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1. Kinnell and the "Two Camps" - Jones: August 1982
KIN NELL AND THE "TWO CAMPS".

In his document in I.B. 11 cde. Kinnell raises again the hoary old line about two camps, claiming to show that the minority use the same method as Pablo.

Not only does this distort the positions of the minority, but also miseducates the movement as to what Pabloism was. If Pabloism was simply dividing the world into two camps then it would be easy to purge ourselves of this disease.

"So the argument is that our position should have determined by consideration of the "international balance of forces" between "two class camps" - Imperialism and the "anti-imperialist masses". It is just like Pablo's arguments in the early 1950's, when he pursued the Trotskyist movement to look at everything in terms of the "international balance of forces" between imperialism and the Stalinist states".


Cde. Kinnell then goes on to compare Pablo's refusal to call for withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany with the minorities position of not calling for the withdrawal of Argentine troops from the Falklands/Malvinas. In fact, Kinnell says Pablo's position was more rational than ours in that he was describing the 'camps' of the Stalinist states and Imperialism and at least these had a different class nature.

NOT NEW:

First of all it was not Pablo who introduced terminology like "anti-imperialist masses". This was a part of the language of Lenin and Trotsky, and by trying to make it look as though it was fraudulently brought in by Pablo cde. Kinnell distorts the history of our movement.

It was Lenin who spoke continuously of the "oppressor nations" and the "oppressed nations", and it was the Bolsheviks and the early Comitern who attempted to appeal to the 'anti-imperialist masses'.

Similarly, Trotsky in the Transitional Programme talking about the war says "It will be the duty of the international proletariat to aid the oppressed countries in this war against the oppressors. The same applies in regard to aiding the USSR or whatever other workers government might arise before the war or during the war... The workers of imperialist countries, however, cannot help an anti-imperialist country through their own government the proletariat supports the non-imperialist 'ally' through its own methods.

(T.P. page 35 - emphasis added.)

So Lenin and Trotsky did not just recognise the class struggle and the struggle for socialism but did actually recognise the double oppression of the masses of the colonial and semi-colonial countries introduced another element i.e. their struggle against imperialism.

This was a real, material thing; the communist movement did not just support certain countries against imperialism in war because the masses were duped, those independance struggles were themselves progressive. The controlling centre of the world oppression was and is the imperialist countries.

Now cde. Kinnell will say, of course, that he agrees with Lenin and Trotsky with regard to the class struggle and the struggle for socialism in their time. But today, things have changed; the vast majority of countries have gained their "political independance" from Imperialism with only a few small exceptions (and anyway some
of these are happy where they are.) Therefore, it is just a question of the struggle for socialism and the national question is irrelevant. So the people Lenin attacked if for example "A character of Marxism or Imperialist Economics" have now become right through the passage of time.

Of course, for Lenin and Trotsky the leading anti-imperialist force in these countries is the working class and within the anti-imperialist struggle they continued to struggle against the national bourgeoisie and for a socialist revolution. But, note: within that struggle. That is why we supported Argentina.

PABLO'S REVISIONISM
Pablo's revisionism was centred on his attitude to Stalinism of which the notion of two blocks was only a part, and by no means the most essential part. In fact it was not the idea of two blocks that was wrong but rather what Pablo meant by it.

Out of the past war social overturns Pablo concluded that imperialism through the cold war had pushed Stalinism into the Eastern Europe Transformation.

Now this was no doubt a factor, but it is the essence of Pabloism that it is empirical and thus it sees events only in a one sided way. He interprets Stalinism in these transformations as being progressive (correctly) without emphasising that their character as deformed workers states shows that it still remains Stalinism. In this way he leaves out its real counter-revolutionary role i.e. that Stalin defended capitalism in the rest of Europe. The buffer states were aquired at the expense of the world revolution.

He then goes on to argue that as Imperialism in the cold war drove Stalinism into these transformations so in a real war (which the whole F.I. expected) Stalinism would be pushed into further transformations i.e. it would turn into a 'revolutionary war'. The culmination of all this was his theory of 'centres of deformed workers states'.

Combined with this was a notion of the transformation of the C.P.s themselves. Under the pressure of the masses, the rising class struggle, the western C.P.s would be pushed and changes would be created in the Eastern European and Soviet C.P.s.

"In no place where the C.P.s possess a mass base, except in Yugoslavia, have mass breaks with the Kremlin been produced; and similarly there has not been a mass break within these parties. The disintegration of Stalinism has begun by assuming the form of penetration into these organisations of ideas opposed to the interests of the Kremlin Bureaucracy; and of a process of modification in the hierachical bureaucratac relation previously established. It is first of all and above all in this manner that the disintegration of Stalinism will proceed for a whole period: the communist organisations with a mass base will maintain themselves, but within these forms of organisation there will develop tendencies towards a new content, both as regards the ideas which they express and as regards the existing organisational relations through which the tight hold of the Soviet Bureaucracy finds its expression" Rise and decline of Stalinism P.6

He goes on to argue that the ranks of the official Trade Unions and the C.P. youth are the "subjective" forces for change and even include some elements "at the top of the regime".
The above quoted document was from 1954, 3 years after "Where are we going?". The main Pablo document that elaborated his two blocks idea two camps in only mentioned once in "Rise and Decline," the same number of times as it is in the S.W.P. reply. We can see from this that well after Pablo had elaborated his theory, the Trotskyist movement considered that his main revision was i.e. Stalinism and not through "two camps".

The S.W.P.'s reply to "Rise and Decline" says that the main point of Pablos revisionism is that it turns the working class and the Trotskyist parties into "pressure groupings" to push "a section of the bureaucracy leftward towards a revolution".

In "Where are we going" Pablo speaks of "the capitalist regimes and the Stalinist world" and says, "It is with the Korean war that our movement for the first time realised the important factor that the relationship of forces on the international chessboard is now evolving to the disadvantage of imperialism." He includes in this disadvantage "The weight of the colonial revolution".

This I do not find contentious
But Pablo then talks of the relationship between the "imperialist block" and "the block led by the U.S.S.R.", This latter block he makes clear. late in the article, includes "the colonial revolutions now going on."

Suddenly Pablo has turned real, existing, material conflicts - that between the colonial revolution and imperialism and that between imperialism and the deformed workers state into a struggle "led by the U.S.S.R."

Now I would accept, with Pablo and the rest of the, "World Trotskyist movement", that imperialism was opposed to the colonial revolution and also that Imperialism is looking for every opportunity, especially in its periods of crisis, to bring Eastern Europe and Russia back into its orbit. There are real material questions and so to see Eastern Europe and the USSR as a bloc is not necessarily wrong, although it is clear that the Stalinists have normally acted against the colonial revolution. This latter point is the most important because when you bracket things in this way, under the heading "led by the USSR" then you put the colonial revolution under the leadership of those who opposed it. You also present the USSR as an abstraction; the content of which as given by Pablo was, "led by the bureaucracy of the USSR."

So this is what his empiricist method led him to: Imperialism was in conflict with Eastern Europe, wanted to take it over and therefore he not only defended the Eastern European "bloc" but also supported its leadership - the Soviet Bureaucracy.

And the revisionism was not defence of the Eastern European "bloc" but support for the leadership of the bureaucracy. So, in essence, it was confusion with regard to Stalinism, that it supported the colonial revolution or that it wanted a genuine anti-imperialist struggle, that was Pablo's revisionism. If, like Cde. Kinnell you lead cdes. to think that the centre of Pablo's revisionism was a "two camps" theory then you lead them away from understanding either the real world or Pabloism. The orthodox Trotskyists in Pablo's time tries to understand this real world and so they also spoke in terms of camps.
"Before World War II the Soviet bureaucracy could and did manoeuvre between two opposing blocs of capitalist powers. Now it confronts a combine of imperialist powers being openly mobilised against the Soviet Union. While the Soviet people feel the greater power of numbers in the anti-capitalist states, this is partially offset by their fear of the centralisation of forces in the opposing class camp."

S.W.P. on "Rise and Decline" Trotskyism Against Revisionism Vol. I p.201

THE STATE CAPITALIST TRADITION

The people who have centred their attacks on Pabloism around the two camps position have been the British I.S. (S.W.P.). They, of course do so from a position that the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are not worth defending and not qualitatively different from Imperialism as summed up in their slogan "Neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism." Thus in International Socialism No.7 (1980) Binns and Haynes argue, "In particular we ourselves have failed to insist on the central issue - namely that state capitalism is not and analysis of Eastern Europe but an analysis of capitalism in general of which these societies are a part". p.19

They hold the same positions with regard to the semi-colonial world, within which they argue the national, anti-imperialist question is non-existent. "The thesis of this article is that the conditions that gave the assumption - (Lenin and Trotsky's conception of the colonial revolution) Jones - Validity has changed. To repeat, the national bourgeoisie - or falling it, the national bureaucracy - has been rescued from oblivion for imperialisms withdrawal; national independence has come to it, in many cases without a struggle and therewith have come the levers of economic development and its own growth." Michael Ridrou - International Capitalism. Thus, for the S.W.P. there is no anti-imperialist struggle. What we have is the struggle the world over of class against class.

KINNELL'S SLEIGHT OF HAND RE THE MAJORITY

In 1953 the East German workers rose up. Russian troops were used to crush them. Pablo refused to call for withdrawal of the Russian troops. He argued that withdrawal would leave the way open for imperialism.

Trotskyists correctly argued for the political revolution and for the withdrawal of these troops, these being the same people who I have quoted above as talking about "class camps". So, The genuine Trotskyists were able to maintain their position of defence of Eastern Europe as a "bloc" against imperialism and at the same time support the mass uprising against the bureaucracy.

In other words it was Pablo's attitude to the bureaucracy that was wrong. What would have happened if imperialism had invaded Eastern Europe on its way to Russia? "We would have dropped our demand for the withdrawal of the Russian troops. We would have defended that bloc and argued for the East German workers to fight the imperialist forces.

What would cde. Kinnell have done - Does he recognise that there is a "bloc" of countries with nationalised property relations? Would he be for its defence? Does this turn him into a Pabloite? Of course not!

It is perfectly possible to defend the Eastern European "bloc"

p.4
and at the same time support the struggle against the bureaucracy, as Kinnell well knows from our present position on Poland. Pablo dropped the latter - the fight against the bureaucracy - and that was his revisionism.

HOW IS THIS TRANSFERRED TO ARGENTINA?
We have admitted elsewhere that the use of the term "class camp" is not accurate in the sense used above and we have explained what we mean. But it is not this that cde. Kinnell is attacking, it is the concept of the anti-imperialist camp. I think it is quite clear that we are not talking of a mass uprising of workers on the Falklands/Malvinas which Galtieri moved in to crush. We are talking about a pro-imperialist group of settlers, so to compare it with East Germany is obviously ridiculous. But cde. Kinnell does it for a reason. He is trying to say that we do not in reality support the struggle of the Argentine workers against the Junta. He says that since we support Argentina against the British task force, as we stand in the anti-imperialist camp this means we are, like Pablo, taking the logic of our camps, to the camps position to the point of not supporting the overthrow of the national bourgeoisie. But the comrades of the majority themselves say that they would have defended Argentina if the fleet had moved westward. Does this mean that they would have been for the stopping the class struggle? Of course not. Then why does the fleet being 400 miles to the east imply that our position must mean that we are for the ending of the class struggle in Argentina? You have to say cde, Kinnell!

If you recognise that Argentina is oppressed by imperialism and therefore there is the possibility of being invaded (even if vague) then you are for its defence. But why then does that not make you a Pabloite cde. Kinnell?

The answer to these questions is simple. Being for the defence of Argentina against imperialism does not mean any support for the Junta. We do not recognise the Junta as "leading" the anti-imperialist camp. But we, like the Palesinians and the oppressed masses all over the world recognise that British imperialism, at that moment, made the Falklands/Malvinas the battering ram of its policies.

We stand in the camp of the "doubly oppressed" masses who recognise the British fleet as a real, material part of their oppression.

Jones: August 1982
In April I produced a document entitled 'Towards a clarification of our position on the Malvinas.' By subsequent standards it was a very brief attempt to correct what I saw as some major errors in the positions taken by WSL on the war in the S. Atlantic. It expressed the view I had held since early April and first argued with some of our youth comrades at the VS Conf. that in a war between British Imperialism and Argentina we should be for the defeat of British Imperialism and for an Argentinian victory.

At that time I assumed that it would be something of a lone battle, both the EC&NC having apparently swung behind a defeatist position for Argentina. My aim therefore was to set out as best I could an assessment of what a revolutionary position should be. Central in this was firstly a clear call for the defeat of British Imperialism - a call which had not, even by the end of April, appeared in our paper and secondly a recognition that what was taking place was a conflict between an oppressed, dependant capitalist state and a major Imperialist power in which revolutionaries had a duty to line up with the oppressed against Imperialism.

Since then, as cdes. are aware, things have taken on a momentum of their own. The apparent unanimity of the leadership was shown to have been no more than the effects of a compromise around the TILC Res. which soon emerged as the two original positions presented at TILC - that of the present NC majority and that of the tendency.

'Re-reading the welter of documents produced since May it is hard to believe that back in April Kinnell was writing an editorial on the war entitled "Disciplining the third world" since by the end of May Argentina had been promoted by the majority to an equivalent of Spain or Portugal well out of the reach of any of anti-imperialist struggle. Equally, it is hard to believe that three months after labelling Argentina 'sub-imperialist' in IB6 Carolan has still to explain what - in Marxist terms - this means. But such has been the method of the debate. Far from attempting to clarify questions the ideologues of the majority, Kinnell and Carolan - I shall not dwell on those like Scott who ended up so contorted as to support emigration controls - have at every step only worked to cloud and confuse issues. On Imperialism we are told Lenin's work is 60 years old and things have changed but we are offered no replacement analysis. We are told that the national question has been solved in Argentina and most of the other former colonies but we are not told how this process - a clear refutation of both Trotsky's Permanent Revolution and our understanding of Imp. were it true - took place. We are told that the Argentine regimes have all been reactionary, but there is no attempt to characterise these regimes in relation to the class struggle in Argentina in defiance of all the methodology of our movement. Are they Bonapartists, semi-Bonapartists, Bonapartism sui-generis, fascists? We are never told, nor is there any attempt to distinguish between say Peron in 1945 and Videla in 1976. They are simply lumped together as a reactionary hodge-podge which tells us nothing. In fact, in place of serious Marxist analysis we are offered syllogisms, half truths evasions and ... abuse. So the tendency are dismissed as Paboites, Maoists etc.
So be it. The majority's arguments have done nothing to make me retract anything in my first document. Rather, by there lack of any serious rooting in the Marxist method they have served only to negatively confirm my position. In this document I shall therefore continue to rely on the established position and method of our movement. Those who regard the political capital of our movement accrued by the Bolsheviks, the early Communist International, the left opposition and the FI as a mill stone around their necks, strangling their personal political impulses should question the source of those impulses before they abandon that legacy in search of easy answers.

1 On Imperialism.

Imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism, the epoch of finance capital formed by the merging of bank and industrial capital. The export of capital supersedes in relative importance the export of commodities to the dependent states leading to the proletarianisation of an important section of the native population and the incorporation of the colonial and semi-colonial countries into the capitalist mode of production as a world system, with a world market and a world division of labour.

Commercial, industrial and financial capital invaded backward countires from the outside, partly destroying the private forms of native economy and partly subjecting them to the world-wide industrial and banking system of the west. Under the whip of imperial imperialism the colonies and the semi-colonies found themselves compelled to disregard the intervening stages of their development, whilst at the same time artificially hanging on to hanging on to them at one level or another.

Economically, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, one in which production has assumed such massive proportions that free competition which characterised the previous period gives way to monopoly. That is the economic essence of imperialism. This monopoly manifests itself in trust, syndicates and above all in the total omnipotence of the big banks, in the buying up of raw materials concentration of banking capital. Everything hinges in the epoch of imperialism on monopoly.

The political corollary of this is the change from democracy to political reaction. If democracy corresponds to free competition, political reaction corresponds to monopoly capitalism.

"The elimination of competition by monopoly marks the beginning of the disintegration of capitalist society. Competition was the creative mainspring of capitalism and the historical justification of the capitalists. By the same token the elimination of competition marks the transformation of stock holders into social parasites."  
_Trotsky. Marxism in our time p.14._

The domination of the world by monopoly capital thus marks the passage from relative to absolute reaction, where the mode of production becomes a choking fetter on the development of the means of production. This historical conflict expresses itself in wars.

"Imperialist wars are nothing else than the detonations of productive forces against the state borders which has come to be too confiding for them." _Ibid p.42_
Thus, Lenin characterised Imperialism as the epoch of wars and revolutions. The period of decomposition and parasitism.

This parasitism expresses itself nowhere more clearly than in the relation of the Great Imperialist Powers to the colonies and semi-colonies. As Trotsky put it, "The exploitation of classes was supplemented, and its potency increased, by the exploitation of nations." (Marxism In Our Time, p41)

The whole world became divided into a small number of parasitic Great Powers and a massive majority of oppressed nations whose natural wealth was ruthlessly plundered. Thus, in the Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Question Lenin pointed out, "The Characteristic feature of Imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces." (Against Dogmatism and Sectarianism p155)

It was this which led Lenin to argue that "the focal point in the social democratic programme must be that division into oppressor and oppressed which forms the essence of Imperialism" Vol 21 p409

Thus, when the Theses were presented at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International, Lenin stressed, "What is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between the oppressed and oppressor nations. Unlike the 2nd International and bourgeois democracy we emphasise this distinction."

Nor, did Lenin and Trotsky see this oppression of nations taking place solely through direct colonial rule. For Lenin, the American Trusts were, "the supreme expression of the economics of Imperialism or monopoly capitalism," (Vol23 p44) while Trotsky commented, "The United States, which formally has no colonies, is nevertheless the most privileged of all the nations of history."

This position flowed from its 'democratic' control of Central and Latin America which it operated as a private Imperialist preserve. "The blood thirsty despots under whose oppressive rule the millions of workers and peasants suffer, the Vargases and the Batistas, are at bottom nothing but the political tools of the 'domestic' US Imperialists. Thus the US remains the predominant and aggressive master of Latin America, ready to protect its power with arms in hand against any serious assault by its Imperialist rivals or against any attempt by the peoples of Latin America to liberate themselves from its exploitative rule."

Documents of the FI p242

But just to make sure there should be no confusion on the issue the Communist International at its 4th Congress noted that the granting of 'formal' independence made no difference to the real position of the oppressed semi-colonies.

"The danger of a deal between the bourgeois nationalists and one or more of the rival imperialist powers is much greater in the semi-colonial countries (China, Persia) or in the countries gaining state independence thanks to Imperialist competition, (Turkey) than it is in the colonies. Every such agreement means a wholly unequal division of power between the indigenous ruling classes and Imperialism; though it may be disguised as formal independence, it leaves the country exactly as before — a semi-colonial buffer state, the puppet of Imperialism."

Comintern Theses p 416
Such was the position of 'formally' independent 8 Argentina... Dependent on British banks for capital, its railways, mines and land acquired by British interests Argentina was effectively annexed by Imperialism...

Now there have certainly been substantial changes in the world since the death of Lenin. The question for us, however, is do any of these changes negate or render obsolete Lenin's fundamental propositions about the nature of imperialism? Above all, has that relationship between oppressor and oppressed states which for Lenin characterised Imperialism been significantly altered?

There are those who would argue yes. Michael Kidron of the IS/SWP has argued, notably in International Capitalism, that the old relationships have gone, to be replaced by gradations of a single system, capitalism. Thus, in IS 61 he argued, "We don't have Imperialism but we still have capitalism". The corollary of this is of course Tony Cliffe's rejection of the Theory of Permanent Revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial world in favour of a simplification of the struggle to capitalism versus socialism.

A somewhat different alternative is offered by Heshe MACHOVER who argues in 'The Century of the Unexpected' that there can be two separate paths to industrialisation, capitalism or what he calls state collectivism, a mode of production likely to occur in the industrially underdeveloped nations.

Both of these new theories share one common feature, however, in that they are also applied to Eastern Europe and the Stalinist states in Sao East Asia. In fact, in part the analysis of both flows from an incomprehension of the post war social overturns and confusion over the development of the colonial revolution during the period of the post war boom. In general, however, there have been no serious or convincing attempts to challenge the basis of Lenin's analysis. So, let us return to the essence of Lenin's Imperialism, that we are in the epoch of monopoly capital when a small number of predatory great powers (warring among themselves for hegemony) feed like leeches on the exploitation of the mass of colonial and semi-colonial nations, plundering their natural wealth, distorting and restraining their economic development, condemning their populations to the rule of an endless stream of the most reactionary and - in their relation to Imperialism - most slavish regimes which are in turn forcibly propped up by Imperialism.

Do the comrades of the majority really deny that this is still the case? Do they regard the economic chaos of the oppressed nations, their massive inflation, their huge indebtedness, uneven and often irrational industrial development, and huge unemployment as natural products of slowly evolving capitalist development in these countries? One wonders what kind of hearing they would receive in San Salvador, Beirut, Soweto or Santiago.

Perhaps the comrades should consider admitting that each of those is a product of their continuing unequal and oppressive relationship with an Imperialism which still through the omnipotence of the great banks, its control of the world market and the world division of labour, and finally, but not least, its massive military might has the world divided into oppressed and oppressor nations.
Yes, indeed, as the Comintern recognised, there have been deals be-
tween the national bourgeoisie in some of the semi-colonies and
Imperialism. Yes, indeed, these local parasites have been allowed
a share - though small - of the pickings. Yes, indeed, some have ac-
quired formal 'independence'. But this has been at all times on the
terms of Imperialism, under the whip of the monopoly magnates
who control the purse strings. That semi-colonies, as a result of
inter-imperialist rivalries, can attain the nominal status of
independent republic should not blind us to the real continuity of
their position as "semi-colonial buffer states, the puppets of
Imperialism.

That is the reality of formally independent Argentina, of formally
independent El Salvador, of the formally independent Somocist
Nicaragua, and of formally independent Chile as Imperialism hatched
the coup in 1973. Only the mobilisation of the masses against
Imperialism can give this 'independence' any semblance of reality
but even then, without proletarian leadership, without the
Permanent Revolution, this can only be a brief moment in their
history of oppression.

Today the development of the Argentine economy remains at the
beck of Imperialism. Its massive debts of 30 billion dollars, its
distorted industrial development, with the bulk of its industry
still tied to meat processing and packing, its other industries
confined to production for home use and in general (80 of the top
120) foreign owned or else massively in hock to the Imperialist
banks, are the tokens of its continuing dependent semi-
colonial status. As for bank capital, the largest Argentine private
bank went bankrupt in 1980 with debts of US dollars 4b. Defaulting
debts from 1979 to 1981 were estimated by the Financial Times at
in excess of US dollars 7 b. And the Economics Minister who was
supervising over this debacle was a director of Standard Telegraph
(US) and two American - not Argentine - banks.

Argentina's place in the world division of labour has remained that
allocated to it by the Great Powers a century ago - as an agricul-
tural producer nation. 70% of its exports, and this figure is rising,
are from AgricultureIndustry; despite its supposed high level of development, remains according to LLoyds Bank Review,
centred mainly on meat packing and meat processing.

The crisis of 1976 led to plans tp modernise industry, and especial-
ly the steel and agricultural industries. But what did this mean? It
meant a loan of US dollars 6.3m to finance the import of new
agricultural equipment, and a similar foreign loan to purchase
modern steel plant from Europe. Ther were plans to develop the
energy sector; but this meant a massive state bank loan combined
with considerable foreign investment to purchase...Canadian and
West German nuclear technology. At every turn the much vaunted 'development' of Argentina rests in the hands of the Imperialist
bankers who loan in order to sell, and by this process bind Argenti-
-ina evry more firmly to them as its oppressors.

We must be absolutely clear on this. Formal 'independence' does not
resolve and finish with the national question and nor does it mark
any break in the division of the world into oppressor and oppress-
ed nations. To see such formal 'independence as negating that
fundamental, characteristic Imperialist division of the world is as
stupid as believing that women's oppression is resolved and ended
for Marxists by such formal assertions of 'equality' as the Equal
Opportunities Laws.
Instead, probing beneath the surface of appearances we should recognise the continuity of oppression and continue to apply the method of revolutionary Marxism.

"We must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics on all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, the popular election of officials, equal rights for women, the self-determination of nations etc. While capitalism exists, these demands - all of them - can only be accomplished as an exception, and even then in an incomplete and distorted form."

Vol. 21 P 408.

2) Bonapartism and Semi-Bonapartism in the oppressed nations.

"The governments of backward i.e. colonial and semi-colonial countries by and large assume a Bonapartist or semi-Bonapartist character; they differ from one another in that some try to orient in a democratic direction, seeking support among workers and peasants, while others install a form close to military-police dictatorship."

Trotsky... "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay".

The majority have to date said nothing about how they characterise the various Argentine regimes since the war, nor how they explain their nature. Yet as Ewing has pointed out, an understanding of this is crucial to an understanding of Argentina's relation to Imperialism. The inability of Argentina and the other dependant semi-colonial states to break out of its oppression of Imperialism is expressed precisely by the continuing, crisis ridden existence of such regimes. Their economic submission and dependancy is expressed also in a political submission to Imperialism. On the need to not only confront the masses on behalf of the exploiters but also to arbitrate and conciliate between the national bourgeoisie and Imperialism. It is this dual role which expresses the objective political dependancy of the Argentine Videla/Viola/Galteri Junta. But this dual role means that the regimes are constantly oscillating between Imperialism, the National Bourgeoisie and the masses. Within that process the regimes take on a significantly different complexion. Peron sought support among the masses and was, like Cardenas, a Bonapartist sui generis, expressing national movements against the "democratic" domination of Imperialism. Videla, like Banzer and Pinochet, was the fruit of counter-revolution, a semi-bonapartist military dictatorship, arbitrating between Imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, against the masses. Each is, of course, reactionary, but in their relationships to imperialism they differ. Those who cannot distinguish between Peron and and Videla in Argentina, or between Torres and Banzar in Bolivia or between Cardenas and Pinochet are terminally incapable of leading any struggle in an oppressed semi-colonial country since they are failing to recognise the difference between a regime with an orientation towards the masses and against imperialism and the stark face of imperialist counter revolution. Peron came to power in 1945 through a general strike directed against the machinations of U.S. imperialism. Videla came to power as the armed fist of imperialist counter revolution, through a military coup. Torres, however reactionary, weak and vacillating he might be had a democratic orientation which opened the door to mass struggles against imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. Banzer was the vicious fist of imperialist reaction.
Because of their denial of any national question, or oppression of Argentina by imperialism, the majority are incapable of understanding how to relate to a movement like Peron's and in particular to the main anti-imperialist movement that developed around him. Like good sectarians they demand that everything be either black or white, with, please, no contradictions! But, perhaps they can learn from some history.

3) THE DEBATE IN THE ARGENTINE TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT

Between 1939 and 1941, under the pressure of the Imperialist war, there was a bitter debate within the 2 Trotskyist groups in Argentina on whether there was a national question in Argentina. Trotsky expressed his view at the beginning of the debate as follows, "In the beginning the difference between them were of a rather secondary character and mainly personal. But, at present, there is an indication that the divergences are assuming a political character. In no. 7 of Inicial, a programmatic article appeared on the nature of the revolutions in Argentina, which attempted to show that its character will have to be exclusively socialist."

Documents of the F.I. p.379

Trotsky rejected this view, but the debate continued.

In early 1940 Quebracho (Liberio Justo) produced an article for "Workers Action" which argued that Argentina was a semi-colony, oppressed and dominated by Imperialism in which it was necessary to combine the struggle against Imperialism with the programme for proletarian revolution. That real national question remained. Included in that struggle for national liberation would be the regaining of Argentine territory like the Malvinas. This basis was Permanent Revolution.

In reply to this, Antonio Gallo, writing in Inicial argued that the most valuable theoretical gain for the Argentine working class was the recognition, first put forward 30 years earlier by Juan B. Justo, founder of the socialist party, that Argentines development was capitalistic and its revolution would be socialist.

There were no democratic questions remaining and those who talked of 'national liberation' were no better than fascists. The majority at that time was with Gallo and his grouping. In fact, the Inicial group (L.O.S.) proceeded to delete all reference to any national question or any struggle against Imperialism from their programme. As a final flourish they declared themselves revolutionary defeatist in the second World War on the grounds that it was an imperialist war, ignoring the circumstances which had led to Argentina not being in the war.

For his part Juan B. Justo - the original author or this schematic nonsense - in good reformist fashion declared that American tutelage was better than misery and lined the socialist party up with U.S. Imperialism.

The result of this sectarian pottering on the part of the Inicial group was predictable. When U.S. Imperialism demanded that Argentina fall in behind its Imperialist allies on pain of a ban on exports of basic materials and this led to an anti-American coup in 1943, the Inicial group was incapable of relating to the anti Imperialist movement which developed around Peron against the interference of the U.S. via Ambassador Braden.
The mass anti-imperialist mobilisation of Oct. 17th, 1945 which secured Peron's release from prison after the pro-US semi-coup of Oct. 9th., was denounced, not least by Nahael Moreno, as a mobilisation set up by the police and army.

Failing to recognise the real conflict between Peron and the US Imperialists (as represented by the Democratic Union), the Argentine Trotskyists were unable to relate th the anti-imperialism of the masses and to the massive strike wave of 1946/47. They preferred instead to to keep their hands clean with ritual incantations about Peron's fascism and called for a united workers front, a nonsense which would have brought together the Socialist Party and the Communist Party who were both backing the Democratic Union and US Imperialism, but would have left out the masses who had broken from their traditional parties over their capitulation to Imperialism. Because the Trotskyists failed to put themselves at the head of the anti-imperialist movement, Peron was able to contain and institutionalise it and, in the early 1950's having broken the the last vestiges of British control, pass Argentina back into the camp of US Imp.

But, like Moreno, our present majority leaders would have missed the bus while retaining their neatly printed programmes. For they go have a programme denying the national question in Argentina. In 195, according to Erresto Gonzales their historian, the leaders of the present P.S.T. acknowledged the contradictory nature of Peronism. But for them this meant no more than a shift from sectarianism to opportunism.

4) TWO CAMPS
At the E.C. discussion on I.B.7 Carolan stated that it was his considered opinion that the positions of the tendency were Maoist. Well, let us see.

The Maoist bloc of four classes can be summarised as follows:
"Unite the working class, the peasantry, the urban petit bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, form a domestic united front under the leadership of the working class."
Mao, selected works Vol.4 p.415

Now, for the Commitern the crucial question was not temporary alliances with bourgeois democracy against Imperialism but rather the establishment of the proletariat as "an independent revolutionary factor in the common anti-imperialist front" with "complete political autonomy" (Commitern thesis p.416)

Above all this meant no concessions to the bourgeoisie.
Mao replaced the Permanent Revolution with a stages conception, which meant a clear programmatic capitulation to the bourgeoisie. Thus Mao writes
"To counter Imperialist oppression and to raise our backward economy to a higher level, China must utilise all the factors of urban and rural capitalism that are beneficial and not harmful to the national economy and the peoples livelihood; and we must unite with the national bourgeoisie in common struggle. Our present policy is to regulate capitalism, not destroy it."
(On the peoples democratic dictatorship selected works Vol4 p.420)
And again, in the Proclamation of the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army of April 1949 we find, "Protect the industrial, commercial, agriculture and livestock enterprises of the national bourgeoisie. All privately owned factories, shops, banks, warehouses, vessels, wharves, farms and other enterprises will without exception be protected against any encroachment."

That is Maoism:

What has that to do with the politics of the Tendency?

Nothing!

In my first document I clearly called for the bringing down of the Junta and its replacement with a Workers Council. When the Tendency places itself in the camp of Argentina it places itself not in the camp of the Imperialist puppet Junta, but in the camp of the oppressed anti-imperialist masses. And we base ourselves not on Maoism but on Trotsky's Permanent Revolution.

As for the Majorities so called 'independent' workers camp which hovers so near here in the stratosphere over Latin America, "The refusal of communists in the colonies to take part in the against Imperialist tyranny, on the pretext of their supposed 'defence' of independent class interests, is the worst kind of opportunism."


5( The politics of War.
Carolan acknowledged in IB 6 the old Leninist 'formula drawn from Clausewitz "war is the continuation of politics by other means". But in practice he does so only in order to distort and twist its meaning. So he states:

"To have an attitude to the war, once shooting starts, in contradiction with the attitude to the politics which it continues (the Argentine invasion and the British response) violates that principle."

(My emphasis.)

But the politics is confined to the invasion and the British response. Or, again, as Carolan puts it,:

"Both the British Imperialist government and the Argentine sub-imperialist military dictatorship are concerned to assert their prestige and strength by siezing the islands. That defines the war as reactionary on both sides."

This is presented as the Leninist approach to wars, but it is rubbish comrades. Trotsky in "In Defence of Marxism" spells out a very different approach:

"The Marxist line of conduct in a war is not based on abstract moral and sentimental considerations but on a social appraisal of a regime in its reciprocal relations with other regimes."

What is required, therefore, is a many sided assessment of the overall politics leading to the war.
As Lenin put it: "The sophist picks out one of many 'arguments' ........... the dialectic method demands a many sided investigation of a given social phenomenon in its development; it demands that we proceed from the exterior, from the apparent, to the fundamental moving forces, to the development of the productive forces and the class struggle." (War and 2nd International p.17 - my emphasis)

Carolan contents himself with the immediate, apparent events. With such a method one would have concluded that the second World War was about Polish self-determination.

But if we look to the reciprocal relationship of Argentina with other regimes, to the process of development of the conflict between Argentina and British Imperialism in the Epoch of the Imperialism what do we see as the underlying moving forces? The decades of looting and oppression of Latin America by Imperialism, the struggle against the domination of Imperialism by the oppressed semi-colonial masses, and in particular for the reclaiming of assets and territory plundered by Imperialism. That was the politics of which the war was a continuation. From that point onwards only the positions of the tendency related to reality.