

Permanent Revolution Collective



Open Letter to Socialist Fight Supporters



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Open Letter to Socialist Fight Supporters

Dear comrades,

The last editorial of *Socialist Fight* concludes by a moving story about old friendship that sadly torn apart and new friendship that fortunately blossoms up:

The degeneration of the left is apparent in its failure to fight the TU bureaucracy on the cuts and the attack on Libya. We need a new international-ist revolutionary party to fight this crisis. Socialist Fight is dedicated to this fight. We have lost many friends and allies because this crisis has forced their politics into the open. However we are pleased to say that we have found new and better comrades in Britain, South Africa and Brazil who we are confident will not buckle under the current ideological assault of neo-liberal Imperialism. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 2)

Every adult knows that “*new friends*” are always supposed to be “*better*”; who would change for worse? Anyway, despite a lack of political clarity (what does mean “*the neo-liberal Imperialism*”? “*the left*?”) and its rather cryptic indictment (who are the “*many friends and allies... the crisis has forced their politics in the open*?”), every communist in the world should enjoy that there is at least some gathering, in front of world events, to build a “*new revolutionary party*”.

Unfortunately, the same issue disregards the “*revolutionary party*” of the editorial when it deals with Libya. Besides, the tale is not reliable: there was a crisis among SF Mark I supporters long before “*the attack on Libya*”; this split led, as a matter of fact, to the end of relations with the Permanent Revolution Collective (CoReP), three months before “*the attack on Libya*”.

HOW “HARD LEFT” GERRY DOWNING UNMASKED THE “SOFT LEFT” COREP

The ITC-SF / Great Britain was launched in spring 2009 by a fistful of militants who participated in the Campaign for a Marxist Party (2006-2008), some coming from the former WIL (1987-1997), an outfit of the WRP explosion of 1985.

SF Mark I appeared in a rather contradictory way:

- on the one hand, the first SF leaflet was a positive illustration of internationalism and a vigorous defense of migrant workers against British jingoism;
- on the other hand, ITC-SF political platform was defective.

So, before the first issue of the journal, there was already a split: two left to WP / Great Britain and the L5I. Another result of the weakness of ITC-SF Platform was that *Socialist Fight* n° 1 was published in solidarity with the FLT. The COTP-FTI-FLT-FLTI (this current changes its name very often) is a hysterical brand of the centrist swamp that usurps today the name of Trotskyism. It is run in an undemocratic way the LOI -DO/ Argentine, a sect unable to overcome the Pabloite legacy of its origin, especially the confusion between Marxism and radical nationalism of dominated countries. The LOI itself is led in an undemocratic way by a guru called “Munzer”.

As the Groupe Bolchevik / France approached SF because of its sharp position in front of the campaign “*British jobs to British workers*”, the leadership of the FLT made the CWG / New Zealand and the HWRS / United States to launch a public campaign against the GB, accused of capitulation to its imperialism and support of the NPA. As SF resisted, Munzer, declared -in a letter signed “*Secretariat*” but full of “*I*”- that SF too has capitulated to imperialism. The ITC-SF refused to self-criticize and broke with the FLT.

In December 2009, a formal political relationship began between SF Mark I and the Permanent Revolution Collective (CoReP). *Socialist Fight* was henceforth published as “*sympathizer of the Collective*”. SF published *China, deformed workers state or rising imperialist power?* a rather good polemic to the “Spart Family”. There were travels from both sides and some political collaboration with the European groups of the CoReP, the GKK / Austria or the GB / France.

All along, the Collective Bureau has tried to reach a programmatic agreement necessary to a full merging: it criticized frankly the ITC-SF platform. It submitted to ITC-SF all CoReP drafts (Iran, Palestine, etc.). Gerry Downing, a prolific writer and an active militant, was associated to the Bureau. Unfortunately, comrade Downing never plainly collaborated in writing international documents. To be fair, he used to send the Bureau a copy of each of his numerous international discussions (among them, the RCG-RWG / South Africa, not a so “*new friend*”).

All along summer 2010, the Bureau of the Collective tried to prevent, stop and reverse the stupid split of SF Mark I about a secondary question, the Polanski affair: comrade Gerry Downing asked for the imprisonment of Polanski as a rapist, meanwhile comrades Pete and Steve were opposed to any call to bourgeois justice whatever his crime. The Bureau tried also to make SF to function as a Trotskyist-Leninist group and not, as we discovered then, a loose circle around Gerry Downing, without conference, fees, discipline or democratic procedures. In spite of respectful and patient recommendations, SF Mark I splintered.

Since December 2010, without any political statement, Gerry Downing has stopped its previous way of collaboration with the Collective. This informal rupture was openly confirmed when he published a new issue of *Socialist Fight* (n° 5, winter 2010-11) suppressing all reference to the CoReP, without political explanation to

readers. Of course, there was no yet question of Libya in the issue n° 5, published several weeks before any significant event in Libya.

In March 2011, the Bureau of the Collective sent a draft of assessment in front of the menaces of an imperialist intervention in Libya. SF never replied, only comrade Downing announced “*personal*” disagreements with the draft. In April 2011, the Bureau of the Collective circulated a draft of international joint declaration to SF and some other organizations, among them the RMG / South Africa and the LC / Brazil. None replied.

By way of answer, the following issue of *Socialist Fight* (n° 6, spring-summer 2011) was more disloyal and regressive. Without any attempt of discussion with the Collective Bureau or any proposition of a SF draft statement to the Collective about Libya, it published two articles (both are available in digital version among Gerald J. Downing’s writings at Scribds):

1. “Libya crisis” (p. 15-20) analysed 1969 military coup in Libya as a “revolution”, like Gaddafi, the imperialist ideologues and the former WRP of late Gerry Healy. It hazardously compared today Libyan rent capitalist economy with the USSR in Trotsky’s time, so that it would be some kind of deformed workers’ state that “*the left*” should defend as such. In line with Colonel Gaddafi, it claimed that the February movement in Libya was a monarchist, racist and pro-imperialist plot fomented by the CIA and Al Qaeda since its inception.
2. “The soft left’s foolish illusions” (p. 20-26) attacked publically the Collective, quoting one sentence from a document of the Collective written before the military aggression of Libya and one personal sentence by a member of the Collective from of an informal blog. Because they did not treat the February youth demonstrations in all Libya as the bourgeois despotic regime did (“*who have taken drugs*”, “*following the Islamists’ leader*”, “*CIA agents*”, “*greasy rats*”...), it categorized the Collective -between SWP and CPGB- in the “*soft left*” which are “*merely imperialist stooges*”.

Both do not start from world class struggle, but from a magnified opposition between one “world imperialism” and a so-called “anti-imperialism”. Their documentation is defective; in particular, they rely heavily on outdated official reports and on Mr David Rothscum who appears a Gaddafi mouthpiece. They explain the mass upsurges of a wide range of dominated countries by CIA conspiracy or artificial imposition of democracy from outside. They overestimate bourgeois revolutionary capacities in the epoch of capitalism decay and advocate an alliance of the working class with the so-called “anti-imperialist” bourgeoisie. They misuse analogy with the former workers’ state to justify it.

LIBYA IS NOT A WORKERS’ STATE, NOT EVEN A DEGENERATED ONE

Marxists should emulate the method the International Left Opposition and the 4th International used for China and other dominated countries.

The more independent the proletarian vanguard will be in relation to the bourgeoisie, the less it will be inclined to place its fingers between the jaws of the bourgeoisie, to see it in bright colors, to overestimate its revolutionary spirit or its readiness for a “united front” and for a struggle against imperialism. (Trotsky, *Summary and perspectives of the Chinese revolution, 1929*, part 1)

Instead, comrade Downing chose another way that he thought more convenient for its purpose (a united front with “anti-imperialist” bourgeoisie of Libya). Libyan state should be defended... as if it was a “workers’ state”.

The method we will employ... is that which Trotsky used in his defence of the USSR as a degenerate workers’ state (*Socialist Fight* n° 6, p. 13)

These Bonapartist regimes as in the USSR... (p. 18)

We seek to emulate the Trotsky’s method in defence of the USSR (p. 19)

So, he confounds deliberately oil rent capitalism with collectivized economy issued of the expropriation of capitalists. Moreover, he reduces the meaning of the defence of the USSR to support of its leadership against foreign aggression, not without some connection with one wing of revisionists of Trotskyism and the main liquidators of the 4th International.

The 1917 October Revolution founded a workers’ state from the destruction of the bourgeois state, grounded on soviets. But the level of Russian productive forces was low and the Soviets power was immediately confronted to civil war and imperialist interventions (Japan, France, USA, Great Britain). It stayed isolated after the defeats of the other European revolutions (Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy...) and the soviets life soon diminished. USSR was more and more deformed. In 1924, this bureaucracy led by Stalin defeated the proletarian wing of the party and took over the USSR state and the Communist International. There was still collectivized industry and state monopoly of exchange, but the workers’ state was not any more under the control of the vanguard, let alone the whole working class.

We know from older books that the labor bureaucracy and the labor aristocracy are the social foundation for opportunism. In Russia this phenomenon has taken on new forms. On the foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat – in a backward country, surrounded by capitalism – for the first time a powerful bureaucratic apparatus has been created from among the upper layers of the workers, that is raised above the masses, that lays down the law to them, that has at its disposal colossal resources, that is bound together by an inner

mutual responsibility, and that intrudes into the policies of a workers' government its own interests, methods, and regulations. (Trotsky, *What next?* 1932, ch. 6)

In 1933, after the German section of the 3rd International, the KPD, allowed the defeat of German working class in front of the Nazis, Trotsky oriented the International Left Opposition to a new workers International, in programmatic continuity with the four first congresses of the 3rd International (and with the conferences of Left Opposition of the 3rd International afterward).

Accordingly, Trotsky adjusted the analysis of USSR because the chief menace of restoration of capitalism inside USSR stemmed from the bureaucracy itself. In 1936, he renounced the former characterization of Stalinism as a form of centrism and of the USSR as a deformed workers state which needed simple reform.

From the circumstance that the "bureaucratic" deformation has grown into a regime of bureaucratic autocracy we draw the conclusion that... it is necessary to overthrow the bureaucracy; this task can be carried out only by creating an illegal Bolshevik party in the USSR. From the circumstance that the degeneration of the political system has not yet led to the destruction of planned state economy, we draw the conclusion that it is still the duty of the world proletariat to defend the USSR against imperialism and to aid the Soviet proletariat in its struggle against the bureaucracy. (Trotsky, *From a scratch to the danger of gangrene*, 1940)

Of course, in the event of an imperialist menace, the 4th International would rank with the USSR whatever its leadership, as revolutionaries stand with an union against a boss or against the bourgeois state, whatever its leadership. That does not mean praising the bureaucracy of the union, nor the degenerated workers state. To defend actually the workers and to fight bosses, communists must democratize the union and expel the agents of the bourgeoisie.

Even when bureaucracy of a workers state or of a workers organization defends the basis of its privileges, it does it in its own way. The actual defense of the union or of the workers state needs to evince it. For instance, when USSR invaded Galicia and Belorussia, the West of Poland state in 1940, Stalin was compelled to expropriate private property of means of production. This was positive, but did not change the world appraisal of Stalinism.

With the aid of the Comintern, the Kremlin has disoriented and demoralized the working class so that it has not only facilitated the outbreak of a new imperialist war but has also made extremely difficult the utilization of this war for revolution. Compared with those crimes, the social overturn in the two provinces, which was paid for more over by the enslavement of Poland, is of course of secondary importance and does not alter the general reactionary character of the Kremlin's policy. (Trotsky, *From a scratch to the danger of gangrene*, 1940)

Time and again, the 4th International analyzed the USSR as a degenerated workers state whose bureaucracy was mainly reactionary inside and outside.

The USSR thus embodies terrific contradictions. But it still remains a degenerated workers' state. Such is the social diagnosis. The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism. (4th International, *The death agony of capitalism and the tasks of the Fourth International*, 1938)

The Fourth International can defend the USSR only by the methods of revolutionary class struggle. To teach the workers correctly to understand the class character of the state imperialist, colonial, workers'—and the reciprocal relations between them, as well as the inner contradictions in each of them, enables the workers to draw correct practical conclusions in situation. While waging a tireless struggle against the Moscow oligarchy, the Fourth International decisively rejects any policy that would aid imperialism against the USSR. The defense of the USSR coincides in principle with the preparation of the world proletarian revolution. We flatly reject the theory of socialism in one country, that brain child of ignorant and reactionary Stalinism. Only the world revolution can save the USSR for socialism. But the world revolution carries with it the inescapable blotting out of the Kremlin oligarchy. (4th International, *Imperialist war and the proletarian world revolution*, 1940)

To sum up,

- in capitalist countries, fight against every menace to USSR; in USSR, fight foreign armies which aim was to reverse the expropriation, even if the working class has been excluded of the power;
- fight to smash the state bureaucracy of USSR, the main internal menace to the workers state by its reactionary role inside and outside;
- build an "illegal Bolshevik Party" in USSR to lead this political revolution;
- participate in an eventual expropriation of landowners and capitalists, even led by the Stalinists; fight in capitalist countries for social revolution;
- build Leninist-Bolshevik party in every capitalist country to lead this social revolution and denounce popular fronts, which are counter revolutionary bloc with the "democratic", "anti-fascist" or "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie.

Comrade Downing's politics is quite different. The workers' state analogy is a fig-leaf for the recovery of Menshevik-Stalinist popular fronts, that is to say alliances with an "anti-imperialist" wing of the bourgeoisie. Hence the need "to see the bourgeoisie in bright colors".

THE FOOLISH ILLUSIONS OF "HARD LEFT" IN COLONELS

We knew nothing before of a Marxist opposition "the soft left" versus "the hard left". Nevertheless, we suggest to comrade Downing to add a third category to his classification: "the incoherent left". Comrade Downing likes the idea of Permanent Revolution but finds out it is irrelevant, at least to Libya.

On the one hand, he explains:

One wonders what kind of a revolution is possible not only without but by oppressing the working class (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 17)

There is no such thing as a "democratic revolution". That was always the term for a bourgeois revolution. And the bourgeoisie definitely are not revolutionary. (p. 18)

The bourgeoisie cannot lead a revolution so there can be no such revolution now. (p. 18)

"Democratic revolutions" and "the Arab Revolution" are fraudulent conceptions, alien to Trotskyism. (p. 21)

If we had a real successful revolution in any or all of these countries it would not be called a "democratic revolution" at all, but the dictatorship of the proletariat. (p. 22)

On the other hand, he forgets his own advice when he writes about the so-called "Guide of the Revolution":

The gains of the 1969 revolution led by Muammar Gaddafi... (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 15)

We put forward the following programme in defence Libya and the remaining gains of the 1969 revolution... (p. 19)

We would have to defend the gains of the revolution... (p. 22)

There is a very great deal left of the Libyan revolution of 1969 worth defending and the masses now increasingly rallying to Gaddafi realise this... (p. 23)

The rebels are immediately threatening all the gains of the 1969 revolution... (p. 24)

Gaddafi's government is still defending the gains of the 1969 revolution... (p. 26)

The only revolution possible is "the dictatorship of the proletariat"... but there was in 1969 in Libya a revolution without proletariat. "The bourgeoisie cannot lead a revolution"... but Colonel Gaddafi could. It is hardly surprising that comrade Downing compares Libya to a workers state.

He is more accurate when he compares Colonel Gaddafi to Colonel Nasser.

In 1969, a new Nasser, Muammar Gaddafi, emerged in Libya... (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 16)

For Marxists, it sounds an accusation; for comrade Downing, it is a compliment.

The prime champion of the post-war defencist movement was Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt and for many years he was the hope of the oppressed throughout the Arab world and much wider. He was vilified no less vilely than Gaddafi is today (SF, Statement on the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and the rest of the Arab world, March 18, 2011)

No matter if one of the first steps of Colonel Nasser was to forbid all workers organisations and to intimidate workers.

The memory of a pair of striking workers hanged by the new government following the 1952 revolution, which brought Gamal Abdel Nasser to power, has not faded... (Foreign Policy, February 16, 2011)

But what worries comrade Downing is not the absence of red flags in Egypt, but of the portraits of the murderer of striking workers.

There has been... almost no portraits of Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein carried by the masses, not even in Cairo. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 20)

Powerful anti-imperialist sentiments... would be heralded by far more flag burning and the portraits of Nasser and chanting of "down with US imperialism, down with Zionism, long live the memory of Nasser". (p. 21)

Will the next issues of *Socialist Fight* measure the degree of maturity of demonstrators in South Africa by the number of portraits of Mandela or in Argentina by the number of portraits of General Peron? Instead of starting from world class struggle, comrade Downing embellishes the epoch of Colonel Nasser. Therefore he cannot explain bourgeois nationalist failure.

During World War II, the proletariat of Europe defended victoriously the workers state in USSR and began revolution in Italy, crushing the first fascist regime. The inter-imperialist war and the menace of social revolution weakened European imperialisms and made easier the struggle of peoples of Asia and Africa to emancipate from colonial empires (reciprocally, the struggle of colonial peoples inspired workers and youth vanguard of capitalist centre and proved imperialism was not invincible). But bureaucracy stayed in power in USSR. "Communist" parties in Italy, Greece and France disarmed workers, rebuilt bourgeois states and restored capitalist order. Stalinism still

kept control, expropriating landowners and capitalist of East Europe, of China, of parts of Indochina and Korea only when USA launched the “Cold War” offensive and true war in Korea.

The 4th International was marginal. Then, the working class of dominated countries could not join its forces to socialist revolution in imperialist centres. Where there were workers parties in colonial and semi-colonial countries, they were under Kremlin control. They always alienated the independence of class of the proletariat and collaborated either directly with the imperialist bourgeoisie (oppose independence and endorsed the partition of Palestine) or with the nationalist bourgeoisie and nationalist petty bourgeoisie (whose ambition was to become a national bourgeoisie with the formal independence of the country).

Assured by Stalinists at world -and often local- scale, the bourgeoisie of backward countries subordinated the proletariat to national unity and to so-called “anti-imperialism”, first to obtain political independence, subsequently to build state capitalism it called “socialism”. All that was cautioned by international Stalinism, some Social-Democrats and all kinds of centrists. Within some limits, several national bourgeoisies profited the divisions of imperialist powers, the survival of USSR and the crisis of leadership of the working class. For instance, Nasser was able to succeed in nationalizing the Canal of Suez in 1956 because the hegemonic imperialist power, the USA stopped the military intervention of Israel, France and Great Britain.

America forced the invaders to withdraw, granting Nasser a victory, bringing about Eden's downfall, hastening decolonisation and ushering in an era of American dominance in the region. (The Economist, March 26, 2011)

Colonel Nasser popularity reached its climax in Egypt, among Arabs peoples and beyond. By contrast, the scarcity of Nasser portraits in today Egypt and the burning of omnipresent official portraits of Ben Ali in Tunisia, Gaddafi in Libya, Al Assad in Syria originate from the discrediting of the Pan-Arab nationalism.

THE FAILURE OF PAN ARAB NATIONALISM

Despite bourgeois Republicans seized power in several countries where Arabs were a majority of the population – Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen– they felt short of unity of Arabs -and the end of Zionist colonisation- they have promised. Pan-Arab nationalists did not succeed either inside their frontiers. They failed to develop really national economy, to emancipate actually from imperialism, to modernize plainly society. Most of them -and Libya was no exception- have even attempted for a decade to settle their own dynasty. By their bankruptcy and their growing concessions to imams, they paved the way for their old rivals, the most reactionary wing of the local bourgeoisies, the Islamists.

In 1967 and in 1973, Egypt -first time, under Nasser; second time, under Sadate- and Syria attacked Israel, without consultation of Palestinian leadership. Every time, the Arab armies were defeated. Of course, Israel was a formidable adversary, but Arab bourgeoisies proved unable to weaken it by any call to Hebrew workers. Instead, as the monarchs of the region, they have helped Zionist ideology, the main strength of the bourgeoisie of Israel, by pretending to drive out all Jews. As a result, Israel took control of former parts of Syria (Golan) and Egypt (Sinai). Sadat signed in 1979 a treaty in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from Sinai.

Without other enemy than themselves, they were not able either to suppress the borders inherited from colonial powers. In 1958, the unification of Egypt, North Yemen and Syria started on, but failed in 1961. In 1969, a federation between Egypt, Libya and Sudan was proclaimed, but collapsed in 1971. In 1971, a federation of Egypt, Libya and Syria was proclaimed, but collapsed in 1977. In 1972, within the federation, the complete union of Egypt and Libya began, but failed in 1973. In 1976, within the federation, the union between Egypt and Syria began, which failed in 1977. In 1974, the union between Tunisia and Libya failed immediately. In 1975, the union between Algeria and Libya aborted. In 1981, the fusion between Libya and Chad failed. In 1989, the union between Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia failed.

Furthermore, in 1977, Libyan army invaded another Arab state, Egypt; in 1983, Syrian army crushed Arab Palestinian OLP in Lebanon.

Unable to unify Arab peoples and to defeat Zionism, Colonel Gaddafi decided to make Libyan people more Arabic (and more Muslim). In 1970, he proceeded the ethnic cleansing of King Idris: he expelled the Italians and, as Colonel Nasser did in Egypt in 1967, Jews. He forbade the Berbers (5% of the population) to speak their language, the Tamazight.

In the years 1990, the cultural and linguistic idiosyncrasy of the Berber communities was severely repressed by the regime of Colonel Gaddafi and many Berbers were imprisoned several years to have taught their language. (Haimzadeh, Au coeur de la Libye de Kadhafi, Lattès, 2011, p. 30)

Moreover, the so-called Pan-Arab nationalist Guide targeted foreign Arabs. Three times at least, Colonel Gaddafi expelled immigrant proletarians as expiatory victims of his erratic relations with governments of the neighbour countries or the “Palestinian Territories”.

In June 1977, Gaddafi decides to expel 225,000 Egyptian workers. (Najjar, Anatomie d'un tyran, Mouammar Kadhafi, Actes Sud, 2011, p. 44)

In August 1985, the Colonel orders the expulsion of thousands of Tunisian workmen, despoiling them their possessions and freezing their assets. (p. 46)

In 1995, Libya expelled nearly 30,000 Palestinians to protest the agreements with Israel on self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza... (Migration News, June 1996)

These deportations illustrate the social nature of the Libyan state and the inconsistency of SF panegyric of Colonel Gaddafi.

Gaddafi was a bulwark against imperialist finance capital and Zionism. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 22)

To be sure, the 1969 military coup was not a social revolution but, at best, a “political revolution”, the replacement of one form of government by another. An armoured column took over the Tripoli, seized control of the royal palace, the military and police headquarters and the radio station. Without a fight, the Military Junta (Revolutionary Command Council) abolished the monarchy.

People of Libya! In response to your own will, fulfilling your most heartfelt wishes, answering your incessant demands for change and regeneration and your longing to strive towards these ends; listening to your incitement to rebel, your armed forces have undertaken the overthrow of the reactionary and corrupt regime... With a single blow from your heroic army, the idols have fallen and false gods have been destroyed... (RCC, Communiqué, September 1, 1969),

42 years after, the same Gaddafi will not answer the “most heartfelt wishes” of the “people of Libya”, its “incessant demands for change”.

One wonders what kind of a revolution is possible not only without but by oppressing the working class (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 17)

One wonders what kind of revolution Gaddafi led in 1969, “not only without, but by oppressing the working class”, forbidding all workers organizations. One wonders what kind of “anti-Zionist” ejected Palestinian workers already ejected from Palestine by Israeli bourgeoisie.

THE FAILURE OF LIBYAN STATE CAPITALISM

One of the main reasons of the incapacity of Arab bourgeoisies to overcome the colonial frontiers is that some inherited oil and gas, while other did not. The former ones shrunk back from partaking rent with the latter ones.

When Gaddafi took power in 1969 he set about a massive redistribution of the oil wealth. And in order to do so he had to prevent the big multi-nationals siphoning all that wealth out of the country... Only Iraq and Libya used their oil wealth for the benefit of their own people, the Saudis, the Shah of Iran and the Gulf States re-invested in the West to assist them out of their crisis. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 16)

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's HDI is 0.755, which gives the country a rank of 53 out of 169 countries with comparable data. The Human Development Index of Arab States as a region increased from 0.398 in 1980 to 0.590 today, placing Libyan Arab Jamahiriya above the regional average. (p. 19)

The government of the most egalitarian and anti-imperialist country in region... (p. 22)

Gaddafi is clearly one of the most substantial opponents of imperialism left... (p. 22)

Gaddafi is fighting imperialism... (p. 25)

Oil wealth was used not only for the people, but to buy a lot of arms (\$30 billion in the 1980s) and for the private benefit of Colonel Gaddafi and his family. Several foreign politicians got some too.

In 1984, was created the “Gaddafi International Prize for Human Rights” worth \$250,000. It is almost as farcical as the “Nobel Peace Prize”. Among the winners are Mandela (ANC / South Africa) who preserved capitalism confronted to revolutionary menace and was President of the South African bourgeoisie, Farrakhan (NOI / United States) who played a role in the assassination of Malcolm X, Garaudy, a former leading Stalinist (PCF / France) who became a Muslim... and a pro-Nazi. Last winner is Erdoğan (AKP / Turkey), the Islamite Prime Minister of the Turkish bourgeoisie.

Others foreign politicians got money more discreetly, as fascistic Haider.

The magazine Profil and the daily newspaper Österreich quoted former employees of Haider as saying that the money in Liechtenstein could have come from donations made by Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi. An anonymous associate of Haider's told the magazine that Gadhafi had "repeatedly" made campaign donations in cash. Haider cultivated economic relations with Libya and was a close friend of one of Gadhafi's sons. (Spiegel, February 2, 2010)

That is how the leader of FPÖ and BZÖ / Austria used “Libyan people wealth” to hatred of migrant workers and of Marxism. In 2008, Saif al-Islam (“Sword of Islam”) al-Gaddafi, the second son and announced political inheritor of Colonel Gaddafi, attended the funeral of Haider. That is enough to make the analogy with workers’ state incongruous.

Comrade Downing refers to the “human development index”, an index that combines indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment and gross national income per capita (so, when there is more oil extracted or when oil price increases, the HDI increases). HDI of Libya is quite good; indeed, as it gave Libya rank 53 in the world in 2010. But figures are incomplete. Saudi Arabian Kingdom was just behind (rank 55) and several monarchist oil renter states did better than Libya: Kuwait (rank 47), Qatar (rank 38), United Arab Emirates (rank 32).

By nature, HDI is not adequate to evaluate internal equality. Comrade Downing does not provide figures to validate his smooth *"the most egalitarian country of the region"*. According to the Global Peace Index, Libya is more unequal than all states of the Arabic-Persian Gulf, but Iraq and post-Shah Iran. In 2008, the "Gini coefficient" (the bigger the coefficient, the less egalitarian the country) of Libya was not so good (36%), better than Israel (39%) and Qatar (39%) but worse than many Gulf monarchies: Saudi Arabia (32%), Oman (32%), United Arab Emirates (31%) and Kuwait (30%).

An omitted indicator is the "corruption perceptions index". The rank of Libya in CPI was one of the worst in 2010: 146 out of 178 countries. All neighbour monarchies did better: Kuwait (rank: 54), Arabia (50), Oman (41), Emirates (28), Qatar (19)...

Vanguard workers need materialist explanations, not praise of one exploiter or another. Libya holds the largest proven oil reserves in Africa and is the world's 12th largest oil producer. Even if imperialist oil firms (through industrial profit, royalties...) and states (through tax) appropriate a large amount of the value of world energy, the dominant classes of the countries where gas and oil are extracted can obtain a significant part of world social surplus through the rent (see Marx, *Capital*, III, section 6; Marx, *Theories on surplus value*, ch. 8...) and through industrial profit if the firms which extract oil and gas are national.

Especially where the population is scarce, a renter bourgeois state can corrupt some intellectuals and (included "hard left") politicians abroad and can try, at least during a period, to buy social peace at home, whether it is monarchist or republican.

In Libya, the main relay of the distribution of the rent by Colonel Gaddafi, apart his own family, was the tribes, in spite of comrade Downing's tentative to make Colonel Gaddafi an enemy of these archaic and monarchist remnants.

Having seen the history of reactionary opposition to this redistribution of wealth... we can now we can see the source of the revolt... as disgruntled capitalists and tribal leaders... (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 19)

For comrade Downing, the opposition to Gaddafi is always reactionary; Colonel Gaddafi defends gains of the revolution. The truth is the last revolt comes from the privatization in favour of Gaddafi family and his tribe and from the growing regional inequality of the distribution of the rent. Both have destroyed a lot of former social gains in all Libya, especially in the East.

*In the patronage system typical of the renter Libyan state, the counterpart of the weakness of representation at the central level in Tripoli was the weakness of the redistribution of the revenue in its area of origin. The centring on the West was thus translated, as early as in the 1980s, by delays, even cancellations of payments of the budgets of the local authorities of Cyrenaica, involving incremental disintegration of healthcare, postponement of buildings and dilapidation of the infrastructures... (Haimzadeh, *Au coeur de la Libye de Kadhafi*, Lattès, 2011, p. 173)*

Initially, Gaddafi tried to undermine the power of the tribes, but in 1975 he turned to them for political support, hence the official celebration of family and tribe. In the process, tribal affiliation became increasingly important, reflecting both the lack of political parties and the shrinking social and geographic basis of the regime. Gaddafi's rule weakened the unity of the country, facilitating manoeuvres from imperialist powers.

Since 1993, the regime withdrew to the clans which form the tribe of Colonel Gaddafi. These last ones which are omnipresent in the Revolutionary Committees and the Revolutionary Guard, become the real pillars of the regime. This shrinkage feeds the criticisms of an irritated population... (Afrique du Nord – Moyen Orient 2005, La Documentation Française, 2005, p. 120)

Libyan economy is closer to Arab Gulf economies than comrade Downing believes. All rely heavily on oil (and gas): 95% of export earnings, 75% of government receipts, 50% of GDP for Libya. Both depend on importations to feed the population: domestic food production meets only about 25% of demand in Libya. Both import workforce: there is no official figures but probably 3 million foreigners were working in Libya, for 6.5 million inhabitants. Both export capital: from Libya \$15.32 billion are invested abroad (stock FDI at the end of 2010).

If investment abroad means *"to assist West"*, how comrade Downing explains that *"the most anti-imperialist country in the region"* is assisting "West" by more than \$15 billions?

COLONEL GADDAFI'S TURN OF 2003 TO "NEO-LIBERAL IMPERIALISM" AND CIA

Is it coherent with another naïve assumption, that Gaddafi has always outraged "world imperialism"?

The interests of world imperialism were severely curtailed and continue to be so to this day... (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 15)

Gaddafi... outraged, and continues to outrage, world imperialism. (p. 16)

If Gaddafi outrages a unique or united *"world imperialism"*, why did Russian imperialism, Chinese imperialism and German imperialism disapproved the choice of the Transitional National Council (TNC) and the military operations led by France and Great Britain, backed by the USA?

To be proper, there is not one *"world imperialism"*-less more the *"neo-liberal world imperialism"* (p. 18)- which feels sentiments like *"outrage"*. Dominated countries are part of the imperialist world economy whose opposite pole is made of several dominating countries, in rivalry to each other.

Kautsky advanced his theory of “ultra-imperialism”. By this he meant the substitution of “joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital, for the struggle of capital of some nations against that of other countries”. (Lenin, Opportunism, and the collapse of the Second International, 1915)

Is it conceivable that such alliances would be more than temporary, that they would eliminate friction, conflicts and struggle in every possible form? The only conceivable basis under capitalism for the division of spheres of influence, interests, colonies, etc., is a calculation of the strength of those participating, their general economic, financial, military strength, etc. And the strength of these participants in the division does not change to an equal degree, for the even development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industry, or countries is impossible under capitalism. (Lenin, Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, 1916, ch. 9)

British imperialism was not always felt so “outraged”; Foreign Office welcomed Gaddafi's coup against King Idriss. French imperialism has not always felt so “outraged”; notwithstanding the USA (and Israel) opposition, Pompidou negotiated with Gaddafi immediately after the military coup of 1969.

From Western side, France, as soon as in the autumn 1969, opens the arms to Colonel Gaddafi who wishes to reinforce his army. Secret negotiations begin then between the two countries... The contract relates to 110 Mirage fighters, helicopters, Matra 550 air-to-air missiles, Matra bombs, Cobra anti-aircraft defence, radars... (Najjar, Anatomie d'un tyran, Mouammar Kadhafi, Actes Sud, 2011, p. 47-48)

In 1972, United States recalled their ambassador. In 1981, US Navy fighters downed two Libyan aircraft. In 1986, a US task force sank two Libyan ships. The same year, the US army bombed Tripoli, killing 41 persons. But, because there is no proper “world imperialism”, the government of Italian imperialism informed Gaddafi 2 days before the attack.

Former Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi warned Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi that the U.S. would bomb his country in 1986, saving the colonel's life, Libyan Foreign Minister Abdel Rahman Shalgam said today. (Bloomberg, October 30, 2008)

In 1986, the United States adopted economic sanctions and, in 1992, the UN imposed sanctions. Nevertheless, the emergent imperialist China increased bilateral trade well before the ban was lifted.

The book comrade Downing uses (p. 16) “to see in bright colors” the Guide is *Libya a country study* collected by Helen Chapin Metz. Unfortunately, he forgets to precise the date of the edition he quotes. The Library of Congress published it... in 1986, when Libya was still backed by USSR and was defying the USA, Great Britain and France (in his bourgeois way, mainly through terrorism against civilians).

Actually, Colonel Gaddafi incorporated plainly Libya in world capitalism. Since 1987, he has given up any “socialist” or “anti-imperialist” language. He spoke then of “popular capitalism”. In 2003, confronted to the US and British invasion of Iraq, he stopped nuclear research, and started to open Libya to foreign firms.

His regime abandoned radical socialism [sic], inviting foreign investment and encouraging private business. (The Economist, February 26, 2011)

Its “neo-liberal” agenda led to degrade the previous social improvements.

Privatizations are done by simple transfer of property of the former state organizations towards the usual beneficiaries of the corruption system: Gaddafi's family of, tribes of the West, army officers, officers of the revolutionary committees. The system of welfare which had ensured a minimum of guarantees to the population is dismantled little by little. (Haimzadeh, Au coeur de la Libye de Kadhafi, Lattès, 2011, p. 173)

Since 2008, the regime has prevented African immigration to Europe. A huge amount of trade and business agreements (trillion dollars) have been signed with European, American, Chinese corporate and governments.

New Libya is attractive. The main European governments made the voyage to Tripoli: Silvio Berlusconi (Italy), José Maria Aznar (Spain), Tony Blair (the United Kingdom), Gerhard Schröder (Germany) and Jacques Chirac (France) made each one official a visit to Mr. Gaddafi. (Afrique du Nord – Moyen Orient 2005, La Documentation Française, 2005, p. 111)

Obviously, Gaddafi did not outrage these representatives of “world imperialism”.

And vice versa. Colonel Gaddafi opened the oil industry to foreign companies, unlike the sheik of Saudi Arabia.

The largest oil company of the world is not Exxon Mobil, BP or Total. It is Saudi Aramco, the national oil company of Saudi Arabia... The largest countries holders of oil reserve are closed to foreign investment. It is the case of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait. Only the countries with smaller reserves are open to, like Algeria, Libya, Syria and Egypt. (Afrique du Nord – Moyen Orient 2006, La Documentation Française, 2006, p. 123)

The USA did not outrage any more Colonel Gaddafi.

In August 2004, the LNOC sells 15 authorisations of exploitation... 11 out of these 15 blocks are allotted to Americans (Occidental, Amerade Hess, Chevron Texaco). Clearly, priority of the government is to associate once again the oil companies of USA, to the detriment of the European companies like Total, in spite of their previous support when sanctions hit Libya... (Le Monde Diplomatique, April 2011)

Then, the ideologue of “New Labour”, Giddens, congratulated Colonel Gaddafi.

On economic change, Gaddafi was less equivocal. He was not negative about globalisation, as so many politicians in developing countries are, and recognised that Libya must change to prosper. He accepts the need to reform banking, diversify the economy, train entrepreneurs and dismantle inefficient state-owned enterprises. Impressive progress has been made towards these objectives in the past three years. (The Guardian, March 9, 2007)

Moreover, Colonel Gaddafi collaborated plainly with the CIA.

The former chief of the CIA praised Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi's past cooperation and said his downfall could complicate US interests in the short term. Retired general Michael Hayden, who led the Central Intelligence Agency from 2006 to 2009 under president George W. Bush, said that restive Syria also helped US intelligence but only in selective areas. (AFP, April 27, 2011)

One wonders how a collaborator of the CIA and a friend of Blair, Berlusconi, Haider... *"fights imperialism"*. One wonders if he is *"a bulwark"* against *"CIA agents"*...

ISLAMIST "SOCIALISM", THIRD WAY OF COLONEL GADDAFI

Comrade Downing is unable to explain in a dialectical and materialist way why Islamism has grown up at the expense of the Arab nationalism, Palestine included. Instead, he adopts conspiracy thesis.

The history of existing society is not any more the history of class struggles but the history of CIA and MI6 plots, from the fall of Berlin Wall to Libyan upsurge.

There are al Qaeda CIA backed opponents (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 16)

There are many reports on the involvement of Al Qaeda cell in Libya... (p. 16)

British intelligence paid large sums of money to an al-Qaeda cell in Libya... (p. 16)

MI6 passed £100,000 to the al-Qaeda plotters (p. 16)

The CIA-sponsored guerrilla training was integrated with the teachings of Islam. (p. 16)

Comrade Downing is not coherent. If the criteria to appreciate a political current are its "anti-imperialist" stance, why does he favor pan Arab nationalism which has capitulated to imperialism for years, even decades? Moreover, Bin Laden exploded more occidental civilian planes than Gaddafi (only two) and killed more people in New York, Madrid and London than Gaddafi in Berlin.

To justify his political backing of Colonel Gaddafi, he overstates the contrast between these two wings of the Arab bourgeoisie. He tends to embellish the pious Guide.

It [the dictatorship of the proletariat] would have to do many of the things that that old dictator Gaddafi has done in the past to ensure survival. That is it would have to execute the counter-revolutionaries, the CIA agents and their unfortunate deluded and confused followers just like the Bolsheviks had to do. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 22)

He forgets *"the need for a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries"* (Lenin, *Draft theses on national and colonial questions for the Second Congress of the Communist International, 1920*)?

No wonder why there is no place –among 15 pages on Libya– for a workers revolutionary party in Libya.

1. Colonel Gaddafi is a revolutionary (who else leads a revolution and fights counter-revolutionaries?).
2. Victims he executes are always *"counter revolutionaries"* or *"CIA agents"*.
3. Bolsheviks would do such a repression and other *"many things"* he does.

Equating despotic bourgeois and collaborator of secret services of the main imperialist state to Bolshevik Party is hitherto more foolish than relating oil rent capitalist economy to USSR.

Comrade Downing should take seriously two constancies of the versatile "Guide": his denunciation of Marxism and his propagation of Islam, two features of genuine counter-revolution, not to mention prohibition of Marxist books and workers strikes, oppression, deportation and torture of foreign workers.

Religion contains tradition and absorbs it... Its teachings comprise basic social guidelines and answers to the fundamental questions of existence. (Green Book, 1975, part I)

All revolutions since the Dutch War of Independence declared freedom of religion, but not the obscurantist "Guide of Revolution".

A sound rule is that each nation should have a religion. For it to be otherwise is abnormal. There is no other solution but to be harmonious with the natural rule, i.e., each nation has a single religion. (Green Book, 1981, part III)

When King Idris, an opponent to Italian colonisation from 1922 to 1943, unified Tripolitania, Fezzan, and Cyrenaica after WWII, the article 5 of the Constitution proclaimed Islam the religion of the new state.

In 1969, the military coup changed the Constitution, but article 2 still proclaimed Islam the religion of the state; article 6 vaunted Arab and Muslim traditions; article 8 made the legacy a matter of Sharia, the religious law.

Within few months, the Military Junta (CCR) forbade political opposition (called "proselytize against the state"), Marxism (called "arouse class hatred"), demonstrations (but in favour of the junta) and, of course, workers strikes.

Qadhafi concluded that his power depended upon tight control. His Revolutionary Command Council issued a "Law for the Protection of the Revolution," making it a criminal offense to proselytize against the state, to arouse class hatred, to spread falsehood, or to participate in strikes and demonstrations. (Middle East Quarterly, winter 2006)

Clearly, the target was not only counter-revolutionaries, even less CIA which has never been troubled by undemocratic measures, especially those against strikes and "class hatred".

In 1972, law 71 banned officially political parties. Government enacted a law providing for the amputation of the right hands of convicted thieves. Colonel Gaddafi founded the "World Islamic Call Society" to propagate Islam and an "Islamic Legion" to Arabize Chad and Sudan.

In 1973, on the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, Colonel Gaddafi delivered a "Five-Point Address". He announced suspension of all existing laws, implementation of Sharia and purging the country of the "*politically sick*", that is to say anti-Monarchists, Islamists... and Marxists. Law 75 denied all freedom of expression. Occidental LP records, atheist and Marxist books were burnt during auto-da-fé.

In 1973 and 1974, laws provided lashings and imprisonment of adulterers, imprisonment of homosexuals for up to five years and floggings for those transgressing the fast of Ramadan were issued as laws "in line with positive Islamic legislation." Another law provided forty lashes for any Muslim who drank or served alcoholic beverages. In 1974, Colonel Gaddafi menaced all dissidents of death penalty.

I could at any moment send them to the People's Court... and the People's Court will issue a sentence of death based on law, because execution is the fate of anyone who forms a political party. (quoted in Middle East Quarterly, Winter 2006)

In 1975, Colonel Gaddafi changed the official name of the state, changed the flag from pan Arab nationalist colours to Islamic green. He transformed cathedrals into mosques and forbade alcohol. He enunciated his "Third universal theory" (sic) as an alternative to capitalism and communism, because both of these ideologies (sic) had been proven invalid. He began to publish his *Green Book*, which was to substitute the Constitution. This was a mishmash of Muhammad, Proudhon, Bakunin and Sun Yan-tsen.

Gaddafi's masterpiece celebrated patriarchal family and tribe.

The individual without a family has no value or social life...

To separate children from their mothers and to cram them into nurseries is a process by which they are transformed into something very close to chicks, for nurseries are similar to poultry farms into which chicks are crammed after they are hatched.

The tribe forms a behaviour pattern for its members, developing into a social education which is better and more noble than any school education. (Green Book, 1981, part III)

His own daughter wears veil in public. The bigotry of the regime fetters sexual freedom, especially for youth, in spite of rather high level of education.

A country without alcohol, where the population abides by strict codes of male-female conduct that require both sexes to stay virgins until marriage—there are no dance clubs, no bars, no young couples strolling down the street, holding hands... Away from the progressive cities of Tripoli and Benghazi, women stay largely in the home, out of sight. (The best American travel writing, Houghton Mifflin, 2006, p. 229)

Or course, as in Iran, the "moral code" imposed to the youth is not for the bourgeoisie. Capitalists drink and fuck what they like. For instance, several Gaddafi's greedy sons were famous for alcoholic consumption and luxury life abroad, including yachts and high tariff prostitutes.

Comrade Downing explains that the Permanent Revolution Collective makes "*democratic demands... that have already been realised*". Certainly, a tiny organisation without presence in Libya may be wrong. However, comrade Downing mentions only one example... which is not convincing.

On the emancipation of women for instance, Libya has the most progressive law on women's rights in the whole region. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 25)

Before the military coup of 1969, women got already some rights, at the time among "*the most progressive in the whole region*": they had right to vote and to participate in political life, they could also own and dispose of property independently of their husbands.

Under the nationalist regime, in 1973, women got equal rights in obtaining a divorce. The state opened education to girls and healthcare to women. The ratio girls/boys in primary and secondary education was more than 100% in Libya in 2009. But it was no exception, even in the region. Tunisia, Israel, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar... got a ration more than 100% too.

One more time, facts do not fit the panegyric. Nurseries and contraception do not receive state support. As a result, the fecundity rate is 2.54 births per woman in Libya in 2011. It is 1.83 in Tunisia, 1.84 in Israel, 1.86 in Emirates, 2.07 in Turkey, 2.12 in Kuwait, 2.3 in Algeria. Abortion is illegal as in clerical and republican Iran or clerical and monarchist Saudi Arabia (the exception in these countries is "to protect woman's life").

In the "*whole region*", at least of three countries do better for women.

- In Israel, there is complete law equality for both genders and the circumstances under which abortion is legal are broader.
- In Turkey, there is complete law equality and abortion is legal.
- In Tunisia, there is complete law equality and abortion is legal. Women can even obtain government-subsidized abortions without their husband's permission.

Public views of Colonel Gaddafi on women were not progressive.

In view of his different nature and in line with the laws of nature, the male has played the role of the strong and striving not by design, but simply because he is created that way. The female has played the role of the beautiful and the gentle involuntarily because she was created so... To ignore natural differences between men and women and to mix their roles is an absolutely uncivilized attitude. (Green Book, 1981, part III)

His dark side is worse. In 1984, he tried to rape French journalist Memona Hintermann... It is probable there were other cases whose victims did not disclose. Comrade Downing splinted SF Mark I because he wanted filmmaker Polanski jailed for sexual abuse. What about his "anti-imperialist" hero?

HOW "HARD LEFT" SF MARK II PROPS UP GADDAFI'S POLITICAL POLICE

Probably, comrade Downing was not aware of the sexual abuses of the "Guide". But, as a writer of 15 pages on Libya -and from his self-proclaimed supremacy on the question upon all Marxists of Earth- he must know the so-called "Revolutionary Committees" launched in 1977.

Since 1977, the "revolutionary committees" ensure an "ideological control" on the people, animate the meetings of the Popular Committees and, since 1979, select openly the delegates. They infiltrate also the army and the General Congress, controls the press.... The Movement of revolutionary committees appears as a state into the state. It counts more than 300,000 members and 30,000 militiamen; it is at the same time the police, the political police and the single party which organizes the demonstrations of support for the Guide. (Najjar, Anatomie d'un tyran, Mouammar Kadhafi, Actes Sud, 2011, p. 58-59)

The ban on parties, confirmed by the *Green Book*, gave the monopoly of political activity to "revolutionary committees", in fact the single party of the totalitarian regime. RC were also part of the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state.

Revolutionary Committees run prisons with little or no documentation of the inmate population or of such basic data as crime and sentence. Revolutionary committees dispense justice, targeting, in particular, participants of the Basic Peoples' Congresses who voice opposition to the state's agenda. (Middle East Quarterly, Winter 2006)

That so-called "Revolutionary Committees" are part of the repressive bourgeois state is confirmed by one official reference comrade Downing quoted in a former edition:

The infamous "hit squads," composed of elements of the revolutionary committees, pursued Qadhafi's opponents overseas, assassinating a number of them. Violent clashes occurred between revolutionary committees and the officially recognized or legitimate people's groups and the armed forces. It became clear by the mid-1980s that the revolutionary committees had frequently stifled freedom of expression. (Metz, Libya a country study, Library of Congress, 1987)

Today, SF Mark II supports plainly the bourgeois "revolutionary committees". RWG / South Africa and LC / Brazil too, perhaps by ignorance (time will show). They do not argue for workers independence and workers soviets, but demand actually the strengthening of Gaddafi's militia.

For Revolutionary Committees in all workplaces, colleges and regions, linked up nationally! (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 19)

Build Revolutionary Committees in all work-places, colleges and regions against Imperialist intervention! (p. 14)

In 1980, Colonel Gaddafi asserted that he wanted the so-called "Revolutionary Committees" to assassinate "dogs", "scum" dissident refugees. Amnesty International listed at least 25 assassinations between 1980 and 1987.

A paramilitary wing of the Revolutionary Committees, the "Revolutionary Guards" (sic), became entrenched within the armed forces. They served as a parallel channel of control. The Republican Guard recruits almost exclusively from tribes whose loyalty he cultivates through economic largess.

In 1996, security guards machine-gunned 1,200 disarmed men in Abu Salim prison (Tripoli).

In 1997, the Law of collective punishment allowed the state to sanction entire families, towns, or districts for the wrongdoing of individuals.

In recent years, hundreds of suspected government opponents have been arbitrarily arrested, often without any arrest warrant, and held incommunicado during the first months of their detention during which they were reportedly tortured. (Amnesty International, 1997)

Torture by bourgeois dominated states are not Jacobin or Bolshevik expedients. They are the other face of torture by bourgeois imperialist states, both aimed at the defence of the world capitalist order at its period of decay,

imperialism. Both confirm that the alternative is not “progressive”, “democratic”, “anti-imperialist” bourgeoisie vs “reactionary”, “fascist”, “imperialist” bourgeoisie, but *socialism or barbarism*.

Comrade Downing opposes wrongly the “anti-imperialist” Gaddafi to the “racist” TNC.

In Libya we had a who knew how to divert these masses against black workers first and then in favour of imperialism. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 16)

No doubt the TNC encouraged jingoism and covered hatred against Black workers who were often accused by armed rebels, mobs, robbers to be mercenaries.

But Gaddafi sowed the seeds of racism. Foreign workers testify they were proposed to join Gaddafi’s troops during the civil war. Moreover, they were persecuted well before the civil war. Colonel Gaddafi “*knew to divert masses*” against foreign workers.

In 1998, six foreign medical workers were charged with conspiring to deliberately infect over 400 children of Benghazi Hospital with HIV. Libyan investigators tortured 10 months Palestinian doctor Ashraf El-Hajouj: “*They used electric shocks, drugs, beatings, police dogs, sleep prevention*”, he told. The Bulgarian nurses were exposed 10 months to aggressive dogs, raped, beaten and tortured by electric shocks. Gaddafi’s court condemned them to death. Now, some of the men in charge of inquiry and judgement are members of the TNC.

In 2000, there were even pogroms against migrants. Colonel Gaddafi encouraged the racists and never sanctioned them. At the same time, he financed racist Haider in Austria and soon after collaborated with Italian imperialism to prevent African migration to European Union.

Libya must end its practices of racial discrimination against black Africans, particularly its racial persecution of two million black African migrant workers. There is substantial evidence of Libya’s pattern and practice of racial discrimination against migrant workers.

In 1998, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed concern about Libya’s alleged “acts of discrimination against migrant workers on the basis of their national or ethnic origin.”

In 2000, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions issued a condemnation of “racist attacks on migrant workers” in Libya.2 Migrant workers from Ghana, Cameroon, Sudan, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad and Nigeria were the victims of attacks by Libyans targeting black migrants, following a government-ordered crackdown on foreign employment, and state-sponsored news reports portraying African migrants as being involved in drug-trafficking or dealing in alcohol. (UN Human Rights Council, February 16, 2010)

The following years, the government molested itself migrants.

Libyan authorities... have instituted a number of repressive measures. These include more restrictive immigration regulation, lengthy and arbitrary detention of immigrants in poor conditions in prisons and camps, physical abuse, and the forced repatriation of tens of thousands of immigrants. From 2003 to 2005, the Libyan government deported approximately 145,000 irregular migrants, mostly to sub-Saharan countries. (Migration Information Source, November 2006)

Is Bolshevism comparable with propagation of religion, mass massacre of prisoners, ban of strikes and *aut-da-fé* of Marxist books? Were expelled Egyptian, Tunisian and Palestinian workers counter revolutionaries? Were tortured Bulgarian nurses and Palestinian doctor, deported black migrant workers agents of the CIA?

“HARD LEFT” UNITED FRONT WITH GADDAFI

Comrade Downing quotes approvingly an interview of Trotsky.

Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 18)

Please note that in the same interview, Trotsky said:

The policy of the “People’s Front”... consists in subordinating the proletariat to the left-wing of the bourgeoisie. (Trotsky, An interview with Mateo Fossa, 1938)

The interview of September 1938 is often quoted by epigones who want an “orthodox” cover for their united front with the bourgeoisie. Trotsky was not very straight in this interview. First, he was not yet familiar with Latin America, as he told to his interviewer. Secondly, he has to be careful not to endanger President Cardenas who welcomed him in Mexico when he was expelled from “democratic” France and Norway, banned by “democratic” Great Britain and USA. So, the following years, he was to sign “Crux” his plain positions on Latin America.

Any interview is politically inferior to programmatic documents. There is nothing wrong in the archive, but it is incomplete. The 4th International’ *Manifesto* -whose draft was written by Trotsky- stated openly:

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the struggle for an independent national state, and consequently the “defence of the fatherland,” is different in principle from that of the imperialist countries. The revolutionary proletariat of the whole world gives unconditional support to the struggle of China or India for national independence, for this struggle... strikes powerful blows at the imperialist states.

At the same time, the Fourth International knows in advance and openly warns the backward nations that their belated national states can no longer count upon an independent democratic development. Surrounded

by decaying capitalism and enmeshed in the imperialist contradictions, the independence of a backward state inevitably will be semi fictitious, and its political regime, under the influence of internal class contradictions and external pressure, will unavoidably fall into dictatorship against the people—such is the regime of the “People’s” party in Turkey, the Kuomintang in China; Gandhi’s regime will be similar tomorrow in India. The struggle for the national independence of the colonies is, from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat, only a transitional stage on the road toward drawing the backward countries into the international socialist revolution.

The Fourth International does not draw watertight distinctions between the backward and the advanced countries, the democratic and the socialist revolutions. It combines them and subordinates them to the world struggle of the oppressed against the oppressors. Just as the only genuinely revolutionary force of our era is the international proletariat, so the only real program to liquidate all oppression, social and national, is the program of the permanent revolution. (Imperialist war and the proletarian world revolution, 1940)

To advocate, against the program of permanent revolution, a united front between the working class and the “anti-imperialist” bourgeoisie, comrade Downing argues that:

International finance capital wants freedom and democracy smash the organisations of the metropolitan working class and to open up the economies of the semi-colonial world to its unfettered penetration, to reduce these countries to the state of Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and the Congo. The international working class must deny them this freedom and democracy if they are to survive and advance to world revolution. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 15)

The ignoring of the real conditions of the masses in Libya and the championing of idealised ‘freedoms’ and ‘rights’ sets them up for imperialist super-exploit. (p. 18)

In Tunisia and Egypt... middle class and opportunist politicians had an agenda... to allow a more “democratic” and better functioning capitalist society. (p. 20)

If we had a real successful revolution in any or all of these countries it would not be called a ‘democratic revolution’ at all, but the dictatorship of the proletariat. And it would have to do many of the things that that old dictator Gaddafi has done in the past to ensure survival. That is it would have to execute the counter-revolutionaries, the CIA agents and their unfortunate deluded and confused followers just like the Bolsheviks had to do. (p. 22)

One wonders who embellishes the “*real conditions of the masses in Libya*”.

True, in the interest of world proletariat, communists differentiate oppressed nations and oppressors, imperialist countries and dominated countries and support the latter against the former, whatever political forms of the respective bourgeois states.

All the rest is a travesty of Marxism:

1. Capital wants to impose democracy.
2. The working class must deny it.
3. Anti-imperialism obliges to deny democracy.
4. The working class must support anti-imperialist regimes.

This support of the working class takes the form of an anti-imperialist bloc or front. This alliance with the bourgeoisie cannot be conjectural. It must be long-lasting because it is a front with the leader(s) of revolution(s), with some relentless anti-imperialist fighter (s).

That explains why there is no need for a workers revolutionary party in Libya.

Such a revision cannot be confined to Libya. There are already some signs.

- The severity towards the internationalist Collective contrasts with the indulgence towards the nationalist INLA-IRSP / Ireland (which got much aid, in the old days, from Gaddafi).

The IRSP is dedicated to mobilising the working class on a political and revolutionary socialist basis. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 16)

- Even Gbagbo becomes an anti-imperialist fighter.

We know who to support in the Ivory Coast, not the pro-imperialist ‘democratically-elected’ President Alassane Ouattara, who has gained the assistance of world imperialism in banning the export of cocoa to deny his rival the opportunity to raise funds but the hold-out President Laurent Gbagbo who has nationalized the Ivory Coast’s cocoa industry to rally the anti-imperialist masses. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 18)

When he had been the president, from 2000 to 2010, Gbagbo had guaranteed US and French firms grip on cocoa. He nationalized purchases and exports of cocoa only in March, after a ban was imposed on Ivory Coast’s cocoa when he refused to accept Ouattara’s victory at presidential elections of November 2010.

- All the issue forgets deliberately the slaughtering of Syrian people by al-Assad Junior.

“HARD LEFT” SUPPORTS DICTATORSHIP AGAINST THE PEOPLE

Comrade Downing vision of a world plot by imperialism to impose democracy is a departure for Marxism. He echo the propaganda of imperialism: “we are there not for money but for freedom” and the arguments of many bourgeois

despots too: "civil liberties are not suited for our (great) people, leave us fight communism (or Islamism), leave me rule without elections, leave us forbid parties, strikes, papers, leave us arrest, retail, torture and execute opponents or national minority..."

The Libyan leader also said that what was often viewed as government heavy handedness in the Middle East in dealing with political opposition stemmed from the violent nature of dissent. "In the Middle East, the opposition is quite different than the opposition in advanced countries. In our countries, the opposition takes the form of explosions, assassinations, killings" he said. (BBC News, March 24, 2006)

Communists do not accuse the bourgeoisie of too much democracy, rather the reverse. The historical record of the domination of a few countries on the rest of the planet is not the imposition of democracy, rather the opposite.

Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system, the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction... (Lenin, Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, 1916, ch. 9)

Every recent revolt in North Africa and West Asia has been aimed at brutal dictators who were enforced by all the imperialist powers.

Political regime of backward state, under the influence of internal class contradictions and external pressure, will unavoidably fall into dictatorship against the people. (Trotsky, Imperialist war and the proletarian world revolution, 1940)

The main tendency of bourgeois states is not to extend but to restrain civil liberties, including at home, see for instance the "Antiterrorism Act" in Great Britain.

Of course, to their own peoples, bourgeois states tell that their motives are patriotic or democratic. For instance, British and French bourgeoisies told that they wanted to prevent a massacre by Gaddafi's troops of civilians. For instance, Colonel Gaddafi told that his *Green Book* will deliver more democracy than the political parties, elections and parliament. When masses revolted from West to East of Libya, Gaddafi said, as Mubarak and Ben Ali before him, he was defending the country against foreign intrusion. Now, he claims he defends the Muslims against "the crusaders" (by the way, is not the language of Al Qaeda?).

Communists know they all lie. Any fraction of the bourgeoisie defends capitalism in general and its specific interests in particular. Through republic and parliament if they can, without if they must. Bourgeois democracy is always limited. Communists fight for a superior democracy, that of the Commune of Paris, the Russian soviets, the German councils... Some restrictive measures of this democracy inside a workers state which stays isolated and without enough productive forces are legitimate, but are not the norm of the dictatorship of proletariat. On no account, such temporary measures at the first steps of the transition to socialism could justify any lack of rights for workers in capitalist society.

Communists assert that "civil liberties" (universal suffrage, freedom of speech, freedom of demonstration, freedom of press, freedom of organization, public courts, freedom of strike...) are useful to prepare the social revolution. Of course, communists do not ask for a constituent assembly where there already civil liberties (as did the opportunist PO, MAS, PTS, LOI and MST in Argentina in December 2001).

Communist demand democratic rights where they are not guaranteed. They defend them when they are restricted by bourgeois governments or attacked by fascists.

Engels became a communist through his participation in Chartism which demanded the right to vote for British male workers. When revolution spread in all Europe in 1848 (as today in North African and West Asia), the Communist League supplemented its recent international program (*Manifesto of the communist party*) by a one-page leaflet special for Germany.

Every German, having reached the age of 21, shall have the right to vote and to be elected, provided he has not been convicted of a criminal offence... Universal arming of the people... All civil servants shall receive the same salary, the only exception being that civil servants who have a family to support... Complete separation of Church and State... Only by the realisation of these demands will the millions in Germany, who have hitherto been exploited by a handful of persons and whom the exploiters would like to keep in further subjection, win the rights and attain to that power to which they are entitled as the producers of all wealth. (Marx, Engels, Demands of the communist party in Germany, 1848)

By the way, a lot of 1848 demands for Germany are still worth for today Libya. During the revolution, Marx and Engels published a democratic and revolutionary paper and fought for freedom of the press, for power to the elected assembly against the absolute monarchy. After the defeat, never they departed from.

The workers' party would have no choice but, notwithstanding the bourgeoisie, to continue its campaign for bourgeois freedom, freedom of the press and rights of assembly and association which the bourgeoisie had betrayed. Without these freedoms it will be unable to move freely itself; in this struggle it is fighting to establish the environment necessary for its existence, for the air it needs to breathe. (Engels, The Prussian military question and the German workers' party, 1865, part III)

When the revolution shook the Russian Empire, the communists did not stop democratic demands.

Whereas both the direct interests of the Russian proletariat and those of its struggle for the ultimate aims of socialism require the fullest possible measure of political freedom, and, consequently, the replacement of the autocratic form of government by the democratic republic. (Lenin, The Third Congress of the RSDLP, 1905)

At the head of the whole of the people, and particularly of the peasantry—for complete freedom, for a consistent democratic revolution, for a republic! At the head of all the toilers and the exploited—for Socialism! Such must in practice be the policy of the revolutionary proletariat, such is the class slogan which must permeate and determine the solution of every tactical problem, every practical step of the workers' party during the revolution. (Lenin, Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, 1905, part 13)

The proletariat in Russia carries on the struggle against both absolutism and capitalism. It only wants the forms of bourgeois democracy, but it wants them for itself, for the purposes of the proletarian class. It wants the 8-hour day, the people's militia, the republic, demands that simply point to bourgeois society, not socialist. But these demands at the same time press so hard on the outermost borders of the rule of capital that they appear as transitional forms to proletarian dictatorship. (Luxemburg, 1649-1789-1905, 1906)

When the Stalinist leadership of the 3rd International dropped democratic demands, communists objected to.

The Sixth Congress condemned democratic slogans as impermissible (constituent assembly, universal suffrage, freedom of speech and of the press, etc.) and thereby completely disarmed the Chinese Communist Party in the face of the dictatorship of the military oligarchy. (Trotsky, "Introduction to the Russian edition", The permanent revolution, 1931)

When a fraction of the bourgeoisie tried to destroy the democratic gains, communists defended them.

When a state turns fascist, it doesn't only mean that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with the patterns set by Mussolini, but it means, primarily and above all, that the workers' organizations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallization of the proletariat. (Trotsky, What next? 1932, part I)

Where they were not yet obtained, democratic demands were still a part of communist slogans.

It is impossible merely to reject the democratic program; it is imperative that in the struggle the masses outgrow it. The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India. This slogan must be indissolubly tied up with the problem of national liberation and agrarian reform. As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic program. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers. On the basis of the revolutionary democratic program, it is necessary to oppose the workers to the "national" bourgeoisie. Then, at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise. (The death agony of capitalism and the tasks of the Fourth International, 1938)

The same method is needed today.

THE CONSPIRACY THESIS OF THE "HARD LEFT"

The unique divergence comrade Downing finds retrospectively to justify his rupture with the Permanent Revolution Collective is:

The CoReP supports the forces of imperialism in the form of the rebels. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 25)

He goes so far as to accuse the Collective to be "imperialist stooges" (p. 26), accomplices of "every imperialist power" and "every reactionary Gulf state".

The CoReP is only contributing to the political confusion and lining up with every imperialist power and every reactionary Gulf state who were slaughtering their own genuine revolutionaries. (p. 25)

Till the end, comrade Downing sounds illogical and unconvincing.

- Even if CoReP was wrong, as Russian imperialisms and Chinese imperialism have reprovved all mass upsurges, CoReP cannot be accomplice of "every" imperialist power.
- If there are "reactionary states", there are also progressive bourgeois states. For sure, Libya is such a progressive state for comrade Downing. Maybe he will add Syria (who approved the slaughtering in Bahrain), Iran (who supports the slaughter in Syria), Venezuela, Bolivia, Algeria... Anyway, a "progressive state" is a petit-bourgeois dream irreconcilable with the permanent revolution.
- Is not strange that comrade Downing - who is silent about today massacres by al-Assad, who justifies the past and today massacres by Colonel Gaddafi - blames the CoReP while the latter supported all the upsurges of the region and opposed the military intervention of the imperialist coalition in Libya?

To substantiate his ridiculous accusation -anybody who supported the demonstrations of 14 February in Libya is an imperialist stooge- he must oppose absolutely Tunisian and Egyptian movements to Libyan one.

The uprising in Libya is not any type of revolution but a counter-revolution, with an imperialist-backed and CIA sponsored leadership. It is a continuation of a whole series of reactionary attempts to restore the Monarchy and tribal privileges. (Socialist Fight n° 6, p. 15)

This uprising has become in fact the central stratagem of imperialism to counter and defeat the great progressive uprising in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain... (p. 15)

We can see the source of the revolt not as confused workers fighting unemployment and oppression... but as disgruntled capitalists and tribal leaders... (p. 17)

A putsch organised by extreme reactionary leaders... (p. 24)

As often, comrade Downing repeats –with a veneer of Marxism- what said Colonel Gaddafi, as Ben Ali and Mubarak before. Mubarak claimed that Islamists were behind the Egyptian revolution. Ben Ali said the same in Tunisia. King Abdullah of Jordan sees an Islamist hand – behind the civil insurrection across the Arab world. The Bahraini authorities discovered Hezbollah’s hand behind the uprising there. If the revolts were so opposite, why Colonel Gaddafi supported Ben Ali during the massive demonstrations in Tunisia?

Of course, each mass movement is different, but all mass demonstrations in the region: Tunisia (17 December), Algeria (7 January), Egypt (17 January), Yemen (23 January), Jordan (28 January), Iran (14 February), Bahrain (14 February), Libya (16 February), Syria (18 February), Iraq (25 February) combined democratic demands and social aspiration, inspired each other and had similar roots.

There was no massive accumulation of capital in the region, but in Israel and Turkey. The old Pan Arab nationalist bourgeois movement has revealed its impotence and converged in fact with the Arab Monarchist bourgeoisies in oppression towards the masses, submission to imperialism, incapacity to employ the youth.

In Middle East and North Africa, 100 millions of 15-19 years are one third of the population... They are the main victims of unemployment... between 20 and 25% out of 15-24 years are out of job... (Alternatives Internationales, March 2011)

Gaddafi couldn’t be accounted any longer by some imperialist governments, not because of his “*anti-imperialism*”, but because he was being rejected by too many Libyans, as Mubarak and Ben Ali. The beginning of the demonstrations in Libya was very similar to those of Tunisia and Egypt.

Libya’s second city, Benghazi, stages the first on February 15th. Barely 60 youth showed up. Similar protests erupted in other cities over the next two days and they were met by security forces with heavy weapons. In Tobruk and Beida, protesters kept the anti-aircraft cartridges as evidence, but four deaths and 80 people injured only spurred larger numbers into the streets. (The Economist, February 26, 2011)

The upsurge took place everywhere, even in Tripoli.

Entire towns outside Tripoli have been torn apart by fighting between pro- and anti-Gaddafi forces. In the suburbs of the city, especially in the Noufreen district, militias fought for 24 hours on Sunday with machine guns and pistols, a battle the Gaddafi forces won. (The Independent, February 24, 2011)

At first, there was hostility in Cyrenaica to any imperialist intervention.

The people of eastern Libya have already said they do not wish for foreign intervention. David Cameron, please note. (The Independent, March 3, 2011)

The “Transition National Council” (TNC) was created on March 5th to prevent the social revolution, in the same way some imperialist powers and the local army propelled the “Provisional Government” in Tunisia. It has a similar composition: former ministers, former generals, “democratic” exiles, Islamist leaders. It called immediately to imperialist backing.

All the new governments, in Tunisia, in Egypt and Libya are bourgeois to the core. Any revolutionary in the world guesses that there cannot be total identity of the revolted youth (who fought heroically the bourgeois repression of “Revolutionary Committees”, “Revolutionary Guards”, “Green Brigades”...) with the TNC.

There are several revolutions in Libya. The first revolution is a kind of Commune of Paris, with its civil, young people, tradesmen or rank civil servants, armed with their Kalashnikov and their enthusiasm, savagely defending an insurgent city and the released territories. Without them, nothing would be possible, because they fight. They took, in February, under the grapeshot and with naked hands then, the barracks of Benghazi...

Secondly, there is a bourgeois revolution, evocating that of 1848, under the aegis of the “Transition National Council” (TNC) – an aggregation from the Libyan elite, powerful families, tribes, exiled opponents, influential notabilities, lawyers, doctors or engineers, and a troop of Anglophone and pragmatic businessmen, often related to oil. (Le Monde, July 5, 2011)

The main difference with Tunisia and Egypt - the lack of influence of the working class- proceeds from the absence of any transition to socialism, of the absence of any previous bourgeois revolution, from the flaw of the Libyan bourgeoisie: no real industrialisation outside oil industry, a lot of African, Asian and even European migrants to do waged work (exactly as in Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar...).

There is no need “*to paint in bright colors*” (Trotsky) the national bourgeoisie of dominated country to oppose imperialism, as did the forerunners of SF Mark II, the fake “4th Internationals” of Pabloites (ISFI-USFI) and, later, Healyites (ICFI).

THE PABLOITE PRECEDENT OF THE MUDDLE OF WORKERS STATE AND BOURGEOIS STATE

The 4th International position on USSR was challenged inside our movement by two twin revisions.

- Shachtman, Castoriadis, Cliff, Landy, following Kautsky or Rizzi, pretended that nothing was to be defended in USSR. To justify their renouncement, they decided that the state bureaucracy was a plain class, either a bourgeoisie of the capitalist mode of production or a new type of exploiters of the collectivist bureaucratic mode of production. Of course, Stalinist parties were, in their opinion, worse than Social-democrat or Labour parties. When imperialist pressure was high, these revisionists often decided USSR was worse than the USA. Lambert -who did not care of forging a theory adequate to his politics- was a variant of this deviation.
- Symmetrically, Pablo, Mandel, Robertson, Healy, in the steps of Webb and Deutscher, shared illusions in the capacity of the bureaucratic caste to build socialism in one country or confidence in the military capacity of the bureaucracy to confront imperialism. The building of a revolutionary party and the upsurge of workers and youth could be counter-productive, because their main perspective was to reform the bureaucratic caste which stayed for them a part of the “communist movement”. Of course, Stalinist parties were, in their opinion, a lot better than older reformist parties. The “hard left” -in comrade Downing’s classification- “Spart Family” (SL, IBT, IG, LBI...) is a second wave Pabloism: hence the infamous poster of General Jaruzelski in the headquarters of the SL / United States or the shameful “*Long live to the Berlin Wall!*” of the LBI / Brazil.

The first type of revisionism was defeated in 1939-1940 because Cannon fought it in the SWP / United States and because Trotsky backed him. But the second type proved devastating and irreversible in 1949-1953. The destruction of the 4th International came from its own European leadership: “Pablo” (Michel Raptis), “Germain” (Ernest Mandel), Pierre Frank and Livio Maitan. Pablo instigated an attack to the program on Stalinism. In 1949, the International Secretariat, without much resistance aligned itself with Tito and Mao. The 3rd Congress in 1951 ratified this orientation in spite of some opposition from the RCP / China, the MAS / Switzerland and the PCI / France. The IS expelled the PCI in 1952. The Club / Great Britain and SWP / United States denounced Pabloism in 1953.

In place of holding to the main course of building independent revolutionary socialist parties by all tactical means, Pablo looks to the Stalinist bureaucracy, or a decisive section of it, to so change itself under mass pressure as to accept the "ideas" and "program" of Trotskyism. (SWP, A letter to Trotskyists throughout the world, 1953)

Stirred by the proletarian upsurge of June 1953 against the Stalinist bureaucracy in Berlin and all East Germany, that opened the perspective of the socialist German -and European- revolution, the sections of United States, France, Switzerland and Great Britain formed the “International Committee” (ICFI).

The International Committee charges the Pabloites with the crime of covering up the current betrayals of Stalinism and attempting to foist a dictatorial rule on the International in the interest of the new revisionist doctrine of Pablo. The International Committee condemns the Pabloites for having dared to speak to the East German workers in the name of Trotsky's Fourth International as nothing but luke-warm 'critics' of the Stalinist counter-revolutionaries, and for having refused to demand the withdrawal of the Kremlin's troops from East Germany although Moscow used these troops to suppress the East German workers. (SWP, Fourth international rallies against Pablo, 1953)

After the crushing of the proletarian revolution by the reactionary USSR bureaucracy, the latter and its GDR agency built up the “Berlin Wall” and 1,400 kilometres -more than 600 miles- of barrier and anti-personnel mines. SF Mark II seems close to endorse this reactionary measure (*Socialist Fight* n° 6, p. 15, p. 18). The aim was less to fight imperialism than to keep its own people in a huge jail, providing worldwide capitalist politicians and ideologues one striking argument against socialism.

Needless to say, the Pabloite liquidators have not limited their revision to Stalinism; they extended it towards national bourgeoisie in dominated countries, tail ending the Stalinists. In 1951, the “world Congress” took up the flawed “United Anti-Imperialist Front” of the 4th Congress of the Communist International to make the 4th International to adopt the popular front in Latin America, without any opposition.

Pablo predicted that the policy of the Kremlin bureaucracy and that of the Stalinist parties would increasingly develop leftward, while the masses would flock about them; from this he deduced an entrism tactic into the Stalinist parties with political capitulation by the Trotskyists, entrism 'sui generis': these ideas and this liquidationist tactic were subsequently extended to the reformist parties and to all mass organizations under petty-bourgeois leadership: the Bolivian MNR, the Peronist movement in Argentina, the Ibanist in Chile, etc. (PCI, Les Phases successive du révisionisme pabliste, 1953)

This led to catastrophic results in Bolivia as soon as 1952. Unfortunately, the ICFI was not able to set up a balance of the Bolivian Revolution. It adopted federalism, preventing itself to fight in a coordinated way the ISFI usurpers and allowing its own sections to display the same adaptation to “socialist” enemies of world proletarian revolution: state bureaucracies, workers bourgeois parties and bourgeois nationalists. For instance, in the French section, Lambert expelled Bleibtreu, dropped the name of the party and subordinated the group to the Algerian nationalist party, the MNA led by Messali Hadj.

At the climax of the Pan-Arab nationalism, the ISFI advocated an “Arab revolution” in line with the Kremlin. Accordingly, it dropped any pretention to build a workers’ revolutionary party based on Marxism to lead the

proletarian revolution in North Africa and West Asia. Pablo wrote an article to substantiate the nationalist “Arab Revolution” in Marxist terminology, at a time he was already deceived by the Egyptian army and Colonel Nasser, but still enthusiastic about the Iraqi army and General Kassem.

In Iraq, because of the weakness of the industrial bourgeoisie, the hostility of the feudalists, and the successive purges of pro-Nasser elements in the army, Kassem has been seen to yield gradually to the pressure of the revolutionary masses... (Pablo, “La révolution arabe”, Quatrième Internationale, February 1959)

Pablo was also convinced that the Pan-Arab -and more religious- FLN nationalists of Algeria would express too “the pressure of the revolutionary masses”.

If the Iraqi revolution constitutes at present the most advanced stage, socially and from the viewpoint of proletarian perspectives, of the Arab revolution, the Algerian revolution, at the other end of the Arab world, represents a no less important peculiarity of that revolution... What can and must be contemplated is transforming the FLN into a transitional political formation by means of working up a definite program and a structure that links it to its base and ensures that base's control over it. (Pablo, “La révolution arabe”, Quatrième Internationale, February 1959)

No need to build patiently the International and the proletarian revolutionary party in each country. By an irresistible objective process, the pressure of the masses was supposed to make the bourgeois nationalists to act as substitutes to the working class and its conscious vanguard. Preparing its split from the ICFI, the SWP / United States sunk in the same kind of opportunism.

Under mass revolutionary pressure, particularly in combination with imperialist attack, some of these nationalist movements can take extremely radical steps. This has been shown in Mexico, Bolivia, Egypt, Algeria and other places. (SWP, The world struggle for socialism, 1961)

At that time, the SLL / Great Britain tried to defend the program and the ICFI.

Nkrumah, Mboya, Nasser, Kassem, Nehru, Soekarno, and their like, represent the national bourgeoisie of their own countries. The dominant imperialist policy-makers both in the USA and Britain recognize full well that only by handing over political ‘independence’ to leaders of this kind, or accepting their victory over feudal elements like Farouk and Nuries-Said, can the stakes of international capital and the strategic alliances be preserved in Asia, Africa, and Latin America...

It is not the job of Trotskyists to boost the role of such nationalist leaders. They can command the support of the masses only because of the betrayal of leadership by Social-Democracy and particularly Stalinism, and in this way they become buffers between imperialism and the mass of workers and peasants. The possibility of economic aid from the Soviet Union often enables them to strike a harder bargain with the imperialists, even enables more radical elements among the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaders to attack imperialist holdings and gain further support from the masses.

But, for us, in every case the vital question is one of the working class in these countries gaining political independence through a Marxist party, leading the poor peasantry to the building of Soviets, and recognizing the necessary connections with the international socialist revolution. In no case, in our opinion, should Trotskyists substitute for that the hope that the nationalist leadership should become socialists. The emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves... (SLL, Letter to the SWP, 1961)

But the SWP adopted “the Arab Revolution”, splinted the ICFI and joined the ISFI, with the POR / Argentina, to form the pro-Castrist “USFI” in 1963. Definitely, the official “4th International” (USFI) stayed in the hands of Pabloites. Meanwhile, Pablo himself became an unofficial member of the first bourgeois Algerian government (1962-1965). The ISFI stated:

The decisions adopted during last weeks by the Ben Bella government... correspond to the requirements and the major aspirations of the masses... After the last measures, Algeria is entering a transitory phase concerning its economic and social structures, a phase whose outcome will be the establishment of a workers state. (“La nouvelle phase de la révolution algérienne”, Quatrième Internationale, 3rd quarter 1963)

THE HEALYITE PRECEDENT OF “UNITED FRONT” WITH COLONEL GADDAFI

Unfortunately, the very same who resisted Pabloism in 1953 and 1963 concluded their own united front in 1976 with a wing of the Arab bourgeoisie, Colonel Gaddafi’s regime. In 1971, Healy splinted abruptly the remnants of the ICFI. Then, the SLL / Great Britain took the name of WRP, discarded proletarian internationalism, assumed that the problem of world proletarian leadership will be solved by the imminent British revolution and, outside, subordinated itself to bourgeois Arab nationalism and despotic regimes of Africa and West Asia.

From the end of the 1970s, Healy’s adaptation to bourgeois nationalist regimes and organisations in the Third World proceeded apace. After the Shah of Iran was overthrown in the 1979 revolution, the WRP soon gave up any attempt at Marxist analysis in favour of unconditional support for Khomeini’s Islamic regime, to the extent of endorsing its suppression of the Iranian USec group. In Zimbabwe the Popular Front, and in particular Joshua Nkomo’s ZAPU, were given uncritical backing. News Line notoriously justified the execution of Iraqi Communist Party members by the Ba’athist regime, and even published a glossy brochure extolling the glories of Iraq under the leadership of Saddam Hussein. Formal references to the permanent revolution still appeared occasionally in WRP and International Committee statements, but these served only as a cover

*for a political line which depicted Libya under Colonel Gaddafi as a society in transition to socialism, and renounced the fight to construct independent working class parties in those countries where Healy had established opportunist relations with the existing nationalist leaderships. Indeed, by the late 1970s Healy had abandoned any serious attempt to build his own 'world party of socialist revolution', the International Committee. (Pitt, *The Rise and Fall of Gerry Healy*, 1994, ch. 10)*

WRP leaders and their own little "4th International" became crude apologists of Libyan "revolution" and "socialism".

*When Gaddafi and the Free Unionist Officers seized popular control in 1969, they set Libya on the road of socialist development and expansion... Gaddafi has developed politically in the direction of revolutionary socialism and he has shunned the palaces and harems of some other Arab leaders. (WRP, December 12, 1981 quoted in *Fourth International*, summer 1986)*

The WRP advocated a "united front" with Colonel Gaddafi.

*The Libyan revolution was close to Gerry's heart; he pioneered a united front between the WRP and the Gaddafi revolution... The Libyan Peoples Jamahiriya (which in Arabic means "state belonging to the masses") has used country's oil wealth for the benefits of the masses... (Lotz and Feldman, *Gerry Healy, a revolutionary life*, Lupus Books, 1994, p. 47)*

Colonel Gaddafi "used the oil wealth to the benefits of the masses" is now the assessment of neo-Healyite SF: "Only Iraq and Libya used their oil wealth for the benefit of their own people" (*Socialist Fight* n° 6, p. 16).

Guess who led the front?

Oil wealth did not benefit only to the Libyan masses. The "Trotskyite" part of the "bloc" looked for money to finance its new daily paper, *News Line*, which was to be launched in May 1976.

*WRP delegation was reportedly sent to Libya in April 1976 to request money for a new printing press for the News Line, and Healy himself apparently visited in August 1977 in search of further financial assistance from the Libyan regime. Not surprisingly, adulatory articles about Colonel Gaddafi were one of the notable innovations of the new paper. (Pitt, *The Rise and Fall of Gerry Healy*, 1994, ch. 10)*

Negotiating the anti-imperialist "united front" in 1976 in Tripoli, the compliant WRP delegates were rather defensive when Libyan officials discovered that their interlocutors claimed allegiance, at least for youth and workers audience, to Jewish famous revolutionists like Marx, Luxemburg and Trotsky.

Our principal meeting was to take place at the International Centre for Green Book Studies and Research with its director, Ahmed al-Shahati... There was another tense moment during a later meeting when he suddenly said, 'You told me your leader was Leon Trotsky. Wasn't he Jewish?'

This time Corin Redgrave took the floor to explain that while Trotsky's parents were Russian Jews, he had not adopted the faith and became a convinced atheist before the age of 20.

There was a furtive discussion around the room in Arabic before al-Shahati said, 'How could Trotsky stop being a Jew?'

*Redgrave patiently explained that Jews were not a nationality but members of a religion. There were Jewish citizens in countries throughout the world and they held the citizenship of those countries. Some Jews practised their religion, but others like Trotsky and Karl Marx, whose parents were Jewish, adopted atheism. (Mitchell, *Come to revolution, a memoir*, 2011, ch. 17)*

Finally, the WRP delegation got what it mattered.

*We happily shifted the agenda to our daily newspaper and the need for financial assistance to continue our editorial support for national liberation struggles in Africa and the Middle East. We were aware that al-Shahati's office was committed to giving money to political parties and popular movements who stood against colonialism and racism, and we made our pitch. The day before we were due to return to London, a final meeting was arranged, to discuss future contacts between us... In a moment of embarrassing generosity he suddenly pulled an envelope from his drawer and said, 'Here's [US] \$15,000 for your newspaper.' (Mitchell, *Come to revolution, a memoir*, 2011, ch. 17)*

It is no wonder Mitchell concluded proudly after the first meeting of Healy with Gaddafi in 1977: "We had become Colonel Gaddafi's revolutionary party in Britain".

From an internal report written when the WRP entered crisis, the anti-imperialist united front included the Libyan secret services.

The Commission was able to secure a section of the correspondence relating to the Middle East from the files in G Healy's former office. The documents examined by the Commission are seven relating to Iraq, four relating to Kuwait and other Gulf states, 23 relating to the PLO and 28 relating to Libya... From internal evidence in the documents under our control, it is obvious that much more material must exist... We were told repeatedly that Healy wanted no formal record kept of the money coming in...

In April 1980 a WRP delegation led by G Healy visited Libya, presenting his redrafted WRP perspective and asking for more money. From March 8 to 17, 1981 G Healy made a further visit to Libya, putting forward demands totalling £800,000. The Commission found a report in Healy's handwriting of this. This report

contains the following statements: "In the evening we had a two hour audience with [name suppressed]. We suggested that we should work with Libyan Intelligence and this was agreed. ... March 13. The delegation was visited by [name suppressed] from the intelligence" ... (ICFI Commission, Interim report, December 16, 1985)

Healy himself enjoyed Colonel Gaddafi's jet.

The defence of the Libyan revolution with its radical nationalism and anti-imperialist policies led to a political bloc... In July 1977, following an abortive Egyptian invasion, the WRP and the General People's Congress of Libya signed a joint alliance... Healy met Colonel Gaddafi on a number of occasions, once even flying back to London in the Libyan leader's jet... (Lotz and Feldman, Gerry Healy, a revolutionary life, Lupus Books, 1994, p. 273-274)

Of course, the accords were –and still are- secret for Libyan and British workers. But it is worth noting that the first printing of Gaddafi's *Green Book* in English was by the print shop of the WRP, the party where comrade Downing learnt politics.

The "united anti-imperialist front" was not limited to Libya. The ICFI declared on Iran:

We pay tribute to the Ayatollah Khomeini who became the symbol of the anti-Shah revolution. (Bulletin, February 27, 1979)

An infamous collaboration with Iraq government was revealed in 1985, when the WRP exploded.

At these meetings [of the WRP branches, in October 1985] the selling of photographs of Iraqi oppositionist demonstrators to Saddam Hussain's brutal regime was revealed. These could have been used to send oppositionists to their deaths. This was the most horrible crime and one which has never been properly investigated. After the Iraqi TU leader who spoke at a conference of the All Trade Union Alliance (ATUA) -the WRP's fake industrial wing- was executed after returning home without a murmur from the WRP. Did, in fact, monetary transactions result in executions? The justification by the WRP of the executions of the Iraqi CP members by Saddam Hussain suggested that this would not have bothered the WRP leaders... (Downing, WRP explosion, 1991, ch. 1)

Such are the antecedents of SF Mark II analogy of Libya with the former USSR, of SF Mark II united front or bloc with Gaddafi, of SF Mark II omission of the necessity of the proletarian revolutionary party in Libya, of SF Mark II vaunting of Gaddafi's "revolution", of SF Mark II call to build Gaddafi's committees in every place..

IT IS STILL TIME TO STOP A DANGEROUS REGRESSION

Communists have, all along the 20th century, defended states, even led by despots, against assaults by imperialism, and rightly so. But this hardly extends to the defence of despots against assaults by the people ruled by those bourgeois and police states. To defeat really imperialism, we need proletarian revolution now and revolutionary workers party in all countries to lead them as soon as possible.

CoReP is not the stooge of any bourgeoisie:

- CoReP has supported all people and youth upheavals in North Africa and West Asia against bourgeois states and all their forces of repression.
- CoReP has opposed new bourgeois governments in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.
- CoReP has opposed the imperialist blockade of Iran, has opposed imperialist intervention in Lebanon and Libya.

The problem is not with CoReP, it is with SF. SF Mark I aim was to make alive the long time dead 4th International corpse. In less than two years and half, SF has changed its international connections three times. The main internal crisis did not bring out any educational gain and led to severe the international relations with the Collective without the least internal struggle. This is more close to Healy tradition, both domestically and abroad, than to the Bolshevik Party and the Fourth International ones.

SF Mark II refuses the expression "Arab Revolution"; however it adopts its content:

1. The struggle is not between the main two world classes, but between imperialism and anti-imperialism.
2. The Arab national bourgeoisie, especially army officers, are consequent anti-imperialist and even leads revolutions.
3. Any opposition to "anti-imperialist" despots comes from agents of imperialism.
4. The socialist revolution is not really on the agenda; it is a distant goal.
5. The building of a proletarian revolutionary party against all the political fractions of the exploiters classes is not on the agenda either.

There is lot of political confusion in the last issue of the paper about the capacity of the bourgeoisie to defy imperialism, on imperialist unity and unification, on democratic demands, on workers' state.... Misconception of permanent revolution leads, as usual, to a strategic "front" with the so-called "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie.

It is urgent to reverse SF regression into Healyism, to restore the international collaboration on safe grounds, to build soon a real militant and democratic communist group in Great Britain... A worldwide proletarian revolution is

urgent. The illusions in one bourgeoisie or another and the splits they cause in workers organizations postpone the building of the world party, postpone the world socialist revolution.

With our internationalist regards

September 1st, 2011, Bureau of the Permanent Revolution Collective

Annex 1: Letter from CoReP to ITC-SF, 20 June 2009

Dear comrades,

It is through the Groupe Bolchevik (France) that we became aware that you appeared.

The Permanent Revolution Collective was born as an international gathering based on a meeting in 2002 at the LOI (Argentina) Congress. A few months later, the latter tried to destroy the Collective in pretending, without any shift in the orientation of its former partners, that the Peruvian, French, Bolivian and Spanish groups of the Collective suddenly became “polpists”, “workers’ aristocrats”, “defenders of the peaceful way to socialism”...

In getting rid of the Collective, the latter being too independent and too critical, the leadership of the LOI felt free to turn back to its utopia, the “reconstruction of the 4th International” (which means that it is unable to politically assess the Morenoist variant of Pabloism and to break the legacy of the revisionism of the LIT and with the opportunism of the MAS, that were never fought by the current leaders of the PTS and of the LOI when Moreno was still alive), to its perspective for “new Zimmerwald” (which was explicitly condemned by the 4th International when Trotsky was still alive, and which corresponds with the “half way house” that you denounce on a national level in the point 10 of your platform). It felt free to hide its fluctuations between spontaneism and opportunism through a “third period” kind of rhetoric, to substitute to concrete analyses some delirious inventions and slogans that it does not implement in Argentina.

A detailed balance sheet of its practice in the face of the revolutionary eruption in Bolivia in 2003-2004 was made by former LOI members (ER, *Clase, partido y dirección en la revolución boliviana*, 2004; *A propósito de la revolución boliviana y el rol del partido revolucionario ante la insurrección y la toma del poder*, 2006). To this orientation corresponds a disgraceful behaviour, such as you may be aware of by Munzer’s circular to the LTF.

Now the Collective is limited to militants in France (the GB, whom you met when you were at the LO Fête), in Peru (who publish “Lucha Marxista” leaflets and who intervene in the TC group) and in Austria (who are building the GKK). It has discussed, with no result, with the IBT. The L5I split never replied to our proposal for a meeting. The Collective currently studies the possibilities for getting closer with the LSI, consisting of the LOI (Brazil) and the PRS (Argentina).

Still, it has allowed some militants, who are coming from different traditions (LRCI-CEMICOR and International Committee-OCRFI) to elaborate and intervene together for more than five years, as the following documents show:

- *Charter of the Collective*, 2004,
- *Manifesto for the Socialist united states of Europe*, 2005
- *Statement for socialist revolution in Bolivia*, 2005
- *Statement for the freedom of Iraq and of Afghanistan*, 2005
- *Statement against the invasion of Lebanon*, 2006
- *Letter to the GRA / Austria*, 2006
- *Statement for the socialist revolution in Mexico*, 2007
- *1st of May Address*, 2007
- *1st of May Address*, 2008
- *Theses on China*, 2008
- *Statement in support of the Palestinian people*, 2009
- *1st May Address*, 2009

The Collective highly appreciates your first public appearance with a clear and firm position against demonstration of jingoism, some strikes against the hiring of foreign workers, that were encouraged not only by the ruling class (which ideology is normally ruling, including in the working class) and the demagogy of its fascistic wing, but also by the role of the workers’ bureaucracies, which have been helped for decades by the epigones of the 4th International. The union leaderships, the traditional reformist party and the former Stalinist party several times sabotaged the remarkable class struggles of the British proletariat, they ruled sometimes for the bourgeoisie, they have educated workers into social-imperialism and social-chauvinism.

Within the circumstances of serious defeats by the world proletariat and of an incredible decay of the workers’ movement, including the liquidation of the 4th International and the degeneration of former Trotskyist sections, your platform seems promising. Yet, we have reservations, among which the main ones are:

- The point 4 does not mention explicitly the need to destroy the bourgeois state apparatus.

- The point 7 is not complete and it does specify that the nationalizations of banks must be done without compensation.
- The point 10 does not explain that it is necessary to build a workers' revolutionary party which is distinct from reformism and from centrism.
- The point 15 forgets the demand for an immediate retreat of your imperialism's troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- The point 18 starts from the unacceptable behaviour of the so-called "Trotskyist groups", in reversing the communist method which starts from the political program to understand the organisational practice.
- The point 19 is even less materialist, since he gives to the ITC the objective of reconstructing an organization that was destroyed almost sixty years ago, without being able to rest upon an international fraction who would have been assuring its continuity, nor at least a section which would have survived the destruction of the 4th International by its own leadership.
- The point 19 also explains that the majority of the forces that present themselves as Trotskyists are centrist, but also that they tend to be faithful to the *Transitional Program*. It is centrism, but a reactionary one, going from communism to reformism (and not from reformism to communism). Indeed, the main currents came from the destruction of the 4th International and from the revision of its program. They occasionally use some orthodox or radical slogans in order to betray their own activists and the vanguard workers, in order to hide the fact that they align with non proletarian forces.

We regret that you did not reply to the proposal of the GB, done with the approval of the Collective, for the elaboration of an international position of the communist groups on the continent for the elections in the European Parliament. We think that a methodical and serious discussion between your group and our international organisation is useful. A meeting with the European members of the Collective's bureau, during the GB School, could be the opportunity to define how to proceed.

With our internationalist greetings

The political bureau of the CoReP

CRP Peru: luchamarxista.blogspot.com
GB France: revolution-socialiste.info
GKK Austria: www.klassenkampf.net

Annex 2: ITC-SF apply for relations with the CoRep, 15 December 2009

Dear Comrades,

We have decided to formally apply for fraternal political with the Permanent Revolution Collective (CoRep). This on the basis of the degree of political agreement already reached reflected in the joint (uncompleted) reply to the LTF and the completed section published in the Socialist Fight No 3 on bourgeois-workers parties and the workers united front.

Following Gerry Downing's visit to France to the Groupe Bolchevik school in the Summer and the discussions there we feel we have a high degree of agreement on political positions with the GB and CoRep; on Europe, Zionism/Palestine, South Africa, China and the history of Trotskyism and just as important on the method of approach to intervention in the struggles of the working class to make this application to be considered as a sympathising section initially. We look forward to full membership when we have had more and fuller discussions and have agreed some more joint documents if that is considered necessary.

Comradely

Gerry Downing,

For the International Trotskyist Current.

Annex 3: Call from comrades Pete and Steve to CoReP, 25 July 2010

We reject that our statement "the Disclaimer" (*Socialist Fight* No 4) is grounds to suggest that we are "anti-women", part of a "pro-rape campaign" and similar uncomradely statements from comrade GD, author of "Polanski, Goddard, Balogh and the Age of Consent", by Angela Byrne (*Socialist Fight* No. 3: page 15).

We believe that comrade GD has brought the ITC and CoReP into disrepute by his statements which are published in ever-growing and unaccountable e-mail lists.

We believe that that CoReP should intervene into the current situation and investigate the Polanski article and its aftermath; the uncomradely public statements about the authors of the disclaimer, and Gerry's public announcement that he has expelled the other 2 comrades of the ITC over this issue.

We request that CoReP instruct all ITC members to desist from further public statements on the Polanski affair whilst both sides of the ITC co-operate with an enquiry.

ITC members should be instructed to give CoReP the opportunity to look into the regrettable series of incidents which have brought the ITC and CoReP into disrepute.

Annex 4: Complement of information by comrade Steve to the CoReP, 29 July 2010

Thank you for your reply! First of all, the "Statement to CoReP" was from both Pete and I - that is, the 2 comrades that Gerry's letter broke relations with.

I hope it is ok that I here make some clarifications about your points:

"Socialist Fight-ITC" was Gerry D, Steve R and Pete B. Other comrades had been involved in "the Project" but no longer: atleast 2 joined Workers Power/L5I.

Pete had explained and requested that he would like to have "sympathiser" status for various personal and not political reasons; however, it was never made clear what constitutes a "member", or why "membership" might be necessary or desirable.

In Issue 1 of SF, "Platform of the International Trotskyist Current" was printed on pages 11-15, and it does say on the front page that "Socialist Fight is published by the International Trotskyist Current".

In Issue 2, page 7 is "Socialist Fight: Where We Stand", which is a shorter version of the Platform in Issue 1. Both these were taken from earlier, agreed programmatic documents - that is, before we formed ourselves as SF-ITC.

For example, when we were part of the TT: Trotskyist Tendency of the CMP Campaign for a Marxist Party, we drew up "10 points" in order to clarify alliances and differences.

The journal *Socialist Fight* was really "Gerry's journal", to which some others were invited to offer support. This included Steve R who contributed a few articles and some money to the first 3 issues, and others with little political connection to the aims of SF-ITC but were nevertheless prepared to contribute.

A bank account was opened for SF or ITC on at least one occasion, and there was often talk of a "dues" or membership subscription system.... but that never happened.

However, Steve and Pete thought that there should be some kind of democratic control over what goes into the journal - particularly after the "offending" article in Issue 3 calling for Polanski's deportation and jailing, etc. some details of this are that the publication of Issue 3 was "almost ready - we are hoping to bring it out for Saturday!"

But then on the Thursday evening (perhaps 12-40 hours before deadline) a draft of the article "Polanski, Goddard, Balogh and the Age of Consent, by Angela Byrne" arrived by email to which Steve immediately objected but without any response and the article was printed in Issue 3, page 15.

SF-ITC (or SF or ITC) meetings didn't happen regularly, although they did happen if any comrade said there was a need for one, generally - it has been actually rather an informal arrangement between militants, each with a long history of fighting for "Trotskyism", with Gerry in London with record stretching back to the 1960s undoubtedly at the core.

One day in October 2009 after Gerry and Steve had gone to Leeds to take part in an anti-fascist mobilisation, a meeting took place in Birmingham where Gerry was in a minority of 1 over the article on Polanski.

Some discussion was had, but i remember the situation becoming tense and it was agreed that those comrades that have a problem or problems with the article may write a "Disclaimer" in the next Issue.

Comrades this is a summary, sent only to Pete now to you comrades.

I (and Pete) agree that discussion of internal differences should be kept internal.

Fraternally, Steve R (SF in Birmingham)

Annex 5: Opinion of the Bureau of the Permanent Revolution Collective on the crisis of SF, 24 August 2010

1. Two comrades of the ITC-Socialist Fight have called the Permanent Revolution Collective to intervene into the crisis of the British group. It came from a public dispute about the Polanski affair. US justice asked Swiss police to seize the former so he could purge a crime sentence in USA. Since September 2009, he has been requested by Swiss justice to stay in his –luxurious– house of Gstaad.
2. Communists fight religious or conservative bigots that make law, police and judges immix in the sexual life of consenting persons. Communists fight the oppression of women, included so common acts of violence by men whatever the class of the individuals who commit them.
3. Even in a bourgeois society, many laws are not reactionary and some police actions and justice decisions even protect litigants and society itself. Of course, members of the dominant class often exempt themselves from the application of the common rules. A thin lawyer of successful artists and sportsmen think naively they indulge the same immunity. Meanwhile, the dominant ideology portrays systematically exploited classes and oppressed minorities as guilty of anti-social behaviour.
4. Aged 44, rich and famous, the film maker abused in 1977 a girl of 13, using alcohol and drug to have sexual relations with her. It is a rape. At the Festival de Cannes, this year, an actress has accused Polanski to have raped her in the same way when 16. Polanski was to be judged in the USA but, using his recent French citizenship, he escaped the USA when in freedom under caution.
5. Roman Polanski affair is certainly not Jean Calas or Alfred Dreyfus case: he was probably guilty and clearly the oppressor. But the affair was 33 years old and the victim, whatever her reasons, has several times stated she did not want any more prosecution. The 12 July, the Swiss justice, as bourgeois as the US one, refused to expel Polanski.
6. Before the publication of *Socialist Fight* n° 3, members of the Bureau warned friendly British comrades it was politically dangerous to go on disputing this and, moreover, to do it publically. They warned against a split about a secondary question. Actually, internal relations became poisoned on his issue and external pressures grew on. The group wasted a lot of energy and probably lost partly the consideration it deserved for its proletarian and internationalist beginnings.
7. The Bureau recommends that comrades (and other contacts who possibly agree with ITC platform and Collective remarks about it and want to be active inside the British group) should meet, with a member of the Bureau if they wish so.
 - a. This meeting should define membership and fees, decide how to conduct internal discussions, to publish the paper and the pamphlets, etc.
 - b. The Bureau suggests to change the name of the group, from “ITC-SF” in “SF Group” (or any name following the advice of Trotsky, “Etiquettes et numéros”, *La Vérité*, 7 August 1935).
 - c. The group should go on collaborating with the Collective in a perspective of joining if a sufficient agreement is reached: discussion of the draft of an international platform, common activities, publication of Collective statements, participation in GKK and GB next conferences, etc.
8. If case of failure, the Bureau will suspend the present participation of comrade Gerry to the Bureau and will examine every individual adhesion to the Collective from former members of the ITC-SF.

Annex 6: Extract of “The Foolish Illusions of the Soft Left”, 3 April 2011

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

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

These ‘revolutionaries’ (some still follow The Guardian in designating them thus) called in imperialist bombing of their own country and people, have made the country’s oil recourses available to imperialism in return for puppet status, just as their ideologue whose flag they wave, King Idris, did up to 1969. Neither did they enquire why these ‘revolutionaries’ felt it necessary to slaughter all those black workers. We would suggest it was because their leaders knew their racism and wished to encourage it by talk of ‘black mercenaries’ to ensure that the working class could not influence events in any way. Of course politically the working class could not have any independent existence when one group of workers were killing another, minority group. The working class was thereby ideologically defeated at the outset of this ‘resolution’.

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

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

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

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

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

Annex 7: Address of the Permanent Revolution Collective, 1 May 2011

THE WORLD ORDER TREMBLES IN NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST. THE VORACITY FOR PROFIT CAUSES A NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE IN JAPAN. THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IS INDISPENSABLE EVERYWHERE.

DECLINING CAPITALISM HEADS TOWARDS BARBARISM

Recent years confirm some of the Marx, Engels, Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky's scientific socialist analysis.

The 2007-2008 banking crisis in the United States and in Western Europe, the 2009 world economic crisis, the recent public debt crisis in several European countries and in the United States are an illustration that capitalism necessarily leads to crisis and unemployment. The recrudescence of protectionist measures and the competition between imperialist powers for the control of raw materials, of farmable fields and of freshwater exacerbate. The continuation of military operations in Afghanistan, in Iraq and now in Libya, the occupation of Haiti, the blockade of Cuba and of Iran, the recurring threats against Iran and against North Korea, the invasion of the Gaza strip by Israel in 2008, the French direct military intervention in Ivory Coast in 2011, show that declining capitalism engenders oppression and war.

The climate warming, the toll of pollution, the deforestation, the desertification, the oil catastrophe due to BP's carelessness in the United States in 2010, the nuclear catastrophe caused in 2011 by Tepco's negligence and by the complicity of the Japanese state, show that the rate to profit threatens the environment. The rise of militarism, of xenophobia, of clericalism, of racism, the overdevelopment of the suppression organs, the attacks on democratic liberties, the persecution of religious minorities, the hunt against migrants, demonstrate that capitalism became anti-democratic and reactionary.

After the collapse of USSR and the restoration of capitalism in China, the establishment of a dynasty and the starvation in North Korea as well as the dismemberment of the collectivized economy in Cuba, confirm that socialism is impossible in a single country, especially if the latter is ruled by a privileged statist bureaucracy. Only the overthrow of such a pro-capitalist cast by the workers could save the revolution's victories and open the way to socialism.

The regulation of capitalism and of finance is a myth. Banks rescue on the one hand, austerity for the workers on the other hand confirm that the State is not neutral, but is at the service of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the new bourgeois ecologist parties and of the old workers' parties ("labor", "socialist" and "communist"), when they faithfully manage the bourgeois state (in some countries in America, in Europe, in Oceania) or when their members lead international capital organizations (like the IMF or the WTO), demonstrate that capitalism cannot be reformed. As a matter of fact, the strike of air traffic controllers was banned by the PSOE government which militarized the airports, in Reagan and Thatcher style.

IN THE IMPERIALIST CENTERS, THE MASSES RESIST BUT THE REFORMIST LEADERSHIP SABOTAGES

Everywhere in the world, there has been and there will be resistance against the attempts by the imperialist bourgeoisie to have the burden of the crisis carried by the proletariat, the peasantry and the youth. The imperialist centres have been victims too. In the United States, the workers – mainly from Latin origin – demonstrated again against new anti-immigrant acts, and the civil servants in Wisconsin demonstrated for defending their jobs and their union rights. In Greece, the waged workers went on strike, demonstrated and sometimes faced the anti-riot police; in France, they massively resisted to the attacks against pensions; in Portugal they went on strike in the public sector; in Spain there were huge demonstrations. In Britain, students and then workers demonstrated. In China, protests against property developers and workers' strikes for higher wages multiplied.

Not only all the defensive strikes of the working class and youth faced the fierce resistance of the exploiting class, its state, its government. Most often, the working class leadership, the union bureaucracies, with the help of the reformist parties and of their centrist assistants, appealed to the national interest, they pretended the negotiated with the bourgeois government, they capitulated on their threats, polices, tribunals, they refused to call for general strike and self-defense, they broke up the energy through symbolic "days of action", or even hypothetical elections.

THE WORLD ORDER IS SHAKEN IN NORTHERN AFRICA AND IN WEST ASIA

Many workers' struggles have occurred in the ruled countries, including Bolivia, South Africa and Bangladesh. The events on Northern Africa especially had a world scope. The revolutionary wave that started in late 2010 in Tunisia and spread all over the region had been announced with the Kabul movement in 2001, with the Palestinian resistance in 2008, with the demonstrations in Iran in 2009. The protests broke out against the unbearable living conditions provoked by unemployment and by rising food prices, against the inability of the national bourgeoisies to develop the country and against the despotic character of the incumbent regimes – whether they came from Pan-Arabic nationalism (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, West Bank, Algeria, Saudi Arabia...) or from clerical nationalism (Gaza).

Stalinism, social-democracy and the liquidators of the 4th International had capitulated against the so-called “Arab revolution” and its bourgeois dictators. All the “socialist” regimes which pretend to unify the “Arab world” and to modernize their country not only oppressed the national minorities but they also accepted the colonial borders and they more and more capitulated against religion. History gave its verdict: in Tunisia, in Egypt, in Libya, in Yemen and in Syria, the masses decided to attack the Mafiosi dictatorships. Sooner or later, they will do so in Algeria.

In Tunisia, Bourguiba’s follower, Ben Ali (member of the so-called “Socialist International”), was in relation with French imperialism. Colonel Nasser’s successor, Mubarak, is submitted with the American imperialism and collaborated with Israel. In Libya, Kaddafi has been in close ties with imperialism for more than a decade: privatization of firms, opening to Italian and American capitalist groups, hunt of Black workers willing to migrate to Europe, on the behalf of the European Union. As soon as his dictatorship was set up, Colonel Kaddafi had forbidden the workers’ organizations, including trade unions. He had kept up the tribal system and had allowed a massive immigrant proletariat (one million in a 6.6 million population) to be fiercely exploited by the local bourgeoisie. In 1995, he expelled 10 000 Palestinian refugees.

In Gaza and in the West Bank a fraction of the youth challenged the two faces of the Palestinian bourgeoisie, despite their repression, in demanding the united action against the Zionist colonization which goes on in the West Bank and in Jerusalem.

THE BOURGEOIS ARMY AND THE “TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT” AGAINST THE MASSES’ MOVEMENT

Against the revolutionary rises that combine mass demonstrations with waged workers’ strikes in Tunisia and in Egypt, the American imperialism gave to the army headquarter the signal to destitute the hated despot and to prevent the solution of workers’ and peasants’ government with transitional governments composed with former dignitaries of the regime, with “democratic” opponents tied with imperialism, or even with Islamists who were renamed as “moderate” for circumstantiated reasons.

In Libya, when the masses got inspired from the neighboring revolts in Tunisia and in Egypt and rose up all over the country, including the popular areas in Tripoli, the French and British imperialism bet on a similar government. The “Transitory National Council” asked the imperialist for help. No organization defended the program expect by the urban and countryside workers and by a substantial fraction of the young people: constitutive assembly, separation of the religion from the state, union rights, restoration of the lands to the peasants, seizure of the big firms, equality for migrants, women’s emancipation... which have questioned not only the totalitarian regime but also the tribal survivals and the capitalist ownership. In front of the intervention of the NATO main armies, Kaddafi had some popular support restored, while Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarchy, an Islamic regime and a US partner, restored order in Bahrain, without people’s right being evoked by Cameron, Sarkozy and Obama, and while the Iraqi army just slandered the Iranian refugees in Ashraf camp.

In Tunisia, in Egypt, in Libya, the theory of the permanent revolution was verified: in our time, the bourgeoisie is not able to play a revolutionary role. The laboring masses in cities and in the countryside, the young people fighting for a decent future, are betrayed by the bourgeois and by talkative petit-bourgeois who try to prevent them to get the power and to make them give up the fight. The state apparatus in general and the army in particular, is not beyond the classes, but it always is a device for the ruling class. The conscripts, the small peasants, the small shopkeepers, the craftsmen fluctuate between the main classes. They are ready to support the workers’ movement if it is able to open a perspective and to propose them a revolutionary leadership.

AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION IN LIBYA, IN AFGHANISTAN, IN IRAQ, IN LEBANON, IN HAITI, IN IVORY COAST, FOR THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Any oppressed country is allowed to resist the military intervention of the big powers. In order to help young people and workers in Libya, the workers in Northern America and in Western Europe absolutely cannot trust their own governments who all are on the service of the big capitalist groups, who destroy all the previous social conquests and who support the counter-revolution, the clerical monarchies and the worst dictatorships all over the world. They must demand that mass organizations of workers origin, unions and parties, stand for the opening of the borders for workers and students all over Africa, against any military intervention in Libya and in the other countries in the region, for the immediate evacuation from Iraq and from Afghanistan, for the closure of American, French and British military bases in the whole Mediterranean basin, for the end of the blockade on Iran, for the destruction of the Zionist apartheid wall and for the right to return for all the Palestinian refugees. The resolute struggle of workers against their own imperialist governments would be the best support to the workers in Libya, for workers’ and peasant governments, for the destruction of the Zionist colonial state, for the socialist federation of Northern Africa and the Middle East where the Arabs, the Berbers, the Turks, the Jews, the Kurds, the Sahraouian, the Persians... will abolish together the borders inherited from colonialism.

The world crisis of the imperialist system, its wars, the ecological catastrophes, the antidemocratic regimes, show that the greed of capital led humanity before abyss. Only the workers can open the way to the socialist revolution, to an economy planned by the workers themselves, they can abolish the archaic borders. For that, the necessary device for victory must be constructed: a workers’ revolutionary party in every country, related with the others through a revolutionary workers’ international.