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For a International Workers' Unity



Anti-Capitalist March in Argentina

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What is the International Socialist League?

The ISL strives to assist the working class to build a world international party that can unite common people of the world in a struggle for socialism. That will entail the abolition of the present rule of the planet by the powerful transnational capitalist companies who with their ruthless greed for profit are the central threat to the present and the future well being of the masses of common people of the world and a threat to the earth itself.

The ISL is a section of the International Workers League (fourth international). In its statutes our international organisation says:

"The purpose of the International Workers' League is to overcome the crisis of leadership of the workers' movement and build a Fourth International with mass influence...

"The IWL (fi) does not claim to be the revolutionary leadership of the world proletariat, nor does its existence imply that the crisis of the Fourth International has been overcome. However, it constitutes the only democratically centralised world organisation struggling for these aims.

"The IWL(fi) reaffirms that the crisis of revolutionary leadership will be solved in the course of mobilising the masses by means of agreements and fusions with other tendencies and organisations that, given the upheaval of the masses, may join the struggle against the counter-revolutionary apparatuses..."

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- Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the ISL.
- We welcome contributions and comments from readers.
- Subscriptions cost £5 for six issues including postage.

Bigger anti-capitalist feeling than 1945

"Landslide Victory for New Labour," "Massive Majority," said commentators about the June election. Such conclusions could only be made by isolating Parliament from the real world outside it.

Certainly, the New Labour Government has now 190 seats more than the Tories in the House of Commons. In the world outside, the results showed that the contempt and anger against the Tory Party in Britain, which developed during the eighties and nineties, has almost destroyed it. However, the overwhelming majority of the electorate does not now see New Labour as an alternative.

The outstanding fact about British politics is that, in a very short time after their election in 1997, a growing mass of British people could not see any difference between New Labour and the Tories. Both serve the interests of powerful capitalist business, and of the wealthy and the privileged.

This is a minority government, elected on the votes of 25% of the population. Those who (generally in patronising tones) pronounce on the 'apathy' of voters, are far removed from the movement of consciousness of masses of working people in Britain today. The abstentions, particularly in 'Old Labour' areas, were positive acts and totalled more than the votes for New Labour.

There is no doubt that the majority of people, and this includes the youth, are opposed to privatisation and the greed for profits; they are opposed to the demolition of the Health Service.

There is, in fact, a bigger and more widespread anti-capitalist feeling in Britain than there was in 1945. The political pundits then, who expected a victory for Winston Churchill, were as far removed from reality as they have always been, with their concentration on the superficial forms of politics.

At the beginning of June, in a BBC/ICM poll, 77% said "there was no point in voting because "it would not change anything". 65% said they did "not trust politicians." Significantly, only 38% of voters aged between 18 and 24 went to the polls.

Demagogically, Blair and other New Labour leaders paid tribute to the feelings throughout the country, when he promised vaguely there would be 're-

forms' in health and public services. His army of fixers and 'spin doctors' suppressed the real issues and their real programme.

Some commentators were forced to point to the 'dumbing down' of the election. The New Labour leaders were blacking out the real issues.

Their aim was to win the election and then continue with their pro-capitalist policies. The major questions were covered over. It was as if Britain existed in a vacuum. The spin-doctors abolished the slowing down of world economy, increasing threats of sackings, and the worsening balance of trade.

Immediately after the victory, there was the incident that showed up completely the managed and cynically staged nature of the election campaign, and the capitalist values and policies that drive New Labour. With a blatant contempt for the feelings of the mass of the population about the salient feature of capitalist society today – the polarisation of incomes – enormously accelerating the gap between rich and poor – the 'listening' Mr Blair, gave a massive pay increase to himself and other New Labour leaders. Four days after the poll, this was

New Labour's 'up-yours,' to the poor, the deprived, the pensioners, workers on the derisory minimum wage, and all the lower layers of society. Blair's salary is now £163,418 a year.

The old joke about the past reformist Labour leaders, like MacDonald and Thomas who betrayed Labour in 1931, used to be that they believed in the advance to Socialism one by one – beginning with themselves. We can't say that is completely true of the servitors of capitalism who form our government now. They don't even mouth socialist phrases, however they certainly go for all the individual perks and connections of parliamentary privilege.

What a bunch! The 'proletarian' Mr Prescott is reported to have originally accused Blair of acting like Jesus Christ in holding back the increase, and is alleged to have said: "You have a wife who earns money, I have one who spends it." Mr Prescott will surely make his mark in future history by this and his other statement to seafarers fighting to democratise their union in the 1960s: "You go on the picket line; I'm going on the Cunard."

We should have the Rate for the Job! said the agitators and 'money-militants' among the MPs. But



what is the rate for a real democratic representative of Labour? "A workers wage for a workers MP" was one of the points in the programme of some Socialist Alliance candidates. It was operated by the Militant MPs in the 1980s and goes back into Socialist history and the ideas of Socialist democracy that representatives should be paid workers' wages and subject to recall by their constituents.

The government now will push faster along the road of attacks on working people. It is no accident that Brown, the Chancellor, said he was not afraid to be unpopular.

Immediately after the election, trade union leaders were forced to talk about collisions with the government. They know very well that they face struggles on the railways and in the public services as privatisation is pushed through.

Far from New Labour having any intention of making any retreat on the anti-union laws, there are preparations in state circles to strengthen them in relation to strikes in public services. They had already prepared legal action against the proposed strike by the tube workers on 3 June. The strike was called off with some economic concessions, but the threat to union rights is not going away. In fact the legal attacks will intensify as the government proceeds with its privatisations and attacks on the public services, in agreement with the aims of the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF.

Union members must be alerted. The great and necessary fights today are political – against privatisation and for workers' and consumers' control of safety and management. The anti-union laws cannot be manoeuvred away. Most trade union leaders, although compelled to express some criticism of the government's plans for the public services, have conducted one retreat after another and show no indication of preparing the necessary aggressive strategy for the defence of workers and their unions today. There is need for the building of an alternative leadership in the trade unions based on such a strategy to organise a fight against New Labour and the legal attacks on the unions.

The election also brings the clear need of the Socialist Alliances to begin their discussions now from the reality outside of themselves. It is the mass movement that will change things. The Socialist Alliances can only begin to be a force for change by assisting the development of such a movement. Overall, the Alliance made some successes in the election. We need to discuss them concretely and seriously. The real advance was in areas where there was already some connection or record of struggle in the mass movement.

The central task remains. It is to assist the people involved in the various struggles against one aspect or another of capitalist rule to organise and gain confidence in the possibilities of a united class movement. If we are correct in our programme and organisation then we have to prove it in the experience of assisting the development of a mass movement. That is the central immediate task of the Socialist Alliance.

No organisation becomes a real socialist alternative by just declaring it is it. It has to prove itself before masses of people in the strategy and tactics of struggles where the big questions of masses of people are answered. One of these big questions is overcoming the political disenfranchisement of the working class by the destruction of the Labour Party by the right wing and New Labour. That means, the working class has to develop a mass independent political expression of workers – a workers' party.

There are groups in the Alliance who say that the central question is uniting the various groups in the Alliance into a new revolutionary socialist party. The ISL does not believe that is the immediate necessary task of the Alliance. We must not be diverted from the central task, which is to assist unity of all forces in the working class in struggle, those demanding control of their lives, and particularly feeling their disenfranchisement politically, against capitalism and New Labour. **That there can be big broad political responses to an anti-capitalist fight, which inevitably is anti-New Labour, can be seen in the return of Dr Richard Taylor in Wye Forest,** with a 68% turnout and participation of young people, as it was seen in the movement against the privatisation of the tube expressed in the election of Livingstone in London.

The ISL will contribute to this discussion on the immediate central tasks in the Socialist Alliances while it propagates in its paper, pamphlets and books for a revolutionary Marxist party and continues the struggle for its theoretical and programmatic basis and struggles for a world party, an international. But the building of that party will not come just from propaganda preaching or even just theory. In fact, as Lenin remarked, a long time ago, theory gets its full development in connection with a mass movement. Revolutionary socialist, or Trotskyist groups have to prove themselves and their programmes in the experience of working class struggle. Theory takes a sectarian, academic character if it is not connected with the tactics and strategy of a mass movement and assisting its building. The main lessons of the election relate to the development of the latter. It is the central questions for the Socialist Alliance.

Mobilise the class to defeat the fascists

Jake Parker

Increasing attacks on the Asian community in Oldham, Bradford, and elsewhere by the National Front must be opposed and these communities defend by the entire labour movement in an active way. The NF has been prevented from doing even greater damage on the Asian community by the combativity of the Asian youth and their supporters, but the question for those youth and for us all is how to mobilise a force that can stop the NF.

The petrol bomb attack on the house of Oldham's deputy mayor was a clear declaration of war by the National Front and Combat 18. They are using the ballot box and the bomb, and are testing the ground for their racist and fascist politics. As one old trade unionist said at a meeting in St Helens during the election: "the BNP are using the traditional fascist methods - first the thugs to cause chaos then the reasonable men in suits turn up with their 'sensible' ways to sort it out".

The policy of the British National Party is for repatriation for Asian, black and other minority communities. Such a policy is an attack on the rights of those communities. Minority groups form an important part of the working class and an important part of the trade union movement.

To drive any divisions into the class is an attack on the whole class and the National Front and Combat 18 are obviously planning to build in this situation after the General Election. The policies of New Labour help to create the atmosphere where the NF and

others can thrive and legitimise their policy. The BNP can win votes and will win votes until an alternative is built in every field where the BNP and the NF are active

New Labour helps create the atmosphere against those fleeing oppression and poverty. It confines them to special areas, keeps them on voucher schemes and helps set them up as targets for any racists that feel like having a go. There are continual reports of asylum seekers getting attacked in London, Liverpool, Glasgow and in all places where they are herded and kept separate from the local communities.

On the issue of asylum seekers New Labour and the National Front go in the same direction. While the NF bomb people in England, there are regular bombing raids on Iraqi people and when people flee Saddam Hussein and arrive in England, the majority are refused asylum.

When the National Front marched in Oldham and later attacked during the night, it was the Asian community, especially the youth who stopped them.

Now that the NF have created a very tense situation in Oldham, the council is planning to erect a partition between an Asian and White area. Such a partition would be a victory for the National Front.

The working class and all its organisations must wake up to the lesson of history. Starting with attacking the rights of the Jews, Asian, Black and other minority communities, fascism ends by attacks on organised labour.

In Birmingham during the election, two socialist alliance candidates and their supporters were attacked by the NF.

A fifteen-strong mob pounced on the Socialist Alliance stall in Hawthorn unfurled St George's Cross flags and yelling "Communists" and other epithets. They then grabbed the SA banner, hitting an SA supporter with an eight foot wooden pole, and overturned a nearby Anti Nazi League stall.

A Socialist Alliance press release said that the attack came "in the same weekend as both Shibli Rahman's funeral in east London and the Gay Pride demo in Birmingham. The same people who blew up the Admiral Duncan pub are given comfort and succour by politicians, the worst of the media, and the police".

Media stories have given false information. *The Manchester Evening News* reported an old white man was attacked by Asian youth and said the attack was part of making some parts of Oldham "no go areas" for white people. The 76 year old was told, according to this paper, to "get out of our area". The allegation of this "racist attack" has been rebuffed by the man's family who said on ITV: "As a family we don't think it was a race issue at all."

Other media outlets based their reports on what *The Manchester Evening News* said rather than the family's views. The media helped to build the picture that the Asian community are the aggressors rather than the targets of racist attacks. In answer to the National Front deciding to march in

Oldham, Jack Straw banned all marches for three months. Such an action equates the racists and fascists with those whom they attack. To stop the NF and their supporters there must be the widest possible unity in action, with the emphasis on the independent strength of the working class and the communities.

This is an extremely urgent question and already there have been some missed opportunities. In the opinion of the International Socialist League (and others) there should have been a Socialist Alliance candidate in the Oldham election.

It was a great error that this was not done.

It is extremely important to study the way in which the Nazis party arose in Germany and how it was fought. There is nothing better written than the writings of Trotsky. The first understanding is that the NF comes out of the degeneration of British capitalism and British society. This, in part, explains why a small or even tiny force can become so disruptive and appear to set the agenda.

It comes at the time of many signs of a decline in the world economy and many economic problems from the USA to Japan. The rise of racist fascist groups is an international phenomenon.

To combine the Asian community, the trade union movement, the anti-capitalist movement, the Socialist Alliance and all those who want to fight capitalism and fascism in a united front will not only be a blow against the fascists but can stop them. Such a movement will have to achieve unity in practice and such a movement would also deepen the struggle against the British State and New Labour in the fight for socialism.

Worm's Eye View

"THE WORMS OF THE EARTH WILL CRUELLY DEVOUR THE LIONS, LEOPARDS AND WOLVES...AND THE LITTLE AND COMMON PEOPLE WILL DESTROY ALL TYRANTS AND TRAITORS." 14TH CENTURY FRIAR, JEAN DE ROQUERAILLADE

Silenced by a Plastic Bullet in Quebec

I'm sitting in Eric Laferriere's basement apartment, and his cellphone is ringing. He looks at it to see who's calling. He doesn't answer. He cannot speak. His throat crushed. Eric Laferriere wants justice for the pain he has suffered.

Democracy is about the right to speak out, but our country is now responding to peaceful protestors with unprecedented clouds of toxic tear gas and a new form of repression: plastic bullets.

The cop who fired at Laferriere was no more than 20 feet away from him, near the wall surrounding the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City... Eric Laferriere, holds the plastic bullet that hit him.

He now has a steel plate in his throat and breathes through a small metal hole. He speaks in a faint whisper and with difficulty, wincing at the pain from the 6-inch stainless steel pipe stuck in his throat. Every breath burns. "It's like someone is grabbing me by the throat and trying to choke me. How could a cop do this to me?" he asks angrily, holding up a white 4-inch piece of plastic — the very bullet that hit him.

"Here, take it, knock it against your head lightly," he tells me.

It is hard, like a rock. "That's what hit me squarely in the throat. It was travelling at 300 feet per second. And somehow I had the reflex to reach down and grab it and put it in my pocket."

...In the corner of his living room sits a table stacked with hospital supplies, packages of plastic tubing and a machine to suck out the liquids that build up in his lungs. "I am going through two boxes of Kleenex per day. It's not every day that you can find it on sale.

"I can't go swimming or take a bath. I have a hole in my throat. I can't even make love — I can't get excited. I have to remain calm. ...I am not violent. I have no dossier. I'm clean."

On Saturday afternoon, he stood alongside other protestors on Boulevard Rene Levesque, some 20 feet from a double or triple row of fully decked-out riot police. Nothing much was happening. It was calm. Then, all of a sudden, clack, clack, clack, the cops started firing tear gas canisters at the protestors. "There was absolutely no reason for the cops to start firing that tear gas."

The gas was so thick, he could not see the person next to him. Some people ran, others got angry. He mimed his outrage... Suddenly, he was dou-

bled over in pain, on the ground. "My hand no longer worked. What did they do to me? I didn't know what hit me... I tried to speak, but nothing came out."

Who fired the shot? And will he face the music? "For attempted murder a person should get 15 years," Laferriere tells me... They succeeded in crushing Eric Laferriere's voice. Will you use yours to speak out against the chemical and military attack against peaceful protestors?

From a report by Tooker Gomberg in the Canadian magazine NOW.

Good for the Poor

A new World Bank report on Mexico, *An Integral Agenda of Development for the New Era*, was formally presented in Mexico on 21 May. The report includes specific recommendations on labour policy for the government of President Vicente Fox, most notably proposals for increasing the "flexibility" of Mexican labour.

The report recommends that current regulations mandating severance pay, collective bargaining, exclusion contracts, obligatory benefits, restrictions on contracts for temporary employment and apprenticeships, antiquity-based promotion schemes, company-sponsored training programs, and company payments to social security and housing plans, should all be eliminated.

The report suggested that North American investors will continue to have doubts about Mexico's economic future, while the poor will continue to be "impeded" by pro-labour laws from "obtaining the greatest benefit from their human capi-

tal."

President Fox said that all the suggestions and recommendations made by the World Bank "are very much in line with what we have contemplated," and that indeed they are essential for Mexico to "really enter into a process of sustainable development."

Mexico Solidarity Network.

Hang Down Your Head Bill Morris!

The Liverpool *Daily Post* reported in its front page story on 29 May that the 400 plus workers remaining in the port, including those who took the dockers' jobs and worked during their great and bitter two and a half years struggle, now face further "redundancy and reorganisation".

"European legislators" said the *Post* are insisting that port services be brought into line with other industries and thrown open to competition."

A spokesman of the European Commission declared: "The port services market covers pilotage, towage, mooring and cargo handling. Historically, these services have been provided within frameworks characterised by exclusive rights and monopolies." He certainly did not mean the shipping lines when he spoke exclusive rights and monopolies. In fact, he was speaking for them because one reason for reorganisation of port services is that the powerful shipping lines are demanding that they handle their own vessels in port.

The real meaning of those words was that historically there has been a strong union organisation. The spokesman went on: "In the area of cargo handling, these traditional structures have

been challenged successfully."

In other words, the trade union strength was smashed.

Colin Carr, a spokesman of the Transport and General Workers Union said: "We have about 400 core workers left who are employed by the port in ancillary services and policy is to resist these proposals."

With the same leadership of the T & G that allowed this situation to come about? Ex-dockers on Merseyside and the WOW remember very well the meeting at the beginning of their struggle, when Will Morris addressed a mass meeting with the following immortal sentences:

"It is one of those situations where as you age and your grandchildren say to you "Where were you at the great moment, you either stand up and say: "I was there" or you hang your head in shame without an answer" and I tell you this, when my grandchildren say in 15, 20, 25 years from now "where were you when the Liverpool workers were fighting for their jobs, their dignity, and their pride I want to be able to say: "I was there, marching with them, side by side."

(The full speech can be found on Labournet.)



The real role of

The following is the first instalment of a three-part serialisation of a shortened version of the article, *United Nations: World Forum Or Instrument Of Re-Colonisation?* by Angel Luis Parras. It is taken from issue two of *Marxism Alive*, a theoretical and political magazine in which the International Workers League is involved.

The article discusses something that is extremely important for those who are opposed to capitalism as there is a great deal of confusion on the role the UN plays in the Middle East, East Timor and in the many other countries of the world where the USA and Europe are concerned to prevent the rise of independent movements that could challenge their ability to exploit the countries when and how they wish.

Angel Parras is a member of the PRT (Spain) and the Executive Committee of the IWL.

Last September, the so-called Millennium Summit of the United Nations was held to discuss the role and form of the UN. In his Millennium Report, the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, declared that "founded in 1945 to introduce new principles into international relationships, the United Nations has achieved better results in some spheres than in others."

As far as the "lower spheres" are concerned, the report could not but present a depressing picture. In the last decade, over 5 million people have been killed in wars and refugees can be counted by the millions. As far as living conditions are concerned, over half the world's population (some 3,000 million people), survive on under two dollars a day. 1,200 million do not even reach a dollar a day. Twenty per cent of the world's population has no access to drinking water and 800 million have no health service. One can keep adding devastating data that supports a conclusion that is already self-evident: unevenness between nations and inside

every nation has become deeper. Kofi Annan's report develops a series of proposals all of which bear the same mark: the need for a "deep reform of the UN".

Talk about reforming the UN leads inevitably to the question: what is the role today of the nation states? Are we witnessing their "minimisation", their progressive "dissolution", or is it that the states are "minimised" to their social responsibility - education, health, pensions?

THREE ANSWERS TO A QUESTION

Basically, three different answers have been given to this question on the left. For the social democratic parties, the UN has been the instrument of peace, co-operation between nations and economic and social progress.

For the left linked to the Communist parties, the UN was the guarantee of peace because the presence of Russia and China in the UN provided representation for the oppressed and neutralised the excesses of the imperial powers.

For the revolutionary left the characteristic feature of the social system has been - since the early years of the century - that "capitalism has become imperialism". Imperialism was, therefore, defined right from the beginning of the century not as a policy, but as an economic and social structure whose main feature was that it constituted "the monopolist phase of capitalism" (...) "bearing in mind the conditional and relative meaning of all definitions in general (...) it is recommendable to give a definition of imperialism that would "... contain five fundamental features: 1) concentration of production and capital to such a high degree of development that monopolies are created that play a decisive part in economic life; 2) the joining of bank capital with industrial capital and the creation, on the basis of this 'finance capital', of the financial oligarchy; 3) capital export, contrary to the export of goods, acquires a particular importance; 4) the formation of international monopolist associations of capitalists and 5) the division of the world among the most important capitalist powers." *Imperialism The Highest Stage of Capitalism. VI Lenin.*

This, for Marxists, meant the UN, as any international organization of that nature, born in a social system as the one described, could not be anything

the United Nations?



Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill at Yalta, February, 1945

other than an institution dedicated to preserving that dominance of the social order. The UN was therefore the "sophisticated" continuity of the old League of Nations which Lenin called a "thieves kitchen".

Those who argued for five decades that Russia and China were the representatives of "peace and progress" in the UN, after the events of 1989 and the end, according to them, of the "bipolar world", should, logically today, be castigating the United Nations, according to their reasoning, as being for a single group - the imperialists. However the reality is different and leaders such as those of the United Left [in Spain], for example, are in general some of the main defenders of the UN.

In the revolutionary left part of those who yesterday accused the UN of being a "thieves kitchen", today demand that the UN intervenes militarily in Kosovo or East Timor. And now organizations as the Left Block (Portugal) or the LCR (France) denounce the UN for not having intervened before. A similar orientation was repeated during the Russian aggression to Chechenia.

It is necessary to say, then that those who continue sustaining the old Marxist characterizations on the UN are a reduced minority, and it is certain that it is not the number who agree that indicates who is right.

Therefore the same question that had three different answers in the left is reduced to this: in its historical development, in its past and present performances, is the organization of the United Nations, with more or less imperfections, the instru-

ment of peace and progress? Or, on the contrary, is the modern version of the "thieves kitchen", a political instrument of the dominant social order - imperialism?

THE BIRTH OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

In 1800 the proportion of the earth under European control was of 35%, in 1914 the figure had reached 85%. In that picture of European domination and colonial voracity, the first agreement that embraces a truly international dimension, was in 1899 when the Hague Conference, summoned with the purpose of establishing a "convention for pacifying international conflicts". Eight years later, they wrote a new agreement for the peaceful regulation of international conflicts. The results of both events was 37 million dead and the devastation of Europe after the beginning of the first world war in 1914.

With the signing of the armistice by Germany, in November 1918, the discussion and elaboration that would result in the Pact for the League of Nations began. The Pact was established to "foment cooperation among nations to guarantee them the peace and the security." *League of Nations, Jose Luis Hernandez.*

It gave special relevance to the denominated "system of mandates" by virtue of which it trusted the tutelage to those "who people had no capacity to defend themselves", they redistributed among themselves the old colonial possessions of the conquered countries. They were "the earliest nations" that assumed the "sacred mission of civilization" and they would exercise "tutelage in mandated areas on behalf of the League of Nations." Pact of the League of Nations Article 22. They established the "protectorates" in this way..

The League of Nations (LON) had as central organs the Council, the General Assembly and the Permanent Secretary. The Council and the Assembly were responsible for the executive activity of the League and, according to the article 5, the decisions of both organs had to be "adopted unanimously". In that way, the virtual right of veto was settled for any State.

The LON created organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO). In front of the

CONTINUED...

revolutionary wave that shook Europe from the Russian revolution of 1917, for the LON, the creation of the ILO responded to the "conviction that international peace was inseparable from social peace".

FROM THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS TO THE UN

The League of Nations was hit by the economic crises and formally remained up to 1945 - but was really definitively buried in 1939, with the remains from the new world war that would liquidate more than 55 millions and, for a second time, see the destruction of Europe.

At the conclusion of the Second World War, 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, the United Nations' Charter was approved and with it, the UN was born. Addressing the representatives gathered in the General Assembly, the North American president, Truman, said: "This Charter has not been the work of a single nation or of a group of big and small nations, but rather it has been the result of a wide spirit to offer and to accept, maximum tolerance before points of view and in the face of the interests of the others". Documents on the history of international relations 1815-1991. Was the UN born, as Truman said, in a democratic form and not "a product of a single nation or of a group of nations"? The history of its gestation show that the UN is very far from the fable that Truman narrates.

On 1 November 1941, in the Conference of Moscow, the USA, Great Britain, France and the USSR "...recognised the necessity of establishing a general international organization as soon as possible." In December 1942, the Conference of Teheran took place, with the USA, Great Britain and the USSR. In the toasts, Dictator Stalin affirmed: "Now it is for sure our people will act together in a friendly way, not only in the current hour, but also after the war." From 21 August to 7 October 1944, in Dubarton Oaks (USA), representatives of USA, Russia, United Kingdom and China met to trace the fundamental bases of the future UN. The document called Proposals for the Establishment of a General International Organization was a complete text of the Charter of the United Nations that was blocked by two points of friction: the voting system in the Security Council and the integration as members of United Nations of different republics of the USSR.

Between 4 and 11 February 1945, the Conference of Yalta, J. Stalin (Soviet Union), W. Churchill (Great Britain) and F.D. Roosevelt (USA), signed a protocol: "1. That a Conference of the United Nations on the world organization will take place in

the United States of America and that it will be summoned for Wednesday 25 April 1945. (...)

3. that the Government of the United States, on behalf of the three powers, will consult the Government of China and the Provisional Government of France about the decisions adopted during the present Conference concerning to the project of the world organization."

In the convocation directed to the rest of the nations it was consistently expressly that "the bases for the Charter" would be the established in the Dumbarton Oaks's Conference "completed up to now by the following dispositions", which settled: the key organism of the United Nations as the Security Council, the vote, the right to veto for the permanent members, the principles rights on the territories under tutelage" the "dismemberment of Germany" was also resolved; the policy of "war reparations", measures to be taken over Poland, Yugoslavia, Iran, the Bulgarian-Yugoslavian relationships, south east Europe, the convention over rights, agreements over Japan, etc. In April 1945, a Committee of Jurists gathered in Washington to make the final touches. Two months later, the United Nations was born. A gestation without a doubt that was far, very far, from the statements of Truman.

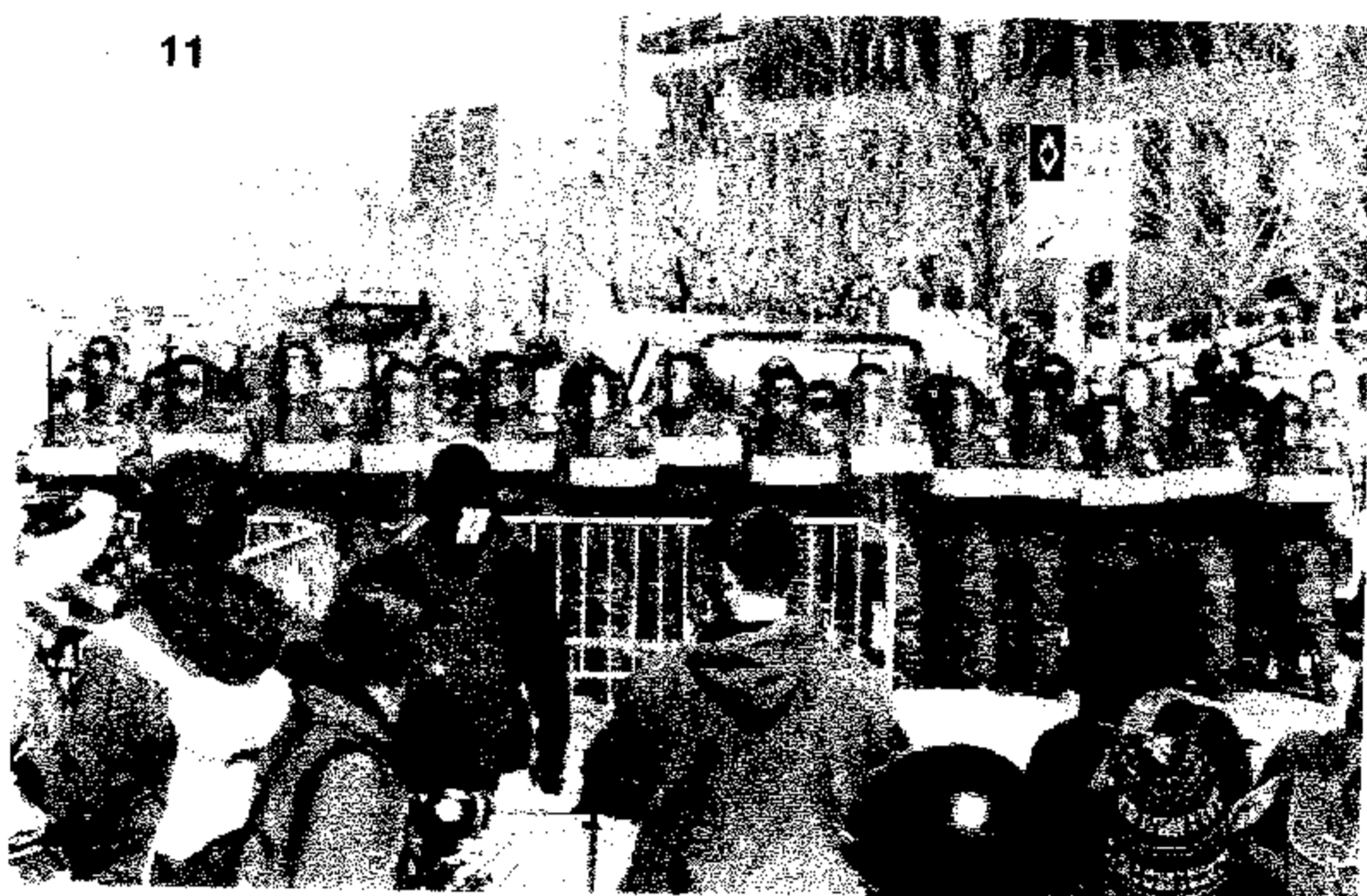
The UN recognises in its principles "the sovereign equality of all the members", but its structure and its organs are the negation of that principle. In Yalta, chapter III of the Charter establishes that the General Assembly is a "deliberative organ". it can "consider, study, raise..." but the decisions of the Assembly lack any obligation for governments. From Dubarton Oaks and Yalta, the Security Council was conceived as the key piece, the essence of the UN. The decisions of the Security Council establish an obligation for the member States of the UN. The five permanent members of the Security Council (USA, United Kingdom, France, Soviet Union, China) have the veto, the negative vote of one of them paralyzes any decision. To express it in another way, if the statute of the League of Society demanded the rule of unanimity to adopt a decision, the statute of the UN establishes the forced unanimity... of five. For the defenders of the UN, the LON failed because of "the exaggerated democratic character that it was endow with degenerated in a total anarchy".

Contrary to its predecessor, the UN was born after a world war that showed USA predominance in the inter-imperialists disputes and marked resolutely North American hegemony over the decadent European powers. The UN was also born amid a widespread revolutionary ascent that threatened the existence of capitalism in Europe.

Stop the FTAA

The Fallout from Quebec City

In last month's *Socialist Voice* we published the May Day speech of Bruce Allen, Vice - President of the Canadian Auto Workers Union Local 199 in St. Catharines, Ontario, in which he described the recent protests in Quebec City and criticised the Trade Union leaders who tried to lead the demonstrators away from challenging the Wall of Shame. Here Bruce Allen writes further about the profound effect the events have had within the Canadian workers movement.



The Wall of Shame

The recent protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) in Quebec City saw a new generation of radical youth make a mark on this country no less significant than the one left by American youth in Seattle a year and a half earlier. These young activists firmly established the existence of a very significant extra - parliamentary social force that both rattled those in power and left the union bureaucracy in Canada reeling. As such the events in Quebec City were a defining moment for the labour movement in Canada.

The young militants who mobilized in Quebec City spearheaded what became an impressive manifestation of anti-capitalist social resistance in the face of the largest mobilization of repressive force by the Canadian state since Pierre Trudeau imposed the War Measures Act in 1970. Yet all of this repressive force did not deter the young militants who were on the front lines in Quebec City. To the contrary, it inspired their courage and heroism. It steeled their determination. They were also not deterred by the fact that the union bureaucracy, with a few notable exceptions, was just as determined to avoid even the semblance of a confrontation.

In effect, the union bureaucracy not only withheld its support of the youth on the front lines. It denied them a real measure of protection against the riot police by leading the massive legal march against the FTAA as far away as possible from the riot police and the "Wall of Shame" erected in downtown Quebec City to "protect" the would be archi-

tects of the FTAA.

In view of this it was only fitting that the demonstration led by the union bureaucracy proved to be woefully ineffective and politically insignificant. Organized labour came away with a semblance of credibility. This was the case only because a significant minority of the union activists, local union leadership and a handful of full time union officials would not tolerate the unfolding labour farce. They broke ranks with the state - sanctioned march to join the youth being attacked on the front lines of the struggle in Quebec City.

Significantly, most of the trade unionists who defied the union bureaucracy were relatively young workers. There was, in effect, a divide between generations. It separated those who were determined to accomplish something meaningful from those who, willingly or not, opted to avoid confrontation and received the cynical approval of those who had deployed so much repressive force in Quebec City.

Political Fallout

The resulting political fallout within organized labour has been profound and unprecedented. This was vividly apparent less than two weeks after the battle in Quebec City.

On May 3 an impressive, overflow crowd of over 700 people packed an auditorium at Ryerson College in downtown Toronto to hear a panel of speakers address the question After Quebec City: What

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THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

By Elizabeth

Our Argentine Correspondent

Next? Many of those in attendance were young militants who had faced the tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannon fired by the riot police.

The most notable speaker was Canadian Autoworkers (CAW) leader Carol Phillips. She read the text of e-mails sent to the CAW National Office by CAW activists venting their frustration and anger at having been led as far away as possible from the Wall of Shame during the legal march. These CAW activists had gone to Quebec City determined to make a powerful political statement not to turn their backs on those genuinely taking on the fight to stop the FTAA.

Carol Phillips proceeded to declare for all to hear that labour was "embarrassed and ashamed" by what had happened in Quebec City. Her stunning admission was greeted by a standing ovation by many in the crowd. She went on to commit that the CAW would adopt a more militant, confrontational role in such situations in the future. She even said CAW activists were going to form affinity groups during future protests.

Others in the union bureaucracy have made their embarrassment known only very quietly by, at most, acknowledging that a mistake had been made. No one else has yet declared that the union leadership will do things differently in the future. Not even other prominent CAW leaders. And in the absence of such a declaration there is no reason to believe organized labour will effectively stand as one in the future with the heroic youth who are leading the fight in North America against capitalist globalization. The union bureaucracy is destined to remain a steadfast pillar of the existing social order and thereby facilitate the continued advance of capitalist globalization.

What we can realistically look forward to in the aftermath of Quebec City are much greater numbers of workers at the base of the labour movement, along with some local leadership, linking up with and bolstering the young militants who can be counted upon to press the struggle forward. It logically follows that this convergence process should not only be actively encouraged in every possible way but done so with the complementary goals of giving it a more organized form and a more clearly focused political direction.

In the process ongoing analysis of and principled debate about this developing anti-capitalist movement will be indispensable to its advance. This will hold true both with regard to its immediate objectives, such as stopping the FTAA, and beyond, meaning successfully challenging the rule of the architects of obscenities like the proposed FTAA and the broader process of capitalist globalization.

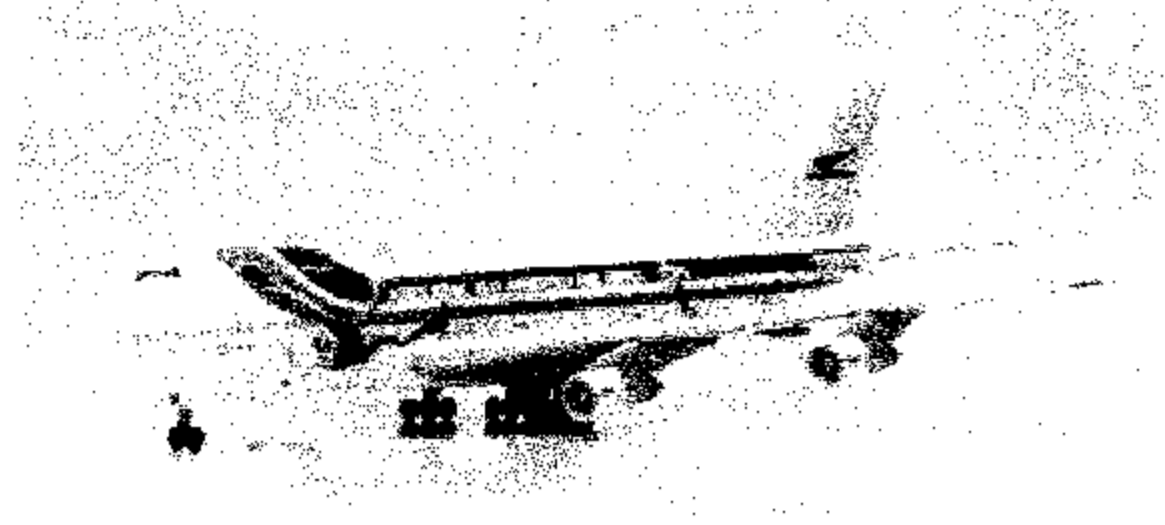
During the privatising craze of the 90s, Argentine workers fought endless battles to stop this pillage of the country's wealth. They lost all of them, but they retained the pride of being the only defenders of what it took generations to build. This was not the case of Airlines, where a considerable number of workers were convinced of the slogan of the government that 'private means efficient. This naivety meant that the lines were handed over to the Spanish Iberia in exchange for a part of the foreign debt. Today, as we hear officials of the Ministry of Economy saying brazen-facedly: "Everybody knows that Aerolineas is one of the worst privatising feats ever accomplished" a voice booms from the grass roots of the Aerolineas workers demanding to know: "Where were you, Mr Minister, when this ignominy was being committed?" For, after having driven Aerolineas to bankruptcy, Iberia is now threatening to close up, leaving seven thousand families out in the street.

An Echo of History

On 25 May, festivities are held every year in Argentina to commemorate the anniversary of the first local government established in 1810. This was the first step towards independence from the Crown of Spain of the former colony of the River Plate. This year's commemoration had none of the goody-goody atmosphere that often goes with this sort of celebrations. The sermon pronounced during traditional Te-Deum Mass was an obvious attempt of the Church hierarchy at blaming the present De la Rúa administration for the anger of the crowds that were beginning to gather on the historical square. Now, that new attempts at re-colonisation are being made, ironically, as in 1810, Spain is the target of the angry chants.

Some of the speakers made it a point to refresh everybody's memory as to how things had been handled to lead Aerolineas (AA) to its present day state of collapse. They told us that Iberia had received AA absolutely debt free and the personnel had been reduced to a bare minimum to ensure

"efficiency" and "competitiveness". The company came debt free because Domingo Cavallo, Minister of Economy in the Menem administration, had "nationalised" the debt of the company before passing the company over. Domingo Cavallo is now minister of education of the De la Rúa administration!



The plundering of Aerolíneas

As years went by, however, AA lost not only many of its aeroplanes - to the point that today most of them are rented - but its flight simulators, which are an essential part in the training of new personnel, its buildings and runways. It also lost something that no airline could ever afford to lose: it lost its routes.

Not only such profitable routes as the direct flight to Rome or Amsterdam have been lost; many of the home flights can no longer be made by what used to be the airline of the Argentine state.

"This is not only an economic loss," said one of the speakers at 15 May meeting, "this has been a violent assault on our sovereignty!"

Originally, the Argentine state, the previous owner of the line, retained 25% of the shares of the 'mixed' company and a special privilege, known as The Golden Share, which gave it the right to veto decisions. Nobody quite knows when and how this Golden Share was also lost.

Workers - all categories, from pilots, administrative staff, airhostesses, down to maintenance and other workers - reluctantly accepted reduction of staff in exchange for a formal promise that the ones who remained would be well paid. Now they bitterly regret such permissiveness with the bosses and such lack of solidarity with their fellow workers: it has turned against them.

From an outburst to an anti-government anti-imperialist movement

It was the unpaid salaries that caused the whole outburst. In the first days of May, news came that there was no money to pay the salaries and new layoffs were announced. Workers occupied the two main airports of the city of Buenos Aires.

Unfortunately, the workers are divided into seven different trade union organisations. The highest fighting spirit is shown by the union of mechanics and technicians, the most plebeian, together with airhostesses, of the sectors. They were the first ones to hit the roof and now they are the ones who refuse

to be led astray by the false promises of "we shall pay if you behave".

But even if the more conciliating wing of the aeronautic workers are doing their best to make us believe that this is just a trade

union conflict, their declarations are belied by the facts, for in the eyes of the majority the following guidelines are there to be seen: This is an anti-imperialist movement, for it clearly poses the question of how international capital exploits local workers and shows absolute disregard for the will or interests of the people of the country. Some of the most daring speakers on that 25 May march clearly posed the need for a "a campaign for a second independence"

This is a clearly anti-government movement, and it aims its blows at two administrations: that of Menem who was responsible for the privatisation and that of De la Rúa whose attitude towards the Spanish owners is seen, at best, as extremely servile.

The anti-capitalistic trait has not been expressed overtly so far, but it is being more clearly insinuated as voices claim that "Those who got us into this predicament are unable to get us out of it, so it is now the job of the workers to ensure the continuity of Aerolíneas".

As a matter of fact, workers are beginning to act as the main characters of this drama. This was made quite clear when they prevented a flight of Iberia from taking off from Ezeiza airport and forced passengers to fly Aerolíneas. Passengers interviewed by the media said things like: "This is a real scandal. I am going to sue Iberia. Those chaps here from Aerolíneas are not to blame. They are just trying to defend what by right is theirs."

Even though the march of the 25th rallied only the advanced guard of the working class, the feeling that the "battle of Aerolíneas" - as some call it - is something that concerns us all is spreading. A sure sign of this feeling was when football players wore the slogan "let's save Aerolíneas" on their shirts.

Lots of people say that independently from whether the aeronautic workers win or lose, this conflict marks a clear "before and after" for any future privatisation and it will not be long before the slogan: "The way to save Aerolíneas is through re-nationalisation", so far chanted by only few, will become part of the general awareness.

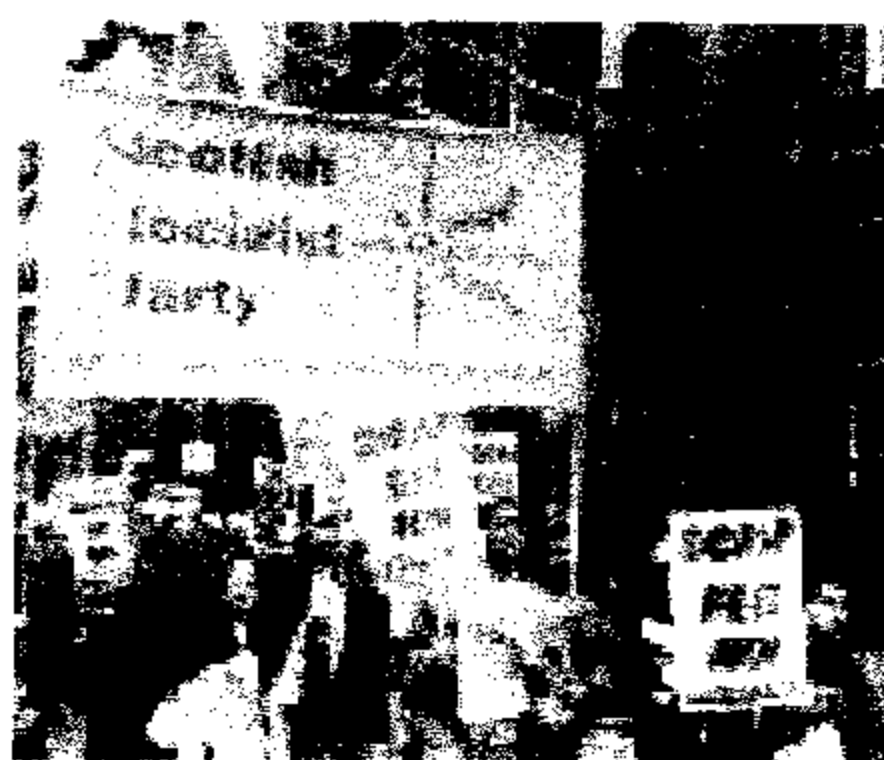
Scotland and the

Martin Ralph continues his review of the book, *Imagine*, by Tommy Sheridan and Alan McCombes

As was said in the previous article - the big problem with *Imagine* is that Sheridan and McCombes do not stress the vital and independent role the working class must take in Scotland and the necessity for unity with the working class in England and Wales against a common oppressor. This is especially important because of the very close proximity of Scotland to England - an independent socialist Scotland could only survive with the wholehearted support of the English working class.

In emphasising independence first, then socialism at some later stage the great danger is of drifting towards the idea of a two stage theory and undermining the independent role of the working class. Lenin was known before anyone else as being the greatest defender of the right of self-determination but he stressed all the time the independent and leading role of the working class. It is also what Trotsky stressed in his theory of Permanent Revolution.

The weakness of *Imagine* on this question is shown throughout the book. For example on Nicaragua Sheridan and McCombes say, "Socialists should also take great encouragement from the successful struggles against oppression that have been waged internationally over the



past two decades. Since 1979, a rogues' gallery of American-backed dictators, including Somoza in Nicaragua... have been toppled like traffic cones under the juggernaut of peaceful mass protest." Nicaragua was later "brought to its knees by an American blockade". This is false.

Somoza was not brought down by a "peaceful mass protest" but through civil war and by an armed uprising led by the Sandinista leadership, which also included direct international assistance.

The overthrow of Somoza did not resolve the questions of national independence, agrarian reform or workers' rights. It did not because it stopped short of expropriating the bourgeois class, of giving the land to peasants and opposed the independence of the working class.

The revolution that began was not made permanent and this was why it is not able to stand-up to

the US blockade. It did not pass the land over to peasants' control; it opposed the formation of trade unions and the full expropriation of Nicaraguan capitalists. It even began the new government with three representatives of the capitalist class who later lead the Contra guerrillas against the Sandinistas.

The US government funded the Contra movement, something Ronald Reagan is famous for. The nationalist revolution was prevented from developing by the Sandinistas, which gave the Contra movement and the US opportunity of undermining the gains that had been made by the workers and peasants. This history is explained more fully in a new pamphlet called *The Permanent Revolution: Battle Cry of The Twenty First Century*. (see advert).

The errors can be seen again when the topic of the Balkans is discussed.

Imagine says "nationalism has led to the tearing apart of integrated communities, ethnic cleansing, and rivers of blood as violent conflict rages over disputed territories." This time they ignore the role of a degenerating Serbian Stalinism, that in order to overcome its own weaknesses against the youth and working class pushed the idea of a Greater Serbian nationalism that was to

Permanent Revolution

rule the former Yugoslavia. Internationalists defended Bosnia. We and many others defended the fight for a multi-ethnic society led by the working class and the youth. By reducing all nationalisms to the same thing, *Imagine* makes a swipe at those who defended the small nations such as Bosnia and the role of the working class is dissolved as if it did not exist.

The same confused ideas are used to discuss Scotland. *Imagine* argues in favour of a Scottish Capitalist Independence and sees that independence as a step towards a Scottish Socialist Republic. Scottish Independence can mean independence "even on a non-socialist basis as promoted by the SNP". The book implies that the SNP will continue to grow and establish independence. It is interesting to note that the previous vote for the SNP not only grew as the Tory Party was wiped out because of its offensive against the working class but also because the SNP put on a left face, it talked about nationalisation for example. The SNP is of course anti-worker and will become more so. Therefore, it is important in any development towards a referendum on independence that the interests of the working class and its independence is fought for at every point. Yet the book implies there is a progressive side to



Simon Bolivar International Brigade that fought in Nicaragua

forces like the SNP: that they objectively prepare the way for socialism. In fact if the SNP did lead a Scottish republic it would rest on relations with English and international capital and lead the fight against the interests of the Scottish working class.

We would urge readers to compare the writings of Lenin and Trotsky on the national question and the Permanent Revolution with *Imagine* - a very different picture of socialism appears.

Here *Imagine* is very weak - there is a great lack of theoretical clarity in their book - on the Middle East, the Balkans etc It is getting similar to the positions adopted by the Democratic Socialist Party of Australia - which at-

tended the SSP conference - one of whose leaders have recently published a booklet attacking Trotsky's theory of the Permanent Revolution as "a grievous mistake".

The DSP position, which supports the two stage theory of revolutions, is taken up in a recent pamphlet *The Permanent Revolution: Battle Cry of The Twenty First Century*. In the pamphlet Bill Hunter points out that in the fight for national independence: "The central reality of this imperialist epoch, which was proved by the Russian Revolution and whose truth has been underlined in the national and proletarian struggles

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Scotland and the Permanent Revolution

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since, is that the winning of national independence can only be temporary, can only be unstable and distorted, until the struggle extends to the victory of the working class.

"Nowhere under the leadership of the petty bourgeois nationalist forces have the questions of national independence and development of national freedom been resolved."

In *Imagine* there is a complete avoidance of putting the Marxist position that the working class is the only class that is capable of carrying through all the democratic tasks consistently: the right to health, education, language, rights of minorities etc. There is clear opposition to Lenin's and Trotsky's position that while Marxists are for the most complete and consistent equality between nations, there must also be the "amalgamation of the workers of the different nationalities in united proletarian organisations." *Lenin "Corrupting the workers with refined nationalist", 1914.*

We would be in favour of an independent socialist Scotland - but such an entity could only be achieved and sustained by the working class of Britain as a whole. A socialist revolution in Scotland could only be successful if it were supported by and spread to the whole of Britain from the very outset - there could not be a totally Scottish road to socialism.

The Scottish working class has an outstanding record of proletar-

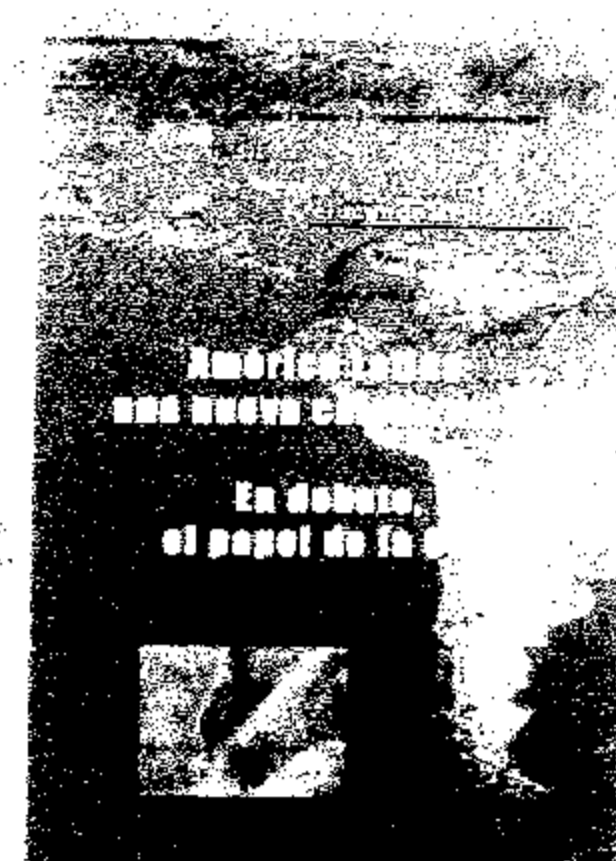
ian internationalism and made a great contribution to the creation of the Communist Party, British trade union movement and the unemployed movement and this is the history that should be built on.

To reinforce the separatism in *Imagine* it states that "Socialists in England, as well as in Scotland and Wales, should do battle to reclaim the best of their national traditions from the jingoists and racists." If this means anything it must mean a call to rescue a specifically national culture but England is one of the Imperialist heartlands, what is progressive in England can only be brought out as part of an international struggle and as part of a joint struggle with Scottish workers, not separately and not by encouraging English workers to build a specifically English movement.

The most class conscious workers have always seen that the interests of the Scottish working class is in developing their struggles as a British movement. The class struggle is uneven; the relationships of struggle between England and Scotland can themselves be uneven.

The Scottish Socialist Party will have to struggle against the vague generalisations, which are contained in *Imagine* if it is to lead the working class successfully. There should be a much deeper discussion on the Permanent Revolution, its history and its perspectives today.

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