



# Socialist Fight

Liaison Committee for the Fourth International

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Unity is strength, L'union fait la force, La union hace la fuerza, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, اتحاد قدرت است, doàn kl'Elà s'El m'Elh, Jedność jest siła, ykseys on kesto, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, Midnimo iyo waa awood, hundeb ydy chryfder, Einheit ist Stärke, Всеединство прочность, единство наша сила, vienybés jéga, bashkimi ben fuqine, η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, unità è la resistenza, 団結は力だ, A união faz a força, eining er styrkur, De eenheid is de sterkte, الوحدة هو القوة, Ní neart go chur le céile, pagkakaisa ay kalakasan, jednota is síla, 일성은 이다 힘 힘, Workers of the World Unite!

# Socialist Fight Where We Stand (extracts)

Socialist Fight is a member of the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International with The Communist Workers Front, Brazil The Socialist Workers League, USA and Tendencia Militante Bolchevique, Argentina

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### Revolutionary socialism

1. We stand with Karl Marx: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule' (The International Workingmen's Association 1864, General Rules).

2. In the class struggle we shall fight to develop every struggle of the working class and oppressed in the direction of democratic workers' councils as the instruments of participatory democracy which must be the basis of the successful struggle for workers' power.

### Revolutionary strategy and tactics

3. We recognise the necessity for 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. In fighting

the attacks of this Tory government it is now necessary to work within the Labour party as well as within other proto-parties such as Left Unity and RESPECT that seek to present socialist and anti-imperialist politics in opposition to the neo-liberalism that is now deeply embedded within the Labour Party. We support all genuine left developments within Labour, such as the Corbyn for leader campaign.

4. We strongly support campaigns to democratise the trade unions' traditional link to the Labour party. We are for funding only those MPs who agree to and have a record of fighting for union policies.

5. We fight for rank-and-file organisations in the trade unions within which we will fight for consciously revolutionary socialist leadership in line with Trotsky's Transitional Programme statement:

"Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and, if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn one's back on mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian factions, it is no less so passively to tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative ("progressive") bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution."

6. We totally oppose all economic nationalist campaigns like for 'British jobs for British workers' that means capitulation to national chauvinism and so to the political and economic interests of the ruling class itself. We are therefore unreservedly for a Socialist United States of Europe.

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

### Special Oppression and Racism

10. We recognise that class society, and capitalism as the last form of class society, is by its nature patriarchal. In that sense the oppression of women is different from all other forms of oppression and discrimination. Sexism and the oppression of women is inextricable tied to the ownership and the inheritance of private property. To achieve sexual and individual freedom women need to fight in the class struggle in general to overthrow class society itself. We cannot leave the struggle against women's oppression until the revolution but must recognise it as one of the most fundamental aspects of the revolutionary struggle itself or we will never make that revolution.

We therefore reject the reactionary "intersectional" theory as hostile to Marxism, to the class struggle and to revolutionary socialism.

11. We also support the fight of all other specially oppressed including lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people and the disabled against discrimination in all its forms and their right to organise separately in that fight in society as a whole.

13. We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist and fascist attacks by any means necessary. Self-defence is no offence, we support it. Two people might make racist/far right comments but on challenging them one might turn out to be a hardened racist/fascist and the other might be mindlessly repeating the Sun editorial. It is necessary to distinguish. It is a legitimate act of self-defence for the working class to 'No Platform' fascists but we never call on the capitalist state to ban fascist marches or parties; these laws would inevitably primarily be used against workers' organisations, as history has shown.

14. We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price.

### Revolutionary internationalism

16. We were and are for the immediate withdrawal and/or defeat of imperialist armies in wars like Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and Ukraine. Whilst giving no political support to the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Sunni and Shia militias in Iraq, Hamas or Fatah in Palestine, Gaddafi (as was) in Libya, Assad in Syria, the 'Islamic State' in Syria and Iraq, the theocratic regime in Iran or the Donbass leadership in Eastern Ukraine we recognise US-led world imperialism as the main enemy of humanity and so advocate critical support and tactical military assistance from the working class to all those fighting for the defeat of imperialism as part of the perspective of Permanent Revolution.

18. We are for the overthrow of the Zionist state of Israel and for a Multi-Ethnic workers' state of Palestine as part of the Socialist Federation of the Middle East.

19. As socialists living in Britain we take our responsibilities to support the struggle against British imperialism's occupation of the six north-eastern counties of Ireland very seriously. For this reason we have assisted in founding the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group and we will campaign for political status these Irish prisoners of war and for a 32-county united Socialist Ireland. We reject all 'two nations in Ireland' theories.

21. We are for the re-creation of a World Party of Socialist Revolution, a revolutionary international, based on the best traditions of the previous revolutionary internationals, critically understood, particularly the early Third and Fourth Internationals, with their determination to combat and overcome both reformism and centrism. ▲

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

## Editorial: Tory Britain's Hostile Environment is killing the disabled and unemployed whilst the Labour Lieutenants of Capital play parliamentary games

Philip Aston, the UN's rapporteur into extreme poverty and human rights produced a truly shocking condemnation of the reign of terror now waged by the Tory government against the poorest and most oppressed in Britain. One of the key features of Universal Credit involves the imposition of draconian sanctions, even for infringements that seem minor. Endless anecdotal evidence was presented to the Special Rapporteur to illustrate the harsh and arbitrary nature of some of the sanctions, as well as the devastating effects that resulted from being completely shut out of the benefits system for weeks or months at a time. As the system grows older, some penalties will soon be measured in years.

Those who have seen *I, Daniel Blake* and listened to the lying denials from Amber Rudd and the Tories should know what life is like for the poorest on benefits in Britain 2019. And it will get worse as a result of the Hostile Environment forced on the DWP but welcomed by the most ruthless practitioner of this regime. It is often a death sentence; the government's own statistics tell us. DWP, August 2015, Mortality Statistics: Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance:

"The information requested for the number of IB/SDA and ESA claimants who have died is shown in table 2.1. Please note that these figures show those whose benefit claim ended as a result of their death. Table 2.1 Total number of individuals who have **flowed off (Died!-SF)** IB/SDA and ESA and whose date of death was at the same time, Great Britain: December 2011 to February 2014, Total number of IB/SDA and ESA off-flows with date of death at the same time. 81,140, of which: ESA 50,580, IB/SDA 30,560."

So, 81,140 people died whilst on benefits in 2 years and 3 months, not all but surely a big portion driven to suicide or stress-related fatal heart attacks etc. And some from outright starvation, or 'malnutrition' as it is politely called, as a result of benefit cuts and sanctions according to official government documents.

The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) say:

"UC is a cruel regime that has the capacity to inflict untold misery on society. Over 70% of respondents to the survey of 554 PCS staff launched in February 2018 said that the rollout of UC should be stopped. There will not be enough staff to deliver UC, as currently designed, safely. PCS agrees with the views of its members and believes that the rollout should be stopped until a fairer, fully staffed Social Security System is developed."

PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka has said about Universal Credit:

"Universal Credit remains a disaster because it is driven by the Tories' political choice to cut public spending and to denigrate people who rely on social security support. The misery being inflicted by the government's mishandling of this disastrous programme must be stopped and the full roll-out should be suspended immediately. The government's arrogant refusal to listen to its own staff, experts, charities, those affected and even its own MPs shows their aim is not to help people but to cynically cut support from those who need it most. A review of the entire project – from its impact on claimants to systemic failings, IT problems and pressures on staff – is needed before any decision is made as to whether it is fit to continue."

But where is the industrial action, where is the mobilisation of members, where is any attempt to stop this happening from the PCS with the Socialist Party bogus revolutionary Trotskyist-led Executive which makes no difference whatsoever to actual practice apart from a few leftist-sounding speeches like Serwotka's above?

Heart-breaking suicides are regularly reported, outsourced firms like Capita commit outrages like that case of Frances McCormack feature here, or that terrible letter in the next page, but only words of condemnation are issued.

Until the mass organisations of the class in the trade unions and the Labour party defends these most vulnerable of their class consciousness will not rise to face the English nationalism and immigrant hounding which is now advancing so strongly because of Brexit.

It is the same battles as that against the gig economy, the zero hours contracts, the entire precarious neo-liberal modern capitalist economy, which is approximately the same in all countries.. And we must fight it against not only the Tories but the entire capitalist system which is defended so ably by the labour Lieutenants of capital in the trade union bureaucracy and the Labour party.

What an appalling debacle was Labour's stance on the Immigration Bill at the end of January, a one line whip, with the intention



Frances McCormack suffered the loss of her son Jack to suicide. She was then hounded because she now had a spare room to be taxed. The day her eviction notice came the working mother was found hanged. She leaves two other sons.

ONLY IN TORY BRITAIN.

to abstain, pandering to the racist bigots of Ukip by not opposing the Bill completely. As *The Spectator* reported:

**Labour's Immigration Bill stance shows how much Jeremy Corbyn has changed:**

This is still an interesting move from Labour's frontbench. The Jeremy Corbyn approach was once to paint in primary colours, opposing bills with anything remotely unpalatable in them as soon as the opportunity arose. Indeed, one of the things that ignited Corbyn's first leadership campaign in 2015 was the decision of the party's interim leader Harriet Harman to abstain on the second reading of the Welfare Reform Bill. Her rationale was that Labour had just emerged from a general election campaign in which voters told it repeatedly that it wasn't good with money and couldn't be trusted on welfare, so the party could not appear to oppose reform. The party couldn't support certain measures, so it would seek changes in the ensuring stages of the Bill's passage through Parliament.

So Jeremy Corbyn has done a Harriet Harman on the Labour movement. But we mustn't oppose lest the Tories benefit! ▲

**The Kilburn Unemployed Workers Group picket of the Department of Works and Pensions HQ against vicious sanctioning and Universal Credit is between 12 noon and 1 pm on the first Friday of every month against Universal Credit, Caxton House, Tothill St, London SW1H 9NA, Nearest tube St James Park. Please attend with your banners and placards.**

We're reducing your Universal Credit by £10.40 each day. This is called a sanction.

We're giving you a low-level sanction because you failed to attend a telephone commitments review appointment on 02/08/18 at 9.20am.

We looked at all the information, including anything you told us, and don't think you have a good reason for this.

#### How long will the sanction last

Your sanction started on 02 August 2018 and will last 110 days.

We'll also add 7 days because this is your first low-level sanction in the last 12 months.

#### If you need help

Talk to a friend, family member or work coach if you don't understand this letter. If you don't want to go to a Jobcentre on your own, you can take someone with you.

#### If you need emergency money

You might be able to apply for a hardship payment if you need help paying bills and other living costs while we're reducing your payments.

This is a loan that you pay back in small amounts out of future

- 13 weeks for the first failure
- 26 weeks for the second failure within 52 weeks of the previous failure
- 3 years for the third failure within 52 weeks of the most recent failure (please note this is not the date of the decision)

## Medium Level Sanctions

Medium level sanctions apply to people who are in the full conditionality group. You can be sanctioned if:

- You fail to be available for work
- You fail to take all the actions expected to get paid work

### The fixed sanction periods are:

- 4 weeks for the first failure
- 13 weeks for the second failure and any more failures after this

## How to avoid being sanctioned

You can avoid being sanctioned by meeting all of the conditions in your claimant commitment. This may be difficult if the claimant commitment does not take into account all of your problems.

### What to do if you are sanctioned

If you have a Universal Credit sanction it is important that the decision is challenged through a Mandatory Reconsideration as quickly as possible. You will need to argue that you have good cause for the action which you took. If you have no other income you will need to ask for Hardship Payments during your sanction. You may also need to be referred to a Foodbank.

### Rate of sanction

The rate of the sanction will be 100% of your standard Universal Credit Allowance for a single person or for a couple where one person only has been sanctioned it will be 50% of the couple personal allowance. The rate of the sanction will be reduced to 40% of this amount if:

- You are aged 16 or 17
- You are the carer of a child under one
- You are pregnant and have less than 11 weeks before the baby is due
- You have had a baby in the last 15 weeks (including if the baby was stillborn)
- You have had an adopted child placed with you in the last 52 weeks

The rate of the sanction is reduced to nil if you have no work related requirements in your claimant commitment because you have limited capability for work and for work related activity.

## Hardship Payments

Payments can be claimed by people who have had Universal Credit sanctions. However, it will be more difficult to get a Universal Credit Hardship Payment than a Hardship Payment when other benefits have been sanctioned. Hardship Payments are paid at the rate of 60% of the benefit which has been stopped if:

- You cannot meet your most immediate and basic needs for accommodation, heating, food and hygiene
- You have made every effort to access other sources of support and stop any spending on other needs
- You have met all the work related requirements in the last 7 days
- You have applied for and given the evidence needed to the DWP in connection with the application.
- You will be expected to make a new application for Hardship Payments each month during your sanction period before the first day of each of your monthly assessment periods.
- Universal Credit Hardship Payments are also loans and have to be repaid by deductions from your benefit at the end of the sanction period. ▲

## Financial appeal to the labour and trade union movement

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
The Kilburn Unemployed Workers Group has fought for the unemployed, disabled and all victims of this system since 2010. Former DWP minister Ester Mcvey sparked outrage online after she said she was part of a "compassionate Conservative government" and current minister Amber Rudd, although forced into a partial and inadequate climbdown on the Universal Credit (UC) rollout time, has "sneaked out", under cover of the Brexit debate, cuts in benefits available to some older 'mixed age' couples by up to £7,320 a year that will force them to claim UC as a couple. Age UK described the change as a "substantial stealth cut" and said it could have a devastating effect on the health and wellbeing of some older people and increase the numbers of pensioners in poverty.

The KUWG has expenses of over £1,000 per PA for rent and office space, several hundred for printing costs and increasing calls on our hardship funds for those with literally no money whatsoever to live on. We are also a referral agency for the foodbanks. We incur substantial caseworker costs and travel expenses to protests and pickets for those with no spare cash at all. We are in desperate need of a part time admin worker, not least to deal with the increasingly complex claimant forms. Please donate as much as your organisation can afford to enable us to continue this vital work, the last lifeline for many of the most oppressed in many cases. Make cheques payable to the Kilburn Unemployed Workers Group and send to The Kingsgate Centre, 107 Kingsgate Road, Kilburn, NW6 2JH You can also donate by going to KUWG Blog, <http://kilburnunemployed.blogspot.com/>, and pressing Pay Pal Donate Button and entering donation amount. ▲

The Benefits Aware website explains the sanctions regime of the Department of Works and Pensions. The appalling hostility to the most oppressed emanating for every line would have made Adolph Hitler proud.

## Universal Credit Sanctions

The rules about sanctions under Universal Credit mean that there will be more people who will be sanctioned than the previous benefits system. In fact, evidence is suggesting that the rate of sanctions under Universal Credit is three times that of JSA. It is possible to be sanctioned even if you are in paid work.

It should also be noted that Hardship Payments are paid as loans and will have to be repaid at the end of the sanction.

The rules for the level of Universal Credit sanctions are based on the rules for JSA and ESA sanctions. Anyone who receives Universal Credit can be sanctioned and the level of the sanction depends upon the conditionality group that you are placed in. More information about the conditionality groups can be found in the article Your Responsibilities if you get Universal Credit

### Highest Level Sanctions

Highest level sanctions can only be applied to people who are placed in the full conditionality group.

You can be sanctioned if:

- You lose your job through misconduct
- You leave work voluntarily
- You fail to do mandatory work activity
- You fail to apply for or to accept paid work
- You lose pay if you are in paid work (without a good reason)

The last of the above is a new reason for being sanctioned which has been introduced under Universal Credit.

### There are three fixed increasing sanctions:

# Balance, prospects of Gilet Jaunes Movement

By Viriato Lusitania, 4 -2-19



This movement is a spontaneous response from the most exploited sections of the French population to 40 years of bosses' offensive through the policies put in place by all governments. This has been going on since the third year of Mitterrand's first term in office (1984), it speeded up and got much worse under Sarkozy, Hollande, Macron to the present day.

This mass movement which has developed throughout the country has highlighted the complete bankruptcy of the left, i.e. the remains of the Socialist Party (SP), the Communist Party (PCF) as a whole, including dissident groups, France Insoumise of Jean-Luc Mélenchon in large part, the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (NPA – created after the dissolution of the former section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in a “broad party”), Lutte Ouvrière (PO), and the pro-Brexit/Frexit Parti Ouvrier Independent Democratique (POID, a split from the Lambertist POI a few years ago, led by former Lambertist leader Daniel Gluckstein).

These latter two have maintained a position of support for the Gilets Jaunes (GJ) movement but without being able to do the full political work that is necessary. The POI-POID are strongly Brexit/Frexit and worked only in the rightist, CIA founded union federation, the Force Ouvrière (FO). The FO ties to the CIA were leaked in 1967 by Thomas Braden, a former agent: “Into this crisis stepped Jay Lovestone and his assistant, Irving Brown. With fund from Dubinsky's union, they organized Force Ouvrière, a non-Communist union”. The Reagan administration continued support through the NED. The strength of Lambertism in France, similar to the Socialist party in Britain, comes from full time well paid union positions in the FO. France's own CIA-funded Trotskyists!

The POI have now begun to work in the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), which was once dominated by the PCF. Both Lambertist groups are ‘sovereignist’, i.e. nationalist, like the PCF. They were traditionally Stalinophobic but are now moving closer ideologically to the PCF on Brexit at least.

Also active are the small Groupe Marxiste Internationalist (GMI) ex-Lambertists which leads the international grouping COREP (Collectif Révolution Permanente, formerly linked to Socialist Fight) and Révolution Permanente (associated with the Trotskyist Fraction – Fourth International, and the US Left Voice).

The real basis of the movement are the crying needs of large segments of the population impoverished by capitalist politics. There are 9 million poor people in France and the working class, petty bourgeoisie and even small entrepreneurs are suffering the weight

of the capitalist crisis, often from ever-increasing taxes.

The conciliatory activity, of compromise, of “dialogue”, of objective betrayal of recent demands and workers' struggles by trade unions and left-wing parties, has created a feeling of deep mistrust of trade union leaders and by extension of the trade unions themselves by a growing number of workers and proletarians.

The absurd sectarian centrism and the opportunism observed by the most known extreme left parties, has made that certain minority layers among the most backward of the proletariat pass to an extreme right-wing vote as the only form of protest against the capitalist policies they are subjected to.

The majority of proletarians either continue to vote for left-wing parties or seek alternatives such as France Insoumise, which does not propose to change the system but to improve it, or, more often than not, abstain massively allowing the election of bankers' and capitalists' candidates thereby giving the opportunity for open enemies of the working classes like Marine Le Pen to be elected.

The complete bankruptcy of the French Communist Party and its relative loss of political influence is accompanied by a total lack of circulation of the Marxist ideas, for more than 25 years now, although they had been concerned with them for a long time. It newspaper from 1920, L'Humanité, founded by Jean Jaurès in 1904 is going bankrupt – section of the right are trying to save it, thereby acknowledging its long service to capitalism.

However, it remains a workers' party because of the number of its militants, but it has not been very active for a long time but has a popular respect of long standing.

The fall of the USSR and the transition to capitalism in China and bourgeois anti-communist propaganda campaigns, which have been very little countered, because intellectuals have all moved rightward to capitalism, and this has created an ideological and political vacuum that the far left has been unable to fill.

Marxism, Socialism, Communism have only been discussed and circulated (and on what form?) in narrow circles, far from the masses, for years. The only ones who propagate it to the masses (LO and POI-POID) or, very briefly address the most backward sectors of the class or do so through poorly read newspapers.

This policy of addressing the lowest level of understanding is assumed and even claimed. The most advanced sectors of the class must be satisfied with what they already know through the press or at most with simple explanations.



If they decide to go further, they can find some reviews but no real polemics, no ideological work, and remain at the level of what they can glean by themselves or submit to a corporal “discipline” that stifles any democratic discussion and leads them through trade unionism to centrist and sectarian political positions.

Faced with such a situation, the right and the far right find themselves in front of a political boulevard, almost without opposition after the “socialist” government of Holland which has put the prestige of the left and its party, the Socialist Party, lower than the ground. But both the right and the far right are still rejected by a significant mass of the people who are wary of them because they know that this will still mean serious attacks on liberties and their living and working conditions.

These conditions, therefore, have allowed lobbies and capitalists councils of administrations plus some unscrupulous intellectuals to work out a plan to put in place draconian measures, in order to align French capitalism with its foreign competitors. This plan, which was the same as all the candidates of the right have, either Juppé or Fillon or even Marine Le Pen but under a disguise, will be put into practice by Macron, a former minister of Hollande, a former employee of the Rothschild bank, who will be elected President of the Republic.

This plan he will put it in place brutally and with an arrogance that will quickly make him hated by the population. This aspect, his arrogance and his contempt for workers and the people explains why the first demand of the Yellow Vests will be his resignation.

The last straw that breaks the camel's back, which triggered the movement, was a new fuel increase, an old technique of every government: to tax the population (taxes represent more than two thirds of the price of fuel). A self-employed woman published a call on the Web which, in a few days, was answered by more than 800,000 people and will exceed one million in a short time. This issue of rising fuel costs was mainly against the interest of workers who travel to work, but also to small companies, even large ones if they are truckers or taxis or transporters.

Over time, there is an inevitable polarization within the movement that responds to the hidden but latent politicization that exists because of the presence of various political

currents. In what could be called the “left” of the movement, there is a dividing line between those influenced by the ideas of La France Insoumise, as well as those who are more inclined to spontaneous and/or ecological conceptions and the few militants who keep a Leninist conception.

Within the extreme right are both those who follow Asselineau’s ideas (high-ranking civil servant, unfortunate presidential candidate) and fascists

“identitaires” who find Marine le Pen to be “socialist”...

In some cities, such as Lyon, clashes between spontaneous currents, reinforced by “state capitalists” as well as by the two Marxist-Leninist groups and the “antifa” movement (anti-fascists) in total not too much people, clash with the identities of extreme right (ED), a group of about thirty well organized, disciplined and possibly armed. These individuals who integrate Saturday demonstrations to fight against “antifas” or molest Arabs or homosexuals. Last week they get some fight coming from young people who gives them a “stone” lesson.

The government has tried various tactics to defuse the movement. So, it has promises a lot and through some minimal concessions in the firsts weeks, and then ... a brutal repression having nothing other but a ‘referendum’ to propose. This recently as a maneuver and a trap.

The clashes in Paris were provoked by whoever they were. Certainly not by the Yellow Vests, which, for the most part, only seek to make their movement “visible”. The press has greatly exaggerated the extent of the fighting and damage. On 1 December, there were only a few pallet fires and a lot of tear gas on site. Nothing more.

Afterwards, two Saturdays later, there was a change. Then, according to reliable source reports, it was more the activity of provocateurs, also unconscious people who came only to the fight and extreme right-wing militants. Some of them will be expelled from the demonstrations but as the movement generally remains unorganized, they come back, to do the same.

But, a social movement, for some even ‘a revolution’, which is far from reality, cannot survive without moving forward and constantly progressing. This requires a solid organization and a sure direction and among the GJs this is under construction but very slowly. The most militant have tried to converge with factory workers and others, but it can also become a “first-class funeral”.



**Jérôme Rodrigues, the plumber of Portuguese parentage, one of the leaders of protests. His lawyer said: “He will be disabled for life. A tragedy for him and his family”.**

Tuesday, February 5 there will be a demonstration and “Renewable Strike” called by the CGT and supported by the “Assembly of Yellow Vests Assemblies” which also called for a “General Strike” (which is different but much riskier because the GJs are not in the works). Several GJs think that the CGT wants to “show”

that people are not ready to mobilize for a general strike, that there is a danger that this demo will link the movement to a union known by its ties to the system and that everything will become a monthly union walk until the demonstrators are exhausted, thus the end of the Yellow Vests movement.

If we look closely at this question, some Left parties no longer has militants to do the work, they have long since abandoned all Marxism and do not want to do the hard work.

The far left, is right-wing or centrist, has only seen the problems and has not wanted to engage or has do so in such a clumsy way for lack of discipline, design or lack of political know-how. Those most able to do political work at the national level have made very few commitments, without committing the majority of their troops, without doing the work, paying lip-service to save their faces.

The demonstration took place in Lyon last Saturday. There were nearly 10,000 demonstrators with a large presence of Yellow Vests coming or from the CGT ranks who had endorsed their Yellow Vests or from Yellow Vests coming directly to participate. As it was organized by the CGT, all the political organizations of the left were present, anarcho-syndicalist, extreme left, even associations that were protesting against the coup d’état in Venezuela.

The route was fixed in advance, authorized by the Prefecture and supervised by few police officers because they know that a CGT parade always takes place in total calm. In short, a parade like so many have done before and which produce no concrete results other than giving leaders sufficient support so that they can continue to live off it, betray us and find themselves as “valid interlocutors” and consensual of the government.

So we covered this short trip, the Yellow Jackets clearly visible by their Jackets well in the middle and once finished the march according to the authorized route and while we were undergoing the soft speeches of the CGT, they organized themselves, put them-

selves in front of the procession and the Gilets Jaunes followed by some unionists from the base, launched towards the city center to invest it with their own slogans, singing the Partisans’ anthem and shouting “the streets are ours! “ and the traditional “Macron resign! We have ‘robbed’ the demo from CGT’s hands. That will surely be in the future the way the Union bosses could be dispossessed of the masses they misled.

Behind, in the full sense of the word, remained both the leadership of the demonstration and the most organized parties. LO had come in force with slogans, newspaper sales activists, the presence of more than sixty grouped militants and others in the procession, the NPA with a big flag, the POI in the middle of the Regional Force Ouvrière union which does not follow the national slogan of FO leaders not to go to the demo. Needless to say, none of these ‘revolutionary’ parties followed Yellow Vests that pass through the authorization of the Prefecture.

News from other cities, shows exactly the same trend, even if Lyon is not characterized, and never has been characterized for its revolutionary or combative spirit. So, if this was possible in Lyon, it may well happen again elsewhere.

The Yellow Vests have become anti-trade unionists precisely because they are fed up with walks without a tomorrow and the fact that they have gone beyond the limits set by the CGT’s leaders is not only a proof of their determination; it has not only taught honest union activists a fighting lesson but also shows that the Yellow Vests movement is indeed the beginning of a new wave that points like a small distant clearing but a clearing anyway.

“A spark can set fire to the prairie” because of the dry straw there are tons accumulated and a lot of anger held back among the people. I do not know if this will be the case, I do not know either if this CGT-Yellow Vests demo will be only a straw fire, all I know is that without this movement of Yellow Vests, despite all its flaws and drawbacks, it has put the bourgeoisie in great difficulty .

For Marcon, its servant of the moment, it has highlighted to the masses the true nature of the left and of the Union bureaucracy, that this movement means hope for a lot of in the lowest strata of the working class disgusted with politics that there can have hope for them and, perhaps, that they are opening their eyes to proletarian politics (in whichever form that begins).

Now the need is for a real communist party to help this awakening, which can certainly go through ups and downs, but which is marching ahead with difficulties, with oscillations, with no guaranteed of success, but in the good direction. That’s the way things have been happening in France over the last three months. ▲

# South Africa (SA) - words, whisper, actions, shout

By Ailish Dease

On the 16th August 2012 the Marikana massacre took its turn in the long list of state sanctioned atrocities which reach back to the founding of the settler colonial society. Since the Marikana massacre, Lonmin (the mining company involved) and the ANC government has attempted a cover up of its own role (and particularly the role of Cyril Ramaphosa (CR), a Lonmin Director at the time) in the slaughter and has set up bogus 'inquiries' as well as jailing 19 survivors of the massacre charging them with the 'murder' of their colleagues.

This is in spite of the fact that there is TV footage which shows without a shadow of doubt that the police gunned down the unarmed workers. The government has, against all evidence and reason promoted the notion that the victims were in reality the real culprits. The struggle for the release of the jailed miners continues.

Lonmin is now to be sold off before paying reparations to the community and fulfilling its legal obligations under the Social and Labour Plan.

## Xolobeni communities' strong peoples' resistance against mining

Elsewhere in South Africa in the Xolobeni communities (on the Eastern Cape's Wild Coast) there is strong peoples' resistance against mining. Europe and Australia are outsourcing their environmental degradation trying to establish mines in the area. Their land is an area of outstanding natural beauty and it would be sheer environmental vandalism to destroy this landscape for money.

On 22 November 2018 the Pretoria High Court ruled that the Communities have a right to say NO to mining on their land and must give 'full and informed consent' before the Deptment of Mineral Resources can begin mining there. Minister Gwede Mantashe told mining executives in Cape Town that his Dept. will appeal the Xolobeni mining ruling. He said communities cannot decide if mining can take place on their land as this would create "chaos". Whenever Mantashe visits the area there is unrest, he refuses to allow community members to speak, and the police use rubber bullets to disperse protesters. The people have set up the Amadiba Crisis Committee (ACC) to represent their concerns, but it has been subjected to vicious violence and the chair of the committee has been murdered.

Corruption is endemic in South Africa. We saw the hypocrisy and dishonesty of the ANC re the expropriation of the land without compensation. The ANC has vacillated on this question and due to pressure from BLF and EFF they decided to pretend that they would proceed with the necessary steps for such. In order for the land to be restored to the rightful owners would necessitate an amendment

to the Constitution before the end of the 5th parliament. The ANC in their dishonesty, having no intention to restore the land, has now claimed, that it is impossible for this amendment to go through, before the end of parliament so the issue of land reclamation will need to be postponed until after the election.

## Andile Ramaphosa and corruption

Another(!) scandal has emerged where according to Maimaine of the Democratic Alliance there are documents which confirm that there were inappropriate transactions between BOSASA (the securities facilities company) and Andile Ramaphosa (AR), Ramaphosa's eldest son. A payment of R500 000 was made to AR which was a 'donation' towards Cyril Ramaphosa's (CR) bid for the ANC's leadership. Cyril Ramaphosa denied getting the 'sponsorship'. Subsequently, he admitted getting the money.

Maimaine claims there is enough evidence to implicate CR in state capture. Maimaine is now demanding that CR set up an independent inquiry into the company's influence on the government and the ANC. Maimaine is also asking that the government cancels all contracts with BOSASA. The President's absolute absence of self-awareness is incredible.

The West (US, UK, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands) leaked a letter to the press, which they had already sent to CR, indicating their political and economic 'concerns' about South Africa specifically on the constantly shifting policy on Black Empowerment and mining. This is imperialism meddling in the internal affairs of another country months before an election. This was a warning to CR that they will do to SA what they have done to Zimbabwe, and Venezuela and thrash the economy, if he entertains any ideas about self-determination for South Africans, (not that such a thought would enter his head!) but he is just playing games about the restitution of the land in order to buy votes from the majority who would vote BLF and EFF, for whom this a major part of their programme.

ANC supporters point out that-corruption was rife during apartheid, billions were stolen, there was systematic enslavement of the African population with alcohol. Those crimes were forgotten, and no one was charged, no one served a day in jail for the horror that the majority were subjected to.

Nothing happened to the criminals. They were allowed to keep their ill-gotten gains stashed away in Swiss banks and continue to live like kings. However, this truth does not diminish the wrongs that the ANC, corrupted by power and willing to turn a blind eye to stupidity, has done while claiming to be a socialist party...they have also forgotten that CR sold out the people at the 1991 Convention



22 November 2018: Xolobeni community members celebrate at the North Gauteng High Court after Judge Annali Basson ruled that the Department of Mineral Resources has to obtain consent from mining communities before granting a mining right to a company.

for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) negotiations.

In 2013 Ronnie Kasrils explained *How the ANC's Faustian pact sold out South Africa's poorest*, whilst admitting his own part in that pact. But his explanation is that well-intentioned but naive ANC and SACP leaders went down the neo-liberal road because the USSR had collapsed and they had to get a big IMF loan to survive even before the first election in 1994. And so the secret pact with Oppenheimer's capitalist oligarchy was developed:

"They were reporting to Mandela, and were either outwitted or frightened into submission by hints of the dire consequences for South Africa should an ANC government prevail with what were considered ruinous economic policies."

**SA Presidents:** Nelson Mandela's (1994–1999) estate was worth about \$3 million when he died in 2013, Thabo Mbeki (1999–2008) is worth \$10 million, Jacob Zuma (2009–2018) \$20 million, and Cyril Ramaphosa (2018–present) \$500 million. Ramaphosa's billionaire brother-in-law Patrice Motsepe (\$1.8), Kgalema Motlanthe and Saki Macozoma are just a few more black ANC-made multi-millionaires in this most unequal country in the planet. *The ANC naivety was very well rewarded!*

Many South Africans have said that imperialist bullying is due to SA's stance on Palestine and Venezuela. This is likely, after all, at this historical juncture, Palestine is the litmus test for anti-imperialist politics.

At one stage in history, one's position on the North of Ireland more or less demonstrated which side of the fence you were on. Ramaphosa assisted the keeping of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998; he and former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari secretly inspected arms dumps in 2000, thereby assisting to legitimise British occupation of the six north eastern counties of Ireland. Workers must unite to overthrow this absurdly unequal and authoritarian regime of Capital. Resist and insist on a life of justice and dignity!▲



# 2019: Irish and International revolutionary and counter-revolutionary centenaries By Tony Fox

The year 1919 opened with the meeting of the first Dáil in the Mansion House in Dublin on 21 January and the first engagement of the Tan War, the Soloheadbeg ambush in

Tipperary on the same day. The IRA volunteers led by Séamus Robinson had no high command at the time. Robinson expressed contempt for the Dáil. Dan Breen said later:

“...we took the action deliberately, having thought over the matter and talked it over between us. [Seán] Treacy had stated to me that the only way of starting a war was to kill someone, and we wanted to start a war, so we intended to kill some of the police whom we looked upon as the foremost and most important branch of the enemy forces”

Following the UK general election of December 1918 of 105 Irish seats Sinn Féin won in 73 constituencies but had only 69 MPs as four were elected in two constituencies, e.g. Sinn Féin Leader Éamon de Valera was elected in both East Clare and East Mayo. Edward Carson's Unionists got 22 seats and John Dillon's Irish Parliamentary party was reduced to 6, losing 68 seats. But only 27 attended the first Dáil, the rest were either 'as lathair' (not present, Unionists), and others either 'fé ghlas ag Gallaibh' (jailed by the foreigner) or 'ar díbirt ag Gallabih' (deported by the foreigner).

The first Dáil adopted a radical programme, but, as Donal Fallon tells us:

“This document was mostly drafted by Thomas Johnson, Secretary of the Labour Party, which had not contested the 1918 Election, allowing Sinn Féin a clear-run in what became something of a referendum in Labour's absence. Johnson's original draft was somewhat toned down by Seán T. O'Kelly of Sinn Féin – with one contemporary joking it was in essence “Debolshvised”. The original document, in the words of one TD, was “communistic”.”

The most important item deleted was James Connolly's sentence: “the Republic will aim at the elimination of the class in society which lives upon the wealth produced by the workers of the nation but gives no useful service in return.”

Connolly co-founded the Irish Labour Party with Jim Larkin and William O'Brien in 1912 as the political wing of the Irish Trade Union Congress. The latter had been founded in 1894 as a consequence of the British TUC continually ignoring Irish issues, even those pertaining to craft unionism. The new organisation was called the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress (ILPTUC). However, the body remained dominated



by craft unions that were mainly Irish branches of British-based unions, with the bulk of these located in the north.

To maintain unity political issues were never discussed. Only with the arrival of Larkin and Connolly did the balance of power shift in this uncomfortably compromised organisation from the craft to the industrial and therefore from the north to the south. This advance was apparent in the ITUC programme adopted in 1914 for, “the abolition of the capitalist system of wealth production with its inherent injustice and poverty”, together with the above quotes sentence.

**1919, clockwise, Red Clydesiders, Jallianwala Bagh memorial, Rosa Luxemburg memorial, Liam Mellows statue Galway, still leading the fight against the Black and Tans in 1919.**

In the 1916 Congress in Sligo President Thomas Johnson had delegates standing in respect for those who had died in the Rising and in “foreign fields”. An ominous indication of the ILPTUC future role in Irish society was the fact that it took no part in the Dublin Lockout of 1913; Connolly and Larkin were left to fight without official backing for fear of alienating craft unionism, overwhelmingly Loyalist. So, the Johnson of the first Dáil had not only conceded the leading role of the working class but also the struggle against imperialism.

Although it did stand in the Treaty election of 1922 it implicitly endorsing that 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty and took no side in the civil war, again implicitly endorsing the Free Staters. They were now 100% opposed to Connolly's politics but hypocritically kept him as their iconic founding father, as today's Irish Labour party still does.

In 1919 internationally the shock waves from the October Revolution in



Russia was still powerfully sweeping the planet. Upwards of 90,000 Red Clydesiders rallied in Glasgow's George Square on 31 January 1919. The Riot Act was read, and the police attacked the demonstrators and arrested the strike leaders. Just over two weeks previously, on 15 January, the Freikorps had murdered the great Polish revolutionary leader Rosa Luxemburg in Berlin on the orders of the Social Democratic leaders, Defence Minister Gustav Noske and Chancellor Friedrich Ebert to defeat the German revolution.

Only John McClean had anything approaching a revolutionary approach to these events, inspired by the events in Russia. Willie Gallagher, the Communist party MP, later regretted that they had not developed that struggle to the point of insurrection by demonstrating outside Maryhill barracks demanding the locked in Glaswegian troops join them in the streets.

Just three months later in India came the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on 13 April 1919. British troops under Colonel Reginald Dyer savagely massacred up to 1,000 peaceful demonstrators in Amritsar in the Punjab province. They were stationed on a hill and fired on the defenceless crowd until all their ammunition was exhausted. Of course, the British administration held an inquiry which exonerated Dyer and claimed only 300-odd were killed.

The truly radical forces in Ireland in those days were the left republicans, Liam Mellows in particular, whose speech during the Treaty Debates is an absolute classic international socialist republican call to arms. It reads as fresh today as the day he delivered it.

This was the radical alternative, learned during his enforced exile in America where he met revolutionary socialists of every hue and from his connection with the fledgling Irish Communist Party, led by men like Sean McLoughlin and Roddy Connolly (before he became a TU bureaucrat).

They combined the national liberation struggle with the struggle for socialism, inspired by the Russian Revolution and Mellows took them seriously and issued a manifesto from his cell which made the connection which would inspire the working class and small farmers to fight.

That was why the Free Staters shot him and his three comrades on 8 December 1922 and others like Erskine Childers and carried out the Kerry Atrocities. Counterrevolution to allow the big Dublin capitalist and the big ranchers to maintain their trade relations with the Empire at the expense of the 'lower orders'. ▲

## “Prevent” is trying to censor the left: Is the SWP joining in? Stop Bans and Proscriptions against *Socialist Fight* and others – the thin end of the wedge!

Last September the Labour Party NEC adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) pseudo-definition of ‘anti-Semitism’, whose purpose is to suppress criticism of Israel and meaningful solidarity with the Palestinians. Since then there has been an escalation of attacks on the democratic rights of the left by Zionists, by Labour Party politicians and others. What is worse is that some on the left are co-operating and joining in the Zionist witchhunt against so-called “left-wing anti-Semites”

■ On 21 September, the Revolutionary Communist Group held a public meeting in Camden to denounce the IHRA definition and the Labour Party’s adoption of it. They reported:

“The attempt to ban the meeting was led by ex-Labour councillor and Director of Public Affairs of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Phillip Rosenberg. Sections of Camden’s Labour Council participated in the attempt to associate Palestine solidarity with anti-Semitism, with the Camden Counter-Extremism team (*Prevent* ‘Thought Police’ - SF) even sending along two council officers to monitor the meeting. It is clear that sections of the Labour Party are now on the offensive to use the IHRA definition to shut down free speech on Palestine.”

■ Zionists Ambrosine Shitrit, Sharon Klaff and Jonathan Hoffman attended the meeting. Hoffman constantly disrupted it and others filmed the audience. These three have long associations with Paul Besser, former Intelligence Officer for Britain First, a neo-Nazi group, and other well-known fascists. Clearly there was a concerted attack on defence of Palestine by Camden Council and far right Zionists.

■ In early October when attempting to re-stock our magazine in Housmans Bookshop in Kings Cross, we were informed that our publications would no longer be sold. We asked why, and were eventually told by the manager “you know why”. “People we trust” said the manager, had told them that our magazine was ‘anti-Semitic’. We hear this is people from *Prevent*.

■ On 14<sup>th</sup> December we once again went to re-stock our magazines, this time in Bookmarks, the outlet of the Socialist Workers Party. Just as at Housmans, the staff told us that they could no longer stock our magazine. They said that they could not say why, but that we could email the SWP for a reason. We have since contacted the SWP leadership, including their leader Alex Callinicos, but they have failed to reply.

■ *Socialist Fight* does support work for political prisoners in Ireland and internationally. In this country we try to help Ben Stimson, a young Irishman of Jewish background in jail in Manchester. He was jailed on a phoney ‘terrorism’ charge for going to Ukraine and giving support to the resistance of the mainly Russian-speaking population and provincial governments of Eastern Ukraine against the Western-backed Nazi-infested nationalist regime in Kiev. He has been told by the authorities that he is no longer allowed to

receive our publications because it would harm his ‘rehabilitation’ under *Prevent*.

Labour Councils and the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucracy have meanwhile been frontally attacking the democratic rights of others on the left inside and outside the Labour Party, and anti-racist critics of Zionism generally. Some examples:

■ The IHRA definition was rammed through the Labour Party NEC on 4th September with all its ‘examples’ which try to ban meaningful anti-racist criticism of Israel, by the votes both of right-wing unions such as GMB and UNISON, and lefts such as UNITE’s Len McCluskey, who also voted down the proposals for Open Selection of Labour candidates. The leadership of Momentum, around Jon Lansman, also stabbed the Labour membership and backed the full IHRA.

■ The Labour Council in Hammersmith and Fulham sacked Stan Keable, of Labour Party Marxists, from his job, for expressing anti-Zionist views in a private conversation, filmed without his consent, at a demonstration last year against the vilification of Jeremy Corbyn. Comrade Keable has also been backstabbed by his union, UNISON.

■ Another attempt was made this autumn, by a Labour Council in Dudley, West Midlands, to sack a Labour member who they employed. Paul Jonson, who outspokenly called for support for the Palestinians and denounced Israel as a ‘racist endeavour’ had to be cleared as the IHRA definition has no legal standing, and comrade Jonson had the backing of his union and the local Trades Council.

■ In December, the ex-Israeli Jazz Saxophonist Gilad Atzmon, who has played for the Blockheads, the band of the late Ian Dury, for around 25 years, was due to play a Christmas concert with the Blockheads. Outside of his musical activity, Atzmon is a fierce critic of Israel as well as Jewish identity politics. As a result of a complaint from an individual called Martin Rankoff, who it transpires is the director of Likud UK, Islington council banned him from playing. However, the Blockheads managed to get a replacement Saxophonist, Sanity Claus, whose musical prowess emulated that of Atzmon (and who resembled him). Also to their credit, the band denounced ‘discrimination’ against Atzmon to considerable applause from fans.

So what do we have here? We have an appalling, cowardly excuse for a left in this country! We have the right-wing of the Labour Party which pro-

motes the Zionist agenda. We have ‘left-wing’ bureaucrats like McCluskey who help the right-wing and the Zionists to impose it on the Labour Party, with only weak opposition from Jeremy Corbyn, and a Labour ‘left’ led by Lansman who is overtly pro-Zionist. We have other parts of the Labour left, such as the AWL, who have joined in witchhunts against more left-wing figures such as Jackie Walker and Tony Greenstein for ‘anti-Semitism’, and even those figures have themselves joined in witchhunting Socialist Fight for our criticism of Jewish-Zionist bourgeois politics in the imperialist countries, which parallel views raised more recently by Norman Finkelstein, probably the world’s most prominent and outspoken anti-Zionist of Jewish origin.

And we have the SWP, which has a very chequered record, to say the least. Alex Callinicos was one of those who joined in the outcry against Norman Finkelstein’s work *The Holocaust Industry* around 2000. But then the SWP after Cliff’s death underwent a more left-wing period during the Iraq war, and was known for its strong anti-Zionism (within its own limitations), its bloc with George Galloway in RESPECT, and in that period its hosting of Gilad Atzmon as part of its ‘cultures of resistance’ events.

The SWP was witch-hunted for some of those things, and eventually capitulated. A key event was its refusal to defend Julian Assange from the CIA frameup after 2011. And now we have its apparent joining in a witchhunt against anti-Zionists to its left, with both the witchhunt in the Labour Party and the attacks of *Prevent* and the Zionists outside it. Refusing to sell the publications of a Socialist trend active in Labour that is witchhunted by the right really means joining in the witchhunt.

■ We appeal to the SWP membership and cadre to fight against this latest scandalous capitulation.

■ We appeal to all socialists and working class militants to demand of Housmans and Bookmarks that they cease their censorship of *Socialist Fight* and allow its sale in their bookshops. ▲

HM Prison Service  
HMP Manchester  
1 Southall Street,  
Manchester,  
M50 9AH



This is the Strangeways ban on SF. There was a similar Belmarsh ban against SF dated 16-10-16. Tracy Fitton, the head of Prevent North West, visited Ben in Wymott prison to assess him. She is the thought policewoman who decides what he gets to read and who he is allowed to talk to on the phone.

Your Left-Stopped Correspondence

CC: P.O. Sutch

Dear Mr Stimson

07/02/17

I write to advise that an incoming item of mail addressed to yourself has been placed in your stored property the reason being that such correspondence will seriously impede your rehabilitation whilst in custody. The correspondence was from Gerry Downing, PO Box 59188, London

Yours sincerely

C. Bramall  
CTU Band 4  
HMP Manchester

## Stop Brexit: Migrants Rights ARE Workers Rights!

Socialists and supporters of workers' rights, in the Labour Party and outside, have to make a leap of our understanding, and realise that migrant workers' rights ARE workers' rights. We should oppose Brexit and defend free movement and migration for workers within the EU. This is not out of any antipathy for workers from outside the EU; we demand the same rights for them. But socialists should demand Brexit be cancelled to defend free movement against reactionary attack from little England chauvinists, including those who claim to be on the left and support so-called 'Lexit'.

One positive effect of migration is that it brings into existence, despite all the strains, an international working class, not as an abstraction, but as a material reality. That has always been true of capitalism. In an earlier period, by drawing into the cities and industry enormous numbers of former poor peasants, it created its potential gravedigger. This is also true of migration: and it is why all kinds of reactionary backward-looking nationalists hate migrant workers.

We do not endorse the EU's single market for labour and capital, just as we do not endorse capitalist markets in general. But just as much as the right to join trade unions, to strike and struggle for better wages and conditions, so the right to seek work where the best conditions are available is also indivisible for workers. We are opposed to all restrictions on this, including chauvinist ones that purport to benefit one section of the working class ('indigenous') workers against another migrant section.

To say otherwise is to poison the relations between workers with different origins, and destroy class solidarity domestically and internationally. Such chauvinism encourages different groups of workers to scab on each other's struggles.

We totally oppose the neo-liberalism of the bourgeois opponents of Brexit, and of the EU itself. The most dramatic expression of this was the punishment of the Greek working people for resisting the austerity programme of the EU, whose purpose was to prop up the Euro as the centrepiece of the current EU project – a rickety monetary union without merging the states and economies of the components of the EU.

But we are against the break-up of the EU along national lines, between British, French, German, Italian imperialisms etc. We demand the destruction of all these separate imperialist entities and the creation through workers' mass struggles for a United States of Europe, which to really succeed would have to be under the rule of the working class.

We demand a full fiscal union to complement the monetary union, writing off Greek and other debts of poorer nations, which would hence be aided economically as regions, and a democratic union where it is the working class, not unelected bureaucrats (who are in fact agents of the European imperialists and their super-rich elites), who control and own the productive forces of a united continent.

We need to win so-called 'indigenous' workers to defend migrant workers' rights and struggles as their own. We need a movement that will physically defend migrant workers against racist and xenophobic attacks, from organised non-state racists and fascists, or the state.

### Brexit and Xenophobic Bigotry

After the vote for Brexit in 2016, there was an escalation of racist and chauvinist attacks. Polish and East European workers were the targets: leaflets were pushed through doors threatening 'Polish vermin'. Polish cultural centres were daubed with racist graffiti, and there were violent attacks, and even disgusting murders of East Europeans.

Black and Asian people were abused and threatened and told to 'go home'. These incidents were a small fraction of what has been happening. Many victims of abuse and violent racial crime do not report such incidents because of justified distrust of the police and the legal system.

This racial abuse and violence can be put at the door of the bourgeois politicians on both sides of the referendum. The entire thrust of Johnson, Gove and Farage's 'Leave' campaigning was whipping up hatred of migrants; but many on the 'Remain' side were no better, endorsing fortress Europe racism against non-EU migrant workers and demands for an 'emergency brake', agreeing that migrants are to be treated as an enemy population. They cringed in the face of anti-immigrant populism that has gained much influence in British society because of the relative absence of working class politics for more than two decades.

Syrian and Middle Eastern refugees too were targets for the Brexiters as they banged



A vigil to pay tribute to Arkadiusz Jozwik, a Polish man murdered by racists in Harlow, Essex on 31/8/ 2016.

the drum against those fleeing the wars the West and the Israelis have waged in the Middle East. These wars destroyed Iraq and Libya and continue to destabilise Syria in pursuit of creating anarchy, social collapse and fragmentation of the Arab world in particular. This is not only aimed at asserting US global hegemony but also at preventing any Arab unification that may threaten Israel's ability to seize Arab land with impunity.

### Proletarian internationalism not labour protectionism

British national sentiment does not contain any justification or a struggle against oppression, as does Palestinian, Irish or Latin American nationalism. It is reactionary pure and simple – Marxists do not support the 'right' of British chauvinists, even those with ties to the labour movement, to exclude or restrict migrants from British soil.

Working class support for labour protectionism helps capital to divide the working class along national lines and severely damages the possibility of international solidarity. And since capitalism has become more and more internationalised for many decades, and the IT revolution in the more recent decades has made capital flight qualitatively easier, international solidarity is going to be a crucial weapon even in defensive struggles in many countries, both imperialist and semi-colonial, in the future. Without it, the working class will suffer more very damaging defeats.

**The labour movement should have no truck with labour protectionism, but should adopt as its own the slogan: 'BRITISH' WORKERS, MIGRANT WORKERS, SAME STRUGGLE SAME FIGHT, WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE! ▲**

# An Argument for Radical Reform in Abortion Law; Abortion Free and Legal Until the Point of Birth

By Ivy O'Hare

Various arguments have been used historically to limit or completely forbid a woman's right to choose. This article seeks to discredit the philosophical and legal arguments used to this end, and argues against the legal framework which deny women vital health care. We seek to destroy the paternalistic approaches to women and this most vital aspect of health care, and to set forth an argument for a person-centred approach to abortion as opposed to that paternalism of the medicine of old.

Therefore we argue that the reasons for a woman seeking an abortion may be an abusive relationship she wishes to discontinue, financial reasons, her physical or mental health, or that she just doesn't want to be a mother. Any reason is justified. We will also discredit the arguments which seek to limit a woman's right to choose, this alongside proposing an educational programme, for both women and girls, which teaches the dangers, both medically and psychologically, of late term abortion.

These are the arguments made historically and currently for limiting the rights of pregnant women.

Some argue the cut off point should be viability, when the foetus can viably live outside the womb. But this changes from country to country and even from post code to post code as different medical equipment, primitive or advanced, is available. This suggestion offers no definitive answer.

Some say that the cut off point should be the moment of conception, and therefore no abortion ever. It endows the foetus with a special quality which entitles it to continue, also known as a soul, and most Churches argue that the soul enters at the point of conception. However if we accept materialism then we cannot help but accept that there is no such thing as this ethereal soul.

The argument of negative theology used to discount God can be applied to the soul. That the soul is an invisible and immeasurable quantity means we cannot ascribe to it any features, characteristics or properties, and existence itself is a property. We cannot see nor describe it, even with advanced scientific equipment, we cannot say the soul is real simply because there is no means by which to measure it. In short, the foetus has no special quality entitling it to survival.

Some say when the foetus first moves noticeably inside the woman, known in medical terms as quickening, should be the moment

when an abortion should become illegal.

This comes from old Aristotelian theory that the most fundamental property of life is that it moves, or rather moves itself, is animated. All matter moves, in fact it has become apparent that no matter how much you freeze it you cannot make matter static. There exists an exponential relationship between how much energy is put into the experiment to



halt matter and how much they can slow it down, never reaching the point of stasis. It has become apparent that movement is an inextricable property of matter, not just of life. So the old Aristotelian argument falls through.

So really any time period drawn up by any state to impose a time limit on abortion is arbitrary, and has little logical or scientific reason for its stated time frame.

The modern argument of a woman's bodily autonomy, that she is in ultimate control of what happens to her body, and her economic situation (a baby can ruin you or seriously disadvantage your prospects) means that a woman should be able to have a termination up until the point of birth, when the foetus becomes a baby and acquires some semblance of personhood. Otherwise we are letting the state dictate what a woman uses her body for. Unacceptable.

What about the daughter who had hidden her pregnancy from her family out of shame, or because of their families religious beliefs their desire for her chastity. Should she be denied a late term abortion (in medical terms, this is when an abortion is performed after viability) and be forced to have a child which she doesn't want, is unprepared to care for, which fulfils the wishes of her family rather than her own? Or the sex trafficking victims who has become pregnant as a result of rape and has been denied healthcare by her pimps? Once free, surely it is a grave double injustice to force her to deliver a rape baby simply because she was unable to access a clinician until late term?

Full reproductive education should be taught in schools and by adult education services, explaining to girls and women that late term abortion come with significantly higher complications. When we say we trust women with their pregnancies it should mean precisely this, that when we educated them to the highest level to be aware of what late term abortion involve, they will consider

these risks as weighted up against the risks of forever having to be involved with an abusive partner by virtue of their shared parenthood, or financially crippled for the foreseeable future because of an unwanted baby. We must educate and trust women.

Abortions can greatly advance a woman's prospects. Late term abortions are in no way ideal but we shouldn't criminalise women for having them, which a time limit does. I would suggest that the majority of late term abortions in the UK, and perhaps internationally, are sought by

women in abusive or controlling relationships, just as internet abortion pills are used by these women (as opposed to going through your genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinic or GP service).

There are no statistics in the UK for this, unbelievably, but that would be my instinct. One can easily imagine the situation where a woman as been in an abusive relationship, controlled by her partner to the extent that she cannot access abortion services, only to leave him whilst heavily pregnant, denied an abortion and the courts grant joint custody or visitation to the abusive father after that child's birth, putting both woman and child in danger. And if, as I suspect, that late term abortion are disproportionately sought by women in controlling of abusive relationships, any law against late term abortions therefore criminalizes some of the most vulnerable women in society.

Moreover, women in abusive and controlling relationships, who have not been able to seek abortions within the legal time frame are prosecuted for obtaining their own abortions, and this is not abstract. Women are prosecuted every year in the UK for obtaining abortion pills online, they face the same prison term as a murderer by virtue of the Offences Against the Person Act (1961) and suffer a life sentence. An institutional injustice compounding a personal tragedy.

So as for a cut off point for abortion, I would hope my arguments here have convinced you that there should be no cut off point at all.

Decriminalisation all the way. ▲

## Free Meng Wanzhou, reject the provocation against China

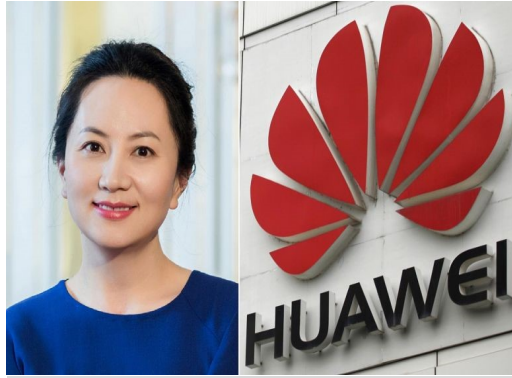
On 1 December 2018 Canadian police arrested Meng Wanzhou, Huawei's deputy Chair and chief global financial officer of the Chinese transnational corporation.

Three of the world's top five smartphone companies are now Chinese. Huawei is the world's second largest smartphone maker after Samsung and beating Apple into third place.

South Korea's Samsung is the largest with a global market share of 20.9% and a loss of 10.4% last year. Huawei's market share is 15.8% with an annual growth rate of 40.7%, The USA's Apple's share is 12.1% and an annual growth of 0.7%, fourth is China's Xiaomi with a market share of 9.3% and fifth is Oppo, also Chinese, market share 8.1%, annual growth 5.1%.

Although the US transnationals; Apple, Amazon, Google and Facebook are still the Big Four technology corporations, which includes all areas of social media technology etc. the trend is obvious. Together with IBM and Microsoft these corporations dominate most of the world's modern technology. Much of the US imperialist global domination over the past four decades is based on these 'Silicon Valley' giant corporations.

They are very uneasy about the threat from China because this advance is obvi-



Meng Wanzhou, daughter of the 1949 Red Army man who founded the giant transnational corporation, was arrested in Canada on 1 December. A representative of a 'deformed workers state'?

ously not confined to smartphones. Losing market share in all other areas of high technology just cannot be tolerated.

Samsung has big hopes of its forthcoming Galaxy Note 9 but what has really spooked the USA is that Huawei is the world leader in next-generation "5G" mobile network technology. Workers Vanguard No. 1147, 18 January 2019, reveals the real reason for the arrest of Meng Wanzhou:

"U.S. officials fret that Huawei's dominance in the development of 5G technology gives Beijing vast powers of global surveillance. That is rich coming from the Master of Government snooping in Washington. Six years ago, Edward Snowden released documents exposing the U.S. government's all-

pervasive spying on its own citizens, foreign nationals and even allied heads of state. As Snowden revealed, the National Security Agency has routinely planted "backdoors" in Cisco routers and other network equipment being shipped overseas. It also hacked Huawei's internal computer network and accessed its email archive, customer list and source code for its software products."

The 23 politically-driven charges against her include bank fraud, obstruction of justice and theft of technology. The USA is successfully rallying its more pliant allies, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the UK against the threat from this terrible 5G device, but the EU and others are not responding.

This is the global trade-war-leading-to-world-war situation that also is driving Trump's aggression against Venezuela.

Obviously we are not defending the appalling employment practises of this transnational corporation nor do we suggest that this multi-millionaire in any way represents the interests of Chinese workers in a deformed workers state.

Whilst we defend China against imperialism the social revolution is needed there. The expropriation of all capitalist property, including Huawei and all Chinese capitalist billionaires in this capitalist, advanced semi-colonial state, similar to Venezuela, Brazil and Russia. ▲

## GRL Motion for LRC AGM 9 February 2019

The Brexit vote on 23 June 2016 caused a huge rise in racism and the neo-fascist DFLA, strengthening English nationalism and imperialist ideology. This is not a choice between two wings of the ruling class; we must oppose Brexit because of its reactionary effect on working-class consciousness.

We must never equate the interests of the British working class with the interests of British or EU capitalism, on company boards or in foreign wars. We must never call for the unity of all true patriots to defend British national interests and independence.

Our allies are the global working class; we strongly hold that migrant rights are workers' rights. The gig economy of zero hours



The gig economy of zero hours contracts in Deliveroo couriers (above), the McDonald's workers and the disorganised construction sites where agency firms collude with corrupt union officials to maintain the profits of the big firms cry out for a fightback.

contracts in couriers, the McDonald's workers, the disorganised construction sites where agency firms collude with corrupt union officials to maintain the profits of the big firms cry out for a fightback.

It is an indictment of big unions like Unite and the GMB that small, TUC unrecognised unions like the IWGB, the IWW, United Voices of the World (UVW) and the Cleaners' and Allied Independent Workers' Union (CAIWU) are far more militant and successful in fighting the bosses.

We need a rank-and-file movement against the union bureaucracy like the Grass Roots Left to unite all the fightbacks within big unions and the small, fighting unions.

We must, therefore, set out to frustrate and defeat the reactionary anti-immigrant, anti-working class Brexit agenda, via a new Labour government and/or a referendum. ▲

# Defeat the US-sponsored coup against Venezuela

## Anti-Imperialist United Front against the USA; defeat the desperate warmongering global hegemon

LCFI Statement, <https://socialistfight.com/2019/02/02/defeat-the-us-sponsored-coup-against-venezuela/>

We must defend Nicolás Maduro and Venezuela against the blatant US-sponsored coup attempt. Unconditional but critical support is the Marxist line, the anti-imperialist united front without political support in the domestic class struggle is the tactic. National Assembly leader Juan Guaidó declared himself Venezuela's acting President on 13 January.

Guaidó had himself sworn in as interim president on 23 January amid much violence and bloodshed. Trump immediately recognised him as the rightful head of state. Maduro immediately broke relations with the USA and ordered the Ambassador and embassy staff to leave the country. On the 26 January the US called an emergency session of the UN Security Council and Pompeo demanded: "It is time for every other nation to pick a side. No more delays, no more games. Either you stand with the forces of freedom, or you're in league with Maduro and his mayhem." By 27 January 27 Maduro had backed down following threats of immediate unspecified action by the US and agreed to maintain diplomatic ties, although now this ambassador was pledging his allegiance to Guaidó.

Venezuela has the largest oil deposits in the world. On 28 January Trump issued an executive order for the US Treasury Department to take control of Petroleos de Venezuela (PdVSA), Venezuela's state-owned oil and natural gas company which is the nation's largest employer and revenue source. It will continue to operate but all its assets and profits are frozen in the USA. This is also the source not only of most of the welfare provisions for the working class and poor but also of the privileges of the military and other Maduro supporters. The economic crisis in Venezuela has resulted in three million refugees and inflation rates of a million percent a year. This crisis is only partly due to the fall in the price of oil; US economic sanctions are the main reason as they were in Zimbabwe, Iran and Turkey recently.

Thus, the coup is driving at the real reason the military has backed Chavez and Maduro so strongly over the years; they bribed them handsomely. Guaidó has offered them all amnesties if they turn against Maduro. National Security Advisor John Bolton urged the military to "accept the peaceful, democratic and constitutional transfer of power".

The second biggest danger is that the working class and poor in the barrios and favelas will become even more demoralised by the failure of Chavez and Maduro to act against the open agents of US imperialism;

the very rich and powerful capitalist class whose wealth and privileges is protected by the state. And those privileges include the right to stage regular coup attempts to test the loyalty of Maduro's base and the loyalty of the military.

### The international line up

Internationally the line-up is similar to the Canada/China affair apart from the EU backing the coup. Russia, China, Italy, (for its own opportunistic reasons against the EU), Syria, Iran, Mexico, Cuba, Bolivia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the Workers' Party of Brazil, Hezbollah, and Turkey have publicly backed Maduro. New Zealand says it has concerns about the 2018 Venezuelan elections but refuses to take sides. The US, Israel, Canada, Australia, Japan, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Britain, Germany Spain; more than 20 countries in all have now recognised the unelected US stooge Guaidó as the legitimate president.

Imperialism, which has been steadily taking over Brazilian Petroleum since the parliamentary coup of 2016, is now seeking to seize Venezuela's essential resources, not only oil, but also gold. It seems that Venezuela has important reserves of gold. The crisis is especially marked because one of the resistance weapons of the Eurasian bloc in the commercial war against the US is to re-establish the prevailing gold standard until World War II as a bargaining chip, de-dollarizing world trade. This confrontation has obvious global political and strategic military consequences.

### Overcoming the Chavez impasse, towards the proletarian revolution!

If the USA expropriates Venezuela's oil corporation then why does Maduro not expropriate the pro-US capitalist enemy forces within his country? He is doomed if he does not if not this time then in the next, better-prepared coup. After two decades in the government, the Chavismo is discredited before the population in two aspects. First, though it rhetorically announces its choice for socialism and against imperialism, it concretely opposes this anti-capitalist rupture and frustrates its popular base. Second, this impasse allows the powerful imperialist enemies and their local agents to move forward with the economic sabotage that undermines the confidence of the Chavismo in protecting the living conditions of the population. Despite the international observers declaring



the undisputed victories of Maduro in the Constituent Assembly an opposition coup now looms.

The political breakdown derived from the strategic deadlock was expressed in high abstention. The biggest of them all in the last 20 years. This abstention, which was boosted by the boycott orchestrated by the opposition who knew they could not win the elections, causes the masses to turn away from politics.

Maduro got three times the number of votes of his nearest rival, nevertheless, that corresponds to only 28% of the voters of Venezuela. Not bad compared to the victory that gave the government to Trump, whose agents today question the legitimacy of Maduro. The US president won the presidential election over Hillary Clinton backed by only 26% of American voters, and actually got almost 2.868 million votes less than Hilary Clinton.

The Venezuelan working class knows that it needs to make a tactical united front with Maduro, against imperialism and its coup agents, as well as against the puppet government of Brazil and Colombia and to advance strategically with its Latin American working brothers, including Brazilians and Colombians to overcome Maduro, claiming arms from Maduro and Putin and taking political control of the means of production, communication and the armed forces.

The Bolivarian National Militia must be expanded to arm the entire people and even internationalize with all the Latin American and Caribbean brothers who wish to enlist in it (including Brazilians, Colombians and Guianas), to disarm preachers to the coup and defend the country of an imperialist aggression that instrumentalizes the governments and troops of Bolsonaro and Duque.

Following the current impasse is the sure path to a bloody defeat, the same or worse than that of Egypt.

Those who make half a revolution inevitably suffer the consequence. ▲

## As I See It: Why The Yankees Imposed A War On Venezuela By Mohammad Basir Ul Haq Sinha, President, Inter Press Network, Dhaka, Bangladesh



All ideological, religious and political interests are intertwined behind US onslaught against Venezuela. This is my precise understanding over America's Problem with Venezuela.

In order to fully understand why America is waging economic war on the people of Venezuela one must analyse the historical relationship between the petrodollar system and Sanctions of Mass Destruction: Prior to the 20th century, the value of money was tied to gold.

When banks lent money they were constrained by the size of their gold reserves. But in 1971, U.S. President Richard Nixon took the country off the gold standard. Nixon and Saudi Arabia came to an Oil For Dollars agreement that



that

would change the course of history and become the root cause of countless wars for oil.

Under this petrodollar agreement the only currency that Saudi Arabia could sell its oil in was the US dollar. The Saudi Kingdom would in turn ensure that its oil profits flow back into U.S. government treasuries and American banks. In exchange, America pledged to provide the Saudi Royal family's regime with military protection and military hardware.

It was the start of something truly great for America. Access to oil defined 20th-century empires and the petrodollar agreement was the key to the ascendancy of the United States as the world's sole superpower. America's war machine runs on, is funded by, and exists in protection of oil.

Threats by any nation to undermine the petrodollar system are viewed by Washington as tantamount to a declaration of war against the United States of America. Within the last two decades Iraq, Iran, Libya and Venezuela have all threatened to sell their oil in other curren-

cies. Consequently, they have all been subject to crippling U.S. sanctions.

Over time the petrodollar system spread beyond oil and the U.S. dollar slowly but surely became the reserve currency for global trades in most commodities and goods. This system allows America to maintain its position of dominance as the world's only superpower, despite being a staggering \$23 trillion in debt.

With billions of dollars' worth of minerals in the ground and with the world's largest oil reserves, Venezuela should not only be wealthy, but her people the envy of the developing world. But the nation is essentially broke because American sanctions have cut them off from the international financial system and cost the economy \$6 billion over the last five years.

Without sanctions, Venezuela could recover easily by collateralizing some of its abundant resources or its \$8 billion of gold reserves, in order to get the loans necessary to kick-start their economy. ▲

## In Defence of Dialectical Materialism: the Philosophy of Marxism today By Gerry Downing

Leszek Kolakowski, the rightist Polish Marx scholar, mentions John Scotus Eriugena (c. 815 – c. 877), Irish theologian, neoplatonist philosopher, and poet, as one of the primary influences on Hegel's, and therefore Marx's, dialectics. In particular, he said his *De Divisione Naturae* was a prototype of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

John Locke (1632–1704), accepted God exists but held reason should be the ultimate judge of all truth. The first real Deist, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648), maintained that revelation was unnecessary because human reason was able to know all the truths requisite for salvation.

The republican John Toland (1670–1722), from Ardagh in the Inishowen Peninsula of Donegal, was much influenced by John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*. Embracing Locke's epistemology, he saw reason as a mental faculty. He argued that all parts of the universe were in motion. Additionally, motion was part of the definition of matter and was, therefore, an aspect of its nominal essence. He invented the word, 'pantheist'.

Deism and pantheism owe their philosophical origin to Toland, Spinoza and Anthony Collins (1676–1729) who accepted Locke's definition of knowledge. His position was that a person is not expected to believe anything that is not comprehensible to human intellect.

Benedict de Spinoza (1632-77) is most obviously associated with the deification of nature. Spinoza opposed Descartes's mind-body dualism and famously postulated the monist idea that thought and its extension (nature) are one substance. Dialectics was clearly central to his *Attributes*. The *Stanford Encyclopedia* says:

"Attributes are at the very heart of Spinoza's metaphysics. They enable us to understand and talk about an extended world and a thinking world in terms of which we understand bodies and minds. Furthermore, it is due to the relation of attributes to one another and to the one substance that an elegant resolution to the Cartesian mind-body problem is possible."

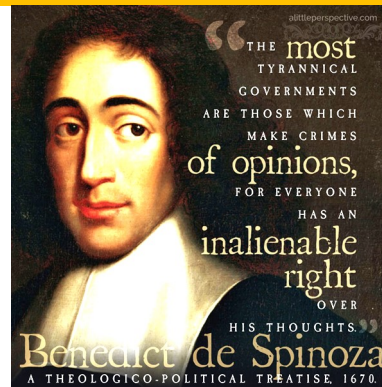
Evald Ilyenkov (1924-79), the great Soviet philosopher, in *Dialectical Logic* defends this monism:

"Hence it inevitably follows logically, as Engels said, 'that matter remains eternally the same in all its transformations, that none of its attributes can ever be lost, and therefore, also, that with the same iron necessity that it will exterminate on the earth its highest creation, the thinking mind, it must somewhere else and at another time again produce it.'

That was Spinoza's standpoint, a circumstance that seemingly gave Engels grounds for replying categorically and unambiguously to Plekhanov when he asked: 'So in your opinion old Spinoza was right in saying that thought and extension were nothing but two attributes of one and the same substance?' "Of course," answered Engels, "old Spinoza was quite right".

Ilyenkov explains:

Spinoza's definition means the following: in man, as in any other possible thinking creature, the same matter thinks as in other cases (other modi)



only 'extends' in the form of stones or any other 'unthinking body'; that thought in fact cannot be separated from world matter and counterposed to it itself as a special, incorporeal 'soul', and it (thought) is matter's own perfection. That is how Herder and Goethe, La Mettrie and Diderot, Marx and Plekhanov (all great 'Spinozists') and even the young Schelling, understood Spinoza.

Engels (1820-95) outlined the new philosophy of dialectical materialism thus:

"The perception of the fundamental contradiction in German idealism led necessarily back to materialism, but — nota bene — not to the simply metaphysical, exclusively mechanical materialism of the 18th century. Old materialism looked upon all previous history as a crude heap of irrationality and violence; modern materialism sees in it the process of evolution of humanity, and aims at discovering the laws thereof..."

In both aspects, modern materialism is essentially dialectic, and no longer requires the assistance of that sort of philosophy which, queen-like, pretended to rule the remaining mob of sciences."

The philosophical outlook of the Nazi Martin Heidegger (1889-1976, "the greatest philosopher of the 20th Century!") found its logical expression in the death camps. His 'philosophy' contributed to human understanding of its relationship to itself and to nature in general what the Holocaust contributed to human progress. It poisoned European leftism with bourgeois anti-social individualism, reactionary 'existentialism' so beloved by Jean-Paul Sartre and others ever since. ▲

## Kronstadt, Victor Serge and the cement of morality By Gerry Downing

**T**heir *Morals and Ours* is Trotsky's great defence of communist morality against the hypocrisy of Judaeo-Christian morality and its offsprings bourgeois and Stalinist morality (in so far as the latter has any morality at all). It had a great influence on my own personal ideological development, and I have heard others like Trotskyist Bill Hunter testify to the same experience. Once you have read and fully understood this text you are ideologically a communist. I have just reread it for the umpteenth time and again learned a great deal more from it. Of course, you must progress from there and discover how to put the principles into practice, an immense task today but surely achievable. This is how Trotsky emphasizes the importance of this ideological struggle in his great piece:

"Bourgeois evolutionism halts impotently at the threshold of historical society because it does not wish to acknowledge the driving force in the evolution of social forms: the class struggle.

Morality is one of the ideological functions in this struggle. The ruling class forces its ends upon society and habituates it into considering all those means which contradict its ends as immoral. That is the chief function of official morality. It pursues the idea of the "greatest possible happiness" not for the majority but for a small and ever-diminishing minority. Such a regime could not have endured for even a week through force alone. It needs the cement of morality. The mixing of this cement constitutes the profession of the petty-bourgeois theoreticians and moralists. They dabble in all colours of the rainbow but in the final instance remain apostles of slavery and submission."

And Trotsky asserts the central importance of getting this matter of morality right for the proletarian revolutionist:

"Whoever does not care to return to Moses, Christ or Mohammed; whoever is not satisfied with eclectic hodge-podges must acknowledge that morality is a product of social development; that there is nothing invariable about it; that it serves social interests; that these interests are contradictory; that morality more than any other form of ideology has a class character. The appeal to abstract norms is not a disinterested philosophic mistake but a necessary element in the mechanics of class deception. The exposure of this deceit which retains the tradition of thousands of years is the first duty of a proletarian revolutionist."

How does Victor Serge fare in this ideological struggle? Very badly as we shall see. His conversion to Bolshevism in 1919 was empirical and by the 1940 essay he had reverted back to his anarchist roots. The central feature his outlook was ideological and political agnosticism in the face of definite, clear-cut positions taken by Trotsky, whose ideology is coherent and consistent; the integrated world outlook that is revolutionary Marxism. Victor Serge is repelled by his "domineering tone of

**"A slave-owner who through cunning and violence shackles a slave in chains, and a slave who through cunning or violence breaks the chains – let not the contemptible eunuchs tell us that they are equals before a court of morality!"**

LEON TROTSKY

SOCIALISTACTION.ORG

Bolshevik speech of the great years, along with its echoes of the imperious and uncompromising style of Karl Marx the polemicist." Trotsky's certainty is "unjustified" because, says Serge:

"The truth is never fixed, it is constantly in the process of becoming and no absolute border sets it apart from error, and the assurance of those Marxists who fail to see this is quickly transformed into smugness. The feeling of possessing the truth goes hand in hand with a certain contempt for man, of the other man, in any case, he who errs and doesn't know how to think since he is ignorant of the truth and even allows himself to resist it. This sentiment implies a denial of freedom, freedom being, on the intellectual level, the right of others to think differently, the right to be wrong. The germ of an entire totalitarian mentality can be found in this intolerance."

Victor Serge was no theoretician, he acknowledged himself, but sometimes even the most 'practical' of people are obliged to make a theoretical justification of what they are about to say. What follows from this attack on the 'truth' by Serge is that Trotsky was a very nasty and sectarian man in attacking the centrist POUM and the Anarcho-Syndicalists in Spain, the ultra-lefts in Holland, etc. If he was nicer to people, understood the limitations of truth a bit better, like Victor himself, he would not have ended up with so many enemies and so few friends (Serge did not fare much better, we might observe, despite the attentions of the Surrealist André Breton). We get the same criticisms ourselves from those who fail to see the ridiculousness of the Thruthers of 9/11 and 7/7 and now think old Uncle Joe Stalin got a very bad press indeed from those who should have upheld his integrity against his detractors a bit better.

But 'the truth' comrades, how do we deal with this animal if it is constantly changing so much so that we can never arrive at any determination at all? How do we sort the truth from the lies? It is well known that all the functionaries in the Stalinised Comintern, and the leaders of all Communist parties internationally after Zinoviev 'Bolshevised' them from 1924, were chosen for their low theoretical abilities and their ability to lie convincingly in parroting the ever-changing line from the Kremlin. "A lie can travel half-way around the world before the truth can get its boots on" as someone once said, and the lies from the Kremlin were legion.

**The first thing to say about truth is that it is concrete.** It is not the sum totals of abstractions. Material reality is never made up of abstractions. That is a fundamental law of Marxist dialects. And it is in the abstractions that Victor Serge gets lost. In the Russian Revolution there was no room for abstract sentimentality. The Bolsheviks shot the Tsar and all his family at Ekaterinburg because if they were liberated by the advancing White armies they would become a rallying point for reaction, that revolution could be defeated and perhaps hundreds of thousands would die because of failure to act decisively.

In 1938 Trotsky wrote:

How can the Kronstadt uprising cause such heartburn to Anarchists, Mensheviks, and "liberal" counter-revolutionists, all at the same time? The answer is simple: all these groupings are interested in compromising the only genuinely revolutionary current, which has never repudiated its banner, has not compromised with its enemies, and alone represents the future. It is because of this that among the belated denouncers of my Kronstadt "crime" there are so many former revolutionists or semi-revolutionists, people who have lost their program and their principles and who find it necessary to divert attention from the degradation of the Second International or the perfidy of the Spanish Anarchists. As yet, the Stalinists cannot openly join this campaign around Kronstadt but even they, of course, rub their hands with pleasure; for the blows are directed against "Trotskyism," against revolutionary Marxism, against the Fourth International!

Lastly, perhaps the greatest lie is the equation of Bolshevism and Trotskyism with Stalinism that Serge makes and which a large part of Trotsky's *Their Morals and Ours* refutes so ably. The whole story of the Zombie that is Stalinism appears once more from the grave via the good efforts of Grover Furr, Yuri Emelianov, etc. Left Stalinism is a product of the low level of the class struggle internationally and the consequent ideological and theoretical backwardness of the middle class intellectuals which we could expect to attract to Trotskyism in a period of an upswing. ▲

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

# The Palestine Solidarity Campaign AGM 26-1-2019

By Gerry Downing

Approximately 250 in attendance in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Most of the AGM was routine apart from some questioning of the finance report – how come with an increase of 31% in membership income receipts from members declined from £84,142 in 2017 to £80,775 in 2018? Answer: If you joined in August only that portion of your membership from August to January would be counted. Satisfied?

Four contested events: two motions and the elections for the Secretary and for the eight lay members of the Executive.

The first controversial motion was that from Exeter PSC on the nation State law. The Executive wanted to remove that part of the first paragraph which said, “which in relation to Palestinians in Israel or Occupied Palestine Territories can be described at best as apartheid ... and at worst as attempted (slow motion Exeter addendum) genocide ... These are both crimes under international law.”

Exeter accepted the addendum of the Executive but not the deletion. A heated discussion took place, Socialist Fight’s two delegates strongly defending the Exeter designation of the actions of Israel as genocide. We pointed out that South African apartheid was different to the intent and actions of Israel. The South African racists wanted to exploit the labour of the oppressed black population, Israel wanted to get rid of the Palestinians.

The Naqba had ethnically cleansed up to 800,000 Palestinians in 1948, the Nation State Law showed its intent to legally designate the remaining Palestinian who were citizens of Israel as second class and the constant bombing of Gaza was another strong indication of their intent. Supporter of Exeter’s motion defeated the Executive amendment with no count of the votes necessary and so their designation of Israel’s actions as ‘slow motion genocide’ stands.

The desire to conciliate Zionist reaction was even clearer in the other controversial motion, Motion 3, propose by Tony Greenstein. This defended Jenny Tonge against the action of the Executive in forcing her resignation because, in response to the Zionist use the murder of 11 Jews at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pennsylvania on 27 October she tweeted:

“Absolutely appalling and a criminal act, but does it ever occur to Bibi and the present Israeli government that its actions against Palestinians may be reigniting anti-Semitism? I suppose

someone will say that it is anti-Semitic to say so.”

They did, beginning with the right wing Tory bigots, Conservative Friends of Israel Lords Pickles and Polak. The motion pointed out that “nothing that Jenny Tonge said was antisemitic” and that Israeli Minister Naftali stated that “the hand that fire missiles is the same hand that shoots worshippers”.

The debate was heated, with all defenders of the Executive’s appalling treatment of Jenny essentially arguing that we had to bow to the Zionist onslaught, and she said the wrong thing at the wrong time. Basically, you could no longer speak the truth about Israel during a vicious Zionist campaign of lies and slanders against the left.

So, the Zionist lobby attacked the PSC Executive viciously, expecting a robust response, but the Executive cleverly fooled them by running away.

The motion was lost by 89 votes to 129 with 22 abstentions because it was basically a vote of no confidence in the Executive and they would have been forced into a humiliating climb down and the new Chair, Kamel Hawwash, who took the main responsibility for the conduct of the affair, would have to resign.

But 89 thought he should and 22 were not sure about him at all.

Tony Greenstein stood for the Secretary’s position against Ben Soffa but lost by 67 votes to 103, a creditable performance. Socialist Fight put out a leaflet critically defending him (he did motivate our expulsion from labour Against the Witchhunt).

In his blog and in the leaflet he put out at the conference he attacked the PSC Executive because their:

“Self-congratulation, timidity and caution bordering on obsequiousness is not the stuff of a solidarity campaign!” He goes through their list of failures, failure to defend Jeremy Corbyn and the left anti-Zionists in Labour against the bogus charges of left anti-semitism, etc:

“Israel is NOT a democratic state – that should be our message” so why did the PSC Executive have “a PSC meeting in the House of Commons with Emily Thornberry, Shadow Foreign Secretary addressing the meeting. This is the same Emily Thornberry who is quoted as stating that:



‘People who believe Israel does not have the right to exist should be drummed out of the Labour Party.’

Far from challenging Thornberry to disavow her support for Labour Friends of Israel PSC uncritically gives her a platform. In an interview with *The Standard* she boasted that “I joined Labour Friends of Israel when I became an MP in 2005. I support the Palestinians’ right to have a state and I support the state of Israel.”

The meeting was addressed by His Excellency Husam Zomlot, Palestinian Ambassador to the UK. Tony correctly states: “the Palestinian Authority is a Quisling authority”:

“The PA openly collaborates with Israeli security forces, something which Mahmoud Abbas has described as ‘sacred’. The PA is an enemy of the Palestinian people, yet PSC has never uttered even one word of criticism. On the contrary it maintains close relations with the Palestinian ‘Embassy’ in London.”

*The National* reported that Zomlot told Sky News on 2 October 2018 that;

“Mr Zomlot said the UK should take on the role of lead mediator between the Palestinians and the Israelis for the benefit of both the US and Britain. Best friends are there to fill the vacuum, if the vacuum is going to be dangerous for your old friend which is America, fill it. This is a moment of leadership.”

Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) is the President of the Palestine Authority recognised by the ‘International Community’ i.e. the USA and its global stooges, including in this instance, the EU, Russia and China. He abolished elections when his term of office expired 15 January 2009. He is a member of the Fatah party and was elected Chairman in 2009. On December 16, 2009 he was voted into office indefinitely by the PLO Central Council. Why hold elections you would certainly lose to Hamas when you have the backing of Israel and the USA and the acquiescence of the entire imperialist world? But elections we must have to oust the democratically elected President of Venezuela.

Lastly, we were entertained by a dance troupe trio from the Palestine Hawiya Dance Company just after the break, who put on a really excellent show for us all. ▲

# Don't mention the Jewish-Zionist lobby!

## Socialist Action crippled Palestine Solidarity Campaign to expunge 'anti-Semites': At least Tony Greenstein now recognises the decay

### Critical support to him as Secretary (SFG Flyer for PSC AGM)

"My first actions as a political activist were with the Boycott of the South African Springbok Rugby team in 1970. We didn't though face a significant pro-Apartheid lobby in Britain. Ministers didn't fall over themselves to laud South Africa as the 'only democracy in Africa.' Israel does possess a powerful lobby. Crucial to destroying support for Israel is destroying the myth that Israel is a democratic state.

"We should also recognise where our strengths and weaknesses lie. The majority of British people support the Palestinians. The majority of the elites support Zionism. We should proceed on that basis." (from Tony Greenstein's blog, motivating his standing for Secretary of PSC) [...]

"We should also be working with groups like the Islamic Human Rights Commission whose own Al Quds demonstration has come under attack by a combination of far-Right Zionists and Tommy Robinson supporters this year.

"We should give critical support to this demonstration and rebut the suggestion that Hamas or Hizbollah are terrorists. The political use of the 'terrorist' label should be opposed. Terrorism means the use of violence against civilian targets and there is none more guilty of terrorism than Israel."

(<http://azvsas.blogspot.com/2019/01/why-i-am-standing-for-post-of-secretary.html>)

These are passages from the article on Tony Greenstein's blog motivating his campaign for Secretary of PSC. His criticisms of the PSC's "cautious conservatism" and "desire to become part of the political establishment" are obviously true.

As are his criticisms of PSC's refusal to campaign against the witchhunt against 'left-wing anti-Semitism' in Labour, which is now spilling outside and has led to staff like Stan Keable, employed by Labour councils, (Hammersmith and Fulham) who have spoken out against Israeli racism, being

sacked, or musicians being banned from playing.

As he notes, PSC has hosted events in Parliament with shadow foreign secretary Emily Thornberry, a member of Labour Friends of Israel who says "People who believe Israel does not have the right to exist should be drummed out of the Labour Party." Likewise, he correctly notes, there is no systematic criticism of the traitorous Palestinian authority by the PSC, this body which represses and tortures Palestinians on Israel's behalf.

We note that this pro-establishment position, grovelling to supporters of Israel and to those involved in repression of Palestinians, is the logic of the witchhunt against more radical critics of Zionism, some with confused views, which racked PSC in the early twenty-teens. There was a witchhunt of people sympathetic to the views of Gilad Atzmon, and people like Francis Clarke-Lowes, himself like Tony a founder of PSC, were thrown out for 'anti-Semitism' and 'Holocaust denial' with the implication that they were some kind of Nazis.

They were nothing of the sort, even if their criticisms of Zionism, Jewish racism and the power of the Israel lobby were often confused and flawed. In a panic at the PSC being associated with such views, Tony, others with similar views on the Jewish left and some non-Jewish supporters made a bloc with the bureaucratic-opportunist deep-entrust group *Socialist Action* to purge PSC of these heresies.

Never mind that some of the heresies were illusory and historically wrong, this was a bureaucratic, opportunist non-solution to a political problem. The main one being that 70 years of ruthless exploitation of the crimes of



the Nazis against Jewish people, by supporters of Israel's own crimes against the Palestinians, have led to intelligent, humane, anti-racist people doubting, or even tentatively denying, Nazi crimes in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

That a layer of militant Jewish anti-racists and others around them doubt the historicity or magnitude of the Nazi holocaust is completely comprehensible. It is the tip of a very large iceberg of such sentiments in the Arab and Muslim world, which they reflect. Many Palestinian and Arab/Muslim leaders, reacting to popular sentiment, have expressed similar views, including Nasser, Abbas, Ahmedinejad, some Hamas and Hizbullah leaders, and others too numerous to list.

Tony Greenstein's call for a bloc with the Islamic Human Rights Commission, which organises the Al Quds march, is somewhat in contradiction to this. As the kind of sentiments PSC purged itself of under Tony's whip earlier are legion in the IHRC. For example, in January 2019, the Campaign Against Anti-Semitism failed in an attempt to force the CPS to prosecute IHRC leader Nazim Ali for remarks that imply that the Grenfell Tower disaster was the responsibility of Zionists.

The Tory blogger *Guido Fawkes* claims that Gilad Atzmon also blamed the Grenfell Tower disaster on 'Jerusalemmites' which the Tory reptile blog implies is synonymous with Jews, though for Atzmon these are distinct, though related concepts. 'Jerusalemmites'

**THIS NOTORIOUS TORY  
BLOGGER HAS ADMITTED  
THAT THE LIES OF THE  
EXTREME-RIGHT GUIDO  
FAWKES HATE CHAMBER  
ARE "GOLD" FOR THE  
"CONSERVATIVE ATTACK  
MACHINE".**



After failing to land many blows during last month's general election, the Conservative attack machine may have finally struck gold.  
Guido reports that the Party's video on Labour's u-turn on student debt forgiveness has (as of two days ago) received more than 1.3 million views and 50,000 shares on Facebook.

are for him people who follow precepts instead of reason; in this case the precepts of neo-liberalism and privatisation which he associates, with a limited but real degree of justification, with Zionism and the rise of the authority of bourgeois Jews among the ruling class.

**Purges that Crippled PSC**

Tony Greenstein was expelled from the Labour Party for outspoken and undoubtedly sincere anti-Zionism. For that he deserves solidarity. However he also played a reactionary role over the earlier witchhunt against 'Atzmonites' and bears responsibility for the state of affairs in PSC – he encouraged the would-be bureaucrats to purge the flawed 'Atzmonite' radicals and hence helped them to power. In standing against them and voicing these criticisms he is implicitly condemning his previous role – even if he is not fully aware of this.

Tony was prominent in purging *Socialist Fight* from *Labour Against the Witchhunt* a year ago for our analysis of Zionism, which notes that the power of Zionism to suppress criticism, even

within bourgeois politics, in the advanced countries is in large measure due to the disproportionate representation of bourgeois Jews (who are mainly Zionist) in the Western ruling classes, which in turn gives them disproportionate social power to get their way politically. Christian Zionists, and the like, to which Tony wrongly gives a primary role in the Zionist lobby, are in fact fellow travellers of that Jewish Zionist caste within the ruling class. If that caste did not exist, the Christian Zionists could not exist either.

This analysis is solidly built on material fact, and the core of it was effectively endorsed last summer by Norman Finkelstein, probably the most prominent of all Anti-Zionists of Jewish origin, in his essay *Corbyn Mania*. Our purging was related to the purging of the Atzmon supporters from PSC, though this time he was purging not holocaust-doubters and those associated with them, but Marxists analysing material facts whose veracity even he could not deny (we were therefore denounced for not ignoring them). To try to hide this, we were somewhat hysterically accused of being Atzmon

'supporters' when it is obvious that our views differ with Atzmon's idealism rather substantially.

What the purges had in common was an element of Jewish communalism and paternalism. Greenstein claims that in doing this he was 'protecting' PSC and thereby the Pales-

tinians from being associated with so-called 'anti-Semitism', which in the main was in fact not racism at all but an emotional response with a political manifestation to decades of Zionist lobbying and the cynical, mendacious exploitation of the Nazi holocaust to justify Zionist crimes. In fact it was not protecting the movement at all. It crippled PSC.

So in a sense, Tony is surveying the results of his own work, and he does not like what he sees. Of course it is not his own personal work, but that of a whole layer of Bundist-influenced leftists and the left-groups they influenced or browbeat into going along with this, most notably the SWP who capitulated over the Atzmon issue. Adding weight to the scandalisation of the SWP, in particular, was the social weight of the Zionists and the Blairite pro-war media, bloggers etc. who provided the chorus.

But in however a contradictory way, Tony is resisting this. This is shown dramatically over the issue of Chris Williamson being witchhunted and forced to apologise for signing a petition in defence of Gilad Atzmon's right to play for the Blockheads in December, when he was banned from playing by the Labour Council in Islington, after a complaint by the UK Director of Likud no less!

It is richly ironic that the only Marxist trends or individuals who have not only defended Gilad Atzmon's right to play his music in Islington, but also criticised Chris Williamson for his apology for endorsing that petition, are *Socialist Fight* and Tony Greenstein. No one else has done so. We note that Tony's article (<http://azvsas.blogspot.com/2018/12/banning-gilad-atzmon-from-playing-jazz.html>) arguing this has not been published in the *Weekly Worker*, who content themselves with defending the 'free speech' of the Zionist-fascist James Goddard instead of Gilad Atzmon. What this signifies to them is unclear.

But these recent events, in their logic, provide a principled basis for us to call for critical support for Tony Greenstein's bid to become PSC Secretary. ▲



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The general historic role of the Stalinist bureaucracy and their Comintern is counter-revolutionary. But through their military and other interests they can be forced to support progressive movements. Even Ludenkauf felt himself forced to give Lenin a state – a very progressive action – and Lenin accepted. We must keep our eyes open to discern the progressive aims of the Stalinists, support them independently, however in time the danger, the betrayal, warn the masses and gain their confidence. *Trotsky, From Lenin to Mao, 1917 to 1953*

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Berlin, April-June 24, 1948 to May 12, 1949 and debate on Hitler's States

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When the February revolution occurred in 1952, the Bolivians had been in existence for fifteen years. When the revolution of April 1952 happened the POR had been in existence for seven years. Both movements operated in concert with a present and petty bourgeois majority but with a modern geographical concentration. Both parties had the benefit of working with the introduction of 'Maoism' into their respective countries (Pakistan and Maoist) and their cadres had taken part in the first working class organisations (SRs) and bourgeois democrats (Gaiden), the POR had to fight against the 'Maoist' of Maoist and Stalinist, the different wings of the MNR and 'socialists' of both bourgeois and military varieties. Introduction by Jose Villa.

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 Liaison Committee for the Fourth International  
 No.1-1 Oct. 1918 Price 50p conc. £1 wage

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"Interpenetrated peoples" Amongst the "proponents of National Ireland" figure the official cause of the British Interpenetrated Peoples theory are the fascist gangs who emerge in times of revolutionary upsurge. These are first taken by our representatives of the cause of Palestine contemporary and are to be approved. We say no to the fascist attempt to separate out from the mass of the Palestinian working class and not represent ideologically or politically like this.

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- [In Defence Of Trotskyism No.1](#) Winter 2009, China: deformed workers' state or rising world imperialist power? Reply to the International Bolshevik Tendency and the Spart "Family".
- [In Defence Of Trotskyism No.2](#) Summer 2011, Today in the wake of the 2008 new ideologues and renegades join the old swamp of opportunism; Karl Kautsky finds a new champion in Lars T Lih. Max Shachtman and Raya Dunayevskaya, previously only defended by Sean Matgamna, find new, third camp adherents.
- [In Defence Of Trotskyism No.3](#) Winter 2011, Class Consciousness and the Revolutionary Party Polemic against the US League for the Revolutionary Party, Workers Power and the now – defunct Workers International League.
- [In Defence Of Trotskyism No.4](#) Spring 2013, Methodology: The United Front and the Anti-Imperialist United Front are tactics that apply at all times except when the direct uprising takes place for the seizure of power and the masses are flocking to the revolutionary banner.
- [In Defence Of Trotskyism No.5](#) Summer 2013, The eight-storey Rana Plaza factory collapse in Dhaka on 24 April is but the most horrible of examples of Imperialism in action. Aminul Islam a Bangladeshi labour rights activist and former apparel worker was tortured and murdered
- [In Defence of Trotskyism No.6](#) Continuity is the whole history of Trotskyism and how Trotskyists saw it. We address here the 'left-Trotskyist', groupings, the Spart 'family', the ICL, the IBT and the IG and Workers Power/LFI, who split with the RCIT in mid-2011.
- [In Defence Of Trotskyism No.10](#) Part 1 December 2014: The general historic role of the Stalinist bureaucracy and their Comintern is counter

- revolutionary. But... (concentrating on Stalin).
- [In Defence Of Trotskyism No.16](#) A first-hand account of the Hungarian Revolution and its crushing by the Soviet intervention. Peter Fryer was correspondent for the Daily Worker (now Morning Star) a newspaper under the control of the CPGB.
- [In Defence Of Trotskyism No.20](#) Ireland and Palestine The IBT/Spart family 'Interpenetrated peoples' theory denies the rights of oppressed nations to self-determination.
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- [Socialist Fight Pamphlet No.1](#) The purpose of this collection is to bring the insights of Abram Leon, one of the most capable theoreticians and activists of the Trotskyist movement before and during Second World War, to a new generation of aspiring Marxists.

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