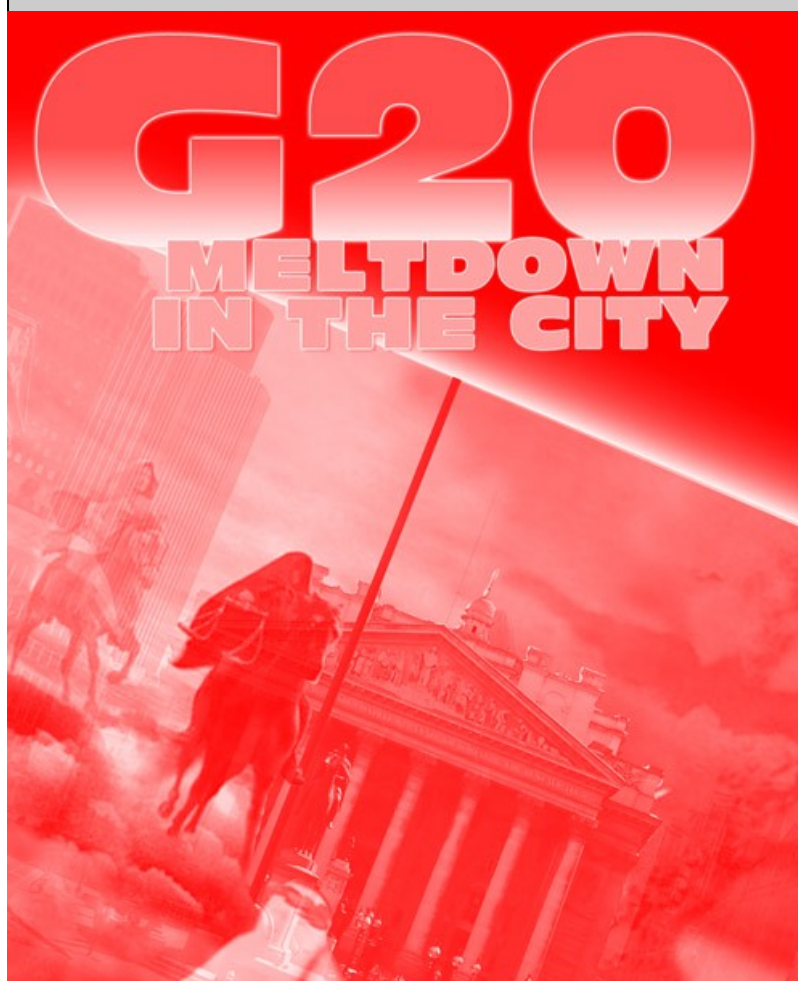


# Socialist Fight

Issue No. 2 Summer 2009.

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## No support for chauvinist, xenophobic strikes—Page 10



**12 noon April 1st 09  
Mass Street Party  
at the Bank of England**

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Unity is strength, L ' unité est force, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, Minimada iyo isku ximaantu waa awood ama xoog sidaa darteed waa inaan isku ximaanaa, Związki zawodowe, Einheit ist Stärke, Всеединство прочность, bashkimi ben fuqine, L ' unità è la resistenza, 団結は力だ", A unidade é a força, 単一性はある 強さ, De eenheid is de sterkte, Ní neart go chur le céile, 단일성은 이다 힘 힘, Workers of the World Unite!

# The Blue, the Green, the Yellow, the Red and the Residuum

## EDITORIAL

### The Blue

**T**ory Boris Johnson's first political coup as London Mayor was to ensure the loyalty of the "thin blue line"; he forced the resignation of Sir Ian Blair, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner appointed by Labour and replaced him with Sir Paul Stephenson, a policeman with more of a Tory outlook. Although we are told, "the appointment will be made by Her Majesty The Queen following a recommendation by the Home Secretary under the Police Act 1996," Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary, was forced by pressure from the rightwing media to accepting a new Tory police chief.

Ian Blair had been forced to resign by media pressure over the police murder of Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes on 22 July 2005. The media rushed to the defence of the police after the killing of de Menezes, where the whole establishment rallied to them, beginning with Labour Mayor Ken Livingstone, to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the coroner at the inquest, who instructed the jury they could not return a verdict of unlawful killing. This resulted in an open verdict on 12 December 2008. The de Menezes family issued the following statement, "We are all in shock and simply cannot understand how the deliberate killing of an innocent man and an attempt by the Metropolitan police to cover it up does not result in a criminal offence. We condemn the CPS decision and reject the logic of their argument".

So it seemed it was not the police as such that the right wing Tory pressed wanted to attack but Ian Blair as a Labour appointee, however the clearing of the police resulted in increasing arrogance that they could get away with murder. But the Liberal establishment had even more reason for its growing alarm over the increasing arrogance of the police in alliance with the Tories and the right wing media with the support of Labour.

Azelle Rodney died after being shot six times by armed police in Edgware, north London on 30 April 2005. He was in the back of a car and unarmed. There has been no inquest as yet and the family fear that the new Coroners and Justice Bill which allows no-jury inquests, will prevent them ever knowing why he was killed, further protecting the police from due process. Susan Alexander, his mother, took her demand for a public inquest to the European Court of Human Rights in March 2009 after being "thoroughly disappointed" by UK politicians.

### The Green

On 27 November police officers entered parliament without a warrant and searched the offices of MP Damien Green, the Tory shadow immigration minister. He was arrested and held by the Metropolitan Police for nine hours and then released on bail. The Speaker of the House, Michael Martin, has now ruled that the police cannot enter parliament without a warrant. In August 1642 Charles I sent his officers into parliament to arrest five members. The speaker refused to co-operate, the five escaped and the English Civil war began. The contempt for bourgeois democracy shown by the police evokes uneasy memories. Jacqui Smith was unaware of the proposed arrest of a senior Tory MP and the proposed entering of Parliament. Sir Paul Stephenson, who was acting commissioner, was not informed either. He says the decision had been taken by a "team of officers under the command of assistant commissioner Bob Quick", who was forced to resign after he was photographed with readable document on display which revealed a planned raid on terrorist cells, which then had to be conducted immediately. This entire operation was exposed as a sham as all the arrested Pakistani 'terrorists' were released without charge.

According to a story in the official Tory newspaper, *The Telegraph*, on 18 April officers trawled Green's House of Commons computer for the name of Shami Chakrabarti, head of the human rights organisation Liberty, who had nothing to do with this case put had come in for public criticisms from the government in the past. She said: "I think this raises very serious questions about just how politicised, even McCarthyite, this operation was. Is it possible to be shocked, disappointed, and yet not surprised?"

David Cameron, the Tory leader, was furious at the actions of the police. *The Mail On Sunday* had published damaging details of Quick's wife's business and he accused the Tories of being out to get him. Apparently they did. He was Britain's most senior anti-terrorism officer. Green was accused of abetting a civil servant at the home office to leak sensitive documents and plans portraying Labour as "soft on immigrants" and this is now established as the truth. The offence carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and in principle could be applied to journalists or any third party seen as conspiring with or aiding and abetting a public official to leak information.

In a legal precedent journalist Sally Murrer was arrested in May 2007 over a story she ran in the *Milton Keynes Citizen* based on information she got from Police Sergeant Mark Kearney. She was detained for



**Shami Chakrabarti: "it is dispiriting to learn that my name became a keyword search for anti-terror officers. We will look forward to answers from the new brooms at the Yard and from the Home Office."**

twenty four hours, interrogated three times, strip-searched, charged and told she could expect a prison sentence. However the case against both the journalist and the policeman collapsed the day after the arrest of Green because the judge ruled that evidence from a massive police bugging operation was inadmissible as the surveillance was a violation of human rights. The details of the case show that the police's target was not just Murrer but also the policeman Kearney who had raised concerns that the bugging and secret surveillance of Labour MP Sadiq Khan was unethical, if not illegal.

### The Yellow

Now the new police chief has to investigate a new police murder, that of Ian Tomlinson at the G20 demonstration on 1<sup>st</sup> April. It is clear from all the video footage on the net that this was a police riot. But the reaction of the "yellow", the Liberal Democrats and *The Guardian* newspaper in particular was astounding. With a campaigning zeal worthy of a Marxist publication they have pursued the police wrongdoers. They have forced the suspension of two officers, forced another post-mortem on Tomlinson which proved the previous one was fraudulent. The new post-mortem showed that Tomlinson died from an abdominal haemorrhage.

The Home Office pathologist who carried out the first one which alleged he died of natural causes, a heart attack, was Dr Freddy Patel who was reprimanded by the General Medical Council in 1999 after he discussed in public the medical history of African Roger Sylvester. In October 2003 a jury returned a verdict of unlawful killing against the eight police who had beaten him to death. But the "establishment" had the verdict overturned by the High Court in November 2004 in one of the major miscarriages of justice of the last decade. His father, Rupert Sylvester said, "I'm very angry, very disappointed, very bitter. The police know they can go and [take] our loved ones and get away with it because they have the whole establishment backing them, protecting them, covering them. When you've got the establishment against

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you, you can't compete with them. They've taken this [inquest verdict] away from us. I don't know how we're going to get justice." As with the case of Ian Tomlinson police were expected to be charged with manslaughter after the unanimous jury verdict of unlawful killing. Tomlinson has had a third autopsy.

Even the Tory Daily Express, headlined "Police did this to me", "It was just like being whipped by the Taliban" G20 protester Nicola Fisher complained on 17 April's front page. The police had not only battered Gaza demonstrators in January 2009 but one by the arch-Tory Countryside Alliance in 2004. But in the case of Tomlinson surely the liberal yellow establishment plus the Tories and their press will win justice? Expect the opposite; when the vital interests of state security are involved and the image of the police becomes too tarnished the establishment will close ranks. Remember what Master of the Rolls Lord Denning had to say about the Birmingham Six in 1980, "If the six men win, it will mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence: and that the convictions were erroneous...This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say: It cannot be right that these actions should go any further". Justice will always be secondary to that in capitalist society.

## The Red and the Residuum

In all these conflicts the vital interests of the working class is being determined in the context of the world wide recession. Unemployment is soaring, industries are imposing wage cuts, and house repossessions are at record levels. Whilst families are becoming desperate we should remember a small detail about the Damian Green case. Green was attempting to portray Jacqui Smith as being soft on immigrants. But Labour has one of the worst human rights records in Europe on immigrants. It is viciously reactionary and the immigration services act as a law unto themselves, deporting and incarcerating immigrants and sending some back to certain deaths at the hands of murderous regimes in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere.

An underclass is re-emerging in Britain, with no rights and no papers doing the poorest paid jobs often below the minimum wage; cleaning, fruit and vegetable picking and working in the rag trade and other sweatshops. These are the new residuum. The residuum was what some social commentators in the middle 19th century called people in London who were outside the industrial advance and were either unemployed or rarely employed. Of course on a global scale the majority of humanity are now a residuum, making nonsense of the origins of the word. In Britain they are generally unorganised but in London the cleaners, mainly Latin American, have made a courageous attempt to fight back and joined the unions Unite and the RMT (see page 5).

But they found that Unite was only interested in their subscriptions and was repelled when they took militant strike action in their own defence. And then a new political calamity befell them. In Lindsey Oil Refinery the British Jobs for British workers (Bj4Bw) strike was "won" with the full assistance of Derek Simpson, the joint General Secretary of Unite (see p.7). The "Trotskyist" Socialist Party, Respect and the entire reformist left of the Labour party saluted the "victory". It marked the re-emergence of the Labour Aristocracy. These were the arch-reactionaries that controlled the craft unions before the great class battles of the 1880s and 90s.

They lived on in the north of Ireland where the supremacist Loyalist dominated trade unions ensured that there were no jobs for Catholic Irish nationalists, in the Harland and Wolf shipyards, in the Bushmills whiskey distillery or in any major employer. The Socialist Party (Militant as it then was) said exactly the same about the 1974 Ulster Council Workers strike (a semi-fascist uprising which had the support of the British Army and the RUC police) against the Sunningdale Agreement as they did about Lindsey; "nonetheless although carried out in a distorted and reactionary manner, the UWC strike has shown the power of the working class. It has demonstrated the superiority of mass struggle over the, by comparison, feeble methods of the Provisionals (IRA)" (Peter Hadden *Troubled Times* p. 41, 1994). The oppressed nationalist residuum is again stirring as evidenced by the shooting of the two soldiers and the policeman. The green is again on the move, although "in a distorted fashion".

But in 1994 it was only a region of a million and a half citizens in conflict; here it is the whole of Britain. The uprising of the residuum at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as typified by the Bryant and Mays match girls' and the Dockers' tanner strikes changed the entire political climate. This created the possibility for the advance of socialist ideas and led to the formation of the Labour party. This was a major gain for the British and international working class because it intuitionalised an advance of class consciousness, no longer did they despise the economic 'loser' as is still the case in the US but they established that the entire working class and all human beings must be protected and nourished by the entire society, albeit in a reformist manner with a bourgeois-worker party, Labour, as the instrument. This has been the focus of the attacks by both Tories and Labour since about 1977 against remarkably stubborn resistance.

The concept of 'totalisation' used by Jean-Paul Sartre in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* as explained by Andy Blunden <http://home.mira.net/~andy/works/sartre.htm> is the "class consciousness intuitionalised" that is the Labour party; "The totality he (Sartre) has in mind of course is not just a *material* thing, but a living institution or organisation, a *social* totality — a state or party brought into being by the creative act

of a social movement of some kind; as soon as this social movement ceases to actively and energetically create and recreate the institution, it falls prey to inertia, the gradual disintegration of centrifugal molecular movement. Further, there are two kinds of activity (or labour) by means of which an entity is "totalized" or constituted as a thing: the activity of those who "inhabit" the thing (the bureaucracy) and the activity of those who created (and recreate) it and continue to recognize it in their actions. [p. 45-46] ". When the working moves again politically it will seek a political outlet. This will inevitably be the reformist trade unions and Labour party—the bureaucracy will be counterposed in conflict to 'those who created (and recreate) it' - the working class. Of course it is true that the Labour party cannot institute socialism, that is the task of a revolutionary party but to win the working class for that we must acknowledge that our attitude to the Labour party is our attitude to the working class, as Trotsky said. The residuum was marginalised. Prison reform, free universal education and eventually free health service in the NHS after WWII was the product of these victorious class struggles and the formation of the Labour party. It is the duty of every "red" to defend these, to repudiate the disgraceful chauvinism shown at Staythorpe, the miserable reformism of the People's Charter and the No<sup>2</sup> the EU Europhobic "platform" of Bob Crow, the CPB and the Socialist Party, which is the political product of Bj4Bw.

Each one of these reactionary developments is a direct threat to immigrants and the Black and Asian community, each one is calculated to inspire fear and insecurity. The arch-reactionary 'trade union' demonstration at Staythorpe on 24 February which chanted "foreigners out" is the arrogant expression of the rise of the fascist BNP, the same political force that is emboldening the police against the entire political establishment and is threatening parliamentary democracy itself. And the shadowy state forces have again intervened in the political process, forcing the resignation of Brown adviser Damian McBride whose "dirty tricks" emails were surely leaked by them to the Tories to undermine the government as payback for refusing to stand by them over Damian Green and a warning to back off over the G20 attack. They surely have much more dirt they could release.

Small sympathy to the British social democrats, whose political cousins had done so much to prepare the rise of fascism in the 1930s only to be amongst its first victims. And we see that even the Tories are a little apprehensive as to where the increasing repressive state forces, which they did so much to advance themselves before Labour, are going. But the colour coded Thailand revolution shows the rise of the residuum and the reds. Every revolutionary socialist with a developed class consciousness knows the truth of this analysis; they know that to champion the rights of the poorest and most oppressed is to fight the battle for the socialist revolution.

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# Antrim/Armagh: Unconditional but Critical Support

By Steve Bagal

## Class Struggle

**S**ocialist Fight unconditionally defends those Irish Republican militarists that carried out the executions of British Army soldiers at a barracks in Antrim earlier this year, and killed the officer of the PSNI colonial police force in Craigavon. The British Army are in Ireland as imperialist occupiers, denying self-determination to Ireland and maintaining the last major colony of the British Empire (the occupied 6 Counties of Ulster that comprise "Northern Ireland"). The soldiers were going from the occupation of one country to occupy another. For this reason, British Army soldiers are certainly 'legitimate targets' of those fighting for a united Ireland, free of imperialist forces and free of the Border that divides not only the Province of Ulster and the Irish nation, but also divides the working class. That is where we are in agreement with the "republican militarists".

However, we need to ask what do the republican militarists think can be gained from a resumption of the guerillaist strategy, "armed struggle", by a dedicated, secretive minority that failed so decisively when carried out by the P-IRA on the basis of much more support than is enjoyed by its splinter groups? We need to propose alternatives.

British troops were re-introduced in 1969 to ensure the maintenance of the border dividing Ireland since 1921 and to defend British interests in a much broader context than 'just' in Ireland. The Provisional IRA emerged as the defenders of the beleaguered Irish nationalist minority. Their goal was to "get the British soldiers out" of Ireland. Their campaign enjoyed mass support among those Irish nationalists under occupation, as well as among Irish immigrants worldwide.

## Bobby Sands

This support peaked in 1980 and 1981, when Republican prisoners went on hunger strike to win their rights as Prisoners of War against Margaret Thatcher. Hunger Strike Committees sprung up all over the world, mostly in former British colonies. The working class of much of the world was mobilising in defence of "the men behind the wire" against world imperialism as represented by the British Government. Thatcher's intransigence, with the total support of Labour's shadow Home Secretary, former Northern Ireland Minister Don Con-cannon, a NUM sponsored former union official, and the cowardly inaction of much of the far left, caused the deaths of ten hunger strikers between 5th May and 20 August 1981. A brief look at the worldwide reaction to the death of Bobby Sands on 5th May shows its powerful anti-imperialist effect. This is from the Wikipedia account;

"In Milan, 5,000 students burned the Union Flag and shouted "Freedom for Ulster" during a march.

In Paris, thousands marched behind huge portraits of Sands, to chants of 'The IRA will conquer'. In France, many towns and cities have streets named after Sands. Examples include Nantes, St Etienne, Le Mans Vier-zon and St Denis. In the Republic of Ireland, his death led to riots and bus burning. In Dublin, the famous Moore Street market closed for the day of Sands funeral. In Liverpool a march in support of Sands took place from

Upper Parliament Street to the Pier Head, chanting "Bobby Sands MP". It was besieged by enraged Liverpool Orange Lodge members along the whole route. The International Longshoremen's Association in New York announced a twenty-four-hour boycott of British ships. Irish bars in the city were closed for two hours in mourning. In Hartford, Connecticut a memorial was dedicated to Bobby Sands and the other hunger strikers in 1997. The lower house of the New Jersey Legislature, voted 34-29 for a resolution honouring his "courage and commitment."

In 2001, a memorial to Sands and the other hunger strikers was unveiled in Havana, Cuba. After the 1979 Iranian revolution the government renamed Winston Churchill Boulevard to Bobby Sands Street. In the Indian Parliament, opposition members in the upper house Rajya Sabha stood for a minute's silence in tribute. A large monument dedicated to Irish protagonists for independence from Britain, including Bobby Sands, stands in the Waverley Cemetery in Sydney, Australia."

The all-Ireland Hunger Strike Committees and the mobilisations, were dominated by Sinn Fein who used them to build popular front alliances with Fianna Fáil and Labour local councillors in the south. Their policy was no confrontation with the southern state forces and this was rigorously enforced in this second revolutionary situation in May 1981 following the death of Bobby Sands; the other was in August 1969, both, of course, were all-Ireland upsurges. In the late 1970s early 80s the radicalisation in Ireland was always to pressure the British state to negotiate a way out, so the roots of 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA) were firmly planted then. SF used the hunger strikers as voting fodder. But the only force that could have got the Brits out was a united front with the British working class. However, except for currents like Irish Freedom (RCP) and some others, the 'Brit left' refused to give unconditional support and fight the Prevention of Terrorism Act in the unions etc. It was this early British version of a War on Terror that exposed the chauvinism of the British left on Ireland.



Craigavon and Lurgan resistance to the arrest of those charged with the shootings of the two soldiers and a policeman

The leader of the Hunger Strikers in the Maze Prison, Bobby Sands, was elected with 30,492 votes from his death-bed as an MP to Westminster for Fermanagh and South Tyrone as an Anti H-Block/Armagh Political Prisoner. Sinn Fein won the by-election caused by his death from starvation. With Thatcher trashing the industrial base of the British economy at this time - taking on the most well-organised sections of the British working class "salami-style" (first the dockers, then the steel-workers leading to the great Miners' Strike of 1984-5), the mass influx of workers into the branches of Sinn Fein in the 26 County Republic and... the possibilities for a mass campaign to rid Ireland of imperialist domination, led by the organised workers were certainly there.

## Good Friday Agreement

However, this seems to have been the beginning of the end for the Provo campaign against the British occupation of Ireland which finished with the signing of the GFA in 1998 and the subsequent decommissioning of Provo weapons. The central occurrence in the intervening years, 1981 to the mid-1990s' striking of a deal between the petit-bourgeois nationalists of the P-IRA and the imperialists of the British Government (the GFA), was the world-historic defeat for the proletariat of the collapse of the deformed and degenerated workers' states of Eastern Europe, the USSR, China etc in 1998-91.

This victory for imperialism dramatically shifted the whole balance of world forces away from progressives and toward neo-liberal capitalism: its effects being seen everywhere with a huge ideological offensive by imperialism, spreading neo-liberal economics everywhere in the world. Politically we saw the collapse of former opponents of imperialism in the form of political formations 'making deals', or supporting nasty, thoroughly anti-working class Governments. This was collectively known as "the Peace Process", most famously involving the PLO in Palestine, the ANC in South Africa and Sinn Fein in Ireland. In April 2009 Gerry Adams and his team visited Israel and Gaza

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to extol the benefits of the GFA. Nowadays, Sinn Fein as junior partners at Stormont, sit almost at the top of the new structure of Government for the occupied 6 Counties - overseeing the running of the hated Northern statelet that their predecessors fought and died to destroy, actively assisting the British imperialists in their continued occupation by attempting to legitimise the occupation and its political structures!

It would seem that the aims of those that carried out the attacks on the British Military and the PSNI colonial police force were to de-stabilise Sinn Fein's involvement in the Stormont regime to collapse the structures. From reading the various websites of these republican militarists, including their statements of Easter 2009, it is clear to see that they offer no way forward for the workers and poor of Ireland or anywhere else in the world but by their actions they damage the opportunities for the workers - the only truly and consistently progressive force in modern society, to impose their own solution to the various crises facing them and the planet. The militarists have a warped idea that the increase in repression that is an inevitable side-product of their 'terroristic' forms of action is in

some way progressive (sounds a bit like recommending a vote for the Tories in a British election - 'because the working class need to be whipped like a dog before they shall get off their knees and fight' or something!). Of course the closing down of civil liberties can in no way be to the advantage of the working class, who needs the utmost liberty in order to arrive at a programme for the conquest of political power.

## Hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle

Do we share the aims of the republican militarists? Well, they rarely criticise the partitionist Government of the 26 Counties Republic of Ireland and think that 'justice' shall be done if the 6 Counties currently under occupation were to comprise part of a capitalist 32 county united Ireland. We as revolutionary socialists have to ask what the class nature of such a future united Ireland might be, and we stand with James Connolly who wrote in the *Shan Van Vocht* in January 1897, "If you remove the English army to-morrow and hoist the

green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs".

That is the story of the 26 counties. We are in favour of a 32 county Workers' Republic in Ireland which would be part of a socialist federation of the islands of Britain and of Europe, and of the whole world. We recognise that the only genuine solution to the present finance and economic crises—as well as for problems such as the "national question" in Ireland—is the ending of the nightmare of capitalism worldwide which is based on the private ownership of everything in the world - a tiny number of capitalists own and control the whole of the Earth's resources. We fight for a world revolution, the vision of October 1917 in Russia. Easter 1916, August 1969, May 1981, were part of that objectively; the Irish working class needs a leadership that consciously fights for it.

## National Shop Stewards Network Conference 2009

Saturday 27 June 2009, 11.30am - 4.30pm

South Camden Community School, Charrington Street, London WC1 (near Euston and King's Cross stations)

**STOP THE RACE TO THE BOTTOM!**

**FIGHT FOR EVERY JOB -**

**DEFEND ALL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE.**

**FOR INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' SOLIDARITY**

Keynote speakers from workers in struggle including Lindsey Oil Refinery Construction workers' dispute, car workers, London Underground, local government, and more.

## Socialist Fight Literature Fund

**Socialist Fight aims to raise a Literature Fund of £1,000 to assist in the regular publication of the journal and the production of a number of pamphlets which we have in preparation. Projected pamphlets include a republication of the WIL's *Revolutionaries and the Labour Party*, *Class consciousness, the Vanguard and the Revolutionary Party*, *The WRP Explosion* (available online now (see page 26), all with new introductions. Please send cheques made payable to Socialist Fight to:**

**PO Box 59188, London, NW2 9LJ**

## Motion in support of Visteon

On 31 March, 240 workers at the Visteon car-parts factory in Enfield (a spin-off from Ford motors) were told that the factory was closing and that they had to leave – without pay, redundancy or pensions. The following day 75 workers occupied the factory.

Faced with a possession order and committal charges against UNITE reps, on 9 April the workers left the factory, but have since maintained a 24-hour -a-day picket to prevent Visteon bosses from removing goods and machinery.

Many of the workers have worked at Visteon for 20, 30 or even 40 years. When Ford sold the factory to Visteon in 2000 the bosses guaranteed to maintain Ford

conditions, including pay, redundancy and pensions. Visteon bosses have stolen the workers' hard-earned jobs, redundancy packages and pensions and it's the workers who are facing the police, the bailiffs and the courts. Branch resolves;

- To send a message of support to the Visteon workers congratulating them on their courageous struggle, which continues to inspire all workers concerned for jobs, homes, families and futures

- To send a donation to the Visteon workers

- To invite a Visteon worker to speak at a branch meeting

- To organise a delegation to visit the picket line at the factory in Ponders End, Enfield

- To write to Visteon UK demanding that the company honour its commitment to uphold Ford terms and conditions

- To publicise the Visteon workers website and email announcements list amongst members.

### Notes

The factory is at Morson Road, Enfield, EN3 4NQ

Nearest train station is Ponders End. The plant is 5min walk, cross the footbridge, walk down main road towards Central London, the next street to the left is Morson Road, the factory situated at the end.

Donations can be sent to "HSG" at PO Box 2474, London, N8. This is a local community group's bank account the workers are presently using to receive funds

Requests for speakers – call Linda on 07727 113 923, or Kevin on 07956 375 410

Messages of support can be emailed to [visteonoccupation@goolemail.com](mailto:visteonoccupation@goolemail.com) or to the PO box above

Address of Visteon in the UK is: Steve Gawne, Visteon Engineering Services Ltd, Endeavor Drive, Basildon, Essex, SS14 3WF



Leading republican activist Colin Duffy (above) was charged with the shooting of two British soldiers on 27 March. He has agreed to let his name go forward for the European Election on 4 July.

## Support the struggle for political status for Republicans in Portlaoise and Maghaberry Prison.

Write to the Prisoners, details from:

<http://southarmagh32.blogspot.com/> or <http://www.rsfcork.com/>

**Maghaberry Prison  
Old Road  
Ballinderry,  
Upper  
Lisburn, BT28**

**Portlaoise Gaol  
Portlaoise  
Co. Laois  
Éire**

# Budget 2009: The Darling Axe is Coming

By Steve Bagal Before the 2009 UK Government Budget, we heard two very interesting things: Dave Prentis, leader of the 1.2 million member public sector trade union UNISON 'threatened' the Labour Government (at least from the front page of the Metro) that if the Government didn't start to listen to the wishes of the members of the Unions that give the Labour Party the vast bulk of its income then changes could be on the agenda and the £millions given to the Labour Party might not be forthcoming for much longer.

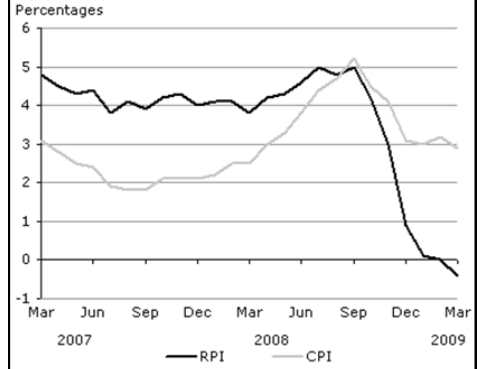
They were pretty vague threats, but threats that clearly are a reflection of the unease of the majority of public sector workers whose jobs and conditions of work are under serious threat - not only as a result of the recession, but because of the destruction of public services that is going on as part of the pro-Business programme of the Labour Government regardless of "financial constraints" (e.g. see SF1 article on Birmingham City Council). Approximately 90% of Labour Party funding comes from the Trade Unions with only Unite contributing more than UNISON.

Also, right-wing, Tory, and Business "think-tanks" and commentators proposed that Chancellor Darling makes £30 billion of cuts to the public sector... so to whom did he listen; from whom does he 'take his orders'? On the day of the Budget, John McDonnell wrote a series of articles at blogs and other

places making an exposure based on information that his privileged position as an MP entitles him to see: "hidden" in the Budget is £30 billion of cuts, including £16 billion from the "sale of assets" which include the Royal Mail national postal service, the Royal Mint, Ordnance Survey, Land Registry and the QE2 conference centre in Westminster.

The front page of UNISON's April 2009 "Labour Link" magazine carries an article in favour of councils' "selling assets" in order to fund Single Status settlements; further, council workers have had a 0.5% pay increase implemented without any consultation... but the "pay-claim" UNISON "is demanding" is only for the same as the rate of the Retail Price Index (RPI) whose latest calculation (April 2009) is that 'inflation' has now become "deflation" so that prices - according to the RPI, are falling by 0.4% so presumably to get an open pay-CUT for this year's pay-RISE would represent some kind of success for the UNISON bureaucrats!

Worse - during last year's "pay campaign", UNISON were demanding 6%+, pointing out that council workers have had pay-cuts for the last 10 years, and how much prices were rising last year...then they settled for the original 2.45% that council workers took strike action to oppose, then ACAS (Govt- and bosses-friendly conciliation service) 'ruled' that council workers should get a pay-rise of 2.75%.



RPI is a measure of inflation which includes falling mortgage payments and housing depreciation values; the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which does not include these, is still at 2.9%, see graph. For obvious reasons unions up to September 2008 always demanded RPI + and employers concentrated on the 'headline inflation' CPI. Logically positions should be reversed since then. How does the falling value of your house benefit you? It only cuts the cost of those buying houses and very few are doing that right now. But that is included in RPI which is still being used to benchmark wage claims, despite the obvious anomaly. But the capitulation of UNISON and other TUs before the Government and the Bosses surely becomes legendary when they end up negotiating pay-cuts! Wages have fallen by 6% this year.

## On the Buses: Central Pay Bargaining without the pay

By AJ Byrne The collapse of the strike waves on London buses of last year (see SF1) has left a bitter taste in the mouth of busworkers. The strikes were abandoned because one small company (1,000 drivers), Metronet, was enjoined from the London-wide strike of 22 October and all the other convenors, apart from one dissenting vote, just abandoned the struggle without even waiting for the reported 'threatened injunctions' from their own companies. To their horror, having spent six weeks "covering all the legal pitfalls", a further indicative vote on 5 December returned a 75% vote in favour of resuming strike action. They simply ignored the vote and negotiated individual pay deals with their separate companies of around 4.2%.

But on 27 April all the London reps and others rallied at Transport House to re-launch a new Central Pay Bargaining campaign. Professor Keith Ewing explained that London-wide and even national bargaining had been the norm in

many industries, private as well as public, and there was no reason it could not be achieved if fought for. All present carefully avoided any mention of bringing the buses back into public ownership. Although there was much bitter comment on the 'race to the bottom' created by competitive tendering and horror stories at how TUPE (transfer of undertakings laws which apply when routes are won or lost in tendering) is used to cut wages amazingly no one thought to call for the abolition of this pernicious system either. But clarity soon emerged. This central pay bargaining campaign was not about pay at all, only about central bargaining, each individual company would pursue their own claims as they ended up doing in the last round when the £30,000 pa target was abandoned. We would just be fighting for 'the principle'. Strange term that when we consider the actions of the chair of the London Convenors' Committee, Metroline's Steve O'Rourke. He won an extra .2% by recommending a deal

(opposed by three reps) that created two new, lower rates for new starters, rewarding existing drivers by stealing the pay from new drivers. This in the midst of a campaign that was all about getting 'one rate for the job'!

Some reps did point out that something should be done about the different terms and conditions in the companies that made comparison impossible. A formula which would allow such comparison was worked out last year and this could have been used as a bridging agreement whilst the unions in the separate companies agreed amongst themselves on harmonising these conditions. But that too is now forgotten. But then we know that the problems for most convenors is the militancy of the memberships and not the intransigence of the companies, with whom they have very cosy relationships. This ignominious collapse puts busworkers in great danger; it is an open invitation to Boris Johnson to cut wages by again



Central pay bargaining not about pay and two new lower pay rates for new starters to win the same 'rate for the job' for all! Reg Varney never did better than these jokers.

tightening the tendering rules. He is already talking of a financial black hole in the underground system of an estimated £5bn with falling tube and bus passenger numbers (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/mar/30/london-tube-funding-boris-johnson>). With this leadership expect no better than the 1993 sell-out. We desperately need a proper rank-and-file busworkers movement on the buses like the one that did so well in the 1930s so we can pressure the union and also take action when the official union will not—with the bureaucrats when possible, against them when necessary.

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



## Socialist Fight::

### Where We Stand

We stand with Karl Marx: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule'.

We see democratic soviets/workers' councils as the instruments of participatory democracy which must be the basis of the successful struggle for workers' control as the pre-condition for the revolutionary struggle for political power.

The revolutionary process of transition to communism is based on the struggle to form an international federation of workers' states and such a federation is required in order to overcome

the domination of global capital.

We defend the heritage of the Russian Revolution and critically support the revolutionary thrust of the first four Congresses of the Third Communist International before the victory of the counter-revolutionary Stalinism.

No to popular fronts with the political representatives of any capitalist class to 'defeat fascism', stop war or for any other reason and no to sectarian abstention from the class struggle.

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.

We aim to develop a programme for the emancipation of the specially oppressed. We

support the right of women, Black and Asian people, lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people to caucus inside the unions and in social democratic parties.

We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist attacks. Self-defence is no offence!

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

We demand of all governments a world plan to combat climate change and the degradation of the biosphere which is caused by the anarchy of capitalist production for profits of transna-

tional corporations. Ecological catastrophe is not 'as crucial as imperialism' but caused by imperialism so to combat this threat we must redouble our efforts to forward the world revolution.

We support Trotsky's Transitional Programme of 1938 in its context. We always practice the method embodied in that document because it is the Marxist method of mass work as advocated by Lenin in Left Wing Communism; an Infantile Disorder in 1920.

As revolutionary international socialists we support Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution and its applicability to the present era of globalisation.

We are for the reconstruction of the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution and will fight for the fusions and splits necessary for this in our international work.

## Welfare Reform Bill: Most serious attack ever on the welfare state

The following piece from the harpymarx blog expose the reactionary nature of the Welfare Reform Bill. The only serious attempt to fight it is from the UK Disabled People's Direct Action Network and London Coalition Against Poverty (photo opposite). Disgracefully there has been no trade union-based campaign against it:

The Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights is to look at whether the Welfare Reform Bill is compatible with the UK's human rights obligations. They will be considering the following:

● *whether changes to require employment and support allowance claimants to undertake specific work-related activities will be administered, without discrimination, and in a way which is compatible with the right to respect for private and family life and property rights (Article 8, Article 1, Protocol 1 and Article 14 ECHR);*

● *whether powers in the Bill to contract out functions of the Secretary of State or others, and provision for direct payments, will provide adequate protection for individuals who might seek redress for breaches of their Convention rights under the HRA 1998;*

● *whether the proposals in the Bill which would introduce conditionality for benefits claimants who are, or may be, dependant on controlled drugs or alcohol, are compatible with the right to respect for private and family life, property rights and the right to enjoy those rights without discrimination; and whether the proposals to enable the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission to make administrative orders in respect of the suspension of the passports and driving licences of non-resident parents are compatible with the right to a fair hearing (Article 6 and the common law).*

The Joint Committee on Human Rights has also written to Purnell outlining their concerns about the Bill. They question the necessity of sanctions, which can lead to discrimination. Can the claimant appeal against the decisions in relation to sanctions? Also, they ask, what training will these 'advisers' have so that they can give adequate support and help to claimants? And they ask whether there is an increased breach of the right to privacy. Would a woman who refuses to name the father of her child if she doesn't know his identity be penalised through prosecu-

tion if he came forward, the reason she refused to name him was through fear of violence?

Other aspects of the Bill they are questioning is will the current economic crisis affect the ability for advisers/contractors to implement the proposals in a manner which is compatible with Convention rights. Along with what safeguards and/or guidance are the government going to implement to stop discrimination. The letter has further questions for Purnell (and they want an answer by the 13th March 2009) about the compatibility of the Welfare Reform Bill and human rights.

It is a very interesting step that this committee has become involved because the Welfare Reform Bill is intrusive and invasive, with the added unnecessary and oppressive need for conditionality, from the way drug users will be treated (forced treatment programmes or you'll lose your benefits), to lone parents, claimants and people with disabilities. And forcing people on Workfare schemes through threats of benefit sanctions. These proposals attack civil liberties, freedoms and a right to privacy.

And the question I want to ask is how



many people will drop out the benefits system because of the endless attacks, vilification, stigmatisation and humiliation just to get a pittance of a benefit?

How many people through limited choices will turn to crime and prostitution as a result? But hey, NL will respond by building more titan prisons. No wonder the Joint Committee on Human Rights is scrutinising the Bill as it tramples on the rights of the most powerless in society.

<http://harpymarx.wordpress.com/2009/03/08/>

**Is the welfare reform bill compatible with human rights?**

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

# Willis/Mitie cleaners: 3 months and still fighting!

WORKERS sacked by Mitie after organising a union defied the multi-million pound cleaning privatiser again yesterday (24 April) by demonstrating in the City of London at the luxury headquarters of global insurance brokers the Willis Group.

The cleaners have now been protesting for an incredible THREE MONTHS - in defiance of legal threats from Mitie - in a determined effort to win their jobs back. With the help of a megaphone kindly donated by a branch of Unite, they begin their protest. The cleaners and their supporters don fluorescent vests, blow whistles and shout slogans to create a wall of noise demanding the reinstatement of the unfairly sacked cleaners.

The cleaners, who are all migrant workers from Latin America and Africa, organised their workplace through Unite's Justice for Cleaners campaign, eventually winning a pay rise that increased their poverty wages close to the London living wage of £7.45 an hour. But in a move that the workers' shop steward Edwin Pazmino described as all too common, the privateer - which raked in almost £70 million profits last year - attacked the newly organised workers by changing their shifts in retaliation.

"Mitie demanded that instead of working a part-time evening shift, we must work a full-time night shift," he explained. "But this was impossible for those who have children - some of us refused and the company sacked us." The cleaners have been deluged with solidarity from London's Latin American community, with interviews on Spanish language radio stations highlighting their fight as

an example of how bosses are exploiting migrant workers.

Last Saturday Mr Pazmino spoke to a packed public meeting in the heart of Latin London - Elephant & Castle. It was organised by the Coordinadora Latinoamericana - an alliance of various Latin American community and solidarity campaigns including the Latin American Workers Association. The subject was 'Amnesty for some or Papers for all' and sought to mobilise for the May 4 migrants amnesty march in London on a non-exclusionary platform. The meeting heard how immigration controls are used to attack workers attempts to organise. A collection was held for the sacked Willis cleaners.

Mr Pazmino says that the workers have been encouraged by their union's apparent pledge to now take up their case. "Unite says that it wants to support us, but it is tied by the agreement it signed in exchange for recognition with Mitie, pledging not to go to the streets to protest when there is a problem," he said. But he points to Unite's support for the Visteon workers, who recently occupied their factories in protest at



mass sackings, to suggest that the union should not be concerned about offending the bosses.

"What the Visteon workers are doing is right - this is a good way to fight," Mr Pazmino insists.

"We visited them at the Enfield factory last week to show our solidarity, and they have inspired us to continue our struggle for our jobs," he added. He pledged that the weekly demonstrations would continue.

**Info: Edwin 07931 464 890 or Alberto 07803 634 319**

**Latin American Workers' Association  
c/o T&G, 218 Green Lanes, London N4 2BR  
tel: 020 8826 2063**

## Justice for Cleaners, SEIU and Unite

In a post " on *The Commune* blog (<http://thecommuine.wordpress.com/>) **Mitie cleaners take on city of london bosses** on 17 April **Jake Lagnado** outlined the treacherous role of Unite in this dispute.

In mid-2007 around 25 cleaners at multinational insurance brokers the Willis Group based in the City of London began to organise under the umbrella of Unite's Justice for Cleaners campaign, for the campaign's main demands of the 'living wage' rather than the minimum wage.

The campaign, largely modelled on similar campaigns run by the American union SEIU, aims to target key workplaces in a particular sector it wants to unionise. The idea is that after a limited time pouring resources into unionising this sector, a self-sufficient union structure is left in place, and resources are switched to another campaign in another sector...

The union has worked hard in the face

of adverse publicity to persuade those on the inside of the union that this is a cause not worth supporting.

Why? Because the workers went outside the rules by demonstrating when they shouldn't have. And in the Willis case, it appears it was national Unite officers at the highest level who told lower ranking officials that this was union policy.

Launching wage rise campaigns makes good publicity, but companies don't usually intend to spend a penny more on their workers. So they may award the wage rise but will then make up for it by increasing the workload, making people redundant and, crucially, reducing and thereby dispersing organised workforces. As we know, campaigning after the event in the case of redundancies is extremely hard as people don't have the same power. Even in the case of Gate Gourmet it was shocking how soon after the official settlement the issue of those left on the outside be-

came a non-issue - something which I have never seen properly discussed on the left.

The Justice for Cleaners campaign has many echoes of SEIU campaigns in the US. Most of all, in the top-down way they are controlled and the way they sit easily with the partnership approach to industrial relations. The organizing approach does not mean an end to the partnership approach, despite a certain amount of 'militant' posturing e.g. noisy demos, occasional sit-ins and the like. It is of course better such organising campaigns happen than they don't. It is also important to note that, as in this case, workers do fight within them to make their own demands heard, and use tactics outside the campaign rule-book.

At the same time there is no doubt that union officials, especially those caught up in the almost religious fervour of some organising campaigns, react very badly when workers play outside their rules. When cleaners at nearby Schrodgers bank held their own self-organised

protest in late 2008, the union sanctioned it at the very last minute after repeated attempts to postpone it. But it also sent an organiser down to desperately try to control what the cleaners chanted and what leaflets they gave out.

Finally the Willis case brings up the issue of union policy which prohibits protests while negotiations and internal procedures are going on. How many recognition agreements is this written into? Even if - and it is questionable - there are tactical reasons for not officially sanctioning protests during talks, it is outrageous that any union should actually use this as a reason not to represent its members. It reveals such an agreement as one by which both union and company control workers. In particular, where unions call off protests supposedly to allow talks to place.

For a fuller analysis of the methods employed by Unite adopted from the SEIU see *Andy Stern—All American Hero* by AJ Byrne Weekly Worker 678 Thursday June 21 2007

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



Socialist Fight Flyer for the Convention of the Left Meeting in Manchester on 24 January 2009:

## For Class Struggle Unity for Socialism, not Popular Front Unity to elect Labour, placate the Daily Mail and Sun, and defend capitalism

This Convention needs to forge the anti-capitalist programme for unity of the left. But unity on what programme, to do what? In the first place we must assert as socialists that the working class itself, and only the working class, can achieve socialism. As the putative leadership we must produce a programme for the crisis that mobilises the working class in their own defence and hence in defence of all the oppressed.

A real programme to fight the effects of this crisis: Occupy workplaces threatened with closure! Build local support groups around the trades union councils, union and Labour party branches and CLPs! Physically prevent evictions of families who default on their mortgages.

But this mobilisation on the ground must be linked to some political perspectives. We all know that union bureaucracies strive might and main to prevent strikes and all class struggle when Labour is in office, using the spectre of the Winter of Discontent, to facilitate a victory at the next general election. Of course when Labour is not in office they do not want to fight the class struggle either because this will again only benefit the Tories!

So our demands cannot be aimed simply at the return of a Labour Government, even a left one. They must be for the building a mass movement of the working class to fight for their own interests, that is to socialise the means of production and to produce all wealth for human need and not for the profits of the capitalist masters of life.

So in demanding to nationalise the banks we cannot advocate the old, discredited forms where the government nationalised failing industries which were vital to capitalism, **IN ORDER TO ASSIST THE REST OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS TO MAKE MORE PROFITS OUT OF US.** No, this must be nationalisation under workers' control, with democratically mandated delegates from labour movement bodies answerable to and recallable by these bodies.

Likewise in preventing evictions we must fight for the by now widespread demand of taking these properties into local council ownership and renting them back to the families, combined with demands for a massive expansion of council housing. It is appalling that we still have to campaign to defend council housing after a decade of Labour governments.

Also in this period we see the rise of the far right BNP and other fascist groups. But this Labour government is playing their game by its attacks on immigrants and the youth. Britain treats both groups worse than almost any country in Europe, this from a country that gave asylum to the revolutionary Karl Marx, who made no secret about his views, in the middle of Victoria's reign. It is a sad commentary that we have a government with a worse attitude to immigrants than Disraeli and with greater social inequality and mobility than those same Victorians!

But we have a Labour party in government 90% dependent on TU funding who have now broken the miserable promises given in Warwick 2 and are about to privatise the Royal Mail. The leaders of Unite, the GMB, Unison, etc. could force Brown to halt the vicious oppression of immigrants, stop privatisation and reverse previous privatisation like rail, buses, water, electricity, etc, etc.

But they will not do so because they are corrupted by their staunch defence of capitalism over the years. The recent figures from the Certification show just how privileged they really are compared to the rest of us, and this includes all the lefts like Crow and Serwotka. We are urgently in need of a rank-and-file movement in the unions, independent of **ALL** bureaucrats, which mobilises the workers to fight for their own interests.

Finally this type of programme is NOT the People's Charter, a useless reformist



An image from the pathetically reformist Peoples Charter. Like the Pope it wants 'a better future for all the peoples of the planet' but neglects to tell us that this is impossible in this vale of tears while capitalism survives.

lowest-common-denominator Stalinist Popular Front document which **DEFENDS** capitalism while the crisis is discrediting it in the eyes of ordinary workers.

Revolutionary socialists can ally with reformist socialists who agree that we need to get rid of capitalism. That is the bottom line for unity in struggle. We cannot tolerate Popular Front politics which only has the defence of capitalism as their first priority. Welcoming this vacuous document because it will produce broad unity is the politics of idiots. It can only demobilise the class struggle to produce its 'unity' it can only lead to defeats, like the notion that voting for Boris Johnson could stop the BNP.

Hope not Hate, the SWP and many other look to Alan Sugar and Boris for salvation, we fight for everything that gives the working class confidence in its own strength, everything that advances strike struggles and occupations, militant 'no-platforming' of fascists, everything that advances the class consciousness of the workers to see their mortal enemies are the capitalists and their treacherous misleaders are the trade union bureaucrats and Labour party leaders who defend capitalism, free market or Keynesianism. That is the only unity worth fighting for!

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**Socialist Fight statement on Lindsey Oil Refinery, 4 February 2009:**

## **No support for these chauvinist, xenophobic strikes**

"A trade union led by reactionary fakers organizes a strike against the admission of Negro workers into a certain branch of industry. Shall we support such a shameful strike? Of course not. But let us imagine that the bosses, utilizing the given strike, make an attempt to crush the trade union and to make impossible in general the organized self-defence of the workers. In this case we will defend the trade union as a matter of course in spite of its reactionary leadership." Trotsky 1939

**S**ocialist Fight (SF) unequivocally opposes the 'wildcat' strikes and their outcome because they were called on the reactionary basis of 'British jobs for British workers' (BJ4BW), it was on this xenophobic basis they were spread, with the assistance of the right wing media and on this basis they were tacitly endorsed by the entire Unite and GMB leaderships. And it was on this basis they were settled. We place the blame for this situation squarely on the backs of the reactionary Labour movement leaders; Gordon Brown and the Labour party leaders for endorsing the reactionary slogan, borrowed from the BNP, the Unite, GMB and other TU leaderships for tacitly endorsing and pursuing negotiations on that basis. A major weight of responsibility also rests on the shoulders of those left groups and organisations, the Communists Party of Britain (CPB), the Socialist Party (SP) and others who have acted as left apologists for these bureaucratic misleaders of the working class. When similar demands were made on the French TU leadership they immediately rejected them as reactionary chauvinism and insisted on demands like 'we will not pay for the bankers/capitalism's crisis'.

We reject the compromise of Keith Gibson of the Lindsey strike committee and the SP. This did not repudiate the original Bj4Bw demands, which were displayed so openly on the pickets. It was rather a cover for it, hoping we would forget, or close our eyes, to what they were really about. Gibson says that "Stewards and Union Officials asked to meet with IREM a.s.a.p. after Christmas to clarify the proposal i.e. would IREM employ British labour?" Then it explains that the walkout took place when "Shaws' workforce were told by the Stewards that IREM had stated they would not be employing British labour" (rb on SU Blog 3 Feb). He admits here that the initial walkout was about the nationality of the workforce, not about wages, conditions or any of the other red

herrings he and his apologists have been dragging across the trail ever since.

The SP motion, which then became the property of the strike committee and the mass meeting, but not the property of the Unite leadership – Simpson, Woodley or Jerry Hicks – says "Union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled union members, with nominating rights as work becomes available". That is simply Bj4Bw in another form. We reject the notion that "Union control of hiring is always preferable to the bosses controlling hiring. Enforcing an illegal closed shop would be a massive advance for the working class movement in this country".

On what basis would the union nominate people for jobs? The only issue that may be in question is equal access to jobs, but that is down to the subcontracting system itself, not nationality. When socialist in British trade unions fought discrimination against nationalists in the north of Ireland in the past they were always referred back to the Irish Region (Region 11, Northern Ireland in the case of the TGWU). Here, in the best workers' traditions, Loyalist craft engineering unions (like we have here), with all their history of privilege and empire loyalty and contempt for other workers, ensured the nationalists did not get to join the craft unions and did not get jobs.

Discrimination proceeded swimmingly, all in the name of the best trade union practices, the power of the unions was consolidated and the NI 'troubles' ensued. This 'union control' is only a demand for 'local' communalist discrimination; the predecessor of the SP in Ireland was quite comfortable with that. And British and Irish



based union leaders turned their heads away and pretended they just did not see. In a certain sense this demand is more reactionary than national chauvinism; presumable workers from the south of England, Wales and Scotland, let alone Ireland, would quickly be sent packing by our 'local' TU registrar of jobs.

As one comrade said, "But the SP states that it is the bosses who are setting one nationality against another. Yes but why play the same game? It is the BNP, say the SP, who are attempting to sever fraternal relations between workers from different nations, but the SP want union control of a register of locally skilled workers presumably to facilitate local jobs for local people. Some are trying to find socialist gold under this militant dross of nationalism. But that seems like an attempt at alchemy (BB). You cannot endorse the strikes and repudiate the aims, they are the same. If you endorsed and sought to spread these strikes you dealt a crippling blow to the British Labour movement.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Workers Power (WP) and SF are not siding with the Gov/bosses. The line-up is clear. The strikes had the enthusiastic support of the BNP, they have the support of the capitalist media, more enthusiastic the more you move to the right. The TU bureaucracy as a whole who would scarcely lift a finger to fight job losses or pay constraints while countless billions are handed over to

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**Derek Simpson, the Star-struck Morning (and Daily) Star's 'left-progressive' joint General Secretary of Unite demonstrates his contempt for immigrant workers and women. How can genuine socialists tolerate kowtowing to the Stalinist bagmen who promote this reactionary? Fight all bosses for jobs for ALL workers!**

bankers almost without conditions are enthusiastic supporters of these illegal but highly reactionary strikes.

The CPB, the SP and the TU bureaucracy supported it for entirely reactionary reasons. The bosses were 'opposed' because that is in their immediate short term financial interests, but they were not anything like as opposed as they would be if the plant was occupied, and the right of private property was thereby challenged, as in the Waterford Glass occupation. The government were 'opposed' but really not like they would oppose a real workers action, **in the long term interests of the class as an international whole**, like Gate Gourmet. They are for 'law and order' and against 'trouble' in general but if they have to have 'trouble' they could not get better than this from their point of view. Where were the threats to sequester the union funds, where were the High Court judges' injunctions, where were the brutal police attacks? Where is the class consciousness of those who cannot see the difference? And we reject with contempt those backward workerists who say we are siding with the Tories because Kenneth Clarke made an anti-racist statement criticising the strikers. Tory anti-racism bad, workers' racism good, declare these political idiots.

It was entirely correct of the Campaign against Immigration Controls (CAIC) to picket the Unite HQ and SF endorses the action. The prejudices of localist craft trade unionists would have been easily overcome and the strike orientated in a healthy direction if it had got a lead from the top. But the Unite leadership reinforced their prejudices. Principled socialists should seek to argue and struggle politi-

cally with these workers to explain that workers cannot win in national, let alone local isolation.

It is entirely nonsensical to talk of the form being reactionary and the content being revolutionary as if this was some kind of Marxist dialectic.

The founding of the Labour party was a result of the great blows struck by the New Unionism inspired by the Bryant and Mays Match girls and the London Dockers (mainly Irish) against the privileged empire loyalism in these elitist unions. They would troop across Westminster Bridge a century ago in bowler hats to work in building sites, the same reactionary aristocracy of labour represented by the Ulster unionists; many of us believed that was its last redoubt.

The marginalisation (but not elimination) of this reactionary tradition allowed the Labour party to be founded as a bourgeois workers' party (in Lenin's famous characterisation) and this was a great world-historic advance for workers everywhere. The re-emergence of the ascendancy of craft unionism will destroy the Labour party as a workers organisation of any kind unless it is fought, and its influence halted and reversed. That defeat has not yet been inflicted on the working class but unless we fight these reactionary labour lieutenants of capital in our ranks now the future will be bleak. And that would be a world-historic defeat and a reversion to the 1870s, but in far worse circumstances.

TUC leader Brendan Barber applauded Brown's British jobs for British workers speech, as did other TU leaders. In a sudden lurch to the right Unite and the GMB have adopted this line, they have allied with reactionary labour aristocratic unionist consciousness against the 'lower orders'. And that is not just targeting Johnny Foreigner, it will target the unskilled and the unemployed and, ultimately it will rebound on its 'socialist' supporters too. All serious revolutionists will have to fight this reactionary bureaucracy by fighting to build a rank-and-file movement in the TU independently of the bureaucracy.

These were reactionary strikes for reactionary ends which were 'won' by ring fencing some 50% Bj4Bw, foreign workers were excluded from these jobs and a reac-

tionary movement was put in train which could lead to the destruction of the entire working class and its organisations and all their historical gains. Fight them now, fight the reactionary leadership of the class who are responsible for this appalling situation or it will get worse. Do not try to find the silver lining; it is not there. They did mean what they said. If they occupied the plant and forged international solidarity that would be an entirely different strike, with entirely different leaders. To pretend otherwise is to defend the existing leaders and to prepare more defeats. This is differentiating the left in Britain; it goes to the core of class politics. Fight the reaction without reservations and you will find new revolutionists who will come forward to champion the interests of the class as an international whole.

**SF responds on 17th February to Permanent Revolution's critical support for the strikes :**

**Difficult, however, to square support for the strike with the report in last night's Standard that a Latvian worker on the Olympic site had been counted as a 'local' whereas he clearly was not 'British'. 'Local' is another word for 'British' and Labour's Newham council has become the champions of the 'British', demanding the names and addresses of those who work on the site so they can ascertain their 'Britishness' against the electoral register. You have now presented an open field to the right wing media, in alliance with Brown, the Unite and GMB leadership and ably assisted by the SP and their hangers on, to witch-hunt all 'non-British' workers. You have assisted to provide the class enemy with a stick to beat the entire labour movement. The strike started about Bj4Bw, it was spread on that basis and its conclusion was negotiated on that basis - how many jobs did 'the British' get? 102? Not enough and we have a job to do now on all the other sites in the country as the recession deepens to ensure 'our lads' are treated 'fairly'. It is too late now to begin to distance yourselves from the Unite/GMB leadership, what secret sellout were they negotiating behind the backs of the strikers, only 50 'British' jobs, maybe? They will have the full assistance of the entire right wing media in this loathsome quest which you cannot now credibly disown.**

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**Socialist Fight statement on the Launch of the new United Left Caucus in Unite on 21 February 2009:**

**The United Left must reject Bj4Bw**

**H**ow does British jobs for British workers go down in your workplace? On the London buses responses were unprintable and the anger against Unite for promoting this slogan was very strong. And they immediately linked it to the disgraceful scenes at Cowley, where again the Unite bureaucracy had sought to divide the workforce, this time between agency, i.e. temporary workers with no employment rights and permanent staff. Of course very few drivers on the buses are 'British'. And the Poles, some quite pro-management ones, were among the angriest, they know they are the most vulnerable because they are the latest arrivals and could speak out because they were not under pressure from fellow workers like in the building crafts to 'support' Bj4Bw.

**Unite in Turmoil**

It clearly is true that Unite is in absolute turmoil. John Haylett, Communist Party of Britain (CPB) leader and former Morning Star editor, had an extraordinary article on 9th February supporting Derek Simpson and attacking the SWP and SP for supporting Jerry Hicks in the upcoming election for General Secretary of the Amicus/Unite section beginning on 16<sup>th</sup> February. He says the right wing press have attacked Simpson alleging 'a secret house-for-life guarantee'; but this is nonsense, there was no secret about it, it was quite open, above board. No mention of whether it was morally defensible, however. And he used an amalgam by equating the attacks of the right wing press with those of the left, which, incredibly all seem to be 'designed to force radical change in Unite to bring about a revival of 'business unionism'. Woodley supporters were charging Simpson with just this orientation just a few short weeks ago. Some more criti-

cal observers have understood that Woodley himself was a long way down that road.

This seems to be a declaration of a split in the United Left before it is off the ground because it had promoted Woodley as the left counterposed to Simpson as the right. This was implicitly endorsed by both the SWP and the SP. And now Simpson, a former CP member, is 'the left-progressive candidate' according to Haylett and is supported by 'other Amicus Unity Gazette supporters, including those in the influential north-west region...the union's Workers Uniting Group and Communist party members'. This is on the basis that he was the best supporter of the 'recent successful struggles by Unite construction workers against their unjust exclusion by subcontractors from engineering industry projects'. Hicks had also supported the strike but this was accompanied by 'strident attacks on the union leadership. The SWP, meanwhile, demeaned the strikes, declaring they were based around the wrong slogans and targeted the wrong people", claimed Haylett. There was, of course, no mention of British jobs for British workers or the outcome of the strike which achieved just that, 102 out of 195 to be precise. But what else would you expect from an advocate of socialism in a single country? *All this clearly has nothing to do with Simpson's 'decision to support the Morning Star as the labour movement's only daily paper'. How cheap they come!*

The world of the left in the TUS really has changed after these strikes, time for the SP, and the SWP (who had a far better line on Bj4Bw) to stand firm in defence of **all** workers against **all** bosses, build genuine rank and file organisation and turn to occupations as a unifying tactic in defence of **all**

# Conference Report Back

Permanent Revolution's Mark H objected to the line Socialist Fight took on the United Left saying, *"To dismiss a gathering of 200 trade unionists simply because you don't like some of the leaders such as Woodley that many trade unionists, like it or not, have real belief in is absurd and sectarian. When the left starts to realise the need to engage with reformist workers, enter into daily struggle alongside them and put real effort into the enormous task of rebuilding the rank and file's organisational strength we might start getting somewhere"*. **Tony Fox** responds:

It was not simply that Woodley turned up for the start of the meeting. He and John McDonnell politically dominated with the Morning Star CPBers as their bagmen. Everything is to proceed by 'consensus'. If you are opposed to anything you simply do not clap. You either accepted the dictates or you could fold your arms when it came to clap-time. Perhaps those opposed to stuff should be given an opportunity to clap their opposition and then the chair could use a clapometer to decide the winner of debates. And, no, you will not get to change anything in future meetings because they have nobbled that too. Note the cute little piece on voting; if 'consensus' or the 'establishment of at least an overwhelming majority of opinion' – the clapping mechanism – fails, "In the event of the need for voting mechanisms, a weighted system designed to reflect the relative numerical strength of the regions shall be considered by the National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC)". In other words at the AGM, if by some fluke or explosion of the class struggle, those present succeeded in overturning the Stalinists, the Woodleyites and the Simpsonites then they would simply produce a 'weighted vote' from their pockets, as King Arthur so memorably did with his 3,000 NUM miners' votes, and vote everyone down.

So this 'left' will not tolerate voting, you have no opportunity to choose leaders as they come as an un-amendable slate, decided on in advance by the methods of the TGWU Broad Left, totally dominated by paid officials and employees of the union. These cannot oppose Woodley, or now Simpson and hope to advance their career. Politics of the left-reformist type is supplied by McDonnell who does not tolerate dissent himself. His Keynesian speech was farcical economics. If only Brown had understood enough to cut interest rates in time, but he had stupidly handed over the BOE to financiers, and if only he understood how to stimulate demand by giving money to the poor, etc, etc. then capitalism would have been ok and that is what will work if I get in, he implied.

This nonsense is supplied by the Healyite World-to-Win people, the very same people who assisted in supplying Livingstone with his left reformist claptrap rubbish when he was associated with the WRP. And the SWP's Pete Gillard is part of the set-up, getting the prize of Editor of the Left United mag and the SP are also in the frame, although it is difficult to see why they will not launch their own left caucus in Unite at some stage. But a Bj4Bw striker did interrupt and propose how 'UK jobs' might be protected and he was very well received. An acceptable 'leftist'.

The purpose of United Left is to support the union bureaucracy and secure jobs and positions for those who kowtow to Woodley and Simpson. It is no more a genuine left fighting for the membership than Woodley and Simpson are socialists, although some may wish to give them a chance. And the scope for fighting for a genuine class struggle line within it, let alone fighting for revolutionary politics is limited. Every national TU has more democratic structures than this Stalinist-dominated fraud, why would we seek to 'give it a chance' as if we were naive idiots? Work within it but look to building a rank-and-file movement independent of these bureaucrats from the best elements we can find in there.

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# What lies behind the advance of the politics and methods of Stalinism in the British Labour movement?

## No Vote for Crow's No2EU Europhobia

By AJ Byrne

**W**e will show that the methods and politics of Stalinism have advanced in the British labour movement because of the strengthening of the hold of the TU and Labour bureaucracy over the working class and the progressive capitulation of the 'far left' groups to this bureaucracy via the medium of the CBP/Morning Star. It is our contention that this opens the ground for the advance of genuine revolutionary socialist politics which looks directly to the working class itself, increasingly disgusted with this bureaucracy and looking for a way to fight them.

### Peoples Charter

We can chart this advance from the preparation and launch of the Peoples Charter. This was pure Stalinism in its politics and methods. It was prepared in secret behind the backs of the ranks of the labour movement; it was drafted by the CPB, all its politics were already decided before opening it up to discussion by 'representatives of the working class'. These plenipotentiaries, like the RMT's General Secretary Bob Crow, LRC leader John McDonnell MP, Prison Officers' Association's Brian Caton, Nick Wrack of Respect and Dot Gibson, General Secretary of the National Pensioners Convention, met behind closed doors, refusing entry even to leading RMT activists. Naturally it was not discussed during its preparation within the ranks of the RMT, the LRC or anywhere else because there are just too many leftist there who might object to its appalling reformist, nationalist outlook.

It was first publicly touted by Mary Davies, veteran CPBer, on 10 January at the RMT convened conference on "the crisis in working class political representation". Workers Powers Jeremy Dewar was there,

*"Likening the Peoples Charter to the great Chartist movement in the middle of the nineteenth century she (Davis) said, "The Charter was not a party, but it was a mass, political, anti-government movement. Let's start with extraparlimentary struggle - the legacy of the Chartists." The opposite, of course, is the intention, "How would it achieve its aims without laying down action proposals and promoting new*

*forms of organisation - not just against closures, but for occupying plants and offices to stop them in the breach? Not just against the fascist British National Party's racism, but for community self-defence to stop them taking over our streets? We need a programme for working class action, not a people's charter aimed at uniting unions, workers' organisations and the left with middle class parties like the Greens and Plaid Cymru."*

The reformist politics of the Charter was outlined by Nick Wrack at the Convention of the Left in Manchester on 24 January where he attempted to get the meeting to endorse an unseen document. SF leafleted against the document and a leading SF member, who had seen the document, publicly repudiated it (page 9). One CPB stalwart present recommended studying one Georgi Dimitrov, infamous author of the 1935 class collaborationist popular front which destroyed both the 1936 French revolutionary situation and the Spanish Revolution.

### Lindsay Oil Refinery

To give meat to this development we had the chauvinist Lindsay Oil Refinery strikes beginning at the end of January (Page 8) culminating in the 24 February "foreigners out" demonstration. That the Socialist Party could have found themselves on a demonstration led by a Union Jack waving bigot desperately trying to drown out this obscene chant from a labour movement event must have bothered their better members. The SWP initially rejected the chauvinism of Lindsey only to collapse into supporting the SP compromise by hailing SP member's Keith Gibson leftist programme which everybody, crucially including the Unite bureaucracy led by Simpson, ignored because it did not repudiate the original Bj4Bw demands.

Similarly with the AWL, a good initial position but ended up hailing the "victory" at Staythorpe. Ditto the USFI's ISG/Socialist Resistance and Permanent Revolution. So in the end only three groups stood against the chauvinist tide, Socialist Fight, a tiny group, Workers Power and the Spartacist League. The Campaign against Immigration Control (CAIC) also took a principled stance. The International Bolshevik Tendency were unable to take a position one way or the other,

apparently because of internal problems on the issue.

But there were many individuals who took a principled stance and stuck to it on the blogs, including members of the SWP and other groups and clearly some other were repelled but stayed silent through group loyalty. But only a few weeks later the SP's empire loyalism was on display again in the north of Ireland. On 11 March in Belfast their placards demanded 'no more killings' in alliance with Loyalists and trade union bureaucrats. There were no demands for the British army to leave Ireland, let alone the simple anti-imperialist duty to defend the oppressed republican communities against the vicious state repression then in train.

### Unite's Left Caucus

Then we had to endure the spectacle of Unite's Left Caucus on 21 February. This was again prepared by ultra Stalinist methods and politics (Page 10). And then we moved on to the No2EU launch. Again prepared by the Stalinists themselves in secret, progressively allowing in other 'leaders', the same methods and largely the same individuals as the Peoples Charter.

From the outset there was absolutely no question of allowing any internal democracy. Its name was registered in advance with the Electoral Commission, there was no rank-and-file consultation, no voting, no election of leaders. This time groups were excluded by name on the basis of their position on Bj4Bw, the SWP, the AWL and the CPGB and unnamed 'others'. Even those who opposed the chauvinism of Bj4Bw but hailed the "victory" of the workers won on that basis and tried to square the circle to remain in the loop were out in the cold. Those who took a consistent position were obviously deemed to be so barking mad as not to deserve consideration. Socialist Resistance was in a unique position, having taken the same position as many of the excluded groups (no to Bj4Bw, yes to the strikes for

those aims) but they slithered in by the tradesman's entrance as part of Respect. The SWP too was in somewhat of a dilemma. They were excluded by name but in Scotland, as part of the Tommy Sheridan-led Solidarity they could gain backdoor admittance. The Stalinist wanted Tommy, whose Saint Andrew's Cross was just as good as a Union Jack to them, so the SWP had to equivocate.

### Rediscovered principles

However for the other groups excluded by name and for PR it was now time to put forward their undying political opposition to chauvinism and backward nationalism, having failed so miserably to do so over Bj4Bw. Martin Thomas for the AWL let rip; "The expanded platform published on the website of the No2EU campaign for the 4 June Euro elections denounces "the so-called 'free movement' of labour" in the EU and "the social dumping of exploited foreign workers in Britain".

How can this be read as anything other than a "left" version of the chauvinist cry: "Kick out the Poles and other migrant workers"? As a macabre addition, the No2EU website has as its masthead, above all such policies: "It's a black and white issue". You have to assume that this is bungling tin-earedness rather than racism, but it is bungling tin-earedness of an exceptional order. The other question that arises is: how, where, and by whom was this expanded platform decided?"

PR's Bill Jefferies was even more dismissive. "It's a half baked campaign with a reactionary programme. Socialists should not support it. These are the same union leaders who have not organised a single official strike against the recession. It is utterly misconceived to believe that standing in the Euro elections, on a nationalist, not left wing at all platform, is a step forward. They will get a derisory vote. And while all the fuss is going on the



The infamous Unite Staythorpe demo of 24 February; SP marched behind the Union Jack and "foreigners out" chants and then obscenely claimed "victory" alibied by much of the left. The video can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzTf8G177a0> av=R\_VwUKsflLs.

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recession will be claiming more jobs”.

## Just do it!

And what of the CPGB? They were outraged to be excluded from the No2EU platform. As PR had done they had alibied the SP in WW 762,

*“It is true that SP comrades played a generally positive role in winning the Lindsey strikers to a progressive, internationalist set of demands, and in opposing the nationalist slogans spontaneously adopted by some, such as ‘British jobs for British workers’ (although admittedly it downplayed the use and significance of such slogans). But instead of attempting to play the same role in relation to No2EU, it claims that the campaign itself is seeking to ‘cut across ... national ... divisions’: ‘The same burning need for a clear lead is true on the political plane. That’s why the RMT’s electoral initiative, despite any weaknesses it may have, is so important.’”*

“Weaknesses” indeed! Peter Manson then complained bitterly,

*“Leaving aside the grossly inaccurate lumping together of the Socialist Workers Party, Alliance for Workers’ Liberty and CPGB (unlike the other two, we gave the Lindsey strikers critical support)”*

Difficult to see this as other than a grovel to the CPB and a plea to recog-

nise a common Trot-bashing heritage, the favourite theme of Lawrence Parker pushed in WW 766; they have upset the CPB by “deflating its absurd claims that it somehow represents the continuation of the Communist Party of Great Britain”. This belongs to the present CPGB, in the comrades view, including seemingly the ‘left’ Harry Pollitt, CPGB Gen Sec, who told us in 1936 that ‘the trials in Moscow represent a new triumph in the history of progress’. Peter continues,

*“... It must be stressed, though, that nothing is set in stone. On the one hand, it is not only the SP and AGS (Alliance for Green Socialism) that have expressed disquiet with the British chauvinism dominating the platform. So too has Solidarity (admittedly from a Scottish nationalist perspective) and some members and branches of the RMT itself. It is certainly correct to intervene in the campaign with internationalist, pro-party demands.”*

The politics and methods of No2EU really were ‘set in stone’ by its total lack of internal democracy but this did not prove an insurmountable hurdle for the political gymnasts of the ‘extreme democrats’ of the CPGB. However they were good enough to give their (very bad) reasons for attempting to join the chauvinist bandwagon.

But the top prize for double speak and hypocrisy must surely go to the USFI’s Socialist Resistance. Having listed horrendous problems with the platform they decide to support it anyway for no given reasons at all. They might just as well have openly admitted to being gross political opportunists—just do it! Here are the ‘problems’ they have spotted:

*“The most significant of these is its top-down structure and method of organising... One (other) example is the rejection of ‘the so-called ‘free movement’ of labour’. We support the right of any worker to work anywhere, with the same rights, with equal access to jobs, and to hold the union leaders to account for not defending wages, pensions and working conditions.*

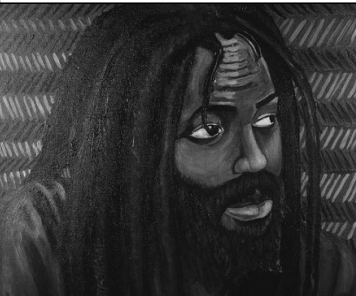
*An important political task which faces any left-wing campaign against the EU is to clearly separate itself from the much bigger right-wing nationalist campaign against the EU — led by the Tories, UKIP and the BNP. Otherwise things can go badly wrong! (!!!) No2eu has been weak (!!!) on this aspect. There is nothing in the large print on its leaflet which defines it as a left-wing campaign — and first impressions are important.*

*Most worrying was the decision of a key RMT organiser within the No2EU campaign recently to speak on a Campaign Against Euro federalism plat-*

*form along with former Tory MP Teddy Taylor. This is a bad sign and needs to be corrected quickly. (!!!) No2eu has to make very clear that it is a campaign in favour of the rights of working people and has nothing in common with Tory or UKIP style euro-scepticism (!!!).” (our !!!s)*

There you have it. Stalinist methods and politics advance because these fake revolutionists capitulate to them and never fight for their own declared revolutionary politics which they are clearly progressively abandoning in lockstep with the LCR of France. In times of relative class ‘peace’ centrists such as these equivocate for decades, but in heightened class struggle, as it is now emerging, the hypocrisy of this approach is very vulnerable to apposite propaganda.

They have all-but lost the political ability to relate to the independent interests of the working class not mediated through the left TU bureaucracy. They are unable to see the relevance of revolutionary socialist politics in fighting for rank-and-file mobilisations that set the working class base against the bureaucratic superstructure to open up the space for the propagation of revolutionary ideas and the building of a revolutionary party. They have become conservative and opportunist behind their ‘Marxist’ verbiage, still victims of imperialism’s neo-liberal offensive.



“Mumia” by Malik Seneferu, San Francisco

A former Black Panther Party spokesman, supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization and award-winning journalist, Mumia was framed up on charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981. On April 6 the U.S. Supreme Court summarily turned down without comment Mumia’s petition to overturn the frame-up conviction that led to a death sentence for this innocent man. While it took less than one business day for the Court to reject Mumia’s petition, which was based on the exclusion of eleven of 15 prospective black jurors from his 1982 trial, the racists in black robes have for weeks been considering the Philadelphia district attorney’s appeal to reinstate the death sentence, which was overturned by U.S. District Court Judge William Yohn in 2001.

(Partisan Defense Committee, 7 April 2009).

## FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!

16 April 2009 Interview with Democracy

### Now radio

**MUMIA ABU-JAMAL:** I have held out hope for the people, because I believe in the people, because the people may change. If the people don’t organize and protest, then no change will happen. It doesn’t matter who is sitting in what office or in what judgeship or whatever. And that’s just a fact. That’s just the truth.

Several weeks ago, a reporter in The New Yorker wrote an article, and I found it quite remarkable. I’m not a subscriber, but someone sent me a Xerox of that article. And it dealt with control units and all across the United States. And it illustrated quite convincingly to me how people are tortured all across the United States in almost every state of the union every day. You know, people are driven crazy. People are subjected to all kinds of vile and violent and vicious treatment, and they’re driven out of their minds by solitary confinement. Well, we can all celebrate the impending closing of Guantanamo, but there are Guantanos in almost every state of the union and have been for I think several decades now.

I think that’s the next phase, is people want to understand how to change this draconian system that we have in this country. That can be done, but people need to be aware of it, and people need to struggle for it, and they need to fight for it. Without struggle, there is no progress. Frederick Douglass was right.

For more on Mumia see <http://www.partisandefense.org/pubs/innocent/> or <http://www.bolshevik.org/>



### Official Unite Call to the Demo:

**There is not a family in the land untouched by the global recession. That is why Unite is pressing for clear and urgent action to defend jobs. The government took action to fix our broken finance system - now we need them to do more to help ordinary people weather the economic storm. This is about OUR futures. That is why it is so important that people send a clear message to the government that we want jobs to be its number one priority. Time is running out. Without a concerted effort from national government to protect jobs, our reputation as a country where employers can find talented workers will be shattered for years to come.**

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# Revolutionary greetings from the Fracción Leninista Trotskista

## International Trotskyism

**FLT (Leninist Trotskyist Fraction—CWG New Zealand, LOI -CI Argentina, POI Chile, RTL Peru, ORI Bolivia FT Brazil)**

Dear comrades of Socialist Fight,

We have received your statement against the reactionary strikes led by the English labour aristocracy and bureaucracy and we are publishing it in our international paper.

Your statement is a breath of fresh air. We would not expect less than that. In the middle of so many adaptations and capitulations on the part of the currents that speak in the name of Trotskyism in order to make the revolutionary movement kneel down before the world imperialist capitalist system in bankruptcy, we welcome your principled position. You condemn these reactionary strikes with a strong warning to the advanced workers *"...These are reactionary strikes for reactionary ends which can only win by driving foreign workers out of the country and setting in train the destruction of the entire working class and its organisations and all their historical gains..."* This is a strong stimulus for the advanced workers

We consider this point to be of decisive importance *"... Fight them now, fight the reactionary leadership of the class who are responsible for this appalling situation or it will get worse. Do not try to find the silver lining; it is not there. They do mean what they say. If they occupied the plant and forged international solidarity that would be an entirely different strike, with entirely different leaders..."*

Then you say correctly that *"...To pretend otherwise is to defend the existing leaders and to prepare more defeats..."*

We repeat, your statement is a breath of fresh air for the world proletariat, because, above all, you are Trotskyists located in Britain, Scotland and Ireland, in the heart of the imperialist beast, fulfilling your obligation as international Trotskyists. We are in the same trench defending the interests of the vast majority of the working class and their needs before the attack launched by big capital. In the opposing trench, is the labour aristocracy and bureaucracy which as the 3<sup>rd</sup> International stated, on the brink of losing their privileges due to the big capitalist offensive, strives to hold onto those privileges as they did when the Anglo-Yankee pirates under Bush's command attacked the Palestinian, Iraqi and Afghan masses with counter-revo-

lutionary wars turning the world into a rotten prison.

Therefore, we affirm together with the 3<sup>rd</sup> International, that only by defending the interests of the most exploited sectors of the world working class, it is possible to defend the proletariat's interests as a whole.

It is clear that this reactionary revival within the labour aristocracy is a bankrupt capitalist system's need to use it as shock force against the vast majority of the working class onto which the system must shift the costs of the crisis. The labour aristocracy and bureaucracy have tied their fate to keep capitalism alive while the vast majority of the proletariat can only bet on the victory of proletarian revolution.

Today, British imperialism, the major partner of USA, is discussing whether the bad debts of the banks and corporate it has bailed out are 100% or 150% of its GDP (Gross National Product). Meanwhile, whole generations of workers will be in debt and will have mortgaged properties and pay for their exploiters bad debts with hunger and misery. The Trade Union leaders want to make English workers believe that they will keep their jobs safe by demanding "British jobs for British workers-(BJ4BW-)" dividing the workers ranks, causing confrontations between workers in the EU and the world and undermining the strength of the international proletariat.

We proposed here to reaffirm the following notion: as Trotsky said whoever gives his little finger to the social chauvinists is giving his soul to the devil. For that reason, it is the duty of the class conscious workers in Britain and the other imperialist countries to, fight against that reactionary slogan of "British jobs for British workers". So that the British working class can survive **we must expropriate the British imperialist corporates, like the murderous British Petroleum that together with Cheney, Bush and company led to the oil wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine! We must tell the British proletariat that a victory for the British working class against BP is a defeat for the armed fascist bands in Bolivia that massacre workers and peasants in the Media Luna! Let's tell the British working class there is no possi-**

**bility of keeping their jobs and wages under attack by British bosses if the British imperialist corporates and their armies that plunder the colonial and semi-colonial people are not defeated by the Middle Eastern, African and Latin American proletariat.**

Let's together tell the truth. Let's say that when Thatcher went to war over the Malvinas with her Royal Navy launching her attack on the world and Latin American proletariat, she strengthened her arm to smash the heroic '85 miners' strike in which the proletariat of your country suffered a major defeat.

We must tell British workers that the chauvinist strike of the Trade Unions is reactionary since it does not tell the working class the truth: if British imperialism is defeated by the colonial and semi-colonial proletariat, British workers will be stronger position to fight for decent wages, to expropriate the bankers and nationalize without compensation all corporates that close or sack workers, and so make the bosses pay for their crisis. Our slogan must be **"To win jobs for British workers we must expropriate the interests of the British imperialist bosses all over the world, and we must support the uprisings of our class brothers and sisters in the oppressed nations who are exploited and oppressed by our own imperialist bourgeoisie!"**

US working class was subjugated to the counterrevolutionary offensive launched by the Bush government the treacherous AFL-CIO leadership. Meanwhile, the US imperialist regime is forcing its counter-revolutionary plans onto the whole planet, and the US working class is losing one by one its historic gains. As Lenin said "imperialism means the splitting of socialism" and so the parasitism of a system that is destroying the whole society can only survive itself by buying a sector of its class enemy, i.e., the proletariat.

The reactionary strikes promoted by the Trade Union leaderships and organized by big capital are not merely xenophobic or "racist". We are facing a real counterrevolutionary action on the part of the labour aristocracy and bureaucracy to divide not only the English proletariat from their class brothers and sisters of the colonial world

but also dividing the British labour aristocracy from the most exploited proletarian sectors at the heart of the English working class - the service workers and construction workers - like the Indian, Pakistani, African, Middle Eastern, and Southern and Eastern European immigrants.

To confront the demand "British jobs for British workers", we must raise the slogan "for equal work, equal pay for all". This is the only way to defend British workers living standards from the attempts by the bosses using migrant labour to drive down wages. That is the minimum demand to defend jobs for all to prove that the problem is not too many African, Pakistani, or Hindu workers in Britain, the fact that the imperialist parasites have wasted 14 trillion dollars [the Iraqi war is already 3 Trillion] on wars and speculation. Those parasites that live without producing but by speculating on the stock exchanges have wasted and destroyed much the wealth produced by human labour and even that, which has not yet been produced.

We believe we must oppose to the reactionary strikes led by the labour bureaucracy and the reformist parties the Greek slogans: "Spark in Athens, fire in Paris, the insurrection is coming". In France, we have seen a great mass political struggle in the streets, with general strikes, with the occupation of factories, with bosses taken as hostages. This struggle has been strengthened by the uprising of the revolutionary workers of the colonies in Guadeloupe, Martinique and the revolution that has opened in Madagascar. The spark was in Greece, Guadeloupe was set on fire and the smoke is already seen in Paris. This is the lesson that the British workers must have in their hands. The heroic insurrections in the French colonies and semi-colonies weakened Sarkozy and the imperialist Fifth Republic regime. This has created better conditions for the French working class to go into streets to make their demands and expose the labour bureaucracy. The greatest allies of the French workers in struggle were their class brothers and sisters of the colonies and semi-colonies who are super-exploited by French imperialist capital!

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



If the British working class is confused and contained by the Trade Union leaders the international revolutionary workers have a duty to tell the truth, and the whole truth. We have seen in your program that you raise the demand: "For direct employment by all firms of all labour, end the pernicious system of sub-contracting and agency working!" Comrades, for the working class to win this demand it must be accompanied by other transitional demands: Jobs for All who want to work! Divide the working hours among all workers without loss of pay! etc. And if the capitalists are in crisis and are now destroying the factories and machines, and cannot provide jobs and a living wage to the workers then their capitalist system deserves to die.

Of course the bosses use immigrant labour to drive down wages. But they are not the main cause of falling wages. Wages are still falling even as millions of migrant workers are sent home. The real reason that wages fall is that the bosses are facing a crisis and they want the workers to pay for it out of their wages. A defence of BJ4BW driven by the labour bureaucracy is the surest way to make sure that working hours increase to 65 a week and wages continue to fall. So comrades, the only way to defend jobs for British workers is to fight for Jobs for all and to expropriate the parasitic British imperialists who continue to plunder the colonial and semi-colonial world.

So while the immigrant workers are blamed, it will be the British workers who pay the costs of the crisis of the finance capitalist parasites through inflation and a rising cost of living. Against that it is necessary to raise Trotsky's transitional demands for the sliding scale on hours, wages and prices. The trade union leaders are collaborating with the bosses to protect British jobs by exporting migrant workers. The price of these chauvinist strikes for British workers will be a working week of 65 hours, under 19th century working conditions where wives and children will be again tied to machines and the British worker will do the immigrants mean jobs.

That is why, in addition to those demands raised in your leaflet, we believe it imperative to include demands that united the British working class with the worldwide working class through the transitional demands for the sliding scale of wages and hours of work and equal pay for equal work, and to oppose British imperialist plunder of the world proletariat and because only the defeat of British imperialism can free British workers from the oppres-

sion and exploitation their own bourgeoisie. As stated by Marx and Engels "No people that oppresses another people can liberate themselves."

So comrades, to summarise, as our contribution to developing your excellent statement on BJfBW, we want to highlight the need to attack the reactionary national chauvinism of the labour aristocracy and bureaucracy, especially in the imperialist countries. This is only one side of the reactionary policy typical of way that bureaucratic labour leaders scabs on workers. But we also must warn of the consequences of their reformist politics of regulating the crisis which is that the workers pay for the crisis by accepting the bosses' sliding scale of sackings, wage cuts and increased rates of production and working hours in the name of national class peace and harmony. This subtle policy, which is carried on in France, on the rest of Europe, USA, among other.

This is the lie we hear from the labor bureaucracy and their parties all over the world. "We have to accept the reduction in jobs, and wages, as the only solution to the crisis".

"There is no alternative" they all say. In this way in country after country they collaborate with suspensions, lay-offs and wage cuts, sackings of migrant and casual workers. They say if workers carry their "share" of the crisis the factories will stay open and they will get their jobs and wages back. Obviously this is a ruse to increase the rate of exploitation by appealing to national unity in the face of the crisis. These traitors are playing the same role within the working class that Martin Luther did for the bourgeoisie in selling out the Reformation.

Thus is it necessary to tell British workers about the hard experience of their class brothers and sister in France. The union bureaucrats told the French workers in October 2008 when the bank crisis had started, that they should use strike actions not to break the "social peace" but to pressure Sarkozy to the left so that they would keep their jobs under a "refounded capitalism".

Instead they were disarmed in the face of suspensions, immigrant layoffs, and now face the full impact of the capitalist crisis still tied to the treacherous labour bureaucracy. This year already 90,000 people have been fired, and it is expected that 350,000 will follow in the coming months. Sony, Caterpillar, Arcelor Mittal, Continen-

tal and other transnationals do not consider the "social peace" when they close the factories they have to around the world. And the French workers, whose union leaders promised that if they let the migrants get fired, they would keep their jobs, today they are facing company closures and massive layoffs, and forced to work 65 hours per week, so they are now responding with occupations such as Sony and Caterpillar, and even taking the bosses as hostages.

Thus when the bureaucrats, faithful to the united front with the bosses they have created, turned the general strike on March 19<sup>th</sup> into passive day of action to pressure the government to "negotiate" the workers responded by taking the solution into their own hands with factory occupations re-opening the revolutionary road of 1936.

You comrades, in an imperialist country, have a great obligation but also a great challenge. The FLT is convinced that the full truth must be told to the British workers. As Trotsky said, facing the challenge the workers see in real life the proof that their allies are the migrant workers and the super-exploited in the semi-colonial countries; provide there is a leadership brave enough to tell the truth. Otherwise, as Trotsky also said, the workers will not learn from the cynical and demagogic union leaders but from the whip of capital. So you are part of a great revolutionary tradition in speaking the truth to the British workers and the workers all over the world. For even if the workers cannot overpass the treacherous leaders and do not follow the revolutionaries, a great tradition will be left.

We adopt your position on BJfBW, together with what we add here, because we have to fight to smash the heads of those who have usurped our world party, the 4<sup>th</sup> International, under Pabloism and opportunism, the main expressions of the labor aristocracy and bureaucracy. We have to prepared ourselves for the fight to re-arm a revolutionary world party, with the strategy and program of the bolshevism and Trotskyism, the only living Marxism.

Finally, we want to pass along side you the admission test of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International to be able to continue the heroic traditions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Internationals. From the 21 Conditions, in particular, Point 6: "Every party that wishes to belong to the Communist International has the obligation to



**First Congress of the Comintern, 1919: "we affirm together with the 3<sup>rd</sup> International, that only by defending the interests of the most exploited sectors of the world working class it is possible to defend the proletariat's interests as a whole".**

*unmask not only open social-patriotism but also the insincerity and hypocrisy of social-pacifism, to show the workers systematically that, without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international court of arbitration, no agreement on the limitation of armaments, no 'democratic' reorganisation of the League of Nations will be able to prevent new imperialist wars."* And together with this point number 8: "...on the question of the colonies and oppressed nations is necessary on the part of the communist parties of those countries whose bourgeoisies are in possession of colonies and oppress other nations. Every party that wishes to belong to the Communist International has the obligation of exposing the dodges of its 'own' imperialists in the colonies, of supporting every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds, of demanding that their imperialist compatriots should be thrown out of the colonies, of cultivating in the hearts of the workers in their own country a truly fraternal relationship to the working population in the colonies and to the oppressed nations, and of carrying out systematic propaganda among their own country's troops against any oppression of colonial peoples". [21 Conditions]

A strong embrace in the hope that we can deepen our relations in the struggle against the labor bureaucracy and pass the test of the class struggle that it will identify us as international revolutionaries able to form an international revolutionary regrouping of the healthy forces of the Trotskyism, which more than ever is needed to give back to the international proletariat the leadership it deserves in order to fight the offensive of the class oppressors.

**Revolutionary greetings, Secretariat of International Coordination and Action (SCAI) of the Fracción Leninista Trotskista –FLT- (Leninist Trotskyist Fraction)**

## Reply from Socialist Fight

Dear Comrades of the LTF,

We were indeed pleased to receive your letter and we agree with its conclusions. We appreciate the efforts you have put into communication with us and elaborating a fuller programme. It is true that transitional demands like "jobs for all - sliding scale of hours" to prevent layoffs are necessary.

We feel very strongly that you are correct in saying "We are facing a real counter-revolutionary action on the part of the

labour aristocracy and bureaucracy to divide not only the English proletariat from their class brothers and sisters of the colonial world but also dividing the British labour aristocracy from the most exploited proletarian sectors at the heart of the English working class - the service workers and construction workers - like the Indian, Pakistani, African, Middle Eastern, and Southern and Eastern European immigrants". We have support on the London buses where the drivers are approximately 95% non-British. The slogan B4Bw made these very angry at the Unite union leaders that campaigned for this. We also have

supporters in the Campaign Against Immigration Control (CAIC) and there was real anger, and indeed some considerable apprehension amongst these immigrant activists that this slogan was assisting the fascists of the BNP and the government's border police; state forces themselves.

We are outraged that the Socialist Party, a 'Trotskyist' organization, has assisted this process and are trumpeting a 'victory' after winning 102 'British' jobs at Staythorpe oil refinery.

On international relations and the Fourth International, we are engaged in discus-

sions with three other groups at the moment. 1. With Workers Power and the League for a Fifth International. 2. With the International Bolshevik Tendency. 3. With the Groupe Bolchevik. We know you have written to the WP, we know you are aware of the IBT's positions and we know you split with the International group to which the GB belongs. Nevertheless we must hold proper discussions with these groups to draw proper balance sheets before we make any international regroupment.

**Comradely Greetings; The International Trotskyist Current – Socialist Fight**

## Rob Williams sacked by brutal bosses—Step up the struggle

Rob Williams, trade union Convenor of Linamar Swansea and vice chair of the NSSN, was sacked by the Linamar management last week, and then temporarily re-instated following militant action by the Linamar workforce.

Disgracefully, however, Rob today had his sacking confirmed. Negotiations between Linamar management and Tony Woodley took place all day in London, but Linamar did not shift.

Meanwhile at the Swansea plant Linamar revealed their brutality. Massive intimidation of the workforce took place - including foremen going around the shop floor threatening workers with the sack if they dared walk out in support of Rob. The bosses even went to the ludicrous lengths of removing the door from Rob's trade union office.

This brutal action by Linamar is an attempt to return to the nineteenth century. What Linamar do not realise, however, is that all hell is going to break loose when workers, both in the Swansea and the wider labour movement, hear how Rob and his members have been treated.

The official reason for his sacking was "irretrievable breakdown of trust" - one of the most blatant excuses to behead a trade union organisation ever used in any factory. Rob's record in standing up for his members, both inside and outside the factory, is second to none. However, what is at stake here is not the fate of one individual but the right for workers to be represented by the best militant fighters.

This sacking has to be totally opposed. The union has promised rapid action to organise a ballot for an official strike, but the anti-trade union laws mean this could still take up to a month between the ballot and the strike action actually taking place. That time, which must be kept as short as possible, needs to be used to pull out all the stops in support of Rob. Messages of support and donations should flood in.

If Linamar are allowed to get away with this, no convenor or shop steward, either in the already weakened car industry or in the wider trade union movement is safe. Allow the employers to inflict a defeat here and no trade unionist, shop steward, let alone a convenor, will be able to put their head above the parapet without the bosses seeking to cut it off.

Workers are facing the worst economic crisis since the 1930s. Big business is doing their utmost to make sure that it is the working class that pays for the crisis. Militant, fighting trade unionism – symbolised by Rob Williams and the union organisation in Linamar – must not only be preserved but strengthened in order to prepare the working class for the capitalist offensive that is under way in Britain and worldwide.

**Continue to phone protests to:**

**Head of Swansea Linamar Brian Wade 01792 656339**

**Personnel Manager 01792 656238**

**Messages of protest to [linda.hasenfratz@linamar.com](mailto:linda.hasenfratz@linamar.com)**

**Messages of support to Rob Williams:  
[robbo@redwills.freemove.co.uk](mailto:robbo@redwills.freemove.co.uk)**

## Groupe Bolchevik Correspondence

Comrade

I will submit the proposal for a joint Declaration before the European elections to the GB and to the CoReP for an official answer. Before, I answer in an informal way to you. Of course, the central cell of the GB and the bureau of the Permanent Revolution Collective are informed, as you will inform the comrades of Socialist Fight.

For Palestine, the Collective has modified its slogan since 2005, on the initiative of CRP of Peru. It looks pretty close to SF's one:

*For a united, secular, multiethnic Palestine, through the socialist revolution in Middle-East. The end of national oppression and of racism against the Arabs, the right of return for all the refugees, the equality of rights for all those who want to live in Palestine, Jews and Arabs, men and women, Christians, Israelites, Muslims and atheists, request the overthrow of the Zionist State and the establishment of secular, multiethnic Palestine on the whole territory of Palestine. Such a Palestine could only be a State of the workers and the peasants, since the only class which can achieve this historical task is the proletariat, since the only method is the socialist revolution and the only perspective for such a Palestine is the establishment of the socialist Federation of the Middle-East. (Statement about Gaza, 2009, 5 January)*

For Vietnam, the Collective does not have a precise position today, but it has changed its position on China after an internal discussion (see *Thesis on China*, June 21, 2008, in French and Spanish).

By principle, the Communists have the right (and sometimes the duty) to intervene in every organisation of the working class (even social democrat parties). For the NPA, I believe that it is necessary to agree about the destruction of the FI by the pabloism in 1950-1953, on the role of the IS-USec and its French section... before discussing any tactic (which must hold account also the limited forces of the GB and its membership: most of its militants were excluded from the LCR at the end of the 1970s or from the JCR at the beginning of the 1990s). Militants of GB took part in preparatory meetings of the NPA in several cities (Paris, Rheims, Rennes). Anyway, the central cell does not have any intention, like the CRI or the Workers Power Group, to present the NPA as a

step ahead. Our bulletin often gave information on the LCR-NPA (for example, we published in No 26 a review of the book by Bensancenot and Lowy on Guevara which MRP has since published into English). The next number of *Socialist Revolution* will present an analysis of the NPA.

For the CRI-CLAIRE, the GB tried to work with this group when it appeared. We invited it to our 4th conference in 2003. The CRI never invited GB to its own conference. The discussions with the CRI are presented in an extensive way in the part "Discussions" of the website of the GB (alas, in French!). One of the divergences was the tactics towards the referendum on the project of European constitution: the GB recommended the boycott, because the question led to either supporting the capitalist UE, or to defend capitalist France against the UE. The CRI chose to make a No campaign, a concession to social-chauvinism. However, I do not characterize as jingoist this position (the CRI uses most of the time internationalist rhetoric) but as an evidence of its tendency to the conciliation towards the trade-union apparatuses, of its adaptation to the pseudo-Trotskyist centrism: creation of a splitting students union with some Stalinist and some Morenists (FSE), "committees for a left No", a trade-union regrouping with the same people (CILCA), joining the NPA with some Morenists (CLAIRE)... At the international level, the CRI does not have more principles: it took part in the "pre-conferences" of the LOI of Argentina which aim to create openly centrist groupings of Zimmerwald type. Then it called with a regrouping with the POR of Argentina in 2005. It did not draw any assessment before adhering more or less to the current of the PTS of Argentina.

I suppose that the political document of SF is the ITC Platform which appears in Socialist Fight No 1. Can we have the text itself in Microsoft standard or Open Office one? If it is translated in other languages, can we also receive these translations? I also hope that we will be able to meet at the time of the Festival of LO.

Philippe (Groupe Bolchevik, In a personal capacity)

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

# THE RIGHTS OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION

## Programme

The ITC has adopted the following resolution on the rights of nations to self-determination:

**T**he question of national self-determination belongs to the sphere of political democracy that is to say the right to decide whether to secede and establish an independent state. Marxists combine the defence of the right of oppressed nations to self-determination with opposition to all forms of nationalism. Indeed, support for the right to self-determination is an essential part of the struggle against nationalism. The fact that we support self-determination does not mean we support independence.

Our goal is not the proliferation of small states but the broadest possible union. In "The April Theses" Lenin wrote that, "The proletarian party strives to create as large a state as possible for this is to the advantage of the working people; it strives to draw nations together, and bring about their further fusion." Marxists can support slogans calling for socialist federations of Latin America, the Middle East, the Indian Sub-Continent and so on. National oppression can also take place in a Degenerate Workers' State. One of the defining features of Stalinism was its national chauvinism. Opposition to national oppression and defence of the right to self-determination is a key element in any struggle for political revolution. Where there is evidence of working class support for independence we raise the call for an independent soviet republic as Trotsky did in the case of Ukraine.

Even where a nationalist movement has a restorationist character we defend the right to national self-determination while organising to defend socialised property relations. Not to do so would make it more likely that the masses fall under the influence of reactionary restorationist forces.

However in line with Trotsky's position in 1939 on Georgia, Poland, the Baltic states, Finland and Norway, we always prioritise the international class struggle and the consequent class consciousness of the global working class (see Trotsky, Balance Sheet of the Finnish Events, (April 1940). The bourgeois "rights of the individual" like the rights of the individual nations to self-determination cannot override this internationalist Marxist principle. Therefore, whilst not denying oppressed nations the right to self-determination when fighting imperialism, we will not support imperialist-sponsored or reactionary nationalist movements which aim to advance the hegemonic projects of

various imperialisms, the US, EU or any other. Examples are Biafra against Nigeria, the Baltic states against the USSR, Bosnia and Kosovo against Yugoslavia, Tibet against China and Georgia against Russia. The bourgeois right of self-determination is conditional and subordinate to more central principles. Anti-imperialism is one of these central principles, and imperialist intervention under the cloak of 'self-determination' is unsupportable under any circumstances.

**Adopted 8 May 2009**

### From the standpoint of the strategy of the world proletariat

The following is extracted from Trotsky's 1940 article:

"On the world arena we support neither the camp of the Allies nor the camp of Germany. Consequently we have not the slightest reason or justification for supporting either one of their temporary tools within Norway itself. The very same approach must be applied to Finland. From the standpoint of the strategy of the world proletariat, Finnish resistance was no more an act of independent national defence than is the resistance of Norway... Secondary factors like the national independence of Finland or Norway, the defence of democracy, etc., however important in themselves, are now intertwined in the struggle of infinitely more powerful world forces and are completely subordinate to them. We must discount these secondary factors and determine our policy in accordance with the basic factors."

We can demonstrate that this position has been amply vindicated by history and the positions of those who opposed it have been historically falsified. We will examine the position on Kosovo in particular. We stand by the following from The Big Lie by James Paris, Marxist Workers' Group (USA) in 1999 and we have extracted from it for our resolution:

*"All sides of the KLA agreed to place Nato troops in Kosovo, as part of the process of developing Kosovo 'autonomy'. After the Yugoslav delegation refused to sign the deal, the KLA spokespeople 'did their job' by agreeing to imperialist troops, and called on Nato to 'hold up their end' by bombing the Yugoslav state into submission.*

*When the conflict between Belgrade and the Kosovo Albanians began, it appeared to be a case of an oppressed minority fighting for the right of self-determination. However, as the conflict escalated, more and more of the Albanian political organisations in the province looked to imperialism to be their muscle. At the moment that the KLA and other Albanian forces formed an unholy alliance with imperialism, the struggle ceased to be a*



**Woodrow's Wilson's 14 Points on self-determination in 1918 was designed to fragment Europe still further and assist the development of American hegemony. France's Clemenceau, Britain's Lloyd George, and Italy's Emanuele Orlando, like their successors after 1999, were opposed but powerless to prevent. Lenin's championing of those same rights was designed to further the world socialist revolution. We must distinguish.**

*question of self-determination. The KLA transformed from a guerrilla force of 'liberation' into a proxy force for imperialism, with the goal of the continued break-up of the country.*

*Whereas we may have defended the KLA against Yugoslavia in the past, and supported their right of self-determination, we should now reject such a position, as it would be giving back-handed support to imperialism. For us, the bourgeois right of self-determination is conditional and can be overshadowed by more central principles. Anti-imperialism is one of these central principles, and imperialist intervention under the cloak of 'self-determination' is unsupportable under any circumstances."*

It is necessary to place the struggle for rights in the context of Marx's *On the Jewish Question* which set out for the first time the fundamental critique of the bourgeois liberal 'regime of rights' which was ushered in by the French revolution in particular. Gerry Downing argued in an article *Civil society and human liberation* (Weekly Worker 736, 11 Sept 2008) that "the US neoliberal offensive has used universal human rights to advance its own hegemonic project". The following passage refers directly to the question of self-determination:

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

However, it is the intervention in Kosovo by the US military that exposed the real thrust and hypocrisy of the rights propaganda. In June 1999, just after NATO had bombed Yugoslavia, the US began the construction of Camp Bondsteel. It was afterwards revealed that this had been planned months before the bombing began. It was ostensibly set up to assist Kosovan refugees from Serbian reprisals. To 'stabilise' the province the US had secretly sponsored the Kosovan Liberation Army (KLA), which was a neo-fascist organisation with strong links to organised crime, the Albanian and Italian Mafia. They ethnically cleansed much of Kosovo of Serbs, Roma and dissident Albanian inhabitants. Meanwhile the biggest US base since Vietnam was constructed on seized land.

According to the World Socialist Web Site, "In April 1999, British general Michael Jackson, the commander in Macedonia during the Nato bombing of Serbia, explained to the Italian paper Sole 24 Ore: 'Today, the circumstances which we have created here have changed. Today, it is absolutely necessary to guarantee the stability of Macedonia and its entry into Nato. But we will certainly remain here a long time so that we can also guarantee the security of the energy corridors which traverse this country.'

The newspaper added: "It is clear that Jackson is referring to the 8th corridor, the east-west axis which ought to be combined to the pipeline bringing energy resources from central Asia to terminals in the Black Sea and in the Adriatic, connecting Europe with central Asia. That explains why the great and medium-sized powers, and first of all Russia, don't want to be excluded from the settling of scores that will take place over the next few months in the Balkans."

In 1997, the KLA was recognised by the US as a terrorist organisation linked to the drug trade. President Clinton's special envoy to the Balkans, Robert Gelbard, described the KLA as "without any questions, a terrorist group".

It is clear from this that the 'human rights' of the Kosovan Albanians, or indeed those of Roma, Croatian and Muslims in the region, were only a cover for the real intention of US imperialism: continued global expansion and maintenance of its world hegemonic position. The desperately poor, but 'liberated' citizens of newly independent Kosovo live under US/NATO occupation and look with increasing anger at the vast sums of money expended on this massive base, apparently visible from space like the Great Wall of China. Although the US is not a colonial power like the British and French were, arguably the proliferation of these bases (730 in over 50 countries by 2003) is their substitute for this and a preparation for World War III if one is necessary to maintain its hegemonic world position - Georgia is the latest manifestation of this.

Of course this does not mean that we should not support in general the right of Kosovo to self-determination but it does mean that it

was wrong to advocate it in the late 1990s under that KLA leadership, so obviously a pro-imperialist gangster outfit, whose 'victory' could only produce a virtual colony of US imperialism. EU imperialists, Germany, France and even the Foreign Office-type elements of the UK ruling class are totally disgusted at the outcome; Trotskyists should be better able than these to reassess their mistakes.

According to Wikipedia the British newspaper The European claimed in 1996 that German Intelligence had been, "involved in training and equipping the rebels with the aim of cementing German influence in the Balkan area. (...) The birth of the KLA in 1996 coincided with the appointment of Hansjoerg Geiger as the new head of the BND (German secret Service)... The BND men were in charge of selecting recruits for the KLA command structure from the 500,000 Kosovars in Albania." Former senior adviser to the German parliament Matthias Kuntzel tried to prove later on that German secret diplomacy had been instrumental in helping the KLA since its creation.

James Bissett, Canadian Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania in 1990, recalled in 1992 and retired from Foreign Service to eventually take a job as the head of an International organization in Moscow, helping the Russian Government establish a new immigration agency, writes that "...as early as 1998, the Central Intelligence Agency assisted by the British Special Armed Services were arming and training Kosovo Liberation Army members in Albania to foment armed rebellion in Kosovo... The hope was that with Kosovo in flames NATO could intervene ..." According to Tim Judah, KLA representatives had already met with American, British, and Swiss intelligence agencies in 1996, and possibly "several years earlier" and according to The Sunday Times, "American intelligence agents have admitted they helped to train the Kosovo Liberation Army before NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia"

So the so-called coup that transformed the KLA from genuine liberation movement to a pro-imperialist outfit was in reality a coup by the US against the EU, represented by German intelligence. And if we look at the political career of a Kosovan prime minister Agim Çeku, again according to Wikipedia, we see that he went from the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) to the Croatian National Guard to fight the Croatian War and war against the breakaway Republic of Serbian Krajina. He participated in several military operation, captured most of the Krajina territory and subsequently advanced into the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina fighting in western



**Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo, the real reason for the illegal bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999.**

Bosnia against the forces of the Serb Republic in Operation Maestral.

In 1999 he went to Kosovo to join the Kosovo Liberation Army with the permission of Tudjman. He had developed contacts with the KLA in the mid-1990s. After the Kosovo War broke out in March 1999 Çeku was appointed the KLA's chief of staff. In the closing days of the Kosovo War, the KLA began providing systematic intelligence to NATO as well as mounting attacks to lure Serbian forces into the open, enabling NATO warplanes to bomb them. According to reports at the time, Çeku was the principal liaison between NATO and the KLA. Following the end of the war in June 1999, Çeku oversaw the demilitarisation of the KLA and its transformation into the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), an ostensibly civilian organization charged with disaster response, demining, search and response and humanitarian projects. The Serbian Government claims that Çeku is a war criminal, though Serbia's jurisdiction in the matter is not recognised by the United Nations. Though Çeku has not been the subject of any ICTY indictment, he was briefly detained in Slovenia in October 2003 and in Hungary in March 2004 on the basis of an Interpol warrant issued by Serbia. Çeku was quickly released in both instances following pressure by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Çeku was clearly a CIA agent or at the very least a close collaborator who delivered the country into the hands of US imperialism. The rights to self determination in this and in the other cases cited in our resolution merely to 'dupe the masses' as Trotsky pointed out in 1940 in IDOM: "The programmatic theses of the Fourth International on the war gave an exhaustive answer to this question six years ago. The theses state: "The idea of national defence especially if it **coincides with the idea of the defence of democracy**, can most readily be utilized to dupe the workers of small and neutral countries (Switzerland, in particular Belgium, the Scandinavian countries ...)." We cannot become part of the Wilsonian cynical fraud, we must seek the Leninist revolutionary approach.

# Socialist Fight Statement on Israel/Palestine: For a Bi-national Workers' State

**Socialist Fight stands for a bi-national workers state in Israel/Palestine and is totally opposed to a two state solution. We take this stance because:**

**W**e recognise that Israel now constitutes a nation and it therefore has the right to self-determination. The fact that the Zionist state is an outpost of imperialism because of the US need for a reliable local police force to protect imperialism's access to oilfields in the Gulf and Caspian sea does not mean we should deny the existence of an Israeli nationality. Over the past sixty years the Israeli Jews have become a nation with a national language (Hebrew) which is now the mother tongue of the majority of Israelis. It has a capitalist ruling class and a working class with various middle class layers in between the society's two fundamental classes.

We do not recognise all 'the Jews' as the nation because this is a Zionist imposition which grants every Jew in the world Israeli citizenship on the basis of their mother's religion as determined by a religious court whilst denying the right to citizenship to Palestinians who were born there and driven out in 1948, 67 or 73. However because we recognise that Israeli Jews constitute a nation does not mean we advocate their right to self-determination because that would be to endorse the Zionist racist project of excluding non-Jews from the nation. We are therefore for the destruction of the Zionist theocratic state but not the Jewish nation. In its stead we are proposing a bi-national workers' state of Israel/Palestine where Jews, Palestinians, and all minorities, have equal rights as citizens, to which the several generations of Palestinian refugees are given the right to return and to which all immigrants have equal rights of entry. The right of Israeli Jews to self-determination applies only to a future bi-national workers state

The fact that we are unconditionally for the smashing of the Zionist state does not mean that a future workers state would seek to deny the national rights of anyone. Revolutionaries would, of course, argue against separation but a Middle East Socialist Federation would allow for the possibility of separate states or autonomous regions for every nationality.

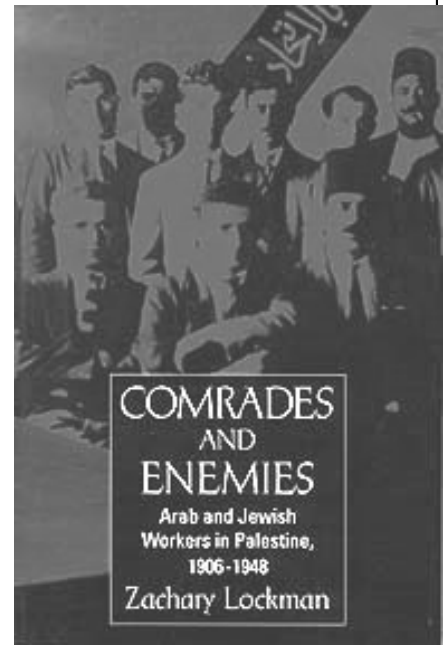
Whilst defending the right of the Palestinian nation to its own state and to separation we recognise that 'facts on

the ground' now make this an impossible dream under capitalism. The fact that it is the chosen solution of Zionism and imperialism and has been accepted by successive PLO leaderships and might well be accepted by Hamas does not make it a progressive solution nor one that the majority of Palestinians would opt for if they were given a viable choice.

Zionism will not allow Gaza and the West Bank to link up territorially; there is no prospect that Zionism will withdraw to the pre-1967 borders, which in any case abandons the Palestinian diaspora. Gaza is an isolated hell-hole which can never develop a viable economy on its own, the West Bank is so truncated by illegal Jewish settlements and hemmed in by the illegal wall that it is clear that the long term plans of Zionism are not any kind of viable state there either. All that is now on offer are isolated Bantustans hemmed in by rings of steel to which the Palestinian citizens of Israel may well be expelled if the 'viable two state solution' ever becomes a reality.

We likewise reject the one nation 'secular democratic state of Palestine', from 'the river to the sea' because, a) it implicitly denies the existence of a Jewish nation, b) It supposes that Zionism can reform itself or that a successful bourgeois revolution is possible in this modern epoch, c) The Arab bourgeoisie is not capable of achieving an integrated secular bourgeois bi-national state.

We oppose all forms of subordination to the bourgeoisie. Against the class collaboration of the Popular Front we counterpose a fighting alliance of the working class and oppressed petit bourgeoisie within which the working class has the right to organise itself independently. (Some use the term "anti-Zionist anti-imperialist united front" for this but we acknowledge that this term is controversial because of the way the Stalinists used it; many Trotskyists prefer to avoid the term entirely because of this). Working class independence will not be tolerated by the bourgeoisie, who will seek to liquidate working class revolutionaries. The working class needs to organise armed self-defence both against the Israeli state and against those like Fatah and Hamas who would claim to speak for the Palestinians. Neither Fatah nor Hamas nor any bourgeois Arab state can defeat the Israeli state. Nonetheless in an armed conflict between Israel and any of the above we are for



the defeat of Israel.

Only the working class, and most importantly the militant Egyptian working class, can offer a solution. To achieve this a revolutionary socialist leadership must be built in these working classes, i.e. a Trotskyist leadership armed with the Transitional method, understanding the theory of Permanent Revolution and setting as its goal the bi-national workers' state in the context of a United Socialist States of the Middle East, as part of the world revolution. A bi-national workers' state would grant absolute equality to both nationalities and fully defend the right to cultural expression and to self-determination.

We recognise the powerful hold of reactionary Zionism over the Jewish working class but as materialists we understand the causes of this, a) the protection and huge subsidies afforded by the US, and the EU to a lesser extent, which is a guarantee of the good life, or a hope of attaining it, for big sections of the Jewish working class. b) the dehumanising and racist portrayals of the Palestinians and c) the 'chosen people' myths and the exploitation of the Holocaust to justify a kill rate of about 100 to 1 as in the War on Gaza and d) the constant war hysteria promoted by all the Zionist political parties.

A socialist revolution or major upsurge in a major nation in the Middle East would immediately attract the Israeli working class, raise their class consciousness to begin the break with the

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

hegemony of the Zionist ideology and prepare its overthrow in collaboration with the Palestinian working class.

We give unconditional but critical support to Hamas in its struggle with Zionism because it is the existing leadership of the Palestinians, properly elected because of the venal corruption of the PLO leadership based on tribal war lords and because it maintains a militant stance against Israel, whilst continually sending diplomatic, and surely secret signals to Zionism that it is willing to compromise. In fact it is Israel that does not want any kind of a deal, it has yet more land to seize and colonise on the West Bank and now has loyal supporters in Abbas's movement which may well bring Hamas to heel. In the War on Gaza and all conflict with Zionism not to support Hamas was not to support the Palestinians.

However we recognise that if the secular PLO could not win the Jewish working class because it had no programme to do so, this is totally impossible for Hamas. It is a traditionalist fundamentalist Sunni Muslim movement which is a dead end for Palestinians. It cruelly oppresses women, it is viciously homophobic and is totally anti-working class. A revolutionary socialist party would have to conduct a protracted, ideological struggle against Hamas amongst the working class and women, but they would have to conduct it in way that was sensitive to religious feelings and conscious of the proximity of extreme reaction.

We are specifically for a bi-national **workers'** state not because we are insensitive to the role which democratic demands might play in the revolutionary struggle. Demands for a constituent assembly and the fight for secular democratic rights are very likely to play a prominent part in revolution but we know that these must be subordinate to the goal of the overthrow of capitalism in Israel/Palestine but also in the entire region of the Middle East.

As Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution explains so well there cannot be two stages to the coming revolution. The working class in the region must seize control of the means of production and produce for their needs in a planned economy, and for that the Jewish working class is indispensable.

In August 2008 the Histadrut and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) signed an agreement to cooperate in employment practices. According to the statement, 'the agreement is an undertaking by the Histadrut to provide legal and union services to Palestinian workers who have permission to work for Israeli employers. It will also reimburse workers fees they have paid since 1993 for union and

legal representation'. This move is to be welcomed. However neither Histadrut nor the PGFTU can be regarded as any type of normal trade union. The Histadrut contains many employers in its ranks and itself owns a substantial section of Israeli industry and is one of the main props of the Zionist state; it defended Israel's action in Gaza in the recent war. Likewise the PGFTU is a Fatah front, it has not held elections since 1981 and its 'agreement' with Histadrut was simply an extension of Mohamed Abbas's (Abu Mazen) collaboration with Zionism against the interests of the Palestinians. Nevertheless both organise substantial proportions of the working class in the region, revolutionaries should work within them fighting to split them along class lines.

SF is opposed to academic boycotts and regard consumer boycotts not only as completely useless but counterproductive. We favour workers' sanctions, the working class via their trade unions and Labour party branches and CLPs fighting to block arms shipments to Israel, etc. We strive through workers' organisations to block all cooperation and trade with firms engaged in war industries and in the occupation, e.g. Eden Springs which is involved in water extraction from the Golan Heights or goods produced in occupied lands and labelled 'made in Israel'. In a historic development for South Africa, dock workers have announced their determination not to offload a ship from Israel that is scheduled to dock in Durban on Sunday, 8 February 2009.

We therefore reject the cross-class 'democratic' Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign. The myth that 'sanctions helped South Africa' is used to justify this campaign but the only time the world's monopoly capitalists started to disinvest from South Africa was when they were faced with a mass working class rebellion there. Out of fear that they may lose everything, they changed the form of control to create local front companies to act on their behalf. Barclays 'disinvested' and left behind the front called First National bank. But the same monopolies were still in control. When the working class resistance was smashed here in the 1960s the monopoly capitalists poured in money into South Africa- this was declared a safe haven for investments. Thus the only way to force imperialism to accept the democratic aspirations of the Palestinian masses is through working class mass action and workers' sanctions.

We endorse the demands of the Edinburgh University students' occupation of January/February 2009 (similar to the entire wave of University occupation demands). The demands are as



**The murderous brutality of the occupation**

follows: a) That the university suspend all relations with companies enabling the conflict and/or occupation, including Eden Springs (contingent on access to information to establish which other companies are implicated)

b) That the university divest from BAE Systems, MBDA, QinetiQ, Rolls Royce and all other "arms and defence" manufacturers whose products are proven to be in use by the Israeli military

c) That the university make scholarships available to students trapped in Gaza, unable to study for university qualifications because of restrictions on them and their institutions, in violation of international human rights law

d) That the university collect and ship donations of unused property to war-damaged Gazan schools and hospitals (e.g. text-books, chairs, computers)

e) That the university provide logistical and financial support for a series of informative lectures on the Palestine/Israel question

f) We also request that no legal, financial or academic measures be taken against those participating in, or supporting, a peaceful sit-in to ensure our calls are answered.

g) As members of this university we feel these are measured and necessary steps to show our opposition to Israel's catastrophic use of force against, and continued blocking of, innocent Palestinians in Gaza.

We take this stand on a bi-national workers' state because, despite the 80% backing for the war on Gaza, we also put our faith in the Israeli working class in revolution and the ability of a revolutionary party with the correct transitional method to forge the unity of Arab and Israeli workers, as has happened many times in the past, despite the best efforts of Histadrut. We are opposed to all actions that target the Israeli nation without class differentiation, just as we are opposed to individual terror, suicide bombs and indiscriminate rocket firing, whilst not in any way denying the oppressed Palestinians the right to fight as they see fit – critical but unconditional support here too.



# Universal rights and Imperialism's neo-liberalism offensive

## Theory

*Imperialism's neo-liberalism offensive since the 1980s cloaked its brutal advance against the working class and poor of the world by a hypocritical championing of 'democracy' and 'rights' - from 'democracy' within trade unions and 'democracy' for the USSR and Iraq all based on the 'free market' and 'free trade'. This ideological offensive left its victims far poorer and with far less effective collective rights. 'Revolutionaries', like the SWP, hailed the fall of the Berlin Wall, the neo-liberal counterrevolution's greatest achievement. They thereby foolishly welcomed their own political marginalisation. **Ret Marut** examines the ideological roots of this offensive and outlines Marxism's answers.*



Fighters for Rights: Eleanor Roosevelt (1948 UDHR) and Rosa Parks (1955 Black civil rights)—the black ghettos of the US are worse now than back then.

**W**e will firstly look at the international order to see how human rights fare under four models of the system; realism, liberalism, constructivism and Marxism. We will use the book on global political economy *Ordering the International, History, Change and Transformation*, eds, Brown, Bromley, and Athreye Pluto Press, OU, London, 2004 as our main source. Now to see how these models might lead to transformation by regimes of universal human rights and justice we will look primarily at the two models that propose a transformation perspective; liberalism and Marxism. Now in transformation we will need to examine the power structures of modern society.

To do so we must examine where we are coming from and going to; we must look at the history of state systems; the Chinese warring states (c.770 to 221 BCE) and the nineteenth century evolution of modern Europe and then the modern world. Lastly we will look at international theories of globalisation to see how socio-cultural issues impact, what is the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) and how and in what way the current sub-prime financial crisis or the overwhelming superiority of the US military has the power to transform the international order.

### Realism, liberalism, constructivism and Marxism

Kenneth Waltz propounds the modern version of realism as historically developed by Thomas Hobbes and advocated and practiced in recent times by Hans Morgenthau and Henry Kissinger. Although the former opposed the Vietnam War the latter organised the illegal bombing of Cambodia (1969-73) and the 1973 coup in Chile against Allende, both advocating the best interests of the US. Realism puts strong

emphasis on national security and interests and assumes international anarchy in inter-state relationships with no relationship between domestic and international politics.

The modern liberal theory of the international state systems' goes back to Immanuel Kant. Its core premises are as defined by Moravcsik. That is (if we can read between the lines) it is the interests of competing national capitalists which are fought out both nationally and internationally and the struggle is to find the best methods of extracting the maximum profits with as little conflict as possible. So 'Moravcsik (1997) sees a world of individual and group interest organised within, and represented through, the institutions and agency of the state' (*Ordering*, p496). It follows that that all states in the modern world seek to represent the interests of that state's ruling elite.

Constructivism is ideas-based. That is it is philosophically idealist in that it sees the prevailing cultural norms as determining the relations between states rather than the material social and power relations between states determining or at least substantially modifying international cultural relations. Constructivism, despite its more 'social' orientation, is as bad as realism on the potential of rights and democracy, let alone genuine human liberation, and so leaves us with nowhere to go on transforming international relations.

Marxism views the world as it moves and changes and sees the things that comprise modern society, commodities, private property, states, legal structures, etc. as embodying relationships between people. It is a theory that takes the social relations of production, the relationships we must enter in order to make a living, as historically evolved and evolving. Moreover these relationships are at a different level and/or have their own historically-evolved peculiarities in all countries.

However this unevenness of development is complemented by a combined character; certain limited sectors of underdeveloped states have become highly developed and out of sync with the rest of their overwhelmingly backward, rural societies.

### How the international system might be transformed under liberalism

The liberal version of the world order was articulated by Bill Clinton to the UN General Assembly in 1993, 'For our dream is a day when the opinions and energies of every person in the world will be given full expression in a world of thriving democracies that cooperate with each other and live in peace' (*Ordering*, p107). This 'dream' dominates the world, even when the realist Republicans are in power. The liberals spell out their dream; 'any given state must be 'a local guardian of the world republic of commerce'. Moreover, liberal states should develop international intuitions and forms of international law to ease commercial transactions across their borders, thereby advancing the benefits of the division of labour and specialisation and political cooperation on an international scale' (the quote from Hirst, 2001, p64, as quoted in *Ordering* p110).

Here the Kantian dilemma appears; even if we concede to Hobbes that security can be permanently solved within states how can we solve it internationally? All of Kant's theories relied ultimately on moral imperatives because international security can only be solved on liberal terms by overcoming anarchy by a world state with its own legal system, police and armed forces.

This is a utopian goal that not even Clinton would advocate because we know that the self-assumed role of the US as the world's policeman is not acceptable to its closest allies, Britain,

Australia or Canada, let alone to the Middle East, Latin America, Africa or Asia. However Kant did recognise the limits of liberalism and conceded that it 'remained, in the end, a set of regulative ideals and empirical tendencies, not a utopia beyond all political differences' (*Ordering*, p563).

Let us see how Kant's dilemma works out in practice. Military intervention to insure the global spread of these liberal values became the policy of the US after 1991. Yugoslavia began to break up under economic and ideological pressure mainly from Germany and the US. All warring sides engaged in ethnic cleansing but the Serbs were the only ones demonised in the western media. But it was the intervention in Kosovo by the US military that exposed the real thrust and hypocrisy of the rights propaganda. In June 1999, just after NATO had bombed Yugoslavia, the US began the construction of Camp Bondsteel. According to the *World Socialist Web Site*,

In April 1999, British General Michael Jackson, explained to the Italian paper *Sole 24 Ore* "Today, it is absolutely necessary to guarantee the stability of Macedonia and its entry into NATO. But we will certainly remain here a long time so that we can also guarantee the security of the energy corridors which traverse this country." The newspaper added, "It is clear that Jackson is referring to the 8th corridor, the East-West axis which ought to be combined to the pipeline bringing energy resources from Central Asia to terminals in the Black Sea and in the Adriatic, connecting Europe with Central Asia".

Simon Bromley, in his *Blood for Oil*, also sees this as fundamental to recent US military interventions,

The routing of pipelines, the policing of shipping lanes and the management of regional influences all depend heavily on US geopolitical and military commitments. This means, in turn, that to the extent that US companies and US geopolitics – and especially military power – remain central to ordering the world oil industry, the USA provides, in good

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



times, a collective service to other states that enhances its overall international hegemony. In bad times, this role would provide the USA with a potential stranglehold over the economies of potential rivals.

It is clear from this that the human rights of the Kosovan Albanians were only a cover for the real drive of US imperialism. In a New Political Economy article in 2004 Robert Cox points out that European powers were clearly miffed by this unilateralism of the US. Roma, Croatian and Muslims in the region were ethnically cleansed by the US sponsored neo-fascistic Kosovan Liberation Army.

Kant's dilemma is further emphasised by the operation of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Serbian President Slobodan Milošević and Sudanese President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir were indicted by the prosecutor of the ICC whilst they were reigning heads of state. There was no question of indicting US ally, President of Croatia Franjo Tudjman, or other allies whose human rights record would not stand scrutiny. Pinochet was never tried despite all the universal justice brouhaha.

And the US itself refuses to recognise international law. In 1986 President Reagan contemptuously rejected the guilty verdict against the US by the ICC for supporting the Nicaraguan Contra rebels. Of course in the Balkans and Iraq the US aimed not only to secure control of oil but also, and we would say primarily, to

rights and as he really exists in society, alienated, oppressed and exploited,

Where the political state has attained its true development, man – not only in thought, in consciousness, but in reality, in life – leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: life in the political community, in which he considers himself a communal being, and life in civil society, in which he acts as a private individual, regards other men as a means, degrades himself into a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers... the right of man to liberty is based not on the association of man with man, but on the separation of man from man. It is the right of this separation, the right of the restricted individual, withdrawn into himself (Marx, On the Jewish Question).

But of course the new regimes of rights were a big step forward compared to the arbitrary, absolutist power of monarchs, nobility and church in the *Ancien Régime*. In examining the conflicting claims of cosmopolitans vs. communitarians, cultural relativism, feminist arguments and Asian values we will keep Marx's vital distinction in mind.

Jef Huysmans is correct to point out that it is false to project a clash of civilisations as Samuel Huntington and Osama Bin Laden do because societies are in internal conflict (Chapter 9 of *Ordering*). The 'cultural values' of the communitarians do implicitly defend reactionary practices like wife beating and female circumcision which are fiercely opposed by female activists increasingly informed by radio, satellite television, mobile phones, etc. But we can see that the communitarians' arguments echo Marx in counterposing the alienation of cosmopolitan, oppressed civil man as against 'life in the political community, in which he considers himself a communal being'. Without conceding to localism in this their criticisms of cosmopolitanism is trenchant and rings true.

Rights were guaranteed by the state and applied to its citizens before 1948 although there was some attempt to universalise rights, e.g. the Geneva Convention, etc. The ideological content of the *Declaration* was the struggle of the US to end all

opposition to the global free market: fascism, the old colonial empires, communism ('really existing socialism') or world revolution (not the same thing). There were seven votes against the 1948 *Declaration*; South Africa and Saudi Arabia, for obvious repressive reasons, and the USSR and four satellites for two contradictory reasons. One was repressive but the other was progressive; they objected to the *Declaration* because it contained no reference to collective rights like food, water, housing, health care, etc. The soviet societies claimed their legitimacy because they partially compensated for their repression by providing a measure of these welfare needs. Social justice versus greedy capitalist individualism was their propaganda stance. In the Cold War the 'non-aligned' movement tended to be dictatorial like Syria, Iraq or Nasser's Egypt which talked a lot about Arab socialism and provide some welfare. The USSR provided a rational for patronising welfare and repression which had independent economic developmental prospects; it was grudgingly tolerated by the poor because it was better than outright repression with no welfare by

such US supported and/or installed regimes as Mobuto's Zaire or Pinochet's Chile.

We are focused on this issue by the question of how we would feel if, on transportation into future, we discovered we had a brand new right – we had an absolute right to keep all our fingers and toes and no one could take them from us. Such a right would make us very uneasy and this highlights the essence of the rights argument, we only need rights if our possessions or security are threatened (Tutor's hand-out). And here the rights debate is situated. What value is the right to vote and protest in conditions of famine? Of course the poor, hungry and starving would accept a great diminution of legalistic 'human rights' if they were guaranteed decent welfare provisions.

These arguments had some force while the USSR existed; the neo-liberal offensive, led-by the US and Britain, was additionally kept at bay by working class resistance and defence of the welfare states in the advanced metropolitan countries. When the British miners were defeated in 1985 and the USSR fell in 1991 history was supposedly 'ended' (Fukuyama) by these dual and closely related defeats suffered by the world working class in terms of the triumph of the free market over social justice.

## Transformation by technological development; globalisation theory

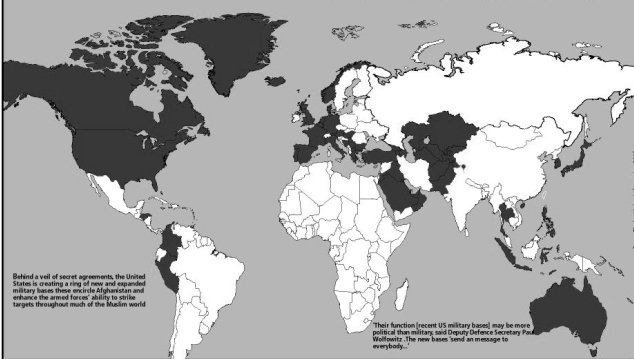
Benno Teschke cogently argues that the modern state system originated not in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia but in late seventeenth century post-revolutionary England. The King-in-Parliament signified the economic (although not yet fully political) domination of capitalist property relations which went on to dominate world trade and commerce. Although he barely mentions the great significance of the English-opposed French Revolution in ideologically universalising this system nevertheless he clearly demonstrates that the extraction of the surplus by the inescapable but 'democratic' wages system rather than by the forcible extraction by the law and taxes of feudalism and absolutism is the mode of production dominant on the planet today (*Ordering*, Chapter 2).

The brief reference to the Chinese warring states (c.770 to 221 BCE, *Ordering*, p6-7) explains that philosopher Mozi wanted a balance of power to protect the small and weak states but Mencius wanted a unified Chinese world state, in an ancient version of the cosmopolitan-communitarian debate. These political differences and local power aspirations were overcome by reunification under the rule of the Qin Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi in 221 BCE. If we look at *The Warring States Period* in *Answers.com* we realise that the resolution was prepared by developments in trade and commerce which challenged localism and by technology as bronze gave way to iron facilitating the transformation of war from aristocratic chariots jousts to mass armies, thereby favouring the larger states. Ideological conflicts between the followers of Mozi and Mencius depended on this material basis.

Similarly the superior productive basis of the capitalist British economy prevailed in the eighteenth up to the last quarter of the nineteenth centuries, in the first globalised world economy. Adam Smith gave an ideological expression to the orientation necessary to maximise this material advantage. And it was Taylorism; scientific management and Fordism; mass pro-

## US military bases world wide 2001-2003

In this period the United States has over 730 military installations and bases in over 50 countries. It also has military personnel on active duty in dozens of other countries.



## Note the encirclement of the Gulf and Caspian Sea

eliminate regimes which opposed the neo-liberal free market economy that so favours the economically powerful.

## How the international system might be transformed by Marxism

Marx made the first socialist criticism of the bourgeois secular regime of rights in 1843 in *On the Jewish Question*, the ideological foundation for his later critique of capitalism as a whole. The basic argument is that the secular regime of rights as developed by the American and French Revolutions at the end of eighteenth century represented civil but not human emancipation. He examines *The Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789) and passages from others constitutions to make his point. It equally applies to the *UN Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948. As Marx shows in *On the Jewish Question* these rights presuppose increasing inequality because they bifurcate human lives and psyches, the citizen equal before the law and in voting



**A Canadian primary schools celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which still eluded humanity**

duction that made the US the world's most advanced and efficient economy and converted the political opinion of the US elite to the goal of global hegemony even before WWII. The above case as presented in *Ordering* might be seen as realist or constructivist. The details supplied by *Answers.com* make it a Marxist analysis of transformation but it might equally be a liberal one

Whereas theories of globalisation explain the modern developments by technology innovation and the expansion of world trade 'globalisation theory' as advocated by Manuel Castells and Marshall McLuhan is a constructivist, idealist notion that inverts the reciprocal relationship between cause and effect; it turns effect into cause. Information can only increase the efficiency of global production ('just-in-time production' etc.), but it is not a 'new capitalism' replacing industry; it is merely a tool of production. The current sub-prime financial crises has demonstrated that information shuffled about on global networks by 'fund managers' glorified vastly over paid parasitic bank clerks do not create wealth, merely swindle wealth producers out of the product of their labour.

Although the communication advantage in the international production of wealth enhances the profits of transnational corporations it certainly does not represent 'an unbundling of state power and its redistribution across mobile, ever-shifting networks' (*Ordering*, p565). Who but states can even address the current financial crisis? And who can doubt that this crisis is materially transforming the US position as world hegemon? No empire survives economic meltdown, this was the cause of the British and Russian falls, and with a gross external debt of over \$13 trillion as of June 2008 even before the current crisis (Wikipedia), it is clear that the process of US decline has been enormously speeded up.

As *Audio 9* points out the vastly superior technological war machine of the US combined with ICT enabled it to overcome the fog of war and devastate Iraq's inferior armed forces. But the same ICT enabled isolated cells of oppositionists to network against the occupying army (al-Qaeda) and so gave them the advantage. The global eco-warriors and 'make poverty history' networks that massed at Seattle and Genoa were only ever a 'soft power' movement now largely spent because they cannot match the 'hard power' of George Bush's war machine or the international capacity of organised labour to force concessions from the bosses by the withdrawal of labour. These networks of dissent targeted the WTO and the IMF and not the nation states where lies real eco-

nomic and political power. These movements highlighted the necessity for dissent to mobilise internationally but they also highlighted the failure of the only 'hard' alternative to globalised capital, the international labour movement to do so.

## Culture and human rights

But there are, nonetheless, real issues of human right violations that the propaganda of rights highlights and cause to develop. In Iran today the Islamic regime of Ahmadinejad denounces women's rights activists and trade unionists as stooges of western imperialism and demands national unity in the face of threatened US/Israeli attack. Mansour Osanlou, leader of the Teheran Vahed Bus Company union and many other are in prison because they attempted to organise trade unions. Is it not Islamic culture to wear the hejab, to marry the husband chosen by your father or brother, and reject western intuitions like trade unions? Does not the Shi'i, as opposed to the Sunni, champion the mustazifin, the oppressed, against the mustakbirin, the oppressor? Iran has a developed civil society with a large and prosperous middle class so while women have to endure many humiliations at the hands of the religious police and Revolutionary Guards they have managed to maintain many rights and privileges not available to their Islamic sisters and brothers in Pakistan's and Saudi Arabia's less developed societies.

Although united by the Quran, dedication to the Prophet, religious rites and shari'a law the culture of Islam differs greatly between societies and between Shi'a and Sunni. Islam has three main political orientations; the conservative or salafi Islam dominant in Saudi Arabia (Wahhabi Islam) with strong support through the Islamic world. It is repressive and hostile to women's rights and intellectual freedom. The second is a radical and militant version of the first which puts its emphases on direct action as opposed to state oppression and is associated with Sayid Qutb of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB), executed in 1996. The third is reformist and tends to marry Islam to a secular attitude to rights and freedoms. It is found mainly in Turkey and Egypt and in reformist Islamists of Iran (although differing between Shi's and Sunni).

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt were originally a brand of militant Islam which sought to impose a literal interpretation of shari'a law, advocated jihad against all liberal intellectuals and non-Muslims and found co thinkers in Algeria, Iran and Afghanistan (the Taliban) and al-Qaeda. Since they were founded in 1928 they had been repeatedly repressed by the Egyptian state because of alleged assignation plots. However the Egyptian state today is developing a *modus vivendi* with the MB which is still illegal although tolerated. It has wide electoral support, has demonstrated in favour of democracy and probably would win a democratic election and rule in a similar way to Turkey's AKP government. It was a more militant organisation with support in North Africa, Jihad Talaat al-Fath, which carried out the Luxor massacre in 1997. This accommodation comes at the same time as the rise of the Egyptian trade unions which are now severely oppressed by the Egyptian state. This is arguably a fourth and vitally important political current within the Islamic world. Modern

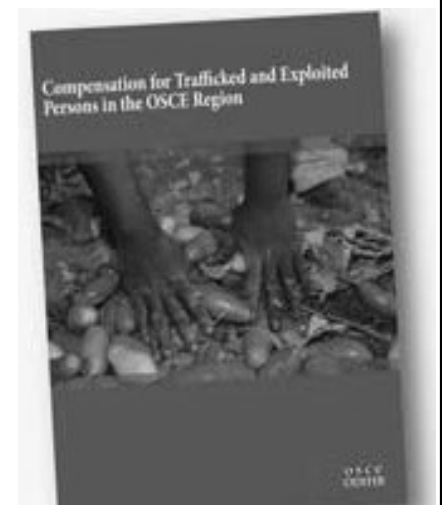
Egypt is beginning to tend towards the reformism of Muhammad Abduh (died in 1905) who reinterpreted Islam to grant full citizenship to Christians and Jews. Arguably the MB is transforming itself into the third, reformist, type along these lines. The advance of the MB and the AKP are examples of the accommodation of Islam to modern capitalism, not the advance of fundamentalism. We are far from a simplistic Huntington-type 'clash of civilisations' in the Islamic world but rather are seeing transformations led by economic developments and political conflicts.

In the US the experience of the wartime comradeship of military service reinforced by the UN *Declaration* was a major contributing factor to the rise of the Black civil rights movement which later led to the women's and gay and lesbian civil rights movements in the US and then world-wide. If we look at the outcome of these civil rights movements they are all disappointing in terms of human liberation. The first has resulted in career opportunities for a small Black middle class; Barak Obama is the best example of a group which includes Oprah Winfrey, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice. In 1992 Dr. Richard Majors, a psychologist at the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire, pointed out,

\*About one in four black men aged 20 to 29 is in prison, on probation or on parole – more than the total number of black men in college.

\*For black men in Harlem, life expectancy is shorter than that for men in Bangladesh; nationally, black men aged 15 to 29 die at a higher rate than any other age group except those 85 and older.

We could make similar points for the outcome of all the other struggles arising from rights; in the north of Ireland inter-communal relations are worse now than during the 'troubles', South Africa's neo-liberal ANC has left the position of the black poor almost as bad as under apartheid, as seen by the recent riots against Zimbabwean immigrants. Women are particularly disadvantaged because 'such (sexual and reproductive) human rights abuses are not prevented by universalised human rights conventions' so the argument goes in the face of 'the powerful and dominant'. The growing trafficking of young women by criminal gangs for prostitution and semi-slavery is another victory for the free market. So fighting for rights might be the



**The growing trafficking of young women by criminal gangs for prostitution and semi-slavery is another victory for the free market**



**Francis Fukuyama: history has still not ended, we are pleased to report**

beginning of a struggle, this cannot be the basis for victory as the above indicates and as Marx indicated back in 1843. But rights will always be necessary as long as want and oppression exist.

### Conclusion

Bill Clinton's and Barak Obama's American dream is still by far the most universally appealing one today. However the modern neo-liberal capitalist offensive is now floundering because of the depression following the spectacular collapse of so many major financial intuitions. Modern capitalism is the source of all cooperation but also of all conflict and rivalries; it proposes a utopian world free from war and conflict but prepares those same wars and conflicts as states promote its relentless drive to maximise the profits of the TNCs. The transformation potential of Marxist theory lies in the acknowledgement of an objectively evolving source of international conflict in Trotsky's theory of combined and uneven development.

However the conclusion for human liberation is contested by those who call themselves Marxists. The Stalinist view is that a national elitist and privileged bureaucracy can deliver for the masses via state controlled planning with little regard for human rights or democracy. The production of superabundance,

the material precondition for human liberation, is only possible on a global scale. Stalinist 'socialism in a single country' (North Korea!) is even more unthinkable now. The Marxist aspiration is world revolution and one world planned economy producing for human need. That is the difference between a civil regime of rights which presupposes inequality and a human regime of real economic and social equality based on the production of the superabundance of wealth, which Marx outlined in *The German Ideology*.

### Index of names (in order of appearance in text, Wikipedia unless stated )

**Kenneth Waltz**, (born 1924) is a member of the faculty at Columbia University and one of the most prominent scholars of international relations alive today. He is one of the founders of neo-realism, or structural realism, in international relations theory.

**Thomas Hobbes**, (April 5 1588 – December 4 1679) was an English philosopher, whose famous 1651 book *Leviathan* established the foundation for most of Western political philosophy from the perspective of social contract theory.

**Hans Morgenthau**, (February 17, 1904 – July 19, 1980) was a pioneer in the field of international relations theory. He taught and practiced law in Frankfurt before fleeing to the United States in 1937 as the Nazis came to power in Germany.

**Immanuel Kant**, 22 April 1724 – 12 February 1804) was an 18th-century German philosopher from the Prussian city of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad, Russia). He is regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of modern Europe and of the late Enlightenment.

**Andrew Moravcsik** is a Professor of Politics and director of the European Union Program at Princeton University known for his research on international organizations, human rights, European integration, and American and European foreign policy, and for developing the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism.

**Jef Huysmans**, obtained a MA in Defence and Disarmament studies from the University of Hull, UK and a PhD in social sciences from the University of Leuven, Belgium. He is now Lecturer in Politics at Open University (University of Birmingham).

**Samuel Huntington**, (born April 18, 1927) is an American political scientist who gained prominence through his 'Clash of Civilizations' (1993, 1996) thesis of a new post-Cold War world order.

**Simon Bromley** joined the Open University in 1999, after teaching and research at the University of Leeds. He is currently Associate Dean (Curriculum Planning) in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Course Chair of the Faculty's

new level 1 foundation course in the social sciences (Open University).

**Francis Fukuyama**, *The End of History and the Last Man* is a 1992 book by Francis Fukuyama, expanding on his 1989 essay 'The End of History?' published in the international affairs journal *The National Interest*. In the book, Fukuyama argues that the advent of Western liberal democracy may signal the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the final form of human government.

**Benno Teschke** joined the Department in summer 2003 had been a Lecturer in the Department of International Relations & Politics at the University of Wales, Swansea. In 1998/99, he was an Andrew Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for Social Theory and Comparative History at the University of California, LA. (University of Sussex).

**Mozi**, ca. 470 BCE–ca. 391 BCE), was a philosopher who lived in China during the Hundred Schools of Thought period (early Warring States Period). He founded the school of Mohism and argued strongly against Confucianism and Daoism.

**Mencius**, most accepted dates: 372 – 289 BCE; other possible dates: 385 – 303/302 BCE) was a Chinese philosopher who was arguably the most famous Confucian after Confucius himself.

**Qin Shi Huangdi**, (259 BC – September 10, 210 BC), was king of the Chinese State of Qin from 247 BCE to 221 BCE. He became the first emperor of a unified China in 221 BCE. He ruled until his death in 210 BCE, calling himself the First Emperor. He was known for the introduction of Legalism and also for unifying China.

**Adam Smith** (baptised 16 June 1723 – 17 July 1790 was a Scottish moral philosopher and a pioneer of political economy. One of the key figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, Smith is the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Adam Smith is widely cited as the father of modern economics.

**Manuel Castells**, born 1942 in Hellín, Albacete, Spain) is a sociologist associated particularly with research into the information society and communications. According to the Social Sciences Citation Index's survey of research from 2000 to 2006, Castells was ranked as the fifth most cited social sciences scholar and the foremost cited communications scholar in the world.

**Marshall McLuhan**, C.C. (July 21, 1911 – December 31, 1980) a Canadian educator, philosopher, and scholar, a professor of English literature, a literary critic, a rhetorician, and a communications theorist. McLuhan's work is viewed as one of the cornerstones of the study of media theory. McLuhan is known for coining the expressions 'the medium is the message' and the 'global village'.

**Sami Zubaida** (born 1937) is an Emeritus Professor of Politics and Sociology at Birkbeck, University of London and, as a Visiting Hauser Global Professor of Law in Spring 2006, taught Law and Politics in the Islamic World at New York University School of Law.

From page 31

Pakistan and the rest of the

world. Down with imperialist oppression. The defeat of imperialism is a victory for workers and the oppressed in the world.

9. We cannot count on Obama and the capitalists to clean up the environment and prevent catastrophic climate change. For them, profit always comes before the environment and the need of the workers. But the time to stop climate change is running out. The work-

ing class must combine its struggle against capitalist exploitation, and against the current economic crisis, with environmental consciousness. We must fight for workers' control of industry in order to transform the current, outmoded technology of industrial production to totally green and sustainable technology.

10. Break with Democrats. No cross-class coalitions with Democrats and pro-capitalist Green Party politicians. For a struggle to replace the union bureaucracies that give our dues to the capitalist Democratic Party. Fight for the independence of the working

class! We need to build a workers' or labor party based on democratically run unions and organizations of the oppressed and the unemployed.

11. For a workers' government that can and will implement and defend all the above transitional demands. To accomplish these goals, working people need their own government. If we allow the capitalists to control the state via their government, they will continue to attack and ultimately destroy our social gains. To defend our gains, we need workers' power.

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

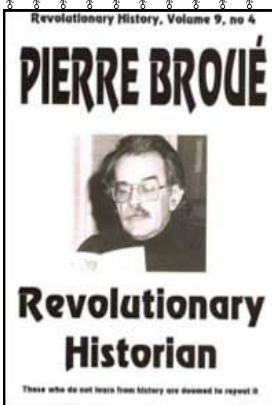
# WRP Explosion

Gerry Downing's 1990 work on the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) explosion is now available online at: [www.scribd.com/people/documents/1544314-gerald-j-downing](http://www.scribd.com/people/documents/1544314-gerald-j-downing).

It will also be available shortly on the Encyclopaedia of Trotskyism On Line (ETOL)

Its 13 chapters (90,000 words) deal with the implosion of the WRP in 1985 and follow the developments in the Workers Press side mainly, both internal and international, up to 1990, when the Preparatory Committee collapsed, the Argentinean LIT (Workers International League) departed and the Slaughter wing linked up with Michel Varga and others to form the Stalinophobic Workers International to Refound the Fourth International.

Gerry Downing said, "I was in the Revolutionary Internationalist League/International Trotskyist Committee at the time I wrote the book, so naturally the account reflects their politics; nevertheless I have little to retract from this political document. I hope it will assist in current regroupment efforts."



## Pierre Broué: Revolutionary Historian 1926-2005

This issue is devoted to the life and writings of Pierre Broué (1926-2005), an outstanding historian of the Communist and Trotskyist movements. Broué's historical writings are far better known in continental Europe than among the Anglophones Britain and North America so we present a series of texts not previously available in English. We include a long biographical essay by Vincent Presumey, which gives some insight into what being a Trotskyist could be like in France during the Second World War and the following half-century. The pieces by Broué deal with the birth of Soviet power, the struggles within the Russian party and the Third International in the 1920s and 1930s and the existence of oppositionist, including Trotskyist, currents, all in the event doomed, within the Soviet Union itself. Unlike most from that tradition he is rigorously critical of the defects and weaknesses which afflicted the Comintern from its inception. Finally there are articles which deal with the complexities of the Spanish Revolution and the opposition outside the Soviet Union. There are also three biographical essays, the

last of which throw a very critical light on the behaviour of many of Trotsky's followers during and after the Second World War.



Author: **Rosa Luxemburg**, Guest Editor: **Mike Jones**, Mike Jones has edited AUGUST THALHEIMER AND GERMAN COMMUNISM, and is a frequent contributor to the journal Revolutionary History.

**Editorial Committee:** Ted Crawford, Paul Flowers, Esther Leslie and John Plant

**Rosa Luxemburg, perhaps the most remarkable and original figure among German Marxists thinkers and activists, was one of the earliest victims of fascism, murdered in Berlin, in 1919. This volume presents selected political essays, writings previously unavailable in English.**

They reveal Luxemburg's aversion to splits in the Labour movement, particularly in Germany and Russia, and aspects of her thinking about culture, nationalism and women's rights. Each essay is annotated, introduced and placed in context.

**CONTENTS** \* In Defence of Nationality, a defence - against Germanification - of the use of Polish in Prussian schools, which has some interesting comments on German class structure; \* On the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz; \* A book review: Franz Mehring's Schiller for workers; \* Tolstoy as a Social Thinker; \* After 50 Years, an article celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding, in 1863, of the Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiterverein (German General Workers' Union); \* Russian Party Conflicts, insights on the SDKPiL's perspective on Russian factionalism and the 1905 RSDLP congress; \* On the Split in the SD Duma Group, writing for the SDKPiL, Luxemburg comments on RSDLP reunification of the RSDLP; \* Observations on the ISB session, December 1913; \* The Female Worker, women's rights can only become reality as part of the proletariat's victory; \* Peace, the Triple Alliance and ourselves), written on the eve of WWI.; \* On Splitting, Unity and Resigning, against walking away from the degenerate of the SPD, a critique of sectarians; \* On the Situation in the Russian Social Democracy, an argument written in 1911 for the SDKPiL Executive, against splits in the RSDLP. It illustrates the thinking on currents in the Russian party, particularly Lenin.

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

# Marx's 'species-being': A response to Adam Smith's 'self interest'

In this piece **Patrick Martens** locates Marx's theory of alienation which 'degrades man's own free activity to a means, it turns the species-life of man into a means for his physical existence' in its historical context of the political economy of Adam Smith and others. In the core argument of the piece he asserts, "Indeed we may argue that Marx's concept of species-being in *EPM* (*Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*), is...(his) attempts to negate the pre-supposition that man is inherently selfish and goes some way to attack Smith as a 'theologian [who] explains the origin of evil through the fall'. Marx counters Smith by suggesting that man is only selfish as a result of competition brought about by private property. According to Marx a rejection or indeed alienation of man's species-being within the context of contemporary political economy, is the appropriation of the objective world, most notably manifest in private property. Man comes to believe that 'immediate physical ownership as the sole aim of life and being.' Man pitted against man in the sole aim of appropriating private property is the essence of competition not man, which causes 'greed and war among the greedy' and a loss of self for each and every one of us. Smith's takes a very different view in that 'it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.'" This is the essence of all arguments for socialism and the piece provides an extended argumentation in defence of Marxism on this ideological plain.

We are left with no illusions as to where Karl Marx derived his concept of 'species-being' or 'Gattungswesen'. In his letter to Ludwig Feuerbach enclosing a copy of his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (EPM)* in 1844, Marx acknowledges Feuerbach's attempts, although limited in scope, to ground conscious man and empower him to recognise that 'the absolute to man is his own nature'. Marx attributes, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to Feuerbach's works a 'philosophical basis to socialism'. Although we can establish quite clearly in the latter quote an intention on Marx's part to use Feuerbach's concepts to flesh out his own theory of socialism, we are left with a criticism of Feuerbach and a rather notable statement that warrant further exploration. Firstly Marx notifies Feuerbach that much of his work is limited in scope. We are therefore presented with the possibility that Marx's concept of species-being as presented in his *EPM* was an attempt to redress the credibility of Feuerbach's theory on the essential nature of man by positioning it within the 'general discourse of their time'. Marx in particular was interested in the 'presuppositions of political economy' and we might agree that the economic theories of Adam Smith were hugely influential at the time. Therefore was it Marx's intention to use his concept of species-being as an argument against Smith's theory of man as a predominantly selfish, competitive being? Secondly we are presented with the possible 'unintentional' philosophical foundation Feuerbach's works give to socialism. We may attribute a satirical undertone in the utterance itself, which leads to a much wider consideration that has occupied much of Marx's work. A scathing argument in Marx's *EPM* on current presupposed theories such as private property serves to illustrate this further. It reads 'political economy tells us nothing about how far these exterior, apparently fortuitous circumstances are merely the expression of a necessary development'.

Having addressed the question as to what the essence of man is, is it Marx's intentions by putting forward the concept of species-being to argue against Smith's principal of a fortuitous, unin-

tentional 'invisible hand' determining man's relationship to man and to himself? According to Quentin Skinner, by considering not only what Marx says about species-being within the context of the text, *EPM*, but adopting a second hermeneutic task and trying to grasp his motives and intentions, we may come to know 'the relationship in which [Marx] stands to what he has written'. In short this essay attempts to go beyond what Marx says about his concept of species-being and grasp what he was 'doing' in saying it.

## Skinner's post-modern times

According to Quentin Skinner we live in post-modern times. A defining feature of this period, particularly in the field of historical research, is 'a deepened scepticism about the traditional humanist project of interpreting texts'. In response to such scepticism posited most notably by Jacques Derrida's 'irrecoverability of meaning' and Michel Foucault's announcement that the author is dead, Skinner offers a methodological approach whose chief aspiration is that of 'enabling us to recover the historical identity of individual texts in the history of thought'. By drawing one's principal attention away from the individual author to that of the argumentative framework and general discourse of their times, Skinner aims to 'return specific texts we study to the precise cultural contexts in which they were originally formed'. Skinner's method employs two hermeneutic tasks, the first of which is 'elucidating the meaning, and hence the subject matter, of the utterances in which we are interested'. The second task is 'then to turn to the argumentative context of their occurrence to determine how exactly they connect with, or relate to, other utterances concerned with the same subject matter.'

## Marx's alienated labour

As part of a project that was to occupy much of Marx's later life, his *EPM* written in the summer of 1844 was the first draft of his 'Economics'. Within the text Marx introduces his concept of [man's alienation from his] species-being as a



Ludwig Feuerbach

third characteristic of alienated labour. In order to elucidate the meaning of this concept I believe it is important to present here first the two preceding characteristics of alienated labour.

Marx's argues that a fact of contemporary political economy is that 'the worker becomes poorer the richer is his production'. Marx goes on, 'the object that labour produces, its product, confronts it as an alien being, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labour is labour that has solidified itself into an object, made itself into a thing, the objectification of labour. The realization of labour is its objectification.' In contemporary political economy firstly the realization of labour appears as a loss of reality for the worker in that without labour he would starve.

Secondly the objectification of labour appears as a loss of the object or indeed slavery to it in that the worker is robbed not only of his product but his subsistence; 'the more the worker appropriates the exterior world of sensuous nature by his labour, the more he doubly deprives himself of the means of subsistence'. Thirdly appropriation of the object appears as alienation in that the



**Jacques Derrida**

'more objects the worker produces, the less he can possess and the more he falls under the domination of his product, capital.'

In short the relationship of man to the object of his production is reversed in that the object allows him to exist first by granting him an object of labour and secondly as a physical subject in that he receives the means of subsistence. As the means of production is distinct from the worker the object of his labour, the product, according to Marx confronts him as an alien being. Marx writes 'The externalisation of the worker in his product implies not only that his labour becomes an object, an exterior existence but also that it exists outside him, independent and alien, and becomes a self-sufficient power opposite him, that the life that he has lent to the object affronts him, hostile and alien.' Therefore the first characteristic of alienated labour is that the product of labour stands over the worker as an alien object with considerable leverage over him.

The second characteristic of alienated labour is the self-alienation of the worker in that his own activity is alien to him and does not belong to him. As we have already encountered, the result of labour in contemporary political economy is the alienation of the worker to his object of labour. However the act of production itself is according to Marx 'active externalisation'. As labour is exterior to the worker, the worker cannot confirm himself in his work. That is, the worker does not feel labour part of his essence and therefore feels miserable and compelled by necessity to conduct it. According to Marx, 'His labour is therefore not voluntary but compulsory, forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need but only a means to satisfy needs outside itself.'

Drawing heavily upon Feuerbach's work, *The Essence of Christianity*, the third characteristic of alienated labour is that it alienates from man his species-being in that it alienates man from his own body. Marx identifies three key relationships of man. Firstly man practically obtains subsistence in the form of food, clothing, shelter and warmth etc, from the objects of nature around him. In that sense man 'makes the whole of nature into his inorganic body'. Secondly man makes plants,

animals, the elements and light etc, part of his consciousness.

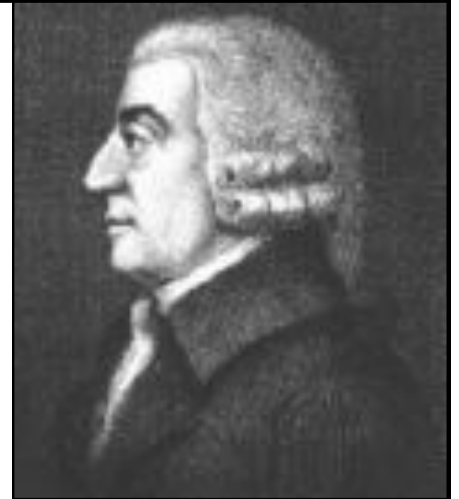
From a theoretical perspective, man objectifies nature as his 'intellectual inorganic body'. Thirdly man as part of his generic character objectifies his production as a duplication of himself 'not only intellectually, in his mind, but also actively in reality and thus can look at his image in a world he has created.' It is on this third relationship of man to his production which Marx grounds his concept of species-being. According to Marx work, vital activity, and productive life have intrinsic value to man. That is man does not have to produce in accordance with a need but quite regularly produces in accordance with beauty. What distinguishes man from animal is his 'conscious vital activity'.

Marx writes 'It is this and this alone that makes man a species-being.' An animal is not distinct from its vital activity in that it produces in accordance with its immediate need whereas man produces universally. Man truly produces only when he has freedom of physical needs. He thus produces the whole of nature as opposed to just himself; such is the nature of animals. In essence what makes man a species-being is his ability to make nature his inorganic body and practically assert his productive creative qualities with conscious purpose over the objective world. Alienated labour undermines this essence of man and 'degrades man's own free activity to a means, it turns the species-life of man into a means for his physical existence.'

### **Species-being; the philosophical foundation for communism**

Within the *EPM* the concept of species-being serves as the backbone of much of Marx's economic arguments. It forms the philosophical foundation for communism in that the suppression of private property, as 'the product, result, and necessary consequence of externalised labour, of the exterior relationship of the worker to nature and to himself.', is seen as the re-assertion of the species claim to all of nature. Man no longer subservient to an artificial need to acquire and commoditize that of which he already owns in essence. By returning to our true essence under Marx's communist system, man no longer presupposes competition as the 'envious desire to level down'.

To Marx political economy causes 'greed and war among the greedy, competition.' Having explained the concept of species-being and briefly touching upon how it was used within Marx's *EPM*, it will strike the close reader of the text that no understanding of the concept is offered by Marx in isolation. Indeed it is presented within his theory of alienated labour and pursued further in his criticisms of private property, competition, demand and money. Indeed one brings to mind R. G. Collingwood's observation that 'you cannot find out what a man means by simply studying his spoken or written statements...In order to find out his meaning you must know what the question was (a question in his own mind, and presumed by him to be in yours) to which the thing he has said or written was meant as an answer'. I



**Adam Smith**

believe Marx had one overriding question in mind when he put forward his concept of species-being in his *EPM*, which is how contemporary political economy and more specifically economists account for the relationship of man to production.

### **Hobsbawm; The Age of Revolution**

Skinner argues that 'We need to focus not merely on the particular text in which we are interested but on the prevailing conventions governing the treatment of the issues or themes with which the text is concerned.' The latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was defined by great social upheavals and world changing technological advances. Eric Hobsbawm offered 1789-1848 as the *Age of Revolution* in his book of the same name. In 1789 the French Revolution had raised its banner of Libert ,  galit , Fraternit .

The idealist vigour that was to enshroud much of France led to the revival of the attempt to install a form of Plato's Republic and expand it in war throughout Europe. It was a war that was to transcend national interest and eventually led to the first military coup d' tat of modern times by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799. The exportation of French Republicanism led to the 'Congress of Vienna' in 1815 in which the old aristocratic regimes of Europe devised a plan to reverse the tide of Republicanism by forming a united front under Monarchy and dividing Europe between them. In unison with political revolution we saw an Industrial Revolution of the same magnitude envelop much of Europe and North America.

Increased scientific research particularly in metallurgy had seen the first steamboat upon the Firth of Clyde in 1802 and the first railway built between Redcar and Darlington in 1825. The mechanisation of textile mills gave rise to factories and changed the manner in which man was seen in relationship to production. As a consequence of the industrial juggernaut cities became even more so the economic centres, with rural economies seen as a necessary causality in the great pursuit of 'human progress'. In was no longer just the political situation of man that occupied much of



the great thinkers of the time but also the economic situation of man. David Ricardo (1772-1823) and Thomas Malthus (1766-1834) were two notable political economists of the time but it is to Adam Smith (1723-1790) that we turn our attention.

In Andrew Skinner's introduction to Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations: Books I-III* we are directed to read Smith's works as a 'grand synthetic system'. Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is relevant to any student of Smithian economics in that it helps establish the philosophical and social foundation of Smith's largely economic works, *Wealth of Nations: Books I-III and Books IV-V*. Smith shared a common ground with Marx in that both adopted a new discipline in combining elements of philosophy and economics to conduct an historical study of man.

Indeed as per my previous comments concerning Marx's concept of species-being within his *EPM*, it is very difficult, according to A. Skinner, to 'examine any one section of [Smith's] work in isolation'. Indeed, 'precisely because Smith viewed his philosophical, historical and economic work as parts of a single whole, we should perhaps expect that a useful perspective on any one may be gained by paying at least *some* attention to the others.' This would not have been lost on Marx in his study of Smith's works and is indeed evident in his own. We can presume to take as fact that Marx studied Smith in that any study of economics at the time, and indeed today, is not complete without considerable attention being made to Smith. In fact many consider Smith the founder of the modern discipline of economics, a title he would no doubt be averse to.

## Scottish Enlightenment

Secondly, Smith was part of the intellectual alliance that was to become a central factor of the movement known as the 'Scottish Enlightenment' that included such notable academics as David Hume, William Robertson and James Burnett.

Indeed David Hume's influence on both Smith and Marx would be hard to underestimate as both draw heavily on Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* in order to establish their own anti-thesis to his thesis on human nature, in true dialectical fashion. Marx would have been very familiar with much of the Scottish works of the time not only as a matter of philosophical development but rather on the basis of the 'law of proximity' in that these writers offered both a political and economic insight, as a very fact of their geographical location, into the heavily industrialised and influential power house that was Great Britain of the day.

Thirdly, and most notably Marx makes several attacks on the 'political economist' in his *EPM*. The glaring omission of Smith's name serves to support the view that Marx was collectively responding to the works of Smith, John Locke, Jean-Baptiste Say and David Ricardo. However it is Marx's approach to his presentation of his concept of species-being, which for me elevates Smith to the position as *the* 'political economist' in Marx's *EPM*.

Smith states 'that to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature'. To 'restrain our selfish affections' offers us an insight into Smith's beliefs of man's nature. Smith in essence believes man to be to some degree inherently selfish. He does recognise however that 'How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.'

### Smith as a 'theologian [who] explains the origin of evil through the fall'

It is largely accepted that Smith thought Francis Hutcheson's treatment of man's selfish tendencies inadequate and wished to render them more prominent in his works. Indeed we may argue that Marx's concept of species-being in *EPM*, is seen as an extension of 'their discourse' in that he attempts to negate the pre-supposition that man is inherently selfish and goes some way to attack Smith as a 'theologian [who] explains the origin of evil through the fall'. Marx counters Smith by suggesting that man is only selfish as a result of competition brought about by private property. According to Marx a rejection or indeed alienation of man's species-being within the context of contemporary political economy, is the appropriation of the objective world, most notably manifest in private property. Man comes to believe that 'immediate physical ownership as the sole aim of life and being.' Man pitted against man in the sole aim of appropriating private property is the essence of competition not man, which causes 'greed and war among the greedy' and a loss of self for each and every one of us. Marx writes, 'However much he is a particular individual (and it is precisely his particularity that makes him an individual and a truly individual communal being) man is just as much the totality, the ideal totality, the subjective existence of society as something thought and felt. Man exists also in reality both as the contemplation and true enjoyment of social existence and as the totality of human manifestation of life.'

### A certain 'illocutionary force'

Marx's concept of species-being may not only be construed as an explicit argument against Smith's apparently ill-conceived and unempirical notion of 'selfish man'.

J. L. Austin observed that in issuing a serious utterance; people and authors not only speak with a certain meaning but also with a certain 'illocutionary force'. Q. Skinner further stipulates 'that gaining 'uptake' of the illocutionary force of an utterance will be equivalent to understanding what the speaker was doing in issuing it.' The grammatical mood of the text suggests that Marx is issuing a grave warning to the political economists of the day who presuppose 'as a fact and an event what he ought to be deducing, namely the necessary connection between the two things'.

Indeed if we were to refer back to the 'vital conscious activity' of man according to Marx, we would see that man produces purposefully and in



**Karl Marx**

accordance with his species. Marx writes that 'Not only the material of my activity-like language itself for the thinker-is given to me as a social product, my own existence is social activity; therefore what I individually produce, I produce individually for society, conscious of myself as a social being.'

Smith's takes a very different view in that 'it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.' Marx undermines Smith's whole argument about man appealing to another's self-interest in that according to Marx, self-interest and the 'drive to better our condition' is a result of private property and alienated labour as previously discussed. Marx's concept of species-being and his *EPM* as a whole may be a warning to the collective 'political economists' of the future that although what you might have to argue is quite insightful, be sure and not place yourself 'in an imaginary original state of affairs' when you wish to explain a phenomena, as it explains nothing and 'simply pushes the question back into a grey and nebulous distance.'

Smith in writing about man's nature does posit on many occasions the 'drive to better one's condition'. Indeed Marx does attribute this drive, as one would imagine to a characteristic of alienated labour and the inevitable result of competition. However Marx goes further in response to Smith's suggestion that man's self-interest is actually of benefit to society as a whole. 'The pleasures of wealth and greatness, when considered in this complex view, strike the imagination as something grand and beautiful and noble, of which the attainment is well worth the toil and anxiety which we are so apt to bestow upon it. And it is well that nature imposes upon in this manner. It is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind.'



## The 'Adam Smith Problem'

We gain an insight here into Smith's irony in writing much of his works. Coined the 'Adam Smith Problem', Smith in short claims that the pursuit of self-interest alone can lead to socially beneficial results. It is a paradox that occupies much of Smith's work, most notably applied to the natural and market price of a given item. In short, the two prices will the long term coincide with the natural price emerging as the equilibrium. In essence, regardless of the fact that it is the capitalist's aim to gain a greater profit by increasing the market price, the market price will revert to the natural price as a factor of long-term progression and capital appreciation.

Marx addresses this apparent paradox by suggesting that there is no paradox in Smith's work, and reconciles Smith's thoughts within his own concept of species-being with one rather notable exception that we will discuss shortly. Marx argues that a characteristic of man's species-being is that 'what I individually produce, I produce individually for society, conscious of myself as a social being.' Marx sees no paradox in that man's individual interests are the interests of the species. However as man has become alienated from his species-being under contemporary political economy, man's individual interest more often than not are skewed by Smith's own presupposition of contemporary political economy. Marx understands Smith's error in that 'The individual and the species-life of man are not different, although, necessarily, the mode of existence of individual life is a more particular or a more general mode of species-life or the species-life is a more particular or more general individual life.'

The notable exception to Marx's reconciliation of the 'Adam-Smith Problem' is in an area where he is less than conciliatory. Hegel bore witness to much of Marx's core criticism, which has dominated much of his work. Marx introduces us early on in the text to his dislike of 'fortuitous circumstances' a pet-hate he was to elucidate on later in the text; 'The whole movement of history, therefore, both as regards the real engendering of this communism, the birth of its empirical existence, and also as regards its consciousness and thought, is the consciously comprehended process of its becoming.' Marx argues that there is no such thing as an 'invisible hand' dominating man's relationship to man and his relationship to his production.

According to Marx 'A being only counts itself as independent when it stands on its own feet and it stands on its own feet as long as it owes its existence to itself.' Marx has continually sought to ground his empirical exercise within the reality of man, not some 'fixed abstraction'. Marx continues, that 'if you wish to stick to your abstraction then be consistent, and if you think of man and the world as non-existent then think of yourself as non-existent' A fact of society is that it is a 'consciously comprehended process of its becoming'. Smith's attempt to suggest otherwise is not only unempirical but also extremely dangerous. Indeed Marx and Smith may both agree that the passivity of man is undesirable, as opposed to the

active principles in man which are according to Smith 'often so generous and so noble' but fundamental to Marx.

## Mythology of doctrines

Q. Skinner's 'mythology of doctrines', which I hope we have been careful to avoid, is a concern which any historical interpretation need take on board. Indeed one notable omission from the arguments preceding this is Smith's quite famous analogy of man as a 'mirror'. Smith remarks that 'Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror he wanted before.' Influenced by Hume's work, 'the minds of men are mirrors to one another', the idea is quite similar to Marx's concept of species-being.

However we must be acutely aware of the danger in attributing the 'discovery' of this concept to anyone other than Feuerbach who quite clearly and concisely gave rise to the concept. In response some might argue that it is a linguistic absurdity to think species-being distinct from fellow feeling, as both touched upon the general meaning of the concept.

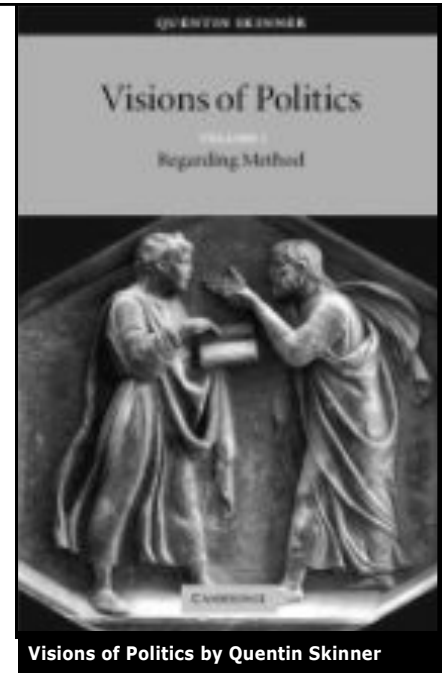
One notable concern is that although Marx had a different question in mind to Feuerbach, Marx and Smith it is argued had similar questions in mind and it would have been feasible to suggest that the idea of 'species-being' has been imminent in Smith's work. Indeed one might have congratulated Smith on his anticipation of Marx's concept of species-being, but it seems more prudent to position each concept within an argumentative framework as posited by Collingwood.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Marx's concept of species-being within his *EPM* seems to be a response to the presuppositions of contemporary political economy. Indeed the fact that we are unable to examine Marx's concept of species-being in isolation and without reference to his economic theories, offers substantial support for an attempt to understand what Marx may have been 'doing' is saying what he did. In order to elucidate the meaning of Marx's concept I found it necessary to expand on his theory of alienated labour, which so consistently appears throughout Marx's text and is fundamental in alienating man from his species-being.

In adopting Q. Skinner's methodological attempts to make 'contact with statement-making agents' I approached Marx's *EPM* more specifically as a response to the 'political economist' of his times and returned it to the 'general discourse' which may have held Marx's attention. Having come to this position it was necessary to ground the work as a response to a particular 'political economist', arguably the most influential of which being Adam Smith. However it was not only the need to reduce the wealth of literature into a digestible canon, but the apparent deliberate positioning of much of Marx's concepts as the negation of Smith's that gave rise to this liberty.

In particular it was quite evident that both Marx and Smith questioned what was man's true na-



ture. Smith considered it inherently selfish but acknowledged man as a social being who took great pains to seek approval in the eyes of his brethren and showed great sorrow in the contrary. Marx however 'stood Smith on his feet' and defined selfishness as a necessary consequence of private property as opposed to an inherent quality in man. Marx further levelled a clear warning to those who like a theologian, 'explains the origin of evil through the fall'.

A second question, although intrinsically linked to the former, was man's relationship to his production. According to Smith we find an inherent drive to better one's condition determining man's industry. However according to Marx it is an inherent quality of man to produce. In fact it is fundamental and constituters his 'vital conscious activity'. It is from this argumentative context that we move on to what I believe occupied much of Marx's thoughts. That is, society and political economy as a whole is the result of man's conscious actions and under man's ultimate control. Political economy is not an abstract, which stands over man, but rather is the manifestation of man's conscious.

Marx takes particular exception to any reference to fortuitous circumstances and indeed Smith's 'invisible hand', which according to Marx answers nothing and 'simply pushes the question back into a grey and nebulous distance.' A quite evident criticism of this essay is the assumption that Marx intended to offer his concept of species-being as a response to certain of Smith's theories. Indeed it is a further assumption on my part to state that Smith had the same questions in mind as Marx. I except an element of parochialism in my work but to borrow from Hollis, 'the aim of the historian is to produce as much understanding as possible, a task not to be confused with that of producing converts.'

# For a fighting program and mass actions, up to and including massive strikes!!

## (a proposal to be considered and voted on by the Workers Emergency Recovery Campaign {WERC})

The formation of WERC could become a step in the right direction in the massive fight against the biggest attacks on the working class since the Great Depression. Unfortunately, however, WERC's platform, as currently formulated, has some serious shortcomings. It is a list of generally supportable demands, but along with the demands there are built-in limitations seemingly designed to keep this campaign palatable to capitalist "friends of labor," such as the Greens and the Progressive Democrats, who have signed on as endorsers of WERC.

The current gaggle of "liberal/progressive" Democratic politicians, as well as the bloated and entrenched labor bureaucracy, have come together to negotiate away our jobs, our social programs, and our benefit packages. In the coming weeks and months, we can expect a further watering down of the Employee Free Choice Act; a total inability to provide a plan for affordable, quality universal health care; layoffs and/or furloughs of thousands of public workers and teachers; school closures; tuition rises and restrictions on student registration at public colleges; and the commensurate ever-increasing expansion of prisons and the military-industrial complex.

To counter the current attacks against the unions and all working people, we need massive united labor actions from coast to coast. Factory occupations, such as the one at Republic Windows and Doors, are necessary to stop massive layoffs and closures of factories and workplaces. Unified strikes of public workers, teachers, and students are the only tactic that can save social programs, education, and the social safety net. But the current labor leadership, entrenched in its love affair with the Democratic Party, is incapable of launching the type of struggle that can win against the current attacks.

WERC's current platform and program are not adequate as a fight-back strategy. For example, WERC calls for nationalizing the banks and the automobile industry. But reformist social democratic governments have nationalized banks during this crisis and before.

They keep the banks and the financial institutions going for the benefit of the bankers and the capitalists, and then they de-nationalize them when it is safe to do so, returning the bank's assets and operating capital to private hands once the risk of failure has been averted with the aid of public resources. Therefore, in contrast to pro-capitalist nationalization schemes, we must call for the nationalization of banks, financial institutions, and basic industries under workers' control and without compensation.

Similarly, WERC's action plan is limited to measures such as writing letters to President Obama begging him to turn against his benefactors. WERC's program suggests that labor activists conduct a cross-class campaign of educational forums, devoid of any concrete preparation for the type of militant struggles labor must engage in if we are to turn the current class war around. Of course educational forums are needed to supplement the education we get from the bosses' frontal attacks every day. But what we really need from labor activists are strategies and tactics for turning our unions back into truly democratic fighting organizations that act in the interest of the entire working class, rather than in their own narrow interests or that of the labor aristocracy.

We propose that WERC commit to organizing and publicizing regional, inter-union general meetings to organize and coordinate preparatory committees in every local. The preparatory committees, in turn, can take the lead in preparing, mobilizing, and motivating workers in their own locals to help lay the necessary groundwork for massive actions. WERC's role should be to serve as a framework around which workers can construct sustained, ongoing, democratically run coalitions of unions, working class communities, and the unemployed, with the goal of building for broad-based, militant direct actions such as massive strikes and occupations of workplaces, schools and universities. Our brothers and sisters in France have shown that such actions are the natural response of the working class. We should start organizing and follow their example.

We propose that the WERC adopt the following program and method of transitional demands, to be implemented by mobilizing the working class for a massive fightback:

1. Full Employment at prevailing union rates for all who are willing and able to work. To assure full employment, thirty hours of work for forty hours' pay must be implemented to spread the available work to all and to compensate for the increased rate of production over the last 50 years that has been exploited by capital to sustain high unemployment rates and lower real wages. Passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) will assist workers in forging fighting unions capable of winning full employment. To that end we must mobilize demon-

strations demanding the right to organize not be impeded and for passage of the EFCA.

2. Failing industries (both financial and industrial) must be taken over (nationalized) under workers' control without compensation to provide adequate access to credit and to get the wheels of industry rolling again. For example, the Big Three automakers, as well as the domestic plants of foreign auto manufacturers, should be taken over under workers' control. Only then can the industry be rationally planned to assure that production is retooled to provide, first and foremost, a public transportation and energy infrastructure that obviates the need for excessive auto production and the commensurate waste of petroleum. The production of non-polluting electric cars, for example, must be planned and coordinated under workers' control as a step toward staving off the environmental disasters threatened by climate change.

3. STOP LAYOFFS! When the bosses declare layoffs or attempt to close down a workplace, workers should occupy the factories and the workplaces and establish workers' control. Follow the example of our Argentinean brothers and sisters, and go even further by establishing a massive network of occupied workplaces as democratically run organs of an incipient planned rational economy.

4. Housing is a right! Stop all foreclosures and evictions. Move the homeless and those in overcrowded housing into housing already vacated due to foreclosures and the falling real estate market. Massive public works projects to build adequate housing for all, and put people to work doing socially necessary construction, must be financed by a banking industry nationalized and coordinated under workers' control.

5. Quality universal public education at no charge from daycare and pre-school through the graduate level. Working people know that without a good education, our children have no future. To confront the current economic and environmental crisis, everyone's intellectual potential must be cultivated. Through education we can build a rational economy and divest the world of poverty and drudgery. Education should be under the control of teachers, parents, and students old enough to participate. In that way, we will assure quality education and not the miseducation, overtesting, and ruling class propaganda that currently plague our public schools.

6. Quality free universal health care at no charge from prenatal to the grave is long overdue. Each person must be given access to the benefit of medical science and current treatment options. Insurance companies must have no "place at the table"; the only way to provide health care for all is to divest it of the profit motive. To accomplish democratic health care, all medical institutions must be placed under worker (Doctor, Nurses, Staff) control with community/patient participation.

7. End attacks on undocumented workers! End the ICE raids! Full employment rights for all workers! To end capital flight through working class solidarity across borders, we demand: Same work, same contract, same wages and working conditions! Down with the maquiladoras! Open all the borders. For the right of all workers to cross the borders and seek work and establish their homes without restrictions and arrests. Free all detained undocumented workers!

8. US troops out of Iraq, Afghanistan,

Continued on page 25

## Humanists for Revolutionary Socialism, Fighting Capitalism and Alienation Who We Are

Humanists for a Revolutionary Socialism is an organization composed primarily of former members of the now-defunct Workers' Voice organization (San Francisco).

We believe that in order to save humanity from the economic chaos, social injustice, and environmental destruction caused by global capitalism, it is necessary to abolish the capitalist system altogether and replace it with a humane, democratically-run planned socialist economy.

We also believe that in order to accomplish this task, it will be necessary for a critical mass of people, internationally, not only to adopt the principles, methods, and program of socialist revolution, but also to transform ourselves. This transformation requires that we transcend the alienated, ego-centric personality characteristic of capitalism, and embrace a spirit of community, cooperation, and mature insight.

Finally, and most important, we believe that no program for socialist revolution can be developed or implemented without a clear understanding of the dialectic method.

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

# Many Platforms but a Common Enemy



The  
philosophers  
have only  
interpreted  
the world, in  
various  
ways; the  
point is to  
change it.

