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ONE WORLD - ONE STRUGGLE - ONE REVOLUTION

NO TO IMPERIALIST EU!

NO TO IMPERIALIST BRITAIN!

FOR A RED EUROPE OF THE
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The British Left and the EU-Referendum

by Michael Pröbsting

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Boycott Cameron's Trap: Neither Brussels, nor Downing Street! For Abstention in Britain's EU-Referendum!

**For international Unity and Struggle of the Workers and Oppressed!
Fight against both British as well as European Imperialism!
Forward to the United Socialist States of Europe**

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) and the RCIT Britain, 2 August 2015

1. The Tory Government will hold a referendum on Britain's membership in the European Union before the end of 2017 (probably in mid-2016). In this referendum people will be asked to vote for whether the British imperialist state should remain inside the European Union or leave this imperialist federation. In fact, such a pseudo-alternative is a political trap set up by the Tory government. Socialists have to explain that it is in the interest of the working class and the oppressed of Britain to oppose *any form* of imperialist state. They should refuse to be dragged into giving their support as gullible voters to *either* of these alternative forms of imperialism. Consequently, the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and its supporters in Britain call upon workers and oppressed to vote neither YES or NO to UK membership in the EU. Instead, they should write on the ballot: "*Neither Brussels, nor Downing Street! For international Unity of the Workers and Oppressed*", i.e., effectively casting a vote of abstention.

2. What is the background for Cameron's decision to schedule such a referendum? The deep-seated cause is the general crisis of capitalism, which began in 2008 and which has greatly accelerated the economic as well as political tensions of the polity both in Britain as well as throughout the EU. In Britain this has led, on the one hand, to both the August Uprising of 2011 and the recent mass demonstration of 250,000 people against the austerity offensive of the government as well as, on the other hand, the rise of the right-wing racist UKIP party. Likewise, the EU faces increased internal tensions in light of its need to move towards a pan-European proto-state (in order to form a united European military force) so as not to perish in its confrontations with the power of imperialist rivals like the US, China, and Russia, in addition to its being able to contend with the increasing instability in key areas like the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. At the same time, Britain's ruling class loathes the thought of playing a subordinate role to German imperialism which would be the only possible leader (in conjunction with France) in such an EU proto-state.

3. The huge majority of Britain's ruling class wants to stay in the European Union as this is consistent with their political and economic interests. In contrast to its role in the 19th and early 20th centuries, British imperialism is far too weak to have any global influence as an isolated state. Its only real options are acting as a junior partner to US imperialism or to a European Union led by Germany and France. While the British bourgeoisie have and will to continue to maintain special relations with Washington (especially militarily), its economic interests are closely aligned with the EU. 51.2% of UK's Outward Foreign Di-

rect Investments are concentrated in the EU (2010), compared with only 17.5% for the US. (49% of the UK's Inward FDI originates in the EU while the source of 30% of these investments is the US.) Similarly, the EU is by far Britain's biggest trading partner: In 2013, 44.5% of UK exports went to other EU countries, while the EU contributed 52.2% of total imports to the UK. (The US accounts for only 17.6% of UK exports and 9% of its imports.)

4. It is therefore hardly surprising that the UK's ruling class wants the country to remain within the EU. This is the only realistic way for British imperialism to continue playing a role in world politics and the global market. This is why the majority of the Tories, Liberal Democrats, Labour, and the Confederation of British Industry (the TUC, etc.), are all united in keeping UK in the EU. However at the same time the British bourgeoisie want to have more power and be more independent of the German-French center. This is what Cameron hopes to gain by announcing the referendum and holding negotiations with Brussels beforehand. Characteristically, the pro-Zionist and social-imperialist centrist, Alliance for Workers' Liberty (AWL) also supports a pro-EU vote, claiming that this would be a vote for more "democracy" and against racism. This is a rather bizarre position of for this so-called "Trotskyist" group, given the fact that the EU doesn't even have an elected government and in light of the EU's standing aside while thousands of migrants drown in the Mediterranean Sea every year. (We note with regret, too, that *Workers Power* recently dropped its former revolutionary position of abstention in such referendums and humiliated itself by calling for a YES vote in a referendum on Britain's membership in the EU.) In short, the pro-EU camp is dominated by the big imperialist bourgeoisie, trailing in its wake the social-imperialist labor bureaucracy.

5. The main social basis of the NO-camp i.e., those who advocate Britain's exiting the EU, is the backward sector of the bourgeoisie (represented in the "*Business for Britain*" campaign) and the middle class, who are in danger of going to the dogs in an increasingly unstable social and economic order in which the big fish are devouring the little fish. This is the same camp which hopes to garner support from among the labor aristocracy and the backward sectors of the white working class by whipping up a racist campaign of hatred against migrants and ethnic minorities. This camp's main political forces are Nigel Farage's UKIP and the right-wing of the Tories which also receive support from the fascist BNP as well as the English Democrats. As a secondary force, the anti-EU camp is also supported by the "*Little England*" remnants of British Stalinism (the Communist Party of Britain, etc.) as well as the main centrist groups (the Cliffite SWP/IST and Peter

Taffee’s SPEW/CWI). This is hardly surprising given the fact that the SPEW played a leading role in the reactionary “British Jobs for British Workers” strike at the Lindsey Oil Refinery in 2009. In short, the anti-EU camp is dominated by the most reactionary, backward sectors of the (middle and petit) bourgeoisie and the country’s middle layers, while left-reformists and centrists serve as their “left-wing” fig leaf.

6. The RCIT maintains that authentic Marxists must refuse to support either of these two, equally reactionary, imperialist camps. The most important task now is to fight for the political independence of the working class and the oppressed vis-à-vis either of these imperialist camps. There is no lesser evil for the working class: On one side are those British imperialists who advocate membership in the war-mongering EU which universally imposes austerity, the plunder of Greece being the most recent and prominent example, and wages colonial wars in North Africa and Iraq, in addition to waging its policy of aggressive expansion in Eastern Europe at the door of Russia. On the other side are those British imperialists who advocate the country’s exit from the EU in order to effectively become the little poodle of the world’s greatest imperialist power, the US, and who call for a chauvinistic hunting down of migrants and ethnic minorities.

7. A particularly important issue for the current situation in Britain and an internationalist campaign against Cameron’s referendum trap is the struggle for the rights of migrants and refugees. As the RCIT has stated numerous times in the past, we oppose immigration control and stand for open borders, equal wages for native and migrant workers, and equal rights for all. Recent developments confirm the need for socialists to equally oppose both British and European imperialism. The Euroseptic right-wing racists oppose the EU precisely because the latter is ostensibly responsible for “too many migrants” in Britain. The EU itself however is no better. British and French police terrorize refugees at the Chunnel crossings. The EU is currently building a wall – like that of US imperialism along its border with Mexico or Israel in the West Bank – along the Hungarian border with Serbia. And the EU is trying its best to stop refugees crossing the Mediter-

ranean Sea and, in these efforts, recently adopted a plan for military attacks against refugee boats along the North African coast. The struggle for the rights of migrants and refugees must reject all variations of imperialist fortresses – be they British or European! Such a perspective is incompatible with voting for either of the two imperialist alternatives that will be offered in the referendum.

8. The only way forward for the white, black, Asian, and migrant working class and youth is the joint, multi-national class struggle against the Britain’s rulers in conjunction with the participation of these workers and oppressed in a united international struggle together with the European working class against the EU bosses. The mass multi-national anti-war movement in Britain after 2001 and the global day of action on 15 February 2003 with 15–20 million demonstrators marching against the Iraq war have been and will continue to be a source of inspiration for such a perspective, alongside the combined struggle of black, Asian and poor whites during the August Uprising of 2011. Similarly inspiring are the international solidarity movement with the Greek people and the global BDS movement in solidarity with the Palestinian resistance against the Zionist Apartheid state. Naturally, these examples show to what extent a multi-national and international movement of the working class and the oppressed is far from being utopian, but rather is the only realistic perspective of resistance against the corporate plunder of the British and European imperialist butchers.

9. At the same time the RCIT advocates the perspective of the *European Revolution*, i.e., the armed insurrection of the workers and oppressed in each country with the goal of expropriating the local bourgeoisie and nationalizing the core industries and banks and placing them under workers’ control. The aim is to foment revolution throughout the entire continent (and beyond) in order to found the *United Socialist States of Europe*. This is the only viable alternative to both British and EU imperialism. The continent can only prosper and provide wealth for all if it is united on the basis of a planned economy and the democratic rule of the working class and the oppressed who will organize themselves in mass action councils and popular militia.

10. In Europe’s semi-colonial countries, i.e., those

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The image shows five covers of the journal 'Revolutionary Communism' from the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT). Each cover features a red star with a hammer and sickle in the bottom left corner and the text 'WORKERS AND OPPRESSED UNITE!' at the bottom. The covers are as follows:

- Cover 1 (September 2012):** Headline: "South Africa: The Miners fight, ANC/SACP betrays". Sub-headline: "plus: Revolution in Libya, Greece, WikiLeaks, Bosnia, Turkey, Maoism". Price: £5.75 / €4.5.
- Cover 2 (August 2012):** Headline: "China as an imperialist power: background, influences and tactics". Sub-headline: "plus: South African Miners Strike, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Canada". Price: £5.75 / €4.5.
- Cover 3 (June 2012):** Headline: "Elections, United and the struggle for workers' Government". Sub-headline: "plus: Programme for Pakistan, France, Chinese Imperialism, Zimbabwe...". Price: £5.75 / €4.5.
- Cover 4 (January 2012):** Headline: "Occupation and Resistance in Pakistan". Sub-headline: "plus: General Strike in Greece, Occupation Movement, Fifth International, Iran, Libya, Israel...". Price: £5.75 / €4.5.
- Cover 5 (September 2011):** Headline: "Revolutionaries of the Arab Revolution". Sub-headline: "plus: Theses on Migration, Workers Struggle in Pakistan, What We Stand For". Price: £6.75 / €4.5.

countries which are dominated and super-exploited by imperialist monopolies and great powers, the RCIT combines such an internationalist perspective of class struggle with the tactic of calling for an exit from the European Union. We do so because we support every small step which weakens the grip of the imperialists on such countries. However such a tactic is *only* applicable to semi-colonial countries like Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, and the countries of Eastern Europe. It is not relevant for imperialist states like Britain, France, Germany, the Benelux countries, Austria, Sweden, Finland, etc.

11. The RCIT bases its revolutionary, internationalist tactic on the programmatic tradition of the Marxist classics. Lenin famously stated that “*a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary*”. Likewise he stated that in the imperialist countries “*the national movement is a thing of an irrevocable past, and it would be an absurd reactionary utopia to try to revive it.*” Later, Trotsky developed the slogan of a European-wide struggle for workers’ power and the *United Socialist States of Europe*, a slogan which was adopted by the Communist International in 1923 (only to be dropped by the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1928). This Marxist tradition is the *only* possible alternative in conflicts between two imperialist bourgeois camps. Similarly, Marxists don’t support one (smaller or larger) corporation against others in capitalism’s market competition. Nor do we support one imperialist state against another. Doing so would be adopting a position of treachery appropriate to the class-collaborationist tradition of social democratic reformism and Stalinism.

12. Our movement has a long-standing tradition of calling for abstention in referendums on questions of entry

into or exit from the EU. This is also the case in Britain. Our predecessor organization – the *League for a Revolutionary Communist International* (whose British section was Workers Power) – called for abstention in all such referenda because we stood for an internationalist perspective and for the political independence of the working class from all imperialist camps. When the left-wing of the Labour Party called for Britain’s exit from the EEC (as the EU was called at that time) in a referendum held in 1975, we called upon workers to oppose *both* the pro-EU as well as the anti-EU camp of the bourgeoisie and to abstain in the referendum. The RCIT continues this tradition, which is the *only* revolutionary and internationalist alternative for the working class and the oppressed in such situations.

13. The fact that the ostensibly Marxist organizations in Britain either join the anti-EU or the pro-EU camp of the bourgeoisie underlines once again the serious crisis of revolutionary leadership. How will these organizations be able to lead the working class struggle in any future political crisis if they have already capitulated to one of the two imperialist camps in such a referendum?! (In fact, we already witnessed the bankruptcy of such “Marxist” organizations during the August Uprising of 2011 at which time they either openly denounced the spontaneous insurrection of the oppressed or in practice boycotted it.) It is the chief task of British socialists to build a serious revolutionary organization which stands in the proud internationalist tradition of Lenin and Trotsky. The RCIT calls upon all revolutionaries in Britain who support the slogan “*Boycott Cameron’s Trap: Neither Brussels, nor Downing Street! For Abstention in the EU-Referendum in Britain!*” to join forces in order to develop an internationalist campaign.

New Book!

Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a book called *BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE*. The book’s subtitle is: *Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of organized Struggle for Bolshevism*. The book is in English-language. It contains four chapters on 148 pages and includes 42 pictures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

A few months ago, our movement commemorated its 25th anniversary. In the summer of 1989 our predecessor organization, the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) was founded as a democratic-centralist international tendency based on an elaborated program. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) continues the revolutionary tradition of the LRCI. Below we give an overview of our history, an evaluation of its achievements as well as mistakes, and a summary of the lessons for the struggles ahead. This book summarizes our theoretical and practical experience of the past

25 years.

In Chapter I we outline a summary of the Bolshevik-Communists’ theoretical conception of the role of the revolutionary party and its relation to the working class. In Chapter II we elaborate on the essential characteristics of revolutionary party respective of the pre-party organization. In Chapter III we deal with the history of our movement – the RCIT and its predecessor organization. Finally, in Chapter IV we outline the main lessons of our 25 years of organized struggle for building a Bolshevik party and their meaning for our future work.

You can find the contents and download the book for free at <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/rcit-party-building/> ■

**Building the
Revolutionary Party
in Theory
and Practice**

Looking Back and Ahead after
25 Years of organized Struggle for Bolshevism



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

The British Left and the EU-Referendum:

The Many Faces of pro-UK or pro-EU Social-Imperialism

An analysis of the left's failure to fight for an independent, internationalist and socialist stance both against British as well as European imperialism

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), August 2015

Cameron's referendum about Britain's membership in the European Union is an important test for the left and the workers' movement. Unfortunately most of the left fail this test and adapt either to the remnants of "Little England" anti-EU chauvinism or to the pro-EU chauvinists. Below we first summarize the conclusions

of the RCIT's position on how socialists should deal with the referendum. We also elaborate the position of Lenin and Trotsky on this issue. We then deal with the arguments of the main left-wing organizations in the YES and NO camps respectively.

I. The Need for an Independent and Internationalist Working Class Position

As we elaborated in a recent statement, the RCIT considers Cameron's referendum on Britain's membership in the European Union as a political trap. *"Socialists have to explain that it is in the interest of the working class and the oppressed of Britain to oppose any form of imperialist state. They should refuse to be dragged into giving their support as gullible voters to either of these alternative forms of imperialism. Consequently, the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) and its supporters in Britain call upon workers and oppressed to vote neither YES or NO to UK membership in the EU. Instead, they should write on the ballot: "Neither Brussels, nor Downing Street! For international Unity of the Workers and Oppressed", i.e., effectively abstain in this vote."*¹

In doing so, the RCIT is upholding the Marxist tradition of taking a defeatist position in any conflict between two imperialist camps. Faced with the alternative between an imperialist nation-state and an imperialist federation, we give preference to neither. Similarly, Marxists don't support any one imperialist state in a conflict with another. Neither do we support a smaller corporation against a bigger one or vice versa. Nor do socialist shop stewards support management in the latter's greedy desire to fuse with another corporation or to sell part of their company to another corporation.

It is a central pillar of the Marxist tradition that the working class be *politically independent* of the bourgeoisie or any one of its factions. This means that workers should refuse to become foot-soldiers for any imperialist camp.

The main issue at the referendum is not a domestic conflict between different parties (UKIP against the government, Labour and Liberal Democrats) or within the Conservative party. Neither is the main issue national independence or the unification of Europe. These are just phrases

of the bourgeois protagonists of the rival camps. Nor is the main issue whether people are for or against austerity or for or against racism, because both austerity *and* racism have been implemented for decades in both Britain and the EU. The main issue of the referendum is the alternative between *two different political forms of imperialist state organization* – an imperialist UK within the imperialist EU or outside of it as a junior partner of US imperialism.

In a situation in which two factions of the ruling class try to rally the oppressed classes behind their imperialist banner, it is the paramount duty of Marxists to explain to the working class that it must not lend support to either of these reactionary camps. Instead they must follow the principles of revolutionary defeatism, fight against both proposed alternatives and advocate an internationalist perspective.

Furthermore, in their struggle against both British and EU imperialism socialists should strive to unite with workers and oppressed in other countries. Such an internationalist stand implies that workers in Britain should look for kindred actions and organizations beyond their own national borders which they can support. Similarly, British socialists should strive for multi-national unity between white, Asian, black and migrant workers in their own country. No less, they should mobilize to display solidarity with refugees and migrants and to smash immigration controls. In the case of the EU referendum, the RCIT calls upon workers and oppressed in Britain to express their internationalist refusal of Cameron's pseudo-alternative by voting neither YES or NO to UK membership in the EU. Instead, as we wrote in our earlier statement cited above, they should write on the ballot: *"Neither Brussels, nor Downing Street! For international Unity of the Workers and Oppressed"*, i.e., effectively abstain in this vote.

I.1. Our Tradition

For four decades it has been the tradition of our movement to advocate abstention in referendums on questions of entry of imperialist states into or their exit from the EU. In one of the first resolution of our predecessor organization – the *League for a Revolutionary Communist International* – we stated:

*“For that reason Workers Power in Britain called for an abstention in the 1975 referendum and will not add its voice, nor will the Gruppe Arbeitermacht nor the Irish Workers Group, to the campaigns for withdrawal, which are chauvinist in their inspiration and utopian and narrowly nationalist in the solutions they offer for ailing European capitalism. For the same reason we would have been unable to and unwilling to advocate either a yes or a no vote in the Norwegian referendum on entry or any future one in Spain or Portugal or even in a referendum on withdrawal in Greece. On each occasion the proletariat is asked to decide on the merits of two purely bourgeois programmes which contest the form of the relationship each of the European powers has with the others.”*²

The above quote reflects a certain weakness in the position of our predecessor organization, in that it did not differentiate between the tactics of socialists living in imperialist countries and those active in semi-colonies. As the RCIT has previously elaborated, we maintain that socialists in semi-colonial countries should advocate the exit of semi-colonial countries from the EU (or any other imperialist alliance) as part of the struggle against the imperialist domination of the oppressed people.³

However, in its primary manifestation – the question of membership of imperialist countries in the EU – our tradition has consistently taken a correct stand by refusing to support either entry or withdrawal. As briefly noted in the quote above our British section called for abstention in a referendum on Britain’s exit from the EEC (as the EU was called at that time) in 1975. We did so in contrast to most of the centrists and left-reformists (including the Stalinists and the left-wing of the Labour Party led by Tony Benn) who all advocated to vote for withdrawal.

We continued this tradition when the issue of entry into the EU became a central issue in Austria. The Austrian section produced extensive propaganda both against the “left-wing” supporters of the country’s entry into the EU (mostly left-wing social democrats) as well as against those opposed to entry (the Stalinist party as well as nearly all centrists). At that time we wrote:

“Revolutionaries should therefore actively seize the opportunity provided by such a national debate in order to advance an internationalist programme of opposition to the capitalist EC and its anti-working class plans, to the attacks of the Austrian bourgeoisie, and for abstention, this posing the only real alternative

*for Austrian workers: international links between the workers throughout Europe, a concerted fight against capitalism at home and abroad, and for the Socialist United States of Europe. (...) On this point the working class position must be clear: we can have no interest in sticking up for either section of the capitalists against the other and marching with them for their profits. Our defence of workers’ present conditions is based exclusively on the international interests of the proletariat.”*⁴

In 1994, our Swedish section also called upon workers of that country to oppose both the pro-EU as well as the anti-EU camp of the bourgeoisie and to abstain in the upcoming referendum there. Our Swedish comrades argued:

*“The immediate task for revolutionary socialists in Sweden will be to intervene in the EU referendum, defending working class independence from both the Yes and No campaign – which are just two different ways of trying to tie the workers to the fate of capitalism.”*⁵

The RCIT proudly continues this tradition, which is the only revolutionary and internationalist alternative for the working class and the oppressed in such situations.

I.2. World Economy and the EU: Myths and Facts

Our basic position is that the attacks on the working class are rooted in the capitalist’s desire to increase their profits in a period characterized by the decline of capitalism. Contrary to the illusions spread by various left-reformists and centrists, these attacks are *not* the result of specific national forms of domination of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Or, in other words, irrespective of membership in the European Union, *all* capitalist classes are forced to attack their working class precisely because of the decline of their system. This being the case, it is a merely a social-imperialist deflection of the proletariat by the petty-bourgeois anti-EU left to spread the myth that the EU is responsible for Europe’s economic stagnation and that Britain – or any other imperialist country – would fare better outside this imperialist federation.

Let us first look at the development of wealth and compare Switzerland, a very rich imperialist country which has never been a member of the EU, with other Western imperialist countries. In Table 1 we see that in the period from 1950 to 1973 Switzerland managed to double its Gross Domestic Product per capita. Other Western European countries grew even faster including Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands which were all members of the European Union (in fact the EEC, its predecessor organization) from the founding of the federation. Britain, which did not join the EU before 1973, grew less rapidly during this period. However from 1973 until 2008, Britain, now a member of the EU, more than doubled its GDP per head, while other EU members and the US experienced

Table 1: Western GDP per capita in international comparison 1950 to 2008⁶

	GDP per capita in 1990 Geary-Khamis dollars							
	UK	USA	France	Germany	Belgium	Netherlands	Denmark	Switzerland
1950	6939	9561	5186	3881	5462	5996	6943	9064
1973	12025	16689	12824	11966	12170	13081	13945	18204
1990	16430	23201	17647	15929	17197	17262	18452	21487
2008	24602	31251	22057	20801	23701	25112	24789	25104

slightly slower growth. However, Switzerland's per capita GDP grew much more slowly during this period – by only 37.9% in fact. In sum, we see from these figures that there is no empirical evidence that imperialist states prosper better when they are *not* a member of the EU.

In Table 2 we examine the development of industrial production and compare the old EU (the so-called EU-15) with other imperialist countries, the US and Japan.⁷ As we see, over the course of five decades there has been a general downward trend of industrial growth in these capitalist countries, one which is not confined to the EU but which is rather a global feature of capitalism.⁸

We get a similar picture if we examine the rate of capital accumulation during these same five decades (see Table 3). Again, we note a general downward trend and not one limited to the EU.

Another myth spread by the petty-bourgeois anti-EU left is that the European Union would be a qualitatively more vicious, pro-austerity enemy of the working class than imperialist nation-states. In fact, the capitalists' offensive against the workers has as its source the historically declining rate of profit and the general crisis of their system (see below), not by any specific form of political organization of the imperialists (like the EU). To illustrate this, let us examine the relative decline in the percent which wages constitute in the overall expenses of corporations (i.e., wage share in Table 4). As we can see, wages have declined in *all* imperialist regions, not only in the European Union. In Japan, the decline of wage share has been even more dramatic than in the EU.

As Marxists have noted again and again, the fundamental cause for this decline is the historic tendency of the rate of profit to fall. This is because in the long run the share of surplus value – which is the only basis for profit – declines in relation to the total invested capital (both constant and variable). As Marx explained:

*“As the process of production and accumulation advances therefore, the mass of available and appropriated surplus-labour, and hence the absolute mass of profit appropriated by the social capital, must grow. Along with the volume, however, the same laws of production and accumulation increase also the value of the constant capital in a mounting progression more rapidly than that of the variable part of capital, invested as it is in living labour. Hence, the same laws produce for the social capital a growing absolute mass of profit, and a falling rate of profit.”*¹²

Marx characterized the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall as the most important law of capitalism:

*“In every respect, this is the most important law of modern political economy, and the most essential one for comprehending the most complex relationships. It is the most important law from the historical viewpoint. Hitherto, despite its simplicity, it has never been grasped and still less has it been consciously formulated.”*¹³

In Figure 1 we show that Marx's statement about the historic character of the law of the profit rate to fall has been proven by studies on the rate of profit during the past century and a half. The Argentinean Marxist economist Esteban Ezequiel Maito recently published an interesting study on this subject.

Michael Roberts, another serious Marxist economist living in Britain, has also verified this tendency in an analysis of the world economy during the past six decades. (See Figure 2)

I.3. The Marxist Classics on the Internationalist Program of Revolutionary Defeatism

Let us now examine how Lenin and Trotsky, the most important Marxist theoreticians living in the epoch of imperialism, viewed the issue of conflicts between the imperialist nation-states and compared them with the formation of imperialist federations.

A basic tenet for Marxists is their fundamental opposition to the imperialist state. In the epoch of monopoly capitalism, the imperialist nation-state – as well as any federation of states – has become reactionary. While the struggle for national independence from imperialist domination retains a progressive element in semi-colonial countries, this is not at all the case in imperialist states. This is why Lenin and the Bolsheviks denounced in 1914 all those “Marxists” who defended “their” imperialist fatherland by referring to the right of national self-determination. While such a defense of the fatherland *is* legitimate for a semi-colonial country, this is *not* the case for those countries which have already become powers which dominate other, smaller and more backward peoples.

Lenin emphasized that since the beginning of the epoch of imperialism, the defense of the fatherland in the advanced capitalist countries has lost any progressive element:

*“What do we mean when we say that national states have become fetters, etc.? We have in mind the advanced capitalist countries, above all Germany, France, England, whose participation in the present war has been the chief factor in making it an imperialist war. In these countries, which hitherto have been in the van of mankind, particularly in 1789-1871, the process of forming national states has been consummated. In these countries the national movement is a thing of an irrevocable past, and it would be an absurd reactionary utopia to try to revive it. The national movement of the French, English, Germans has long been completed. In these countries history's next step is a different one: liberated nations have become transformed into oppressor nations, into nations of imperialist rapine, nations that are going through the “eve of the collapse of capitalism””*¹⁶

Lenin warned against the illusion of transforming imperialist states into “non-imperialist” capitalist states. Likewise there could be no “league of equal nations under capitalism”.

*„Finally, our “peace programme” must explain that the imperialist powers and the imperialist bourgeoisie cannot grant a democratic peace. Such a peace must be sought for and fought for, not in the past, not in a reactionary utopia of a non-imperialist capitalism, not in a league of equal nations under capitalism, but in the future, in the socialist revolution of the proletariat. Not a single fundamental democratic demand can be achieved to any considerable extent, or with any degree of permanency, in the advanced imperialist states, except through revolutionary battles under the banner of socialism.”*¹⁷

From this follows that socialists must not preach support for the imperialist nation-state. They must not lend any support to “their” imperialist fatherland in a conflict with another. This is the fundamental principle from which Lenin and the Bolsheviks derived their famous program of *revolutionary defeatism*. They consistently refused any form of support for the defense of the imperialist fatherland and stood for the defeat of their own ruling class.¹⁸ The core idea of Lenin's approach was the struggle against the imperialist wars through the methods of the class

struggle and the utilization of the crisis caused by the war for the revolutionary overthrow of one owns bourgeoisie. Hence the unequivocal stance for the defeat of one's own government in the war:

*„During a reactionary war a revolutionary class cannot but desire the defeat of its government. This is axiomatic, and disputed only by conscious partisans or helpless satellites of the social-chauvinists.“*¹⁹

This approach was combined with the struggle for the socialist revolution. Hence the central slogan of the Bolsheviks was the “civil war”:

*„The conversion of the present imperialist war into a civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan,“*²⁰

Based on the same method, when the *League of Nations* (the predecessor organization of the imperialist-dominated *United Nations*) imposed economic sanctions against fascist Italy (after the latter's invasion of Ethiopia), Trotsky explained that the workers' movement must not support such sanctions since they could only contribute to the inter-imperialist rivalry.

“Most dangerous of all, however, is the Stalinist policy. The parties of the Communist International try to appeal especially to

*the more revolutionary workers by denouncing the League (a denunciation that is an apology), by asking for ‘workers’ sanctions,’ and then nevertheless saying: ‘We must use the League when it is for sanctions.’ They seek to hitch the revolutionary workers to the shafts so that they can draw the cart of the League. (...) The truth is that if the workers begin their own sanctions against Italy, their action inevitably strikes at their own capitalists, and the League would be compelled to drop all sanctions. It proposes them now just because the workers’ voices are muted in every country. Workers’ action can begin only by absolute opposition to the national bourgeoisie and its international combinations. Support of the League and support of workers’ actions are fire and water; they cannot be united.”*²¹

In a major programmatic document, Trotsky emphasized that the workers' movement will be prepared for the struggle against imperialist wars if it will only learn to oppose “its” imperialist state times of peace.

“The defense of the national state, first of all in Balkanized Europe – the cradle of the national state – is in the full sense of the word a reactionary task. The national state with its borders, passports, monetary system, customs and the army for the protection of customs has become a frightful impediment to

Table 2: Growth Rate of Industrial Production in the Imperialist States (Percent per annum)⁹

	<i>Growth rate of industrial production (percent per annum)</i>		
	<i>USA</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>EU-15</i>
1961-1970	+4.9%	+13.5%	+5.2%
1971-1980	+3.0%	+4.1%	+2.3%
1981-1990	+2.2%	+4.0%	+1.7%
1991-2000	+4.1%	+0.1%	+1.5%
2001-2010	-0.2%	-0.4%	-0.3%

Table 3: Capital Accumulation in the Imperialist States (Percent per annum)¹⁰

	<i>Gross fixed capital formation at 2010 prices; total economy (percent per annum)</i>		
	<i>USA</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>EU-15</i>
1961-1970	+4.7%	+15.7%	+6.0%
1971-1980	+3.5%	+3.5%	+1.9%
1981-1990	+3.5%	+5.7%	+2.8%
1991-2000	+5.4%	-0.6%	+1.8%
2001-2010	-0.4%	-1.9%	+0.4%

Table 4: Adjusted Wage Share; Total Economy; in Imperialist States¹¹

	<i>As Percentage of GDP at Current Factor Cost</i>		
	<i>USA</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>EU-15</i>
1960-1970	67.2%	73.8%	69.8%
1971-1980	66.8%	77.7%	71.1%
1981-1990	65.2%	74.0%	67.8%
1991-2000	64.9%	70.8%	64.8%
2001-2010	63.3%	65.5%	63.6%

the economic and cultural development of humanity. The task of the proletariat is not the defense of the national state but its complete and final liquidation. (...) A "socialist" who preaches national defense is a petty-bourgeois reactionary at the service of decaying capitalism. Not to bind itself to the national state in time of war, to follow not the war map but the map of the class struggle, is possible only for that party that has already declared irreconcilable war on the national state in time of peace. Only by realizing fully the objectively reactionary role of the imperialist state can the proletarian vanguard become invulnerable to all types of social patriotism. This means that a real break with the ideology and policy of "national defense" is possible only from the standpoint of the international proletarian revolution." ²²

In the struggle against the imperialist rivalry between the great European powers Trotsky advocated the slogan of the *republican United States of Europe*. There has been a process of discussion and elaboration among Marxist theoreticians about the applicability of this slogan with which we have dealt with elsewhere. ²³ At this point we will limit ourselves to the following observations.

Lenin initially supported the slogan *republican United States of Europe* because it combined the struggle against the imperialist chauvinism and the limitations of the nation-state with a revolutionary-democratic program of fighting against the absolutist monarchies in Russia, Germany, and Austria. However, he later opposed the same slogan because, as he explained, it could either create the illusion of a peaceful and democratic unification of Europe under capitalism or it could become a slogan apologizing for the creation of an alliance of imperialist great powers. ²⁴ This was the meaning of Lenin's famous dictum that the slogan of the *United States of Europe*, under capitalist conditions, "is either impossible or reactionary."

"Of course, temporary agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a *United States of Europe* is possible as an agreement between the European capitalists ... but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty against Japan and America, who have been badly done out of their share by the present partition of colonies, and the increase of whose might during the last fifty years has been immeasurably more rapid than that of backward and monarchist Europe, now turning senile. Compared with the *United States of America*, Europe as a whole denotes economic stagnation. On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, a *United States of Europe* would signify an organisation of reaction to retard America's more rapid development. The times when the cause of democracy and socialism was associated only with Europe alone have gone for ever." ²⁵

Hence, Lenin concluded: "From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism — i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the "advanced" and "civilised" colonial powers — a *United States of Europe*, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary." ²⁶

Lenin warned that the slogan of the *United States of Europe* could become a slogan which could be exploited by those social-imperialists who do not orientate towards a single nation-state but to the unification of European capitalism in order to strengthen Europe's role as a dominant power in the world.

"Hobson, the social-liberal, fails to see that this "counteraction" can be offered only by the revolutionary proletariat and only in the form of a social revolution. But then he is a social-liberal!

Nevertheless, as early as 1902 he had an excellent insight into the meaning and significance of a "United States of Europe" (be it said for the benefit of Trotsky the Kautskyite!) and of all that is now being glossed over by the hypocritical Kautskyites of various countries, namely, that the opportunists (socialchauvinists) are working hand in glove with the imperialist bourgeoisie precisely towards creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Asia and Africa, and that objectively the opportunists are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of certain strata of the working class who have been bribed out of imperialist superprofits and converted into watchdogs of capitalism and corrupters of the labour movement." ²⁷

Taking Lenin's criticism into account, Trotsky overcame the weakness of his initial version of the slogan of the *United States of Europe* by combining it with a clear class character. Hence, he reformulated the slogan in such a way that it combined the task of overcoming the "balkanization" of Europe into numerous nation-states by means of a federation the task of which would be the overthrow of capitalist class rule. Hence he argued in summer 1923 for the *United Socialist States of Europe* and won over the Communist International to this perspective.

"The sooner the popular masses of Europe regain the confidence in their own strength which was sapped by the war, and the more closely they rally around the slogan of "United Workers' and Peasants' Republics of Europe", the more rapidly will the revolution develop on both sides of the Atlantic." ²⁸

Unsurprisingly, the Stalinist bureaucracy dropped this slogan in 1928 since it (rightly) felt to be in contradiction to the national-centered and reformist perspective of "socialism in one country." Against this, Trotsky unreservedly defended the internationalist program.

"But the Communist parties have their hands tied. The living slogan, with a profound historical content, has been expunged from the program of the Comintern solely in the interests of the struggle against the Opposition. All the more decisively must the Opposition raise this slogan. In the person of the Opposition the vanguard of the European proletariat tells its present rulers: In order to unify Europe it is first of all necessary to wrest power out of your hands. We will do it. We will unite Europe. We will unite it against the hostile capitalist world. We will turn it into a mighty drill-ground of militant socialism. We will make it the cornerstone of the World Socialist Federation." ²⁹

He continued to raise the slogan of the *United Socialist States of Europe* in a number of major programmatic documents. In his last major document, the Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War which was adopted by the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in May 1940, Trotsky made clear that the imperialist nation-state is not an alternative but an historic regression. Likewise he denounced any imperialist unification of Europe as reactionary.

"The promise of the Allies to create a democratic European federation this time is the crudest of all pacifist lies. The state is not an abstraction but the instrument of monopoly capitalism. So long as trusts and banks are not expropriated for the benefit of the people, the struggle between states is just as inevitable as the struggle between the trusts themselves. Voluntary renunciation by the most powerful state of the advantage given by its strength is as ridiculous a utopia as voluntary division of capital funds among the trusts. So long as capitalist property is preserved, a democratic "federation" would be nothing but a worse repetition of the League of Nations, containing all its vices minus

only its illusions. In vain do the imperialist masters of destiny attempt to revive a program of salvation which was completely discredited by the experience of the past decades. In vain do their petty bourgeois flunkies warm up pacifist panaceas which long ago changed into their own caricature. The advanced workers will not be duped. Peace will not be concluded by those forces

now waging war. The workers and soldiers will dictate their own program of peace!"³⁰

After we have outlined above the Marxist position on European unification, we will now analyze the positions of the British left on this issue and their tactical conclusions.

Figure 1: Average Rate of Profit in Imperialist Core Countries (1869-2010) ¹⁴

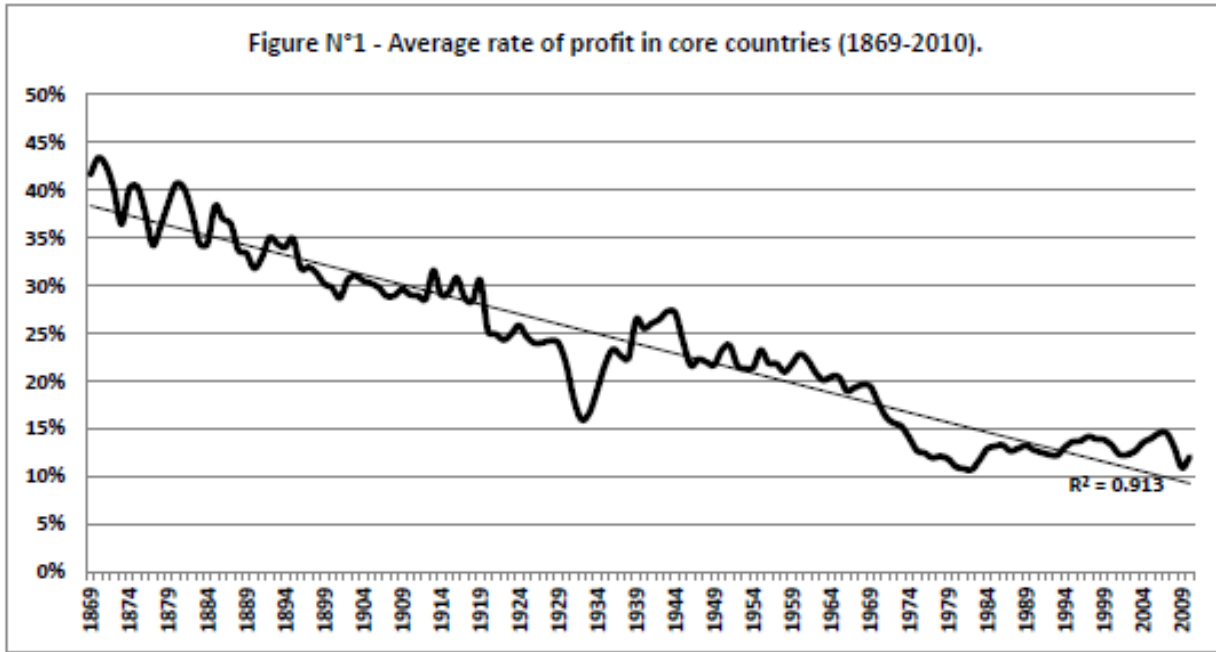
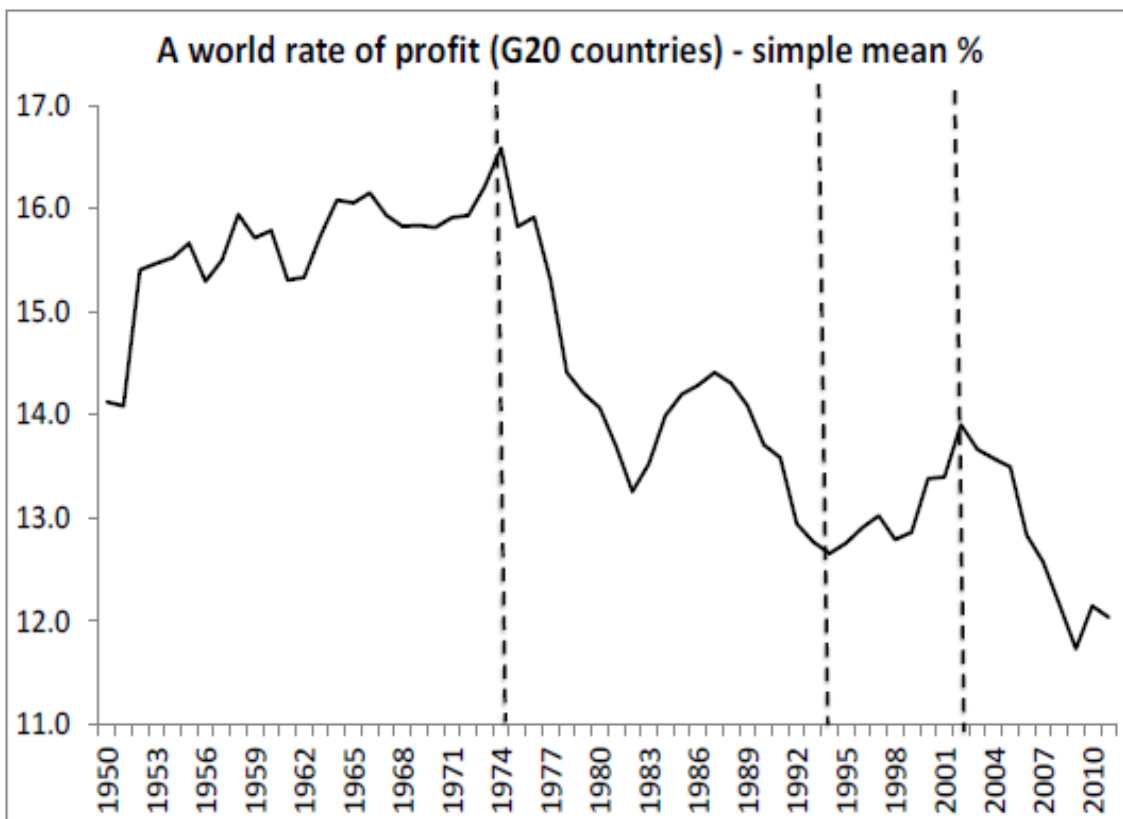


Figure 2: A world rate of profit (G20 countries), 1950-2012 ¹⁵



II. The NO-Camp: “UK First” Social-Imperialism

The three main left-wing organizations in Britain – the Stalinist CPB, the SPEW (the leading section of Peter Taffee’s CWI), and the SWP (affiliated with the IST led by Alex Callinicos) – all call for voting for Britain’s exit from the European Union. They claim that this would in one way or another benefit the working class. Let us deal here with their arguments.

II.1. The Stalinist CPB: The Openly Patriotic “Communists”

The British Stalinists – the *Communist Party of Britain* (CPB) – and their daily newspaper, the *Morning Star*, asserts that the austerity attacks on the working class are the result of Britain’s membership in the EU. According to them, it is the European monopolies which strive to slash the wages and social benefits but not the British monopolies. For Stalinism, the devil resides abroad. If Britain would leave the EU, things would be much better – so goes the perpetual canon of these “UK First” socialists. For them the devil resides abroad. This is why the CPB’s paper calls in an editorial for a capitalist Britain which is not a member of the EU: “the alternative is a federal Britain, outside the EU and Nato, in which we can fight for parliaments and governments free to enact progressive domestic and foreign policies.”³¹ Obviously, the Stalinists speculate that the working class suffers from a collective Alzheimer disease and forgets its history. Britain had been outside of the EU for much longer than it has been a member of it. There have been plenty of opportunities to have “parliaments and governments free to enact progressive domestic and foreign policies.” However, inexplicable for these “communists” without memory, the British working class was never able to get the parliaments and governments to enact progressive domestic and foreign policies.

The reason for this is very simple. The British state and its monarchy have never been and can never be an instrument of working class policy. It was always and could only have been an instrument of the ruling class. This huge centuries-old apparatus was built by the ruling class during the course of hundreds of years and is closely linked with the big capital groups. In addition, it includes a parasitic monarchy as a kind of Bonaparte in reserve. Hence, the British state has always served to keep the working class under control (which includes massive bribery and integration of its bureaucracy and upper strata) while keeping the oppressed people down (first as part of the Empire and later as part of indirect domination of the semi-colonial world via the imperialist powers).

The Marxist Classics versus the CPB

In fact, it is the Stalinists who have lost their memory and forgot what Marx and Lenin taught socialists. As early as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels stated:

„The executive of the modern State is but a committee for man-

aging the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.“³²

Lenin made clear that there exists an abyss between authentic Marxists and those centrists and left-reformists who hope to gain a majority in parliament thereby enabling them to utilize the bourgeois state machinery for the interests of the working class:

„Marx teaches us (...) to act with supreme boldness in destroying the entire old state machine, and at the same time he teaches us to put the question concretely: the Commune was able in the space of a few weeks to start building a new, proletarian state machine by introducing such-and-such measures to provide wider democracy and to uproot bureaucracy. Let us learn revolutionary boldness from the Communards; let us see in their practical measures the outline of really urgent and immediately possible measures, and then, following this road, we shall achieve the complete destruction of bureaucracy.

The possibility of this destruction is guaranteed by the fact that socialism will shorten the working day, will raise the people to a new life, will create such conditions for the majority of the population as will enable everybody, without exception, to perform “state functions”, and this will lead to the complete withering away of every form of state in general.

“Its object [the object of the mass strike],” Kautsky continues, “cannot be to destroy the state power; its only object can be to make the government compliant on some specific question, or to replace a government hostile to the proletariat by one willing to meet it half-way ... But never, under no circumstances can it [that is, the proletarian victory over a hostile government] lead to the destruction of the state power; it can lead only to a certain shifting of the balance of forces within the state power.... The aim of our political struggle remains, as in the past, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by raising parliament to the ranks of master of the government.”

This is nothing but the purest and most vulgar opportunism: repudiating revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words. Kautsky’s thoughts go no further than a “government... willing to meet the proletariat half-way”—a step backward to philistinism compared with 1847, when the *Communist Manifesto* proclaimed “the organization of the proletariat as the ruling class”.

Kautsky will have to achieve his beloved “unity” with the Scheidmanns, Plekhanovs, and Vanderveldes, all of whom agree to fight for a government “willing to meet the proletariat half-way”.

We, however, shall break with these traitors to socialism, and we shall fight for the complete destruction of the old state machine, in order that the armed proletariat itself may become the government. These are two vastly different things.

Kautsky will have to enjoy the pleasant company of the Legiens and Davids, Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Tseretelis, and Chernovs, who are quite willing to work for the “shifting of the balance of forces within the state power”, for “winning a majority in parliament”, and “raising parliament to the ranks of master of the government”. A most worthy object, which is wholly acceptable to the opportunists and which keeps everything within the bounds of the bourgeois parliamentary republic.

We, however, shall break with the opportunists; and the entire class-conscious proletariat will be with us in the fight—not to

“shift the balance of forces”, but to overthrow the bourgeoisie, to destroy bourgeois parliamentarism, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.”³³

Hence, in contrast to the Stalinists, Lenin was fully aware that the capitalist state machinery cannot be reformed but has to be smashed:

„The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it of a new one which, in the words of Engels, is “no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. But Kautsky finds it necessary to befog and belie all this -- his renegade position demands it.”³⁴

Therefore, Lenin and the Bolsheviks resolutely refuted the reformist idea that the transformation to socialism could proceed peacefully. They insisted that this is only possible via a revolution, an armed insurrection:

„Of course, if it were a case of capitalist society in peacetime, peacefully developing into socialism, there would be no more urgent task before us than that of increasing output. But the little word “if” makes all the difference. If only socialism had come into being peacefully, in the way the capitalist gentlemen did not want to see it born. But there was a slight hitch. Even if there had been no war, the capitalist gentlemen would have done all in their power to prevent such a peaceful evolution. Great revolutions, even when they commence peacefully, as was the case with the great French Revolution, end in furious wars which are instigated by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Nor can it be otherwise, if we look at it from the point of view of the class struggle and not from the point of view of philistine phrase-mongering about liberty, equality, labour democracy and the will of the majority, of all the dullwitted, philistine phrase-mongering to which the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and all these “democrats” treat us. There can be no peaceful evolution towards socialism.”³⁵

Likewise, Lenin stated categorically in his famous book *State and Revolution*:

„The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution.”³⁶

A Referendum on Austerity, Free Trade and Democracy?

The British Stalinists also raise the present secret negotiations between the US and the EU about the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Pact* (TTIP) free trade agreement as an example illustrating the reactionary character of the EU.

“The EU and its basic treaties and institutions such as the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the anti-labour European Court of Justice were designed to serve big business and minimise the potential for democratic intervention by national governments or parliaments in favour of the people against profits. That’s why the EU drives forward the austerity and privatisation agenda hammering the people of Greece today. That’s why it negotiates a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Pact (TTIP) with the US and Canada in secret while pretending to take on board people’s concerns about the corporate threat TTIP poses to public services and national self-government.”³⁷

Again, it is beyond doubt that the EU is a reactionary imperialist institution and that socialists must fight against the dangerous TTIP. However, why on earth would Britain as an “independent” capitalist nation-state outside of the EU,

not participate in these secret negotiations?! The promoters of the campaign against the EU are arch-reactionary capitalists who are fanatic supporters of the “free market.” Furthermore, except for the EU, all participants in the negotiations of the TTIP or the *Trans-Pacific Partnership* (the Asian equivalent to the TTIP) are capitalist nation-states! Likewise writes Doug Nicholls, the Stalinist chairman of *Trade Unionists against the European Union*:

“The EU Parliament is toothless. The EU’s politics and economics are entirely determined by the banks and large corporations. It is a superstate with no real electorate, it acts entirely in the interests of capital.”³⁸

But how is this different from Britain?! Aren’t British politics and economics not “entirely determined by the banks and large corporations”?! And does the British state not “act entirely in the interests of capital”?!?

How on earth have the British monopolies succeeded in convincing the Stalinists that it was not *their* desire, but that of the EU, to so viciously attack the miners and the entire British working class since the early 1980s?! How did BP and Shell create the impression that it is not their own profit greed which is destroying the climate as well as the living conditions of the people in South but rather the pressure from Brussels?! How could the CPB leadership get the impression that the Tories imposed the anti-union laws not because of the *British* capitalists’ class-hatred but because of the *EU-bureaucrats*!?

Well, the more likely explanation is that the CPB leaders wish to believe this because they are looking for excuses to adapt opportunistically to the (non-existent) “patriotic” sector of the British bourgeoisie. This is what Lenin called “social-imperialists”.

There is no doubt that the EU is an undemocratic institution having a parliament with little power. However, the British Stalinists are such deep-seated patriots that they have “forgotten” that they themselves are living in a pretty undemocratic country which is still a monarchy! We are not aware of a case in which a British Queen (or King) has ever been democratically elected by the people! Neither are we aware of elections having been held for the House of (mostly senile, corrupt and perverse) Lords!

The CPB would be doing the British working class a much bigger favor if it would seriously campaign to abolish the monarchy instead of for the country’s exit from the EU!

Amusingly, the CPB leadership calls workers to vote for Britain’s exit from the EU because the referendum supposedly is a vote for or against austerity:

“A resounding No to continued membership of the EU should be coming from the working-class socialist movement. That is why campaigners have formed Trade Unionists Against the European Union (TUAEU). The inhuman punishment of Greece should not be duplicated anywhere ever again. The EU has never worked in our interests, either here or throughout Europe and the world. The opportunity of the referendum on continuing EU membership offers a real opportunity to say no to austerity and the domination of the banks and to escape the clutches of the most anti-democratic superstate in the world. It is a major opportunity to express our internationalism and belief that another world is possible. (...) [T]he opportunity of a referendum on the EU provides the people with a unique chance to upset the whole austerity apple cart and end our relationship with its strongest European advocate.”³⁹

These are the words of people with a world view of a vil-

lage idiot! Clearly they have never heard of austerity programs' having been implemented by the capitalist classes in many countries *outside* of the EU. Just ask the US, Japanese or Australian workers, to say nothing of their Russian and Chinese brothers and sisters! Or at least, if the patriotic CPB leaders cannot bring themselves to leave their beloved island, they could at least attempt to read some newspapers with reports from these countries, or maybe check the internet.

The Stalinists' deep-seated affiliation to Britain, one of the oldest and most reactionary imperialist powers, also becomes obvious in the following statements. Brian Denny, a Stalinist spokesman of the No2EU campaign, calls for British imperialism to defend the pound as its currency and to stay out of the Eurozone:

"Cameron has no intention of fundamentally changing Britain's relationship with the EU, mainly because finance capital does not want it altered. There is no sign that he will end the supremacy of EU law over British law or even that he will keep Britain out of the eurozone in the long run." ⁴⁰

Likewise Doug Nicholls states:

"Trade unionists and socialists led the campaigns against joining the European single currency. Imagine where we would be now if Britain had joined the euro. Voting Yes in the referendum will lead to renewed calls to join this single currency club and worsen our situation." ⁴¹

These words reflect unabashed support for British imperialism! The *Pound* has been the traditional currency of British financial capital. It served and serves as a tool for currency speculation and as a financial weapon against the economically weaker countries of the South. How on earth can it be in the interest of the working class, except those who are deeply corrupted by white chauvinism, to support the currency of the British financial oligarchy?!

Leaving this aside, such an argument is also empirically wrong. In general the British economy has not fared better before its entry in the EU than the EU itself. Let us compare the dynamics of capital accumulation in Britain and the EU. (See Table 5)

Similarly, we cannot confirm better performance of the British economy as a result of its sticking with the pound after the introduction of the Eurozone in January 2002. This can clearly be seen in the comparison between the respective capital accumulations of the UK and the EU-15 in the bottom line of Table 5 (for the decade 2001-2010). This is also made manifest when we examine the comparative development of industrial production and public debt for the UK and the EU-15 (see Tables 6 and 7). Public debt has increased much faster in Britain than in the Eurozone since 2002 and industrial production has also fared worse in UK than the Eurozone during that period.

Neither can we assess a more favorable development of wages for British workers when compared with those of their Eurozone colleagues since 2002 (See Table 8). While the wage share in the UK is traditionally higher than in Europe (because of the smaller proportion of small farmers), the UK wage share decreased slightly in the period 2002-2014 while it slightly increased in the Eurozone.

The British Stalinists mourn that Britain's "real economy" has never been as weak as it is now.

"The break-up of a strong manufacturing economy with flourishing publicly owned services and infrastructure has been the very purpose of the EU and has severely weakened our country.

Britain's real economy has never been weaker than it is today." ⁴⁶

This is certainly true. But this has nothing to do with membership in the EU since this is true for nearly all imperialist countries. As we have shown in our book *The Great Robbery of the South* this is a world-wide process reflecting the decline of the old imperialist powers and the shift of capitalist value-production to the South. (See Table 9)

The very same process is also reflected in the ever-increasing relative importance of the proletariat in the semi-colonial part of the world which today constitutes the vast majority of the global working class. Conversely, the share of the global working class living in the old imperialist countries, like Britain, is progressively declining (see Table 10 and 11).

Furthermore, the social-imperialist line of the CPB is only reiterated by the laments of its leaders who jingoistically complain that "we," i.e., the British state and its ruling class, have to pay too much money to the foreigners, i.e. the EU.

"EU membership has cost a great deal in hard cash. The EU is legendary for its internal fraud and waste, yet Britain's net annual payments into it are £10 billion a year. It is said: "But we get a lot back." We don't. It is said that our payments help the European poor, but they don't." ⁵⁰

This is a propaganda socialists should be quite familiar with, since they are exposed to it all the time in the bourgeois media and particularly in the agitation of the yellow press and right-wing populists from the richest, most parasitic imperialist countries like Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands.

In their patriotic enthusiasm the *Little England* Stalinists even go so far as to suggest Britain might constitute a kind of "colony" of the EU and leaving it would lead to "self-rule"!

"The EU is fundamentally unreformable. It was designed to be that way. To those who say we can't survive outside the EU, we should be pointing out that this is a colonial mentality and, in the end, what on Earth is wrong with self-rule?" ⁵¹

The very analogy by the CPB is the product of servile decrepitude! It demonstrates once again how thoroughly social-imperialists these Stalinists have become; how pathetic it is for so-called Trotskyists like Peter Taaffe's SPEW to join the CPB in the No2EU campaign! In fact, British monopoly capitalists are among the richest, most rapacious, and most parasitic sectors of the ruling class in Europe. Britain is *not* a colony of the EU but one of its leading states. A capitalist Britain outside of the EU would certainly not constitute "self-rule" for the working class and the oppressed. Such a scenario (probably led by right-wing Tories and UKIP) would instead only further entrench the rule of the British imperialist ruling class in its vicious, unrelenting attack against the working class and migrants, acting in collusion as a junior partner of US imperialism. Another bizarre and truly social-imperialist argument of the CPB is that the EU has supposedly caused migration which the Stalinists consider as something bad "for Britain."

"The EU's four founding principles are the freedom of movement of labour, capital, goods and services. These cannot be reformed away from within. The EU and European Courts of Justice exist only to promote these "freedoms." The mass forced migration it has caused has led to a tragic and nomadic life for millions." ⁵²

This argument certainly says a lot about the CPB. Accord-

Table 5: Capital Accumulation in UK and EU-15 ⁴²

*Growth of Gross fixed capital formation at 2010 prices;
total economy (percent per annum)*

	<i>UK</i>	<i>EU-15</i>
1961-1970	+5.3%	+6.0%
1971-1980	+1.1%	+1.9%
1981-1990	+4.1%	+2.8%
1991-2000	+0.7%	+1.8%
2001-2010	-0.3%	+0.4%

Table 6: Growth Rate of Industrial Production in UK and Eurozone ⁴³

Growth rate of industrial production (percent per annum)

	<i>UK</i>	<i>Eurozone</i>
2001-2010	-1.2%	-0.1%
2011	-0.8%	+2.6%
2012	-2.7%	-2.7%
2013	-0.5%	-1.0%
2014	+1.5%	-0.4%

Table 7: General government consolidated gross debt; in UK and Eurozone ⁴⁴

As Percentage of GDP at market prices

	<i>UK</i>	<i>Eurozone</i>
2002	35.9%	67.2%
2008	51.8%	69.5%
2010	76.4%	84.8%
2014	89.4%	95.1%

Table 8: Adjusted Wage Share; Total Economy; in UK and Eurozone ⁴⁵

As Percentage of GDP at Current Factor Cost

	<i>UK</i>	<i>Eurozone</i>
2002	67.9%	63.2%
2005	66.5%	62.4%
2008	66.8%	62.0%
2010	68.2%	63.2%
2012	67.6%	63.6%
2014	67.3%	63.7%

Table 9: Share of Output by Sector in Developed and Developing Countries 1990–2005 (in %) ⁴⁷

	<i>Developed Countries</i>			<i>Developing Countries</i>		
	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Service</i>
1990	2.7%	31.8%	65.4%	14.9%	35.9%	49.2%
1995	2.2%	29.2%	68.6%	12.8%	35.9%	51.3%
2000	1.8%	26.9%	71.3%	10.8%	36.7%	52.5%
2005	1.6%	24.9%	73.5%	10.5%	37.8%	51.7%

ing to these Stalinists it is the EU and its Court which has caused “*mass forced migration.*” How naïve we Trotskyists must be to assume, as we do, that migration is caused by the miserable lives led by people in the semi-colonial countries of Eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere! How ignorant we must be to actually believe that those responsible for this misery are the imperialist monopolies (including those of the British!) and the great powers (including the UK!) which exploit these countries and wage or at least instigate wars against them!

Another argument of the Stalinists love to make is that a victory for NO in Cameron’s referendum will weaken the government or even split the Tory party: “*By voting No we also have an opportunity to drive a significant split in the Tories and wound the government. If we do not take this opportunity, we are stuck with them for five years.*”⁵³

While this argument is certainly true, it is extremely short-sighted. The Tories have already been weakened by the emergence of Nigel Farage’s right-wing anti-EU UKIP party. However this development has hardly been advantageous to the working class! Rather, a victory for NO will further strengthen the right wing among the Tories and fortify the most reactionary forces inside and to the right of the Conservative party. Such a “weakening” of the Tories will hardly be beneficial to the working class struggle! The only idiots who might object to this analysis are those Stalinists who viewed the rise of the fascists and semi-fascists as a harbinger of the future communist victory – as the Stalinist Comintern did when faced with the rise of Hitler in the early 1930s!

In short, the CPB’s position regarding the referendum offers the working class no internationalist perspective but is rather a reactionary and utopian conception of an “independent” imperialist Britain which would somehow be “fair” to workers.

II.2. SPEW/CWI: The Hidden Patriotic “Socialists”

The *Socialist Party of England and Wales* (SPEW) is a right-centrist organization and the parent section of the *Committee for a Workers International* (CWI). It traditionally adapts to the reformist labor bureaucracy which results in its crude theory espousing the possibility of a peaceful transformation to socialism. One of its positions, for example, is that police men and women are not enemies of the working class but rather part of it (“*workers in uniform*”). SPEW also refuses to defend semi-colonial countries against the military attacks of imperialist powers; and it offers pro-Zionist support for a “socialist” Israel at the side of a Palestinian state.⁵⁴

From the beginning of the No2EU movement, SPEW has been part of it together with the Stalinists. This is by no means fortuitous, since SPEW adapts to the “UK First” chauvinism of Stalinism. Naturally, as a formally Trotskyist, internationalist organization, it refrains from such openly advocacy of the pound against the euro or of presenting Britain’s exit as a kind of “self-rule.” Essentially these right-centrists advocate a “lighter” version of the national-centered conception of Stalinism is summarized within the slogan “*the devil resides abroad.*”

Reforming the British State?

Similar to the Stalinist propaganda, SPEW/CWI one-sidedly stresses the capitalist character of the EU as “*a bosses’ club.*”

“*The EU is, in the final analysis, a bosses’ club, with different wings of capitalism collaborating - like thieves chained together in the same cart - while also striking blows at one another, only differing on how best to defend their own ‘national interests’ and their system.*”⁵⁵

It never occurs to these centrists that Britain too is “*a bosses’ club*” – not an inch less than the EU! It is somehow embarrassing to have to explain to so-called Marxists, that the imperialist nation state is no more than an instrument of monopoly capital. Lenin was absolutely clear on this:

„*In explaining the class nature of bourgeois civilisation, bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system, all socialists have expressed the idea formulated with the greatest scientific precision by Marx and Engels, namely, that the most democratic bourgeois republic is no more than a machine for the suppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie, for the suppression of the working people by a handful of capitalists*”⁵⁶

SPEW/CWI stresses again and again that the EU cannot be reformed: “*This summarises the position of the left advocates of EU membership: why not try and ‘reform the EU’ in the interests of the working class? What is never explained is how this is to be achieved.*”⁵⁷

While their position vis-à-vis the EU is obviously true, the tragedy is that SPEW/CWI truly believes that, in contrast to the EU, the imperialist nation state, such as Britain, can be reformed. Peter Taaffe, the central leader of the SPEW/CWI, defended this idea explicitly. In an interview he gave a few years ago in response to the question if there will be a revolution to overthrow capitalism, Taaffe answered:

“*Well yes, a change in society, established through winning a majority in elections, backed up by a mass movement to prevent the capitalists from overthrowing a socialist government and fighting, not to take over every small shop, every betting shop or*

every street corner shop -- in any case, they are disappearing because of the rise of the supermarkets -- and so on, or every small factory, but to nationalise a handful of monopolies, transnationals now, that control 80 to 85% of the economy.”⁵⁸

And in an educational pamphlet which the CWI publishes on its website another central leader, Lynn Walsh, repeats this idea:

“Our programme presented the case for “the socialist transformation of society” - a popularised form of ‘socialist revolution’. We use this formulation to avoid the crude association between ‘revolution’ and ‘violence’ always falsely made by apologists of capitalism. A successful socialist transformation can be carried through only on the basis of the support of the overwhelming majority of the working class, with the support of other layers, through the most radical forms of democracy. On that basis, provided a socialist government takes decisive measures on the basis of mobilising the working class, it would be possible to carry through a peaceful change of society. Any threat of violence would come, not from a popular socialist government, but from forces seeking to restore their monopoly of wealth, power and privilege by mobilising a reaction against the democratic majority.”⁵⁹

As we see, the CWI doesn’t understand the nature of the bourgeois state with its huge machinery – built top down without any democratic control from below – which serves and can only serve the capitalist class. The bourgeois state

exists and can only exist to implement the class interests of the bourgeoisie and enforce them against the resistance of the working class and oppressed. The CWI doesn’t understand that such machinery is incompatible with serving the working class on its road to socialism. This is why Marxists say that the bourgeois state *cannot* be reformed but must be smashed by a violent revolution, as we cited above in several quotes taken from Lenin.

So, from adapting to the reformist thesis that the instruments of the bourgeois state can be utilized to introduce socialism, SPEW/CWI concludes “logically” that the imperialist nation state is preferable to an imperialist federation like the EU. Consequently, they defend the British imperialist nation state against the EU as a “lesser evil.”⁶⁰

It is certainly true that the formation of a bourgeois nation state in Western Europe was a progressive development. But this was in the early epoch of capitalism when this mode of production had an historically progressive character compared with the feudalism of the middle ages. But this was a long time ago! Today, as we live in the epoch of decaying capitalism, the imperialist nation state has no progressive meaning at all! As we showed above, Lenin made this very clear as early as 1916 when, referring to imperialist countries like Germany, France, and England, he wrote:

Table 10: Distribution of Wage Laborers in different Regions, 1995 and 2008/09⁴⁸

	<i>Wage earners (in percent)</i>	
	1995	2008/09
World	100%	100%
Countries with low and middle income	65.9%	72.4%
Countries with high income	34.1%	27.6%
Countries with high income (without semi-colonial EU-States)	-	25%
Countries with low and middle income (including semi-colonial EU-States)	-	75%

Table 11: Distribution of Labor Force in Industry in different Regions, 2008/09⁴⁹

	<i>Labor force in Industry (in Millions)</i>	<i>Distribution of industrial Labor force</i>
World	666.4	100%
Developed economies	109.8	16.5%
Eastern Europe & ex-USSR	39.5	5.9%
East Asia	226.0	33.9%
South-East Asia	49.9	7.5%
South Asia	122.2	18.3%
Latin America	56.1	8.4%
North Africa	14.9	2.2%
Middle East	16.4	2.4%
Sub-Saharan Africa	31.7	4.8%

*"In these countries, which hitherto have been in the van of mankind, particularly in 1789-1871, the process of forming national states has been consummated. In these countries the national movement is a thing of an irrevocable past, and it would be an absurd reactionary utopia to try to revive it. The national movement of the French, English, Germans has long been completed. In these countries history's next step is a different one: liberated nations have become transformed into oppressor nations, into nations of imperialist rapine, nations that are going through the 'eve of the collapse of capitalism'"*⁶¹

Does SPEW Suggest Socialists Should Become Better Nationalists?

Shamelessly, the SPEW/CWI goes even further in its adaptation to Stalinist patriotism and flirts with the idea that Britain is a country which somehow is oppressed and exploited by the European Union. In a recently published lengthy article in which the Taaffeites attempt to justify their support for the NO campaign, they even went so far as to compare the current situation of Britain with that of Germany in the 1920s after the Versailles Treaty.

Under the chapter sub-headline *"Vacating the field to the right"*, Clive Heemskerck from the SPEW/CWI explains why socialists should not leave the campaign for Britain's exit from the EU to the right-wing populists and fascists. *"Days after the Front National won the 2014 European elections in France, its leader Marine Le Pen claimed she had a mandate to demand that president François Hollande nationalise Alstom, the builder of high-speed TGV trains, 'contrary to the rules of the European Union, to save this strategic company'"* (*The Guardian*, 28 May 2014).

How would supporters of the EU in the workers' movement respond? By urging workers to accept 'EU rules'? An appeal to the European Commission for 'permission' to save workers' jobs? Or Lenin's advice, not to be bound by treaties that the working class have no responsibility for? (...) [T]he bigger danger is vacating the field to the right within the national terrain. The horrendous debt burdens placed on the workers of Greece and other countries after the crash of 2007-09 – policed in the eurozone by the EU institutions – are not incomparable, as a percentage of GDP, to the burdens imposed by the world war one 'victors' on the German working class and middle classes by the 'war reparations debt' clauses of the Versailles peace treaty. This sense of being 'punished' by the Entente powers of Britain and France was a feature of mass consciousness in Germany and needed to be taken into account by the workers' movement.

Writing in the early 1930s, before the victory of the Nazis in 1933, Leon Trotsky criticised the argument of the Stalinist leader of the German Communist Party (KPD) Ernst Thälmann that what was involved was "primarily a matter of national liberation" as Germany "is today a ball in the hands of the Entente". "France also, and even England", are 'balls' for the US, wrote Trotsky. "This is why the slogan of the Soviet United States of Europe, and not the single bare slogan, 'Down with the Versailles peace', is necessary (The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, p102). But, Trotsky insisted, the working class cannot abandon the field to the nationalist right, as its mass organisations – the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the KPD – did in December 1929 when a referendum was promoted by the German National People's Party (DNVP – led by the media baron Alfred Hugenburg) to reject the Young Plan reaffirming German war reparation debts. The KPD abstained in

the referendum while the SPD deputies voted for the Young Plan in the Reichstag, 'in support of international law'.

The Nazis participation with the DNVP in the referendum campaign – the first time an important section of the capitalists had collaborated with Hitler – was a factor in their phenomenal surge from 810,000 votes (2.6%) in the May 1928 general election to 6.3 million (18.2%) in September 1930, against the backdrop of the 1929 crash. Analysing the election results, Trotsky concluded that the working class had been given yet another "chance to put itself at the head of the nation as its leader". Its failure to do so, following the missed opportunities of the previous decade to show it could "change the fate of all its [the nation's] classes, the petit-bourgeois included", was paving the way for a terrible reaction (ibid, p59).

*The Versailles treaty debts were, of course, backed up by external military force, with French troops invading the Ruhr in 1923. This is not the case with the EU treaties; although the 'unattributed briefings' by EU officials that Grexit would necessitate a 'state of emergency', invoking spectres in a country with experience of military coups, are an ominous warning of how internal reaction could be 'legitimised'."*⁶²

We apologize to our readers for reprinting this long quote from the SPEW/CWI article, but we deem this necessary to demonstrate their political argument. Obviously the SPEW/CWI considers the example of Germany in the 1920s as relevant not only for Greece but also for Britain today and to justify its tactics in the EU referendum. This in itself is a monstrous absurdity! While Germany was an imperialist country in the late 1920s and early 1930s, it was certainly a victim of British, French and US imperialism who imposed the draconian Versailles Treaty on it. Under this treaty Germany was forced to pay billions of pounds to the victorious powers. The same treaty served as justification for the military occupation of the Ruhr district in 1923.

While the present situation in Greece indeed includes parallels to Germany at that time, this is not at all the case with imperialist Britain! Britain is a profiteer from the EU, not its victim!

But even if one would accept the SPEW/CWI analogy of Germany in the 1920s with Britain today, the whole logic of the article remains an embarrassing scandal! The author relates the initiative of the extreme nationalist DNVP and the Nazis for a referendum about the Young-Plan (which, in contrast to Britain's relation with the EU today, was indeed a Western imperialist plan to squeeze more money from Germany as war reparations). He explains how successful this initiative was for the right-wingers since they experienced massive growth in the period after the referendum. He reports that the Communist Party abstained at the referendum and concludes with a quote from Trotsky *"that the working class had been given yet another "chance to put itself at the head of the nation as its leader". Its failure to do so, following the missed opportunities of the previous decade to show it could "change the fate of all its [the nation's] classes, the petit-bourgeois included", was paving the way for a terrible reaction."*

In other words, the SPEW/CWI author suggests that the Communist Party should have not abstained in the referendum but should have supported the Nazi initiative by voting against the Young Plan!

As a matter of fact, Trotsky argued exactly the opposite. The last quote from Trotsky – about the need of the work-

ing class “to put itself at the head of the nation as its leader” – is taken from another article which doesn’t deal at all with the Young referendum. Nor does it state any need for communists to support a referendum initiative by right-wing chauvinists.⁶³ It is simply a quote which SPEW/CWI takes completely out of context and misuses to justify its adaptation to British chauvinism.

In contrast to SPEW/CWI, Trotsky denounced the Stalinists for declaring the foreign imperialists as the main enemy of the German working class instead of recognizing that the “main enemy is at home,” i.e., that the main enemy of the German working class is the German bourgeoisie. This would have become obvious if the author would have also quoted what Trotsky wrote immediately before and the quoted statement:

“The fact is that the former revolutionary worker, Thaelmann, today strives with all his strength not to be outdone by Count Stenbock-Fermor. The report of the meeting of party workers at which Thaelmann proclaimed the turn towards the plebiscite, is printed in Rote Fahne under the pretentious title, Under the Banner of Marxism. However, at the most prominent place in his conclusion, Thaelmann put the idea that “Germany is today a ball in the hands of the Entente”. It is consequently a matter, primarily, of national liberation. But in a certain sense, France and Italy also, and even England, are “balls” in the hands of the United States. The dependence of Europe upon America, which has once more been revealed so clearly in connection with Hoover’s proposal (tomorrow this dependence will be revealed still more sharply and brutally), has a far deeper significance for the development of the European revolution than the dependence of Germany upon the Entente. This is why – by the way – the slogan of the Soviet United States of Europe, and not the single bare slogan, “Down with the Versailles Peace”, is the proletarian answer to the convulsions of the European continent.

But all these questions nevertheless occupy second place. Our policy is determined not by the fact that Germany is a “ball” in the hands of the Entente, but primarily by the fact that the German proletariat, which is split-up, rendered powerless and degraded, is a ball in the hands of the German bourgeoisie. “The main enemy – is at home!” Karl Liebknecht taught at one time. Or perhaps you have forgotten this, friends? Or perhaps this teaching is no longer any good? For Thaelmann, it is very obviously antiquated, Liebknecht is substituted by Scheringer. This is why the title Under the Banner of Marxism rings with such bitter irony!”⁶⁴

As we see, Trotsky’s argument is diametrically opposed to what SPEW/CWI wants us to believe. While SPEW/CWI suggests in its discussion of the Nazi referendum against the Young-Plan that revolutionaries should not “vacate the field to the right”, Trotsky argued that German communists must not support a referendum initiated by right-wing chauvinists against foreign imperialists. They must rather see the German imperialists as their main enemy.

Trotsky’s approach was exactly the opposite of what SPEW/CWI is advocating today. Yet the latter unabashedly try to falsify Trotsky’s writings to support their own position. SPEW/CWI views EU imperialists as more dangerous enemies than British imperialists. Likewise, the German Stalinists viewed the British, French and American imperialists as more dangerous than their German colleagues. This is why SPEW/CWI supports Britain’s exit from the EU as the German Stalinists supported Germany’s rejection of the Young-Plan. This is why SPEW/CWI supports

the NO campaign even though this campaign is the initiative of and is controlled by the right-wing Tories and UKIP. However, the Stalinist Communist Party of the time did not dare support such a reactionary policy as does that support by SPEW/CWI today, but rather and correctly called for a vote of abstention in the referendum – even though the Young Plan *did* represented a direct attack on the German working class and was not “simply” a referendum about membership in a imperialist federation. While the Stalinist bureaucracy later condemned the KPD’s refusal to take part in the Young Plan referendum as an error, Trotsky and the Fourth International never did so.⁶⁵

Predicting the Imminent Collapse of the EU ... for Four Decades!

Peter Taaffee and his CWI have traditionally supported the preference of imperialist nation states to a European federation. They called for Britain’s exit from the then federation in the 1975 referendum and have opposed the entry of all European countries into the EU since then. For decades four decades (1) they have hoped to underpin their position by predicting the imminent collapse of the EU and later of the Euro! As we showed above, they incorrectly cite Lenin, like the Stalinists, by acclaiming that any form of European unification is utopian.

“The EMU [European Monetary Union] project will break down in fact. (...) It is not a question of ‘if’ the euro will break down, but only of ‘when’ and ‘how’.”⁶⁶

“The Single European Act (‘the single market’), various EU legislation and uniform regulations, tax-harmonisation, etc. have acted as means of stimulating further integration inside the EU. This, together with the political consensus established throughout Europe during the 1990s, has given rise to the illusion that EU is on its way to become a ‘super-state’. This is certainly not the case. The new global crisis has already to some extent halted the process of globalisation.”⁶⁷

17 years after these words were written – and SPEW/CWI has made this dire prediction many times before and after then – the EU and the Euro not only still exist but have substantially deepened their political and economic integration.

In his recent programmatic statement on the EU referendum, SPEW leader Peter Taaffee repeats the same argument without answering why his groups’ prediction have not materialized in the past decades.

“This even generated the illusion amongst many, including some Marxists, that unification of the continent was possible on a capitalist basis. But the Socialist Party insisted that the European capitalists could never succeed in completely overcoming the barrier of private ownership of industry on the one side and national states on the other.”⁶⁸

However, Taaffee & Co not only predicted that “the European capitalists could never succeed in completely overcoming the barrier of private ownership of industry on the one side and national states on the other.” They also predicted the imminent collapse of the EU and the Euro.

With the self-confidence of a political autist, Taaffee writes that the EU and the Euro are already about to break down: *“This was reflected in a spiralling of growth that lasted for an unprecedented 25 years between 1950 and 1975! The advent of neoliberalism – characterized by colossal intensification of the exploitation of the working class, low-paid part-time jobs in-*

stead of high paid and permanent jobs, etc - greatly reinforced this process. Many were thrown off balance by this development and swallowed the illusion that capitalism could complete the process and unify Europe. The establishment of the eurozone seemed to reinforce this. But the onset of the economic crisis, as the Socialist Party predicted, saw the exact opposite take place with the re-emergence of national divisions and nationalism with a pronounced tendency towards the eventual breakup of the eurozone itself. The introduction of the euro was utopian in its aim of establishing a lasting common currency, something that could only be possible on the basis of a 'political union', which has not and will not happen." ⁶⁹

This is complete nonsense. Taaffee obviously assumes that his readers are not aware of his "predictions" during the past decades. He writes that the EU could only deepen its integration in the period of the boom. Once the boom ended, the EU and the eurozone became doomed. ("the onset of the economic crisis, as the Socialist Party predicted, saw the exact opposite take place with the re-emergence of national divisions and nationalism with a pronounced tendency towards the eventual breakup of the eurozone itself"). But the end of the boom was as early as the early 1970s, as Taaffee's organization themselves loudly proclaimed many times. Since the 1970s the integration of the EU has deepened, contrary to Taaffee's fanciful "predictions." 13 years after the introduction of the Euro, Taaffee still proclaims it as "utopian"! And he proclaims that a political union of the EU "has not and will not happen". But why should the stronger European great powers (like Germany and France) and the monopoly capitalists not be able to "unite" parts of Europe or even most of Europe - of course not on the basis of equality but on the basis of subordination and domination?! Why should this be excluded IF the alternative for the other European capitalists is annihilation on the world market and IF they would lose much more in the case of a collapse of the Euro and the EU than in the case of deepening the integration?! SPEW/CWI still tries to downplay the EU simply as a temporary agreement or treaty.

"The EU, fundamentally, is only an agreement between the different national capitalist classes of Europe, with the aim of creating the largest possible arena for the big European multinational corporations to conduct their hunt for profits with the least possible hindrance. Each treaty, from the 1957 Treaty of Rome that created the European Economic Community (EEC) onwards, has developed and enhanced a Europe-wide market, with pan-European regulations and commercial law." ⁷⁰

In fact, the EU is not only a commercial project but a project for a political, economic, and military federation. What SPEW/CWI and many others don't understand is that the European integration, i.e., the formation of a political and economic federation (a "super-state"), is the only chance for the European monopoly capitalists to withstand the increasing pressure of rivaling great powers on the world market and in global politics. As we have explained elsewhere, this is the fundamental cause of the overwhelming drive of the monopoly bourgeoisie in the main imperialist countries to advance the EU integration. ⁷¹

What we have always and continue to insist on is that the EU could of course potentially collapse and split into its nation state components. This would naturally constitute a tremendous economic blow for the European states, given the overwhelming competition of the US, China, Japan, and perhaps even Russia. Yet another possibility is

that the EU will indeed split apart but be replaced by a smaller variant of European unification - a kind of "core Europe" coalesced around Germany. Or, in fact, Germany and France may succeed in bringing about the creation of a pan-European super-state. Naturally steps in this direction of a (smaller or bigger) European imperialist super-state will go hand in hand with vicious attacks on the working class - as would happen no less so if the nation states which leave the EU and are forced to survive alone on the world market.

Similarly, it is clear that any unification of Europe (or parts of it) would not be an organic, harmonious process. Rather, as we already pointed out some time ago, such a process would be undemocratic in character and would be linked with the creation of a Bonapartist pan-European state apparatus

"The process of European unification cannot be a "spontaneous" process - either on the political or on the economic level. Left to the market there will be no spontaneous emergence of a pan-European capital. We do not live in a period of rising capitalism where nation states are formed and capital first and foremost expands with them. We live in the era of globalization and neo-liberalism. Left to the market, the process of Europeanization of capital would be constantly disrupted and negated by mergers and acquisitions carried out by Japanese or US companies. Today, in the imperialist epoch, under the conditions of global capitalism with its enormous competition and rivalry, any organic formation of trans-national capital is an illusion. Let's not forget: the most multinational capital blocs are those of the leading world powers - the Americans and, on a smaller scale, the British, as the former leading world power, who were able to open the markets with their huge combined economic, political and military power. Such a process is impossible inside the European Union. No power is strong enough to enforce its will and subordinate the others. So, European unification and the creation of pan-European capital have to be the result of a conscious intervention by a pan-European imperialist state apparatus. However, that, too, has first to be created and since, unlike any other state, it will not be the political instrument of an already existing ruling class, rooted in a national society, its creation can only result from the conscious decision of the existing imperialist states within the EU. That requires at least the major powers to each accept that its own interest lies in ceding power to the higher, pan-European body. Only the certainty that the alternative would be economic ruin could force them to this decision and, thus, it is precisely the overwhelming superiority of the US, by comparison with any individual European power, which is the principal unifying force in European politics. The need for a unified political EU state apparatus becomes even more evident if one looks at the meager role Europe plays in world politics, not to mention its inability to play any role as a world policeman or to impose its interests around the globe." ⁷²

Hence, we concluded:

"So, in effect, the new Constitution creates an imperialist EU state apparatus on the basis of bourgeois parliamentarism but with a strong Bonapartist element in the form of the European Commission." ⁷³

However, SPEW/CWI is incapable of understanding this process because it has always viewed the existence of the EU (respectively its predecessor institutions) as an unnatural agreement which was destined to quickly collapse. Thus, Taaffee and his collaborators have a lot of explaining to do regarding why this "unnatural agreement" has now

held out for more than 60 years – if we take the creation of the *European Coal and Steel Community* in 1952 as the beginning – and is increasingly deepening its integration.

SP's Defense of Immigration Control

The opportunistic adaption of SPEW/CWI to the imperialist state is not only reflected in its campaign for Britain's exit from the EU and its spreading of illusions about the possibility of a peaceful transformation towards socialism. It also becomes obvious in its support for immigration control by the imperialist state. They justify this adaption to chauvinism using classically opportunistic arguments: the majority of the workers do not currently support such anti-immigration slogans. With such an opportunistic approach, revolutionaries would also have to refrain from standing up against nationalism and arguing for a consistent internationalist line! As it is well known, opportunists of all sorts justify their capitulation to imperialism by claiming that a principled *"demand would alienate the vast majority of the working class."* German social democrats likewise used this argument to justify why they had to support the imperialist war in 1914. Here is how SPEW explained its stance in a resolution put forth in a congress in 2013.

*"Of course, we have to stand in defence of the most oppressed sections of the working class, including migrant workers and other immigrants. We staunchly oppose racism. We defend the right to asylum, and argue for the end of repressive measures like detention centres. At the same time, given the outlook of the majority of the working class, we cannot put forward a bald [?] slogan of 'open borders' or 'no immigration controls', which would be a barrier to convincing workers of a socialist programme, both on immigration and other issues. Such a demand would alienate the vast majority of the working class, including many more long-standing immigrants, who would see it as a threat to jobs, wages and living conditions. Nor can we make the mistake of dismissing workers who express concerns about immigration as 'racists'. While racism and nationalism are clearly elements in anti-immigrant feeling, there are many consciously anti-racist workers who are concerned about the scale of immigration."*⁷⁴

It is therefore no coincidence that SPEW/CWI also justifies their support for Britain's exit from the EU with their opposition to free movement within the EU. As Peter Taaffe states:

*"The alleged benefits of the 'free movement of labour' are in reality a device for the bosses to exploit a vast pool of cheap labour, which can then be used to cut overall wage levels and living standards."*⁷⁵

And on the website of the No2EU-Campaign, of which SPEW/CWI is a member like the Stalinist CPB, the following statement appears:

*"To reverse this increasingly perverse situation, all nation states must have democratic control over their own immigration policy and have the right to apply national legislation in defence of migrant and indigenous workers."*⁷⁶

Naturally, such a position is deeply hostile to the principles of Marxism or even consistent democracy and internationalism. As we have elaborated elsewhere, the revolutionary workers' movement has a long tradition of opposition to immigration control.⁷⁷

Communists don't claim that migration is the cause for lowering of wages and lay-offs but rather these are caused

by the capitalists and their system of profit. Communists oppose immigration control because this binds workers to their imperialist nation state and undermines the international solidarity with foreign workers. The solution is to struggle to organize migrant workers in trade unions and other organizations of the workers' movement and to fight for equal wages for all workers in a given industry – irrespective of their skin color or passport.

The Communist International took such an internationalist perspective – which includes opposition to all forms of immigration control – and made it mandatory for its sections in the imperialist countries.

"The communist parties of the imperialist countries, America, Japan, England, Australia, and Canada should not restrict themselves, in face of the threatening danger, to propaganda against war, but must make every effort to eliminate the factors which disorganize the workers' movement in these countries and make it easier for the capitalists to exploit the antagonisms between nations and races. These factors are: the immigration question and the question of cheap coloured labour power. Even today the contract system of indentured labour is the chief means of recruiting coloured workers on the sugar plantations of the south Pacific area, to which workers are brought from China and India. This induces the workers in the imperialist countries to demand legislation prohibiting immigration and hostile to the coloured workers, both in America and Australia. Such legislation deepens the antagonism between the coloured and white workers, and splits and weakens the workers' movement."

*The communist parties of America, Canada, and Australia must conduct an energetic campaign against laws prohibiting immigration and must explain to the proletarian masses of these countries that such laws, by stirring up race hatred, will in the end bring injury to themselves. The capitalists on the other hand are prepared to dispense with laws against immigration, in order to facilitate the free entry of cheap coloured labour power and thus lower the wages of white workers. Their intentions can only be successfully frustrated by one thing – the immigrant workers must be enrolled in the existing trade unions of white workers. At the same time the demand must be made that the wages of coloured workers must be raised to the level of the wages of white workers. Such a step by the communist parties will expose the intentions of the capitalists and at the same time clearly show the coloured workers that the international proletariat knows no race prejudice."*⁷⁸

Ultimately the whole debate about open borders and migrant workers is a repetition of the discussions on female labor in the First International. The petty-bourgeois socialist adherents of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon argued against female labor since it was said to be "unnatural" and that it would reduce the employment chances for male workers. Of course, on a superficial level, it was true that women workers got jobs more readily than men since their wages were lower – just as it is the case with migrants and white workers today. But Karl Marx, and all socialists since then, explained that the problem is not women (or migrants) entering the labor market and seeking employment. The problem is the capitalists' ownership of the means of production. The task is to organize the women (or migrant) workers together with their male or white colleagues and to counter the capitalists' desire to divide the working class by fighting for equal wages.

Hence, the RCIT – in contrast to SPEW/CWI – consistently opposes immigration control as we call for in our program:

*"The right to stay and immediate legalisation of all illegal migrants and asylum seekers! Right of asylum for those fleeing war, oppression and poverty in their countries! Open borders for all!"*⁷⁹

For the very same reason true Marxists opposed the chauvinist strike of 2009 which was conducted under the chauvinistic slogan *"British Jobs for British Workers."* At that time British workers at the Lindsey Oil Refinery wanted to stop the hiring of migrant workers. It is a shame that many British left-reformists and centrists – like the Stalinist CPB, the CWI, IMT etc. – supported this strike. Until this very day, SPEW/CWI even proudly boasts that one of its members was a leader in this strike!⁸⁰

Equally unsurprisingly, SPEW/CWI joined the chorus of the reformists and centrists who denounced the August Uprising of black, Asian, migrant and poor white youth in 2011, instead of supporting this as a justified spontaneous insurrection.⁸¹

While we cannot go into great detail on the issue of migration here, this is as a key question for all imperialist countries in the present period and in particular for Britain. We simply refer to the fact that, according to the latest official census of 2011, national and ethnic minorities constitute 1/5 of the population of England and Wales. In London, only 45% (3.7 million) out of 8.2 million usual residents were white British, i.e., national and ethnic minorities already constitute the majority. In Leicester, the share of the white British is 60% and in Birmingham 65%.⁸²

Hence, implementing a correct, Marxist line on the issue of migration is a central requirement for any revolutionary organization in Britain.

II.3. SWP/IST: Subjective Internationalists, Objectively Supporters of the Patriotic Anti-EU Campaign

The Cliffite *Socialist Workers Party* (SWP) has also joined the camp of those who advocate Britain's exit from the EU and its return to being an "independent" imperialist state. Basically, the SWP shares the same faulty logic of voting for Britain's exit because the EU is a "bosses' club," as was stated by Charlie Kimber, the SWP's national secretary:

*"It's a bosses' organisation designed to ease the exploitation of workers and sharpen the capacity of European capitalists to beat other capitalists. We don't believe the EU will ever be a positive assistance to workers' struggles."*⁸³

Similarly, the SWP stated recently:

*"Lined up on that side is Tory prime minister David Cameron and the majority of the British ruling class. That's because the EU is a bosses' club and is no guarantor of workers' rights. It polices austerity across the continent. (...) The EU is a thoroughly pro-business project."*⁸⁴

Like the Stalinists and SPEW/CWI, the Cliffites distort the meaning of the referendum. The SWP/IST claims that this will be a referendum polling the opinion of the people of Britain on the imperialist EU. As we have explained above, they forget – more accurately, they want to make the people forget – that this is in fact rather a referendum on how British imperialism is to be politically organized: either as part of the EU or "independently" (which will most likely really mean Britain's becoming the complete poodle of US imperialism). This, and only this, is the real political meaning of the referendum!

Like the Stalinists and SPEW/CWI, the SWP/IST dema-

gogically claims that the EU is "no guarantor of workers' rights" and that it "will never be a positive assistance to workers' struggles." What a surprise! But, we ask our SWP comrades, has the capitalist British state ever been in any way more of a "guarantor of workers' rights" and "will it ever be a positive assistance to workers' struggles"?! Comrade Kimber, haven't you heard about Margaret Thatcher and her brutal attacks on the working class in the 1980s?! Or do you want to claim that Thatcher would not have attacked the workers if Britain would not have been part of the EU?! If you think so, how do you explain that the same kind of attacks took place and still take place in countries which have never been part of the EU (like the US, Canada, Australia or Japan)?!

Again like the Stalinists and SPEW/CWI, the SWP/IST claims that a victory for the NO vote in the referendum would throw the Cameron government into a crisis:

*"A vote against the EU could also cause a crisis for our rulers. The Tory party could rip itself apart over its divisions on Europe."*⁸⁵

We repeat the argument we elaborated above: this will be a crisis from which only the right-wing of the Tories and the UKIP party would gain. How on earth can this be beneficial to the working class and the migrants?!

It is however also necessary to differentiate here and note that the SWP/IST refrains from the chauvinistic excesses of the openly patriotic Stalinists and the hidden patriotic SPEW/CWI. SWP/IST has always opposed immigration control and also took a principled stand during the chauvinist *"British Jobs for British Workers"* strike in 2009.

Likewise, the SWP/IST is more aware of the chauvinistic dominance of the NO-campaign. However, they don't understand that this chauvinism is not by chance, but rather is due to the essentially chauvinist nature of the entire issue. Therefore, they do not completely drop their involvement in the pro-UK social-imperialist NO-camp, but take a clearly more passive position by limiting themselves to propaganda for a "relatively small groups of people" as SPW cadre Joseph Choonara explained in a recent article:

*"Our role in the referendum is to try to carve out a space for an internationalist No campaign. There are times when socialists put forward simple arguments and rally large numbers of people around them. There are other times when we have to provide clarity by making complex arguments to relatively small groups of people. The EU referendum is an occasion for the latter."*⁸⁶

Unfortunately, passivity and abandonment of mass agitation will not exempt the SWP/IST from the political trap of pro-British social-imperialism in which it has adeptly maneuvered itself. Falling in this trap is only possible if the SWP/IST comrades break with the NO-camp and take a consistently internationalist stand by opposing both British as well as EU-imperialism and advocating abstention in the referendum. In other words, they can avoid this pitfall only if they don't ignore Trotsky's advice about the necessity of the working class to break all links with "their" fatherland.

*„Workers' action can only begin by absolute opposition to the national bourgeoisie and its international combinations."*⁸⁷

III. The YES-Camp: Pro-EU Social-Imperialism

As we have seen, the dominant forces of left-reformism and centrism support Britain's exit from the EU. However, while in the referendum of 1975 virtually the entire left took such a position, the situation is somewhat different today, and there are a few leftists groups advocating Britain's remaining inside the EU.

III.1. AWL: Is European Imperialism in Fact a Lesser Evil?

The most renowned of these forces is the *Alliance for Workers' Liberty* (AWL) which unequivocally states: "We will vote "Yes" to keep the UK in Europe."⁸⁸

The AWL is a national-centered group without any international affiliation. Furthermore, it represents a particularly right-wing form of centrism which supports the existence of Israel. Nor have they ever supported the struggle of colonial peoples who are oppressed by "their" British imperialism: neither the Irish, nor during the Malvinas war, nor in any Middle East War. Worse, their historic leader, Sean Matgamna, even wrote in their paper that one could hardly criticize the arch-reactionary Zionist Apartheid State of Israel if it would attack Iran! As Matgamna wrote in 2008:

"We do not advocate an Israeli attack on Iran, nor will we endorse it or take political responsibility for it. But if the Israeli airforce attempts to stop Iran developing the capacity to wipe it out with a nuclear bomb, in the name of what alternative would we condemn Israel?"⁸⁹

In short, the AWL is one of those bizarre "socialist" groups which still believe in the "progressive" potential of imperialism. It is therefore hardly surprising that they prefer a greater imperialist power, the EU, to Britain's becoming an isolated imperialist power. Consequently, they end up becoming a cheerleader for pro-EU social-imperialism. This is of course hardly surprising from an organization whose leaders implicitly side with the most reactionary watchdog of imperialism against a semi-colonial country which until just recently had been strangled by the Western Great Powers for decades!

Is the EU a Progressive Historic Achievement?

Let us now examine the main arguments of the AWL. Basically it considers the EU as an expression of a progressive historic task: the unification of Europe. Their criticism of their centrist rivals in the NO camp is that they do not recognize the EU as a historic step forward towards the overcoming of the nation state.

"The abolition of serfdom also allowed the emerging bourgeoisie to exploit a vast pool of cheap labour. Marxist socialists do not fight capitalism by advocating historical regression; we fight for the socialisation and democratisation of the economy, for labour to take control! In the referendum, where there will be a choice between in or out of the EU, Workers' Liberty will vote to keep the UK in the EU. We will do so for reasons similar to those that motivated our call to Scottish workers to vote against independence. In general, we are in favour of fewer and weaker borders

and barriers between peoples."⁹⁰

"We will be asked our opinion about European unity and (given the tone of the debate) about migrant workers. The left should say we are for European unity and for migrants. We should vote to stay in the EU."⁹¹

(Dis)armed with the same logic, the AWL accuses its opponents of being nihilists who want to destroy every gain which has been created under capitalism.

"And this is the fifth problem: what is wrong with the anti-Europe left? These groups misunderstand the relationship between the socialist project and advanced capitalism. They set themselves against the flow of history. Socialism comes out of advanced capitalism, and is made possible by advanced capitalism. Socialism requires the scientific, economic, technological, cultural and democratic progress made by capitalism. We don't want to destroy everything capitalism has produced — very far from it.

Who would suggest, for example, the destruction of our NHS — built within capitalism — so we can rebuild a socialist NHS at some point in the future? It is obvious to us that the route to a better NHS lies in defending the existing one, and planning to reshape it after the working class comes to power. The question of Europe is no different. The SWP and SP want to destroy the existing unity in Europe so they can build a socialist united Europe in the future. They can't see the contradiction because voting for a UK exit is a political collapse under nationalist pressure — and that pressure doesn't exist on domestic questions such as the NHS. In Europe we want to build on what is positive, not start again from Year Zero."⁹²

What we see here is the nonsensical mirror image of the centrist anti-EU camp. The AWL distorts the meaning of the referendum in the diametrically opposite direction than do the Stalinists and SPEW/CWI did. While the latter claim that this is a referendum about being in favor or against the EU and its policy of austerity, the AWL claims that the issue to be decided at the referendum is whether the people of Britain are for or against the unity of Europe. *"European unity, and the reduction and abolition of the borders that separate the peoples of Europe are gains made under capitalism that we will maintain and extend, not something we want to abolish. European unity is part of our democratic programme. So to agitate to pull the UK out of Europe so that, in the future, it can form a part of a European federation makes no sense at all."⁹³*

As we have explained above, the *only* meaning of the referendum is how British imperialism is to be organized politically: either as part of the EU or "independently" (again, as the complete poodle of US imperialism).

It is true that the rulers of the EU present their project as motivated by their desire to unite Europe. But only a fool would believe them. Thus, it obviously escapes the AWL's attention that Europe's monopoly bourgeoisie is "uniting" Europe by:

- i) Intensifying the exploitation of the European working class;
- ii) Squeezing out extra-profits by super-exploiting semi-colonial countries like Greece and Eastern Europe;
- iii) Strengthening the EU as a global rival of the other great

powers;

iv) Cultivating the EU as a great power which exploits the countries of the South and increasingly intervenes in them militarily.

AWL's comparison of an imperialist-imposed "unity" of Europe with social gains for the working class like the NHS is idiotic. Can it really have escaped the attention of the AWL that the EU is *attacking* such gains like social and health benefits and *not* defending them?! And democracy: isn't the EU ruled by a government *which has never been elected* by the European parliament, nor is this government under any parliamentary control? How can the AWL possibly speak about the EU as a democratic achievement?! Once again, we repeat: The EU is an alternative form of state, an alternative political form of imperialist domination and exploitation and *not* a democratic or social historic gain of the working class.

Naturally, Marxists take the issue of democratic rights seriously not only for semi-colonial countries and dictatorships but also for Western Europe.⁹⁴ Similarly, we would defend a bourgeois democracy in the event of a military coup.⁹⁵ But the "conflict" between an imperialist nation state and an imperialist federation can hardly be compared with the conflict between a bourgeois democracy and an authoritarian regime!

In short, the few rights the EU is giving people living inside its borders with one hand (like the freedom of movement), are being taken away twofold and threefold with the other hand, by transforming its exterior borders into walls of a fortress, by increasing the exploitation of its workers and particular migrant workers domestically, and by becoming a more powerful imperialist player in the world market.

Of course, as we have explained above, there is no reason to conclude from this that one should support Britain's exit from the EU, since Britain is similarly an imperialist state, only weaker. But to whitewash the EU by praising its democratic and internationalist achievements is both wrong and, for Marxists, embarrassing!

The AWL might protest our criticism and claim that they too are for a "Workers' Europe" and that have said so in their statements. We don't doubt this; but the point is that the AWL considers and defends the creation of a stronger imperialist power – the EU – as an interim stage towards such a socialist Europe; an interim stage which they support. This is, irrespective of their subjective intentions, nothing but pro-EU social-imperialism!

Is the Imperialist EU a Necessary Interim Step towards a Socialist Europe?

In fact the AWL applauds the formation of the imperialist EU as a "democratic gain" – as it has applauded Western imperialism on many other occasions. This becomes clear from statements they have made like "European unity is part of our democratic programme" or "We are for a Federal Europe."⁹⁶

Here we have to emphasize the ostensibly minor but actually cardinal difference between the social-imperialist slogan of a "federal Europe" and the Marxist slogan of a "socialist (or workers') Europe". A "federal Europe" is – and can only be – an imperialist Europe, a reactionary super-state with more power to oppress and exploit the global work-

ing class and poor. It in no way constitutes a step towards the United Socialist States of Europe!

In fact, while the pro-British centrists commit the error of national localism, the AWL replicates this error inversely on the European level. Their outlook is characterized by EU-localism which entirely ignores the reactionary consequences of the formation of an imperialist super-state for the international working class and oppressed people. Specifically, they ignore the second part of Trotsky's advice about the need of the working class to break all links to "their" fatherland.

*„Workers' action can only begin by absolute opposition to the national bourgeoisie and its international combinations.“*⁹⁷

Contrary to the AWL's claims, the imperialist unification of Europe is *not* part of the democratic program. The democratic program for Europe rather includes the self-determination for the oppressed nations and the destruction of the imperialist EU by the European Revolution – not as a means of returning to the framework of individual imperialist nation states but as a step towards the United Socialist States of Europe.

The only legitimate form of fighting for the unification of Europe is the Marxist slogan of a "socialist (or workers') Europe"! As we have shown above, this was exactly the reason why Lenin correctly opposed the slogan of the United States of Europe:

*“From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism — i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the “advanced” and “civilised” colonial powers — a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary. (...) On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, a United States of Europe would signify an organisation of reaction to retard America's more rapid development. The times when the cause of democracy and socialism was associated only with Europe alone have gone for ever.”*⁹⁸

This problem was only overcome when Trotsky further developed the slogan and called for the *Soviet United States of Europe*.

The AWL might object that Trotsky himself initially called for the "republican United States of Europe" (or "democratic or federal Europe") and not for a "socialist Europe." This is true, but the AWL seems to have gotten historically stuck. At that time – during World War I – Marxists were involved in fundamentally rethinking their assessment of the character of the epoch and the programmatic consequences. They were in a process of recognizing the limitations inherent to the classic division of the program into minimalist and maximalist approaches. Ultimately, they reached the conclusion that a transitional program was necessary. The slogan of a "republican United States of Europe" was part of the old social democratic program as was Lenin's slogan of the "Revolutionary-Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry". Both were finally overcome by Marxists and replaced by the slogans of the "Soviet United States of Europe" and the "Workers (and Peasants) Government".

The AWL is reintroducing old, worn-out formulas which were a legitimate part of the Marxist discussion a hundred years ago, but which were subsequently dropped by Marxists due to their historic experience. The AWL chooses to completely ignore these hundred years of experience! They are like the Bourbons who have learned nothing and have forgotten nothing!

Is the Referendum About the Unity of Europe or About Imperialist State Organization?

The AWL claims that it is a contradiction for socialists to agitate for an exit from the EU if at the same time they support the formation of the United Socialist States of Europe. (“So to agitate to pull the UK out of Europe so that, in the future, it can form a part of a European federation makes no sense at all.”) Surely, as we have argued, for decades Marxists too reject the national-chauvinist slogan calling for the exit of imperialist nation states from the EU. However, as the AWL quote just cited demonstrates yet again, the AWL considers the formation of the EU primarily as the democratic overcoming of national borders instead of recognizing that it is, first and foremost, the formation of a more-encompassing imperialist entity.

In fact, without acknowledging it, the AWL views the formation of the EU as Marxists viewed the formation of nation states in the early period of capitalism, when oppressed peoples were struggling against foreign oppression.

“The European bourgeoisies have substantially united Europe, politically and economically. They have done it in their own way, in their own interests. Nevertheless, despite all qualifications, that work is positive and progressive. Our job is not to try to destroy that work — any more than socialists would bulldoze the capitalists’ factories, rip up railway lines or pull down libraries and museums.” ⁹⁹

The AWL “forgets” (or either has never known or prefers to forget) that we are *not* living in the epoch of capitalist ascent but rather in the epoch of capitalist decline. Similarly, they “forget” that today’s Western European countries are not oppressed nations shaking off foreign domination, but are among the strongest, richest, most parasitic nations in the world who are exploiting other peoples and who are uniting in order to intensify this exploitation!

Furthermore, the AWL confuses the Marxist opposition

to Luddism with the Marxist opposition to the imperialist state (be it the nation state or the pan-European version). Nothing could be more mindless. It is obvious that as the pro-British social-imperialists hope to reform the imperialist nation state, the AWL believe that the EU can be transformed into a “Workers’ Europe.”

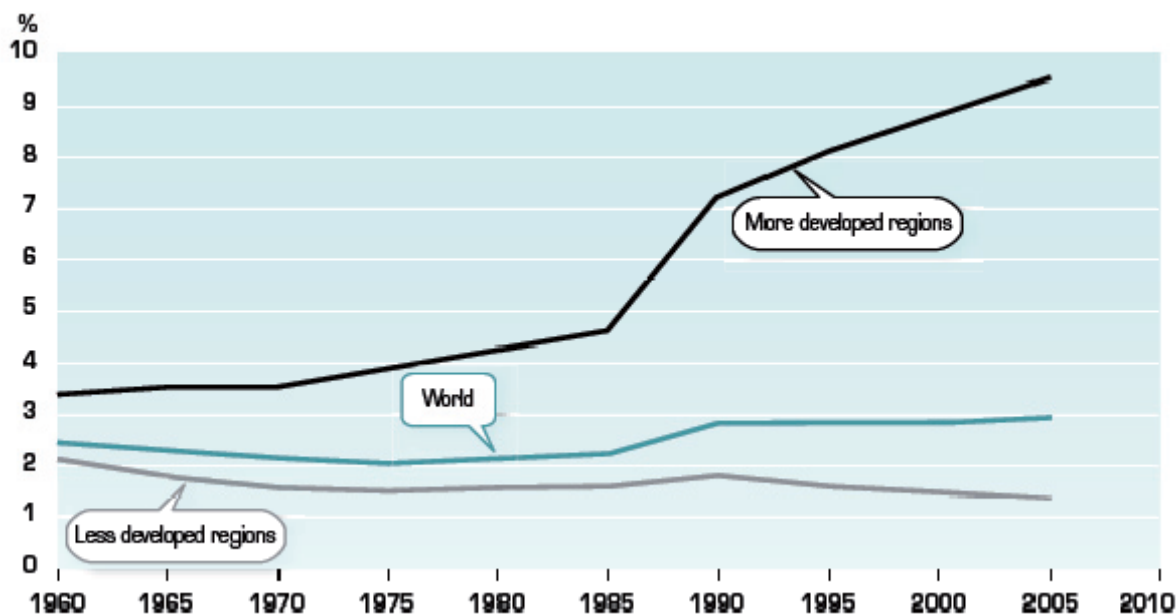
But, as a matter of fact, the socialist revolution will have to smash *both* – the imperialist nation state (like Britain) as well as the imperialist pan-European state! Marxists must never forget that the future United Socialist States of Europe will have nothing to do with the EU. It will not retain a single institution of the EU but will dismantle them all! The AWL suggests that the referendum is primarily about a geographically smaller or bigger state, about the first step to overcome the nation state, and towards the achievement of European unity. This is simply wrong. The ruling class doesn’t hold a referendum about geography because they don’t need to care about such issues. They hold a referendum about the concrete state form of imperialist rule: the British imperialist state as part of the imperialist EU or independently (as junior partner of US imperialism). This is the real issue of the referendum and no geographical question!

Should We Support Britain’s Membership in the EU as Part of Our Struggle for the Rights of Migrants?

Seemingly the AWL’s strongest argument is their claim that Britain’s exit from the EU would have negative consequences for migrants. Such an argument gains credibility given the overtly racist character of UKIP and its backward co-thinkers among the Tory right-wing village idiots. To make gains for its position from the spewing of such reactionary forces, the AWL claims that the EU has actually brought about democratic progress for the migrants from Eastern Europe.

“The benefits of the free movement of labour do not exist in in-

Figure 3: Migrants as a percentage of the population, 1960-2005 ¹⁰²



verted commas, nor are they "alleged"; the benefits are real and to be defended. Just ask any Polish worker. (...) Racism and the right will grow and migrants' right to work will be further restricted; many migrant workers will simply find it impossible to work in the UK."¹⁰⁰

It is of course true that Marxists have to defend the right of migrants to move freely within the European Union. However, as on all other issues, the AWL distorts the question and transforms the necessary defense of a democratic right into a social-imperialist apology for the EU.

First, let us not forget that the EU is constantly trying to reduce the rights and benefits for migrants inside the EU. Secondly, EU treatment of migrants originating outside its borders is barbaric.

In addition, the AWL is simply ignoring the key source of migration in the imperialist epoch: As monopoly capital rapaciously hunts for extra-profits, imperialism increasingly destroys the living conditions millions upon millions of oppressed persons for whom migration is often the only option for survival. While migration takes place under all circumstances, it does so particularly during the period of capitalist decline which began in the early 1970s with the end of the long mid-twentieth century boom.¹⁰¹

Since then migration to all imperialist countries has increased, irrespective of and long before the EU announced its policy of "freedom of movement" in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. In Figures 3 and 4 we can see how migration to the imperialist countries has exponentially increased during the past decades. Furthermore, vast waves of migration have taken place not only to the EU but to other imperialist countries in North America or Australia as well.

It is simply not true to claim that migration to Britain would stop or would even be significantly reduced if Britain would leave the EU. Look at other European countries which are not members of the EU. The migrant population in Norway grew from 59,000 in 1970 to 805,000 in 2015 and today migrants in Norway comprise 15.6% of the country's population.¹⁰⁴ A similar process took place in Switzerland which consequently became one of those countries with the highest share of migrants in all of Europe, today constituting about 36% of the Swiss population.¹⁰⁵

So we see that increased migration is not at all related to membership in the EU! Rather it is a manifestation of monopoly capital's need to find young and cheap labor. This is particularly true in the old imperialist countries – Western Europe, North America, Australia and Japan – since, as decaying powers, they are experiencing a decline of their populations and a process of overageing. This is why Britain, even if it would leave the EU, would still be forced to continue importing migrants.

Furthermore, it's revealing to examine a bit of Britain's history. In 1931 Britain had a total of 1,080,000 foreign-born persons representing 2.7% of the population. By 1971, i.e., before Britain even joined the EU, this number had already grown to 3,100,000 people, representing 6.4% of the population.¹⁰⁶ Again, we see that massive increase of migration is not caused by the EU but by the fundamental laws of capitalism.

Of course, migrants are super-exploited and oppressed in Switzerland and Norway. But does the AWL want to claim that migrants in Switzerland and Norway, i.e., outside of the EU, are qualitatively more oppressed than migrants inside the EU?! Obviously, there is no qualitative differ-

ence between oppression of migrants in imperialist countries whether inside or outside the EU. Likewise there is no qualitative difference between oppression of migrants in imperialist Britain before and after it joined the EU in 1973. So why should the membership in the EU in itself be a decisive issue for the status of migrants?! And why should the issue of migration and our struggle against racism be an argument to support Britain's membership in the EU?!

No, our internationalist approach of fighting both against British as well as EU imperialism obliges us to fight against the oppression of migrants under *all* circumstances. But this struggle cannot be combined with either advocating membership in the EU or exiting from it.

In summary, the AWL's call for a YES vote in the EU referendum is nothing but another opportunistic adaption of this group to the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy. Marxists must make no concessions to the pro-Western, in fact, pro-imperialist liberalism which includes the hypocritical applause of the EU as a project of European unity and democracy.

III.2. Alan Thornett (Socialist Resistance, Mandelist Fourth International): Opportunism to the Left-Wing Milieu as the Only Principle

Alan Thornett, the historic leader of the Mandelist Fourth International in Britain (which currently carries the name *Socialist Resistance*), has published a longer article in which he calls for a YES to Britain's membership in the EU. This document is a paragon of opportunism.

All the other groups with which we have dealt in this essay try to put forward principled arguments and theoretical considerations to defend their position. While we do not agree with any of them, one cannot deny that they desire to present fundamental arguments. In contrast to them all, Alan Thornett and Socialist Resistance (SR) apparently feel free from catering to principles, for Thornett does not even pretend to put forward any such arguments when developing his position. Instead, he entirely and exclusively deduces his position from what he assesses is the dominant opinion of those sectors of the left which are relevant for his group's current political maneuvers. This is *chvostim* par excellence, tailing behind the mood prevalent among the petty-bourgeois left. Based on this opportunist method, Thornett and SR can justify why they supported the campaign for Britain to exit in 1975, but are not able to justify why they are for the opposite position today.

*"With previous struggles around the EU—the introduction of the Maastricht Treaty and the single currency in the 1990s for example—it was possible to be part of broad left wing No campaign that was based, at least to some extent, on socialist and working class principles and represented something significant."*¹⁰⁷

Today however, the left is less enthusiastic on Britain's exit from the EU. Hence Thornett and SR are free to change their positions:

"The left in Britain (in its broadest sense) is more pro-EU today than at any time since Britain joined the project. This has been due, at least in part, to the fact that politics here in Britain have shifted to the right to the extent that some aspects of EU policy are progressive in relation to it. (...) What is more surprising, however, given the current role of the Troika in Greece, is that

the trend on the radical left has been the same. It is harder today, amongst the radical left, to argue that the EU is a bosses club than it has ever been. And even where this is accepted, as in *Left Unity* for example, there is probably a majority against exit under any circumstance—leaving the current referendum aside. (...) We can say with confidence when it comes to the referendum campaign itself that it will reach new heights (or plumb new depths) in terms of xenophobia, nationalism and racism. It will be a carnival of reaction. (...) The main No campaign will be totally dominated by UKIP and the Tory right wing. This poses something of a dilemma for those on the left (like ourselves) who see the EU as a reactionary institution designed to ensure that the national governments impose the austerity agenda and increase the rate of exploitation more effectively but have no wish to be associated with the right in any form it might take. SR has not yet taken a view on this. In my opinion, however, the right way to vote in this referendum will be Yes."

En passant we note that in fact it is not in fact "the left" which has become pro-EU. As we have shown above, the largest organizations – the CPB, the SPEW, and the SWP – are for a NO-vote. However what is true is that those sectors of the left to which SR is currently opportunistically adapting – the SSP in Scotland and *Left Unity* in England and Wales – are for a YES-vote. Hence, Thornett and SR have to adapt to this milieu and change their position from NO to YES regarding Britain's membership in the EU.

At least, we should thank Thornett for being open and honest about the Mandelites' method of opportunism. In contrast to others, at least he does not hide his adaption to the petty-bourgeois progressive milieu behind orthodox Marxist phrases.

III.3. WPB/LFI: An Unfortunate Abandonment of Revolutionary Defeatism

Let us now finally deal with the position of our former comrades in Workers Power. ¹⁰⁸ Until recently these comrades shared the same position as us on membership of the imperialist nation states in the EU which we have outlined in Chapter I of this essay. Unfortunately, they have now changed their position. Instead of advocating abstention in a referendum, Workers Power now calls for a YES vote in the referendum as is indicated in the title of their statement:

"The UK EU Referendum – Vote Yes and fight for a socialist united states of Europe" ¹⁰⁹

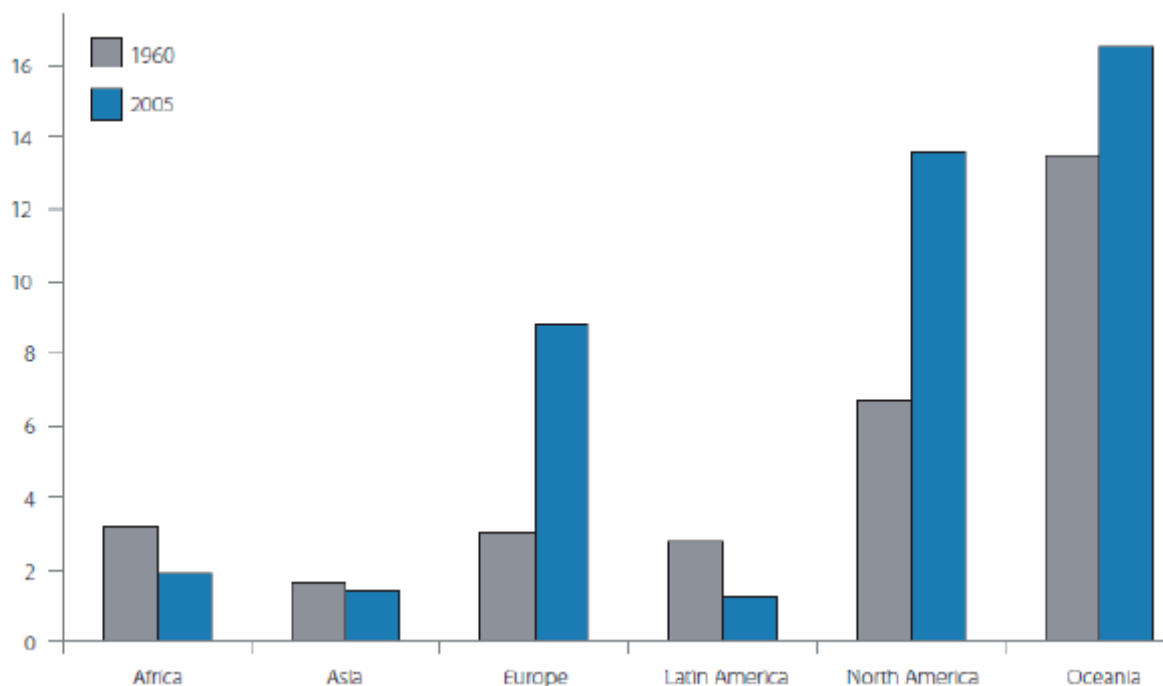
As we have shown in Chapter I, in the past the WP comrades advocated abstention in a referendum on Britain's membership in the EU. Unfortunately they neither mention nor explain in their latest statement why they have changed their position.

The WP/LFI resolution contains a number of correct arguments as well as absolutely valid criticism of various centrist organizations. The comrades correctly state:

"For revolutionary socialists the task of the day is to create a campaign of effective opposition to the racist and chauvinist No campaigners but equally to the pro-capitalist/neoliberal Yes campaigners, especially at a time when Greece is being martyred by the capitalists and politicians of the EU. Within the ranks of the workers' movement we need to expose and oppose both the campaigners for a pro-capitalist Labour 'Yes' and the reformist and centrist 'No2EU' 'No' bloc."

Likewise they give a clear characterization of the EU as *"an imperialist bloc, completely at the service of finance capital"* and conclude:

Figure 4: The share of migrants in the population in world regions, 1960 and 2005 (in %) ¹⁰³



"In such conditions it is an absolute utopia to imagine that the EU can be peacefully transformed into a 'Social Europe' by a process of reform or democratisation."

They equally and correctly reject the arguments of the left-wing British patriots:

"But it is equally utopian and actually reactionary to imagine that it is in the interest of any working class in Europe (or the rest of the world) if the states which compose the EU were to revert to separate national economies. The idea spread by some who call themselves revolutionary socialists that breaking up imperialist states or federations "weakens imperialism" and thereby strengthens the working class is sheer idiocy; reactionary nationalism is the natural, immediate and poisonous corollary of any move to national independence where this is not a mechanism to throw off the chains of national oppression."

Lack of Clarity about the Internal Semi-Colonies of the EU

Nevertheless the WP/LFI resolution contains some important weaknesses. Despite their characterization of the EU as imperialist bloc, the WP/LFI comrades are not clear and unambiguous about the imperialist relations of oppression inside the EU. Not in a single word do they address what is the class character of more than half of the member states of the EU in which over ¼ of the EU's population is living. All EU member states in Eastern Europe, Greece, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta etc. are semi-colonies, i.e., countries which are formally independent but which are de facto colonies which are politically and economically dependent on the imperialist powers.

This lack of clarity also becomes obvious in the following formulation. The WP/LFI comrades reprint a quote from Lenin where he says: *"Other conditions being equal...always stand for the larger state."* The comrades then continue:

"The main case where things might not be equal would be in the case of national oppression; at the moment this is not the case."

What exactly do the comrades mean by this? Are they referring to Britain which, of course, is not in any way nationally oppressed by the EU – contrary to the fantasy of the Stalinists? However, it seems that the comrades are not referring to Britain since they continue, *"at the moment this is not the case."* We are certain that they also don't see a possibility of Britain becoming an oppressed nation in the foreseeable future.

So the only other possible interpretation is that the WP/LFI comrades are referring to the EU as a whole. But how can they then say that "at the moment" there is no oppression of nations in the EU, if there are so many dependent semi-colonial member states?!

The WP/LFI comrades themselves make an indirect reference to this fact when they write:

"As the fate of Greece and to a lesser degree Portugal, Spain, Italy and Ireland shows, the imperialist centre has, via the Euro, subjected the periphery to trade domination and debt bondage. If not overcome, this domination will inevitably lead to revolt and fracturing of the Union."

But what is this "trade domination and debt bondage" other than imperialist oppression and super-exploitation of oppressed nations?! We are of the opinion that there is a dangerous lack of clarity in the comrades' approach: they seem not to recognize, or at least underestimate, the imperialist oppression of a number of nations inside the EU by

the great powers and the monopoly capitalists.

Furthermore, the paragraph we just quoted contains another statement which is ambiguous. The comrades write *"if not overcome, this domination will inevitably lead to revolt and fracturing of the Union."* Does this mean that the WP/LFI comrades think there is a possibility that the EU can overcome its imperialist character and stop the oppression of its southern and Eastern European member states by "trade domination and debt bondage"?! But this would mean that the comrades believe in the possibility of a reform of the EU into a "social Europe," an illusion which they explicitly reject.

We think that these quotes demonstrate that there is an important lack of understanding among the WP/LFI comrades about the concrete imperialist character of the EU, something which they need to overcome in order to develop a correct revolutionary strategy in Europe.

Again on Trotsky and the United States of Europe

The WP/LFI comrades reproduce a quote from an article by Leon Trotsky called *"The Programme of Peace"* which was written in 1915 and 1916. *"Likewise Trotsky considered that if German imperialism were to succeed in imposing some sort of union on continental Europe then 'the proletariat will in this case have to fight not for the return to "autonomous" national states, but for the conversion of the imperialist state trust into a Republican European Federation.'" ¹¹⁰*

While this quote shows that Trotsky opposed advocating the imperialist nation state as the "lesser evil" compared to an imperialist European federation, the WP/LFI comrades are mistaken if they propose using these ideas of Trotsky in order to justify their YES vote at the referendum. It has always been the Trotskyist position that Lenin was right in opposing the formation of a bourgeois, i.e., imperialist, United Europe and hence to reject the slogan of a "republican United States of Europe." Lenin was very clear in stating that an imperialist united Europe would be either utopian or reactionary and that it was not a "lesser evil" to an imperialist nation state. Do the WP/LFI comrades now reject this position of Lenin? Trotsky himself, as we showed above, changed his position and gave the Europe slogan a clear, proletarian, class character. Only from that moment on did the slogan acquire progressive content.

This has always also been the position of the WP/LFI comrades, which is why they always rejected voting for joining the EU or to staying inside the EU.

Finally, we remind our comrades that they themselves republished this article of Trotsky's in the very same issue of *Permanent Revolution* in which they published the MRCI statement *"The Nature of the EEC and the Elections to the European Parliament"* from which we quoted in Chapter I of this essay. At that time they obviously did see Trotsky's article as a valid confirmation of our defeatist position at the EU referendum. Why then have they now changed their interpretation?

On the Breaking Up of Larger States

In their recent statement, the WP/LFI comrades also raise another comparison when they write:

"Marxists no more favour the break up of large states or semi-state confederations than they would support the breaking up of giant companies or banks into smaller capitalist units. With states, as with the economic units of capital, our road is through socialisation to a planned economy under democratic workers' control and management."

We think that this argument is problematic. Yes, of course it is true that we do not favor the breakup of larger states (as long as there is no national oppression involved). Likewise we do not favor the breakup of larger enterprises. But first we have to recognize that breaking up an enterprise, i.e., the organizational form of the productive forces, is not the same as breaking up an imperialist state apparatus. Let us not forget that we are for smashing the capitalist state, but we are not for smashing the capitalist machinery in enterprises.

Irrespective of this, the comrades' argument is also flawed because, while we do not advocate breaking up of monopolies, neither are we defenders of them. Would a revolutionary shop steward defend that faction of the manage-

ment which wants to retain a certain unit of the enterprise against another faction which wants to transform it into an independent enterprise? We don't think so.

Finally, if the WP/LFI comrades really believe that having larger capitalist states or federations is a main achievement for the European working class, should they – armed with the same logic – not have supported Britain's entry into the Eurozone? Should they not have advocated the entry of other countries (like Switzerland and Norway) into the EU? If the comrades are to be consistent, they have to overthrow their entire political approach to the EU issue. And, to go further, should they not also support free trade agreements, since these create a larger market (which ostensibly should be supported by Marxists when compared to smaller markets)? And shouldn't they then support Switzerland's entry into the United Nations as a "lesser evil" to national isolation?

Naturally, we don't wish for the WP/LFI comrades to draw these erroneous conclusions but rather to correct their mistake of supporting a vote of YES on Britain's membership in the EU. Because such a correction is the only possible way to return to the program of revolutionary defeatism in the imperialist states!

NEW RCIT PUBLICATIONS ON RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM!

Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power

By Michael Pröbsting, August 2014



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I. Four Currents in the Workers' Movement

II. Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and its Revisionist Distortions

Marx and the Centrality of the Production Process

Imperialism is Based on the Capitalist Value of Production

Is There a Capitalist Country Not Dominated by Finance Capital?

Monopolism as the Essence of Imperialism

The Role of the State in Monopoly Capitalism

Disparity between the Imperialist Powers

Can Only the Richest Countries be Imperialist?

The Disparity between the Great Powers in Lenin's Time, before 1917

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Russia's Foreign Investment and Foreign Policy

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VI. Summary

IV. Conclusions

To summarize, we have elaborated that the RCIT considers Cameron's referendum on Britain's membership in the European Union as a political trap. The working class and the oppressed in Britain should oppose any form of imperialist state – be it Britain as a member of the EU or an independent Britain (most likely as a subservient poodle of US imperialism).

Contrary to the views of the social-imperialist British left – divided in a "UK First"-camp and a pro-EU-camp – the basic issue of the referendum is *not* a domestic conflict between different parties or within the Conservative party. Neither is it about national independence or the unification of Europe. Nor are the main issues whether people are for or against austerity or for or against racism. The main character of the referendum is the alternative between *two different political forms of imperialist state organization* – an imperialist UK within the imperialist EU or without as junior partner of US imperialism.

Most of the British left fails to recognize this. Forces like the CPB, the SP/CWI or the SWP/IST call for Britain's exit from the EU as a strike against austerity or against imperialism. They "forget" that at the same time they say YES to an "independent" imperialist Britain which is qualita-

tively not better than the imperialist EU.

The AWL and others who advocate Britain's continuing membership in the EU claim that this would be a step towards the unification of Europe and in support of the migrants' right for free movement inside the EU. They too "forget" that at the same time they say YES to Britain as part of a more and more powerful imperialist EU which acts as a global great power suppressing the people of the South and which increasingly exploits the workers, migrants and oppressed nations inside the EU.

Against this backdrop the central task for socialists is to support the working class in gaining political independence from both factions of imperialism (as well as their social-imperialist supporters): Neither support for UK's exit from the EU nor for its continued membership. Instead, workers and oppressed should go to the polls on the day of the referendum and write on their ballot: "*Neither Brussels, nor Downing Street! For international Unity of the Workers and Oppressed*", i.e., effectively abstaining from the vote. This is the only way to avoid becoming foot soldiers for any imperialist camp. This is the only way to advance the program of proletarian internationalism in the present situation.

NEW RCIT PUBLICATIONS ON RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM!

Russia as a Great Imperialist Power

By Michael Pröbsting, March 2014



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I. What are the Criteria for an Imperialist State?

Imperialism and Super-Exploitation

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WIVP (South Africa): Russia is a Semi-Colony of German Imperialism

LCFI: From "Imperialist" to "Pre-Imperialist" China and Russia

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An Ultra-Left Version of Kautskyianism

Inverted Social-Imperialists

VI. Appendix: The Capitalist Restoration in Russia (2001)

Endnotes

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- 17 V. I. Lenin: The Peace Programme (1916), in: LCW 22, pp. 167-168
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„The fact that the police was originally recruited in large numbers from among Social Democratic workers is absolutely meaningless. Consciousness is determined by environment even in this instance. The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker. Of late years these policemen have had to do much more fighting with revolutionary workers than with Nazi students. Such training does not fail to leave its effects. And above all: every policeman knows that though governments may change, the police remain.“ (Leon Trotsky: What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat, <http://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/trotsky/germany/1932-ger/next01.htm#s1>)
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Books from the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

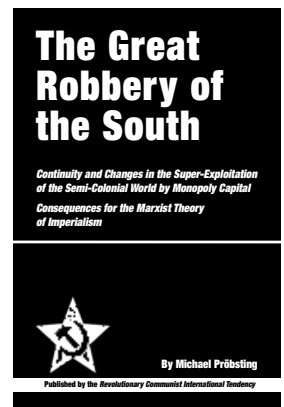
The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a book called *THE GREAT ROBBERY OF THE SOUTH*. The book's subtitle is: *Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital*. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism. The book is in English-language. It has 15 chapters, 448 pages and includes 139 Tables and Figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who is the International Secretary of the RCIT.

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting analyses the super-exploitation and oppression of the semi-colonial world (often referred to as the "Third World") by the imperialist powers and monopolies. He shows that the relationship between the small minority of rich capitalist countries and the huge majority of mankind living in the semi-colonial world forms one of the most important elements of the imperialist world system we are living in. The Great Robbery of the South shows that the past decades have been a complete confirmation of the validity of Lenin's theory of imperialism and its programmatic conclusions. *The Great Robbery of the South* demonstrates the important changes in the relationship between the imperialist and the semi-colonial countries. Using comprehensive material (including 139 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that never before has

such a big share of the world capitalist value been produced in the South. Never before have the imperialist monopolies been so dependent on the super-exploitation of the semi-colonial world. Never before has migrant labor from the semi-colonial world played such a significant role for the capitalist value production in the imperialist countries. Never before has the huge majority of the world working class lived in the South – outside of the old imperialist metropolises.

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting argues that a correct understanding of the nature of imperialism as well as of the program of permanent revolution which includes the tactics of consistent anti-imperialism is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future.

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Michael Pröbsting: Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a book called *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?*. The book's subtitle is: *The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism*. The book is in English-language. It has 5 chapters plus an appendix, 108 pages and includes 19 Tables and Figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who is the International Secretary of the RCIT.

In *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* Michael Pröbsting analyses the character of the Cuban Revolution 1959-61, its bureaucratic degeneration, and the recent march of the Castro leadership towards capitalism.

The author demonstrates how the Cuban Revolution, despite the initial modest intentions of its leaders, was spurred forward to more radical policies by grass roots struggles of Cuban workers and peasants. In fact, the very abolishment of capitalism by the Cuban regime was no part of the original game plan of either Castro's Movimiento 26 de Julio or of the official Cuban communist party (PSP), but rather was a product of precisely such pressures from below.

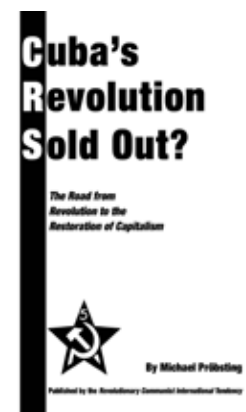
Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? describes in detail how a number of relatively recent political, economic, and social measures were

purposely taken by the Cuban government to open the road back to capitalism. Pröbsting elaborates the key role of the world's new great imperialist power, China, in Cuba's state policy as exemplified in the June 2011 Sino-Cuban agreement for a first Five-Year Plan of cooperation between these two states.

Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? examines these developments from the viewpoint of Marxist theory, the nature of the ruling bureaucracy in Stalinist states, and the process of restoration of capitalism under such regimes.

In conclusion, the book proposes a socialist program for political and social revolution in Cuba to halt the advance of capitalism and to eradicate the country's bureaucratic dictatorship.

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The Author: Michael Pröbsting is a revolutionary activist since 34 years. He is the author of many articles and pamphlets in German and English language. He published books or contributed to books on Rosa Luxemburg (1999), on the World Economy (2008), on Migration (2010) and the Arab Revolution (2011). In addition to *The Great Robbery of the South* and *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* he also published in 2014 the book *Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice. Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism*. He is the International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency.

What the RCIT Stands for

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) is a revolutionary combat organisation fighting for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed. It has national sections in a number of countries. The working class is composed of all those (and their families) who are forced to sell their labor power as wage earners to the capitalists. The RCIT stands on the theory and practice of the revolutionary workers' movement associated with the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky.

Capitalism endangers our lives and the future of humanity. Unemployment, war, environmental disasters, hunger, and exploitation are all part of everyday life under capitalism as are the imperialistic oppression of nations, the national oppression of migrants, and the oppression of women, young people, and homosexuals. Therefore, we want to eliminate capitalism.

The liberation of the working class and all oppressed is possible only in a classless society without exploitation and oppression. Such a society can only be established internationally.

Therefore, the RCIT is fighting for a socialist revolution at home and around the world.

This revolution must be carried out and led by the working class, for only this class has the collective power to bring down the ruling class and build a socialist society.

The revolution cannot proceed peacefully because a ruling class never has nor ever will voluntarily surrender its power. By necessity, therefore, the road to liberation includes armed rebellion and civil war against the capitalists.

The RCIT is fighting for the establishment of workers' and peasants' republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in councils democratically elected in rank-and-file meetings in factories, neighbourhoods, and schools. These councils, in turn, elect and control the government and all other state authorities, and always retain the right to recall them.

Authentic socialism and communism have nothing to do with the so-called "socialism" that ruled in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and which continues to do so in China and Cuba, for example. In these countries, the proletariat was and is dominated and oppressed by a privileged party bureaucracy.

Under capitalism, the RCIT supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of the workers and oppressed, while simultaneously striving to overthrow this system based on economic exploitation of the masses.

Towards these ends, we work from within the trade unions where we advocate class struggle, socialism, and workers' democracy. But trade unions and social democracy are controlled by a bureaucracy perniciously connected with the state and capital via status, high-paying jobs, and other privileges. Thus, the trade union bureaucracy is far from the interests and living conditions of

its members, based as it is on the top, privileged layers of the working class – a labor aristocracy which has no real interest in replacing capitalism. Therefore, the true struggle for the liberation of the working class, the toppling of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their "representative" from the upper trade union strata.

We also fight for the expropriation of the big land owners as well as for the nationalisation of the land and its distribution to the poor and landless peasants. Towards this goal we struggle for the independent organisation of the rural workers.

We support national liberation movements against oppression. We also support the anti-imperialist struggles of oppressed peoples against the great powers. Within these movements we advocate a revolutionary leadership as an alternative to nationalist or reformist forces.

While the RCIT strives for unity of action with other organizations, we are acutely aware that the policies of social democrats and pseudo-revolutionary groups are dangerous, and ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class, peasants, and the otherwise oppressed.

In wars between imperialist states we take a revolutionary defeatist position: we do not support either side, but rather advocate the transformation of the war into a civil war against the ruling class in each of the warring states. In wars between imperialist powers (or their stooges) and a semi-colonial countries we stand for the defeat of the former and the victory of the oppressed countries.

As communists, we maintain that the struggle against national oppression and all types of social oppression (women, youth, sexual minorities etc.) *must* be led by the working class, because only the latter is capable of fomenting a revolutionary change in society. Therefore, we consistently support working class-based revolutionary movements of the socially oppressed, while opposing the leadership of petty-bourgeois forces (feminism, nationalism, Islamism, etc.), who ultimately dance to the tune of the capitalists, and strive to replace them with revolutionary communist leadership.

Only with a revolutionary party fighting as its leadership can the working class be victorious in its struggle for liberation. The establishment of such a party and the execution of a successful revolution, as it was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks in Russia under Lenin and Trotsky remain the models for revolutionary parties and revolutions in the 21st century.

For new, revolutionary workers' parties in all countries!
For a 5th Workers International to be founded on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

