in the mistaken belief that this was a continuation of the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings. But our 'revolutionaries' (so dubbed by *The Guardian*, for instance, who see no irony in Imperialism backing 'revolutionaries') have accepted the backing of every Imperialist government in the world and every reactionary regime in the Gulf.



Sarkozy shakes hands with Mahmoud Jibril and Ali Al-Esawi, representatives of the unelected ITNC in Benghazi in Paris, March 10 where he recognised them as the legitimate government of Libya. The NPA and the USFI demand recognition from all the Imperialist powers for these counter-revolutionaries.

Their leftist supporters can draw no conclusion from how the balance of class forces internationally has developed. According to the Agence France Presse (March 7), *"The Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) demands that the UN Security Council take all necessary measures to protect civilians, including enforcing a no-fly zone over Libya"*.

France has recognised the rebels as the legitimate government of Libya and the Arab League has sided with them (against the opposition of Syria and Algeria), demanding Imperialist intervention. David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy have been to the forefront in demanding urgent Imperialist intervention. A meeting on March 2 in the British parliament of the Henry Jackson Society *"urged the Prime Minister to stand fast in his commitment to put a stop to the crimes of Colonel Gaddafi, including through the implementation of a no-fly zone and active assistance to Libyan opposition movements in conjunction with our allies"*. Stars of the meeting were that fearless champion of the oppressed and seeker after truth whom Israel asked to conduct the whitewash investigation into its murderous commando raid on the aid flotilla to Gaza, Nobel Peace Prize Winner Lord David Trimble, joined by such fellow fearless champions of the world revolution as Khaeri Aboushagor (UK Representative of the [CIA-sponsored] Libyan League for Human Rights) and Air Vice-Marshal Tony Mason, CB, CBE, DL, the former Air Secretary for the RAF.

As for the naïve notion that these 'masses' must be the same as the masses in Tunisia and Egypt have we forgotten about the deluded pro-Imperialist masses that brought about the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet revolution, the Orange revolution and all the other 'coloured' so-called revolutions (in reality counter-revolutions)

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

that Imperialism sponsored and the CIA facilitated in recent years? There is no indication whatsoever in Libya of any progressive political tension let alone conflict between the base and the leadership of the rebels, unlike in Egypt and Tunisia. But there are al Qaeda CIA backed opponents who are even more opposed to the organised working class. In Tunisia in particular the masses are pressing on with the revolution and succeeding in pushing aside more leaders from the old regime who have emerged hoping to stabilise their rule. Egypt will also succeed in deepening its revolution in like manner as with the Bahrainis, we are absolutely confident.

Trotsky was somewhat more sanguine about these 'masses':

"But the masses are by no means identical: there are revolutionary masses, there are passive masses, there are reactionary masses. The very same masses are at different times inspired by different moods and objectives. It is just for this reason that a centralized organization of the vanguard is indispensable. Only a party, wielding the authority it has won, is capable of overcoming the vacillation of the masses themselves."^[1]

In Libya we had a reactionary leadership who knew how to divert these masses against black workers first and then in favour of Imperialism.

According to David Rothscum, *"The main opposition group in Libya now is the National Front for the Salvation of Libya. This opposition group is being funded by Saudi Arabia, the CIA, and French Intelligence. This group unified itself with other opposition groups, to become the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition. It was this organization that called for the "Day of Rage" that plunged Libya into chaos on February 17 of this year."*^[2] Despite the fact that there was a huge and unexpected response to this call, no doubt inspired by the events in Tunisia and Egypt, we are not foolish enough to think that the CIA is capable of fostering that out of nothing. However there was never any suggestion that the reactionary leadership were under political threat from the risen masses. Indeed the targeting of the 'black mercenaries' as agents of Gaddafi and the reported execution of 100 of them was surely a move by this leadership to ensure that no opposition could emerge from the working class.

Al Qaeda cell in Libya

There are many reports on the involvement of an Al Qaeda cell in Libya and there are numerous sources testifying on their attempts to assassinate Gaddafi. According to Martin Bright, home affairs editor in *The Observer*, Sunday 10 November 2002, *"British intelligence paid large sums of money to an al-Qaeda cell in Libya in a doomed attempt to assassinate Colonel Gaddafi in 1996... The latest claims of MI6 involvement with Libya's fearsome Islamic Fighting Group, which is connected to one of bin Laden's trusted lieutenants, will be embarrassing to the Government, which described similar claims by renegade MI5 officer David Shayler as 'pure fantasy'... The Observer*



Professor Michel Chossudovsky: "the Central Intelligence Agency using Pakistan's ISI as a go-between played a key role in training the Mujahideen. In turn, the CIA-sponsored guerrilla training was integrated with the teachings of Islam. The madrasahs were set up by Wahabi fundamentalists financed out of Saudi Arabia"

can today reveal that the MI6 officers involved in the alleged plot were Richard Bartlett, who has previously only been known under the codename PT16 and had overall responsibility for the operation; and David Watson, codename PT16B. As Shayler's opposite number in MI6, Watson was responsible for running a Libyan agent, 'Tunworth', who was providing information from within the cell. According to Shayler, MI6 passed £100,000 to the al-Qaeda plotters."

Imperialism, in the shape of the CIA, is hedging its bets in Libya today. The ITNC is losing credibility and the fundamentalists are gaining it in the ranks of the rebels. According to Michel Chossudovsky, *"the Central Intelligence Agency using Pakistan's ISI as a go-between played a key role in training the Mujahideen. In turn, the CIA-sponsored guerrilla training was integrated with the teachings of Islam. The madrasahs were set up by Wahabi fundamentalists financed out of Saudi Arabia"* ^[3] There were a substantial number of Libyan Jihadists in Afghanistan in those years and when they returned to Libya as the Islamic Fighting Group they retained their CIA connections as Shayler and the Observer have proved. It is now being put to good use as the following extract from Stratfor, *Jihadist Opportunities in Libya* tells us:

"Outside Benghazi's courthouse, these multiple Islamist groups have proved assiduous in asserting their presence. The Muslim Brothers, Libya's oldest political party established by Egyptian émigrés fleeing Nasser's repression in the 1950s, appears to be the best organized. Hitherto an elitist group concentrated in Libyan academe, it is rapidly acquiring a grassroots reach through the mosques, a newly acquired forum the liberals lack. Scrapping their previous reformist agenda, the Brothers now preach revolution and an anti-Qaddafi jihad... Within days, the academics outside the courthouse were outnumbered by would-be mujahideen staging prayers "fi sabil Allah," in the path of God, for the fight against the colonel. "We control the street and the fighting at

the front," says Juma' Muhammad, one of hundreds of former Abu Salim inmates helping to rally the crowds behind the Islamists. "We're with the people; the Council is not." In open-air prayers and graffiti, they repetitively denounce Qaddafi -- not least because of his bushy curls -- as an unbeliever, a Mossad agent and a Jew. Another Abu Salim inmate notes that two rebel fighters killed in the first battle for the oil port of Ra's Lanouf were Libyan veterans of the Afghan jihad, as is a 41 year-old rebel commander."^[4]

A new Nasser, Muammar Gaddafi

In 1969 a new Nasser, Muammar Gaddafi, emerged in Libya. In 1951 before oil was discovered in Libya (1958) it was officially the poorest country in the world, after the devastation wrought in it by genocidal Italian colonialism – up to 30% of the population slaughtered in the decade of the 1920s and then another terrible devastation in WWII. When Gaddafi took power in 1969 he set about a massive redistribution of the oil wealth.^[6] And in order to do so he had to prevent the big multi-nationals siphoning all that wealth. Indeed he was the prime moving force behind the 1973 OPEC embargo which secured such a massive transfer of wealth to the oil producers from the US, Europe and Japan. But only Iraq and Libya used their oil wealth for the benefit of their own people, the Saudis, the Shah of Iran and the Gulf States re-invested in the West to assist them out of their crisis. Iraq suffered its dismal fate because of that and now the Imperialists hope it is the turn of Libya, egged on by our bogus revolutionaries.

Wikipedia reports on the 1969 movement was:

"The Free Officers Movement, which claimed credit for carrying out the coup, was headed by a twelve-member directorate that designated itself the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). This body constituted the Libyan government after the coup. In its initial proclamation on September 1, the RCC declared the country to be a free and sovereign state called the Libyan Arab Republic, which would proceed "in the path of freedom, unity, and social justice, guaranteeing the right of equality to its citizens, and opening before them the doors of honourable work." The rule of the Turks and Italians and the "reactionary" regime just overthrown were characterized as belonging to "dark ages," from which the Libyan people were called to move forward as "free brothers" to a new age of prosperity, equality, and honour."^[7]

Let us set out just how far Gaddafi honoured these pledges and what he did that outraged, and continues to outrage, world Imperialism so much. We can guarantee they are not outraged at how he deals with his working class opponents, just how he deals with his pro-Imperialist ones. Our leftists should be able to distinguish these two now. These extracts are from *LIBYA, a country study* by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, edited by Helen Chapin Metz. We can scarcely accuse such a source of a pro-Gaddafi bias:

"In December (1970) the Libyan government suddenly nationalized the holdings of British Petroleum in Libya... In 1973 the Libyan government announced the nationalization of a controlling interest in all other petroleum companies operating in the country. This step gave Libya control of about 60 percent of its domestic oil production by early 1974, a figure that subsequently rose to 70 percent."^[8]

"A property law was passed that forbade ownership of more than one private dwelling, and Libyan workers took control of a large number of companies, turning them into state-run enterprises. Retail and wholesale trading operations were replaced by state-owned "people's supermarkets", where Libyans in theory could purchase whatever they needed at low prices... While measures such as these undoubtedly benefited poorer Libyans, they created resentment and opposition among the newly dispossessed. The latter joined those already alienated, some of whom had begun to leave the country. By 1982 perhaps 50,000 to 100,000 Libyans had gone abroad; because many of the emigrants were among the enterprising and better educated Libyans, they represented a significant loss of managerial and technical expertise."

"Internal opposition came from elements of the middle class who opposed Gaddafi's economic reforms and from students and intellectuals who criticized his ideology...The most serious challenges came from the armed forces, especially the officers' corps, and from the RCC."

Reactionary opposition to this redistribution of wealth

So having seen the history of reactionary opposition to this redistribution of wealth (in contrast with Nigeria, for instance) we can now see the source of the revolt not as confused workers fighting unemployment and oppression (and there are many of these, of course) but as disgruntled capitalists and tribal leaders represented by reactionary army officers who were either expropriated or denied a far greater cut of the national cake that they felt their tribal and social status entitled them to. And they hope to get that as agents of Imperialism, they have made their willingness to do this very plain. "The provisional government has promised that whoever assists them in this will be rewarded in any post Gaddafi regime, a very dangerous offer to the Imperialist plunderers from Europe who still have blood on their hands from Iraq and Afghanistan (as well as the historical record of slaughter across the world during the days of colonial empire)" Indeed in Libya "the lack of a revolutionary working class is a central factor why Libya was different to the other countries" admits Simon Hardy on 10/03/2011 in Workers Power document *A revolutionary civil war*.

In fact our 'revolutionaries' have turned viciously on the working class and are killing black African workers wherever they get the opportunity. But note too how these appalling racist attacks by the rebels on the working class turns out to be

all the fault of Gaddafi and the perpetrators are almost innocent of their own crimes. The Christian Science Monitor headlined *How Qaddafi helped fuel fury toward Africans in Libya*, March 6, http://news.yahoo.com/s/csm/20110306/wl_csm/367708

"Accra, Ghana – As Libya erupts into civil war, migrant labourers from sub-Saharan Africa are coming under increasing threat of mob violence due to reports that African mercenaries are helping Muammar Qaddafi brutally quash a nation-wide uprising against his 41-year rule... thousands (of migrant workers) remain too scared to try to make their way out of the country for fear of being beaten or killed by rebel mobs flush with animosity for anyone with dark skin and African features. Many experts – and African migrant workers themselves – say the animosity stems from anti-African racism found throughout the Arab world. But some say the anger has been made much worse by Mr. Qaddafi's moves to buy the loyalty of black Libyans from the south of the country as well as his decades-long efforts to build Africa-wide patronage networks at great cost to the country's Arab majority."

Twisted Imperialist propaganda

One could not get better in the way of twisted Imperialist propaganda than that highlighted above, so typical of the Goebbels style stuff we are getting on behalf of the rebels now! So reports of African mercenaries helping Gaddafi cause outbreaks of mob violence by our 'revolutionaries' "flush with animosity for anyone with dark skin and African features". And the "anti-African racism found throughout the Arab world" is excused because Gaddafi is just as bad because, "his decades-long efforts to build Africa-wide patronage networks at great cost to the country's Arab majority". Like the 'British jobs for British workers' reactionary campaign in Britain it is not possible for the working class to advance their cause, let alone make revolution, under such reactionary ideological domination.

On March 14 *Somaliland News* published the following article on these events, *LIBYA: Rebels execute black immigrants while forces kidnap others*:

"In east Libya, African hunt began as towns and cities began fall under the control of Libyan rebels, mobs and gangs. They started to detain, insult, rape and even executing black immigrants, students and refugees. In the past two weeks, more than 100 Africans from various Sub-Sahara states are believed to have been killed by Libyan rebels and their supporters."

"According to Somali refugees in Libya, at least five Somalis from Somaliland and Somalia were executed in Tripoli and Benghazi by anti-Gaddafi mobs. Dozens of refugees and immigrants work-



Gamal Abdel Nasser and Nikita Khrushchev (right), May 1964. Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal in 1955, which led to the Suez war against Egypt by Britain, France and Israel in 1956, but the US did not support them, seeking to outmanoeuvre its rivals. Nasser fell back on the Soviets.

ers from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana, Nigeria, Chad, Mali and Niger have been killed, some of them were led into the desert and stabbed to death. Black Libyan men receiving medical care in hospitals in Benghazi were reportedly abducted by armed rebels. They are part of more than 200 African immigrants held in secret locations by the rebels."^[9]

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

One wonders what kind of a revolution is possible not only without but by oppressing the working class in 2011? But perhaps this civil war, helped into being no doubt by the events in Tunisia and Egypt, is in reality one of those 'democratic revolutions' which bestows stable parliamentary democracy on third world countries too poor to afford it up to now? The communist programme for revolution, even in advanced metropolitan countries, is called 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' not any type of bourgeois democracy at all, simply workers democracy that suppresses the capitalists and removes their democratic rights.

We are presuming that all readers who have made some study of Marxism know that the lack of parliamentary democracy is a symptom of great economic and political crisis in a metropolitan country and poverty and oppression imposed by world Imperialism in the semi-colonial world. They must not swallow the lie that it is as a result of corrupt and evil dictators who will not apply the basic humanitarian values of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights to its people. Even the 'perfect' parliamentary democratic system is only a cover for the dicta-

torship of the bourgeoisie. They will have read their Marx and know that a regime of rights is pie in the sky; rights are a product of competition for scarce resources and no good to those without the effective economic means to exercise them. We might point to India in contradiction but we can recall the Dalit rat catchers there and the explanation of the father of the family who had absolutely no money at all and was so oppressed and discriminated against that he said in a memorable TV programme, "I have to catch fifteen rats a day to feed my family".^[10] But he had far more rights than the citizen of Libya with the highest standard of living in Africa, comparable to the west in many ways, so his plight and that of his family should not merit our concern.

This is how Marx makes the distinction between political emancipation, liberal rights and liberties, and human emancipation as explained by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

"Liberal rights and ideas of justice are premised on the idea that each of us needs protection from other human beings. Therefore liberal rights are rights of separation, designed to protect us from such perceived threats. Freedom on such a view is freedom from interference. What this view overlooks is the possibility — for Marx, the fact — that real freedom is to be found positively in our relations with other people. It is to be found in human community, not in isolation. So insisting on a regime of rights encourages us to view each other in ways which undermine the possibility of the real freedom we may find in human emancipation."^[11]

Thus the ignoring of the real conditions of the masses in Libya and the championing of idealised 'freedoms' and 'rights' sets them up for Imperialist super-exploitation. We understand that the entire culture of the working class is in opposition to this path which fails to distinguish workers rights from bourgeois rights and workers democracy from bourgeois democracy. John Rawls's 2001 book, *Justice as Fairness* is the modern day ideological attack on Marx's great historic argument against this fraud of perpetrated on us by the liberal bourgeoisie and swallowed whole by so many anti-Marxist 'socialists'.

Imperialism did not bring freedom to the citizens of the Congo 4,000 kilometres to the south of Libya. Their drive for freedom from Imperialist exploitation was expertly blocked by the CIA assassination of their leader Patrice Lumumba in 1961.^[12] This country is now devastated by a murderous civil war sponsored by rival Imperialist powers the better to extract its mineral wealth, diamonds, gold and particularly its coltan (80% of the world's supply), so necessary in the micro circuits of mobile phones and similar indispensable gadgets. The 5.5 million dead, the greatest casualties since WWII, has been almost totally ignored in the west, not because there is no mineral wealth, but because they have unrestricted access to it whilst the central (client) government is unable to police its own disintegrated 'failed' state because of the never-ending war. We know who to support in the Ivory Coast,

not the pro-Imperialist 'democratically elected' President Alassane Ouattara, who has gained the assistance of world Imperialism in banning the export of cocoa to deny his rival the opportunity to raise funds but the hold-out President Laurent Gbagbo who has nationalised the Ivory Coast's cocoa industry to rally the anti-Imperialist masses. Truly in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Congo and the Ivory Coast Imperialism hath wrought its masterpieces. Perhaps they hope to surpass that in Libya with all their 'freedom', 'justice' and 'democracy'.

'Democratic revolution'

There is no such thing as a 'democratic revolution'. That was always the term for a bourgeois revolution. And the bourgeoisie definitely are not revolutionary. The failure of the 'Springtime of Peoples' in Europe in 1848 showed that but our modern-day Imperialist hacks still dub these uprisings the 'Arab Spring' to invoke the illusions and hope we will forget the reality of cowardly capitulation to feudal reaction in 1848 and Imperialism today. The bourgeoisie cannot lead a revolution so there can be no such revolution now. And it is equally foolish to demand that the working class leads this bourgeois democratic revolution, as the Weekly Worker does. That is the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry which Lenin rejected so decisively in the April Theses in 1917 and which Trotsky replaced by the theory of Permanent Revolution.

Petty bourgeois nationalists and Stalinists can claim to be leading such anti-Imperialist revolutions and can be supported up to a point as long as they fight Imperialism. When they side with Imperialism, like in the whole series of counter-revolutions around the fall of the Berlin Wall, in former Yugoslavia or in Libya and Iran now and simply demand 'democracy' they are demanding the right of international finance capital to penetrate those economies without let or hindrance from troublesome opponents who may well be bloody dictator themselves but who nonetheless defend some aspects of the living standards and welfare of the masses. They are not 'our' (Imperialism's) bloody dictators so they must be ousted.

Sincere Revolutionaries

What do we say to the sincere revolutionaries who want to overthrow Gaddafi and who are opposed to the reactionary agenda of their own leadership? There must be many such among the rebels. Surely it is permissible to make an alliance 'with the devil or his grandmother' (Trotsky) to achieve a progressive goal like the overthrow of Gaddafi? And when it comes to personal survival against Gaddafi's onslaught is not any action justified in order to fight another day? We can only say to such comrades what Trotsky said to the workers and oppressed of Brazil in 1938:

"In Brazil there now reigns a semi fascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with ha-



Eleanor Roosevelt launches the UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights in 1948: Even the 'perfect' parliamentary democratic system is only a cover for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. A regime of rights is pie in the sky; rights are a product of competition for scarce resources and no good to those without the effective economic means to exercise them.

tred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally—in this case I will be on the side of "fascist" Brazil against "democratic" Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British Imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers!"^[13]

Bonapartist regimes: Imperialism's 'Bad Boy' returns to the fold

However these Bonapartist regimes (that is the Marxist term for them), as in the USSR, also suppressed the working class, either making trade unions illegal, or, more frequently incorporating them into the state institutions. Strikes were and mainly are still illegal, in countries like Libya, Egypt, Tunisia etc. Strikers face long prison terms. If our Bonapartist were blocking the penetration of Imperialist finance capital into their countries to a certain extent they were even more ruthlessly blocking the opposition to global Imperialism from developing to socialist and world revolution.

With the fall of the USSR in 1992 Libya was left dangerously exposed to the onslaught of neo-liberal world Imperialism, now enormously

strengthened by that victory. Libya was framed for the Lockerbie bombing of 1988 (Paul Foot sat through the whole of Megrahi's trial in the Netherlands in 2001 and condemned the prosecution's case was farcical). In fact the bombing was carried out on the instructions of Iran via a Syrian group in retaliation for the downing of the civilian Iran Air Flight 655 in the Persian Gulf in July 1987 with the loss of 290 civilian lives by an unrepentant US navy. It did not suit the US to implicate Syria and Iran when it needed their support in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. So Gaddafi was forced to accept the blame and pay compensation. He destroyed such the "weapons of mass destruction" as he possessed and restored diplomatic relations with the United States in 2006. He then embarked on a massive neo-liberal attack on Libyan workers, at the behest of Imperialist companies, privatising, sacking and decimating the state sector, up till then the outlet for all university graduated in Libya. Unemployment reached 21% by 2009, according to official statistics.[14] He signed an agreement with the EU to stop the flow of immigrant workers to Europe, and carried out that agreement with considerably brutality.

This is the appalling report of *The Times Live* on Gaddafi's visit to Italy in August 2010:

Gaddafi seeks EU cash to prevent 'black Europe'

"Gaddafi's visit to mark the second anniversary of a friendship treaty with former coloniser Italy had already stumbled into controversy after he said Europe should convert to Islam. Speaking at a ceremony late on Monday, standing next to Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Gaddafi said his plan to "put an end to" illegal immigration was backed by Italy, but Berlusconi remained silent. Backing Libya's request for cash would be in the interests of Europe which otherwise "tomorrow, with the advance of millions of immigrants, could become (another) Africa," Gaddafi affirmed. Libya "is the entry door for unwanted immigration" which should be "stopped at the Libyan borders," he went on.

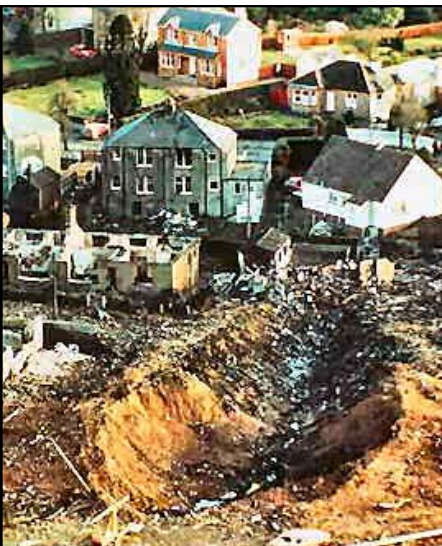
"Tomorrow Europe might no longer be European and even black as there are millions (of Africans) who want to come in," Gaddafi argued, describing the migratory movements as "something very dangerous". "We don't know what will happen, what will be the reaction of the white and Christian Europeans faced with this influx of starving and ignorant Africans," the Libyan firebrand said, adding: "We don't know if Europe will remain an advanced and united continent or if it will be destroyed as happened with the barbarian invasions." [15]

Therefore we can lay a good deal of the responsibility for the popularity of the uprising on Gaddafi. By his banning of the trade unions, making strikes illegal, by his fostering racism, by his neo-liberal policies he created the conditions for the Imperialist inspired and CIA sponsored leadership of the rebels to gain control. But all of this does not excuse our so-called leftists' capitulation to Imperialism.

Programme to Emulate the Method of Trotsky

As mentioned we seek to emulate the Trotsky's method in defence of the USSR. We can see that he defended all the remaining gains of the Russian Revolution whilst urging a political revolution to depose the corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy.

"But, fortunately, among the surviving conquests of the October revolution are the nationalized industry and the collectivized Soviet economy. Upon this foundation Workers' Soviets can build a new and happier society. This foundation cannot be surrendered by us to the world bourgeoisie under any conditions. It is the duty of revolutionists to defend tooth and nail every position gained by the working class, whether it involves democratic rights, wage scales, or so colossal a conquest of mankind as the nationalization of the means of production and planned economy. Those who are incapable of defending conquests



Libya was framed for the Lockerbie bombing of 1988 (Paul Foot sat through the whole of Megrahi's trial in the Netherlands in 2001 and condemned the prosecution's case was farcical). In fact the bombing was carried out on the instructions of Iran via a Syrian group in retaliation for the downing of the civilian Iran Air Flight 655

already gained can never fight for new ones. Against the Imperialist foe we will defend the USSR with all our might. However, the conquests of the October revolution will serve the people only if they prove themselves capable of dealing with the Stalinist bureaucracy, as in their day they dealt with the Tsarist bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.

...Advanced workers! Be the first to rally to the banner of Marx and Lenin which is now the banner of the Fourth International! Learn how to create, in the conditions of Stalinist illegality, tightly fused, reliable revolutionary circles! Establish contacts between these circles! Learn how to establish contacts through loyal and reliable people, especially the sailors, with your revolutionary co-thinkers in bourgeois lands! It is

difficult, but it can be done.

Down With Cain Stalin and his Camarilla!

Down With the Rapacious Bureaucracy!

Long Live the Soviet Union, the Fortress of the Toilers!

Long Live the World Socialist Revolution! [16]

In this spirit we put forward the following programme in defence Libya and the remaining gains of the 1969 revolution against the attacks of world Imperialism and Gaddafi's betrayals of those initial progressive goals:

For a Military United Front with the Libyan army against the pro-Imperialist ITNC and against all CIA sponsored groups!

For Revolutionary Committees in all workplaces, colleges and regions, linked up nationally!

For a national Constituent Assembly based on these Revolutionary Committees.

For a workers' and peasants government!

For free and independent trade unions!

No immigration controls; equal rights and conditions for all immigrant workers!

For workers control of workplaces and the oilfields; for substantial subsidies in food and essential goods, decent wage and conditions for all workers and jobs for all; expropriate all Imperialist assets!

For a Socialist Federation of North Africa and the Middle East, full support for the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain!

Victory to the strikers in Wisconsin and all workers in the metropolitan countries!

For permanent revolution and the victory of the socialist revolution!

Build the Trotskyist world party of Socialist Revolution!

Endnotes

[1] Leon Trotsky, *Moralists and Sycophants Against Marxism, Peddlers of Indulgences and Their Socialist Allies, or the Cuckoo in a Strange Nest.* (June 1939) <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1939/06/moral.htm>

[2] <http://thetruthiswhere.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/world-cheers-as-the-cia-plunges-libya-into-chaos/>

[3] Al Qaeda and the "War on Terrorism", by Michel Chossudovsky, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=7718>

[4] STRATFOR, Jihadist Opportunities in Libya, <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20110223-ijihadist-opportunities-libya>

[5] <http://www.scribd.com/doc/19117853/Minority-Imperialism-New>.

[6] Human Development Report, The Human Development Index - going beyond income, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/LBY.html>.

"Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's HDI is 0.755, which gives the country a rank of 53 out of 169 countries with comparable data. The Human Development Index

of Arab States as a region increased from 0.398 in 1980 to 0.590 today, placing Libyan Arab Jamahiriya above the regional average.

[7] History of Libya under Gaddafi, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Libya_under_Gaddafi

[8] <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-8145.html>.

[9] <http://somalilandpress.com/libya-rebels-execute-black-immigrants-while-forces-kidnap-others-20586>

[10] "Rat meat is a healthy alternative to rice and grains," Vijay Prakash of the Bihar state welfare department told a press conference in Patna, "and should be eaten by one and all. Rat and chicken have equal food values, not only in protein but throughout the entire spectrum of nutrition. I haven't tried it myself, but my mother has and she finds it delicious. In fact, whoever has eaten rat says it is more spongy and better than even chicken meat." The welfare secretary's words were greeted with dismay by listeners. "Indian culture is based on vegetarianism," said Chef P.

Soundararajan of the Mahindra resort chain. "Our culture and customs are based on not harming any living beings. And besides rats are dirty creatures that only the very poor would eat."

[11] <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/marx/>

[12] "In a Leopoldville apartment, I heard a CIA man, who had had too much to drink, describe with satisfaction exactly how and where the newly independent country's first Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, had been killed a few months earlier. He assumed that any American, even a visiting student like me, would share his relief at the assassination of a man the United States government considered a dangerous leftist troublemaker." Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.

[13] Leon Trotsky, Anti-Imperialist Struggle is Key to Liberation, An Interview with Mateo Fossa, (September 1938) <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/09/liberation.htm>.

[13] Leon Trotsky, Anti-Imperialist Struggle is Key to Liberation, An Interview with Mateo Fossa, (September 1938) <http://www.marxists.org/>

archive/trotsky/1938/09/liberation.htm.

[14] Business News Print, Libya's Unemployment at 20.7 Percent. 2009-03-09, Libya's unemployment rate is 20.74 percent according to recent census figures released recently by the authorities. That would give Libya the highest jobless rate in the five-country Maghreb region of 80 million people, where the proportions of workers without jobs in the four other states range from around 9 to 15 percent, according to official figures.

"Libyans with jobs numbered 1.3 million, which represent 79.26 percent of the whole workforce. This means that the jobless rate in Libya is around 20.74 percent," Oea newspaper reported as quoted by Reuters. <http://www.libyaonline.com/business/details.php?id=8161>

[15] Times Live, Aug 31, 2010 By Sapa-AFP <http://www.timeslive.co.za/africa/article631492.ece/Gaddafi-seeks-EU-cash-to-prevent-black-Europe>

[16] Leon Trotsky, Letter to the Workers of the USSR, May 1940, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1940/05/workers.htm>

The soft left's foolish illusions in Benghazi's rebels

By Ret Marut 3 April 2011

Political Polemics

Comment by on Lenin's Tomb Blog:

"Even if the USA now departs the scene, they have stuck around - and bombed - long enough to undermine the revolution; to drain it of, as you call it, emancipatory content and turn it into a civil war. Gaddafi now has his anti-Imperialist cred boosted enough to politically undermine opposition in areas under his control; the rebels are pushing aside the popular militias in favour of the professional forces led by former Gaddafi military leaders. The popular, political impetus has been frozen in aspic, as it were, pushed aside by a conflict within the ruling class of Libya."

The whole thread of this argument is based on two false premises:

1. That there is something called a 'democratic revolution' or 'Arab revolution' spreading in this whole region and every country's conflicts are basically national manifestations of this same pan-Arab phenomenon.
2. That the Libyan and maybe Syrian "revolutions" had an "emancipatory content" from a 'popular militia' with a 'popular political impetus' from the beginning which may or may not now be gone in Libya because of the bombing but whose revival we must fervently wish and work towards.

The character of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt

Let us first look at the character of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt.

These revolutions were dominated from the beginning by the middle classes and by opportunist politicians, to a far greater extent in Egypt than in Tunisia. They sucked in big numbers of unemployed youth, who became the political playthings of these opportunists. They had an agenda; to use the radicalisation of the masses, the explosion of their suppressed outrage, for their own political ends; to allow a more 'democratic' and therefore better-functioning capitalist society, to allow more successful penetration of global finance capital from the US and EU the better to exploit the working class.

There were two barriers to this ambition, the existing regimes and the working class. The regimes have shown their flexibility on instructions from Obama after initial fierce resistance so the problem now remaining is how to manoeuvre themselves into power without awaking the sleeping giant of the working class, particularly the Egyptian working class, and thus subvert the revolutionary potential of the movement.

One phenomenon has been remarkable by its relative suppression in these 'revolutions' (so far not progressed beyond pre-revolutionary uprisings) which has rendered them ideologically flaccid from the outset; there has been no mass burnings of the US and Israeli flags and almost no portraits of Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein (we have heard of just one) carried by the masses, not even in Cairo. There was therefore no consistent solidarity expressed with the oppressed Palestinian masses and they did not develop into a rush to the border to liberate the besieged inhabitants of Gaza as every leftist and revolutionary had hoped would be the first task of any revolution in Egypt. In fact one of the first actions

of the new Egyptian regime was to reaffirm its co-oppression of the Gaza strip and its total collaboration with the Israeli Zionist regime in this.

Of vital assistance in preventing this deepening of the revolution was the Muslim Brotherhood, who were prepared to sponsor such flag burning in angry demonstrations in the past in response to Zionist outrages, Lebanon, the bombing of Gaza, etc. But to sponsor such events now in the midst of this revolutionary upsurge would be to unleash the full force of the revolution; hence the caution and conservatism of the Brotherhood and the constant warnings from the Imperialist mass media of the dangers of an Islamic fundamentalist takeover of the revolution. The fear of Cairo's fifteen million who could annihilate the entire capitalist order in hours was palpable.

But in that chaos the only force who could take command to carry the revolution forwards was Egypt's powerful organised working class, in constant militant struggle for some five years now. And when they stirred in mass strike action Mubarak went and the regime almost immediately adapted its profile and introduced some reforms, the better to survive. But neither did the working class struggles make their connections with the Palestinians and anti-Imperialism in general. The long dominance of the pro-regime trade union bureaucratic leadership had inculcated a syndicalist, workerist culture which ignored the Palestinians, in the name of opposition to Islamic fundamentalism, and the newly emerging independent trade unions have not proved capable of overcoming this.

Assisting the bureaucracy in this separation of militant trade unionism and revolutionary anti-Zionism and anti-Imperialism was the fact that

this latter was practically monopolised by the Brotherhood and there were a big proportion of working women in the cotton industry. These did not want the ideological subordination of women that the Brotherhood represented. It is therefore vital to fight for the working class movement in the shape of the new independent trade union federation, the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, champion the cause of women's oppression and equally the cause of the oppressed Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. [1] But the US AFL-CIO and the International Labor Organization (ILO) are working overtime to ensure that does not happen.

Powerful anti-Imperialist sentiments

The collaboration between the secular pro-Imperialist Mohamed Mustafa ElBaradei and what he represented and the Muslim Brotherhood has so far succeeded in suppressing these powerful anti-Imperialist sentiments, which have emerged at times showing they are deeply held amongst the working class and oppressed in Egypt and Tunisia and throughout the region. Their dominance would be heralded by far more flag burning and the portraits of Nasser and chanting of "down with US Imperialism, down with Zionism, long live the memory of Nasser".

Then the Permanent Revolution would be emerging in full flight, then revolutionary Trotskyism would be vindicated and the intervention of a revolutionary socialist Trotskyist party would be facilitated by events. But the ideological grip of the collaboration of the pro-Imperialist secularists and the pro-Imperialist Islamists (whose anti-Imperialism has now shown itself to be purely opportunist, as distinct from that of the masses) has proved strong enough so far to blunt the revolutionary trust of the Egyptian masses and that of the rest of the region.

And that was the great fear of Imperialism and their stooges in the region; the ideologues of Imperialism constantly propagated against this by warning of the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism (which they deny entirely in Libya). The entry onto the stage of the multi-million oppressed masses had of necessity to contain Islamic prejudices along with anti-Imperialism, to reject the whole movement because of this fear was to reject the revolution; that was how its entry had to be announced.

The Muslim masses would naturally look to the organised working class as leaders because they constitute a big part of their numbers and are the only really revolutionary force that can take the revolution to its conclusion. Therefore they would be directed in the direction of revolutionary Trotskyism and Permanent Revolution. That is only in a global struggle against the dominance of world Imperialism and international finance capital can this revolution succeed. That is lodged in the consciousness of the masses; they realise their global dependence on world trade and finance capital. That is why 'democratic revolutions' and 'the Arab Revolution' are fraudulent conceptions, alien to Trotskyism. They are all versions of socialism in a single country, of a

revolution in distinct and separated stages, which will herald ultimately the death of the revolutionary upsurge if this counter-revolutionary theory is not overcome.

This fact that anti-Imperialism did not ideologically dominate was a weakness that was to prove debilitating as events unfolded in Libya. Because if anti-Imperialism, which had shown itself at times by support for the Palestinian masses and anti-Zionism, was not an indispensable part of this revolutionary upsurge how bad could pro-Imperialism be, provided we accepted this was just a first stage; a 'democratic revolution'? Not so bad at all the Imperialist mass media was able to shout, this really was a 'democratic revolution' against all the bad local despots, close friends or inconsistent foes of Imperialist interests alike. As for that tyrant Gaddafi (foremost opponent of Zionism in the whole region), forget about anti-Imperialism, what we need is "freedom, justice and democracy" and once we get that we can think about the bigger picture later. Gaddafi is "Imperialism's strongman in the region", one former leftist confidently assured us just as they were about to bomb him. One wonders what they do to their enemies if this is what they do to their friends.

That is how the Imperialist mass media propagated a separate and distinct stage in this revolution. Outrageously, in the name of the 'wider revolution in the region' we were asked by so-called orthodox Trotskyists to swallow all of this and not make the connection with the worldwide socialist revolution that Lenin made with the April Theses and Trotsky and genuine Trotskyists have made ever since via the theory of Permanent Revolution. Instead we must forget about our whole history of the fight for world revolution and the plight of the oppressed Palestinians and all the others and accept the humanitarian claptrap of world Imperialism's mass media as the genuine article. We must concentrate instead on building, not socialism in a single country but democratic capitalism in a single country or at best in a single region via the 'democratic' or 'Arab revolution' as our first stage.

The ideological collapse from the standpoint of orthodox Trotskyism of those self professed Trotskyists who took this line could not be greater. They completely ignore the fight for ideological leadership of the masses, have accepted outright reactionaries as leading a 'democratic revolution' far better than the much maligned Michel Pablo, Ernest Mandel or Gerry Healy ever did. They, after all, chose leftist opponents of Stalinism and Imperialism in the beginning as adequate substitutes for revolutionary Trotskyism to carry forward the objectively unfolding world revolution, at least until the late 70s when Healy picked Arafat and Saddam Hussein and he, the USFI and others backed the fundamentalist Ayatollah Khomeini, who propagated anti-Imperialism as the source of their



A public manifestation of anti-Zionism in the revolution: The Israeli flag on Mubarak's forehead links him with Zionism.

power. Our current jokers are telling us that outright, self-declared reactionary pro-Imperialists are leading this so-called revolution and implicitly that the movement is so powerful that it can do away with the need for conscious revolutionary leadership entirely and be represented adequately by its open opponents. A more foolish political scenario is impossible to imagine. Some even warn us not to put any trust in them (but, of course, do not fight to overthrow them, we cannot change horses in mid-stream, they are 'democrats' after all, are they not?). These former leftists are attempting to perpetrate wholesale fraud on the world working class.

Workers Power

The SWP and the SP are to the left of Workers Power on Libya, both being unwavering in opposing military intervention. Workers Power gave us this analysis by Pater Main on 19/3/2011:

"Victory to the Libyan Revolution!"

"The rebellion against Gaddafi's dictatorship deserves unconditional support and that is not altered by the UN decision. Those who oppose powerful states have the right to get hold of arms wherever they can and to take advantage of any weaknesses in their oppressors' situation. That remains true even where the weaknesses are the result of Imperialist action. If, under cover of the no-fly zone, Libyan insurgents and revolutionaries can retake positions, undermine the morale or the loyalty of Gaddafi's troops and even advance on the capital, Tripoli, that is a step forward for the Libyan revolution and should be welcomed."[2]

It is would certainly be welcomed by world Imperialism and every reactionary state in the Gulf. But what of the politics of the leadership and where it was going politically and what about those black workers? This has escaped Workers Power entirely; another advocate of the anti-Trotskyist stagiest notion of the 'democratic revolution' and the 'Arab revolution'. No worries the 'Libyan revolution' (more of the same) is proceeding swimmingly, or would be if our plans, and those of the Benghazi reactionaries and world Imperialism, were not being thwarted by that 'dictator' Gaddafi and his brainwashed followers. Their former comrades in Permanent Revolution have no doubts about supporting the

reactionary rebels: "Libya: Imperialists move to control uprising (10 March 2011)

Before this Simon Hardy had acknowledged a few problems in:

"Libya - a revolutionary civil war" [3]

"The lack of a revolutionary working class is a central factor why Libya was different to the other countries." Might be connected with those murders of black workers, Simon. And anyway we had a very adequate substitute; those CIA-sponsored reactionaries will do the job just as well. "As the fighting rages in Libya sinister forces in the western world gather" Indeed they do, Simon, those CIA agents plotting with their Imperialist sponsored clients in Benghazi we suppose?

Well no. Simon, in a statement that puts Workers Power well to the right of the SWP and the Socialist party and close to the pro-imperialists of the AWL, blazing the path for the United Front of Obama, Cameron and Sarkozy demanded his own imperialist United Front on 26/3: "The overriding question in Libya today is not "Who are the imperialists attacking?" It is "How can the Libyan Revolution succeed in overthrowing Gaddafi's regime?" A united front with Gaddafi in this situation would be literally impossible... Within Libya, we oppose the calls on the imperialists to intervene but that does not prevent the forces of the democratic revolution taking advantage of the impact of the imperialists' intervention against Gaddafi. It would be bizarre, indeed, to refuse to continue the campaign against Gaddafi's repressive apparatus because it had been weakened by imperialist action!"

In line with this outlook Simon regurgitates Imperialists/rebel lying. Where is the footage of aircraft bombing civilians, where are the photographs? Gaddafi is 'murdering his own people' and was about to massacre the entire population of Benghazi, we must believe and so he must be bombed to save these innocent civilians. Presumably his supporters are 'guilty civilians' who don't matter a lot. What really happened is an armed uprising by Imperialist sponsored gangs attacked the government of the most egalitarian and anti-Imperialist country in the Africa and the Middle East and Workers Power supported it on the foolish notion that it was a fight for 'democracy'. If you were really interested you could have googled. The following piece by Diana Johnson *Why are They Making War on Libya* might have moderated your strident pro-Imperialism:

"False Pretext Number One: "to protect civilians".

"The falsity of this pretext is obvious, first of all, because the UN Resolution authorizing military action "to protect civilians" was drawn up by France – whose objective was clearly regime change – and its Western allies. Had the real concern of the UN Security Council been to "protect innocent lives" it would have, could have, should have sent a strong neutral observer mission to find out what was really happening in Libya. There was no proof of rebel claims that the Qaddafi regime was slaughtering civilians. Had there been visible proof of such atrocities, we can

be sure that they would have been shown regularly on prime time television. We have seen no such proof. A UN fact-finding mission could have very rapidly set the record straight, and the Security Council could then have acted on the basis of factual information rather than of claims by rebels seeking international aid for their cause." [4]

You see comrades by 'democracy' the Imperialists mean the right of finance capital to penetrate that economy at will and exploit its people and rob its natural resources. If we had a real successful revolution in any or all of these countries it would not be called a 'democratic revolution' at all, but the dictatorship of the proletariat. And it would have to do many of the things that that old dictator Gaddafi has done in the past to ensure survival. That is it would have to execute the counter-revolutionaries, the CIA agents and their unfortunate deluded and confused followers just like the Bolsheviks. With the working class in the saddle it would be the majority class and would not suppress workers' organisations as he has done, but ensconce them as the ruling class.

And it would be the victim of vicious lying Imperialist propaganda, just as the early Soviets were, just as Stalin's regime was and China, Cuba, North Korea and Libya are today. We would have to sort out the truth from the lies, to defend the gains of the revolutions whilst rejecting those leaderships who were merely protecting them as the source of their own privileges. And there would be plenty soft left groups like Workers Power to swallow whole the lies and regurgitate them for us with a leftist, 'Trotskyist' gloss.

The Workers Power stuff is an incredible mass of self contradictory nonsense, just like their line on the Balkans in the 1990s. The 'revolutionaries' who are led by reactionaries are fighting the reactionaries who are led by worse reactionaries, it seems. There is no revolutionary working class; nevertheless this revolution is unfolding in a continuation of the struggles for 'democracy' and the 'democratic revolution' in Egypt and Tunisia, where the working class is playing a vital role. There is no mention that Gaddafi was a bulwark against Imperialist finance capital and Zionism just some puerile tut-tutting about the pro-Imperialism of the leaders these 'revolutionaries' unfortunately have got right now.

This is how Workers Power managed to support the KLA on Kosovo, and ended up with Camp Bondsteel [5] and a US colony in the heart of Europe led by CIA sponsored gangsters with close ties to the Italian and Albanian mafia who made their money harvesting the body parts of kidnapped opponents and friends in a clinic in Albania. [6] This is where support for 'democracy' led: "Florin Krasniqi, a Brooklyn-based businessman who raised large amounts of money for the KLA and shipped high-powered rifles from the United States to the KLA, said he has personally complained to senior State Department officials about corruption and crime at the top levels of government in Kosovo but he said he is routinely dismissed. "You can be corrupted as hell," Krasniqi said, "but as long as you keep the stability



Simon Hardy, WP's Tariq Ali: "The overriding question in Libya today is not "Who are the imperialists attacking?" It is "How can the Libyan Revolution succeed in overthrowing Gaddafi's regime?" Trotsky: "The victory of the Negus, however, would mean a mighty blow not only at Italian imperialism but at imperialism as a whole, and would lend a powerful impulsion to the rebellious forces of the oppressed peoples. One must really be completely blind not to see this."

you are a friend." Krasniqi, who was recently elected to the Kosovo parliament, described his former KLA comrade Thaci as "the head of the mafia here". [7]

Gaddafi is a bourgeois nationalist who is clearly one of the most substantial opponents of Imperialism left, albeit in the interests of local, corrupt capitalists like his own family. The following story puts this in context: "Singer Nelly Furtado has said that she will give away \$1 million (£615,000) she was paid to perform for the family of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. The star said on Twitter she had given a private 45-minute show for Gaddafi's "clan" in 2007 at a hotel in Italy." So no political support for Gaddafi and his regime but unquestionably a Military United Front with them against both Imperialism and their local agents, the rebels, who are clearly now one fighting force, one army with one agreed goal; in return for installing them as their puppet government Imperialist finance capital gets Libya.

Lastly let us quash the argument that this is really not about Imperialism seizing the oil wealth of Libya and the 'democracy' of finance capital. This extract is from the *What's Left* blog by Stephen Gowans. It makes clear things are more complicated than the 'evil dictator' Gaddafi line:

"The Heritage Foundation provides a guide to how accommodating countries are to the profit-making interests of US corporations and investors. Every year the foundation publishes an *Index of Economic Freedom*, which ranks countries on how open they are to exports and foreign investment, how low their taxes are, how committed they are to protecting property rights, and so on; in short, how strongly a country favours foreign businesses and investors over its own people. Significantly, governments that are perennially targets of US government regime change efforts rank at or near the bottom of the index. This year's list identifies the following 10 countries as the least economically free (i.e., least accommodating to foreign businesses), in order, from worst to slightly better:

North Korea, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Eritrea, Venezuela, Myanmar, Libya, Democratic Republic of

Congo, Iran, Timor-Leste

Seven of the bottom 10 (North Korea, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Venezuela, Myanmar, Libya and Iran) are the targets of open regime change operations by the United States and its allies, carried out ostensibly because the targeted countries are not protecting human rights, threaten regional stability, or in the case of Libya, because the government is said to be attacking its own people. That these countries happen to be considered the least accommodating of foreign business profit-making points to an ulterior motive on the part of Western governments to bring about regime change, and to use human rights and humanitarian rhetoric as a cover for pursuing the economic interests of Western corporate and investor elites." [8]

The USFI, Fourth International

John McAnulty of the Irish Fourth International group Socialist Democracy has repudiated his reactionary comrade Gilbert Achcar as a "Cruise Missile socialist" and many others have picked up on this very significant move to the right of the USFI. [9] The British section, Socialist Resistance has an article on March 6, 2011, *Support the Libyan revolution! Gaddafi out!* by 'Terry':

"Gaddafi takes control of the situation again, with thousands of deaths, the process (of the revolution) will be slowed down, contained or even blocked. If Gaddafi is overthrown, the whole movement will as a result be stimulated and amplified. For this reason, all the ruling classes, all the governments, all the reactionary regimes of the Arab world are more or less supporting the Libyan dictatorship."

Obviously she has missed the newspapers and takes no heed of the ITN/Sky news telling us who is supporting who in this conflict, she has totally mistaking the intentions of Imperialism. Now the Italian Sinistra Critica (Critical Left), USFI section. It slogans make clear its pro-Imperialist policies. We (i.e. Imperialism) must get rid of Gaddafi:

"Gaddafi out! No to Imperialist military intervention!, No to the military intervention! No to the use of Italian bases for the military intervention!, We demand that the regime's armed forces end repression and aggression!, Gaddafi must go and the people must freely decide their own future as in Egypt and Tunisia!" [10]

Whilst the whole article makes the totally unwarranted assumption that the rebels are genuine revolutionaries, despite their leaders, the last is just a sick joke. A "free election" for a bourgeois parliament like we have in Iran and Afghanistan? Anti-Imperialist forces will naturally be prohibited from standing in this capitalist democracy which is must be our goal now. This is an explicit repudiation of Trotskyism.

The French Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (NPA) have called for UN recognition of the reactionary rebels as the government of Libya, in sync with Sarkozy:

"Support for the Libyan people against the dictatorship. The Libyan population which rose against Gaddafi faces today an outburst of fatal violence.

The dictator would like to drown the revolt in a blood bath. Our full and total solidarity goes to the Libyan people who should be given the means to defend themselves, the weapons which it needs to drive out the dictator, to conquer freedom and democracy."

This is just pathetic nonsense from out 'left turning' NPA, as Workers Power so badly character-



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (left) and Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci now resigned He is "the head of the mafia here" says Florin Krasniqi.

ised this group. The usual crap about 'freedom and democracy' as if the author had never turned a page of Trotsky or Lenin.

Statement of the Liaison Committee

In the Statement of the Liaison committee of the CWG (NZ) and HWRS (USA) Imperialism: Hands off Libya! The US and EU are planning a military intervention to protect their oil interests! (from the rebels??) we get the following:

"Libya is on a knife edge poised between victorious workers revolution that can defeat both the dictatorship and Imperialism, and turn the Arab Revolution into socialist revolution in the whole region, and the counter-revolution that will halt, reverse and defeat the Arab Revolution and prevent the formation of a United Socialist States of North Africa and the Middle East. The outcome will depend on whether or not the international working class can stop the US and EU Imperialists from invading Libya and imposing a new compliant national leadership. The aim of the Transitional National Council is to steer Libya during the interim period that will come after its complete liberation and the destruction of Gaddafi's oppressive regime. It will guide the country to free elections and the establishment of a constitution for Libya." [11]

This is a total capitulation to Imperialist propaganda, particularly the ridiculous notion that not only was there something called "the Arab Revolution" which was above class, but that it moved forward of its own objective volition irrespective of the leadership that it had and that the counter-revolution was represented only by Gaddafi and not world Imperialism. And why would they have to invade to impose "a new compliant national leadership" when they already supposedly had one? And the notion that the Imperialist-sponsored and CIA directed and funded ITNC was going to "guide the country to free elections and the establishment of a constitution for Libya" is

just too silly for words; an idealistic and unachievable aspiration for a bourgeois republic and a two stage revolution.

They repeat as fact the obvious lies of the rebels: *"Such was the ferocity of this repression, employing the Special Forces and foreign mercenaries, that its failure to intimidate and defeat the unemployed youth rebellion forced the military to split. The defection of the Generals who had long been cronies of Gaddafi was forced only by the rebellion of the rank and file soldiers who refused to fire on the masses and were in turn executed by the Gaddafi forces."*

Where is the evidence for these lurid claims? There is none because it is a complete lie.

"We call on the Arab revolution that is under way in Egypt and Tunisia, and is beginning to rise up in Algeria and in the Middle East, to immediately send material and military aid to the liberated part of Libya to strengthen the revolution against the regime's extreme repression, to complete the revolution and stop mass murder of workers on an even greater scale."

No need for that, Imperialism is on the case on your behalf.

"We call on the workers in the Imperialist countries to take immediate steps to oppose the military intervention in whatever form in Libya. Imperialism is the No 1 enemy of the Libyan people. Gaddafi is a creature of Imperialism. His 1969 revolution had the guise of a national socialist liberation but in reality it installed a national bourgeois crony capitalist regime to serve Imperialism."

And now the biggest lie:

"Imperialism is the No 1 enemy of the Libyan people. Gaddafi is a creature of Imperialism."

The Liaison Committee cannot see the contradictions between Imperialism and bourgeois nationalist regimes, the Leninist distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations, and can imagine no good reason apart from subverting the 'revolution' for them to sponsor the rebels. This is indeed becoming a very tangled web. The truth is that what the Liaison Committee correctly labels a "national bourgeois crony capitalist regime" is at severe odds with Imperialism because there is a very great deal left of the Libyan revolution of 1969 worth defending and the masses now increasingly rallying to Gaddafi realise this. And the ranks of the rebels realise this also, they do not know why they are fighting, which is why they appear so cowardly and half-hearted in their struggle. Installing puppets for Imperialism is not a strongly motivating ideal so they run away from the first sound of gunfire.

And now the slander directed at Socialist Fight and our fellow anti-Imperialist revolutionaries (There isn't any other kind!):

"All those who on the left who gave support to Gaddafi in the name of Communism or Trotskyism and were responsible for disarming the Libyan people in their long resistance to Gaddafi must be exposed and condemned. They share a large part of the blame for the failure to build a

revolutionary workers party in Libya and the others states of the region to play a leading role in the Arab Revolution."

It is true that Gerry Healy and the WRP did capitulate to the Arab bourgeoisie and that the present-day WRP continues that line. But Healy's most vociferous opponent before the 1985 split was Sean Matgamna of the AWL. He supported Imperialism against the same Arab bourgeoisie and he has continued the same line ever since.

Although we totally denounced Vanessa Redgrave's attempts to bring the AWL to court for this I and another Central Committee member in the post-split WRP refused an invite from Matgamna to speak at a public meeting denouncing Redgrave because we would not be associated then or now with an attack on Gaddafi from the right. The nonsense about 'disarming the Libyan people' from those who are now the spokespeople for Imperialism is just total nonsense as is the stuff about the "Arab Revolution".

The Alliance for Workers Liberty

Now we come to the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL). With some trepidation we opened the page and our worst expectations were met. Here it is:

"But there is real hope and excitement in the free cities. It may be that a potential No Fly Zone could tip the balance in the favour of the rebels — in that sense we should not take a stand against such a policy, even if we would not critically support it with all that that implies.

Let us look towards the elimination of the Qaddafi regime and its crimes. The vengeance of history is more powerful than the vengeance of the most powerful General Secretary, as Trotsky wrote in similar circumstances. Solidarity with the revenge of the Libyan working class!" [12]

Martyn has no illusions in what the leadership of the 'rebels' will do to the workers, nevertheless he has picked his (pro-Imperialist naturally) side so he is for bombing by Imperialist forces — won't take a stand against it — but will not critically endorse it either. And he has the cheek to invoke Trotsky's name for this anti-working class bile!

Here is the AWL in the shape of Clive Bradley on 20 March, 2011

"But the rebel forces in Benghazi greeted the UN decision with jubilation. Benghazi is a city where Qaddafi has, in the past, conducted the mass public execution of oppositionists. They knew what they could expect if Qaddafi triumphed. And it seemed likely that Qaddafi was on the verge of defeating the revolution, or at least inflicting terrible slaughter. To oppose — that is, demonstrate against, and make a serious effort to prevent — the limited military action against Qaddafi, is to tell the rebels in Benghazi "you're on your own." What socialist would want to send out such a message? Only one not deservng the name. But what issue of principle should make us demonstrate against the one thing which might prevent untold slaughter, prevent Qaddafi's immediate bloody victory, and therefore a crushing defeat for the wave of revolutions?...instead,

some socialists have responded to this crisis by putting their hostility to America above the lives of the Libyan rebels. And this is a shameful disgrace." [13]

Every sentence and phrase of this is dripping in pro-Imperialist chauvinist bigotry. We will leave the reader to decide who is a shameful disgrace in here — Bradley is objecting to the pacifist Stop the War picket against Imperialist intervention!

The Socialist Party and the SWP

The Socialist Party too capitulated and sided with the rebels, as we would expect but it made some correct demands in The Socialist, 3 March 2011. If these demands, for committees to represent the workers, for independent trade unions, for a constituent assembly, etc. were equally pitched at Gaddafi's supporters and called for a united front against the rebel leaders then they would form part of a programme for the Permanent Revolution. As it is they are simply a cover for Imperialism.

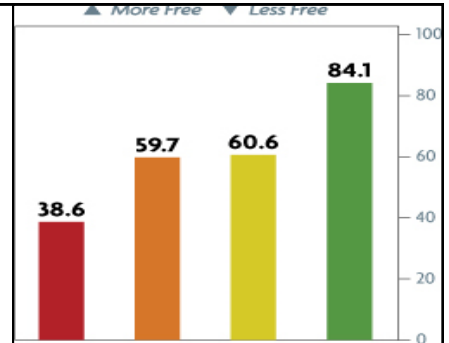
Although they back the rebels, they do the more leftist thing of also opposing Imperialist intervention. A survey of the left will show that only the AWL supports this, Workers Power is ambiguous, saying the rebels are right to take advantage of the bombing that they demanded but which Workers Power oppose. Logically the AWL are right, then. If the 'revolution' is to succeed it can only do so with the assistance of 'the international community' so let us go with that. Hold on, treachery say our leftists, the Imperialists intervened only to subvert the revolution not help it. Nonsense, the AWL might truthfully say, these people made their politics clear from the outset, they never wavered in their pro-Imperialism and we have never wavered in our support of them, we are the real social Imperialist, you are only our shamefaced imitators.

But the SP spot another problem.

"Gaddafi can correctly portray the ITNC as being in the lap of the western powers who would like to exploit Libya more. At the same time even western journalists are reporting that many in western Libya fear what would happen if Gaddafi was overthrown; would Libya tend to break up like Somalia, would fundamentalism arise, what would happen to the large social advances in health, education, etc made over the last 40 years? Admiral James Stavridis's testimony to the US Senate that rebel forces in Libya show "flickers" of possible al-Qa'ida presence could help make Gaddafi seem a 'lesser evil' to an alliance of the western powers and fundamentalists." [14]

There is something to defend in Libya which these rebels might be endangering, they imply. In fact they are immediately threatening all the gains of the 1969 revolution. But what revolution is the SP defending? They manage to fudge this because they are political enough to spot some problems coming up and do not want to be stranded on the wrong side completely.

We get capitulation to Imperialist propaganda from the SWP; opposed to Imperialist interven-



Libya's Economic Freedom Score outrages the right-wing Heritage Foundation, but our soft lefts regurgitate war propaganda that there is nothing left to defend.

tion except in its proxy form of the ITNC: in online Issue: 2243, 19 March 2011 they castigated Obama for his lack of will in tackling Gaddafi: "If the US's motive was to see the revolution succeed, it would release Gaddafi's frozen assets to the interim government. But "No-fly zone" is no way to free Libya". However "People are prepared to die for this revolution and they are fighting for their freedom, not for the Imperialist control of Libya." Sometimes "people" are conned by their leaders, we would suggest. But, in memory of Paul Foot, they acknowledged that sometimes Imperialism too can be bad: "He also agreed to pay compensation to the families affected by the Lockerbie bombing, and accepted the false conviction of Abdelbaset al-Megrahi—the Libyan who was framed for the bombing." [15]

The Permanent Revolution Collective, CoReP

One group of comrades, the CoReP, with whom we have had fraternal relations, asked this of us: "We agree to support Gaddafi against Imperialist armies. But we cannot agree to support any bourgeois despot coming from the army against his own people's upsurge, as Gerry did in name of SF well before Imperialist intervention. If there was a real revolution led by Nasser or Gaddafi, who needs the permanent revolution strategy and a revolutionary workers party there?"

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

These 'revolutionaries' (some still follow The Guardian in designating them thus) called in Imperialist bombing of their own country and people, have made the country's oil resources available to Imperialism in return for puppet

status, just as their ideologue whose flag they wave, King Idris, did up to 1969. Neither did they enquire why these 'revolutionaries' felt it necessary to slaughter all those black workers. We would suggest it was because their leaders knew their racism and wished to encourage it by talk of 'black mercenaries' to ensure that the working class could not influence events in any way. Of course politically the working class could not have any independent existence when one group of workers were killing another, minority group. The working class was thereby ideologically and politically defeated at the outset of this 'revolution'.

These comrades think that there is still a huge political difference between the Imperialist war planes that bomb Gaddafi's army and his civilian supporters and the rebels. But they are obviously part of the same war machine and are trying to win by following up the bombing as Imperialism's foot soldiers, unfortunately for Sarkozy et al not very good ones.

The CoReP statement complains that *"The threat of interference of the Western armies" ... has "politically strengthened Gaddafi."* That might be because he is fighting Imperialism and the rebels are supporting it. It makes a number of democratic demands, seemingly unaware that some of these have already been realised and under immediate threat from the Imperialist-sponsored rebels, whom they are supporting. On the emancipation of women for instance, Libya has the most progressive laws on women's rights in the whole of the region. And we have seen above the real relationship between finance capital and Libya, it is severely inhibited and it wants its 'freedom and democracy' and it is confident that the rebels will give it to them.

The CoReP declares for a socialist revolution. But supporting the forces of Imperialism in the form of the rebels can only strengthen the hand of reaction. The CoReP concludes:

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

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

And the CPGB

But the CPGB are absolutely awful. Long time leader Eddie Ford in Weekly Worker 858 March 24 says the following:

"Imperialism out, down with the Gaddafi regime. Western intervention in Libya - and the rest of the Arab world - aims to subvert popular power and the Arab revolution. Unlike scabs such as the

WRP, communists wholeheartedly backed the revolutionary democratic upsurge - the revolution - in Libya against the rotten regime, just as we did in the entire Arab world. We want to see all these regimes swept away by popular power, with the working class securing hegemony over the demonstrations, protests and uprisings."

Again that non-class and above class democratic revolution – "the revolution" which can be going in any direction, with any allies fighting for any cause as long as it is in pursuit of "extreme democracy". It allows us to forget about the 'democracy' of the black workers lynched by these 'democrats' because they see what these reactionaries real intentions are; to become a puppet government on the basis of betraying their own national interests and selling out the remaining gains of the 1969 bourgeois revolution. And the real 'democracy' contested here is the right of finance capital to exploit the Libyan economy and rob its oil without all those 'undemocratic' restrictions imposed on it by that 'evil dictator' the 'madman' Gaddafi.

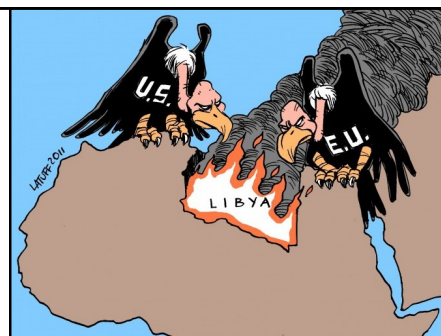
The real scabs in this conflict are not the WRP and those Maoists and pan-Africanists who capitulate to the Bonapartist regime of Gaddafi but all those who call for the defeat of Gaddafi by the rebels and world Imperialism like the AWL. Those who equivocate on this by ignoring the political character of the rebels in the name of 'the democratic revolution' are at best Imperialism's unwitting stooges. Those who take a neutral stance between the rebels and Gaddafi despite correctly analysing the character of the rebels are also unable to fight Imperialism by siding with and relating to the oppressed masses by correct transitional demands.

They were opposed by the African Union, the only group of countries against the bombing of Libya and for the very good reasons. [16]

This desperate anti-Imperialist stance by Africa as shown by the squirming of Jean Ping, chairman of the Standing Commission of the AU in this BBC hardtalk video. How is he to defend Africans from the wrath of world Imperialism and appease Imperialism at the same time? Africa is humiliated by world Imperialism yet again. [17]

The 'harder' left: the WRP, the Sparts, IG, IBT and SEP

The stance of the WRP in calling for victory to Gaddafi has raised the hackles of many leftists. But almost all these attacks are from the right. A leftist criticism would point out that the line does not counterpose the interests of the working class in Libya to this leftist bourgeois nationalist, who has moved to the right in recent years. They do make these criticisms but there is no political clarity; victory to Gaddafi certainly implies that he is capable of lasting victory and puts faith in him that he will not sell out. Supposing he does, would it not have been better to urge the Libyan workers to defend the gains made since 1969 with their own methods of struggle and organs of power against Gaddafi, although in temporary alliance?



Unlike in Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt, there is no discernable leftist voice in this 'revolution'.

They say:

"It was a major mistake for Gadaffi not to place himself and Libya in the front line of those supporting the revolutions that began in Tunisia and spread to Egypt. In fact, he opposed them when he should have shown solidarity with them, and then urged the Libyan masses to say what changes they wanted to see in Libya, as part of the struggle for a socialist North Africa" (The News Line: Editorial, 23 February)

But Gaddafi opposed these revolutions because he is a bourgeois nationalist; asking him to urge "the Libyan masses to say what changes they wanted to see in Libya, as part of the struggle for a socialist North Africa" is to suppose he is some type of socialist or a blunted instrument of the socialist revolution, a very 'Pabloite' error. Politically Gaddafi is the same as Chiang Kai Shek and Trotsky's attacks on Stalin before the 1927 massacre of the Shanghai soviet equally apply to the WRP today.

The statement by the Revolutionary Marxist League, Greek section of the WRP ICFI still has many old Healyisms in it (e.g. references to the above class 'Libyan Revolution', Russia a workers state, etc) but it is still much better in terms of the independence of the working class:

"No to the Imperialist interventions in Libya! Shut down the Souda Bay military base!, Forward with the permanent revolution in the Arab countries! For the victory of the socialist revolution!"

And it does not call for victory to Gaddafi. Instead it correctly charges Gaddafi with some responsibility for the uprising (although the quote does indicate disappointed illusions):

"This uprising is due to the reactionary pro-Imperialism policies of the Gadaffi regimes in recent years. This regime allowed the Imperialist oil companies back into Libya and imposed privatisations; this brought riches to those sections of the ruling class doing business with the Imperialist companies, while it drove workers and youth to unemployment and poverty. Gadaffi's other big mistake was his support for Ben Ali and Mubarak. But the working masses in Libya must defend the gains and achievements of the 1969 Revolution against Imperialism and the oil companies."

Whilst correctly calling:

"To fight in a United Revolutionary Front against the leaders of the reactionary uprising and at the same time they must campaign for the political

power of a workers' and small peasants' revolutionary alliance" (The News Line: March 2011).

The Statement by the ICL (Sperts) on 20 March, "Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!" calls for the defence of Libya against Imperialist attack, is correct on who the 'rebels' are and then shows the old Shachtmanite weakness on Imperialism we saw in its refusal to call for the defeat of the British expeditionary force in the Malvinas war to take just one example. Here is the quote:

"Prior to the current attack, the conflict in Libya had taken the form of a low-intensity civil war, heavily overlaid by tribal and regional divisions, between the Tripoli-centred government of strongman Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi and Imperialist-backed opposition forces concentrated in the country's eastern areas. Workers



Black workers flee the racist rebel lynch mobs but; "The world's most Imperial-dependent, ill-disciplined and whining "liberation movement" is still blaming black "mercenaries" and soldiers from Chad for its failures in the field – that is, when they aren't crying about not having a 24/7 umbrella of full-spectrum American dominance of the skies." Lynch Law and Summary Executions in Rebel-Held Libya By Glen Ford

Vanguard No. 976 (18 March), newspaper of the U.S. section of the ICL, noted that **"Marxists presently have no side in this conflict."**

In their statement of 1 April the International Bolshevik Tendency takes the same line as the Sperts and the internationalist Group:

"Unlike in Egypt and Tunisia, where the protests were mass popular expressions of opposition to brutal oppression, the conflict between Qaddafi loyalists and the rebels headquartered in Benghazi amounted to a small-scale civil war between qualitatively equivalent capitalist factions. Marxists take no side in such conflicts, although we of course oppose the killing of civilians by the combatants. The entry of the NATO powers, however, transformed this conflict into a struggle between a neo-colonial country and several Imperialist powers (and their indigenous proxies)."[18]

But how could these two forces be termed, "qualitatively equivalent capitalist factions", the one, Gaddafi's government, was still defending the gains of the 1969 revolution, albeit in their own interests and by their own often reactionary methods. And how was the rebel's political character and the attitude of revolutionaries to that

suddenly transformed from neutrality to opposition by the dropping of NATO bombs? This is a cover for the initial flinch.

In Libya North's SEP advocates taking a permanent neutral stance between Gaddafi and the rebels because neither of these can represent the working class. Whilst correctly opposing the Imperialist bombing he refuses to make a Military United Front without political support with Gaddafi even now (which all the Spart family correctly do at that late stage) but he agrees with them that there is initially 'no side' in the conflict with the direct agents of Imperialism, the reactionary 'rebels/revolutionaries' of Benghazi.

This leaves him to the right of the Sperts and takes a very wrong policy to its logical conclusion which chimes in with the interests of imperialism by a 'purist' reductionism. This dismisses the Leninist distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations and leaves the theory of Permanent Revolution as a flaccid propaganda weapon with no application to the real world.

The rebels were prepared to give the Imperialists everything in return for their patronage. Had they won in that first push Imperialism would have gained a very cheap victory. Failure to make a bloc without political support to Gaddafi at this stage meant that the 'Spart family' and the SEP still had illusions in the rebels and were victims of the 'humanitarian' propaganda war. The Imperialists and their lackeys throughout the world recognised their friends at once and chose sides without hesitation. The WRP is left Pabloite on Gaddafi, the Sperts, IG, and IBT initially choose no side; they took a third campist position. The SEP is third campist even now. But the soft left in general are merely Imperialist stooges but with a wide range of political differences.

Endnotes

- [1] Conference officially forms new – and growing – independent union federation, 03/03/2011, <http://www.egyptworkersolidarity.org/?p=309>.
- [2] Peter Main, Victory to the Libyan Revolution! <http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/victory-libyan-revolution,19/03/2011>.
- [3] Simon Hardy: Libya - a revolutionary civil war <http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/libya-revolutionary-civil-war,10/3/2001>.
- [4] "Why are They Making War on Libya? By Diana Johnstone. <http://www.globalresearch>
- [5] Wikipedia, Camp Bondsteel, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Bondsteel
- [6] Wikipedia, Organ theft in Kosovo, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organ_theft_in_Kosovo.
- [7] Kosovo's Mafia: How the US and allies ignore allegations of organized crime at the highest levels of a new democracy <http://nuckinfutsnyc.blogspot.com/2011/03/kosovos-mafia-how-us-and-allies-ignore.html>.
- [8] What's Left blog By Stephen Gowans. Looking Out for Western Business and Investor Rights: Why the West Approves Military Interventions to Topple One Arab Government and Prop Up Another, <http://gowans.wordpress.com> March 28 2011
- [9] John McAnulty Socialist Democracy <http://www.socialistdemocracy.org/RecentArticles/>

RecentTheTestOfLibya.html

[10] Sinistra Critica (Critical Left), Gaddafi out! No to Imperialist military intervention! <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2042> 20th March 2011.

[11] Class Struggle 93, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/51948850/Class-Struggle-93>

[12] Martyn Hudson Libyan rebels in retreat, <http://www.workersliberty.org/story/2011/03/16/libyan-rebels-retreat,16> March, 2011

[13] Libya: no illusions in West but "anti-intervention" opposition is abandoning rebels <http://www.workersliberty.org>

[14] Paul Foot Lockerbie - The flight from Justice, Private Eye special report, http://thepiratebay.org/torrent/5063495/Lockerbie_-_The_flight_from_Justice__Private_Eye_special_report

[15] The Socialist newspaper, Defend the Libyan revolution, No to Imperialist intervention <http://www.socialistparty.org.uk30> March 2011.

[16] The AU consists of 53 African states (without Morocco) formed in 1999 in Sirte on the initiative of Gaddafi. He had repeatedly proclaimed his "vision for a strong and united Africa."

[17] African Union 'ignored' over Libya crisis <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/hardtalk/9436093.stm>. 25 March 2011.

[18] statement of the International Bolshevik Tendency http://bolshevik.org/leaflets/ibt_2011-04-01_libya.htm

Statement on the Omagh bomb

Sinn Fein's leader Gerry Adams wrote on 11/4/2011: "There are political groupings which present themselves as republican. These include Republican Sinn Féin, the 32 County Sovereignty Movement, the Republican Network for Unity and Éirígí. These are all entirely legitimate political groupings... But since the murder of Ronan Kerr they have all put their heads down. I am appealing to them all to call for an end to these armed actions. They need to make it clear that these actions have to stop."

Socialist Fight deplores attempt by Adams to slander his political opponents and states: "We are completely politically opposed to act of individual terrorism and are absolutely certain that this is not the way to mobilise the mass of the nationalist community or to defeat Loyalist reaction or to convince Protestant workers of the need for a united Ireland.

However we do not "condemn" this, liberation fighters have the right to chose their own methods of struggle. Their aims are a united Ireland, expulsion of the blood-soaked British army of occupation from Ireland and the abolition of the border created by Britain in 1921. Page 11 sets the record right on the crimes of the British Empire as does the horrific barbarism of British colonialism during the Kenyan liberation struggle by the Mau Mau, now going through the courts, also outlined on p. 11. Whilst fighting for a Socialist United Ireland ourselves, we recognise these aims as entirely progressive and urge the 'armed struggle' republicans to change their methods and mobilise their communities to fight politically for their aims alongside those fighting the SF, the DUP and the ConDem cuts."

Lars T Lih, Kautsky, Lenin and the CPGB

By Ray Rising

Marxist Theory

I have speculated and considered over a period, the last year or so, on the reason why the CPGB/Weekly Worker has given so much time and space to the investigative method and the, not so modestly invoked, revelatory discoveries of Lars T Lih.

Firstly, he suggested last year, that it was Karl Kautsky, who personally made it 'apparent' to Lenin the inspiration for his 'April Theses', by way of Kautsky's article in 'Die Neue Zeit', writing as he did at the time on the 1917 February rising in Russia.

Now we learn from this same professor that there were no essential differences between Lenin's newly considered orientation, and that of Kamenev, Stalin, Zinoviev and other leading members of the central committee of the Bolshevik Party throughout the months between March and October, save for 'misinterpretation' of the words *vlast*, *kontrol* and compromise. Is there really a 'science' in this work of Lih? If so, what science can truthfully dissect and analyse Lenin's conception of old-Bolshevism from this, purported re-direction as outlined in the April Theses, itself a seminal document and precursor to the Bolshevik/Soviets taking power in October 1917?

The concluding five points Lih made in this latest 'revelation', excludes the very mention of the proletariat as 'being' at the very heart of the 'old and new' Bolshevism. Is this accidental? I would suggest that Lih has taken even Kautsky's view of 1917 Russia even further back, to feudal times with his emphasis on the peasantry. How preposterous.

The author is billed as a Canadian historian/academic, presumably he does not consider himself a Marxist, or if he does so he assuages any self definition thus so to, again presumably, give to his work an air of 'academic neutrality' as distinct from any accusation of 'dogmatism'. There have been many earlier minds similarly 'tuned in' on the ideological driving-force as to Lenin's directives and urgings during those months of 1917 - and they all testify to the class positions of these 'viewers' regarding the social and political overturn of October.

The simple fact is this, that without the totally new economic, social and political conditions revealed in the Imperialist war beginning in 1914, old-Europe, like old-Bolshevism, could not have been the stage for October's revolution. Professor Lih, in his latest article, brings prominently before us his often repeated views of Kamenev, as the archetypical old-Bolshevik leader, as distinct from Lenin, where he says:

"Those Bolsheviks who, like Kamenev, were opposed to Lenin were arguing that his opposition to the Provisional government was too empty, too formal - too much like just sitting there saying that it is an Imperialist government. They asked: how do we get across the message that an Imperialist government is bad? Let's put across some specific demands to expose this government. Let's be more specific and help the Bolsheviks who are working in local soviets.

So my argument about this whole debate is that it was a kind of misunderstanding. Lenin read in the papers about kontrol and got upset. When hearing Lenin say that all that was needed was patient explanation about the need for soviet power, others responded by pointing out that they were in a revolutionary situation and there was a need to be doing things. That is the rather paradoxical aspect of this whole debate. These old Bolsheviks were accusing Lenin of being rather passive! And if you read some of what Lenin was saying then you can see why they were wondering what their chief was actually thinking. In any event, I think this debate is not as important as it is made out to be and that both sides were thinking along the same lines and just trying to formulate a concrete strategy. (Lars T Lih)

Lih asserts most certainly that there was somehow just a difference in interpreting *vlast* and *kontrol* - therefore Bolshevism was spun simply on a misinterpretation! As the events of social and political processes unfolded over the spring to summer - summer to autumn, the unviability of the Kerensky, Miliukov and Guchkov provisional government, straddled between, on the one hand, the war weary, hungry, displaced workers and landless displaced peasants forced together in military combinations (in war) and thereby into disparate armed soviets and those urban soviets of workers, who were initially the more politicised because of their tradition of 'founding' the one 'big' soviet in 1905 St Petersburg.

Reflecting the political orientation of these aforementioned soviets were the parties to which they either sympathised with or were members of: The Socialist Revolutionaries (left and constitutional), Menshevik (constitutional and internationalist) and Bolshevik (Leninist and compromisers) - on the other hand the prevarications of the provisional government whose attitude and control of the war had brought through to prominence the reactionary Kadet Party- Junkers and Cossacks of the Whites' reaction with General Kornilov's plans to overturn the whole preceding - bourgeois democratic strikes/constituent assembly - the February earlier passage.

Unless the reader has an empathy and an understanding of the very process then forming

the actual future of the 'undefined' democracy in Russia at this time, i.e., revolution and counter-revolution implicit in the contending dual-power showing itself, academic 'misunderstandings' can be passed for good coin and simple differences.

Did Lih ever read Trotsky's 'History of the Russian Revolution'? Did he dismiss altogether the multifarious archive basis of that enormous work? Perhaps Trotsky's earlier foresight ('Permanent Revolution', in theory and leader of St Petersburg Soviet 1905, in practice) and immediately on his arrival at Petrograd in May 1917, having a total attachment to the revolutionary process in its actual making and success. Trotsky, is in Lih's view (in this piece unmentioned) an inconsequential absentee - why so? Was that 'other' essential leader (non-Bolshevik?), suitable for omission in this, his most authoritative of new appraisals.

"...The power is taken over, at least in Petrograd. Lenin has not yet had time to change his collar, but his eyes are very wide-awake, even though his face looks so tired. He looks softly at me, with that sort of awkward shyness that with him indicates intimacy. "You know," he says hesitatingly, "from persecution and a life underground, to come so suddenly into power... He pauses for the right word. "Es schwindelt," he concludes, changing suddenly to German, and circling his hand around his head. We look at each other and laugh a little. All this takes only a minute or two; then a simple "passing to next business."

The government must be formed. We number among us a few members of the Central Committee. A quick session opens over in a corner of the room.

"What shall we call them?" asks Lenin, thinking aloud. "Any thing but ministers that's such a vile, hackneyed word."

"We might call them commissaries," I suggest, "but there are too many commissaries just now. Perhaps 'supreme commissaries'? No, 'supreme' does not sound well, either. What about 'people's commissaries'?"

"People's commissaries? Well, that might do, I think," Lenin agrees. "And the government as a whole?"

"A Soviet, of course..., the Soviet of People's Commissaries, eh?"

"The Soviet of People's Commissaries?" Lenin picks it up. "That's splendid; smells terribly of revolution!"

Lenin was not much inclined toward the æsthetics of revolution, or toward relishing its "romantic quality." But all the more deeply did he feel the revolution as a whole, and all the

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

more unmistakably did he define its "smell."

"And what," Vladimir Ilyich once asked me quite unexpectedly, during those first days "what if the White Guards kill you and me? Will Svyerdlov and Bukharin be able to manage?"

"Perhaps they won't kill us," I rejoined, laughing.

"The devil knows what they might do," said Lenin, laughing in turn.

In 1924, in my recollections of Lenin (after his death), I described this incident for the first time. I learned afterward that the members of what was then a "trio" Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev felt terribly offended by it, although they did not dare contradict it. But the fact remains that Lenin only mentioned Svyerdlov and Bukharin. He did not think of any others." Trotsky - 'My Life' (1930)

But let us here go back a while and reflect on the views of the historical linearity of Russian Marxism as a precursor to Bolshevism, and what that tradition said: "...To appreciate Lenin's historic contribution there is no need whatever to try to show that from his early years he was obliged to break the virgin soil with a plough of his own.

"There were almost no comprehensive (Marxist) works available (to Lenin when he began his studies)," writes Elisarova (a Stalinist historian), parroting Kamenev and others. "It was necessary for him to study the original sources (government local statistics on peasant and worker life) and draw from them his own deductions."

Nothing could be more offensive to Lenin's own rigorous scientific scrupulousness than this claim that he took no account of his predecessors and teachers. Nor is it true that in the early Nineties (1890s) Russian Marxism possessed no comprehensive works.

The publications of the Emancipation of Labour Group already constituted at the time an abridged encyclopaedia of the new tendency. After six years of brilliant and heroic struggle against the prejudices of the Russian intelligentsia, (Georgy) Plekhanov proclaimed in 1889 at the Socialist World Congress in Paris, "The revolutionary movement in Russia can triumph only as the revolutionary working-class movement. There is and there can be no other way out for us." These words summed up the most important general conclusion from the entire preceding epoch and it was on, the basis of this generalization of an "émigré" that Vladimir (V. I. Lenin) pursued his education ..." - Trotsky on 'How Lenin Studied Marx' (1936)

The Russian Marxist movement of Marxist/Plekhanov origins, was particularly distinguished from the 'Peoples Will' or anarchistic peasant oriented Narodniki, and by their turn, to the revolutionary nature of that class of proletarians who by their nature would be the only consistent 'class' i.e., progressive social

force to both underlie the possible capitalistic social growth and conflict, both with and without the bourgeois representatives in the form of an organic liberal democratic challenge to the feudal Romanov dynasty around which the overwhelming majority population of middle and lower peasantry farmed the nature of the productive land. We know that both Lenin and Plekhanov were two of the principle figures of the émigré editorial board of the Iskra (The Spark) group in 1902/03 London, and it was at this time that the young Trotsky joined the sitting six on that board alongside Lenin, Martov and Potresov in the 'new generation' as against the older émigrés of Plekhanov, Zaslitch and Axelrod.

But Lenin's appreciation of Plekhanov's earlier role as propagandiser and populariser of Marxism did not alter, his émigré-London acquired total conviction, that a functional fighting revolutionary party required more than that which the 'old man' Plekhanov had in him to give. The soon to be revealed split between the majority Bolsheviks and minority Mensheviks was at the 'foundry' where sparks flew apart and where Lenin, ironically, initially with the backing of Plekhanov, split with Martov on the forged commitment of a party members' responsibilities.

In the light (or darkness) of Lih's previous reference to Lenin's appreciation of Kautsky, it can be said at this point as a supplementary, that it was universally accepted amongst both wings of Russian Social Democracy throughout this time, that Kautsky was right as against Bernstein in the German Social Democracy struggle for ideological correctness. But their growth and polemics were in their own 'national and legal plane' and their development was in a totally different environment and tradition within the 2nd International. These two schools became three after 1914 with the principled and defined communist emergence of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

I cannot but believe that amongst the 'leading lights' of the CPGB/Weekly Worker, there haven't been raised eyebrows to these latest points made by Lih. Do you think this should pass without comment by yourselves? My concern, however, is toward the younger, revolutionary seeking reader, being led on a false trail here by Lih, into the origins of reformism, revisionism and Stalinism, within which are the 'all the formative lessons' about the internationalism of Communism. Of course there can be much more done on explaining the position of Bolshevism regarding the proletariat and peasantry over the whole period encompassed above, but unless the fundamentals are corrected, the student will wander in darkness led astray by the likes of Lih.

Virtually every line of his latest piece is an eclectic jumble of part programme - part perspective, it's like an elusive multi-headed monster slipping out of one's grasp through lack of substance or placement. Where Lih says: "Old



Lars T Lih: "Did Lih ever read Trotsky's 'History of the Russian Revolution'? Did he dismiss altogether the multifarious archive basis of that enormous work?"

Bolshevism can be defined as strategy, as an outlook. Lenin himself, in 1910 or 1911 said that Bolshevism became a tendency in 1905 - a strong hint that we should be looking for the strategy pursued in this era..." Lenin defined Bolshevism as a revolutionary tendency - as opposed to the 'undefined popular front Social Democracy' tendency of Menshevism - as the essential different tendency, to build a resolute, determined party capable of single-mindedly leading the proletariat to power - and not anything more, neither in outline nor otherwise Mr Lih. Lih says; "...First, old Bolshevism was a vision and strategy of democratic revolution, and carrying through the democratic revolution to the end ..." - old Menshevism had exactly the same goal (in theory - at least) during the period under consideration Mr Lih.

"That phrase - 'carrying the democratic revolution to the end' - is probably more helpful than the 'democratic dictatorship of proletariat and peasantry'. It was commonly used at the time, but its use has been obscured by Soviet translators into English, who not only paraphrased it, but used different paraphrases each time." Carrying the 'democratic revolution to the end' was used within the context of all oppositionists to Czarism, including the bourgeois groups in the state Duma, where these social/political tendencies would fight it out or capitulate entirely until resurrected after burrowing into the 'rightist' bureaucracy after 1924.

The role of the proletariat was certainly clear to all Russian Social Democracy (Bolshevik and Menshevik) preceding 1917, but the role of the peasantry was considered an economic and political variable, dependent to the, more or less considered view, on the success of the bourgeois resolve to fight for the hegemony of the varying layers of those lower and middle petty bourgeois sectors in relation to the sup-

pression of the landlords power and to their connectivity with town life and central government. There were a number of open questions that couldn't be outlined with finality in their perspectives right through to mid-1917.

" ... The (presumably here Lih means Bolshevik) idea was that the tsar was on his last legs and a democratic revolution was bound to occur. But of what kind, what would be the results, and how far could it proceed? The Bolshevik strategy was for the working class to take as much as it could during this period of ferment while it had the chance to do so. The constituent assembly would come in two, four or five years and the aim in the meantime was a widespread social transformation. The slogans were confiscation of the estates, agrarian reform, a democratic republic and an eight-hour day - reforms embracing the peasants, workers and all citizens..."

What a most stupid and presumptive assertion to make. As if Lenin's party were suggesting solely propagandising to steal in (with the workers leading - or in tow) and grab as much politically accrued credited loot as possible during chaos and ferment, only later to be cashed in and resuscitated on an eventual evolutionary result very much of a German-type model - built up SPD-style.

Professor Lih demonstrates he has very little understanding of either the nature of the essence of capitalism in political and economic fundamentals, less further still its Imperialist juncture that underlay the first world war and the subsequent political consequences. It was precisely this that Marxists of the communist type like Lenin and Trotsky were seeking to seriously tackle at the head of the international working class and peasant masses in a culturally diverse and backwardly vast expanse of land.

I believe he is making an apologetic case for Kautsky's theoretical betrayal on the eve of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry through Soviets, and with that 'impossibility' in mind, he thereby justifies the eventual degeneracy of Russia under the Stalinist 'Thermidor' after the event. This finds resonance only with those that are too lazy politically to make a real Marxist and thereby scientific analysis of the successes and setbacks of the Russian revolution and its global significance then and now. In short Lih is a fraud and the Weekly Worker is guilty of disseminating a fraudsters meanderings without offering any critique of their own toward this junk at all.

The **Weekly Worker** article can be found here: http://www.cpgb.org.uk/article.php?article_id=1004181

Continued from page 9

working class propaganda not to mention the attitude to immigrant workers it implies.

On the trade unions we get:

"Those who are supposed to defend us failed us. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions was in partnership with this Government every year Fianna Fail was in power. David Begg, the leader of ICTU, sat on the Board of the Central Bank when it failed to regulate the banks and failed to do anything to prevent the disaster."

Correct as far as it goes but again it is a capitulation to the left bureaucracy, why no mention of the fight of the rank-and-file against the trade union bureaucracy? SD produced an excellent statement in support of Jerry Hicks and building rank and file bodies to fight the bureaucracy and gave the Hicks campaign for Unite Gen Sec powerful political and material support whereas the ULA leaders either opposed or gave it half-hearted support like the SWP.

They finish with, "Only ONE group stand opposed to ALL cuts, to paying the debts of the BANKERS and opposing the bullying of the EU and IMF. Vote for and sign up to the United Left Alliance!" in undisguised capitulation.

But perhaps the statement is not official SD policy? The credit at the end says. "This leaflet has been produced by supporters of the United Left Alliance who are members and supporters of Socialist Democracy".

The Irish Republican Socialist Party

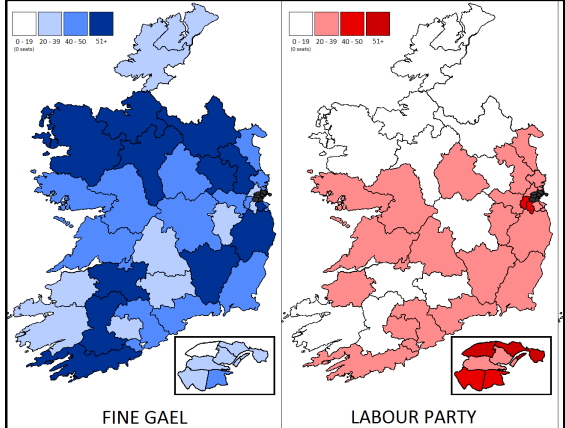
In contrast the attack from the IRSP is clearly from the left. They gave individual members permission to support the ULA by campaigning for it in the election but both it and éirígí were excluded from the group from the beginning because they were 'left republicans' and not socialists. It is clear from this document that the IRSP would have refused any such invitation. They have fundamental criticisms of the ULA programme. They are for a 32 County Democratic Socialist Republic and want unity on the

left but "a major failing is that the programme itself, while mentioning several components of a socialist system, fails to explicitly state that it is the programme of an organisation which seeks to establish a revolutionary socialist state in Ireland." And is, "notable by its absence is any mention of the national aspect to the revolutionary socialist struggle in this country. It is the duty of Irish socialists to combat the undemocratic imposition of cutbacks in the North, challenge the overt sectarianism which has been entrenched in the very structures of the Northern state and work towards the ending of partition."

The 'Democratic Socialist' bit suggests a two stage revolution without that 'nasty' dictatorship of the proletariat bit implied in the 'Workers Republic' slogan but then 'a revolutionary socialist state' suggest just the opposite. A more detailed analysis of the republican socialist programmes of both the IRSP and éirígí is necessary and we will attempt this for the next issue. The ULA document is reformist says the IRSP,

"The IRSP's position on electoralism is clear. We do not believe there is a parliamentary road to socialism and thus any electoral intervention must not be characterised by a refusal to put right-wing parties in power or the demand for what can realistically be judged as a more progressive policy platform than a conservative administration, but by the clear pursuit of revolutionary aims...Should socialists sign up to something that in practice would be reformist and firmly in the realms of social democracy? The answer should be an unequivocal 'no'. This returns us to the issue of how this alliance is being built: not by the broader layers of working masses, but by two main sects out to enlarge their vote."

Whilst having many differences with the IRSP



The dark rural constituencies are where Fine Gael are dominant and the more urbanised areas are the home of Labour. Sinn Fein's vote was strongest around the border, some parts of rural Ireland and west Dublin. Labour is weaker there because the TU bureaucracy and the Irish establishment want to keep the national question and the class struggle separate because its revolutionary potential. Fianna Fail lost its big anti-Imperialist working class following but Sinn Fein did not get that. Only when the labour movement leads the struggle for a socialist united Ireland will revolution become possible.

this is clearly a principled socialist stance on the ULA.

Alan Davis of the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT)

Some may question why we take the time to analyse the contribution of a single individual with no followers in Ireland but that misses the point. In the first place we have few members ourselves and the vital question is always the struggle for clarification of revolutionary ideas. This document does address this in a serious way.

In line with the IBT itself it has no real appreciation of the relationship between the national question and the socialist revolution in Ireland. It sees the unification of the country, not as reversing the 'carnival of reaction' that Connolly correctly predicted partition would reinforce in

the political psyche of both Loyalist and Nationalist workers (not that we should equate the reactionary with the progressive) and therefore a barrier to the socialist revolution.

All revolutionary situations in Ireland were all-Ireland events; the pre and post WWI struggles, the 1969 Civil Rights uprising, the anti-internment mobilisation of 1971-72 and the 1981 Hunger strikes. In all these cases the hold of reactionary Loyalism over 'their' working class weakened markedly and they had to mobilise fascist elements to discipline these and to attack nationalist workers to defeat these revolutionary upsurges in collaboration with the northern and southern states. This has to be the case in the next revolutionary situation. too

The IBT formulate the matter thus: *"We would have no objection to such a development (capitalist unification of Ireland) if it could be achieved without intercommunal warfare and massive bloodletting. But at this point, it is utopian to imagine that it might."*

This is the equivalent of demanding that no blood be shed in the revolution. Loyalist leaders will mobilise fascist gangs against any threatened revolutionary unification (one of the aims of the Orange Order is "to counter revolution"), these will have to be defeated in order to make revolution. It is totally incorrect to present Loyalism as the legitimate representatives of protestant workers, by doing so you are dismissing the mobilising and liberating effect of the revolution. Therefore not to champion the right of Ireland to self-determination is to rob that communist slogan of its entire content. This slogan is of its nature democratic, it is directed at the consciousness of nationalist workers whose progressive instincts tell them that British Imperialism is the main enemy in Ireland.

In no way should we attempt to equate this with the essentially supremacist, pro-Imperialist arrogance of the Loyalist labour aristocracy, complete with the sashes and bowler hats of this reactionary elitist privileged workers of old before the Labour parties were founded. Which is why no mass reformist Labour party can ever flourish in the north; the national question fatally divides the working class and that barrier

must be overcome in reunification of the country. Of course we want a socialist united Ireland but we cannot place this as a pre-condition of struggle because that is to pander to Loyalist backwardness. We must defeat that, not appease it. The document says.

"The new party should call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. We should demand the release of Republican prisoners and the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act... One of the central slogans of the new party should be – For an Irish Workers' Republic within a Socialist Federation of Europe!"

This is inadequate because it does not explain how unity can be forged and suggests that a syndicalist, workerist unity of fighting the capitalists is good enough. This is approaching the backwardness of the SP itself where they can have two papers in Ireland because Loyalist workers should not be forced to read about southern workers' struggles; they supporter the Ulster Loyalist Workers Council strike in 1974.

After that the stuff on the trade unions is somewhat confused. Although it is better than old Spart notions of building pure 'revolutionary caucuses' composed of party members alone in the trade unions it is syndicalist/abstentionist, in between Cannon/Trotsky and Spart leader Robertson via the pro-Imperialist workerist Max Shachtman (the dead guru revered by the AWL and Sean Matgamna). The document says; *"It is necessary for trade union activists to organise groupings within the unions based on class struggle politics in opposition to the bureaucrats – not only to overcome their resistance to militant industrial action against the current attacks, but also to lay the basis for a more generalised offensive against the irrationality of capitalism. These groupings should reject the fake unity of "broad left" formations and instead be caucuses of party members, and other militants who support our work in the unions, formed on acceptance of the key elements of our programme as the basis for action. These socialist caucuses would then work with others throughout the union movement in united front campaigns on specific cases and issues."*

It should simply declare for rank and file bodies like the Minority Movement of the early British Communist Party or the US SWP under Trotsky's guidance when they produced the Northwest Organiser in the great Teamster struggles in Minneapolis-St Pauls in the early 1930s. However is getting there on this question, we must admit.

Lastly it is refreshing to see a document posing the real tasks which will face the working class in any revolutionary situation,

"It is necessary to break up the existing state apparatus and replace it with a new state power, based on the fundamentally different forms of workers' democracy, which is committed to serving and protecting the interests of working people and the oppressed. The new party should openly advocate this and reject any reformist fantasies about "community control" of the existing capitalist state apparatus."

So in conclusion as the it is not a critique of the ULA but addressing the question of how a new workers party should function, along the 'algebraic' lines that Trotsky advocated for building a Labor party in the USA, putting demands on TU bureaucrats and mobilising the ranks to fight them in struggle it tackles its task well. But with the exclusion of the left republican socialist groups like the IRSP and éirígí, and the failure of this latter document to understand the essential reformist drive from both the SP and SWP which led to those exclusion means there is much work to be done

Endnotes

[1] The United Left Alliance (ULA) is an electoral alliance of left-wing political parties and independent politicians in the Republic of Ireland, formed to contest the 2011 general election. The grouping consists of three existing political parties, the Socialist Party, the People Before Profit Alliance (SWP dominated), and the Workers and Unemployed Action Group, as well as former members of the Labour Party (Wikipedia).

[2] The ULA programme and three critiques can be viewed here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/52697810/ULA-Programme-and-Three-Critiques>

Continued from page 32

science, an exposure of its true nature (as what the bourgeoisie has to say about its own practice); and so of its epistemological status, an exposure of its limitations, and an invitation to realize that this alleged science, claimed to be independent of historical materialism, cannot possess such independence. Political economy is the outward form assumed by historical materialism (the class struggle) under capitalism. On the logical plane historical materialism is prior to economics, but class struggle under capitalism does not take place in a vacuum: it operates on an economic basis, and shapes laws that appear economic in character." (Amin, The Law of Worldwide Value, 10)

This false consciousness, when it makes economic claims that the exploitation at the peripheries is

not as complete as the exploitation at the Imperial centres, is ultimately absurd—another reason why, at the end of the day, it is utterly false, illogical and uncritical. For if it was really true that the peasant is not exploited as much as the labourer in the first-world factory, then one would imagine that the first-world factory labourers would rather be peasants living in South Asia, which is clearly not the case. Of course, the counter-argument would be that I'm misunderstanding the actual meaning of surplus-value and exploitation but that is my entire point: we cannot speak of exploitation and oppression simply as numbers but as facts that exist in the real world—in history and society. And really, if it was the case that more surplus can be extracted from the factory worker, then why the rush on the part of some nations to control and carve up the resources of the majority of this

world's nations? Why the fostering of underdevelopment, why the attempt to deal with this current crisis through military intervention? Or why, in a word, Imperialism? But a consciousness that rejects any serious theorization of Imperialism and its connection to capitalism, that refuses to understand how those of us at the Imperial centers often benefit from a culture/context produced by Imperialism, can understand Imperialism as nothing more than a militaristic aberration performed for dubious reasons. Hence, as I have already complained, the propensity amongst certain sectors of the left to be able to adopt a coherent and critical anti-Imperialism in cases like Libya.

Endnote

[1] Samir Amin. The Law of Worldwide Value. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010.

Imperialism and False Consciousness By Joshua Moufawad-Paul,

M-L-M Mayhem! Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Thoughts, Philosophy, Humour (<http://moufawad-paul.blogspot.com/>), April 6 2011.

Socialist Fight is pleased to reprint this article with the permission of Comrade Moufawad-Paul. It is from a Maoist perspective but the points about Euro-centric Marxism and Imperialist ideology in the wake of the political collapse of the majority of the left groups over the Benghazi rebels and bombing of Libya hit home. That requires an explanation of more depth than simply a bad person theory of history. We present this article as a contribution to that discussion.

The failure to express a truly anti-Imperialist politics amongst progressives—amongst even those who profess "anti-Imperialism"—is often due to a failure to understand and theorize "Imperialism." The refusal amongst certain sectors of the mainstream left to recognize the intervention in Libya, for example, as an instance of Imperialism follows from the inability to conceptualize Imperialism. Thus Gilbert Achcar could veil his capitulation to Imperialist logic with anti-Imperialist trappings. Jean-Luc Nancy, recently critiqued by Alain Badiou, makes the same mistake. And both Achcar and Nancy are symptoms of this widespread failure to truly appreciate the concrete reality of Imperialism and then, upon this concrete understanding, to construct an anti-Imperialist politics.

I think we can trace elements of this theoretical failure to certain overlapping strains/tendencies of academic Marxism, predominantly an implicitly Eurocentric Marxism that downplays the connection between capitalism and Imperialism/colonialism. "Political Marxism", best represented by Robert Brenner and Ellen Meiksins Wood, is one of these strains. The practice of "Marxology", where scholars treat the works of Marx and Engels as sacred texts and ignore the method that transcends the doctrine, is another problem. Then there are the multiple positivist Marxisms, the political economies devoid of historical materialism that rely on the statistical and reified data of vulgar economics, that contribute to the breakdown of a holistic theoretical analysis. Instead of examining why these academic strains/tendencies fail to properly comprehend Imperialism, which is the business of entire books (many already written), I want to investigate something more fundamental. These tendencies are not, in my opinion, the ultimate cause behind this breakdown of a truly critical anti-Imperialism. Rather, I think these analyses emerge from a general consciousness that is produced by Imperial and colonial privilege. In his most recent book, for example, Samir Amin speaks of how "the essential contribution furnished by Marxists of the Third World... is, as a rule, poorly understood and badly received in the West." (Amin, *The Law of Worldwide Value*, 92) [1] I would argue that this is a general rule because the consciousness produced by Imperial and colonial privilege, just like the consciousness produced by bourgeois or petty bourgeois privilege, often leads to an inability to accept critiques that threaten this very privilege.

What I find rather telling, and extremely disappointing, is the prevalence of a supposedly "Marxist" viewpoint that goes out of its way to dismiss any theory that interrogates the global contradiction between the Imperialist centres and peripheries of global capitalism. What is most problematic about this viewpoint, however, is not the tangential arguments and diversionary "proofs" it is able to mobilize (all of which shift the argument down a rabbit trail of spurious appearance that often has nothing to do with the original terms of the argument), but the fact that it implicitly proves one of the main points made by anti-Imperialist theories: the consciousness often produced in the centres of Imperialism, sometimes called a "labour aristocracy" consciousness, is demonstrated by the uncritical refusal to actually appreciate theories that call the privilege behind this consciousness into question. None of this is to say that everyone who lives at the centres of Imperialism is privileged and not exploited, but that a certain culture and general consciousness is produced, due to the situation of global capitalism (Imperialism), in those nations that benefit from and control Imperialism.

Marxist theorists sometimes like to speak of "false consciousness", of a way of seeing the world produced by the ruling ideas of the ruling classes, that often affects even those who are exploited by capital. This false consciousness, this "common sense" way of making sense of reality, is what limits the radical imaginary. Thus the imagination of Marxists who cannot understand how their societies might benefit from Imperialism—how they themselves might benefit from a liberal culture that is only possible because of the enforced lack of this culture elsewhere—also refuse to theoretically understand the very structure of Imperialism.

If we add this false consciousness to the false consciousness that is encouraged by the strictures of academic intellectualism, then the refusal to truly engage with the Marxist theories and movements that emerge from the global peripheries makes sense. None of this is to say that intellectuals cannot be exploited, that some of us do not also sell our labour-power in increasingly neo-liberalized universities (I work in a casualised contract context, for example, so I'm well aware of this issue), but that we exist within a certain culture that produces a certain consciousness. Moreover, I would argue that this culture flourishes because of Imperialism: I have a good friend and comrade whose research, for example, examines



"This widespread failure to truly appreciate the concrete reality of Imperialism" is predominantly an implicitly Eurocentric Marxism that downplays the connection between capitalism and Imperialism/colonialism. "Political Marxism", best represented by Robert Brenner and Ellen Meiksins Wood, is one of these strains." -

how the Frankfurt School's concept of "the culture industry" or "one-dimensionality" makes the most sense if understood within a third-world Marxist theorization of Imperialism. And the argument of the culture industry does not claim that people living in the countries where this culture industry thrives are no longer exploited, just that it is extremely easy for us to accept the terms of this exploitation—especially easy if the most vicious contradictions of capital can be muted with social democracy, liberal culture, and a lifestyle politics that is only possible by generally exporting the most terroristic contradictions elsewhere.

What makes this false consciousness especially offensive, however, is the fact that it leads to some very bizarre assertions about world capitalism and Imperialism. For instance, I have heard some people who reject every attempt to theorize the labour aristocracy actually claim that the factory worker in North America is more "exploited" than a peasant in any given South Asian country. They try to prove this claim by looking at positivist approaches to statistics, suddenly becoming like bourgeois economists, and produce very narrow and critically limited interpretations of surplus extraction. But this is not historical materialism, nor is it especially scientific, since it is based only on numerical appearances rather than concrete analyses. The medical scientist does not create a good theory of medical science simply by the numerical representations of, for example, CAT scans but by always contextualizing this within an investigation of the body itself. Nor did Marx rely only on economic formulae when he wrote *Capital*: this always emerged from his dialectical/historical materialism and he understood, as did Engels when he defended *Capital* in *Anti-Dühring*, that the numerical formulae were not the ultimate proof—hence the reason to talk about history and society and to actually examine the world rather than the appearance of the world. Again, as Amin qualifies in his new book and thus closes the door on any positivistic attempts to ignore and obfuscate what he is trying to argue:

"The subtitle of *Capital—A Critique of Political Economy*—does not mean a critique of 'bad' (Ricardian) political economy, with a view to replacing it with a 'good' (Marxian) one. It is rather a critique of so-called economic

Continued on page 3I

Libya: Pakistan left parties' statement on NATO attacks

Socialist Fight welcomes this timely statement from these ten Pakistani groups in clear and unequivocal opposition to the barbarism of the world Imperialism's attack on Libya. Coming from a country which is suffering appalling illegal drone attacks killing vast numbers of civilians arising from the assault on Afghanistan by Western Imperialism it is enormously heartening to those of us in the belly of the Imperialist beast to get such a courageous message.

And it is an open repudiation of the cowardly pro-Imperialist 'revolutionaries' in the West who have either openly supported the Imperialist assault or who have supported and many who continue to support their agents, the Benghazi rebels, even dubbing these Contra elements 'revolutionaries'. We note the signature of the Revolutionary Socialist Movement, Pakistani section of the League for the Fifth International, in such obvious repudiation of Workers Power's pro-Imperialist stance.

April 8, 2011 -- ESSF -- While it is accepted that Gaddafi and his model of ruling is autocratic and repressive and cannot be supported by any progressive grouping, a few things also need to be stated about NATO and its discourse of humanitarian intervention and let us state them clearly.

After drowning Iraq and Afghanistan in blood, Western Imperialism has now sunk its fangs into Libya. Like a wild beast that smells the scent of its prey from a distance, it has seized upon the rebellion in Libya as if it were the opportunity of a lifetime. Attempts by the United States, Britain

and France to portray the bombardment of Libya as a humanitarian act are totally fraudulent. Saudi Arabia sent its troops to crush the protesters of Bahrain, yet here the US and NATO silently watched, or rather, covertly assisted their ally. So why the attack on Libya? The answer is oil.

America and NATO are today visiting the same destruction on Libya that they visited upon Iraq. Whereas in Iraq they launched a full invasion, in Libya they are pursuing other methods -- by assisting collaborators within Libya itself. Let us be clear this is about regime change and oil and as with Iraq the oil will be privatised or linked to development

projects for Western co-operation. It is another instance of capitalism as Imperialism. The victim again will be the poor of Libya and the world, the environment that this capitalism is destroying and all those movements that aim at the democratisation of the political, economic and social spheres -- that is all those movements that aim at socialist solutions.

This is what Western Imperialism has always done in the name of humanitarianism and democracy. In the name of democracy, it has propped up the most ruthless dictators in Latin America, the Middle East and all over the world. In the name of humanitarianism, it has savagely

rained down death and destruction upon millions from its warplanes and tanks. History shows that every such intervention has been for securing strategic resources, subjugating Third World countries and crushing peoples' movements, so that the rich may continue to remain rich and the poor continue to remain poor.

It is our duty as moral and peace-loving people to wish our brothers in Libya a decisive victory against the United States and NATO and oppressive political and economic structures.

Down with Western Imperialism and its collaborators!

No to NATO attack on Libya

Victory to all workers fighting for the democratisation of the political, economic and social spheres!

Victory to the people of Libya!

1. Workers Party Pakistan
2. Labour Party Pakistan
3. Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party
4. Revolutionary Socialist Movement
5. Awami Party
6. Awami jamhoori Forum
7. National Students Federation
8. Progressive Youth Front
9. Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee
10. National Trade Union Federation

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narrative, telling the truth is a revolutionary act. And, if telling the truth is a revolutionary act, then it is the duty of Socialists to defend those who do tell the truth or endeavour to bring crimes and abuses to light.

Secret diplomacy was anathema to the Bolsheviks, and one of the first acts on taking power was to publish all secret treaties. Trotsky wrote^[17]:

Publishing the secret diplomatic documents from the foreign policy archives of Tsarism and of the bourgeois coalition Governments of the first seven months of the revolution, we are carrying out the undertaking which we made when our party was in opposition. Secret diplomacy is a necessary tool for a propertied minority which is compelled to deceive the majority in order to subject it to its interests. Imperialism, with its dark plans of conquest and its robber alliances and deals, developed the system of secret diplomacy to the highest level. The struggle against the Imperialism which is exhausting and destroying the peoples of Europe is at the same time a struggle against capitalist diplomacy, which has cause enough

to fear the light of day. The Russian people, and the peoples of Europe and the whole world, should learn the documentary truth about the plans forged in secret by the financiers and industrialists together with their parliamentary and diplomatic agents. The peoples of Europe have paid for the right to this truth with countless sacrifices and universal economic desolation.

The abolition of secret diplomacy is the primary condition for an honest, popular, truly democratic foreign policy.

Endnotes

- [1]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradley_Manning
- [2]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adrian_Lamo
- [3]<http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2010/05/lamo/>
- [4]http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cx3_ynHjL-M
- [5]<http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2010/06/wikileaks-chat/>
- [6]http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/glenn_greenwald/2010/06/18/wikileaks
- [7]<http://wikileaks.info/>

[8]<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/mar/16/hear-bradley-manning-because-chains>

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[11]<http://Littlealexinwonderland.wordpress.com/2010/04/12/upcoming-wikileaks-video-may-2009-massacre-by-u-s-killing-up-to-147-afghan-civilians/>

[12]http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/16/world/16wiki.html?_r=2

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[14]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellingham_Hall,_Norfolk

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[16]<http://www.alterpolitics.com/politics/julian-assange-western-newspapers-hesitant-to-publish-israel-related-leaks/>

[17]<http://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/foreign-relations/1917/November/22.htm>

Defend Bradley Manning

By Brigid Ó Duinn

"During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act."

George Orwell

If the opening decade of the 21st century has taught us anything, it has taught us that there is no limit to the depravity of Imperialist finance capital, nor any limit to the way in which many of those operating on the front-lines of opening new foreign markets for capital, referred to (interchangeably) as 'freedom' and 'democracy', in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Libya, will dehumanise everyone and everything that it perceives to be a threat to its ability to operate unchecked. While the US and its 'junior partner' the UK delight in regular criticism of the abuses and violations by everyone and everything other than themselves, their own domestic records are atrocious in regard to the taking of political prisoners, while also lacking the honesty to say that's what they are. Generally, in the 'free' and 'democratic' societies of 'The West', there are no political prisoners, only 'terrorists', 'extremists' and 'traitors' to the fictional notions of nations and the fictional capital with which they seek to consume every available resource for fictional capital profit.

23 year-old Private Bradley Manning [1] is a US soldier accused of being the source behind the leak of US diplomatic cables and US army footage of their atrocities to the Wikileaks website. He was an unlikely soldier, sensitive, a humanist, and had recently come out as gay man, but the military was the only option in exchange for having his education funded, a path common to so many financial conscripts to the US Army. Manning had been assigned in October 2009 to a support battalion at Forward Operating Base Hammer, near Baghdad. He was arrested in May 2010, shopped to the FBI by an infamous US computer hacker, Adrian Lamo [2], who claimed that Manning had revealed to him during online chats that he'd been the source of the leaks. At around the same time Lamo was apparently under section for mental health problems[3] after contacting police for help and just two weeks later, Manning was arrested.

Manning gave his reasons for the leaking of the 'Collateral Murder' video[4] in what is claimed to be one of these online chats with Lamo[5], although there is no firm evidence that the person communicating with Lamo was Manning as online names were used.

Lamo: what's your endgame plan, then?...

Manning: well, it was forwarded to [Wikileaks] - and god knows what happens now - hope-

fully worldwide discussion, debates, and reforms - if not, than [sic] we're doomed - as a species - i will officially give up on the society we have if nothing happens - the reaction to the video gave me immense hope; CNN's iReport was overwhelmed; Twitter exploded - people who saw, knew there was something wrong... - i want people to see the truth... regardless of who they are... because without information, you cannot make informed decisions as a public.

According to one investigative journalist[6]: "A definitive understanding of what really happened is virtually impossible to acquire, largely because almost everything that is known comes from a single, extremely untrustworthy source: Lamo himself."

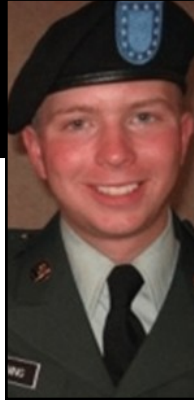
(S/INF) Web sites such as Wikileaks.org have trust as their most important center of gravity by protecting the anonymity and identity of the insider, leaker, or whistleblower. Successful identification, prosecution, termination of employment, and exposure of persons leaking the information by the governments and businesses affected by information posted to Wikileaks.org would damage and potentially destroy this center of gravity and deter others from taking similar actions.

What is clear is that the US Government deemed Wikileaks[7] a 'threat to National Security' and had made plans to destroy it by deterring anyone considering 'whistleblowing':

Setting an example is precisely what the US is intent on doing - as with the torture in Guantanamo and the abuse in Abu Ghraib - Manning is being subjected to inhumane treatment that amounts to torture whilst awaiting court martial. In May 2011, 22 further charges were levelled against him, including 'aiding the enemy' for which he faces the prospect of the death penalty. The inhumane and brutal treatment of Manning includes:

- Solitary confinement in a 12^{ft} x 6^{ft} windowless cell
- Stripped naked and ritually humiliated
- Sleep deprivation and forced medication
- Refusal of prison visits
- An hour of shackled exercise, alone
- Removal of prescription glasses that leave him in near blindness

His friend and twice-monthly visitor, David House, says "he had watched Manning change from an intelligent young man to someone who appeared catatonic and had difficulty conducting a conversation"[8]. Amnesty International, a US Congressman and the UN Spe-



cial Rapporteur on Torture have all been refused private visits to Manning[9]. A petition to end the torture of Bradley Manning can be signed here[10].

Julian Assange, the now public face of the previously anonymous Wikileaks is busy doing deals with the main stream media to drip-feed the leaked diplomatic cables and to date, Wikileaks has not released the further footage of atrocities which it is said to have[11]. WikiLeaks did not identify Manning as the source of this material, and according to NBC in January 2011, the U.S. government could find no evidence of direct contact between Manning and Assange[12]. Assange, while busy like all comic-book superheroes trademarking his name[13], happens to be holed-up in the country estate of former British Army officer Vaughan Smith[14] - a somewhat curious liaison however you look at it - fighting extradition to Sweden on charges of sexual assault. Assange has recently released Israeli diplomatic cables exclusively to the Israeli press, where it would be fair to presume the selective publication of which will be the name of the game[15]. As noted in another report [16] "By giving the main stream media exclusive rights to the leak information - essentially the power to serve as middlemen between the documents and the discerning public - they are effectively allowing the corporate-owned media establishment to serve as ideological gatekeepers". In short, Wikileaks deal-brokering methods of 'disclosure' do little more than to maintain the status quo regarding the suppression of information by corporate gatekeepers.

"Publish and be damned" it certainly isn't, and we have yet to see the bulk of the cables Wikileaks claims to have. If Wikileaks continues to fail to challenge the corporate-state hierarchy then what purpose does Wikileaks as an organisation serve? Irrespective of how Wikileaks acts from here-on in, whistleblowers such as Bradley Manning, who endeavour to put into the public domain information about the way in which the State operates, should be supported and their releases from captivity secured. As Orwell observed in his prophetic

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France topples Laurent Gbagbo in Cote d'Ivoire

By Mark Brown

The toppling of Laurent Gbagbo in the Cote d'Ivoire by France and the UN is no part of 'Democratising Africa' but further proof of the emergence of inter-Imperialist rivalries as Lenin's theory on imperialism shows the possibility of WWII emerging from the structural crisis of imperialism revealed by the 2008 financial crisis.

The 'United Front' of the US, Britain and France are in a grab for Africa by a coalition consolidated over Libya. They are seeking to outmanoeuvre their Germany and BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) rivals, who abstained in the UN vote over Libya. The 'United Front' seeks to ratchet up the exploitation of the semi-colonial world to compensate for the industrial dominance of Germany and China.

Cote d'Ivoire's long-standing military standoff between forces loyal to rival presidential candidates Allassane Ouattara and Laurent Gbagbo came to an end on 11 April 2011 when forces loyal to Allassane Ouattara with the help of French troops and French air power successfully overpowered the thousand plus men defending Gbagbo, to arrest Ivory Coast's ex-President.

It meant the end of a four month standoff after the disputed November 28th presidential election between the presidential rivals. France and the NATO powers recognised Ouattara as the winner of the election, after Ivory Coast's Electoral Commission declared Ouattara the winner, despite the fact that the Constitutional Court subsequently ruled that there were voting irregularities, claiming that Gbagbo had won the election.

It remains to be seen whose forces have been responsible for the worst violence, but evidence shows the most substantial massacres of civilians have been carried out by supporters of Ouattara - including one of up to 1,000 people in a single village.

After Gbagbo refused to stand down, a stand-off ensued with both dependant on militia forces in their respective ethnic constituencies. Neither of the two sides were capable of mobilising the support of the whole population. Ouattara was supported and protected by armed rebels of northern origin, together with supposed UN peacekeepers, whilst the incumbent Gbagbo, who was supported in the southern part of the country and had the national armed forces and state media on his side.

Gbagbo excluded Ouattara from the 2000 presidential elections, claiming that Ouattara was not a native Ivorian because Ouattara's parents were from Burkina Faso and not Ivory Coast. This Ivorian nationalism was a major part of Gbagbo's 11 year grip on power in the country through his exploitation of ethnic and communal hostilities within a declining economy with the scapegoat-

ing of immigrant labourers who came to Ivory Coast from neighbouring Burkina Faso in the 1960s and 1970s.

Clashes between Ouattara's northern mainly Muslim forces and Gbagbo southern mainly Christian loyalists from the south of the country intensified after the breakdown in talks between both parties mediated by France. In the UN, France and Nigeria drafted UN resolution 1975, which was adopted unanimously on March 30th, giving UNOCI a mandate to protect civilians. It was drawn up on the same lines as the resolution that allowed NATO jets to attack military Libyan military positions.

Within days of the Ivory Coast resolution being agreed, France and UNOCI went into action in Abidjan. French helicopters bombed forces loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo and were seen attacking the palace and presidential residence on the evening of the very same day talks broke down (5th April 2011), justifying their action by claiming that pro-Gbagbo forces had used heavy artillery against civilians whilst denying they were involved in the fighting. [1]

The French government actions have been consistent with its stated role to act to protect the population from harm (as with western nation's stated aim to intervene in Libya), although the UN resolution did not authorize the French to attack. More broadly, it has been a cover for a broader explosion of French militarism in Africa. France under President Nicolas Sarkozy, who also led the way in calling for a no-fly zone in Libya as part of a US-France-UK alliance, was the first country to recognise the Transitional National Council based in Benghazi as the rightful government of Libya (though allegations in relation to who has funded the TNC point in the direction of the Saudis, the CIA and French intelligence). Similarly, France's role in Ivory Coast has Washington's support. President Obama welcomed the intervention of France and UN:

"To end this violence and prevent more bloodshed, former President Gbagbo must stand down immediately, and direct those who are fighting on his behalf to lay down their arms", Obama said. "I strongly support the role that United Nations peacekeepers are playing as they enforce their mandate to protect civilians, and I welcome the efforts of French forces who are supporting that mission". [2]

Gbagbo had been previously recognised by France because he had close connections with then-Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and France's Socialist Party at the time of the 2000 election, even though Gbagbo excluded Ouattara from standing. Gbagbo's relations with France deteriorated when he rejected France's promotion of a power-sharing regime that would include northerners to end the civil war. Gbagbo broke a cease-fire in 2004 when he launched a military assault on the north, during which a French base



Starting the new Grab for Africa: Youth burning rubbish with rotting corpses in Abidjan, Ivory Coast following the ousting of Gbagbo.

was hit. Paris responded by destroying the entire Ivorian air force. [3]

France's impetus to intervene in Cote d'Ivoire and oust Gbagbo was in part given the green light after the AU panel of the Peace and Security Council at the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government submitted its report on 10 March 2011, re-affirming the support for Ouattara and asking the Constitutional Court to swear in Ouattara as President.

However, like in Libya, imperialism intervened because of the country's economic importance and strategic location. France intervened, with the US stamp of approval, to "take care of its post-colonial protectorate under the umbrella of global imperialism". Cote d'Ivoire is the largest economy in the West African Economic and Monetary Union, constituting 40 percent of the monetary union's total GDP. The country is the world's largest exporter of cocoa, and the fourth largest exporter of goods in sub-Saharan Africa (following South Africa, Nigeria and Angola). Agricultural exports and the maintenance of close ties to France since independence in 1960 and foreign direct investment, have been the main factors in the economic growth of Côte d'Ivoire. In recent years Côte d'Ivoire has been subject to greater competition and falling prices in the global marketplace for its primary agricultural crops, namely coffee and cocoa.

However, perhaps most significantly, Ivory Coast also occupies an important strategic position as a major portal for the extraction of resources from landlocked countries, Burkina Faso, Niger etc.

Endnotes:

- 1). Talbot, Ann: "France intervenes in Ivory Coast's civil war", in WSWS, 7 April 2011 <http://wsws.org/articles/2011/apr2011/ivor-a07.shtml>
- 2). Op cit 1).
- 3). Op cit 1).

The COMMUNIST LEAGUE is born to build a revolutionary Trotskyist party that belongs to the working class!

Socialist Fight is pleased to reprint an abridged version of the split statement of the Communist League of Brazil from the LBI - Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (Internationalist Bolshevik League). Not to be confused with the Internationalist Bolshevik Tendency, see box at the end. As you can see from the cover of the current Magazine here the comrades have an identical position to us on the question of Libya, not only opposing the imperialist bombing but correctly characterising the rebels as agents of the CIA and placing no confidence in Gaddafi to lead the struggle. And the statement emphasises they have rejected the scepticism of abandoning the working class as the revolutionary subject of history, a vital perspective for all Marxists, which Socialist Fight has made the number one in our Where we Stand platform.

"It is ridiculous to plead different circumstances and a change of periods: the building of a fighting organization and the conduct of political agitation are essential under any "drab, peaceful" circumstances, in any period, no matter how marked by a "declining revolutionary spirit"; moreover, it is precisely in such periods and under such circumstances that work of this kind is particularly necessary, since it is too late to form the organization in times of explosion and outbursts; the party must be in a state of readiness to launch activity at a moment's notice."
(Lenin: Where to Begin?, 1900)

We present the workers, the youth movement and the vanguard of the worker's movement with all of the reasons for our break with the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI).

WHICH HERITAGE ARE WE RENOUNCING?

The small universe of the petty bourgeois opposition became more fetid in the 2010 elections, being crushed by the Popular Front pressure and the bourgeois opposition, recycled around the PT-PSDB symbiosis that was the candidacy of Marina. Electing the left wing of the petty bourgeois opposition as the center of its political intervention, the LBI limited itself to perform a completely inoffensive warning regarding the pseudo-Trotskyism that exists in this political environment.

Also neglecting the patient work of forming recruits from outside the circle of the very deformed petty bourgeoisie and the aristocracy of Brazil, the LBI has set itself to a dead end. Passive victim of unfavorable increasingly conjunctures to the classes struggle, the LBI arrives in the mid of 2010 prostrated front to the anticom-

munist ideological reaction of post-Soviet Union and especially to the pressure of the popular front in Brazil.

SEVERAL STEPS BACK FROM PROSTRATION TO SCEPTICISM

The recognition of the historical task of the working class as the protagonist of socialist revolution is part of the LBI's programmatic points. It is mentioned in many of the concluding parts in their articles.

However, it has become just words as the group itself became convinced after three global imperialist offensives (capitalist restoration in the worker's states, the post 9/11 war on terror and the economic crisis of 2008) that not only the revolution was no longer a task for our lives, but that the struggle for the construction of the working class Bolshevik party was no longer a valid effective practice. At a meeting on September 8, 2010, the great majority of LBI's direction made a catastrophic evaluation by stating that, "Faced with the current class ideological setback, it is impossible for a revolutionary core to insert itself into the proletariat." This statement is nothing more than the formula to prostration, as characterized during the meeting itself. To conclude, the organization spent a decade and a half arguing for the foxes not eat the chickens, refusing to work and teach the chickens the abilities of the eagles.

If we grant as true that the cause of the defeats is rooted in the social qualities of the proletariat itself then the position of modern society will have to be acknowledged as hopeless. Under conditions of decaying capitalism the proletariat grows neither numerically nor culturally. There are no grounds, therefore, for expecting that it will sometime rise to the level of the revolutionary tasks. Altogether differently does the case present itself to him who has clarified in his mind the profound antagonism between the organic, deep going, insurmountable urge of the

LBI - Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (Internationalist Bolshevik League) is a Brazilian Trotskyist organization born in 1995. It was originated from a split with PCO (Partido da Causa Operaria), the party that then represented the international organization of Partido Obrero Argentino, led by Jorge Altamira in Brazil. The LBI split with the PCO because it disagreed with the political support that PCO gave to Lula's popular front in 1994. Another reason for the split was that the LBI differed with the PCO in characterising the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and in Eastern Europe in 1989-1991 as historical defeats for the working class.



Spain's Prime Minister Zapatero and Brazil's former President Lula; no political support for Lula's popular front in 1994

toiling masses to tear themselves free from the bloody capitalist chaos, and the conservative, patriotic, utterly bourgeois character of the outlived labor leadership. We must choose one of these two irreconcilable conceptions." (The proletariat and its Leadership, The USSR in War, Leon Trotsky, September 25, 1939).

FOR A PROLETARIAN VANGUARD OF THE IV INTERNATIONAL

Today's extreme need of a true proletarian political organization that is the willing to establish a Bolshevik militancy armed with a Trotskyist program is an enormous advantage to our group in making our task successful. Our job now is to build a revolutionary workers' opposition to Lula's government and the bourgeois government that will replace him.

When in the hands of those bastards who were LBI's well asserted target of criticism, this document might cause some perverse moral satisfaction to them. We advise these gentlemen to enjoy this brief moment. From now on, they can no longer take advantage from the fact that the Trotskyist organization that criticizes them is isolated from the working class vanguard's task forces. We are very confident that once aware of its historical interests, the proletariat task forces will march upon the politics of class collaboration towards the worker's takeover aiming the construction of a socialist future for humanity.

Humberto Rodrigues, Founder and former member of the LBI's Central Committee, a member of the Newspaper and Magazine Workers' Struggle Revolutionary Marxism editorial board.

Nadia Silva, Former militant of LBI and TRS;

Luiza Freitas, Former militant of LBI and TRS;

Pilar Oliveira, Former militant of LBI and the TRS

October 2010

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

Statement on Libya by the Liga Comunista of Brazil, the Revolutionary Marxist Group of South Africa and Socialist Fight of Britain 21 April 2011

Declaration to the workers of the world and their internationalist vanguard

For the unconditional defence of Libya against Imperialism!

For a Military United Front with Gaddafi to defeat NATO and the CIA armed "rebels"!

No confidence in the government of Tripoli; only by arming all the people and by the permanent revolution can we win the struggle!

The global economic crisis has increased the appetites of Imperialism to appropriate the planet's riches by super exploiting the working class and recolonisation. Capitalist governments of the world have moved enormous sums of money from state coffers to large private capitalist financial intuitions in the name of saving capitalism's crisis cause by speculation. Now the bourgeois governments are seeking to recapitalise their coffers. For this, they force the working class to pay the price of this financial orgy. This payment is made through fiscal adjustments, the attacks on wages, and victories over unionised labor and the attack on social security, etc. It has also increased the cost of living for the masses, and increased inter-Imperial competition in the semi-colonies.

In Europe, from Greece to Ireland, popular resistance was restrained by pro-Imperialist party leaders and trade unions. In Wisconsin in the USA workers leaders linked to the Democratic Party did the same. In Latin America, so far, but not for long, the governments of the "centre left" are delaying and dampening social conflict by the control they exert over mass organizations. Obama ordered the start of the bombing on Libya when he was with the pro-imperialist President Dilma Vana Rousseff, in Brazil.

In Africa the liberal bourgeois opposition to dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt made democratic transition arrangements to install new puppet governments to stabilise the country and keep it sympathetic to the U.S. and Israel. We do not consider these processes as "Arab revolution" or "democratic revolutions." These popular uprising are genuine expressions of the outrage at price increases and increased oppression caused by the imperialist crisis which began in 2008 but Imperialism seek to divert these potential revolutionary situations enhance and extend its dominance in Africa and the Middle East.

If Imperialism cannot take ownership peacefully as in the fraudulent referendum that divided the Sudan, then the UN will come to occupy the country by military force and impose their fraudulent elections as happened in Ivory Coast. All this, with the support of the African Union and the ANC government in South Africa.

In Libya, Syria and Iran, Imperialism seeks to accomplish coups camouflaged as "democratic", by taking advantage of the "popular uprising" in neighbouring countries. In Iran, the U.S. and Israel seek to revive the reactionary "green revolution".

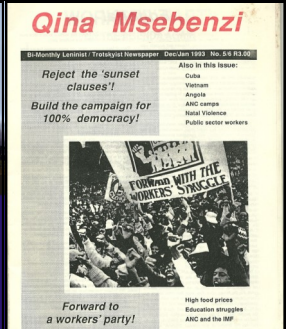
In Syria U.S. Imperialism and its Zionist enclave strive to create the same scenario of civil war to justify another military intervention. In Libya, Imperialism made a qualitative leap in its intervention. Not only by what it did after starting the "rebellion", but they had also prepared beforehand. A "revolt" in Libya is not any kind of revolution, but a counterrevolution, directed by Imperialism and supported and sponsored by the CIA. It is the continuation of a series of attempts to restore the monarchy and tribal privileges in favour of U.S. and European Union, which began shortly after Gaddafi took power in 1969 and continued sporadically since then. Not coincidentally, the flag of the "rebels" is the flag of the monarchy imposed by Imperialism, the flag of the puppet King Idris (1951-1969).

Rebel leaders in Libya were CIA agents from the beginning, as were the anti-Chavez coup leaders in Venezuela in 2002. Imperialism, headed by the U.S. and France, seek to balkanised Libya, as it did in Yugoslavia or to dominate it together, as in Afghanistan and Iraq. We have also have seen this in Bolivia, where Evo Morales surrendered a larger share of the revenues from gas exploration to the pro-Imperialist coup makers in the east of the country.

Those who hold the naïve notion that what happens in Libya is a revolution of "masses" and a continuation of the riots in Tunisia and Egypt, they forget that the masses have been duped by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet Revolution (Czechoslovakia), the Orange Revolution (Ukraine) and all other 'revolutions' made in the CIA. They were all, in fact, counter-revolutions, sponsored by Imperialism.

Since the new escalation of Israeli attacks against Palestinians 20 Palestinians have been killed and 50 wounded in the worst Israeli offensive in Gaza for two years. It is the bloodiest attack since the 2008 military operation that killed 1,400 Palestinians. We are for the destruction of the Zionist state of Israel and for a multi-ethnic workers' and peasants' government a based on workers' and peasants' councils.

For 21 years Hosni Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) in Egypt was a member of the Socialist (Second) International (SI) alongside the New Zealand Labour Party, the Australian Labor Party and the British Labour Party. The SI only expelled the NDP in January 2011, after the mass demonstrations emerged that brought down Mubarak, but not the NDP. But true to its long history of defending British Imperialism British Labour leader Ed Miliband gave unequivocal support to the Benghazi rebels and to the bombing of Libya on the totally hypocritical basis that, "as internationalists we have both the responsibility and the opportunity to help enforce international



O Bolchevique No 4 of the Liga Comunista and the QM of the Comrades for a Workers Government, Dec/Jan 1993.
RMG of SA report: "Currently our comrades are preparing the re-launch of our publication, Qina Msebenzi (QM), preparing for the local government elections and the development of the RMG Youth organisation"
RMG Website: <http://thebolshevik.jimdo.com/>

law and save innocents from slaughter". Using Gaddafi's foolish threat of "no mercy, and no pity" he sanctioned the bombing which will result in far more deaths than Gaddafi could have caused, but, as an 'unintended consequence' will put the oil resources of Libya in the hands of western Imperialism to invest in the markets of Wall street and the City of London and divert it from schools, hospitals and welfare payments in Libya and investments in other African countries.

Jim Murphy MP, Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary gave the cue that the rest of the soft-left in Britain and internationally have followed, "Inaction would have undermined the cause of freedom not just for the hundreds of thousands of people who have risen up against Gaddafi in Libya, but in other countries where people are also fighting for change."

And just so as we are left in doubt about the Labour party's position on Imperialism's murderers Murphy writes; "our thoughts should be with all British Forces around the world, including the more than 10,000 Britons in Afghanistan. Those undertaking courageous acts in the sky above Libya and in the Mediterranean should be given all the support they need because their bravery is what enables the UN resolution to be enforced and the Libyan people to be protected". There is, naturally, no concern about the civilians and fighters blown to pieces 'to save lives' in Iraq, Afghanistan or now Libya only concern and praise for the killers.

The greatest proof that the "rebels" are nothing but butchers and Libyan agents of Imperialism is that they have invoked NATO bombing on their own people, as did the collaborators at all times of the class struggle since the Paris Commune Thiers (1871) to Lebanon (2006). As each day passes it becomes clearer that the native agents of Imperialism are merely open cat's paws for multinational intervention in the country. They are racists and xenophobes, the enemies of all black working class Saharans in

Continued on page 14