



Populism or Leninism?

Most of the left wants to re-define Socialism today to exclude what they see as the fatal mistakes of the Russian Revolution. They want to dumb down socialism so as not to upset people who think that Socialism is violent like Stalinist concentration camps, or Pol Pots massacres. They want it to be popular, democratic, gradual and peaceful. This is nothing new.

There were those who rejected the Russian revolution as premature at the time. Luxemburg and Kautsky were the best known. They said that a socialist revolution in Russia would necessarily see the Party dictatorship over the working class. The February revolution was enough, Russia would have to wait its turn for the socialist revolution. Revolution in a 'developed' imperialist country where the working class was in the majority first would have to come first. Workers would have to go through the experience of parliamentary democracy before they were prepared for socialism. Workers would then vote for a government that could introduce socialism peacefully without resorting to violence.

Lenin called these 'socialists' Mensheviks or centrists, because while they professed to be Marxists, they rejected Marx's view formed after the Paris Commune of 1871, that the capitalist state

would violently repress the revolution unless it was overthrown by force. He pointed to the German Social Democratic Party voting for war credits to fund German workers to kill workers of other countries as a betrayal of the workers revolution. Instead he called for workers to turn their guns on their own ruling classes. Later he realised that the February revolution in Russia would be suppressed unless the the Bolsheviks won the majority of the soviets to make a socialist revolution in Russia. Not only that, Lenin expected that the German workers could be led by a Bolshevik party to go beyond the democratic revolution and make a socialist revolution in Germany to come to the aid of the Russian revolution to prevent it falling to imperialism or to an internal bureaucratic dictatorship. Today Leninism is rejected for populism. For example the Communist Party of Great Britain (a CP that takes the name of an imperialist country!)

says that the Russian revolution was premature. The workers were not yet in the majority and had to resort to violence and repression to defend the state. Today the CPGB wants to build a broad Marxist party that aims to fight to complete the democratic revolution in Britain to prepare the ground for socialism in the future. While the SWP saw the Russian revolution as a genuine socialist revolution, the working class was too weak to prevent the rise of a new capitalist class. Today the SWP forms alliances with many popular social movements to form a parliamentary majority. Anarchists condemn the Bolsheviks for hijacking the revolution and repressing the workers. Yet they too ally with Greens and Democrats and other social movements in broad or popular democratic fronts. Others like the Australian Green Left are quite open about rejecting the Bolshevik revolution and today follow Hugo Chavez and his populist regime in the quest for parliamentary 'socialism of the 21st century'.

In this issue we focus on why the left today wants to misrepresent the Bolshevik revolution as something that is best written off as a premature, isolated and misbegotten revolution. In our view this is because the left is pacifist and reformist. It is oriented towards the petty bourgeois, the better paid workers and students rather than the poorest workers and peasants. It says that workers need not lead the revolution when they can enlist the support of other classes or 'social movements' for democratic human rights and bring about a 'social' revolution peacefully. There is no need for a Bolshevik type party what is run along democratic-centralist lines. Such a party is seen as inherently undemocratic if not dictatorial. Instead the Zapatistas or indigenous movements, or 'broad' Marxist parties, are offered as better models for democratic decision-making in the first stage of completing the democratic revolution and creating the conditions for socialism in the 21st century.

This populist left is repeating the betrayals of the previous revolutionary internationals and building popular fronts based on social movements, in particular indigenous movements, in which indigenous national leaders compete for small crumbs left over from the larger crumbs consumed by the pro-imperialist national bourgeoisie. They believe that imperialist capitalism can be reformed, and that it is possible to negotiate with a peaceful, democratic imperialism to allow neo-colonies to take control of their own economic development. In this they are, according to Marx, taking a fetishised view of capitalism, believing that what is wrong with capitalism is unequal exchange relations, which can

be equalised without overthrowing capitalist social relations or the state.

Many of the historic debates about the Bolshevik revolution are forgotten such as the national question as a class question. The post-marxists say the revolution doesn't need to be led by the workers and by a revolutionary party because already the 'anti-capitalist' movements are international. Most importantly, if the 'people' are in the majority and elect popular leaders like Chavez and Morales, then the 'peaceful' parliamentary road to socialism is opened. Nationalist and indigenous social movements can negotiate for equality between nations without having to mobilise as a revolutionary, international working class.

In Bolivia today, the populist left hails the government of Evo Morales as representing the indigenous peoples of Bolivia. They support the MAS attempt to write a new plurinational Constitution that can allow all the indigenous peoples of Bolivia self-determination within a single state. All they need is a better deal with imperialism and everyone can win.

Against this populist utopia, we say that imperialism must superexploit the neocolonies to survive. There can be no class reconciliation short of socialism. The nationalities of Bolivia will never be free without a socialist revolution that expropriates the capitalists' wealth and creates the conditions for full self-determination of all peoples. To the Menshevik view we oppose the Bolshevik view that the national question IS the class question.

In this issue we look at Howard's attack on Aborigines, the future of Maori struggle in NZ and the question of Mapuche in Chile all caused by imperialist states imposing their crises onto the most exploited and oppressed sections of the workers and peasants, and the national minorities. In Oaxaca, Mexico, the 'commune' was betrayed by the Zapatistas strategy of indigenous social movements.

Then we look at how the populist left is becoming Chavistas and abandoning the basic lessons of Marxism and Leninism; of the Bolshevik revolution, of permanent revolution –that a full bourgeois revolution is only possible with a socialist revolution - that workers must form their own soviets or workers councils, and must be armed and independent of the state, in order to overthrow the state and defeat the counter-revolution. Most importantly, workers must be led by a Bolshevik-type party organised in a democratic-centralist way to ensure that the arrival of socialism comes in time to avert the horror of universal capitalist barbarism.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Black Nation in Australia

John Howard, Australian conservative PM, has imposed a state of emergency in the Northern Territory and sent in the army and police to enforce a series of measures to supposedly counter widespread child sexual and alcohol abuse. Such social problems have existed for generations as a result of Australian capitalism's exploitative, oppressive and racist policy towards Aboriginal society. In reality this is a blatant excuse to reverse the land rights struggle and grab the land for mining companies. It is the same sort of heavy handed colonial invasion that Howard has used in the Solomons, East Timor and Tonga, and for the same purpose, to grab the valuable mineral and gas resources of the region on behalf of Australian imperialism.

Typically the Australian left attitude towards this blatant state oppression is to treat it as an abuse of minority human rights. The far left Spartacist Group calls for: "Cops/Military hands off Aboriginal Communities". It then goes on to say that this will need the "expropriation of industry, mining and agriculture from the capitalist class through a victorious workers revolution. We need a class struggle fight for Aboriginal rights!" (SL leaflet, 28-6-07)

OK, but what are Aboriginal rights? Historically the left in Australia has avoided talking of the national rights of Aboriginals, let alone fighting for them, for fear that it would upset racist white workers who have been complicit in the oppression of blacks for generations.

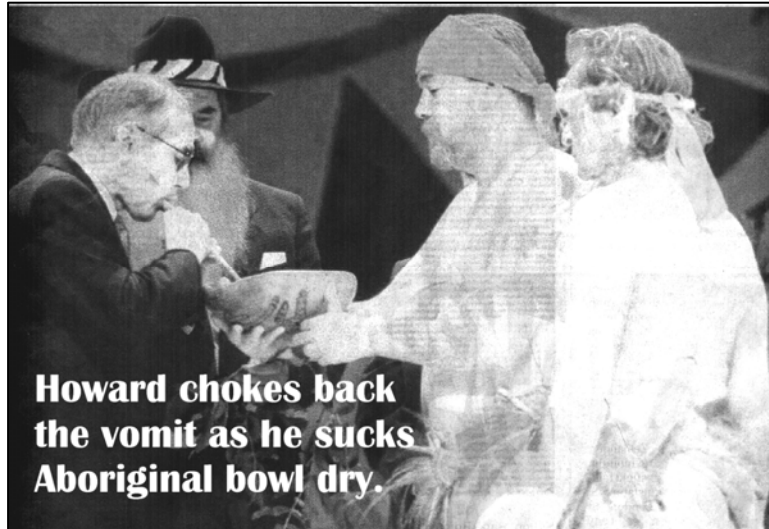
Yet recognising that Aboriginals are a people who are oppressed and have a right to self determination which includes their own nation, is a precondition for any unity between black and white workers. Aboriginal workers will never take white anti-racism seriously unless it argues for Black national rights, and most importantly, land rights, as fundamental. Its been done before when the unions got in behind land occupations.

The NZ Greens and Maori Party are opposing Howard's racist attack. But for them it is the action of a racist politician acting in the interests of the mining companies who are ripping off Aboriginal resources. It seems Aboriginals would make kinder, more sustainable capitalists. The reality is that the mineral export boom is a huge chunk of Aussie imperialism. One of the world's biggest mining monopolies, RIO TINTO, has massive holdings in Australia and owns COMALCO in NZ.

The only class struggle that will stop Howard from smashing Aboriginal land rights is the occupation of Aboriginal land against Howards military offensive. And

what better way to raise the demand for expropriation than to occupy the most profitable monopolist mine-owners property, demanding nationalisation without compensation and under worker/Aboriginal control! If Australia is going to mine coal and uranium it should be the working class, and in particular the Aboriginals whose stolen land is being ripped off, who should decide what is produced and for what purpose.

The answer to Howard's military occupation and land grab is a working class occupation of Aboriginal land and of corporate mines. All Australian workers of whatever ethnic origin need to reverse the logic of Howard's use of state force to grab the land for the mining bosses, occupy the land to demand and defend land rights now, and use working class power to shut down the mines and demand their nationalisation. In particular white Australian workers who have been



accomplices in the history of racist exploitative oppression of the indigenous Australians, need to recognise that Howard's latest attacks on Black Rights, just like migrants rights, is what he has in store for all workers down the line. Working class anti-racist solidarity behind Aboriginal national rights now becomes the way to build working class unity for the big fights to come.

Maori Nation in Aotearoa

Bryce Edwards, a member of the **Workers Party**, recently wrote on the Maori question.

"Race relations and Maori politics have been one of the major political issues in New Zealand for some years now. Those on the left that are interested in true liberation need to formulate an alternative view on race relations - a view that rejects both Labour's liberal Treaty politics as well as National's continuing, contradictory and hypocritical "One law for all". We need to argue against Maori nationalism and identity politics, and instead argue for a solution that unites the working class of all ethnicities and fights for true equality."

Bryce Edwards' analysis of nationalism is very Stalinist. It requires territory, language, culture etc as the defining criteria of nations. Lenin's position, in opposition to Stalin, was that if peoples of distinct ethnic or national origins are so oppressed that they are attracted to the appeals of bourgeois or petty bourgeois nationalists to solve their problems, then we have to treat this nationalism as seriously as we do that of the European bourgeois nations. After all, these nations were created by the ruling classes, or factions of them, to protect their property and wealth from their rivals. And these nations

were built by sending the working classes into battle to defend and extend them. And capitalist nations are divided into oppressor nations and oppressed nations.

When the European nations invaded non-European countries, they subordinated and in a few cases obliterated the existing modes of production. To the extent that they didn't obliterate, but subordinated them, the material existence of such peoples coexisted and interpenetrated with the capitalist mode. In NZ, the colonising power, Britain, signed a Treaty with Maori as a sovereign people, establishing property rights and citizenship rights as British subjects. Of course this Treaty was a fraud because the colonising power did not intend to honour it for one day. But for the Workers Party to repudiate this Treaty is equivalent of repudiating the Magna Carta because it is often observed in the breach. The point is, that in the struggle to honour the Treaty, the majority of Maori will see clearly that it is still a fraud.

As Marx observed about the Wakefield colonisation scheme, it was designed to both dispossess the indigenous people and to turn them into wage labourers. In the case of Maori their subsistence on the remnants of their tribal land as reserve army workers lasted until the 1950s and has been rekindled by the structural crisis since the 1980s. That means that as a result of being over-represented in the reserve army, Maori are falling back on subsistence methods from the past and trying to survive economically. The statistics tell this story.

The main Maori leadership in the 'Treaty Partnership' wants to escape this subsistence and get into business. They are using Treaty settlements to provide jobs, income and education. Yet these settlements are tiny compared to the land and wealth forgone. They can never meet the needs of the majority of Maori who are low paid workers.

Who do these workers look to meet their needs? If they continue to be oppressed and super-exploited they will look for allies. Some will see radical nationalist movements as the answer, others will look to the unions and to the working class. However if the rest of the working class turns its back on the oppression of Maori workers, they will look to nationalist leaders to come up with the goods.

While historic oppression exists and persists along racial or ethnic lines, national solutions will always arise. The only way to stop these from becoming reactionary tribal wars led by various warlords is for the non-Maori working class to recognise Maori oppression as more than wage labor oppression, and put the fight for Maori rights at the centre of trade union politics. This will demonstrate that the only reliable allies of Maori workers

are non-Maori workers, and not the Maori bosses who want to use national demands to exploit Maori workers as much as non-Maori.

It is necessary to recognise the right of Maori national self-determination despite all the reasons that the Workers Party thinks disqualify Maori as a nation. But we should not advocate that right unless a movement of Maori workers so oppressed by capitalism, and getting so little support from non-Maori workers, demanded this right (which could extend from separate representation to territorial secession).

The point, then, is that Maori nationalism is already splitting the working class, (look at the Maori Party) not just because of the Treaty process, but because non-Maori workers were not strong enough to fight for Maori workers. It is no use tiny left organisations arguing against Maori nationalism verbally when it already has a hold over many Maori workers. The only way to reverse this process is for non-Maori workers to line up alongside Maori workers by acknowledging their national rights and to join with them in occupying stolen land or resources.



A good example is the **Foreshore and Seabed**. Much of the left, including the Workers Party, said that the F&S is better in state ownership (for Marxists that is the collective ownership of the capitalist class) then fall into the hands of tribal capitalism. Bryce writes:

"The left in New Zealand actually had little to say about this debate, but where it has made pronouncements this has

often taken the usual unthinking line of supporting any struggle waged by any Maori, regardless of its merits. Peace groups, far-left organisations, and parties like the Greens have come out against government moves to bring about public ownership of the foreshore and seabed and thus guarantee public access...

...Nationalisation, by contrast, could ensure that no private interests - domestic or foreign, pakeha or Maori - can section off the foreshore and seabed as their own property. Within this, it would be quite possible to protect Maori customary access for food-gathering etc. In fact the most practical way to ensure customary access for Maori is to make sure such resources stay out of private hands, including that of any iwi which might commercialise such property. The foreshore should be common land, which means national ownership, with full rights of access to everyone, along with guaranteed protection of sacred Maori sites, just as we would protect graveyards full of pakeha. Within the general idea of nationalisation, the best specific option is whichever one makes it hardest for any future government to sell off public land although, of course, we know that these kinds of measures are only finally settled by the balance of class forces in struggle."

Against this reformist position of 'public ownership' where the capitalist state is supposed to protect the interests of all workers from privatisation of the F&S, the CWG at the time said that it is better to fight alongside Maori to reclaim control over the foreshore and seabed to wrest that control from both international capitalism (joint ventures with the state) AND from bourgeois tribal leaders. If the non-Maori workers backed Maori workers in occupying land and F&S sites, this would mobilise the working class as a force to impose its own power against both the capitalist state and Maori capitalists.

In other words where national demands and rights are being raised against the capitalist state, why defend the capitalist state rather than join that struggle so that the working class can fight for control of a major resource and take it out of the hands of the bosses' state and the MNCs', and Maori capitalism?

Howard's current attack on landrights in Australia is a parallel case. [see article]. All workers need to join with Aborigines to occupy and defend their land, not with the intention of separating (though that right should be recognised and supported if it becomes a popular demand) but to create a racially united working class that has the strength to defeat Howard and then take on the mine owners, a powerful section of the Australian ruling class.

The Leninist method is to recognise that the national bourgeoisies use nationalism as a method of harnessing workers and peasants to fight their wars for bigger pieces of capitalism. Understanding this, Lenin said that the only way to stop it was to win such workers and peasants to international socialism by demanding that they first defend the right of oppressed peoples' to self-determination, and proving in the struggle that only the international working class can win those rights through defeat of the national bourgeoisie as well as the imperialists and making a socialist revolution.

As Lenin said, the national question IS the class question. The answer is to make it so.

Mapuche Nation in Chile¹

Below we reprint and edited version of an article from 2006 that shows how our fraternal comrades in Chile are fighting for Mapuche self-determination.

Immediate and unconditional Freedom for Mapuche political prisoners, hostages of the Pinochetista-

¹ Mapuche Nation. The Mapuche constitute the main indigenous group in Chile.

Concertacionista² regime under the "Socialist" Bachelet!

...In our country, "socialist" Lagos and Bachelet, are completing the process of making Chile into a stronghold of imperialism in Latin America (The 53rd star on the US flag, another treasure chest of the British imperialist pirates' and a viceroyalty of the Spanish monarchy...). They have committed themselves to a terrible *Pinochetista* repression, using the police apparatus formed during the military dictatorship to attack the striking subcontracted miners of La Andina and El Teniente, Codelco's copper mines³. They are using the police to repress the college and high school students and building a police state in the Mapuche communities by means of the GOPE.⁴ There the special forces are ambushing and killing militants as they did to the young martyr to the Mapuche cause, Alex Lemun in November, 2002.

Bachelet has avoided speaking about the hunger strike of the Mapuche political prisoners. A government spokesman, Lagos Weber, however, said that: "*The prisoners are serving a sentence required by the state penal justice*". Meanwhile, senators and deputies of the Socialist Party, the PPD and even the Christian Democrats, are hypocritically proposing reforms in the "excessively harsh" Antiterrorist law.

Moreover, the Public Ministry and the Forest Mininco Co. propose diminishing the charges on the comuneros⁵, and the so much hated Interior (Homeland Security) Minister Andres Zaldivar today promotes a "socialist concession" that would allow the prisoners to be transferred to the Work Training Center (CET) at daytime while returning them to jail at night. A truly ridiculous proposal!

This way they hope to carry out the white-washing of the *Pinochetista-concertacionista* regime based on the 1980 Constitution to

continue oppressing the Mapuche nation-people for the sake of imperialism. To make this anti-worker and anti-popular regime more acceptable to the masses the CP and the CUT⁶ through



² Pinochetista -concertacionista means the regimes that came after Pinochet's but which followed his 1980 They are mainly the Socialist Party (of Bachelet) the Christian Democratic Party, the PPD (Party for Democracy). The Communist Party has become a concertacionista party to get some seats in the parliament.

³ Codelco is the Chilean state-owned copper company.

⁴ Grupo de Operaciones Policiales Especiales (Special Police Force Group): the GOPE became operational in 1980 after receiving training from German and Israeli SF Teams. They are primarily a Special Forces/Commando unit but are also responsible for counter-terrorist duties in government and diplomatic buildings. GOPE's 100 man strength is roughly divided into four 25-man teams

⁵ "Comuneros" refers here to the people that live in "comunas" or small ethnic communities, like the Mapuche Indians. There are other kind of "comuneros", too, in Chile, being the comunas also small peasant or poor people settlements.

⁶ The Chilean Communist Party is a powerful counterrevolutionary party that has dominated the life of the Chilean working class from the first decades of the twentieth century, having prevailed over the Socialist Party and some now defunct nationalist petty bourgeois movements in the leadership of the masses. Even the '70s and '80s guerrillas, as the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, a mixture of left Communists and all sorts of small "Trotskyist" groups) and the MRMR (Movimiento Revolucionario Manuel Rodríguez, an ultraleft split of the CP) come totally or partially from the CP, and are a product of the disillusionment of young CP militants before the thoroughly reactionary policies of its leadership. Today the Chilean CP (to the model of its old mentors and its new "models", the Russian and Chinese former restorationist bureaucrats become new bourgeoisie, respectively) owns a chain of Jewelleries, a net of cooperatives and cooperative banks, etc. The

their agenda "For more Democracy and Social Justice", are promoting reforms to the electoral-binomial system⁷ to the pension funds, the subcontracting labor law.

This neo-colonial regime - the executive branch and the parliament as well as the justice system--, like all the Latin American regimes under imperialism, cannot even grant the most elementary demands to the masses. For example, the World Social Forum has declared the maximum expression of democracy to be the Bourgeois Constituent Assembly of Evo Morales.-an Institution to subordinate workers' demands to the imperialist oil companies and the bosses' association of Santa Cruz.

...But in our country as in the rest of Latin America, the democratic demands for true justice, free elections, adequate pensions not subject to fraud, land and national rights of the Mapuche and other Indian peoples, can only be fulfilled by joining the working class, the peasantry and the Mapuche people in an all out struggle to defeat the *Pinochetista* regime and setting up their own workers' and peasants' government.

The imprisoned Mapuche comrades, who have been in prison since 2002, have adopted such an extreme measure as a hunger strike because the organizations that claim to defend the working class, the peasantry and the people's rights have turned their back on the struggle for the land rights and self-determination of the Mapuche from the Chilean State, as they had always done before.

In 2004 the same happened to the political prisoners of the "democracy". After 15 years in jail, they went on the longest hunger strike in Chilean history. It lasted 74 days, during which they were left to their fate by the CUT, the CP, the Confech [University Students Union] the different union federations, etc. While they were giving a lip-service "support", they shamelessly said that solution would come through parliament. But life has shown that the only way to free our class sister and brothers from the jails of the regime is direct action, strikes, protests, the mobilization of millions in the streets, fighting for their freedom and setting up dual power institutions based on workers democracy and workers power to set them free.

The CUT, the CP, the Confech, the different union federations, etc, have in their hands the possibility of doing that. All those who are for the Mapuche political prisoners' freedom, must break with the regime and the government. Break with all kinds of conciliation and collaboration with the bourgeoisie and

Chilean CP is an enthusiastic partisan and propagandizer of "market socialism". The CP reigns in the CUT, or Worker Union Central, the powerful and until recently uncontested organization that centralizes the unions in Chile. Now there have appeared some new unions that criticize the CUT, and even confront it, influenced or led by left bureaucracies coming from fake Trotskyist or by "Classist" (left unionist) groups. Some of these new unions are the Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores Marítimo Portuarios (Nationwide Coordinating committee of Longshoremen and Sailors), the SinTrac (Subcontractist Workers Union), the CGT (General Confederation of Workers) Mosaicam, etc.

⁷ Up to now, the ("binomial") electoral system consecrated by the '80s constitution allows for *only two* candidates, one from the "Concertacionista" parties—they first decide among them, essentially the SP and the CD, by means of a primary election, which candidate they present. The other candidate comes from the Pinochetista—right wing, pro-military- parties which have also their own primary election (they are the UDI, Union of Independent Democrats, and Renovación Nacional—Regeneration of the Nation).

call for assemblies, protests and strikes to demand the immediate and unconditional freedom of the militant comrades in jail!

With every new struggle the Mapuche political prisoners have aroused increasingly militant solidarity to their fight for freedom, not only in our country but all around the world as well. First there were the comuneros of Arauco and Collipulli who together with relatives and friends have taken the demand for their immediate freedom in Temuco streets. Then the students from Universidad de la Frontera (UFRO) set up barricades, hurled stones and recently took the Andrés Bello campus to the shout of "Free the Mapuche in struggle".⁸

...To set them free it is necessary to build an international coordination of all workers, farmers, peoples' and student organizations in struggle. Only thus we will be able to fight for their freedom until no militant for the exploited and oppressed of the world is left rotting in the jails of imperialism and its client regimes and governments!

- **Immediate and unconditional freedom for all Mapuche political prisoners, the imprisoned internationalist militiamen in Guantanamo, the Ayo-Ayo prisoners in the jails of Evo Morales, the Basque prisoners of the Spanish monarchy and the PSOE, and to all the political prisoners in the world!**
- **Stop all persecutions, occupations, demolitions, humiliations and murders against the Mapuche People-Nation! GOPE out of Araucania! For immediate self-determination for the Mapuche People-Nation!**
- **Stop the Homeland Security forces invading Latino neighborhoods in the US! Not one immigrant jailed or deported in the US! We demand the immediate release and citizenship rights for the jailed undocumented immigrants!**
- **Down with the repression launched by US puppet Fox in Mexico against the miners of Sicartsa and the people of San Salvador Atenco and Texcoco! Immediate freedom and dropping of charges against the miners' leader Napoleon Gomez Urrutia and the 217 imprisoned in San Salvador Atenco and in Texcoco!**
- **Hands off Haiti all the imperialist troops!**
- **¡Out with all the occupying troops of Bachelet, Lula and Kirchner, mercenaries of imperialism!**
- **For the military defeat of the imperialist troops in Iraq! Out with the imperialist troops of Afghanistan and the entire Middle East! Hands off Iran all the warmongering US, British and French imperialists!**



POI (Workers Internationalist Party) of Chile, member of the Leninist-Trotskyist Fraction

⁸ The students from the Catholic University of Temuco (UCT) occupied their university to demand the release of the striking prisoners. From the Arica students at the University of Tarapaca (UTA) to the Iquique students at the University Arturo Prat (UNAP) to the students of the Pedagogical College in Santiago, the same as the students of the UTEM, the USACH and of the University of Chile, the majority of the university students have joined the fight for the Mapuche prisoners' freedom.

Debate: Peoples' Power in Venezuela?

An overexited Socialist Worker/NZ has publicly disagreed with its sister organisations in declaring the Venezuelan revolution the "most important leap forward for the workers' cause since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution". It likens Chavez new party of socialist unity to Lenin's Bolshevik Party. CWG replies to this view of the Bolivarian revolution and argues for a different and revolutionary politics based on the conception of Chavez as a 'Bonapartist' figure balanced between the working masses and international capitalism whose regime has to be overthrown by a workers revolution to form a workers and peasants state.

The revolution is in the balance

While the political developments in Venezuela do have 'global significance' we see this as rather different from the SW/NZ or its sister organisations. The SW/NZ is caught up on a wave of enthusiasm on the left for '21st century socialism' that offers positive hope to workers all around the world in a period of crises, wars and genocides.⁹ But as Alex Callinicos, on behalf of the ITC puts it, the centre of the struggle against imperialism is in the Middle East, especially the war and resistance in Iraq. Events in Venezuela, while very important, are in part the result of the US being bogged down in its 'war on terror' and unable to effectively intervene against Chavez. So while the SW/NZ wants to jump onto the new bandwagon of the 'socialist unity' party formed by President Chavez, its sister organisations are more cautious. For one, they disagree that there is a 'dual power' situation in Venezuela.¹⁰ There is as yet no 'bottom up' independent workers power that is arrayed against the power of the bourgeois state. Nor Chavez' new party, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), a "mass socialist party".¹¹



Yet, despite these differences over how far the revolution has gone, they all agree that the formation of the PSUV offers an opening for workers to move towards political independence and create genuine organs of workers power - soviets or workers councils and militias. In this they join forces with most of the ex-Trotskyist left like the Australian Green Left and the international Grant/Woods Tendency. They all characterise the PSUV as a broad 'workers' party in which revolutionaries can enter and fight for a program of workers to power. To this end they say the UNT should join and lend its weight to a mass rank and file membership that can take advantage of Chavez promise to hold democratic elections for delegates to found the party, and force a break from the Bolivarian state bureaucracy that wants to limit the revolution to a form of Venezuelan state capitalism.

But this assessment makes the fatal mistake of failing to see that the PSUV is a 'popular front party' where the state bureaucracy acts as the 'shadow' of the national bourgeoisie which is in an alliance with imperialist capitalism. More important, the PSUV is the ruling party of the state Bolivarian regime which includes Chavez Presidency. This regime we characterise as 'Bonapartist' following Trotsky's analysis of populist leaders in Latin America in the 1930s. A 'Bonapart' is a bourgeois leader who balances between the main antagonistic classes in the name of national unity in order to contain the masses when the ruling class itself is too weak to destroy the popular movement. In this sense then, the PSUV is not a broad workers party but a popular front party created by Chavez to help contain the contradiction that he faces daily in balancing between the insurgent masses and international capital. The PSUV, then, is not on opening on the road to revolution, but rather a dead end that leads to the defeat of the revolution.

Here we argue that the popular front cannot work unless a treacherous fake left leadership seduces the workers into joining it on the bosses' terms. In doing so they tie the workers hands behind their backs and prepare to lead them to historic defeats. Whereas in the 1930s the Stalinists performed this role, today after the restoration of capitalism in all of the former degenerate workers states except Cuba and the DPRK, Castro plays an important role in seducing workers into the popular front. But this is insufficient, because the new layers of radicalised workers, peasants and youth can see that Cuba has long been following the path of the other former Stalinist states and is making its peace with capitalism. Therefore, to contain

⁹ "Socialist Worker-New Zealand regards the unfolding revolution in Venezuela as of epochal significance. With the US military bogged down in Iraq, there is more space for Venezuela's socialist Chavistas to seriously challenge capitalism right on Washington's doorstep. This challenge has profound implications for the world's socialists. The deepening revolution in Venezuela is an historic opportunity for socialists everywhere to spotlight a real-life alternative to capitalism's inequality, eco-chaos and war. Is the unfolding Venezuelan revolution the most important leap forward for the workers' cause since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution? The answer from delegates at Socialist Worker-New Zealand's recent national conference was a unanimous "yes". VENEZUELA'S REVOLUTION IS GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT 05 Jun 2007 from the UNITYblog www.unityaotearoa.blogspot.com

¹⁰ SW/NZ claims: "There is, at present, a dual power scenario in Venezuela where opposing class forces are "balanced out". While this state of affairs has lasted for quite a while, it is inherently unstable and cannot last forever. Either one class coalition or the other will win the war over whether Venezuela will move beyond capitalism to socialism. In this war the impact of global events will play a pivotal role, since the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union in the 1920s showed that "socialism in one country" cannot forever withstand the pressures of world capitalism."

¹¹ SW/NZ say: "It would be utopian to think that the PSUV could be an instantly homogenous party of revolutionaries. It will, however, be a mass socialist party with organic connections to grassroots people who support the unfolding revolution. The process of building the PSUV will challenge the reformist wing of the Bolivarian movement and precipitate a "battle of ideas" in which the masses will participate. While the initiative for the PSUV came from Chavez, it will be built "from below". Socialist militants, who played a key role in mobilising the Chavista vote during the 2006 presidential election, have become the "promoters" of the new mass socialist party. They are going out to the people to register members, who will be organised into "socialist

battalions" of 200 people each. The aim is to organise 20,000 of these "battalions" across Venezuela, from which delegates will be elected to attend the PSUV's founding conference in August 2007."

the most advanced layers of the workers who want to fight for socialism, the centrist Trotskyist groups have taken over the role of acting as the left wing of the popular front to lock workers into a political 'unity' with the bourgeoisie.

The Popular Front in Latin America

The crucial problem in Latin America is that, membership of ruling parties, and voting for ruling parties that are part of popular front governments, contains and ultimately betrays, the independent development of workers organisations. This is because in a popular front, workers parties are in a coalition with bourgeois parties so that the workers parties become subordinated to petty bourgeois or bourgeois parties by electoral agreements that are in the bosses' class interests.

If the unions and workers parties are inside these popular fronts, this has the effect of limiting their independent action. More than that it prevents them from organising as armed independent class forces to prepare for counter-revolution. Peron in Argentina built a system of state patronage that tied the unions via his party machine to his regime. This destroyed their independence and left them exposed to the dictatorship. This system still exists today with Kirchners' left Peronist regime incorporating the unemployed unions as the administrators of work schemes and the dole.

Lula did the same in Brazil. The unions and the workers party were forced to swallow Lula's agreement with his bourgeois partners and imperialism, leading to splits in his party and the formation of breakaway unions and the Party of Socialism and Freedom (PSOL) who are repeating the same failed strategy to build a party on the left wing of the popular front regime to push it to the left. **Voting in Brazil comment.**

PSUV is a Popular Front Party

The situation is slightly different in Venezuela as Chavez' regime came first and built a union base and is now forming a united party to support it. But the result is the same. The united party will combine all classes in support of the bourgeois government and constitution. Chavez wants the UNT to join the PSUV. This will subordinate organised labour to the party of a popular front regime via a labor bureaucracy.

PSUV is not politically independent of the state. It will be the governing party after all. Moreover it is what Trotsky called a 'popular front party' comprising left bourgeois, petty bourgeois and working class elements. If the UNT joins the PSUV then it will not be independent of the state. It has since joined.

Fight for independent unions, independent armed workers councils (soviets) everywhere, and an independent Marxist Party with a program to form a workers and peasants government and expropriate imperialist and capitalist property.

We need to understand the significance of the PSUV as a popular front party. Its significance is that the popular organisations, AK47s and all, remain part of a political bloc dominated by the bourgeoisie, and so are hampered in forming politically independence class organs such as workers councils and workers militias. Many on the left don't understand that the bourgeoisie can be represented in a popular front by a very small section, even by a petty bourgeois party. They object that the national bourgeoisie in Venezuela is hostile to Chavez, so how can it be represented in the PSUV?

The Bourgeoisie or its "shadow"

However, a popular front (or popular front party) does not need to have a strong representation of the bourgeoisie, and certainly not the traditional bourgeoisie in Venezuela. The most famous popular front of all that of 1935 in France was a front between the Communists the Socialists and the Radicals. The Radicals were a party of the petty bourgeoisie and small capitalists, not the big bourgeoisie or its hegemonic fraction. In Spain in the 30s the popular front contained small bourgeois fragments around a few individuals which Trotsky called the 'shadow of the bourgeoisie'. That was enough to ensure that the Stalinists and anarchist leaders kept within the framework of a bourgeois parliament.

The important thing is that the workers party (or working class elements) in a popular front are constrained by deals done by their leaderships to appease the interests of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, or its 'shadow' - in the case of Venezuela the state bureaucracy that uses the regime to defend the bourgeois constitution and the defence of private property.

What is happening in Venezuela is not unique, it follows a very similar course to Mexico in the 1930s under Cardenas who formed a 'popular' united party, the PRM, nationalised the oil industry (far more than Chavez has done) and controlled the unions via his state machine which he then used to repress the workers. The PRM (and we think the PSUV) are forms of popular fronts common in Latin America created by elected strong presidents as 'populist parties' sometimes referred to a 'patriotic fronts', to bury the independence of the labour movement in a 'bloc of four classes'. e.g. workers, peasants, petty bourgeois and 'patriotic capitalists.' The PRM was called a 'peoples front' by the Mexican CP and analysed as such by Trotsky who coined the term 'popular front party'.

Are popular front parties the same as bourgeois labour parties?

It could be argued that a popular front party is no different from the more common bourgeois workers parties such as the British or New Zealand Labour Parties. In both cases the bourgeoisie is not directly represented. For example the New Zealand Labour Party grew out of the right wing (reformist and bureaucratic) of the Labor movement with the support of small farmers. Its policies benefited the national

manufacturing bourgeoisie without their direct representation (apart from the co-optation of people like businessman James Fletcher during WW11).

Both popular fronts (including parties) and bourgeois-workers (Labour or Social Democrat) parties suppress the basic class contradiction of workers representation against the bourgeois program. In Labor parties the workers can challenge the leadership when it betrays its own program. In a popular front however, the workers leaders make agreements with the bourgeois party or parties and use this agreement to discipline any attempt by the ranks to break out of the popular front. The strategy of the bourgeoisie, using the labor bureaucracy then, is the same in both forms of government. The question is what tactics to apply to break with the bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracy?

Lenin's tactic of critical support for BW parties is well



Lula, Chavez and Morales

known (if not well understood). It means using the BW parties constitution to fight inside for a workers program, and getting them elected to expose their bourgeois program. Thus entry into a Labour Party activates the contradiction when the revolutionaries fight to expose the reformist program of the BW Party when it becomes the government. The case of the popular front the tactics to break with the bourgeoisie have to be applied in such a way as not to sow illusions in the popular front. It is necessary to critically support the Workers Parties in a popular front, but only in order to break them away from the bourgeoisie.

The debate among Trotskyists about tactics towards the popular front

Some say it is impossible for workers to mobilise inside the PF to activate the suppressed contradiction because the leaderships have already made their agreements with the bourgeois, petty bourgeois, or labor bureaucratic partners. The contradiction can only be activated from outside, and so to join a popular front as the POUM did in Spain in 1936 is a betrayal because it effectively suppresses the contradiction.

Others argue that it may be possible to activate the contradiction by short term specific entry or critical support before the PF becomes elected. They point to the fact that the Trotskyist party in France in 1935 put up candidates only in electorates where the Radicals were not standing candidates. This in effect is saying to workers "vote Socialist and Communist and then demand that they break from the Radicals". That is, it may be possible to win enough representation to activate the mass movement to break the popular front if it becomes the government. This almost succeeded in France in the great strike of 1936.

In the case of popular front parties such as the PSUV where there is no direct representation of the bourgeoisie but rather its 'shadow', the state bureaucracy, the tactical question of activating the contradiction depends first on having an independent force outside the PSUV that could build support for such tactics and act as a fulcrum to exert leverage to break workers from the popular front in government.

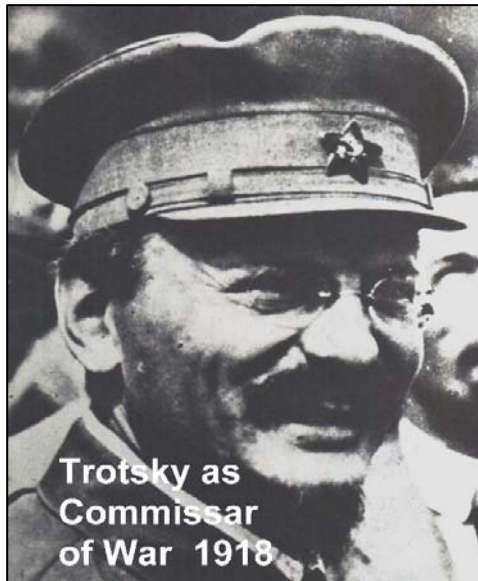
Is the formation of a left party outside the PSUV by the LIT, PO and PTS such an independent force? [see article below]. No, like the PSOL in Brazil it is not designed to mobilise the masses, but rather to form a bloc to the left of the popular front to 'pressure' it to the left. This was the policy of Privert in France in 1935. These 'centrists' use revolutionary phrases about not joining Chavez' party to keep their 'independence'. But they capitulate to the popular front all the same by failing to tell the masses that they are trying to push a popular front party to the left when it is already subordinated to the bourgeoisie, in the case of Venezuela, through its shadow, the state bureaucracy. Thus, as in the 1930s the centrists are on the extreme left operating 'outside' the popular front to corral any maverick uprising of the masses, back into the popular front.

What is the role of revolutionaries?

Therefore the role of revolutionaries is NOT to tell the UNT to join the PSUV and fight for a revolutionary program inside to push the popular front to the left. This is a fatal mistake that led to historic defeats of the Socialist Unity in Chile 1973 and MNR party in Bolivia 1952 to name only the worst defeats. This is

what the SW/NZ is advocating. Increasing the membership of unionists in the PSUV, they say, will counteract the bureaucrats, and other anti-worker interests and push the regime to the left. No, it will not, it will tie the hands of the UNT to Chavez' discipline of 'unity' and weaken the revolutionary development of the working class to face the counter-revolution that will follow when imperialism decides to act against Chavez regime, or when Chavez himself acts to repress the working class.

Against this capitulation to the popular front, the correct strategy is to build united fronts around occupations, workers defence etc to create armed workers councils or soviets that are politically independent of both the UNT and PSUV. Tactical interventions inside the UNT and the PSUV should be made to form class fractions for a revolutionary workers party and to break up the popular front. But these tactics can only work as part of a strategy to build an independent working class politics led by a revolutionary party and program.



Revolutionary Tactics

Trotsky's position in relation to the popular front was to build united fronts of the workers organisations that were being trapped inside the popular front in order to break the base from the treacherous left leaders as a first step to breaking with the bourgeois partners and program. Clearly voting for the candidates of workers parties that propose to join a popular front government and that stand for election separately might have this effect. It might therefore be argued that in the formation of the PSUV there is an opportunity for class struggle candidates to be put up by the class struggle tendency of UNT for election that would take a revolutionary fraction

program into the party to break up the popular front party. This could be one way of trying to activate the class contradiction in the PSUV.

But its success would depend on the strength of the independent workers mandate (i.e. independent workers candidates standing on the same program outside the PSUV) and how strictly the delegates were held to it in the face of the 'unity at all costs' discipline that is behind the formation of the PSUV. If this fraction was suppressed then that would be a clear indication that the contradiction was suppressed in the PSUV.

Revolutionaries must fight inside the organs of the working class to form communist fractions and cells. That means actively building revolutionary platforms in the UNT and inside any political formations arising out of the working class such as the Trotskyist centrist bloc being formed in Venezuela [see article below] They should call for the formation of workers councils and workers militias of all the class struggle tendencies in the working class.

Inside these formations revolutionaries would fight to expose the PSUV as a popular front party, and the Chavez regime as a bourgeois Bonapartist regime. At the same time they would form a military bloc with all those defending the regime from imperialist destabilisation, invasion and overthrow, while stating clearly that only the armed and centralised militias of the workers and poor peasants are capable of defeating imperialism and its agents in Venezuelan society and state, and that only a workers and peasants government that creates a planned socialist economy can fulfill the demands and needs of the masses

Venezuela:

The PTS proposes an “Independent Workers Party”

In Venezuela the PTS proposed that the POR Lora [that betrayed the 1952 Bolivian revolution], the LIT and the PO of Altamira of Argentina, unite to form an “independent workers party” in Venezuela, against the PSUV (United Socialist Party of Venezuela) formed by Chavez in an attempt to force all the different ‘Trotskyist’ currents to dissolve themselves into it, including the PRS (Party of Socialist Revolution) in which most Trotskyists currents are now organised, along with and very small group of PTS, and the C-CURA, a fraction led by the PRS in the UNT (National Workers Union)

An “independent workers’ party”

The PTS, POR, Lit and PO front would “campaign for the nationalization without compensation and under workers control and management of all the companies and strategic industries of Venezuela; for an independent workers party, and a workers, campesino and poor peoples government. . .” (*The task of the left facing the project of Chávez*, FT-CI; 8 March 2007).

As we will see, the PTS project is to form a reformist workers party around three or four general programmatic points that any reformist current can sign up to, throwing into the rubbish bin the Transitional Program of the Fourth International and with it the really urgent task that faces the Venezuelan working class to become independent from Chávez and chavismo and to take the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle.¹²

In its original call to constitute this “independent workers party”, the PTS says nothing about a fight for independence of the working organizations from chavismo and the state. Now, when most of the leaders of the UNT are joining the PSUV, making the UNT virtually part of the bosses’ state, and when others who have campaigned for “10 million votes for Chavez” and refer to him as “comrade President” halfheartedly talk of the ‘autonomy’ of the unions from the PSUV, Chávez attacks them as ‘social patriots’ and ‘counterrevolutionaries’, the PTS calls for a campaign for “independence of the unions” (LVO 233).

But again, this is a campaign for the independence of the unions “with red phrases” i.e. in the abstract. Nothing is said about *workers organisations fighting against the state* or the Secretary of Labor (a former Trotskyist) or the laws that jail workers for up to 18 years for striking in “the strategic” companies, and that regulate the organizations of workers!

It is a rare “independent workers party” that does not fight to **build organs of direct democracy and self-organisation** of the working class and the exploited people, that is to say, the organs of workers power, opposed to the power of the bourgeoisie and their state.

Nothing to build **factory committees or committees of unemployed and to coordinate them with committees of poor farmers and the landless!**

Nor to speak of the necessity of **self-defense committees of the working organizations and the landless farmers**, to face “the bolivarianas” repression of the police and Armed Forces, as well as the hired thugs of the landowners who kill peasants in the countryside.

¹² Although it wants to adorn it with ‘red’ socialist phrases - “nationalization without compensation and under workers control”, “for a workers, campesinos and poor peoples government” etc., etc. - it is a strange “independent workers party” that does not raise any demands against the worst conditions that Venezuelan proletariat faces: superexploitation and starvation wages - a monthly wage of US\$ 300, when the basic cost of living is US\$ 650, and with inflation of near 20% - and that for the workers who are employed, in a country where a million are unemployed, 80% of the population live below the poverty line and 50% survive in the so-called “informal economy”. It is a strange ‘independent workers party’ that does raise the demand in the Transitional Program for a the rising scale of wages and working hours to “*defend the proletariat from deterioration, demoralization and ruin*”; that is, to defend “*the only creative and progressive class, and for that reason, to guarantee the future of humanity*”!

While Chávez orders the officer caste of the Armed Forces to swear an oath “Socialism or death”, the PTS wants an independent “workers” party without fighting for the **sacking of the officers and forming committees of soldiers** who elect their own officials, and provide arms to the factory committees and **workers and peasants militias** in coordination with the military committees.

The PTS calls for an “independent workers party” to campaign for the “nationalization without compensation and under workers control of all the strategic companies and industries of Venezuela”. But this is abstract anti-imperialism.

They refuse to raise the central task that today is vital to end Venezuela’s super-exploitation by imperialism which is **workers support for the heroic Iraqi resistance**, which is leading the anti-imperialist struggle of the international working class: Nor does it call for the Venezuelan working class to **stop a single barrel of Venezuelan oil** from being used by the Yankee military in Iraq.

Nor to call for the repudiation of the external debt that Chávez has paid every year he has been in government, or to stop the billions of dollars sucked out by the imperialist monopolies, the bankers and the 31 families who control the economy of the country.

What does this “independence” mean?

The PTS calls on the PO, the LIT and POR Lora, “...show political independence from chavismo”. But the PTS and PO called for a NO vote to keep Chávez in government in the 2004 recall referendum. That vote -though ‘critical’ - was to give political support to a bourgeois government, breaking the most basic principle of class independence and giving up any fight to overthrow Chavez.

And the PSTU (LIT) did the same thing in Brazil, calling for a vote for the popular front of Lula-Alencar in the second round of the presidential elections of 2002. The PO called for a for Evo Morales in Bolivia in the presidential election of 2005 and then said that his election was a victory of the Bolivian masses.

But worst of all, calling on the POR Lora of Bolivia to be “independent of the chavismo”, cynically hides a half century of betrayals by the POR in liquidating Trotskyism in 1952 and putting the workers at the feet of the bourgeoisie or its lackeys at critical moments.¹³

¹³ This is a lie and a conscious deception by the PTS against the Venezuelan and Bolivian workers, because POR Lora in the glorious Bolivian revolution of 1952 supported “critically” the bourgeois government of Paz Estenssoro, refusing to raise the fight for “All power to the COB” which had formed workers militias and split the bourgeois army, and become an organ of dual power which was capable of taking the working clasws to power by a victorious revolution. Again in 1971, after the bloodthirsty military coup of Banze, Lora called on General Torres, as a ‘patriotic officer’ to form an “anti-imperialist front” that called for the seizure of power and socialism. Then in October of 2003 with the overthrow of Goni, Lora refused to call for workers and peasants organs of dual power or militias. Finally, during the huge events of 2005, Lora abstained when more than 400,000 workers, poor miners and farmers were diverted by Vilma Plata, controlled by Solares and Patana from forming a centralised organ of dual power that could have organised a successful insurrection, leaving the way open for the replacement of Mesa by Rodriguez, and the later victory of Morales in the elections. With these people,

It is clear that the call of PTS to form a "independent workers party" is a trick to stop workers real fight for independence from the "Bolivarian" government of Chávez that allows the MNCs and the national bourgeoisie to superexploit, sack, and pay starvation wages while they reap billions from oil profits.

A new 'workers' party

In reality the PTS wants to form in Venezuela a reformist workers party such as the Workers Party (PT) of Lula in Brazil. It has turned a tactical demand for a workers party raised by the Fourth International in the US in 1938 into a strategy for all times and places.¹⁴

Trotsky used the tactic of a 'workers party' under precise conditions in the United States.: "the proposal of the working party is not a part of the transitional program, but a special case". Again: "The question of the workers party never has been a question of 'principle' for revolutionary Marxists. We have always taken our point of departure from the specific political situation and its developmental tendencies" (*"The problem of the workers party"*, April, 1938).

The PTS on the other hand calls for an 'independent workers party' in Venezuela. In Bolivia, it calls for a "Political Instrument of the Workers" along with the bureaucracy of the COB; and in Argentina, it calls for the creation of a "great party of the working class", etc.¹⁵

who for almost 60 years have been pushing the Bolivian working class into the arms of the class collaborationist leaders of the COB and by that route, in the arms of the bourgeoisie, the PTS says to the Venezuelan workers that a "an independent workers party can be built", that fights for the "perspective of the workers and socialist revolution".

¹⁴ In 1938, Leon Trotsky discussed with the SWP of the United States the tactic, under particular conditions, to call for a workers party based on the unions. It was a specific tactic at a time when the imperialists were heading for World War II. In the US, the working class, unlike the European proletariat, was not organized in reformist workers parties, but was politically subordinated to the Democratic Party. There had been a huge wave of union militancy that led to the formation of the CIO. In 1937-1938 the economic crisis returned to hit the US. The Fourth International judged that these events would push the working class into battle and create the conditions for a rapid development of the SWP as a revolutionary party: "Capitalism is decaying ten to one hundred times more quickly than our party is growing (...). The need for a political party for the workers is given by the objective conditions, but our party is too small, with too little authority to organize the workers in its own ranks. For that reason we must say immediately to the workers, to the masses: you must have a party. But we cannot say immediately to these masses: you must join our party" (*"The labor movements in the United States and Europe: a comparison"*, conversations of Leon Trotsky with SWP, 31/05/1938)

¹⁵ PTS calls in Venezuela to form an "independent workers party", around two general points: "nationalization without compensation and under workers control of the strategic companies" and "workers and peasants government". Leon Trotsky, when he discussed the special case of a "Workers Party" with the leaders of the SWP/US, was clear that such a party should never be formed on the basis of a minimum program, or around some abstract [general] points as the PTS does, but rather revolutionaries should fight in the unions and workers organizations that constitute this party to raise a revolutionary transitional program. When the SWP/US put forward the motion for a Labor Party they raised a program of transitional demands that included the fight by the sliding scale of wages and working hours, workers militias, factory committees, workers control of industry through factory committees, the end to commercial secrets, and the opening of the books, leading to the fight for a workers and farmers government Trotsky would never have called for a workers and farmers government in the US in 1938 – where the proletariat was subordinated to an imperialist bourgeois party, the Democratic Part – without insisting on workers militias to face the scabs and thugs hired by the bosses, as well as fascists like Hague - then mayor of Jersey City that organised paramilitary gangs to attack the workers. Trotsky said that all those who in the US called for a Labor Party without raising the demand for workers militias, were crude pacifists, since obviously as soon as the workers broke with the Democrats and the union bureaucracy, the imperialist bourgeoisie will respond with fascism. On the contrary, the PTS have the audacity to say to the Venezuelan workers to form a "independent workers party" without the need for self-defense, i.e. workers militias.

Nobody can doubt that if the Venezuelan working class wins its real political independence and breaks with Chávez, imperialism and the bourgeoisie will prepare a fascist attack to smash them, as they did in Argentina in the '70s, when they used Videla to smash the workers after the general strike of 1975 July, when the bourgeoisie lost control of the working class that stood up to government of Isabel Perón and the social pact of the Peronist union bureaucracy.

The PTS, however, says to workers that they can build an 'independent workers party' as a pacifist party, "without messing up its hair do", so to speak. But they don't even address the proposal to the base of the workers!

The special motion of a "Labor Party", raised by the US Trotskyists in 1938, was made to the mass workers organisations, in that case, to the unions in the AFL/CIO so that the working class could fight for its own class independence by creating its own independent party, based on its militant organizations in the manner of the Labour Party in England at the start of the 20th century.

But the PTS does not make this proposal to the workers mass organizations, but to parties like POR Lora, the LIT and the PO of Argentina. That is to say, the PTS does not challenge the base of the workers organisations to form an independent workers party.

Rather, the strategy of PTS is to construct reformist workers parties in common with the Loristas, Altamiristas and Morenistas... and in those countries where the bourgeoisie faces a revolutionary uprisings of the masses - like in Argentina in 2001, in Bolivia in 2003/2005. Is that strategy one for the fight for... soviets, the arming of the workers and peasants, the insurrection and the taking of the power? No, never! That strategy is for... Constituent assemblies (that is to say, a bourgeois institution) that can solve all the problems of the workers and the exploited people!¹⁶

We have shown that the PTS policy to form reformist "independent workers parties" is really a proposal for a united reformist party that serves to trap workers outside the popular front, but prepares them for the popular front. Thus, this current mired in Gramsci and Social Democracy, returns to its origins in Morenismo, to its policy of "Revolutionary United Front" (FUR) with minimum program, to fuse with other currents in false "revolutionary parties" with - in this case - self-proclaimed "Trotskyists" in the minority.¹⁷

¹⁶ Comrades Miguel Tavares de Almeida, ex-member of the the LER-QI, the PTS group in Brazil, who had publicly broken with this current, puts this question clearly: "The construction of the parties of the FT-CI is based on the agitation and the systematic propaganda of Asamblea Nacional Constituyente (ANC) and of Partido Obrero Independiente (POI). Unlike the policy of Trotsky that had a precise sense for those tactics, the FT-CI prostitute the ANC giving it a meaning the opposite of the Russian revolution(...). Under the cover of the construction of Independent Workers Parties, what we have is the repetition of the old Morenoist policy of the construction of Centrist Parties of the Legal Left. In Argentina this policy has the name of Revolutionary Workers Party, but in the 2001 crisis, the call to the PO and the mst was for the construction of a centrist party. In Bolivia it has the pompous name of "Political Instrument of the Workers". In Venezuela the group of the FT-CI, the JIR, after the failure of its policy inside the PRS, sent with support of the FT-CI, an international call for the construction of a party centrist in Venezuela along with sectors of the LIT and the CRCI (international grouping created by the Argentine PO directed by Jorge Altamira) both chavistas and Loristas, which shows the total loss of direction of the FT-CI. In Brazil as we will see soon this policy at the same time conceals the capitulation of the LER-QI to the policies of the PSOL and the PSTU, looking also to construct a party in common with those sectors". (*Leninista Party or morenista party?*, Miguel Tavares de Almeida, April of 2007).

¹⁷ In a word: what wants PTS... is that they do not want to be left outside of the new parties formed by the fake trotskyists such as the PSTU and the LIT-CI who are blocking and the program of Celia Hart, James Petras and the World Social Forum. It is a small petty bourgeois student current of the University of Buenos Aires that, with its reformist, legalist and pacifist policy has lost all of its workers members in Argentina, and today looks desperately for a place under the sun.

Massacre of workers in Aluar, Chubut, Argentina

The recent growth of the Argentinian economy on the back of starvation wages paid to workers in the 'black' has resulted in a series of multiple deaths. The latest in Aluar when 10, mainly Bolivian migrant workers, died in the collapse of a silo has seen the union leadership fail to act, and the centrist left call for 'investigations' by the authorities. We summarise the DO article in response to this massacre calls on a general strike to repudiate and mourn the deaths of the workers to mobilise the working class against the Kirchner regime, the employers and the bureaucracy. It calls for a program of transitional demands a sliding scale of hours and wages, and for the workers to judge those responsible for the mounting death toll of workers.¹⁸

It was no accident, it was caused by the bosses' greed for profits¹⁹

The regime wants to disguise this massacre as a "labor accident". With the complicity of the union bureaucracy of the UOCRA, the UOM, Moyano and Yasky, they are going to appoint "experts" to an "investigation commission" that will allow the bosses to escape any blame. Taselli, the industrialist



¹⁸ Like in Acindar, where six workers died in industrial 'accidents' in the last three years, in Aluar, the employer was extending the plant using workers on starvation wages in agreement with the unions, the UOCRA, and the UOM, so that the bosses can make huge profits at the cost of workers lives. The deaths of these workers are mounting because the bosses are protected by the state, the justice system with its police and gendarmerie, and its laws, parliaments, legislatures, and allowed to impose the most terrible wage slavery on the workers.

¹⁹ They are the junior partners of imperialism who benefit from the oil wars, the massacres in Iraq and Palestine, the occupation of Haiti, and the cuts in spending on health, education, transport, etc. They rob the workers. They receive subsidies of hundreds of million dollars to their fat profits. Aluar has got around \$700 million). Yet, none of these thieves and killers are imprisoned. The only ones locked up are the workers who rebel against these terrible conditions and fight for their rights, conditions of work, against the 'precarious' contracts signed by the bosses and the union officials behind their backs. This is why 4500 of our comrades of Las Heras were arrested. They rebelled against their poverty wages to the cry of "The oil is for all!" These are the conditions of the social pact signed by the bosses and the government, with the union bureaucrats of the CGT and the CTA, who are hired as prison guards to enslave the workers.

friend of Kirchner, who was responsible for the death of 14 miners at the River Turbio. The owner of the dangerous railroad that forced the workers to protest at the Constitution station a few weeks ago goes unpunished. So is the employer of the young people who died in the workshop where they were locked in like slaves. So is the textile boss whose workers died when their prison like hostel burned down. Ibarra murderer of the youth of Cromañón; Sobisch, the killer of Fuentealba; Duhalde, killer of Kosteki and Santillán; De la Rúa who is responsible for the deaths of the comrades on the 20 of December, 2001; Menem, Alfonsín and all the murderers of the working class and the people, are all free.

The comrades Antonio Areco, Lucio Buendía Flores, Braulio Marquina, Julio Alberto Deslinder, Obdulio Escobar, Agapo Mejía Vidal, Tito Luciano Mamani, Fidel Torrico Ferrufico, Osvaldo Zurita Montañón and Wilder Orellana Hut, killed at Aluar, are new martyrs of the Argentine, Bolivian, Latin American and world working class!

The union bureaucracy is an accomplice in the workers' deaths

This killing of the workers occurred only a few days after they were betrayed by the UOM officials in their struggle against the wage limits and for a 45% of pay increase. During a strike that shut the plant, two workers on the picket line blocking access to the plant, were threatened by the police and then attacked and beaten

by thugs hired by the bureaucracy of the UOCRA, which had made an agreement to "guarantee" the completion of works and protect the investment of \$900 million. On the 15 of June, the leadership of the UOM called off the strike without consulting the workers. Thus, between the bureaucracy of the UOM selling out the fight for the wage, and the bureaucracy of the UOCRA using thugs to break the strike of the Aluar workers, they 'guaranteed' to the bosses the superexploitation of the workers. Treachery! They are accomplices in the workers' deaths!²⁰.

²⁰ These bureaucrats say that they "cannot inform on the legal situation of the workers...". But they know that most of the workers, many of them Bolivian, who work for contractors, are working in 'black' [illegals]. The union officials of the CGT and CTA 'guarantee' the hiring of illegal workers with no legal protection. These are the workers without rights; 60% of workers are not represented in union, they do not appear in the labor statistics. And they are the industrial workers who are most injured or killed. They verbally condemn illegal conditions while they are themselves responsible for the existence the

Stop the killing of workers, poverty wages, and wage slavery!

- **Down the union bureaucracy, accomplice of the workers deaths and paid killers of the bosses!**

The employers fill to the factories with security staff to guard their private property and the profits, but care nothing for the safety and health of their workers. Nor do the union bureaucrats. Enough! We will not tolerate it:

- **For Workers Control of production and Committees of management, under the control of workers assemblies whose elected delegates, as their first task, will stop all unsafe, illegal work, and ensure that all workers are employed with equal rights!**
- **Down with the Ministry of Work, accomplice and accessory of the murder of workers!**

The only guarantee of the security of workers is the workers themselves. At Aluar, the construction workers had already warned that the silo could collapse: "We said to them that this structure was not going to hold. I said it to the overseer...but they all fell", said one workmate of the dead workers, to the news media.

- **For an 8 hour working day; a minimum, living wage of \$3,100 pesos adjusted to the cost of the family shopping basket according to the rate of inflation measured in dollars.**

In order to win these demands it is necessary to fight with strikes and pickets, to mobilise in the streets and throw out the union bureaucracy. The workers of the Subte proved that the only way to win a 6 hour day to protect their health underground, and a basic wage of \$ 2,800 [a month], they had to strike, to block the tracks, to take to the streets and to throw out the bureaucracy of the UTA.

- **Bring to justice those responsible for killing workers at Aluar, River Turbio, etc. and murderers of Fuentelba and of all the martyrs of the working class! For Workers Courts to judge and punish all the military, bosses and politicians responsible for the the deaths of workers and youth.**

enslaved illegal workforce. They know that the biggest firm employ around 50% of their workforce illegally. They know that there are million workers in these conditions. And they allow it because they are accomplices.

- **Freedom for the prisoners of Las Heras, and all the political prisoners and those arrested and charged who rebelled against these injustices! Stop wage slavery!**
- **Down with the the social pact. Down the ;poverty wage limits of 16.5%. All illegal and contracted workers on permanent contracts!.**

In order to end 'precarity', a living wage and decent work, illegal work and the end of workers deaths, is necessary to organise to defeat to the social pact between the government and the employers.

For a General Strike to mark the massacre at Aluar! For a National Committee of Struggle to prepare for a General Strike!

- **We must build a National Committee of Struggle to organise a march to the union headquarters to demand a general strike of mourning!**

The reformist left says that "there are no conditions" to coordinate and to centralize such as National

Committee of Struggle, and so they refuse to do it. The results are obvious. The conditions to such a Committee are more than ripe. It is necessary for the working class to impose it. Let us do it right now! Not to do it, is to leave the working class submissive to the union bureaucracy and to the wage slavery of the bosses.

The workers in struggle like the telephone workers, health,

workers, underground workers, the many lists, unions, and competing delegates who stood in the national elections of the CTA; the workers of the French Hospital; the workers who fought in FATE and coordinated ithe Pan-American fight against Bush; educational and state workers of Santa Cruz; the teachers of Neuquén who want revenge for the murder of Fuentelba; the workers of the Garrahan, etc., the combative piqueteros movements, none can wait for a minute more.

From each factory and firm, from each workplace, it is necessary to coordinate, to organize, overcoming the splits and divisions created by the treacherous bureaucracy, united the various unions and professions, uniting the employed, unemployed and illegals, because as we know, while we live there is hope.



Stop the massacre of the heroic Palestinian masses!

The recent events in the middle East, the confrontation between Al Fatah and Hamas, and the split between Gaza and Transjordan, is of major importance to the world working class. Workers everywhere are thinking how is it possible to end the ongoing oppression of Palestine occupied by the Zionist state for six decades, and today divided into ghettos like Gaza and Transjordan. How can Palestine be liberated? We reprint an edited version of a declaration of the FLT that argues that the unity of the working classes of the Middle East to resist imperialism and overthrow their corrupt national bourgeoisies, can, along with the mobilisation of the proletariat in the imperialist countries, defeat the imperialist war machines, liberate Palestine and open the road to a Federation of Socialist Republics in the region.

How is it that Israel can still oppress Palestine when the Zionist army, one of the most powerful in the world, that defeated Egypt and Jordan in 6 days in 1967, had its spine broken in July 2006, by the resistance of the Hizbollah and Palestinian fighters in the South of Lebanon? This proved again that a popular resistance that defends its own homes, land and territory, is a thousand times more powerful than an occupation army. The Vietnamese proved this yesterday and today the Iraqi resistance proves it.²¹

The defeat of its army at the hands of the armed masses left the Zionist state of Israel, that is, the main gendarme of imperialism in the region, in a deep crisis, and opened up a new offensive by the Palestinian people to win its historical fight to destroy the Zionist state achieve its national liberation.

At the same time, another important development occurred. The staunch resistance of the Iraqi masses against the Anglo/Yankee occupation troops spurred the US working class to seriously mobilise against the war, and to come to the defense of the rights of immigrant workers, causing a crisis of confidence in the Government of Bush and the powerful oil groups that dominate US imperialism.

These two decisive facts have changed the balance of forces and posed the threat of a *Vietnam-type scenario* for US imperialism. There now existed a danger that the resistance of the Palestinian people and all the exploited of the Middle East could join forces with the Iraqi resistance, as well as generate growing support from the United States and the other imperialist countries.

The national bourgeoisies of the Middle East contain the anti-imperialist struggles of the workers and oppressed peoples.

After the defeat of the Israeli army in Lebanon, the Palestinian people had the possibility of breaking through the encirclement imposed on them in 2002, when the second Intefada that began in 2000 was smashed by the Zionist military.²² But this did not

²¹ When imperialism occupies a nation it must put to the working class to work. As Trotsky said in the 1930s the myth that the German army under Hitler was invincible was exploded because that army could never put next to each worker of the occupied nation a armed soldier to force the worker to produce.

²² The 21st Century began in September 2000, with the Intifada, confronting Al Fatah and the Palestine bourgeoisie directly by attacking the police stations of the "Palestine National Authority" [PNA] and rejecting the imperialist agreements of Oslo of 1993 designed to enslave the Palestinian people. The masses disarmed the "Palestine" police armed themselves in the camps and the cities and began an armed semi-insurrection against the Zionist army. The heroic resistance of the Intifada became a mass revolutionary counter-offensive. To stop the insurrection, to disarm the masses and restore the bourgeois leadership of Arafat, and Al Fatah, (who had been unable along with Hamas and the Jihad to contain the Intifada for two years) the Israelis launched a military offensive in the first months of 2002. While Yankee imperialism bombed, killed and invaded Afghanistan, and prepared its colonial war against Iraq, the Zionist army, commanded by Sharon, entered Jenin, Nablus and other cities and Palestinian camps in Transjordan, killing thousands

happen, not because of any lack in the will or ability of the mass resistance, but because it was held back by the bourgeois leadership. Al Fatah and Hamas formed a government of "national unity" to act as the prison guards of their own people in the concentration camps of Gaza and Transjordan.²³ In Lebanon, Hizbollah made an agreement with the Siniora



government to support it and accept the imperialist troops of the UN in control of South Lebanon. This left the Lebanese army that refused to fight against the Zionist army intact.

This is the same army that, less than two months ago, was used by the pro-imperialistic government of Siniora, to attack the Palestinian refugee camps in the north of the Lebanon, while Hizbollah stood by. At the same time, the Zionist army began new attacks against the people confined in the Gaza Strip and locked up under a terror regime imposed by the collaborationist Al Fatah and its "police".

In Lebanon the resistance in the Palestinian camp fought the army of Siniora for six weeks killing as many as they lost (of a total of 167 dead, almost 80 belonged to the Lebanese army). Inspired by the resistance of the Palestinians in Lebanon, the swelling Iraqi resistance, and the emergence

of workers, women and children, smashing the heroic militias, and restoring Arafat and Al Fatah to power.

²³ The defeat of the Intefada in mid-2002 allowed the US to put forward its "Road Map" to the UN, to allow Israel to create Bantustans administered by and the collaborationist Palestine bourgeoisie of Al Fatah. The Gaza Strip - a very small territory of 400 km² with a population of 1.5 million became a concentration camp under direct control of the PNA of Al Fatah and Hamas, surrounded by the Zionist army like a true ghetto. Transjordan remained under the direct occupation of the Zionist army; fragmented into bantustans by Zionist colonies and a massive wall. These "ghettos" - reminders of the Warsaw ghetto under the Nazi occupation of Poland during WW2, are policed by the PNA headed by a prominent leader of the Al Fatah, Dahlan. The 200,000 civil employees, bureaucrats, police and mercenaries of Al Fatah and its 13 armed security agencies live of the misery of the enslaved Palestinians like modern day sultans.

of working class struggles in Egypt and Iran, the Palestinian militants in Gaza rose up against the bourgeois leadership of Al Fatah, their militias and police, and threw them out of Gaza.

However, while the leaders of Al Fatah were thrown out of Gaza they were replaced by another faction of the Palestinian bourgeoisie in the form of the Islamic movement, Hamas. It took control of Gaza on June 15th, and immediately sought a ceasefire with Al Fatah in Transjordan.²⁴

By this means the two factions of the Palestinian bourgeoisie –those those-confined in Gaza under the control of Hamas and those in Transjordan under Al Fatah –are separated from one another and from their compatriots in Lebanon, dividing and ruling the national liberation struggle Palestine against the Zionist occupant.²⁵

This proves yet again that the national bourgeoisie is incapable of leading a victorious national revolutionary struggle against imperialism, especially in a nation like Palestine, colonized and occupied by an army that is funded by imperialism to act as its gendarme in the region, such is the army of the Zionist state of Israel.²⁶

But the indomitable will and resistance of the Palestinian people over sixty years, has also proven that only the Palestinian proletariat, leading all the exploited people, and taking the road of the 2002 uprising, united with the workers of the whole Middle East and with the working class and the US and other imperialistic powers, is capable of winning the struggle for the liberation of Palestine, overthrowing its own bourgeoisie, acting as the prison guards of the Zionist occupation, and destroying the Zionist state of Israel.

Gaza June 2007: mass insurrection and the counter-revolutionary role of Hamas

In 2006 Al Fatah and Hamas formed a government of “national unity” with Abbas of Al Fatah as president and Haniyeh of Hamas as prime minister. In this way This way, both fractions of the bourgeoisie, one openly collaborationist, the other acting as the “opposition”, joined forces to become the prison guards of the Palestinians; ki.e. a colonial government that governs on behalf of the Zionist state of Israel. However, the imperialists, Israel and the UN designated Hamas as “terrorists” – and imposed an economic blockade to bring the Palestinian resistance to its knees.²⁷

²⁴ In order to contain the hatred of the masses for Al Fatah, a new bourgeois faction emerged, Hamas. Hamas, expressed the interests of the commercial bourgeoisie of the Bazaar in the Middle East, as for example the Iranian bourgeoisie, or the Egyptian Muslim Brothers. It won support by calling for the destruction of the state of Israel, manipulating the hatred of the Palestinian people, won the 2006 “elections” in the nonexistent “Palestinian state” organized by imperialism, its Zionist gendarme, the UN and the ANP. Once elected it offered Israel a “truce” for 10 years – giving up the fight by Israel’s destruction. Hamas hoped that this truce would buy some “economic aid” from the imperialistic powers and the Zionist state to administer the ghettos in which the Palestinian people are imprisoned. This truce was rejected by the imperialists and Israel and all funds going to the new Hamas led government for Palestine were embargoed. Hamas would have to publicly acknowledge Israel’s right to exist before it could make a ‘truce’.

²⁵ This allowed Bush and Olmert to redouble the offensive against the Palestinian s. The Zionist state, with the approval of US imperialism, mounted new attacks against Gaza, immediately killing more than 12 among them a boy of 12 years, and injuring more than 200.

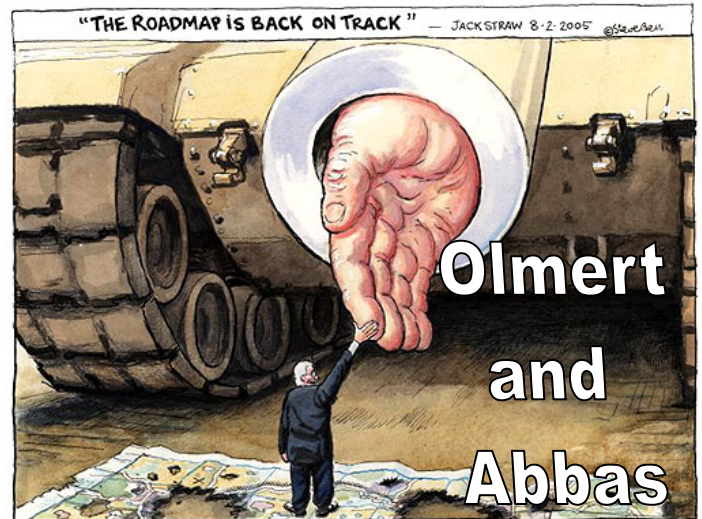
²⁶ In almost 60 years of occupation of Palestine, the bourgeoisie has proved many times it is incapable of carrying through to the end the revolutionary national struggle by destroying the Zionist state of Israel. It is bound by thousands of ties of property and businesses to the Zionist bourgeoisie and the imperialistic monopolies, and acts as the junior partner in the exploitation of its own people. It knows that the Palestinian masses in attacking the property and the state of the Zionist bourgeoisie, and that of imperialism, must also attack its property and its state power.

²⁷ In Gaza for more of a year, lived being able to go to work like slaves in Israel, without food, water, fuel, light, medicines. From February of 2006 the wages of the public workers were not paid. The only food and medicines were

Against this extreme situation of colonial rule the masses of Gaza rose up in a spontaneous insurrection. In mid-June they attacked the government buildings, the police stations and the headquarters of the hated “preventative security” and armed themselves. They burned the opulent houses of the officials of Al Fatah –including the house of Yasser Arafat.. Long live the right of workers and oppressed to take food from the houses of those rich officials and arm themselves from the arsenals of the oppressors!

The broke into the prisons, released the prisoners and burned the archives of the collaborationists, torturers and killers of their own people. This spontaneous action of the masses was labelled “anarchy” and “chaos” by the imperialists and the Zionists.

The big fear of the imperialists and Zionists was that



this insurrection would spread to Transjordan, and to Lebanon and mark the unification and mobilisation of a strong Palestinian resistance that could take the road of 2000 and 2003. They feared also the spread of the insurrection to the Egyptian working class confronting the regime of Mubarak who openly backs Israel and the imperialist rule over the region.²⁸

To prevent this scenario Hamas and its militias on 15 June took control of the government in Gaza. Hamas could if it wished take over in Transjordan as well where it has the mass support. Instead it allowed Al Fatah to keep control and use its militia to repress the militants of Hamas, calling for calm and negotiation, while guaranteeing control of the masses in Gaza.²⁹

Hamas by separating Gaza and Transjordan hopes to win the favor of the imperialistic powers and Israel, to get some “international aid” and the taxes in order to keep the insurrectionary masses of Gaza under control and free from Zionist military attacks. In return they will attempt to disarm the masses of Gaza. For that reason, Hamas has prohibited missile attacks on Israel. Their Islamic brigades visit the camps and towns, Koran in hand, trying to get the masses to give up their, but with very little success.

In synchrony with the imperialist “Conference for

the “humanitarian aid”. The PNA and Al Fatah police ruled, arresting, torturing and killing any opponents of the regime.

²⁸ In Egypt, a workers struggle against the pro-imperialistic, proZionist, antiworker and repressive regime of Mubarak has begun, led by the strikes and protests of the textile workers, and extended to workers in construction, food, recycling, baking, health, media, transport, mining etc. The Egyptian working class faces the union bureaucracy, the governing party and the ministry of work that bans strikes and sends the police against them. A workers victory in Egypt could unite Palestinians from Gaza to Beirut.

²⁹ Hamas says it does not want civil war, nor a separate government. It has proposed to Al Fatah a national dialogue for “unity”, new elections, and calls on the masses to be “calm”, to go home, and releases a Zionist soldier and British journalist taken as political prisoners.

peace and security in Iraq”, the imperialist powers, the Zionist state of Israel, and the pro-imperialist bourgeoisies of the region, want to strengthen the role of the two factions of the Palestinian bourgeoisie to strangle the heroic Palestinian people. They intensify their blockade of Gaza, while they recognise the self-proclaimed government of Al Fatah and promise to restore the funds to administer the Transjordan. But it is not possible to understand the recent events in Palestine fully, without seeing it as part of the current world situation.

A new pact between imperialism, Zionism and the bourgeoisies of Syria, Iran and the Middle East to stop a new Vietnam

From mid 2006, to avoid a new Vietnam, US imperialism began to look for a way out of Iraq. The unions and the reformist left pushed the anti-war movement back in behind the Democratic Party and when it won claimed this was a victory for those



opposed to the war. Yet the Democrats in power backed Bush in Iraq and voted to pay for the war on a vague timetable of withdrawal. To replace the US, and subcontract the colonial occupation, Bush snr, James Baker and a bipartisan commission of Congress formed a pact between the United States, France, Germany and other European powers, Israel, and the bourgeoisies Syria and Iran - the old “axis of evil” – to meet each year in an ongoing “Conference for Peace and Security in Iraq”.³⁰

This pact means then that, to ensure that the weakening of the state of Israel does not jeopardise Imperialist rule in the Middle East, the principle gendarmes in the region are now the national bourgeoisies,³¹ including the Iranian and Syrian bourgeoisies and the bourgeois movements like Hizbollah, Al Fatah, and Hamas³²

³⁰ In this pact, all the national bourgeoisies of the Middle East will form a bloc under their imperialistic masters to contain every threat to imperialist property and power that arises from the Iraqi, Palestinian resistance, or from any growing working class struggles in Iran, Egypt, Pakistan etc

³¹ The Egyptian leadership of Mubarak is also a key part of this plan. It is required to control the militarized border with Gaza, completing the iron wall that isolates Gaza, and prevents the Egyptian working class from joining the struggle of the Palestinian masses. Note the silence of the Muslim Brotherhood –the Egyptian organization that founded Hamas in occupied Palestine.

³² That is the role of Ahmadinejad and the Iranian ayatollahs; Hizbollah and sheik Nasrallah, Al Fatah, Hamas and the other bourgeois factions of the region. The bourgeoisies of the Middle East are thus playing the same role that as the popular front governments of Morales, Lula, Tabaré Vázquez, Chávez, etc. - all those who are “anti-neoliberal”, “anti-imperialists”, backed by the reformist left of the World Social Forum, and supported by the Castroite

A key part of this imperialist plan to avoid a new Vietnam was to guarantee that the Palestine bourgeoisie – both Al Fatah and Hamas –prevented any resurgence of the Palestinian struggle following the defeat of the Israel army by Hizbollah. At the same time the Syrian and Iranian leaderships were put in charge of crushing the Iraqi resistance along with the ‘surge’ of 20,000 marines and the puppet Iraqi army and police.³³

- **Down with the imperialist pact to destroy the Palestinian and Iraqi resistance!**
- **By the generalized armament of the masses in the middle East,**
- **Egyptian workers open the border with Gaza to supply arms, food, medicines etc to the Palestinian people!**
- **Iranian workers retake the road to revolution of 1979 against the Ayotullahs and Islamic state!**
- **End the divisions of the Palestinian people!**
- **Neither Al Fatah nor Hamas or a new “government of national unity” of the concentration camps to subjugate the Palestinian people**
- **Dissolve the “Palestine” police and “preventive security” and other armed bands of the jailers, killers and torturers of the Palestinian people!**
- **Immediate freedom to all the Palestinian prisoners who the Zionist state has like hostages!**
- **For a national Palestinian assembly workers and peasants delegates to unite Palestinian masses from Gaza to Beirut³⁴**
- **For a workers and peasants militia to defeat the army Siniora and to throw out the imperialistic troops of the UN!**
- **Israeli immigrant workers break with Zionism and go to the trench of the Palestinian people!**
- **For the destruction of the Zionist state of Israel!**
- **For a Secular, democratic and nonracist state of Palestine that only can be guaranteed by a workers and peasants government of the armed Palestinian masses!**
- **For a Federation of Socialist Workers and Peasants Republics!**

The International Working Class will not leave

bureaucracy. In return for containing and strangling the anti-imperialist struggles of the masses, they act as the junior partners of imperialism, and get paid their share of the superprofits sucked out of the continent. Thus Hizbollah stopped the Palestinian masses and of south Lebanon from overthrowing the government of Siniora and disarming his army, preventing the start of a workers and peasants revolution in Lebanon capable of launching a campaign for the destruction of Israel. In return, the Italian and French imperialists pay the Hizbollah bourgeoisie part of the profits made from the reconstruction of the country destroyed by the Zionist army.

³³ The Syrian leadership was required to prevent arms and personnel from crossing its border into Iraq. The Iranian leadership backs the puppet government and has sent thousands of “Revolutionary Guards”, to assist the death squads formed by the US, to fight the Sunni and Mahdi resistance. So much for the Iranian bourgeoisie which Chávez wants to present as “anti-imperialist”!

³⁴ A Palestine National Assembly of workers and farmers would call on the whole working class and poor people of the Middle East to unite and revolt against imperialism, the Zionist state and the lackey bourgeoisies by attacking its private property and its profits, to fight for the expropriation of the imperialist monopolies, the nationalization without compensation and under workers control of oil, gas and wealth of all the Arab nations and the Middle East. It would call on the workers in the imperialistic powers to rise up its support, against the regimes and governments that support the Zionist state and the occupation of Iraq, Afghanistan and south Lebanon. It would call on the working class of all the region to rise up against their own lackey bourgeoisies and imperialism to expropriate the expropriators and transform all the nations in the region into a Federation of Workers and Peasants Socialist Republics of the Middle East and Asia!

the Palestinian and Iraqi struggles isolated!

As the imperialists, Zionists and national bourgeoisies develop their reactionary plan in the Middle East, they are confronted by the rise of the working class in the Middle East opposing the national regimes that act as junior partners in superexploiting and oppressing them for the imperialists' superprofits.

Only the working class entering the struggle in the whole Middle East can solve the tragedy of the Palestinian people and ensure the liberation of the Iraqi people and all the oppressed nations of the region. Thus in Iran,³⁵ in Egypt, in Pakistan, the workers are making fights against their own bourgeoisies, showing that they have the potential power to come to the aid of the resistance in Iraq and the martyred Palestinian people. The revolutionary fight of the proletariat, from Egypt to Pakistan, can expel imperialism from the region and to expropriate its monopolies, destroy the state of Israel, overthrow the national bourgeoisies and create Workers and Peasants governments and a Federation of Socialist Republics.

The task of defeating and of expelling the invading imperialistic troops from Iraq, and of destroying the Zionist state of Israel, is a task of the proletariat of the Middle East, but also the world working class.

The internationalist Trotskyists of the FLT calls on the working organizations of the world who say they defend the Palestine liberation cause, to run the blockade and the wall imposed on our Palestinian brothers sisters, to ensure that arms, equipment, food and medicines reach the people of Gaza, Transjordan and the Lebanon, and to the indomitable Iraqi resistance!

The key for the victory of the Iraqi and Palestinian resistance is the proletariat of the imperialist countries, in particular the US which occupies Iraq, and along with other imperialist powers, created, supports and finances the Zionist state of Israel. They have the power to strike at the heart of the imperialistic beast and its military machine.³⁶

To mobilise the workers in the imperialist countries it is necessary to break with their own imperialistic bourgeoisies and the reformist leadership of the World Social Forum. The US proletariat must break with the imperialist butchers of the Democratic Party! French workers must break with the regime of Sarkozy-Royal-Le Pen. Spanish workers must break with the PSOE defenders of the imperialist monarchic regime of the Bourbons. The Italian working class must break with the government of Prodi and Communist Rifondazione which have sent their "blue helmets" under the command of the UN to south Lebanon!

- **Imperialism out of Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East!**
- **UN hands off Lebanon and Palestine!**
- **For the liberation of Palestine and destruction of the state of Israel!**
- **Down with the butcher Bush! Down with the imperialist regime of the "Republicrats", killers of the peoples of the world, exploiters and oppressors of the US working class!**

³⁵ Today the Iranian working class, after more than two years of strikes of workers and teachers, in the middle of a brutal economic crisis weighing on the heads of the exploited masses, faces fuel rationing. The reaction of the masses was to set fire to 17 petrol stations. The Iranian working class is standing up to retake the road of 1979 when it threw down Shah Reza Pahlavi, agent of imperialism, destroyed his army and created workers militias.

³⁶ The dockers of Oakland, in the San Francisco Bay, have shown the way. Strikes, pickets, demonstrations and protests to prevent the shipping of arms and equipment to the imperialist troops in Iraq and the Zionist army. Now we must ensure that arms, equipments, food, fuel, medicines etc reach the Iraqi and Palestine resistance! By stopping the war machine at home, the US and other imperialist workers can enter the struggle on the side of the Iraqi and Palestinian as the main battalion of the world proletariat.

For a World Party of the Socialist Revolution

The tragedy of the heroic Palestinians is their domination by different fractions of the bourgeoisie, Al Fatah, Hamas and Hizbollah. These national bourgeoisies claim to be anti-Israel and anti-imperialist, but their class interests are to make pacts with imperialism and Zionism. They are backed by the reformist left of the World Social Forum,³⁷ Fidel Castro, Stalinism and the fake Trotskyists who also want to do deals with 'democratic' imperialists such as the Democratic Party.

They are supported by the labor bureaucracies and the fake Trotskyists who in 2004, when the Spanish working class revolted against the war and occupation of Iraq reacted to the bombings of the trains in Atocha station by rejecting Spain's role in the war – "Your war, our dead" – called for a vote for the imperialist PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers Party) candidate Zapatero to "defeat the PP" *(the conservative Popular Party). Zapatero promised to take out the troops from Iraq some months later but then sent Spanish troops to occupy the south of the Lebanon under the UN in 2006.

Facing the Palestine struggle and the struggle of the oppressed nations of the Middle East and the Arab world for their national liberation, the bankruptcy of the former Trotskyites that are now the left leg of the World Social Forum popular front, is total. They have gone over bags and baggage to an open policy of supporting the reformist bourgeois, social patriotic popular fronts and populist regimes.

Such is the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League) with their deputies in the European parliament, who voted in 2004 in favor of the "Road Map" for Palestine. Today their spokespersons openly offer social patriotic advice to the Israeli Prime Minister, Olmert and to the Zionist General Staff, that they must now negotiate with Hamas or face a revolution later.

There it is the LIT (Argentinian followers of Moreno) that, with the most sameless union cretinismo, traveled to Gaza with a delegation of Spanish unionists, to make proclamations with delegations of the Palestinian unions for "humanitarian aid against the blockade", without saying a word about the fight for the destruction of the state of Israel, only days before the spontaneous insurrection of the masses of Gaza began.

The Spanish group of the LIT, says to the Spanish workers not to make a general strike against Zapatero, or to return to the political offensive of 2004, because by means of letters, petitions and with the pressure public opinion, it is possible to get the government to "change its policy" and remove its troops from Lebanon to lift the blockade against the Palestinian masses. The same LIT, with the Workers Party of Argentina and other currents, openly supports the Hamas fraction of the bourgeoisie, and that of Hizbollah, which today negotiate with the Zionists and imperialism to act to disarm the Palestinian masses in Palestine and Lebanon and 'guarantors of peace'.

The only hands clean enough to take up the flag of the fight to destroy Israel, that is to say, the liberation of Palestine, are the hands of the Palestinian workers and poor people, the proletariat of the Middle East and the world, and the healthy forces of Trotskyism that fight to regroup the principled international Trotskyists and revolutionary workers organizations, as the only way to refound a world party of socialist revolution, under the program, the lessons and the legacy of the Fourth International founded in 1938.

³⁷Chávez called on the Palestinians in Lebanon to support the bourgeois leadership Hizbollah, that today stands by while Siniora's army attacks the camps. The Social Democratic and Stalinist union bureaucracies of the European powers - of the UGT and CCOO of Spain, the British trades unions, the CGT and CFDT of France, the CGIL of Italy, etc. - support their own imperialist bourgeoisies, recognize as "legitimate" the state of Israel and the 'Road Map' for "two states".

Mexico

Oaxaca leads the workers and peasants struggle

The 14 of June of 2007 thousand of workers and farmers were mobilized headed by the **Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO)** and Section 22 of the teachers' union, included teachers' educational delegations from Chiapas, Federal District, Guerrero, Jalisco, Morelos, Tlaxcala, Zacatecas, Valley of Mexico and Durango etc, that form **National Coordinator of Workers of Education (CNTE)**, a radical faction within the national teachers union. This was the first anniversary of the formation of the Commune of Oaxaca. The Commune was formed by defeating to the police attack on their camp unleashed by the PRI state Governor Ulises Ruiz (URO). The camp was set up by striking teachers and the Commune took control of the central city, taking decision in a popular assembly, forming its own self defence squads, creating a temporary dual power of the APPO against the bourgeois state. The Commune was a popular response to the attacks of imperialism and the bosses on the workers and farmers on both sides of the border. The ghost of the Mexican revolution was seen looming over North America. Oaxaca became the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle of the masses against imperialism in Latin America, inseparable from the struggle of immigrants in the U.S.A. Like the workers and teachers Neuquén and Santacruz, in the Argentine Patagonia, and other struggles in Latin America, they were betrayed by the same treacherous class collaborationist leaders associated with the Zapatistas and the World Social Forum, and suffered the repression of the bourgeois state forces.

This 14 June the people went on the streets again demanding the immediate resignation of Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, the release of the political prisoners, the bringing to justice of those in charge of the repression, the withdrawal of all charges against members of the APPO and the demilitarization of the communities of the state of Oaxaca, following the defeat of the APPO in a heroic struggle against the forces of the PFP led by URO and President Fox and his successor Calderon (PAN) in October-November of 2006.

Now it is necessary to return to the fight to avenge the 24 comrades who died, free the hundreds of prisoners who still rot in the jails, and stop the persecution of the activists and teacher by the murderous regime of Calderón and Ulises Ruiz in Oaxaca which is still occupied by the Federal Preventative Police (PFP).

The workers and farmers who formed the commune put all their efforts into the struggle and yet were defeated. Not because of any lack of will to fight, or lack of heroism, quite the reverse. Nor was it the superior strength of the repressive forces. This defeat was the sole responsibility of the leaders of the political currents organised in the World Social Forum who left the heroic fighters of the Commune isolated and disarmed. The results are clear. Those who lead the APPO to defeat were the reformist leadership of the APPO associated with the Castroite *Communist Party of Mexico-Popular Revolution (PCM-FPR)* and the *New Left* (affiliated to the Democratic Revolutionary Party of Obrador - PRD). The union bureaucracies played a criminal role in isolating the APPO from all the other union struggles, in order to subordinate them to the PRD of Lopez Obrador and his electoral 'democratic front' backed by the

World Social Forum. Missing in action was the ELZN, led by Subcomandante Marcos, of "the other campaign" who travelled across Mexico by motor scooter preaching his message that it is necessary to "go slowly" and that "we can change the world without taking power". All disarmed the insurgent workers in the face of the bourgeois repression.



These currents are today raising resolutions in APPO to tie it to the PRD 'Democratic Front'. "(...) to strengthen all the efforts at national unity against the repressive governments such as , like the APPM; the National Dialogue; the Democratic National Convention (PRD front); and the General Council of Struggles and the Other Campaign (EZLN

front). The APPO will have to act on the proposals passed by the assemblies, ensuring that representation in these assemblies is plural and inclusive." (2^a STATE ASSEMBLY OF the APPO, Oaxaca to 15 of June of the 2007). To leave no doubt where these reformist currents stand, in the declaration calling for a march on June 29 they say. "(...) the movement today must meet with all the other sectors to unite and demand the resignation of [URO] as soon as possible, as our objective has always been to replace the corrupt government of Oaxaca with a democratic government which serves all sectors of Oaxaca society; this can never happen under URO so it is necessary to change the articles of incorporation." (APPO, 27 of June of 2007, City of the Resistance, Oaxaca).

The PRD led by Lopez Obrador , and backed by stalinism and the reformist currents in the World Social Forum has a ally in the EZLN of Marcos. They played the key role in preventing the masses from rising up against Fox-Calderón when they stole the Presidential election from Obrador, and turning the Federal

District and all of Mexico into another Oaxaca. Instead the masses were contained by the "planton" (camp) in the Zocalo of Mexico City of two months by Lopez Obrador while he organised the "Democratic Front" against the electoral fraud of the PAN. The PRD and its collaborators thus prevented the masses from independent action and subordinated them to the fraction of the bourgeoisie that the PRD represents (as pro-imperialistic, antiworker and defending NAFTA as Fox, Calderón of the PAN as well as the PRI). It is this swindle of the PRD and Lopez Obrador against the exploited masses that is the real "fraud: that is, to make the masses think they can have "democracy" without breaking with imperialism, without throwing out NAFTA, and with the PRD/PAN/PRI state regime. Playing a supporting role, the EZLN and Marcos, in his knitted cap, comes to the aid of the NAFTA regime, when the masses threaten to make a revolution. They are the 'celebrities' of the World Social Forum, the Castroites and Chavistas, who want to make a "Bolivarian Revolution" in Mexico.

Thus they made a trap for the Comuneros of Oaxaca. While the Government Secretary promised to meet the demands of the teachers, including a wage increase, dropping legal charges against the leaders of the APPO, and to release the political prisoners, a Senate Commission declared Oaxaca to be in a state of "anarchy" creating the pretext for the massive repression that followed. The leaders of the APPO, Castroites and PRD members and supporters of Marcos, knew of the situation and refused to prepare the masses for the attack. By entering the negotiations the class collaborators and conciliators of the APPO leadership opened the doors to the repression. The consequences of their policy today can be counted in the number of dead, disappeared, tortured, imprisoned, wounded and persecuted comrades.

Inside the leadership of the APPO the Castroites of the PCM-FPR and the New Left (PRD members) did all they could to stop the struggle of the comuneros from coordinating and concentrating all the militant forces of Mexico in Oaxaca. They refused to call on the workers and peasants organisations in struggle to send mandated delegates of the base to Oaxaca to organize the defense of the commune and a national general strike in support. They prevented therefore - following exactly the policy of Marcos and the WSF - that after 12 years of NAFTA, the workers and peasants from rising up against the the huge imperialist offensive to complete the privatisation and sacking of national assets, such as PEMEX (Mexican State Petroleum) and the national electricity company.

No honest observer can have any doubt that the role of Marcos was fundamental. The EZLN had in their hands the 'power' to prevent Oaxaca from being isolated. It would have been enough to call on the workers and poor farmers if Chiapas and Guerrero to rise up beside their oaxaqueños brothers and sisters with the demands that the EZLN first raised in 1994: "Down with NAFTA", "Land for the peasants" and "Down with the hated regime"! When the workers and peasants of Guerrero also came together, following the example of Oaxaca, and creating popular assemblies, they were prevented by Marcos

and the EZLN from answering the call of their brothers and sisters of the Commune of Oaxaca to unite in a same fight against imperialism and the NAFTA regime of the PAN, PRI and PRD..

Because Marcos says it is necessary to "go little by little" the EZLN refused to make available of the defense of the Commune of Oaxaca all its resources and media to oppose the repression of the PFP. Meanwhile Marcos wrote poems travelled across Mexico building "the Other Campaign", that is to say, the subordination of the masses to the bourgeoisie of the PRD. By his actions he prevented the unity of the workers workers and poor farmers of Guerrero and Chiapas to join the APPO to create a Federation of workers and peasants Communes of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas, that without doubt would have reopened the road to the Mexican revolution demolishing the regime of the PRI, PAN, and PRD, the only way to smash NAFTA and guarantee the land for the peasants and the other demands raised by the chiapanecos from 1994.

But it is also in San Salvador Atenco where the consequences of the criminal policy of the EZLN can be seen. When the workers and peasants of the Peoples Front and Defence of the Land (FPDT) cut the Texcoco-Lecheria highway in May 2006, they were brutally attacked by the PFP forces. Two

comrades were killed, many wounded, 28 jailed and 146 arrested and charged. And in Michoacán a state governed by the PRD, in April of 2006, when the heroic iron and steel workers, joined by the miners, occupied the Sicartsa plant, they were attacked also by the PFP, leaving 2 dead, tens of wounded.

It was obvious to all that in Oaxaca two alternative powers faced one another, two different and irreconcilable classes: on one side the power of the imperialistic monopolies, the national bourgeoisie, its armed forces and paramilitary bands; on the other, the power of the workers, peasants and poor people. Once again the purveyors of the 'democratic front', put the combative masses on their knees before the national bourgeoisie, and the result is a catastrophic defeat for the workers and peasants. Marcos and the Castroites in alliance with the PRD, they are the one really responsible for the defeat of the heroic comuneros of Oaxaca.

The struggle of the masses in Mexico is indissolubly linked to the struggle of the immigrant in the U.S.A. The class collaborationist policy the EZLN and the Castroites, along with Lopez Obrador and the PRD in Mexico, ensured that the Oaxaca commune did not spread to the Latino migrants in the US, subordinating them to the Democratic Party of Clinton and Obama. Thus, the 'celebrities' of the WSF helped to contain the political opposition to the Iraq war of the US working class behind the pacifist opposition of the Democrat Party left, and migrant workers faced a new attacks as happened in Los Angeles on May 1st.



The Mexican Revolution

What We Fight For

We fight to overthrow Capitalism

Historically, capitalism expanded world-wide to free much of humanity from the bonds of feudal or tribal society, and developed the economy, society and culture to a new higher level. But it could only do this by exploiting the labour of the productive classes to make its profits. To survive, capitalism became increasingly destructive of "nature" and humanity. In the early 20th century it entered the epoch of imperialism in which successive crises unleashed wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions. Today we fight to end capitalism's wars, famine, oppression and injustice, by mobilising workers to overthrow their own ruling classes and bring to an end the rotten, exploitative and oppressive society that has exceeded its use-by date.

We fight for Socialism.

By the 20th century, capitalism had created the pre-conditions for socialism –a world-wide working class and modern industry capable of meeting all our basic needs. The potential to eliminate poverty, starvation, disease and war has long existed. The October Revolution proved this to be true, bringing peace, bread and land to millions. But it became the victim of the combined assault of imperialism and Stalinism. After 1924 the USSR, along with its deformed offspring in Europe, degenerated back towards capitalism. In the absence of a workers political revolution, capitalism was restored between 1990 and 1992. Vietnam and China then followed. In the 21st century only Cuba and North Korea survive as degenerate workers states. We unconditionally defend these states against capitalism and fight for political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy as part of world socialism.

We fight to defend Marxism

While the economic conditions for socialism exist today, standing between the working class and socialism are political, social and cultural barriers. They are the capitalist state and bourgeois ideology and its agents. These agents claim that Marxism is dead and capitalism need not be exploitative. We say that Marxism is a living science that explains both capitalism's continued exploitation and its attempts to hide class exploitation behind the appearance of individual "freedom" and "equality". It reveals how and why the reformist, Stalinist and centrist misleaders of the working class tie workers to bourgeois ideas of nationalism, racism, sexism and equality. Such false beliefs will be exploded when the struggle against the inequality, injustice, anarchy and barbarism of capitalism in crisis, led by a revolutionary Marxist party, produces a revolutionary class-consciousness.

We fight for a Revolutionary Party

The bourgeois and its agents condemn the Marxist party as totalitarian. We say that without a democratic and a centrally organised party there can be no revolution. We base our beliefs on the revolutionary tradition of Bolshevism and Trotskyism. Such a party, armed with a *transitional programme*, forms a bridge that joins the daily fight to defend all the past and present gains won from capitalism, to the victorious socialist revolution. Defensive struggles for bourgeois rights and freedoms, for decent wages and conditions, will link up the struggles of workers of all nationalities, genders, ethnicities and sexual orientations, bringing about movements for workers control, political strikes and the arming of the working class, as necessary steps to workers' power and the smashing of the bourgeois state. Along the way, workers will learn that each new step is one of many in a long march to revolutionise every barrier put in the path to the victorious revolution.

We fight for Communism

Communism stands for the creation of a classless, stateless society beyond socialism that is capable of meeting all human needs. Against the ruling class lies that capitalism can be made "fair" for all; that nature can be "conserved"; that socialism and communism are "dead"; we raise the red flag of communism to keep alive the revolutionary tradition of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, the Bolshevik-led October Revolution; the Third Communist International until 1924, the revolutionary Fourth International up to 1940 before its collapse into centrism. We fight to build a new, Fifth, Communist International, as a world party of socialism capable of leading workers to a victorious struggle for socialism.

Class Struggle is the Bi-Monthly paper of the Communist Workers' Group of New Zealand/Aotearoa, a member of the Leninist Trotskyist Fraction.

The other members are the International Workers League (LOI-CI) Argentina, International Workers Party (POI) Chile, Revolutionary Trotskyist League (RTL) Peru, Red October International (ORI) Bolivia, and the Trotskyist Fraction (FT) Brazil. PO Box 6595, Auckland, NZ.

Mail address: PO Box 6595,
Auckland, New Zealand.

Email cwganz@yahoo.com

Class Struggle is also on our website <http://www.geocities.com/communistworker/>

CWG blog at <http://redrave.blogspot.com/>