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This is not austerity it is social war

Stop the destruction of services and jobs Axe the bedroom tax

*A special March issue
on the fight against
women's oppression
will be out soon*

Protests are beginning to increase as the government's attacks deepen against the sick, the disabled, the unemployed and pensioners. Basic amenities are disappearing in the third year of cuts, and the NHS is being decimated into a privatised and tiered service. Spineless councils across the country are closing libraries, swimming pools, youth services and children's Sure Start services to save money.

Millions of the unemployed and low paid are being hit with a triple whammy: bedroom tax, which will force some households to pay £600 a year for those with a so-called extra bedroom which will affect 660,000 social housing tenants; council tax benefits will be reduced by up to 50 per cent; and benefits kept at below inflation rates for at least another three years. On top of this many on benefit are facing sanctions and ATOS tests which are forcing thousands off benefits and into desperation, and into twenty-first century soup kitchens - 'food banks'.

Despite government reassurances that pensioners would be exempt, 67,000

could be affected. The national council tax benefit scheme is to be scrapped from April so local authorities will be making their own arrangements with just 90 per cent of this year's funding to cover needs. They are attacking people from all angles and in Liverpool 52,000 families will be told to pay bedroom tax with many more of the poorest also facing cuts in council tax benefit.

Parents of seven year old Becky Bell, a cancer victim in Hartlepool, were told they will be charged a bedroom tax for their daughter's room. Becky's ashes have been kept in her bedroom, which has been left exactly as it was when she died of brain cancer last January. The government define this as a "spare room" which means that they will be charged £56 a month from April.

Nationally 1.77 million households were on local authority waiting lists in April 2008. In April 2012 that had risen to 1.85 million. This shortage is being used to justify the bedroom tax but the reality is that this crisis can only be resolved

(continues on page 3)

» MERSEYSIDE CALLS FOR GENERAL STRIKE

[page 4]

» AXE THE BEDROOM TAX

[page 6]

» A MORAL AND REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS IN THE SWP

[page 7]

» CIVIL WAR AND REVOLUTION IN SYRIA

[page 12]

LIFE OF THE IWL-LIT

Learn more about the life of the parties of the International Workers League.

800 in Buenos Aires and 350 in Madrid attend 30th anniversary of IWL meetings

The event at the Unione Benevolenza hall in Buenos Aires on 1 December was a day worthy to be written in the history book. "This a traditional Argentine working class area" said Alicia Sagra, Argentine trotskyst leader who led the commemoration.

After showing a video on the history of the IWL and its parties, sections from across Latin America entered including Argentines, Brazilians, Chileans, and Colombians.

A Palestinian activist living in Brazil, Soraya Misleh, spoke first and announced her affiliation to the PSTU and IWL. She spoke of the Palestinian struggle, "The future of Palestine lies in the hands of the youth, but there remains a lack of a revolutionary leadership". She also spoke about the Arab revolutions, the main hub of which today is the Syrian revolution. "The route for the liberation of Palestine goes through the Arab revolution and the downfall of Bashar Al Assad will be a great step towards this goal".

Eduardo Almeida, from the leadership of the PSTU Brazil, recalled another time, also in Buenos Aires, 25 years ago, when Nahuel Moreno died and the crisis that shook the IWL. "We were saddened, but today we are in Buenos Aires again and we are delighted." He talked of the



process strengthening the IWL and its expansion in European countries such as Portugal, Italy and Spain amidst the current process of mobilisation against austerity plans.

Eduardo also talked about the importance of the heritage and the principles of Marxism that the IWL fights for at a time when much of the Left has abandoned the perspective of the socialist revolution.

"This is the main tribute we can offer to Nahuel Moreno's memory", said Eduardo Barragan, from the leadership of the PSTU Argentine. Barragan described the current struggles of European workers and the North African revolutions, which today show more than ever the need for internationalism and revolutionary leadership.

Vera Lucia from the PSTU in Aracaju, Sergipe State, Brazil, moved everyone when she talked about the need to fight

against oppression, emphasising the overexploitation that women in general, black women and lesbians in particular, are subjected to. At the end of her speech, everyone chanted: "Our fight / is every day / against sexism, racism and homophobia".

Angel Luis Parras from the leadership of Corriente Roja, Spain and IWL spoke at the end. "The current situation is very complex, but very enthralling", he said. "We have witnessed the explosion of the revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East as a result of the economic crisis and the popular upsurge, but also as a result of the end of the Stalinist apparatus. After misery and dictatorship these peoples have broken on to the political scene".

He attacked the position of most of the Left and Castro-Chavism, who support Assad in Syria. "They say that there is a unity of action between the rebels and imperialism. Of course there, it is a kind of unity equal to that between the allies and the partisans, when the allies landed in Normandy against Mussolini".

"We hereby, want to send a salutation to our detractors: keep calling demonstrations in defence of Assad because we, from the IWL, will continue in the resistance".

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EDITORS
Margaret McAdam and Martin Ralph

LAYOUT
João Simões and Martin Ralph

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(continued from the front page)

with a building programme for at least two million social houses, which will also provide some much needed jobs.

In 2012 to 2013 the country's highest earners received a £3bn a year tax cut and the UK's top 100 wealthiest saw their fortunes rise to a record high. Robbery from the public purse is going straight into the pockets of the rich.

The working class is the target for this government, as pointed out by the Audit Commission, "councils in the most deprived areas have seen substantially greater reductions in government funding as a share of revenue expenditure than councils in less deprived areas." So Hackney, Hastings, Newham, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle have taken a huge hit, but Elmsbridge, Winchester and Richmond-upon-Thames are protected.

Nationally twenty five Labour councillors from Hull, Southampton, Dagenham, Todmorden and other places have opposed the cuts. This group of anti-cuts Labour councillors say, "We are a new network of local councillors formed to support the fight against cuts. We believe that instead of implementing the coalition's cuts, councils and councillors should refuse to do so and help workers and communities organise in resistance."

Unions, communities and labour councillors must begin to demand the setting up of local authority needs budget and plan to spend the 'reserves' on the people who need it most. The problem is that unfortunately Labour councils do not want to mobilise a local, regional or national struggle against the devastation of the communities they represent. Their feeble argument is that the government would only send in their own people to impose the cuts. So what is their answer? Do the job for them, cut and destroy services, and devastate lives and communities.

This is a social war on behalf of the millionaires, the City of London and bankers against workers and the poor.

Who can help build a national movement? Who can bring back outsourced council services into public ownership? Who will set a needs budget? We cannot rely on any council to achieve this, trade unions, anti-cuts campaigns and community groups need to work together to fight this and expand services, create jobs, and advance our communities by establishing a massive national social housing building programme. We have to build the fight, join us.

Bank of England gets a new speculator City of London euphoric

Daniel Campos, member of the Argentine PSTU and author of 'The End of the Corporation' published in Spanish 2012. Available in English in 2013

George Osborn selected Canadian Mark Carney to take over from Mervyn King amid great excitement in the City of London, but who is he and why the euphoria?

Mark Carney is head of Canada's central bank. He worked at Goldman Sachs multinational bank for 13 years in London, Tokyo and Toronto where he was head of investment banking. He is a leading player in the world casino of speculative gambling that Goldman Sachs fostered, with help from the US and British government and other banks.

Many main stream commentators have suggested Mark Carney will change Tory government policy on public spending. His selection is down to the discredited leadership at the bank of England over the fiddling of the international exchange Libor rate. They need a pair of 'clean hands', or rather someone seen to have pair of clean hands who will continue policy ensuring the enrichment of the rich and impoverishment.

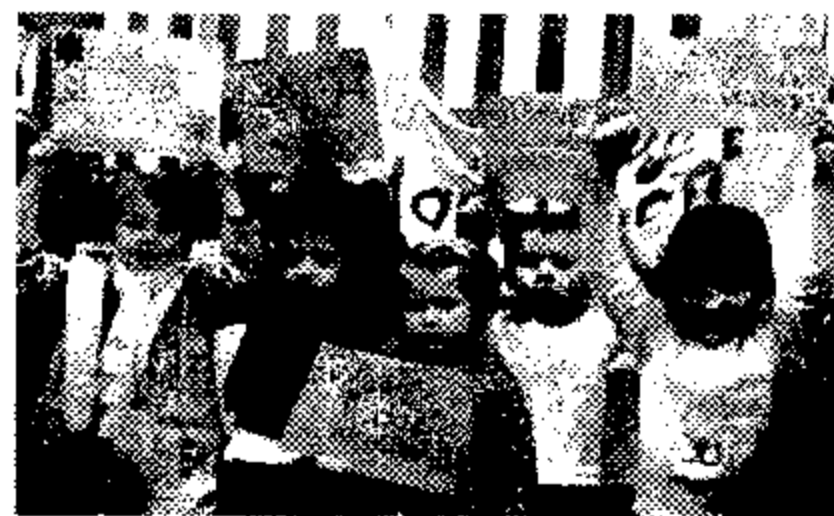
In January 2012 the Financial Times said Carney is "the leading example of a new breed of ambitious, internationally focused central bankers who view regulatory and monetary policy issues through a more market-based lens". That means he will give global capital markets even more free rein to rip up the last remains of the welfare state.

He will be paid nearly 1 million pounds and will give many more billions to the banks. His appointment is a prelude to another onslaught on the working class and the maintenance of the banks through public money (quantitative easing). They cannot survive without it.

Carney's appointment also means that the US government and banks have their man at the head of the City of London.

The Socialist Voice is fighting to build a revolutionary party for workers and, as part of the IWL, to unite the struggles of the workers and peoples of the world against the brutal policies of capitalist governments.

Liverpool Fights



On 6 March, Liverpool city council will vote on its £32m budget cuts. £110m more cuts are planned for 2014 to 2016, which means that in the foreseeable lifetime of this coalition government Liverpool will have been dealt £283m cuts. While the Labour Mayor Joe Anderson is paid £70,000 per year, 83,000 of the poorest and most vulnerable in Liverpool are being told to that they have pay for this 'deficit'.

Whilst the priority should be the creation of jobs and services, Liverpool Labour council has overseen council job losses from nearly 12,000 in 2009 to 6,500 according to council union sources, as a result of cuts and outsourcing. So the council unions (JTUC) will be lobbying against this budget.

Liverpool trades council, Liverpool Against the Cuts, council unions, Axe the Bedroom Tax groups are calling for a mass lobby on 6 March outside the town hall and are organising a joint meeting on 13 March in the Adelphi Hotel to build the fight for services and to fight the onslaught of benefits.

Merseyside conference calls for a general strike

Margaret McAdam, International Socialist League

At the 26 January conference all speakers were in favour of a general strike including Steve Gillan, general secretary POA, John McCormack vice-president UCU, John Hendy QC, co-author of the booklet "Days of Action". Chris Bough deputy general secretary and Len McCluskey Unite general secretary.

Vitor Dias, president of the Portuguese dock workers, whose union had participated in the 14 November European general strike was also an invited speaker.

The motion to the conference was moved by Mark Hoskisson, secretary of Liverpool TUC.

Two women speakers had been invited but unfortunately they had been unable to attend.

The motion stated that a general strike will only be called if individual unions "convene emergency meetings of the appropriate bodies to plan a detailed campaign in their unions and major workplaces putting the case for a general strike with speakers enlisted to address branch meetings, workplace mass meetings and town or city wide public meetings in advance of co-ordinated ballots". It stated, "Once the date has been named, each major town and city a convention of delegates from all affiliated unions should be called and hosted by the relevant Trades Councils ensuring that such action is co-ordinated and united". It said further that a decision for a general strike must be publicised across Europe so the possibility of a second historic international general strike being organised.

On 14 November 2012 millions of workers across Europe, particularly those in Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain, took united action against attacks on public services, jobs, wages and working conditions. The conference agreed that these experiences should be built on by taking further united action.



Portuguese dock workers discussing the lessons of the European general strike

International workshop

Portuguese dock workers President says - if you don't fight you will never win.

Vitor Dias, President of the Portuguese dock workers union said that when listening to the first section of the conference he felt he was back home because what he heard is the same.

He was introduced by Martin Ralph, vice president of Liverpool trades council, who said that Merseyside TUC decided that any discussion on organising a general strike in this country must involve workers who had been part of the historic European general strike of 14 November 2012. He went on to describe the solidarity action across several cities by the trades councils and others including Liverpool trades council and stressed the importance of exchanging experiences and learning from each other across Europe.

Vitor said that they had just ended a five-month strike dock strike which had not achieved their immediate demands but had forced the European commission to alter its policy of privatisation and deregulation of the docks. He said that this change could only be achieved by

strike action and that the strike action could only have been sustained by the national and international solidarity received from trade unions, students and youth and other workers. In November they organised an international day of support for their strike and 150 dock workers from other countries joined them in solidarity. That support was organised through the International Dock Workers Council (IDC).

Vitor talked about the growing problems facing European workers. He explained that in the past just the mere threat of a strike could win their demands, or they could achieve a victory through a one-hour or one-day strike. But today, after five months, they are still fighting.

He made the link with the wider financial and economic crisis and spoke about the attacks by European governments, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and IMF. In this way he identified common points of struggle for workers throughout Europe.

He said that the worst thing is not to fight, "if you don't fight you can never win, but if you do fight you're always in with a chance, to start to fight and resist is already a victory".



Mark Hoskisson, Secretary of Liverpool trades council moving the general strike motion



Applause for the Portuguese dock workers

(Report on international workshop continued)

The Portuguese dockers along with other unions and social movements joined the 14N general strike. On 15 September they joined a movement of youth and the unemployed and participated in mobilisations in nine cities of one and a half million. This action was not called by the official union leaderships.

A very lively discussion followed Vitor's opening contribution. A question was asked about the role of the police in Portugal. He explained the police have attacked demonstrators, therefore on a recent demonstration the dockers demanded that there would be no police and that they would appoint their own marshals and observers. Another time the women handed flowers to the police, kissed them on the cheek, and attempted to make friends with them, Vitor commented "it had an effect."

There was a question about sectarianism between trade unions, which had been a problem in Greece. Vitor explained that many unions are affiliated to a trade union central but are participating in actions despite their leadership's reticence.

Workers from UCATT, PCS, Unite, UCU, the RyanAir campaign, the Manchester



Maria from Greece and UCU member speaking in the afternoon session

United Service Users committee and Kevin Robinson, sacked Liverpool dockworker all contributed to the workshop discussion. Kevin talked about the Liverpool dockers dispute (1995-98) and the support they had received from the dockworkers in Portugal, reinforcing the point on the importance of international support and how important that support is in sustaining their strike.

For information on the Portuguese dockworkers see estivadeportugal.blogspot.co.uk, the IDC web site is <http://www.idcdockworkers.org/>

Greetings to conference

Conference agrees full support to the Halesowen 4

Hello and solidarity to all our sisters and brothers at Merseyside today from us at Halesowen UCU. We would like to send you our support in calling for action today, and hope you have a productive and inspiring conference. We ask for your support

in our fight against union victimisation at Halesowen College, where as many as you may know our branch secretary Dave Muritu and 3 further activists have been dismissed in the past month. We share with you in the fight against the current all out assault on worker rights and freedoms in the UK and globally. Rhiannon Lockley, on behalf of Halesowen UCU and the Campaign for Justice for the Halesowen 4"

For further information see <http://justiceforhalesowenfour.wordpress.com/>



Union syndicale
Solidaires

Solidaires Trade Union Federation (L'Union syndicale Solidaires) salute all fellow trade unionists in Britain involved in combating capitalism and its dramatic consequences for the working class.

This struggle goes through moments of national coordination such as decision on the question of the general strike at the TUC conference in September. But we also know that it is only possible from daily militant work in close connection with to the employees, taking into account their demands, their needs, their expressions at the base of the union.

This dual activity is needed to build our union action to create the conditions of profound social change.

Unionism is internationalist. This is all the more necessary now in order to face the crisis of the capitalist system. They want us to pay for the crisis of a system that is not ours! International coordination is essential for struggle unionism.

The Solidaires Trade Union Federation with unions from different continents, has initiated an international union meeting in Paris from 22 to 24 March. We attach the invitation on behalf of the Trade Union Solidarity (France) and also the CGT (Spanish State), CSP-Conlutas (Brazil), ODT (Morocco), and wish for, of course, your participation in these events.



We send from our unions and popular organizations and youth of Brazil affiliated to CSP-Conlutas, our salute to the conference that you are making this weekend.

Considering the international crisis and imperialist policy of multinationals and their governments to attack our rights, jobs and achievements the unity of workers along with other oppressed and exploited sectors is fundamental and decisive.

Rebuilding unity, means trade unionism based on direct struggle, workers' democracy, independence from the bosses and their governments, the defence immigrants against any expression of xenophobia, the fight against gender oppression and sexual violence, in defence of the environment against the appropriation by big capital of natural resources around the world. Rebuilding unity in internationalism, in the struggle against imperialism and its domination over the world and finally, the combination of the immediate struggles with the strategic defence of a new social order and operated without exploiters and oppressors and without the oppressed.

The isolated struggle in each country against the model of international exploitation of imperialism will be inevitably be defeated. Only our unity in each country and internationally will be able to face the attacks and defend our rights.



Interview by Martin Ralph, International Socialist League

Save Ancoats Dispensary campaign is demanding Manchester city council and Urban Splash restore the dispensary. They had intended to allow the building, with its heritage, to rot. Can you comment on your campaign?

Andy Brickner, a lifelong resident of Ancoats. I was in total shock when I was told it was falling down due to neglect. From that day I joined the campaign. My relatives used to live in the lock keepers cottage by the canal, my father had an allotment near. Many people stop and say things like "I was born in this area", "I trained as a nurse here", and "my father had his leg amputated there". Support has been overwhelming.

Jacqueline Marsdon, a resident for 42 years until the Private Finance Initiative took my house off me. We hope the council will help save this building.

Chris Simpson, from the area. The hospital was built in 1865, in the birth place of the industrial revolution, for the workers of the industrial revolution. The area had industry after industry.

This hospital was here before the NHS started, this is a Labour stronghold. The hospital withstood two world wars but Urban Splash come along and look at it now.

Paul Soanes, Ancoats resident and Manchester United supporter! It is such an important building historically, it is iconic around here or was. It is what this community needs. We want to embrace everyone around here, new and old residents of Ancoats, the people in the apartments, the people in the houses, those in the terraces and so on. This building could be put to great use for the community. That's why so many people are keen to help.

A German photographer, who returned after five years, was here four weeks ago, and very shocked at happened. Urban Splash made a lot of promises about this building. But have done nothing, except level a lot of the area.



fight2saveancoatsdispensary.wordpress.com/

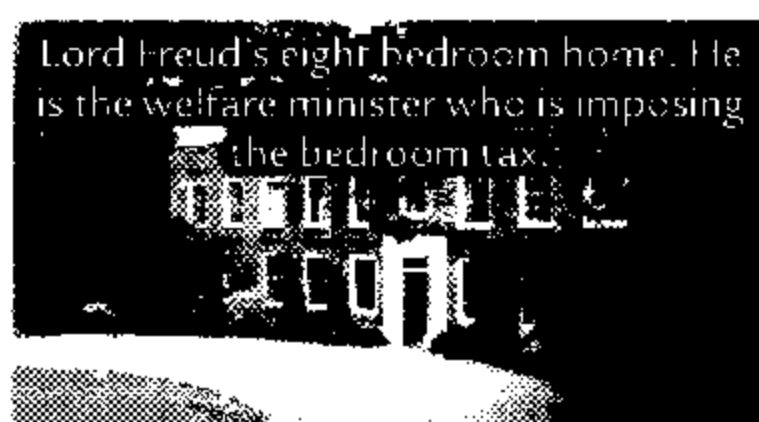


1) When was Stand up in Bootle formed and why?

Stand up in Bootle was formed about four weeks ago, I have been campaigning in Southampton and Portsmouth and was aware of my father's frustration at the very little help in highlighting the attacks on the welfare reforms with a very small number of others. I knew there wasn't much of a union structure within the Bootle area such as a trades council for help, so I offered to help in the initial set up as my father is not from a trade union background. I felt my input was vital, and as a Bootle lad I know quite a few people. So the Facebook group was set up....the rest is history.

2) How is the support developing in Bootle?

Locally and within the north west it's developing at a rapid pace, it's great to see trade unions becoming involved and people developing politically who never bothered before.



3) Do you think it is important for unions to support this campaign?

The unions are key to this group because at the moment we have no structure as such, everybody has an equal ownership within the group, and unions offer direction, resources and knowledge in a political sense. We need to build this movement within the community together and remind ourselves that this is an attack on the working class, with a strong community spirit. For unions to engage in a fight back will encourage workers caught up in a dispute that the public are in support of and will be there to offer much needed support.

4) Do you think it is important to link all areas in this fight and why?

I think it's important to fight locally and be confident in the knowledge that others are mobilising in the very same way,

Socialist Voice interviewed Daz Procter a member of Stand Up In Bootle, one of several groups in Merseyside fighting the bedroom tax. He is also a member of the national executive council of the RMT. The hated bedroom tax means a cut in benefits if a household is deemed to have one or more spare bedrooms.

for the very same reason, to send out a powerful message that communities in all of the UK have had enough. I think it also gives people hope when they know they are not alone because people in a town at the opposite end of the country are sending messages of hope and solidarity.

5) Why are you standing as Trade



The Hooper family are two parents and five children who live in a four bedroom council house in Hull. Their disabled child has her own room because of her wheel chair. They will lose £20 per week because not all the children are sharing.

Union Socialist Coalition in a by-election for parliament?

Because no other political party offers opposition to the political dribble carried out by career politicians more interested in becoming an MP than representing the people of their constituency.

The attacks on the working class at the moment are hard and fast and as a working class lad I am not willing to stand by and watch as the three political parties represent the bosses whilst our employment rights are attacked. The thirst for privatisation of our services in the name of greed is disastrous, broken promises are a weekly occurrence and the welfare reforms seek to send our communities into a state of poverty. I believe in standing up for your own, always have and always will and would not let the opportunity to represent people pass me by, not because I want to be an MP, but because I want to represent people to make a difference for the better with a voice of opposition to greed. Also, by standing as a candidate it will highlight to others not only in Eastleigh but further afield that there is an alternative, to the Etonian elite ,who actually believe in representing the working class and opposing the cuts.

Crisis in the SWP

A problem of revolutionary morality in the struggle against women's oppression



Cecília Toledo, International Workers League-Fourth International's International Women's Bureau

A serious crisis is shaking the English SWP, one of the largest parties of the Left in England, which claims to be Trotskyist.

It is a moral crisis and the IWL cannot remain on the sidelines because firstly, the serious events that occur in this Left party are used by the bourgeoisie to destroy the image of the Left as a whole, as if all parties were a single organisation. Secondly, because it is through the actions of all organisations that claim to be revolutionary that the Left builds its place among the world's proletariat.

SYNTHESIS OF WHAT HAPPENED

A member of the party accused a member of the central committee of raping her. The Dispute Committee (called the Moral Commission in the IWL) investigated the case for four days and concluded that there was insufficient evidence against the accused.

A report of this investigation and its conclusion was presented to the conference in January. Delegates protested that the member who accused

the leader had not been invited to the conference. Meanwhile, another member of the party made allegations that the same leader had sexually molested her.

In this climate of discontent the discussion was led in a bureaucratic way by strictly limiting the time for contributions, which prevented a broad discussion.

All these facts cast suspicion on the committee's work and report, so that the conference was split almost in half, with 231 votes in favour of the report, 209 against and 18 abstentions.

An unprecedented crisis followed with members breaking from the party and even intellectuals who had always worked with the SWP refused further cooperation with them.

WHY NO FULL FREEDOM OF DISCUSSION?

In our opinion, these are serious issues and require deep reflection. A complaint of rape from within the ranks of a party that claims to be revolutionary must be regarded with the utmost seriousness by all members, particularly by the leadership.

Rape is a type of violence against women that leaves scars for life. A woman who has suffered rape feels permanently threatened and afraid that this will happen again. It is a physical and psychological aggression that is difficult to overcome.

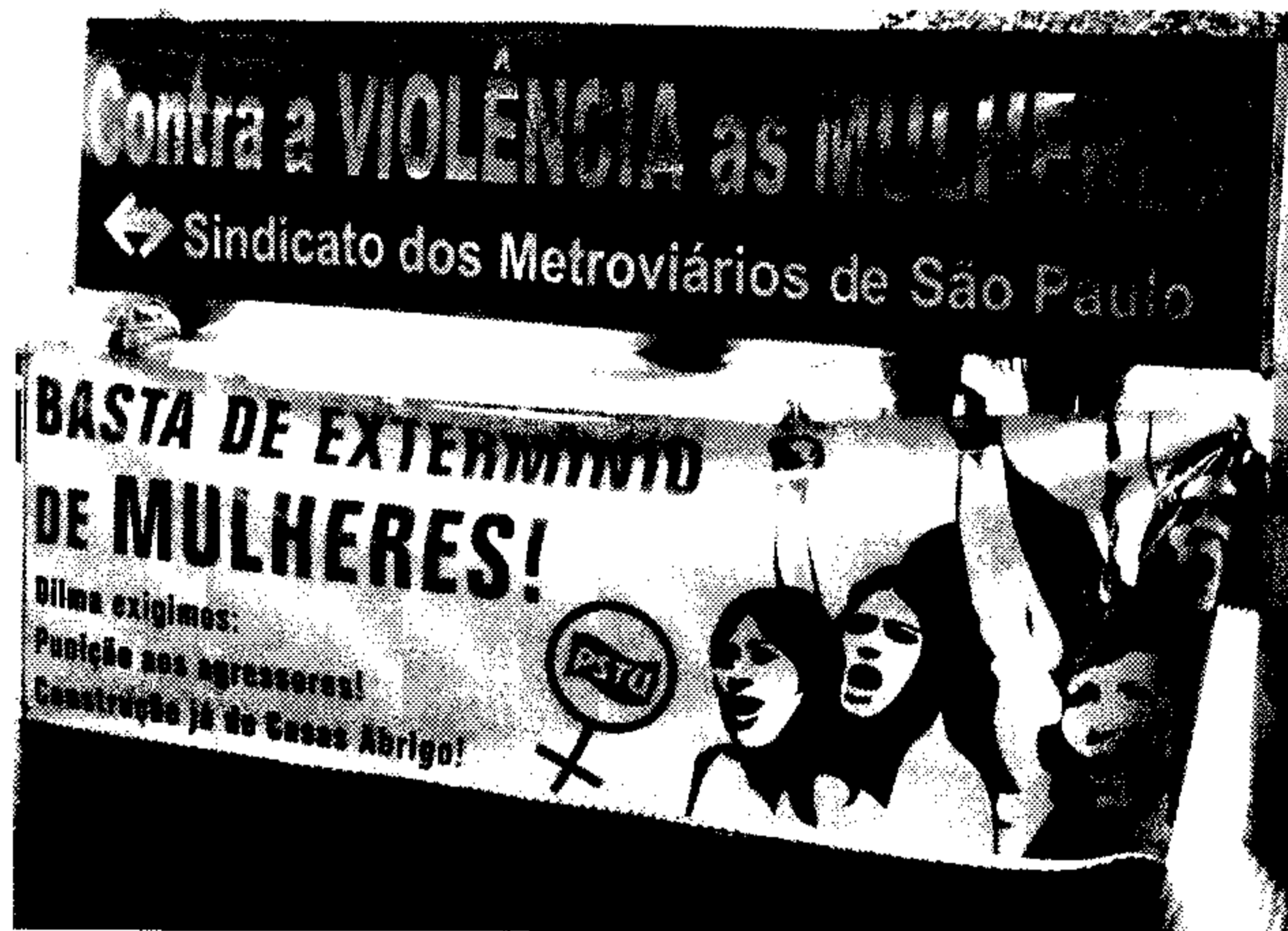
Therefore a complaint should be investigated thoroughly, and the leadership of the party has to be the most determined to ensure this; to prevent this from being repeated within the party. They should be the first to ensure complete freedom of discussion, encouraging all members to speak, especially the very member who made the complaint, without any embarrassment.

But that is not what happened. The member who made the complaint was not invited to the conference.

This is extremely serious because if the SWP leadership were sincerely interested in clarifying the complaint and establishing the truth, they would have given her presence fundamental importance. Moreover, the report of the conference shows that instead of ensuring the broadest possible freedom of discussion of the report, the Disputes Committee sought at all costs to avoid clarification of all the facts adding to the climate of distrust among the delegates.

An important question put by the delegates was why had the Disputes Committee not taken into account the second complaint by another member, in order to review their decision to acquit the leader or, at least, to raise doubts about the initial decision.

Thereafter, the Disputes Committee itself was questioned on suspicion of having acted to protect the leader. This is because two of DC members were appointed by the CC and another three were former members of the CC. It is much more democratic if all DC members are appointed by the Congress delegates, not just some, otherwise the composition favours the ruling group in the party.



Women's movement and the Sao Paulo metro union in Brazil fighting the oppression of women

A problem of moral and revolutionary struggle against the oppression of women

A QUESTION OF REVOLUTIONARY MORALITY

In the Transitional Program, Trotsky says that, *"In a society based upon exploitation, the highest moral is that of the social revolution. All methods are good which raise the class consciousness of the workers, their trust in their own forces, their readiness for self-sacrifice in the struggle. The impermissible methods are those which implant fear and submissiveness in the oppressed before their oppressors in a society based on exploitation, the supreme moral is the moral of the socialist revolution. Good are the methods that raise the class consciousness of the workers..."*

Trotsky is saying that the struggle against the oppression of women is part of the defence of revolutionary morality in our organisations and these issues cannot be treated solely in a formal way.

What happened in the SWP was just the opposite. They used methods that undermined the confidence of militants and created uncertainty and fear before the oppressors.

No political organisation is exempt from the possibility of moral revolutionary deviations. The question that arises is how these deviations are treated within the organisation.

The IWL (International Workers League - Fourth International) has also suffered such problems. Some of them were so severe that they came to threaten the very existence of the IWL.

What was the approach of the IWL?



Firstly, we did not hide the facts, but clearly investigated them and punished those involved by expulsion from our ranks.

We even reached the point of losing an entire section of our International.

A companion of the main leader of the Bolivian section of the IWL accused him of beating her violently and repeatedly. The case was thoroughly investigated by our Moral Commission, which eventually proved the charges.

This leader had been in the IWL for many years but he was expelled from our ranks, which led to the remainder of the members of the Bolivian section to abandon the ranks of the IWL in solidarity with him. Thus, the IWL preferred to lose an entire section rather than keep in their ranks a militant who was proven to have serious moral problems.

The question of revolutionary morality is widely discussed among all the members, and the IX World Congress (2008) of the IWL agreed a document "In Defence of Revolutionary Morals", which shows that our daily activity is an essential part of our construction.

What this showed us is that the question of revolutionary morality is not just an issue, but a key question for a leftist organisation that wants to build in order to destroy capitalism and bourgeois society.

It was a tough battle, but we are sure that the IWL has been strengthened by it. However we are aware that the threat remains, because the bourgeoisie will always seek to impose its morals on us and we are under constant pressure from bourgeois society and its moral degeneracy. We must stand firmly against this and not allow it to penetrate our ranks and destroy our organisations.

The IWL position is based on the teachings of Trotsky. We opened this discussion in our ranks to confront the problems by battling for a communist morality in our sections, in order to prevent the growing pressures that could eventually destroy us.

That is why we are concerned about what is happening in the SWP. We want our experience to help all revolutionary militants in different countries to understand its importance, with an awareness that this is a constant battle if we want to build a real organisation to serve for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

With each passing day we are more and more convinced that there will not be a solid construction of a national revolutionary party, nor an International, if we do not maintain with courage our determination to fight anyone who damages revolutionary morality in our ranks.

PARTY MORALS

The working class needs its own morals in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, which involves specific questions for the labour movement for the mutual protection of persecuted workers; never abandoning a worker who is fighting an employer or the police and always maintaining fair and honest relations between labour organisations.

But the revolutionary party has a specific morality.

The reason is that the more advanced fight is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. For that revolutionaries must have an iron discipline and morals that are superior even to proletarian morality, from which it comes.

It is essential that there is a high level of trust between everyone, a "brotherhood of the persecuted" as it is historically called in Latin America, because those who want to overthrow capitalism are persecuted and may pay the price with their lives. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a higher moral strength in this organisation in order to withstand the pressures that the bourgeoisie impose.

For the party, collective organisation is everything, as opposed to the outlook of capitalist ideology where individualism and selfishness prevail.

We need to strengthen the confidence of each comrade in their own strength, and develop trust between all militants, because in the most serious moments of our struggle we must trust our comrades.

To develop this, we want and we help each other to develop politically. Our party must be an organisation against the state and that requires complete trust between comrades whether men or women.

CONFIDENCE IN WOMEN

There is a gap in society between men and women - it is harder for women to become militants. They are less able to be active, they experience a lesser position, historically have been slower

A problem of moral and revolutionary struggle against the oppression of women



Protest in Amed (Diyarbakir) Kurdistan, against the killing of three Kurdish women activists in Paris

to enter political life, and they continue to carry the burden of double oppression - so women have to make more effort.

At home, at work, at school, in all spheres of society, the woman is at a disadvantage and suffers all kinds of oppression, prejudice and sexual abuse.

The party has to be the opposite. In it women should find an environment of respect and interest in their political development. There is revolutionary respect for a woman who enters the party and is willing to give her life for the revolution because upon entering the party she will have to overcome greater obstacles than those faced by a man.

Within the party, if a party leader sexually oppresses a comrade, then he is committing a grave error because this is not what you would expect from any militant willing to dedicate their life to the socialist revolution.

Socialism is incompatible with such an attitude. Within the party, a conscious woman and militant revolutionary, does not expect to find the same that they find every day in society. Within the party they rely on their comrades, they lower their guard against them, and expect in return trust and a relationship of respect and camaraderie.

The denunciation of what happened in the SWP has not been made only to draw attention to the gravity of what happened. A revolutionary party that does not incorporate into its daily activity a struggle against the oppression of the oppressed sections, in this case women, can not be victorious in the struggle for liberation of the class.

You must fight all moral deviations,

and along with it, be consistent with the program of liberation for the whole class, men and women.

We who fight against the oppression of women, know how important it is for a woman to become politically conscious and above all, to enter the party. So if incidents of sexism in society as a whole are serious, they are doubly pernicious within our ranks, because they will be destroying a militant and also our ultimate goal that is, the construction of the party - the instrument that we are building daily to win a socialist society, and with it, the total emancipation of women.

A CONSTANT BATTLE

Inserted in bourgeois society there is a need for the party to fight to educate their members in revolutionary morality - theoretically and programmatically. This has to be a daily task. If when moral deviations occur and it is clear that this task has not been taken seriously, or, is addressed only in a formal way, then the party remains more exposed to attacks by the bourgeois press and conservative forces, who will take advantage of these deviations to make attacks on all leftist organisations.

Why is it so important make every possible effort to establish the facts? It is to show to the working class and society as a whole that our parties are distinct from the bourgeois parties, where corruption, slander and deception reigns. To show that revolutionary politicians are different from the bourgeois politicians, who use politics to promote themselves and rob from the public coffers. To show

that we have distinct morals and that our struggle against the oppression of women is a sincere struggle, not just something to mention in our documents, but is part of our everyday life. Only in this way can we win working men and women to our ranks.

The comrades of the SWP have an example in Britain of the kind of moral deviation that can destroy an organisation however strong it may be. The Healyite WRP was an organisation that had a long history in the English Left, but in the 1985 the catalyst for its destruction were the moral deviations of the leadership.

The leader of the party, Healy betrayed the trust of activists, especially women. Several of the women were sexually abused by him, and when they found the courage to report it, most of the leadership tried to smother it and dismiss the charges in order to protect the leader. The result of this approach was quickly followed by the total destruction of the organisation.

We need to learn from those mistakes to avoid repetition and destruction. The oppression of women and sexist deviations within our organizations must be fought relentlessly. Revolutionary morality requires us to exercise constant vigilance, which implies not only frequent discussion with our members through debates, lectures and courses, and with a thorough investigation and verification of any deviations.

Coming from our daily experience, which is often painful, the biggest lesson for all members is that men and women who today are part of revolutionary organisations throughout the world have to combat bourgeois morality, which is grounded in selfishness and privilege over others and in the hateful oppression of women.

Note

For further reading on the IWL's struggle see the congress documents and documents from our history at <http://litci.org/especial/index.php/morals>; including a document by Nahuel Moreno from 1957 and In Defence of Revolutionary Morals from IWL IX Congress 2008.

For further information and documents please write to ISL, c/o News From Nowhere, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L14HY or islinfo@talktalk.net

UK government joins France in the military invasion of Mali

International Socialist League

The invasion of Mali by French troops on 11 January is the start of a new imperialist war. The invasion was supported by the British government, which is sending 330 troops. The European Union and the United Nations will send troops in the spring. This is going to be another long war.

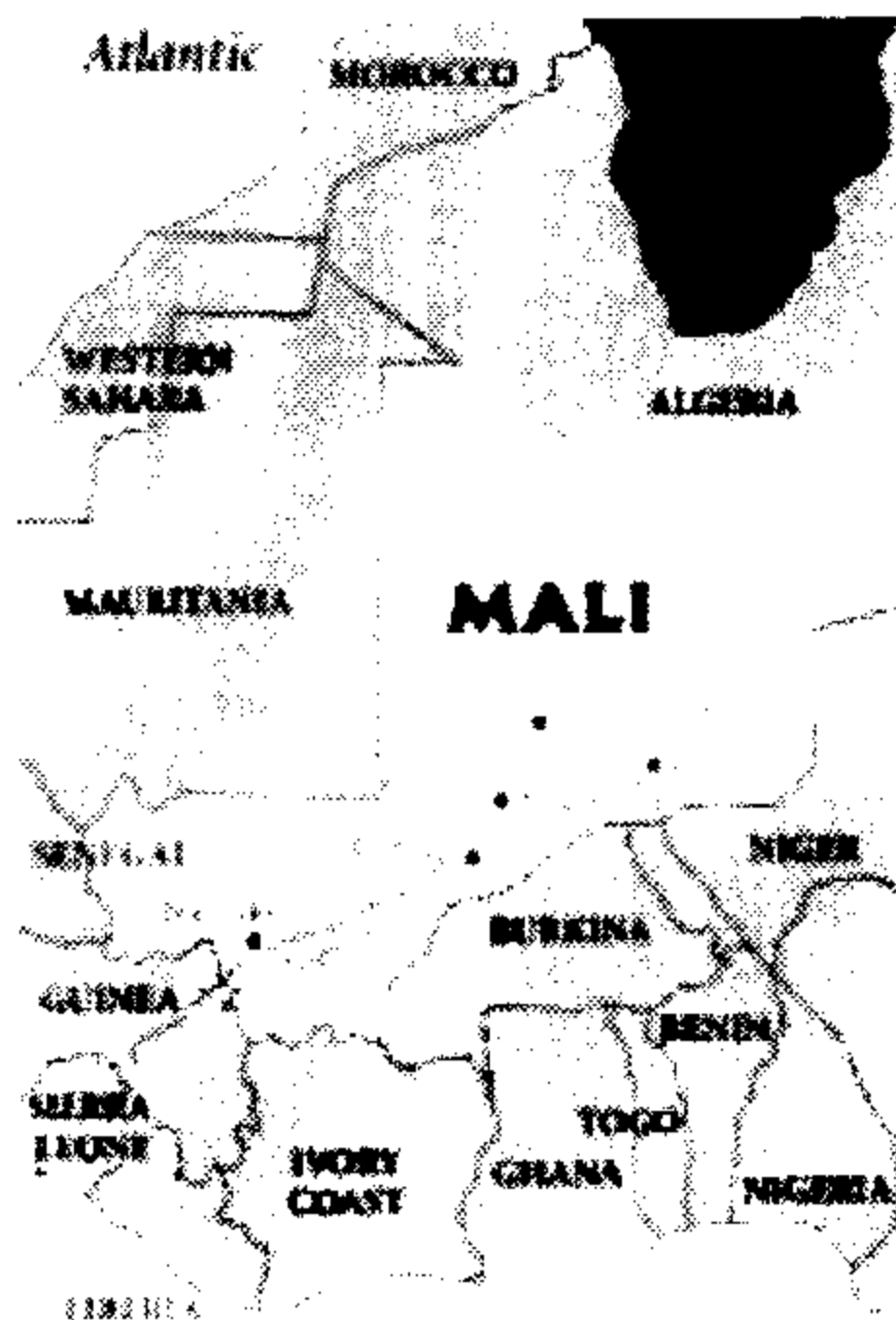
David Cameron justified the intervention as a "war against terrorism". This is the same excuse that the British used during the war against Afghanistan and Iraq, but it is an imperialist war to destroy the independence movement. It is driven by the business interests of the West and has nothing to do with humanitarian concerns.

They say the invasion is against Islamist militants, but it is colonial war whose aim is to defeat the nationalist movement of the Tuareg people. France, like the US and Britain, since African independence has supported the most brutal dictators, massacres and wars. They are implicated in the Rwandan genocide. The millions who died in the Congo did so because of wars driven by Western interests.

For many years the West have opposed the demands for self-determination by the Tuaregs who inhabit the northern half of Mali, known as Azawad. They number about 1.5 million and speak Tamashek, one of the Berber languages and they spread over Algeria, Mali, Niger, Libya, Chad, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.

Mali won independence from France in 1960, and the first Tuareg uprising broke out in 1962. A second rebellion in 1990 resulted in the 1991 Tamanrasset Accords promising the Tuaregs self-government, which was never implemented. After 2001 the United States stepped up its military aid to the Malian government in the name of the 'war on terror'. This aid was used to crush independence movements and further control resources.

The third Tuareg rebellion was joined by anti-imperialist fighters who had participated in the struggle against Qaddafi. A new unified National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) was formed, and it started an all-out war against the Malian government in January 2012. The MNLA expelled the Malian Army from northern Mali and Azawad independence was declared



on 6 April 2012. The US then helped organise a coup in March to bring down the democratically elected president, Amadou Toumani Touré.

The reason for invasion is that an important source of uranium is in Niger which was within reach of the insurgency. BP, Total and other US oil and mining companies have important interests in Mali. (Mali is Africa's third largest gold producer).

In February 2013 the French army retook three towns and the MNLA has retreated but not been defeated. The Coalition of Patriotic Organizations of Mali (COPAM) called demonstrations against the presence of foreign troops including those organised by the UN from the Economic Community of West African States. The Western backed Mali government has banned these demonstrations.

International protests have taken place in Algiers, Cairo, Istanbul and London. The demonstration in Algiers condemned Algeria's decision to allow French warplanes to overfly the country in order to carry out attacks on Mali, which lies on Algeria's southern border.

We call on students, anti-cuts activists, the trade unions and social movements to oppose the invasion. French and British, EU and UN troops out of Mali!

India: All support to the general strike!

By New Wave (Bolshevik-Leninist) and Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)



On February 28th 2012 India's major trade union federations organised a one-day general strike, of tens of millions, it was largest strike since independence in 1947

Rising inflation! Rationing of LPG cylinders! Price hikes in essentials! Disinvestment in public sector companies! Mass arrests and repression on worker's organizations! These are the reasons why all the major trade-union bodies and even smaller trade unions throughout India are calling a general strike on 20 and 21 February. We want to express our unconditional support for the General Strike. Only the uninterrupted and permanent mobilization of millions can bring a real change in India. A General Strike is a great weapon in the hands of working class. Even a two day strike shows everyone who really runs this world! It shows what will happen once the entire proletariat arises in indefinite general strike against the intolerable exploitation of the capitalist bosses and government. The only thing a boss can keep moving is a whip... For the third time in three years that workers of India are rising against inflation, for defence of worker's rights and social security!

Read the rest of the article at <http://newwavemaha.wordpress.com/2013/02/08/all-out-support-to-the-general-strike/>

GM workers mass meeting approve agreement

Written by engineering workers union, São José dos Campos

General Motors' workers in São José dos Campos, approved on 28 January, the agreement proposed by their union and by the management of GM.

At the first shift in the morning 98 per cent of the 5000 workers present approved the proposals.

At the workers' assembly at the start of the second shift in the afternoon 2,000 GM workers also approved the proposals.

The deal comes after a year of intense mobilisations with strikes, rallies and visits to Brasilia to build pressure on the Federal Government and the company.

From February 2012 the union led a strong fight to prevent the company from



firing 1840 workers and from closing the MVA (Motor Vehicle Assembly).

GM went so far as to announce its intention to close the industrial complex of São José dos Campos if there was no agreement.

On 26 January, the union and GM reached a draft agreement that means R\$500 million will be invested in the São José dos Campos plant and will keep 750 employees for the production of the "Classic" model until December 2013.

The layoff period, which began in August 2012, will be extended for two more months with GM paying full wages to the laid off workers during this time. After this period, if there is any sacking, GM will have to pay three years of a standard salary. Individuals who are injured or who are in the pre-retirement period must mandatorily be retained as company employees after any period of layoff.

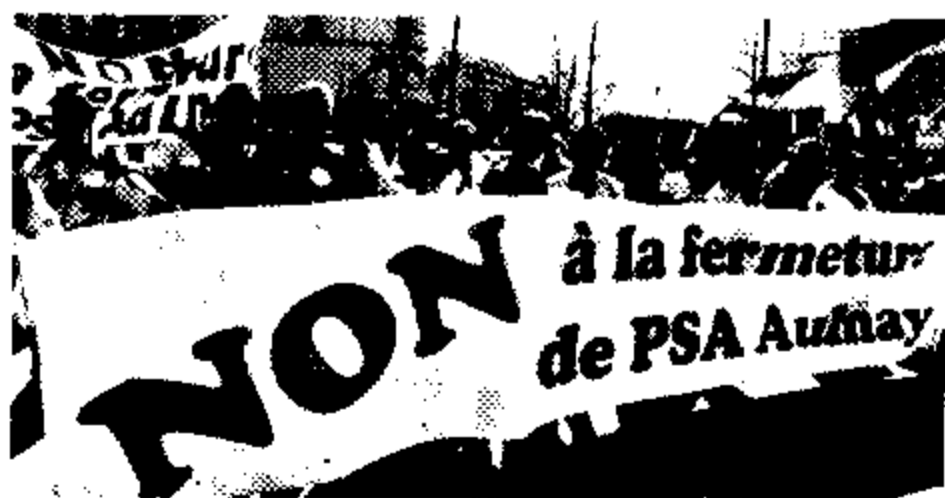
International action against layoffs and closures All support to Renault workers - Alnay - France No layoff at GM - São José dos Campos - Brazil

Written by the engineering workers union, São José dos Campos, Brazil

On 23 January an international day of action was organised by car workers from eight countries. This action came from the decision in November 2012 when an international meeting was hosted by GM workers in São José dos Campos, Brazil.

In Italy there were solidarity actions at Fiat-Ferrari in Maranello and Fiat-Irisbus in Avellino, under the slogan "No Closures OF GM, OPEL, PEUGEOT or FIAT car plants".

Renault workers at the factory in Alnay, France went on indefinite strike against the plans to close the plant in 2014. Management are negotiating a merger with GM. Some workers have already been laid off.



Indefinite strike car workers at Renault



GM workers in Brazil blockade Brazil's main motorway

Workers at General Motors of São José dos Campos (Brazil) went on strike on Tuesday, 22 January, and occupied the Presidente Dutra Highway (known as Via Dutra, it is the most important motorway in Brazil and runs from the State of São Paulo to the state of Rio de Janeiro) as a way to put pressure on the Federal Government to stop the 1598 layoffs planned by the company out of a workforce of 7,500.

The engineering workers also demanded that President Dilma Rousseff sign a Provisional Act forbidding companies that benefit from government tax incentives, such as GM, to lay workers off.

The occupation of Via Dutra took place on both sides of the motorway close to GM plant from 6:30 am to 7:30am. Tyres were burnt to disrupt traffic and workers took over the highway with banners and placards. One of the demands included "Dilma, prohibit layoffs at GM." About 4,500 workers participated in the demonstration. After the occupation, the engineering workers went back to their homes and a 24-hour strike started.

The strike stopped production 480 vehicles (S10, Classic and Blazer models) and 2,400 engines and transmissions during the strike.

FREE SYRIA
ASSAD MUST GO

Civil War in Syria

OUR TIME IS UP

Ronald Leon Nuñez, International Workers League, writes on the Syrian civil war and revolution, Part One. For reasons of space the second part will be published in the next issue. The full article can be found at <http://www.litci.org/en/>

For the past year and a half, the class struggle in Syria has been translated into the language of the gun, the roars of cannons, and fierce house by house combat in a forceful struggle against enemy positions. This is an overt and complete civil war. We are witnessing the greatest confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution in the world today and its result will have a huge influence on the international situation, particularly on the way revolutions develop in the Middle East and North Africa.

As months go by, the situation tends to become more dramatic and gory. The dictatorial Bashar Assad regime that has promised to “live and die in Syria” is committing genocide against its people, who have risen in arms to defeat him. Day in day out we are witnessing atrocious methods of mass extermination against the armed rebels and population in general; the methods are clearly of a Nazi-fascist character, ranging from air raids and the use of heavy gunfire to reduce cities to rubble, to the selective bombing of bakeries or petrol stations terrifying and killing desperate civilians. There is also the systematic use of gangs of thugs who are armed and paid by the dictatorship, known as Shabiha, who tear into neighbourhoods that are under dispute or are controlled by rebels, to torture, murder and rape women and children.

The numbers of crimes committed by Assad are bloodcurdling. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, more than 38,000 people have died (3,220 of them children) since 15 March 2011, when the revolution began up to late October 2012.

SYRIAN ECONOMY HAS BEEN DEVASTATED

Before analysing the course of the civil war and its dynamics, it is important to point out the current economic situation in Syria, 20 months after the beginning of the revolution.

On 4 August 2012, the Lebanese newspaper, The Daily Star, reported that, according to the International Finances Institute, Syria's GDP would fall 14 per cent in 2012 after a 6 per cent contraction in 2011. It also warned that the decrease

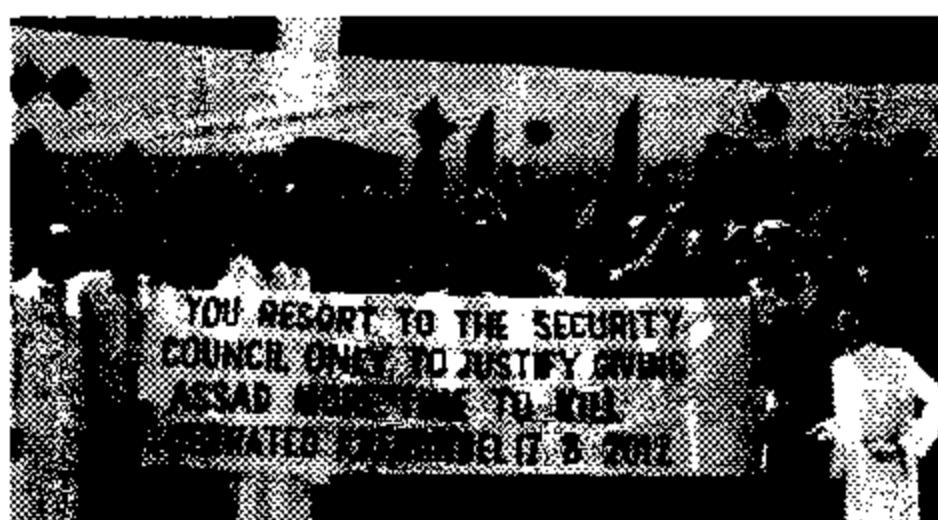


may be as bad as 20 per cent by the end of year, if the civil war continued.

The main economic indicators are falling. Revenue from tourism has diminished from 11 per cent of GDP in 2010 to 4 per cent in 2011; by 2012 it will represent not more than 0.6 per cent of the Syrian economy. Direct foreign investment will drop from \$1.5 billion in 2010 to \$100 million in 2012. The total drainage of capital between March 2011 and July 2012 represents 21 per cent of GDP. Due to the paralysis of the economy, international sanctions, and a drastic fall in farming production, the population is running out of every kind of food and consumer goods. Average inflation in 2012 was 17 per cent compared to 5.3 per cent in 2011.

The newspaper Syria Today reports that, according to data provided by the government, unemployment has reached 25 per cent. Other sources say 30 per cent is more accurate, without taking underemployment into account. This is the economic framework in which the war is set.

Armed conflict fuels social contradictions and the misery of the toiling masses fighting to topple Assad and to win democratic liberties. It is clear that the dictatorship is losing economic oxygen to maintain their war against the Syrian masses.



Assad's situation is dramatic. Production is plunging and most markets are closed, fiscal revenue has reach rock bottom and there are practically no financial reserves. His political and social base is unstable with sectors of bourgeoisie beginning to abandon him.

Were it not for the economic and military aid given to him by his few allies: Russia, China, Iran, Venezuela and Cuba – the Syrian regime would not survive and be able to maintain its genocidal attacks.

THE COURSE OF THE CIVIL WAR

Before the rebel camp can achieve a military victory it has to overcome its problem of armaments and its problem of political and military leadership.

In spite of all the headway achieved by the rebel militias and the Free Syrian Army (FSA), Assad still has greater fire power. Assad has an army that is riddled with desertions, but its chain of command remains as does the heavy artillery and air force. It is important to know that the Syrian army has always been one of the strongest in the Middle East and was armed directly by Iran and Russia.

In order to make desertions more difficult, Assad is using elite units – such as the terrible IV Mechanised Division commanded by his younger brother Maher Assad and, of course, the mercenary and criminal Shabiha. On top of this his military actions are being strongly supported by air raids. This has caused a high number of casualties among civilians and makes the rebels' progress more difficult. The rebels have been forced to abandon some positions due to a lack of anti-aircraft or anti-tank guns.

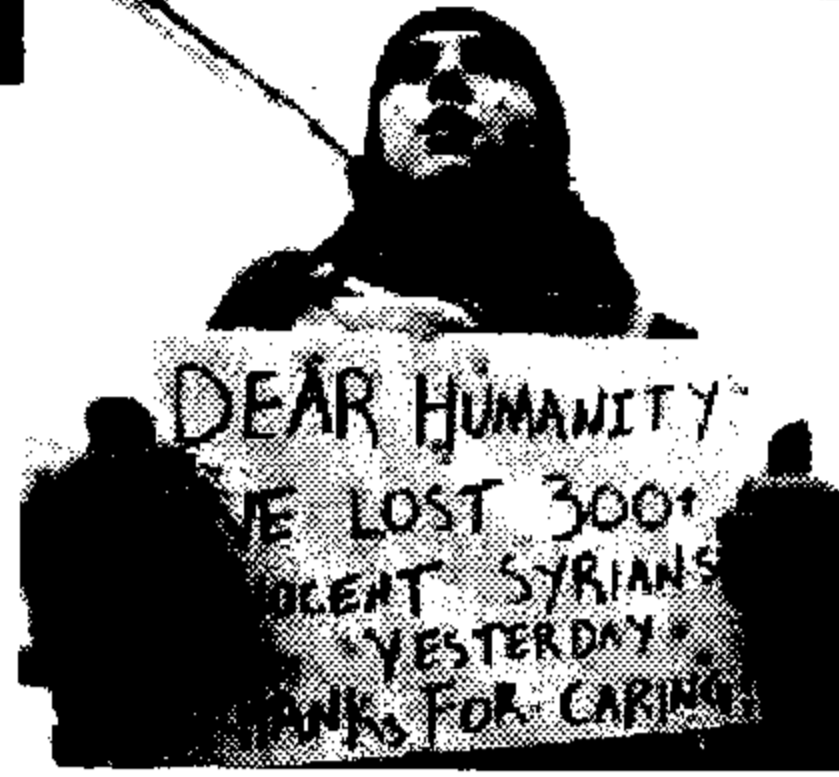
As in every civil war, armaments is an extremely important political issue. The numbers of rebel is growing but they do not have enough weapons to maintain positions and make decisive headway, according to commanding officer Ahmed Abu Ali, who leads a katiba (battalion) of a hundred militiamen fighting in the neighbourhood of Saladino, Aleppo. He says, “The most difficult thing we have to cope with is the T-82 armoured fighting vehicles against which our RPG

Course of the Syrian Revolution

are of little use...as well as their fighter planes...we have snipers but no precision rifles...We cannot control Aleppo unless we get heavy weapons...Without more weapons we cannot even imagine our future." (El País 11, August, 2012)

So far no government sent heavy weapon to the rebels. Western imperialist powers and governments in the region such as that of Egypt or Libya have been adverse to this alternative. Barack Obama expressed his motive very clearly, "It would be very risky to use American military means in Syria. We cannot put weapons into the hands of people who may then use them against us" (El País). Imperialism is very much aware that arming the rebels would mean arming those who are carrying out a revolution. The best "material support" the FSA has received from imperialist powers so far consists of light weapons or intelligence services for some rebel operations, which normally happens through Qatar or Turkey. Weapons, however, reach the rebels through dribs and drabs and only for groups or sectors yielding to the interests of imperialism or those who may, in the opinion of the USA, divert the revolution from inside, such as the Jihadists. In the meantime, the Assad regime continues to receive shipments of weapons from Russia and Iran. In 2011 alone, Russia, which has a naval base in Syria and important commercial interests, sold US\$1b worth of weapons to the Syrian government. Russian Foreign Affairs minister, Sergei Lavrov admitted this overtly when he cynically said that this happens "within the framework of technical and military cooperation between Russia and Syria in order to support the defensive capacity of Syria against those who do not support Bashar Assad". (Reuter, 5/11)

Another favourable element for the Syrian regime is the political and military support from Hezbollah, which is an important part of the Lebanese government, a country where the Syrian civil war is exerting influence. This has led to serious confrontations between the sympathisers and detractors of Assad. We must bear in mind that Hezbollah controls entire regions of the Syrian-Lebanese frontier and that it is the best



-trained armed organisation with great political prestige and military power in the Middle East, especially since it defeated Israel in 2006.

Furthermore, there is another serious problem. The activity of Islamist Salafist groups or Jihadists groups (fundamentalist groups of Islam) such as the militia known as Al Nushra, are not part of the FSA. They carry out isolated actions in order to give the civil war a sectarian, religious character. They preach that the conflict is between the Sunni and Alawite-Shia (the branch of Islam to which the Assad family belongs). Hence they dedicate their efforts to terrorist actions without any connection with the military activity of the FSA and often aimed at the civilian population or against other religions.

Despite activity contributing towards the military effort to topple the dictatorship, the fundamentalist Islamic groups deepen divisions and weaken the rebel camp by their sectarian activities. That only helps to exclude whole sectors of the population (the Alawites, Christians, etc) from the struggle to defeat the regime and support the revolution.

There are problems in the rebel camp, because the political and military leadership of the Syrian National Council, and the top leadership of the FSA are pro-bourgeois and pro-imperialist. They have repeatedly said that they would support an imperialist military intervention. They are also willing to discuss a "transitional administration" without Assad but that could include his vice president or another member from his regime.

The Assad regime still has greater military power, but after mid-June there was an offensive of the armed rebels and they made important military headway. That was against the background of a deepening civil war that for about three months saw very powerful struggles in two of the main cities: Damascus and

Aleppo.

In Damascus, the capital city, battles are being fought mainly in the peripheral neighbourhoods and more intense battles are being fought downtown. The regime has so far failed to annihilate the rebel resistance in Damascus to the point that they had to use air raids in several neighbourhoods.

In Aleppo combat is over every inch of the territory. The FSA assert that they control 60% of the city even if they have not yet been able to seize downtown. In the midst of the rubble of a city all but turned into ruins by endless bombardments, rebels defend their positions. The conquest of Aleppo is of strategic importance because of its geopolitical and economic position as it would open a path which is directly connected to the Turkish frontier.

In early November, rebels conquered Maaret Al-Numan and Saraqeb, two other strategic positions. The cities are in the province of Idlib, where the government has lost all but three of its control posts. The cities are of vital importance for both sides due to the control of the road from Damascus to Aleppo and from Aleppo to the coastal town of Latakia in the north. This road is used by the regime to transport troops to attack Aleppo.

Attacks have also broken out again at the military base of Taftanaz, where the regime launched its attacks against the entire province of Idlib. In Deir Ezzor in the eastern zone of the country, rebels have announced that they had seized the Al Ward oilfield. On 5 November, in Hama, 50 soldiers and politicians linked to Assad were killed in an attack by a car filled with explosives. Attacks and indiscriminate bombardments by the regime are taking place in Daraa, Homs and Latakia.

FSA militias are delivering important blows against the Syrian regime but they still lack sufficient power to carry out a sweeping and decisive offensive. However, the depth of the revolution is such that a clear situation of dual power has been established in the country which is most clearly expressed in the territories liberated by the militias.

(Second part continued in the next issue.)

**Invitation to an international union meeting
22 March to 24 March Paris**

This call has been launched by trade unions from Europe, Africa, America, some are affiliated to the International Trade Union Confederation or the World Federation of Trade Unions and some are not. We also participate in various international trade union networks. All our unions recognise union struggle, workers' democracy, self-organisation of workers and the need for social transformation.

The crisis of the capitalist system has consequences in the world. Economic, financial, environmental and social crises interact and become self-reinforcing. The global crisis of capitalism shows an impasse based on increasingly unequal distribution of the wealth produced, financial deregulation, free trade and the widespread disregard for ecological concerns.

To save the profits of the shareholders and owners, to ensure the future of banking and global institutions (the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, etc.), governments and employers place increasingly heavy burdens on workers' rights and living standards.

The current economic and political system organises the looting of many countries, forcing millions of people to leave their region of origin in order to survive ... and then they are denied their rights because they are immigrants.

The destruction of public services, the questioning of all social rights, attacks on trade union rights, the development of precariousness and unemployment to put pressure on people ... these are the same methods that are used in all countries!

To achieve their goals, they use every means to criminalise our struggles: trials, arrests, police actions, military occupations and all kinds of obstacles to collective and individual rights. Punishment is one of their weapons against those who resist, as they are opposed to building alternatives. Our solidarity crosses borders, it is one of our answers.

The unionism we are building does not affirm pacts with powers including validation of antisocial measures. Unionism has the responsibility to organise resistance to the international hierarchy and to build through struggle the necessary social transformation of society.

Our unionism aims to overthrow the model of economic, social and political development based on the hegemony of finance, profit and competitiveness.



International Trade Unionism: we are building the future

Instead, we want to build a system based on common property, the redistribution of wealth between all those who are contributing to its creation, the rights of workers and ecologically sustainable development.

We demand the extension, democratisation and social appropriation of public services (education, health, transport, energy, water, housing, etc.). The free movement of persons and equal social and political rights for everyone, regardless of nationality, origin or gender, are part of our common goals.

Our unionism combines immediate workers' demands and willingness for profound social change. It is not limited to protest in the economic field, it covers topics such as the right to housing, land, equality between men and women, racism, ecology, anti-colonialism, etc.

The interests we defend are those of the working class (active or retired workers, unemployed or trainees) and they relate to peoples from all regions of the world. We oppose subservience to employers, governments and institutions and we assert our autonomy vis-à-vis all political organisations.

International trade union organisations exist; union networks were created on geographical or professional fields. From one region of the world to another, our union histories, structures and affiliations are different. But we share what is essential: we are determined to build coordinating union struggle internationally. We are organising the meeting in March 2013 as part of this process.

By organising this meeting, we do not proclaim the establishment of a new international organisation! We want to strengthen, expand, make more efficient a network of trade unionism that is on the offensive, democratic, independent, alternative and internationalist.

We want to share our experiences, strengths and enhance achievements for all, build unity across borders, implement international solidarity of workers. Faced with the crisis in the populations of all countries that is caused by the policies

of capitalism it is necessary to coordinate and unify our struggles. We call on the unions collectively to join us to build this united union action needed to combat social decline, win new rights and build a different society.

This approach is being built step by step with unions to fight capitalism and it is building towards change through collective struggles and daily reflections on the society we want for tomorrow.

For this international meeting in March 2013, we have proposed objectives. But together we can define and implement them:

- Implement union solidarity, focused on one or two countries.
- Intervene in a united and coordinated way in support of the existing international struggles and campaigns, in support of the Palestinian people, in recognition of independent trade unionism in the Maghreb and the Middle East, against the military occupation of Haiti, against the European Treaties imposing austerity, for the right of all peoples to decide their future, ...
- Strengthen the international work carried out in professional sectors (transport, education, call centres, industry, commerce, health, etc..) and on inter-professional issues such as women's rights, immigration, housing, ecology, health and work, etc.

If you are interested in the process and if your organization is thinking of participating in this international meeting please contact us.

syndicalisme.inter@solidaires.org

Christian Mahieux, Solidaires Union Federation

Dirceu Travesso, Union and Popular Central Conlutas

Ali Lofti, Workers Democratic Organisation

Jacinto Ceacero Cubillo, General Workers Confederation

(continued from page 16)

bureaucracy. We brought out the fundamental questions this revolution must solve.

In the words of James P. Cannon speaking on the death of the Stalin cult on 9 March, 1956, "The goal of this revolution is the unconditional repudiation of the Stalinist theory of 'socialism in one country' which was the motivation of all the crimes and betrayals, and the re-affirmation of the Lenin-Trotsky programme of proletarian internationalism; the overthrow of the Stalinist police-state in the Soviet Union and the restoration of Soviet democracy; the abolition of the privileged caste: a complete review of the frame-up trials and purges and a vindication of their victims.

These are the demands and the programme of the political revolution in the Soviet Union."

As soon as we possibly could — by February, 1957 — we reprinted this Cannon's speech together with Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress.

Also, in this little book, *The 20th Congress and World Trotskyism: A documented analysis*, we published 18 documents circulated privately at the Twentieth Congress.

These included Lenin's letters on the national question — one asking Trotsky to take up the case of Georgia against Stalin and Dzerzhinsky, in March 1923.

Here also was Lenin's 'Testament'.

All these documents had been denounced viciously by Stalinists in the past as part of the Trotskyist arsenal of fabrications and slanderous lies spread by anti-Soviet elements.

In Liverpool we won the active members of the YCL.

Two two young miners in the Trotskyist group were working at Cronton pit on the outskirts of Liverpool.

They were discussing with a member of the YCL, John Connor, a plumber who had opted to become a miner when he was called up for his 'national service'.

Through him we made contact with other members of the YCL in Liverpool.

Copies of *Revolution Betrayed* and Trotsky's *In Defence of Marxism* circulated around until they were falling to pieces. These YCLers wanted to discuss everything — the history of the Left Opposition, socialism in one country, Communist Party history, the Internationals, the trade unions, the Labour Party.

MEMBERSHIP

The entire active membership of the Granby branch of the YCL quickly became Trotskyists, as well as others throughout Liverpool and the Thompson brothers in Wigan, one of whom was a member of the National Committee of the YCL.

We won a group of CP building workers as well.

After the revelations of Khrushchev came the Hungarian Revolution. The YCL Congress was in the middle of it. There was already an opposition to YCL policies, particularly its line of 'cut the call up'.

The opposition demanded an outright campaign against conscription. Hungary exposed the complete insincerity of the party leadership's condemnation of Stalin's crimes.

SLANDERS

First came the slanders of workers and students, the smearing by these leaders and the *Daily Worker* of the spontaneous



eruption as a counter-revolution instigated by fascists.

Then, when Soviet troops began to withdraw it became according to them an uprising with genuine grievances.

Finally, after a few short days, when Kadar treacherously announced his 'Workers and Peasants Government' with no support and Soviet troops moved back to crush the revolution, there came the sophisticated arguments.

Yes, there had been very grave crimes against the Hungarian people. Yes, there were very genuine grievances. Yes, perhaps, the first Soviet intervention had been a blunder and had encouraged nationalism.

But now there were sinister elements able to exploit the situation. The Soviet Union now had no alternative but to send in its troops otherwise all the socialist gains could be lost. It was an educative time.

French and British imperialism launched the invasion of Egypt.

It was clear that there was agreement between the Soviet bureaucracy and these imperialist governments to look the other way while each other's invasion forces advanced.

There was a big feeling against the Suez War in the Liverpool Labour movement and, together with youth from the YCL, we sold enormous amounts of the Trotskyist pamphlet on the Suez crisis, particularly around Labour clubs.

That activity itself spurred forward the discussions on Trotskyism and Stalinism.

Brazilian Trotskyists receive apology from Dilma's government

Americo Gomes, member of the Commission of Political Prisoners, representing the persecuted of the former Socialist Convergence and PSTU, Brazilian section of the International Workers League.



Socialist Convergence (CS: *Convergencia Socialista*) is one of the organisations that gave rise to the Unified Socialist Workers' Party of Brazil (PSTU). It was heavily persecuted by the dictatorship that took power in 1964. Its members were known, from the late 1970s and early 1980s, as militant fighters in the labour movement against the military regime, and their

resistance led to "Operation Lotus" (an entire unit organised by the dictatorship to annihilate the CS).

In August 2012, three militants of CS obtained political amnesty and received a formal apology from the government on behalf of the Ministry of Justice's

Amnesty Commission. The PSTU is proud of the amnesty because it formally recognised the involvement of CS in the fight of Brazilian workers against the military dictatorship.

The roots of the PSTU today go back to a long experience of struggle against the Brazilian dictatorship; the CS was formed in 1978 out of the Workers League that had been formed in 1972. The amnesty needs to be understood in the context of the military dictatorship that existed from 1964 to 1985 and the struggle of these Trotskyist forces against it.

Socialist Voice we will cover this history in future issues.

Bill Hunter's Archives

Bill Hunter is 92 years of age, for 73 years he fought for Trotskyism and still does. In this is lively account Bill tells how Trotskyism developed when Khrushchev (partially) revealed the role of Stalin and Stalinism in destroying the heritage of Leninism. Taken from the Workers Press 4 October 1986. The first part appeared in Socialist Voice September 2012.

Communist Party members awoke to the shock of revealing 'mass repression' and 'barbaric tortures'. They had to read of 'indignation in the hall' as the Twentieth Congress was told of the 17th Party Congress which took place in 1934.

Of the 139 members and candidates of the party's Central Committee who were elected at the 17th Congress, 98 people (70 per cent) were arrested and shot, mostly in 1937/38.

Of 1,966 delegates with either voting or advisory rights, no less than 1,108 were later arrested on charges of anti-revolutionary crimes — an overwhelming majority.

Communist Party members were reeling in anger and dismay, their whole world turned upside down.

Ten feet tall, we knocked on their doors, with *Revolution Betrayed* in one hand, a leaflet with the pictures of Lenin's Central Committee in the other hand, all but a handful of whom were destroyed by Stalin.

We were determined they should hear about the Left Opposition and Trotsky and the roots of the Stalinist crisis.

'Treat a Trotskyist as you would a Nazi: Clear out Hitler's Agents' (1942). 'The despicable agent provocateur, the tool of the enemy who worms his way into progressive movements in order to create disunity and incite illegal acts.' (1944.) The Communist Party in Britain had tried to mount a witch-hunting pogrom

against the Trotskyists.

Now we went in with confidence everywhere, keeping a close watch on the *Daily Worker*, following through all critical letters, all the names we heard of people who spoke up.

We distributed leaflets at all meetings, internal and public

In the attempt to make a breakthrough we would interrupt the Communist Party leaders trying to excuse away Stalin and the repression in the Soviet Union. We interrupted Gollan from the gallery of the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, as he lost his vigorous style of speaking and droned on. "Where were you, Gollan? Tell them what you knew Gollan.

"What about Rose Cohen, Gollan?" Rose Cohen was a relative of Gollan who disappeared in the Soviet Union when her husband — who had worked with Pollit and CP leaders in Britain — was framed up and executed.

RECRUIT

Our very first recruit was a long-time member of the CP, Frank Parkinson.

We had distributed leaflets at a Merseyside aggregate of the Communist Party — I believe, at that time, the CP claimed a membership of 750 on Merseyside.

This old man — he was just over 60 and seemed old to me at the time — came stumping down the stairs of the Walton Cooperative Hall and said to me: "I'm finished with that shower; where do you live, I'll call and see you."

He became a staunch member of ours; about ten years later he collapsed while distributing the Newsletter to old age pensioners who had allotments near his, and died soon after.

The opposition which developed in the Communist Party and was highly critical of the leadership's attempts to explain away the repression and anti-socialist crimes in the Soviet Union, divided

broadly into two tendencies.

There were those who were moving to social democracy and beyond, who generally accepted the right opportunist, 'people's front' aspects of Stalinist policy, and the parliamentary and British road to socialism. They put forward ideas, later described as Euro Communism, which essentially accepted bourgeois ideology on democracy and the state.

This tendency coalesced mainly around the *New Reasoner* and later, *University* and *Left Review*.

The other stream strove to understand the degeneration and corruption they now had to face in terms of communist struggle, in terms of the Marxist teaching they had sought in the Communist Party.

Of course, it would be very wrong to put rigid boundaries on these definitions.

Both tendencies had a genuine thirst for the truth behind Khrushchev's revelations, as can for example be seen from some of the work of those around the *New Reasoner* group as well as those who moved to Trotskyism.

Our aim was always to encourage the movement of the discussion to fundamentals.

We were convinced that only those would really understand the Soviet Union and its degeneration who built on the struggle of Trotsky and the Left Opposition.

In a sense, all the oppositions to Stalinism can only make a real step forward if they make that struggle their own.

Is it necessary to say that does not mean accepting it as correct in every detail?

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx described Communists as representing the future in the present and we saw this as our task in relation to the opposition to Stalinism.

Here was represented the stirrings of political revolution against the Stalinist

(continued on page 15)

For more information or to join the ISL, Email: isinfo@talktalk.net

or, write to: ISL c/o News from Nowhere, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY

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