

THE CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF THE ANTI-CAPITALIST STRUGGLE, AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN BRITAIN

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"The domination of the Trade Union and Labour bureaucracy survives on what is left of imperialism's ability to impose itself in the world" - J Posadas.

Our Posadist comrades have to grow numerically. They will grow, and perhaps sooner than they think. There are the conditions. All over the world, the political preoccupation of people increases. The world process and the events in Britain invite political involvement, not political apathy. Our comrades must discuss and challenge the plans of capitalism and those of the Thatcher government¹. A lot of new events bring about opportunities and the conditions for our teams to grow.

In Britain, the conditions have grown in recent years to discuss more, and analyse politically in the working class' movement. There is no apathy in the world these days, least of all in Britain. The bureaucratic leaderships in the Trade Unions and the Labour Party want to restrict debate, but the Labour Left continues to progress. The bureaucratic leaderships want to contain the

¹ Margaret Thatcher was elected on 4 May 1979. She immediately proceeded with privatisations and de-regulations. She was going to stay in government until 1983.

struggle of the working class, but they fail. In the country at large, the masses have mobilised for years against war² and in defence of their rights. No-one can stop the masses opposing the capitalists and their wars.

The mobilisations against the atomic weapons³ are aspects of the anti-capitalist struggle. Those who participate in them are not just opposed to war. They reject the bosses, the capitalist system and Yankee imperialism. They are not yet sufficiently consistent and systematic, but this is their intention. Large layers of the progressive petit bourgeoisie attend the anti-war demonstrations because they lean to the left, towards the proletariat. In the anti-war mobilisations, the proletariat and the petit bourgeoisie draw closer together, around what amounts to a struggle against the capitalist system.

All the analyses we made over the years regarding this matter have proven their worth and validity. All the changes we observed in the political situation confirmed the correctness of the basic principles which we used to understand them. All these changes have amounted to class and revolutionary struggle.

For imperialism, the coming war is its last throw of the dice:

The resistance of the workers to unemployment is not separate

² This may be a reference to the important Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and anti-war movements in Britain.

³ In 1979, Nato voted to replace 108 Pershing 1a missiles stationed in West Germany, with longer-range Pershing 2s, and to deploy 464 such new missiles across Europe. This was implemented in 1983.

from the growing resistance of the masses to the atomic weapon. There is a worldwide repudiation of imperialism and its war preparations. Between the different countries, the masses create a front of solidarity against imperialism and the atomic war which it prepares. The populations draw closer together. They make increasing links between themselves and the Workers States. An enormous process of discussions emanates from there. We say 'a process of discussions' because it is not happening all at once. Above the din of some debates, the confrontation between capitalism and the Workers States rumbles on. The countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America side with the Workers States. The masses of the world draw strength and confidence from the existence of the Workers States.

There is an objective world alliance⁴ between the Workers States and the masses of the world. The Non-Aligned countries⁵ - who just held a Conference in the Workers State of Cuba - illustrate this point. In the run-up to that Conference, North American and British imperialism orchestrated a world campaign for the demonization of Cuba. When they failed to obtain a change of venue, and the Conference took place, they used the most insecure and conciliatory delegates (like Marshall Tito) to

⁴ The word 'objective' in this context generally means 'de-facto' in J Posadas' works. Editorial.

⁵ **The Non-Aligned Movement** was started in 1956 in Belgrade by Tito (Yugoslavia), Nehru (India), Sukarno (Indonesia), Nasser (Egypt) and Nkrumah (Ghana). In September 1979, the Non-Aligned held their 6th Conference in Havana (Cuba) to the great fury of US and British imperialism. To force a change of venue (before the Conference), Kissinger (USA) and the Thatcher government mounted a virulent campaign of vilification of Cuba. This partially intimidated the Yugoslav, Chinese, Somali and Egyptian delegations. The Conference took place in Cuba however. Fidel Castro made a powerful anti-imperialist speech. The conference ended up denouncing world imperialism and not the Workers States, marking a certain return to the 1970 Lusaka Conference where the big capitalist powers had been asked (to no avail) to remove their military bases from the Non-Aligned countries. Editorial, June 2017.

intimidate the other delegations. This helped dilute the content of the final texts, but not in every way. The conference cheered the fighting speeches of Fidel Castro and it gave him a standing ovation.

The struggle against capitalism characterises our historic stage.

There are plenty of half-hearted workers' leaders in the world, but they cannot alter the course of this process. We have made it our task⁶ to identify the decisive world's events and intervene in them. One important way to do this has been through publications. Now we must publish more and find ways to develop. Our arguments are rational and they have a huge influence already. We need to bring them to the attention of the objective alliance of humanity. This alliance exists. The conditions are favourable for us to influence at that level. See how people struggle against war, against pollution, against the atomic weapon. They are revolted by the despotism and the arrogance of imperialism and the bourgeois class. This is a very dynamic process. See how entire populations break the shackles of extreme poverty, as in Nicaragua and El Salvador⁷. See how

⁶ This refers to the Posadists. But it refers also to the revolutionary current that will eventually arise in the Labour Party and Trade Unions, as part of some new mass International of humanity. Editorial

⁷ **Nicaragua Revolution:** 17 July 1979. It was led by the Sandinista Liberation Front, (FSLM). It brought down the dictatorship of Batista. It reduced illiteracy by 50% in 5 months and started elements of an Agrarian Reform. It ruled in alliance with other left parties and was supported by the USSR. In 1981, the counter-revolution supported by the United States - called 'the contras' - started a war to bring down the revolution. The elections of 1984 gave victory to the Sandinistas headed by Daniel Ortega, and the revolution continued. The Bush administration granted at least \$50 million to the Contras to fuel a civil war. The latter ended in 1989 with the *Tela Accord* that disarmed both sides. The Sandinistas lost the election of 1990, but Daniel Ortega returned to government in 2007. Editorial.

El Salvador Revolution: 15 October 1979: The Farabundo Marti de *Liberacion Nacional* (FMLN) won the fight against the right-wing military dictatorship of Ramos and others, supported by the United States under Carter and then under Reagan. The FMLN had previously merged with the Communist Party and 5 guerrilla

they bring down military dictatorships by means of taking power!

Half of the Yankee budget is for war - not 10% as they say. The US have an immense military and economic power, but they do not have social capability. When small countries like Nicaragua and El Salvador succeed in throwing US imperialism out, it is because the world balance of forces impels countries in an anti-capitalist direction. This impulsion from the world has come to impact every country in an increasingly regular, constant and dynamic way.

Many countries are making experiments in social change. We note that these are never fortuitous or incidental. On a world scale, they are all connected. They happen in particular countries, but their origins can be traced back to world combinations of social, economic, political and military factors. These factors influence each other across Africa, Asia and Latin America. This is all the more remarkable in Latin America when you consider the proximity of US imperialism. There was a time in that part of the world when the designation 'backyard' meant the same as 'US domination'. In the last few decades, the masses in many parts of the 'backyard' have managed to stand up, defeat and throw out US imperialism.

Now it is the turn of the masses of Nicaragua and El Salvador. They brought down the US-backed governments that held them

groups to defeat the imbecility, the despotism and the death squads of the military. Editorial.

down, and they started upon programmes of social transformation. Why didn't the US intervene to crush them? To this we answer that the US was stopped by the world balance of forces. By 'the world balance of forces', we mean the Soviet Union *and* the proven readiness of the Soviet Union to intervene in the world⁸. We also mean the anti-imperialist grit of the world masses. And let us never forget the constant anti-imperialist disposition of the North American masses themselves.

US imperialism realises that the world escapes its control. To try and keep afloat, it has started the very dangerous enterprise – dangerous for itself – of taking position in the Gulf of Aden leading up to the Red Sea and Saudi Arabia, in easy reach of Iran and Africa. It behaves in similar ways in Latin America, allegedly to secure its air and sea routes. It pretends to be doing this for the good of the world, but who believes this? Everyone knows that US imperialism defends of its own interests; that is to say, the interests of capitalism and imperialism. This is why it goes about making alliances with the reactionaries of the world, the monarchies, the tyrannies, the dictatorships. It keeps despicable despots in power because it counts on them to quell rebellions and revolutions. Wherever a country turns towards the Workers States, wherever a revolution breaks out in the world,

⁸ On the 25 December 1979 – 2 days before this document – the **Soviet troops entered Afghanistan**. In so doing, the Soviet Union proved to the world that it was not just a Workers State, but a Workers State prepared to confront world imperialism. Long before that, the USSR had been supporting the Afghan Land Reform. That Reform had been hated by the Afghan landowners. In support of these landowners, US imperialism created what J Posadas called '*the Hollywood Mujahidins*'. These were mercenaries recruited from the right wing in Afghanistan, in Pakistan and indeed from all over the world, to try and bring down the Soviet Union.

you see new Yankee bases appearing.

Overcome the imperialist role of the Labour Party:

The Labour Party needs to discuss the reason why imperialism – and British imperialism therefore – depends so much on the counter-revolutionaries of the world. This is not yet discussed in the Labour Party, but we know that it will be.

To keep the British public closed in upon itself, the British press publishes a lot about Britain and little about the world. This ploy is deliberate on the part of the big bourgeoisie⁹. It helps keep the British masses in the dark about the revolutionary experiences of other countries. This is limited however, because people get to know in the end. Where imperialism succeeds better, is in increasing the distance between the influence of the Workers States on a one hand, and the Trade Union and the Labour base on the other. This too is limited because capitalism cannot shut out the news. It manipulates the news therefore, but it cannot stop reporting.

It would appear that the British Trade Unions do not keep a lot of links with the Workers States. Even if this is so, we find interesting that the British Trade Union leaders do not attack the

⁹ It is remarkable how little of this has changed. From the confirmation of Hugo Chavez in the government of Venezuela in 2002, **very little about Venezuela was reported in Britain**. See the film: *The Revolution will not be Televised*⁷. The British media only started reporting on Venezuela in 2015 when it felt that the time had arrived to criticise the lack of “democratic rights” in the Venezuelan Revolution and to demand the liberation of jailed counter-revolutionaries. Editorial note, 16.6.2017.

Workers States. In view of the general anti-Workers States prejudice, this indicates a certain level of sympathy. This is different from the United States where the Trade Union leaders make a sport of attacking the Workers States. If the British Trade Union leaders behave as we say, it must be because acting otherwise would lose them support.

At the base of the Trade Unions, the working class and many middle ranking Trade Union officers support the Workers States. You find the lower rungs of the Trade Union structures in most anti-war demonstrations¹⁰. In Britain, the large anti-war mobilisations indict the weapons of British capitalism, not those of the Workers States. This indicates that the broad masses do not fear the Workers States. The Trade Union leaders are receptive to such things. They are also well placed to know that when capitalism makes wars, it is to get rid of surplus human labour.

No third road between capitalism and the Workers State:

All these matters are rich ground for discussions and debates.

¹⁰ A very important anti-war movement always existed in Britain. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) was founded in 1957. In 1958, it supported a march to Aldermaston. On 12 December 1979, some 11 days before this text was elaborated, it denounced the intention of Nato to deploy more middle-range nuclear weapons in Western Europe and to modernise these. This was part of the "*the dual track*" strategy that Nato had announced in the Spring of 1979. One 'track' was to invite the USSR to disarm; the other 'track' was to upgrade the US missiles already in Europe. There were huge demonstrations in Germany, but also in France, Belgium, Britain and elsewhere, to demand – from Nato and from the US – the non-deployment of the new *Pershing 2* in Europe. The *Pershing 2* were deployed in 1983 however; and in 2017, Eastern Europe is covered in US and Nato missile installations of atomic and first strike capability, overtly poised against Russia (and China). Editorial note. June 2017.

They provide opportunities to speak, to make proposals, to give ideas. Our comrades must not wait until their programme is recognised and accepted. The conditions already exist to make progress before that.

The vanguard of the British working class is keenly interested in the social gains made in other countries. This applies to layers of middle ranking workers' leaders - and it applies also to the progressive petit bourgeoisie. The latter is an ally of the working class. All these sectors applaud the fall of the Shah¹¹. They support the many solidarity committees that exist in Britain to defend the liberation movements against imperialism, like the Sandinistas in Nicaragua¹². Although Nicaragua is a small country with no economic, technical, military or material means, it shook the world when it expelled US imperialism. When a small country manages to shake the world, it is because the world is ready to be shaken. This can only happen because the world masses support Nicaragua and oppose capitalism. An *objective alliance* already exists therefore, between them and the masses of Nicaragua. In any country, Britain included, those who are confronting capitalism find strength in this alliance. Sensing this force, they base their confidence on its existence to continue the struggle.

¹¹ The fall of the Shah was on 16 January 1979.

¹² In the UK, the **Nicaragua Solidarity Committee** was set up as early as 1978. It was part of a network of 2,500 world groups and 100,000 world supporters. In the Spring of 1979, military dictator Somoza had refused to call elections and was overthrown on 17 July 1979. The Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN) took power and expelled US imperialism from the country. The Solidarity Committee never stopped functioning in Britain. It also developed Trade Union links between Britain and Nicaragua.

The world masses live the reality of this situation. They know that Nicaragua was kept 'backward' by a right-wing military dictatorship. Of course, there were no political rights there, no Trade Unions, and not even the conditions to have Trade Unions. Now the world witnesses this small country overthrowing a US-backed dictatorship with a clear programme of social development. Where did this programme come from? From the Workers States! The Workers States weigh in the world through the authority of their social superiority. Their existence exerts its influence everywhere. Their influence was in Nicaragua well before that country decided to stand up. The Workers States lend to the peoples of the world the confidence, the programme and the knowledge that there is a solution to their problems.

The whole world discusses the fall of the Shah and the Revolution in Nicaragua. As a result, the leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties must discuss these things too. They never foresaw the possibility of such events, and they never had any wish to foresee them. Now that those events have taken place, they will only discuss them if obliged! But the ordinary workers and Party members are indignant at this. They force the debate on their leaders. They hail social progress wherever it happens. They want their Socialist and Communist parties to discuss social progress, and to organise for it in their own countries.

Even if only partially, the Communist, Socialist and Social-

Democratic leaders are forced to give way. In the capitalist countries, the result is a profound crisis in all the workers' parties. The same applies to the Labour Party in Britain. The working class and the workers' vanguard of Britain feel encouraged and stimulated by the revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua. They want their Trade Union and Party leaders to learn from the gains made by the peoples there. They want similar gains in Britain. It is not just the working class that insists on this. Swathes of intellectuals, academics, artists and political leaders say: If Nicaragua can progress towards Socialism, why can't we do the same here?

In the fall of the Shah and the revolutionary process in Nicaragua, the Socialist and Communist bureaucratic leaders see a threat to their policy of accommodation with capitalism. Not wishing to stop conciliating with capitalism, but not wanting to capitulate to it either, these leaders look high and low for a 'third road' to Socialism where no Workers State is needed. To this end, various Communist Parties invented notions like 'Eurocommunism' and 'pluralism'¹³. The Italian Communists admit openly that through Eurocommunism, they hope for more

¹³ **Eurocommunism:** theory developed in several Communist parties of Western Europe in the 1970's and 80's. It allowed for some criticisms of Stalin to be made, only to incriminate Leninism itself, and Lenin's dedication to the struggle for the Workers State. In this theory, elements of Western 'democracy' are preserved on the road considered to be leading to Socialism - a road alternative to that which leads to the Workers State. This is why it was sometimes referred to as 'the third road'. In Britain, *The British Road to Socialism* amounts to this. In 1977, the *Sid French* tendency broke from the CPGB to form the *New Communist Party* (NCP). Its paper is *The New Worker*. It upholds that the only way to make Socialism is through *Soviets* and the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. The old CPGB underwent modifications and became the CPB of today, with connections with the *Morning Star*. Another branch of it, which continues under the name of CPGB, produces *The Weekly Worker* paper.

distance with the Soviet Union. This is a false hope. The conditions do not exist for this. In a recent meeting between Workers States and world Communist parties, the following topics were discussed: 1) capitalism, 2) capitalism's atomic intentions and 3) capitalism's war preparations. Not a word about Eurocommunism.

We make it our task to have clarity on how Socialism gets built. Any theory must have a practical expression. The Communist Party of Italy is very keen on Eurocommunism, but when it deals with the problems of Italy, it offers neither a general programme nor a Eurocommunist one. Eurocommunism is the subject of many articles in intellectual reviews, but none of them ends with any programmatic proposal. Eurocommunism has no grip on ideas because it has no grip on logics. It is based on no historic experience, and it has no tradition to hand over to the future.

Bureaucracy feeds on what is left of imperialism:

In Britain, the bureaucracy of the Trade Unions controls the agendas of what the workers discuss. The Trade Union bureaucracy circumscribes and hinders the debate, but it cannot control it all. The workers want to know; they want to discuss, and they do discuss. As we said elsewhere, the strength of the bourgeois and boss-like Labour and Trade Union bureaucracy is not due to any smartness on its part. It is not true that its ability to stay in control comes from Britain being special, or from the

British masses being singularly apathetic. No. The domination of the Trade Union and Labour bureaucracy survives on what is left of imperialism's ability to continue to impose itself in the world.

The workers' apparatus in Britain was unnecessarily reinforced by the rise of Stalinism. In 1926, the determined advance of the British proletariat towards power was thwarted by the policies of Stalin. Instead of being overcome, the Trade Union and Labour apparatus gained more control. The policies of Stalinism overall, and now the notions of *Euro-communism* and *pluralism*, form part of what gives strength of the Trade Union and Labour apparatus. The refusal of the world's Communists to fight for power created conditions, on a world scale, through which the worker's bureaucracies could keep protecting the internal structures that thwart working class intervention.

There is nothing so particular in Britain to make that country incapable of revolutionary transformation. There is no particular timidity or inability on the part of the British proletariat. In the working class' movement, the restrictions on debate are deep-rooted, but the powers behind those restrictions are now in decline. It is true that the history of Britain is special in the way it favoured the development of a dogged Labour and Trade Union bureaucratic apparatus. This apparatus is still with us, and it is still strong enough to hinder the development of ideas. This is all true, but only partially, because the Labour structure cannot simply fall in line behind the bourgeois class and surrender to it.

Labour leaderships have done this, but the proletariat never did. The result is this situation where the apparatus cannot simply capitulate.

The British Isles are less physical islands of land-and-water than an area where the official political preoccupation is almost exclusively about Britain. The British papers concentrate mostly on Britain. This is more marked than elsewhere. It is more marked even than in the United States for instance, where the papers publish a lot about the world - if only because the US is the country with the most to do with the world.

Organise a scientific Labour revolutionary current:

There is not yet a revolutionary current in Britain. This has many economic and social causes. One of them is the enormous accumulation of wealth which British imperialism could once bring back from the world - Asia, Africa and Latin America. This wealth helped resolve many a crisis at home. Even after British imperialism was thrown out of most of its colonies, it retained a lot of that wealth. Time passing, its capacity to accumulate from the world declined. This caused it to lose social authority as well, and the result was an acceleration of its decline. Now Britain spends more in defending its imperialist role than it gains from it. British imperialism will never return to full expansion. It could never recoup the economic surplus required, if it tried.

It is with less and less means at its disposal that British imperialism is forced to defend its system. This is why it must attack its own masses now. It has no option but to reduce the living standards. Having become so much less able to compete with the rest of the world, it must automate production. Automation reduces the standard of living, and increased automation accelerates the decline in the standard of living. Feeling massively attacked, the workers and masses want to know what to do.

There is one positive aspect about technology entering the workplace. It lets more scientific and objective knowledge penetrate society. This is happening in all the capitalist countries. The elevation of scientific knowledge allows a greater penetration of the scientific influence of the Workers States. If you look at the increasing struggles in the capitalist countries, you find that most of them look for examples or inspiration in the Workers States. They analyse the experiences made in the Workers States, or in the construction of the Workers states.

In the capitalist world, the broad masses see all this. They also know from experience that none of the social gains and human rights they still retain were handed over to them by the capitalist class. None! The British petit bourgeoisie knows this too. It is educated. It knows what the Workers States are, and the role that they play. There are large layers of a progressive petit bourgeoisie in Britain. They are impressed by the measures of

social progress observable in the Workers States. They are moved by the centrality which the Workers states give to the human being. They appreciate the aspects of Workers State superiority around issues such as women's rights, abortion rights, childbirth, childcare and the like.

Help liberate working class creativity in the Labour Party:

On the topic of social evolution, capitalism as a system never contributed the least element of reasoning or of understanding. In this matter, it is the proletarian vanguard that has experience, dominion and knowledge. Capitalism never wanted such a knowledge, let alone allowing it to become generalised in society. In the capitalist world, social and human progress is stopped, stalled; the creative capacity of people is not allowed to raise the level of the human relations. The effect of this is paralysing. It paralyses creative capacity itself, and what is worse, it keeps the creative capacity of the working class in check even in the workers' parties - the Communist parties, the Socialist parties and the Social Democratic parties. It was the task of the Communist parties to show the better way. Instead of this, their erroneous policies contributed to the further detention of the creative capacity of the working class. This has not just been damaging, it has kept capitalism going!

The damage that this inflicted in Britain was compounded by the fact that there, a bureaucracy inimical to thought and reason

always existed in the Trade Union and Labour apparatus. And in the Labour Party specifically, *the form* of this apparatus had always been bourgeois¹⁴. This continues today. You see it in the way the Labour MPs need not consult. They need not be mandated or report back on specific mandates. This leaves them 'free' to decide politically not only for themselves, but for the Party! If the Trade Unions and the Party members do not agree, let them lobby their MPs. The class conduct of the Labour Party, as a result, is determined by the parliamentarians and not by the Party's class base. All the apparatuses of the world act in this sort of way; but in this case, the fact that the world Communists do not show a better way lends an additional force to the *bourgeois form* of the Labour apparatus.

The Labour left must propose a Republic:

There is the beginning of a discussion on all the subjects that we have raised above. Although the debates in the Labour Party need deeper aims and a clearer programme, they are not superficial either. Not wishing to leave policy-making to top leaders and Labour MPs, the Labour Party members have recently proposed to have the Party's policy elaborated at Labour Conferences. Callaghan managed to postpone the vote on this matter for another year, but this is because the left is still insufficiently developed and clear. This makes it uncertain. One way to deal with this is to raise the need for a Republic. Without

¹⁴ As opposed to the Communist parties, because these started on a revolutionary basis. Editorial.

this, all the good ideas remain partial, superficial and in tow of the monarchy.

In Britain, there are movements in support of a Republic. And there are Republicans in the Labour Party too¹⁵. The idea is around, and this is important. It is not decisive for the moment, but it lays the foundations for the deeper discussions and structural changes coming to the country - sooner than one thinks.

In Britain, it is possible that the monarchy will fall only with the fall of the capitalist system. It is possible that this process will not come in two stages, but in one.

Empiricism smothers objective thinking:

There are few political, scientific and cultural debates in Britain. Those that exist are bourgeois. The capitalist class cannot produce any scientific history of social evolution. Only the workers' parties can do this. The British Communists as well many Union and Labour leaders did a lot to maintain workers' centres of scientific and cultural life¹⁶. Their contribution in this field has been important but it remained circumscribed by the

¹⁵ **Labour for a Republic** is affiliated to the national Republic Campaign -visit: www.labourforarepublic.org.uk. For the national Republic Campaign, visit: www.republic.org.uk - The organisation was created in 1983. It estimates at 10 to 12 million the number of Republicans in Britain. It states its aim as follows: "To achieve the abolition of the British monarchy in favour of a Democratic Republic". Editorial note, June 2017.

¹⁶ Some examples could be the Working Men's Clubs, the Reading Societies, the House of Marx - and partially the TUC, amongst many other things. Editorial.

Stalinism of the Trade Union and Labour apparatuses. Add to this the Stalinist policies¹⁷ that emanated from the USSR after 1924 to spread throughout the world workers' movement.

The Stalinist policies that came out of the USSR reassured the apparatus of the Labour Party¹⁸. It shored it up and made it feel unchallenged. This went on for many years, until the 1950's and beyond, because Krustchev lasted until 1964¹⁹. The effects of that period are still with us today. On top of its bourgeois *form*, the Labour apparatus became even more markedly bureaucratic. This bureaucratic apparatus is similar to that in the Communist parties, only in bigger! So much so that within it, there is no room for any Marxist education; there is no room to discuss, debate or study scientifically the social history of human development. In such a structure, scientific discussion is eclipsed by empiricism. In the bureaucratic apparatus of the Labour Party, all ideas, actions and projects are empirical²⁰.

The bureaucratic apparatus is murderous:

Alfredo Reichlin is the Editor of UNITA²¹ and member of the

¹⁷ In other documents, the author defines the **Stalinist policy** as follows: Coexistence with capitalism and conciliation with it – and all in the name of Socialism. Editorial.

¹⁸ The Labour Party was set up **in February 1900**.

¹⁹ **Nikita Krustchev**, 1894-1971. He took over from Stalin in 1953.

²⁰ In various documents, the author defines what is politically **empirical** as follows: jealous of its power, expedient, superficial, patronising, pliant with those in power, arrogant with workers, conservative, politically timid, answering to small cliques, black and white vision, impatience, individualism and hatred of change.

²¹ **Unita**, journal of the Italian Communist Party. Was started by Gramshi in 1924 in Milan. It was clandestine in 1927. **Reichlin**: 1925-2017. Died 21.3.2017 in Rome. Was a partisan during WW2. Senior Member of the Italian Communist Party.

Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party (1979). In November, he wrote an article in that paper on the occasion of the Centenary of Trotsky's birth²². This article is very good and sympathetic to Trotsky's life and work. One week later, the vice-director of 'Rinascita'²³ answered what had been an exchange of letters critical of Stalin in that Review. According to the vice-director, Stalin had often been wrong, but that had been the fault of Leninism. Stalin had not been a very bad guy. Yes, he had arranged for "all the top leaders of the Soviet Central Committee to be killed", but this had been due ... "to Lenin's policy of alliance with the Peasants"²⁴.

It is the first time (1979) that a leading cadre of the Italian Communist Party admits that Stalin had "all the top leaders" of the Soviet Central Committee killed; and that this had been wrong. See how this admission is made, just like that, in a secondary debate. A debate arising from some *Letters to the Editor*, and where a top Communist leader decides to be more critical of Lenin than of Stalin!

²² Unita 3 November 1979.

²³ **Renascita**: Theoretical Review of the Italian Communist Party. In June 1979, there were legislative elections in Italy. Christian Democrats (CD): 262 MPs, Communist Party: 201, Socialist Party: 62. Hence the CD could not govern without the Communists. In 1977-78, an important CD leader, Aldo Moro, proposed an alliance with the Communists. This was 'The Historic Compromise' to which the Italian Communist Party responded with their new notion of *Eurocommunism*. In 1978, Moro was kidnapped and killed mysteriously; in March 1979, the investigative journalist Carmine Pecorelli was assassinated. Editorial.

²⁴ At the 14th Congress of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party in 1926, dozens of Bolsheviks were elected to lead in the various parts of the Soviet Union: Trade Unions, Countryside, Soviets, Central Councils, the working class (Metal-workers for instance), Armed Forces, the Communist Party, etc. **In 1934, the Central Committee had 139 members.** 93 of these (and the most important in the taking of power in 1917) were put to death; whilst others, like Trotsky, were hounded out, and/or killed later.

The vice-director of Rinascita blamed Stalin for wrong doing, but he did not say that Stalin should also be blamed for *his policies*. He does not say that Stalin's policies led to the formation of a bureaucratic apparatus, and that this apparatus gave to Stalin the authority to kill "all the top leaders" of the Central Committee. In short, Stalin had taken the lead in the creation of a bureaucratic apparatus that gave him the power to murder. All this needs saying.

See how the Italian Communist Party has come to be dealing with these questions! We raise this example to illustrate the harm done by what we call *empiricism* in the manner of thinking and debating. We call empiricism and we indict it as a thought-method. We denounce it! In the above example, the Italian Communist Party demonstrates clearly how empiricism, as a thought-method, trashes a workers' Party and destroys its scientific capacity to reason.

This failing is far from being special to the Italian Communist Party. The above example illustrates the point, but you find the same failing in all the mass working class parties of the world.

The Italian Communist Party uses the empirical thought-method every day. This is how its leaders to continue to ignore the conditions that led to the formation of a bureaucratic apparatus at the heart of the Russian Revolution. The same empiricism makes these same leaders blind to the existence and functioning

of a bureaucratic apparatus inside their own Party. These are all essential conclusions for the Labour Party.

Stalin arose from a bureaucratic apparatus, not from Lenin or from the Revolution:

In the above examples, the Italian Communist Party gave as much weight to Reichlin (who justifies Trotsky) as to those who justify Stalin. This said, it remains remarkable that the question of Stalin having killed "all the top leaders of the Central Committee" is at last being admitted by a Communist Party! The world's Communist parties have kept so silent about this, and for so many decades, that you would think it never happened. Look at the empirical way in which this disclosure surfaces suddenly, incidentally and around some debate about "Lenin's policy of alliance with the peasants". Wanton empiricism! See how the absence of principled leadership and of scientific method lets empiricism incapacitate a workers' Party.

The Posadists use this example to show what empiricism is and how it works. They call for this kind of example to be studied in the workers' parties of the world. This will raise the consciousness of the international working class. The Posadists insist in having workers' parties like the Labour Party discussing this matter, to discard firmly the notion that it was Leninism, Lenin or the Soviet Workers State that led to a Stalin. Nothing of the sort! As a function, Stalin arose from an apparatus. Not

from the Revolution and not from the Soviet Workers State.

The more the Italian Communist Party refuses to handle the concept of bureaucracy, the less it understands its own Communist Party functioning, and history itself. A workers' Party that disdains scientific preparation can only become muddled and ineffectual. It is logical. Such a Party can only fall prey to the manipulations of the bourgeois class. The Spanish Communist Party acts in a similar way. It is now closer to capitalist positions than to anti-capitalist ones. If the Communist parties continue to exist, it is due to the continued existence of the Workers States. Meanwhile, the Communist base in the working class does not let the Communist leaders throw-in the towel.

The broad masses support the Workers States:

In the major European capitalist countries, hundreds of thousands take regularly to the streets against the Yankee missiles and capitalism. There have been huge anti-war mobilisations in Belgium and in capitalist Germany. In France, 40,000 protested against the stationing of Yankee missiles in Europe. In Belgium, the anti-war movements mobilised 60,000. The crowds who take part do not condemn the Soviet Union. They recognise that the Soviet Union is under attack and defends itself. Considering the constant flood of anti-Soviet propaganda, this shows a fair depth of understanding. It shows the elevated

social and political intelligence of the masses.

This high level of consciousness is not reflected in the Socialist parties. In Spain, the Socialist Party acts like an ally of the monarchy and of the bourgeois government²⁵. It connives with the repression of workers and Communists. In a similar way, the leadership of the French Socialist Party clings to the coattails of the French bourgeoisie. Although there is a difference here, because the Socialist leadership in France keeps some links with the Workers States. It does not wish to be seen by the world, and even less in France, as completely opposed to social progress. Besides, there are important left Socialists currents in France that support the Soviet Union. They reflect something of the pro-Workers State sentiment that exists in France and throughout Europe.

Where the European bourgeoisies accept the deployment of the Yankee missiles on their soil, they present this as reasonable. 'No, we do not wish to attack the Soviet Union' they say, and 'we are not expecting any Soviet invasion'. 'All we want is to defend the country'. According to them, the missiles are for 'defence'. In the European official reports, you see nothing about Europe preparing against any Russian threat. You don't hear comments on those lines from the North American officials either. They hide

²⁵ On 1 March 1979, there were Legislative and Senatorial elections in Spain, the first elections as demanded by the 1978 Constitution. The UDC (Conservatives) won, but they had to form a minority government. Their leader, Adolfo Suarez, made an alliance with Fraga of the right-wing 'Democratic Coalition' (CD). In the Legislatives, the UDC had won 168 MPs, the Socialist Party (PSOE) 121, the Communist Party 23 and the CD 9. In the Senate: UDC: 119 seats, PSOE: 70, CD: 3. Basques: 8.

what they truly intend. They make banal and emollient statements to deploy their weapons. Not fooled, the masses reject the Yankee missiles and support the Soviet Union.

In Europe, the anti-war demonstrations express the maturity of the masses of the world, not just of Europe. These demonstrations also indicate the imminence of war. Alongside the mass movements and mobilisations against the atomic weapon, you do not see any mass demonstration against the Workers States. All the anti-war demonstrations are against US imperialism. Not a single movement mobilises mass support against the Soviet Union. The capitalists, the right-wing petit bourgeois and the right-wing Social Democrats try to do it now and then, but the masses do not join them.

The rejection of the North American missiles on the part of the masses of Europe - and indeed elsewhere - is a way of supporting the Workers States. Those who reject the Yankee missiles are essentially the masses of the world. The masses know that the Yankee missiles aim at smashing human life and social progress, and that the Soviets encourage human progress. Even where they intervene militarily, the Soviets impel human progress²⁶. To shore themselves up socially, the European governments wish to appear sedate and progressive in front of the petit bourgeoisie. Behind this mask however, they can hardly conceal

²⁶As we said elsewhere, the Soviet troops entered Afghanistan 2 days before this text. The author is manifestly referring to this. Editorial note, June 2017.

their hatred of the Workers States. The various Socialist leaderships tend to go along with them, and some even act in the same way.

Organise the Left in the Labour Party:

In Britain, the proletariat, the intellectuals and the progressive petit bourgeois vanguard observe that the Soviet Union does not impose its missiles on Europe, but that US imperialism does. To be bolder on their own socialist road, the progressive masses of Britain and the Labour left would need to see the working class in charge of the Workers States. And not the bureaucracy. These progressive masses need to see clearer examples of superiority in the social organisation of the Workers States.

It is our task and that of the Labour left to analyse and explain that one needs not be entirely detained by this. It is the task of the Labour left to assist, without waiting for examples from the Workers States, in the creation of better means to foster a political life in the Labour Party.

It is also our task and that of the Labour left to draw conclusions from the revolutionary processes of the world. Nicaragua, El Salvador, the fall of the Shah of Iran are examples. The Labour Party needs to elevate its capacity to analyse, draw conclusions and elaborate programmes of social transformation.

In Britain, the lack of dialectical thinking in the Communist parties leaves the empiricism of the Labour apparatus unnecessarily in charge. Wherever dialectical thinking is barred from entering – as in the Labour Party – the winners are pragmatism and idealist-materialism²⁷. In the pragmatist estimation of all apparatuses, the workers must wait. They must be patient and not rock the boat.

It is the task of the left to explain that social transformation is not the same as rocking the boat. Social transformation cannot wait. It is urgent, and the conditions exist for it.

J. POSADAS

27.12.79

²⁷ This refers to Marxism as a dialectical thought method, evolved from idealist Hegel and put on its dialectical and materialist feet by Karl Marx.