

“The Industrial Union is the Embryo of the Socialist Commonwealth”: The International Socialist League and Revolutionary Syndicalism in South Africa, 1915-1920¹

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The focus of this paper is the International Socialist League, the main revolutionary socialist organization active in South Africa in the latter half of the 1910s. The International Socialist League was founded in September 1915 and absorbed into the Communist Party of South Africa in July 1921, having played a central part in the processes that led to the founding of that Party over the previous year.

This paper provides a re-examination of this important organization, disputing the views dominant in the literature. The conventional view in the literature is that the International Socialist League was always a radical Marxist party, and that its role in founding the Communist Party was simply the product of this basic political commitment. It is also asserted in much of the literature that the International Socialist League ignored (at best) the question of racial oppression in South Africa.

This paper will challenge both of these claims, drawing extensively on primary sources. It will be demonstrated, firstly, that the International Socialist League was a revolutionary syndicalist organization, and not a Marxist group. As such, the International Socialist League held that racially integrated revolutionary industrial unions should overthrow capitalism and the State, replacing both with workers' self-management of the economy. Hence, the organization must be situated within the context of the international revolutionary syndicalist movement of the early 20th century, a movement exemplified by the Industrial Workers of the World (or I.W.W.) in the United States of America. It is for this reason that the International Socialist League sought to organize revolutionary industrial unions in South Africa, the most notable of which was the Industrial Workers of Africa. Founded in September 1917, the

Industrial Workers of Africa was the first trade union for African workers in South African history. Although the question of the International Socialist League's analysis of racial oppression in South Africa does not form a central focus of this paper, it will also be suggested that the organization developed a coherent analysis of racial oppression in South Africa, and advocated the removal of racially oppressive laws through industrial action.²

The first part of this paper situates the International Socialist League within the context of the historical literature and within the context of the international socialist movement of the early 20th century. The second part of this paper will look at the history and political theory of the International Socialist League and at the attempts at industrial organization with which the organization was associated. Although both the International Socialist League and the Industrial Workers of Africa were very small organizations, it is when we understand them within their international context — as part of a far larger revolutionary socialist current — that we best grasp their full significance. Internationally, the organization to which the International Socialist League exhibits the greatest political affinity was not the “Marxist left wing of the European socialist movement,”³ but the revolutionary syndicalist I.W.W. The significance of this reassessment of the International Socialist League is threefold. Firstly, it is a contribution to our understanding of the nature of the early socialist movement in South Africa, and, simultaneously, a critique of the conventional historiography. Secondly, it is a contribution to the recovery of the history of revolutionary syndicalism more generally. This field of research is relatively undeveloped, especially with regard to revolutionary syndicalist groups in areas

such as Africa. Thirdly, the reassessment provides a partial examination of the approach adopted by revolutionary syndicalists in South Africa vis-a-vis racial oppression, and hence, is a contribution to our understanding of revolutionary syndicalist analyses of racism more generally.

Histories of Socialism: A Critical Look at the South African Historiography

Despite the small size of the International Socialist League — the organization probably never had more than a few hundred members⁴ — the organization has loomed large in most discussions of the early socialist movement in South Africa. The International Socialist League appears in works ranging from academic studies, to conservative anti-Communist polemics,⁵ Pan-Africanist accounts,⁶ contemporary socialist newspapers,⁷ and the histories written by activists in the Communist Party of South Africa, and its successor, the South African Communist Party. Despite their varying perspectives, however, these accounts generally share the view that the International Socialist League was a radical Marxist organization similar to Lenin's Bolshevik Party in Russia and that the International Socialist League's role in founding the Communist Party of South Africa was a natural and obvious outcome of this affinity. Thus, we read in various accounts that the International Socialist League was launched and led by "revolutionary Marxists,"⁸ occupied itself with "following the teachings of Karl Marx"⁹ and with "applying Marxism to South Africa,"¹⁰ and acted as "tireless propagandists" for Marxist ideology.¹¹ Already built on firm Marxist foundations, the "entire outlook" of the International Socialist League is described as "ever more deeply colored by...the teachings of Lenin,"¹² and consequently, the organization played a central role in founding the Communist Party. Thus, the International Socialist League is described as the "Communist nucleus" of "true socialists"¹³ in Communist Party publications.

There is a strong tendency in the literature to present the International Socialist League as simply a chapter in the history of the Communist Party, a sort of Communist Party in embryo, the first six years of South African communism. Take, for example, the March 1944 issue of the *Party Organizer*, an organ of the Cape Communist Party of South Africa: "The Communist Party of South Africa was really founded in 1915 under the name of 'The International Socialist League' as a result of a split in the Labour Party on the question of the War."¹⁴ Less ambitiously, perhaps, other Communist Party accounts refer to the International Socialist League as the "direct forerunner"¹⁵ or the "main foundation" and direct predecessor¹⁶ of the Communist Party of South Africa. Similarly, the autobiography of Eddie Roux, a one-time Communist Party of South Africa leader, and later, vehement critic, states that "The International Socialist League at that time [1921] was about to change its name to the Communist Party of South Africa and affiliate to the Communist International."¹⁷ In Johns' excellent scholarly account of the International Socialist League and the early Communist Party of South Africa, the International Socialist League is treated as the first years of South African communism.¹⁸

The argument that the International Socialist League was a radical Marxist group and a forerunner of the Communist Party — that is, the notion of political and organizational continuity between the two organizations — may be traced back to the interpretation of the history of the early socialist movement in South Africa developed by writers associated with the Communist Party. This body of work was developed from the 1940s onwards, as a number of writers — Brian Bunting, R. K. Cope, Lionel Forman, "Lerumo" (Michael Harmel), Eddie Roux, Jack and Ray Simons¹⁹ and, more recently, Jeremy Cronin — began to produce published histories of socialism in South Africa.

These works — which I will refer to collectively as the "Communist school" of South African socialist history — were strongly influenced by the Communist Party's own views of its history and of what constituted correct socialist policies. Cope, for example, was a sympathizer of the Party and was commissioned to write a work celebrating the life of W. H. ("Bill") Andrews, a long-time Party leader (and founding member of the International Socialist League), in the 1940s. Forman was a key intellectual in the Party in the 1940s and 1950s. The Simonses involvement in the Party spanned many decades. Forman and the Simonses produced detailed histories of the resistance movement in South Africa. Brian Bunting and "Lerumo" were active in the Party from the 1940s onwards, and Cronin, from the 1970s. Roux's case differs slightly, in that he had left the Communist Party at the time he published his accounts. A founder member of the Young Communist League, and one-time editor of the Communist Party's newspaper *Umsebenzi* (*Worker*) and member of the Communist Party's political bureau, Roux withdrew from the organization in the late 1930s, deeply disillusioned by years of infighting and purges. Yet, whilst Roux wrote his works after his break with the Party, he still shared many assumptions about the early history of socialism in South Africa with his peers who remained party loyalists.

It is in the work of the Communist school that the habitual presentation of the International Socialist League as a radical Marxist organization seems to have been first developed in a systematic form. In the historiography associated with Communist Party of South Africa and South African Communist Party leaders and intellectuals (Bunting, Cope, Cronin, Forman, Lerumo, and the Simonses), the International Socialist League is typically characterized as part of the anti-war Marxist minorities movement: thus, the International Socialist League is typically praised for developing an anti-war analysis "closely approaching the stand of Lenin," for anticipating the formation of the Third (Communist) International in 1919, and for developing a "unerring" interpretation of the Russian Revolution of 1917.²⁰ If mentioned at all, revolutionary syndicalism in this period in South Africa is characterized in these works as a "malady," a form of "ultra-leftism"²¹ confined to a few sectarians and opposed to the positions adopted by the International Socialist League.

This line of argument is taken up by most academic writers who refer to the International Socialist League as the "first Marxist orientated political organization in the

history of the South African labor movement"²² and as a body aligned with the "Marxist left wing of the European socialist movement."²³ In most cases, academic accounts rely heavily on Roux and the Simonses in particular for their information about the International Socialist League. Only two brief articles by Hirson and Philips have suggested that something is wrong with the picture of the International Socialist League we have inherited from the Communist school. These two writers have advanced the beginnings of the alternative argument that revolutionary syndicalism had a deep impact on the International Socialist League and the Industrial Workers of Africa, as well as on the early revolutionary left as a whole.²⁴ However these two pieces are brief narratives that pay limited attention to the International Socialist League.

Having asserted that the International Socialist League was an orthodox Marxist organization approximating Lenin's views, Communist Party accounts of the organization — not to mention most academic studies — typically center on assessing the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the International Socialist League's supposed Marxism.²⁵ The Communist school tends to portray the history of Marxism (in which they include the League) as a series of struggles to attain a correct understanding of the South African situation. Although the International Socialist League is praised for its "Marxism," it is also criticized (by Party ideologues Bunting, Forman and the Simonses) for its ostensible failure to recognize the supposedly revolutionary potential of African nationalism in favor of an "abstract" commitment to non-racial class struggle. This "failing" is finally resolved in the 1950s, the Communist school suggests, when, after many false starts and workerist deviations, the South African Communist Party formed an enduring alliance for "national democracy" with the African National Congress.²⁶ This was based on a "two-stage" theory of socialist revolution: the first stage would abolish racially oppressive laws and establish a "national democracy;" the second stage would deepen the national democratic revolution into full-scale socialist transformation.

Hence, there is a very strong element of teleology in the works of the Communist school as the early history of socialism in South Africa becomes assimilated to its later developments: in the literature of the Communist school any perceived imperfections of the earlier period are reduced to passing maladies whose critique and cure occurs in the fullness of time through a clarification of Marxist theory under the guidance of the correct leadership. Like the history of socialism in China, which has been reduced to the "progressive evolution of a correct socialism under the guidance of Mao Zedong or the Communist Party,"²⁷ the history of socialism in South Africa has thus been reduced by the Communist school to an account of the Communist Party of South Africa's struggle to develop the correct relationship with nationalist forces. Concomitantly, the International Socialist League is also reduced to an early and imperfect chapter of this struggle for the correct tactics and strategy.

What is problematic about such approaches — leaving aside the issue of a teleology that characterizes and explains earlier events by reference to later developments — is that

they lose sight of the specificity of organizations such as the International Socialist League. For, as this paper will argue, the characterization of the International Socialist League as "Marxist" is an inaccurate one. It is true that there was a degree of "organizational continuity" between the International Socialist League and early Communist Party of South Africa: the International Socialist League provided the young Party with many of its leading figures, a large proportion of its membership, and with a party press and weekly journal, *The International*. However, there was an equally important fundamental "political discontinuity" between the two organizations. Whereas the Communist Party of South Africa was unambiguously Leninist and Marxist, the International Socialist League was, despite minor Marxist influences, a revolutionary syndicalist organization situated in the broad libertarian socialist tradition (see below).²⁸

Thus, discussions of the International Socialist League which take as their premise the view that the International Socialist League was a "Marxist" organization may be asking the wrong questions, and thus reaching the wrong conclusions. Discussions which assess the International Socialist League on the basis of its "Marxist" politics — whether such assessments are carried out within the ambit of Communist historiography, or other approaches — likewise tend to proceed from the wrong premise, inhibiting analysis of the organization's politics and history.

My focus in this article is on the period between September 1915 and early 1920. From 1919 onwards, the International Socialist League entered a difficult transition from revolutionary syndicalism to Leninism which culminated in the organization helping found the Communist Party, a development which falls outside the scope of this paper. It must be stressed, however, that revolutionary syndicalism would continue to influence the International Socialist League well into 1920.

Two points may, however, be made at this point. First, the very fact of such a political transition was necessitated by precisely those revolutionary syndicalist politics of the International Socialist League that I examine in this paper. It was emblematic of the political discontinuity between the two organizations. Second, the parallels for the International Socialist League's transition to Leninism are not the processes of revolutionary regroupment amongst political socialists which were central to the formation of other Communist parties (for example, in Germany and Italy), but instead, the experiences of that minority of revolutionary syndicalists (notably in Britain and the United States) who went over to Leninism. All of this serves to confirm, rather than challenge, the International Socialist League's place in the revolutionary syndicalist tradition. The role of the International Socialist League in founding the Communist Party of South Africa did not, therefore, reflect a long-term commitment to radical Marxism, but instead a radical shift within the outlook of the organization.

The International Context: Marxism and Revolutionary Syndicalism

Our understanding of the International Socialist League is enhanced if, for a moment, we remove the organization

from its place in prefaces to the history of the Communist Party of South Africa, and re-situate it within its international context. There is a tendency within much of the literature on the history of socialism and radical labor to conflate the history of revolutionary socialism with the history of State-centered forms of socialism, and, specifically, the history of Marxism. What this conflation of revolutionary socialism does is to excise any consideration of the rich tradition of alternative revolutionary socialist (particularly anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist) theories and practices from accounts of socialist history. Avoiding this pitfall, we might cite Eric Hobsbawm, who noted in an earlier work that

...in 1905-1914, the marxist left had in most countries been on the fringe of the revolutionary movement, the main body of marxists had been identified with a de facto non-revolutionary Social Democracy, while the bulk of the revolutionary left was anarcho-syndicalist, or at least much closer to the ideas and the mood of anarcho-syndicalism than to that of classical marxism...²⁹

To clarify this point: in the early 20th-century, there were already substantial divisions within the international socialist movement over questions of strategies and aims, and, in this period, the broad approach represented by revolutionary syndicalism was clearly in the ascendancy within the revolutionary left.

Revolutionary syndicalism may be understood as a form of “libertarian” socialism. That is, it was part of that current within international socialism that argued that fundamental social transformation could not come about through the State, which was represented as a hierarchical structure serving dominant class interests and structurally incapable of any progressive social reform, let alone social revolution. Instead of relying on a purportedly enabling state to bring about socialist revolution, the libertarian socialists advocated “direct action” outside of formal political channels in order to establish a “stateless” socialist society based on “free federations of free producers” engaged in self-management of the economy.

Libertarian socialism was represented, above all, by anarchism, which advocated the simultaneous abolition of both the state and capitalism in favor of a society based on decentralization, voluntary association and self-management. The basic idea of revolutionary syndicalism — whose roots lie in the anarchist movement of the 1860s-1870s³⁰ — was that the working-class could only emancipate itself from capitalism and the State through the formation of revolutionary labor unions which would perform a dual role. In the short-term, the revolutionary unions would organize workers as a “class-conscious” force in defense of their immediate interests. In the long-term, the revolutionary unions would provide the vehicle through which the workers will seize direct control of the means of production in a revolutionary general strike (or “lockout of the capitalist class”). This strategy would replace the political State and the capitalist system with socialism, workers’ self-management and socialist economics, based on the union structures.³¹

Unions were, the revolutionary syndicalists argued, the best weapons for socialist revolution, given that they mobi-

lized workers as a class at the point of production on the basis of their class interests, and against capitalism and the State. By contrast, political parties — including labor and socialist parties — were characterized by the revolutionary syndicalists as multi-class institutions led by non-workers: in practice these parties supposedly used workers as passive voters in a futile quest to use the capitalist government for socialist transformation.³² Revolutionary syndicalism literally means “revolutionary unionism” (syndicalism being French for unionism), with “revolutionary industrial unionism” often the preferred usage amongst English-speaking syndicalists. From the late 1910s onwards, the term “anarcho-syndicalism” came into greater currency.

In contrast to libertarian socialism, a second current existed, which may be defined as “political” socialism. Political socialism advocated a “a political battle against capitalism waged through...centrally organized workers’ parties aimed at seizing and utilizing State power to usher in socialism.”³³ In the period covered by this paper, “political” socialism was exemplified both by classical Marxism and by reformist parliamentary socialism, the two main tendencies present within the Second International, an international grouping of socialist and labor parties founded in 1889.³⁴ The debate between orthodox Marxists and “revisionists” within the German Social Democratic Party that raged from the 1890s onwards, as well as later debates between the Bolsheviks and parliamentary socialists, and between Stalinists and Trotskyists, were controversies within the political socialist tradition.

However, although most Marxists were political socialists, Marxism cannot be reduced to political socialism: radical Marxist currents such as council communism — which opposed trade unions, parties and the State as instruments for working-class emancipation in favor of federated workers’ councils — are better characterized as falling within the libertarian socialist current than that of political socialism.³⁵

Divisions between political and libertarian socialism were at the center of the split in the International Workers Association (the “First International”) of 1864-1877 between its Marxist and Bakuninist wings.³⁶ Here the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin argued that any attempt to use the State for progressive social change would fail, resulting either in co-optation or the substitution of “red bureaucracy” for the capitalist elite. By contrast, Marx and his supporters had fought for the adoption by the International of the need for the workers to form political parties able to fight for State power. These divisions were subsequently reproduced within the Second International, which explicitly excluded anarchists and “antiparliamentarians” in the 1890s. Later these divisions would reappear in the Third International, initiated by Lenin’s Bolshevik Party, when the revolutionary syndicalists (many of whom had initially adhered to the Third International) withdrew, charging that the Russian Revolution had degenerated into a one-party “State-capitalist” dictatorship. Most of these organizations — with the notable exception of the I.W.W. in the United States — then went on to found their own International Workers Association in Berlin in 1922.³⁷

The relative strength of libertarian and political socialism varied over time between the 1860s and 1930s. By the 1890s, the anarchists had become isolated in many countries due to factors such as repression (particularly following the Paris Commune of 1871) and unpopular tactics, notably that of "propaganda by the deed," which included a spate of assassinations of prominent elite figures by anarchists.³⁸ Although ground was lost to the parties of the political socialists at this time, the libertarian socialists were able to mount a renewed challenge to political socialism in the form of revolutionary syndicalism from the 1890s onwards.

Whilst anarchists had founded revolutionary syndicalist unions in the 1870s and 1880s (in Spain and Chicago, for instance),³⁹ it was only in the 1890s that revolutionary syndicalism emerged as a significant international force, again pioneered by the anarchists. The turning point was in France, where "the Anarchists, beginning with their famous 'raid' on the unions in the nineties had defeated the reformist Socialists and captured almost the entire French trade union movement."⁴⁰ Amalgamated in the General Confederation of Labour, the C.G.T., in 1902, the revolutionary French unions served as a model for radical workers and socialists disenchanted with the moderate and electoral approaches of the parties of the Second International, and its founding also coincided with a rise in working-class militancy in countries ranging from Argentina to Sweden.⁴¹ Libertarian socialism was thus able to capitalize on the weaknesses of the Second International to present itself as a viable mass-based alternative socialist movement.

By the early 20th century, the revolutionary syndicalists' star was on the rise, and their ideas came to exert, as noted above, a prevalent — and often dominant — influence on revolutionary socialist groups across the world. At the same time, often quite substantial revolutionary syndicalist unions were established in Europe, the Americas and parts of Asia and Africa. Revolutionary syndicalists established, or came to influence, unions in countries as varied as Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.⁴² In addition to actually functioning unions, there were revolutionary syndicalist propaganda groups in countries ranging from Egypt to Puerto Rico to India and Norway. In a number of instances — for example, Argentina, Brazil, France, Mexico and Portugal — revolutionary syndicalist union bodies were in this period the dominant or even the only union centers in their respective countries.

It was in this context that the I.W.W. was founded in the United States in 1905. The I.W.W. aimed to organize all workers into "One Big Union" in order to overthrow capitalism and the state through the revolutionary "One Big Strike."⁴³ The "Wobblies," as they came to be known, developed into an international movement, attracting adherents — both unions and propaganda groups — in countries such as Australia, Canada, Chile, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, and, indeed, South Africa, where a small section was active between 1910-1912.⁴⁴

Revolutionary syndicalism also fractured the ranks of the Second Internationalists themselves. In some cases, revolutionary syndicalist movements were born through breakaways and expulsions in Second International groupings (for example, the Italian Syndicalist Union). In other cases, prominent figures in the tradition of political socialism themselves shifted to revolutionary syndicalism: key examples here are James Connolly of Ireland, Tom Mann of Britain, and Daniel De Leon and "Big Bill" Haywood of the United States of America.⁴⁵ There was clearly some overlap between the libertarian and political socialists. Although the two tendencies differed fundamentally on basic issues, it is also true that many revolutionary syndicalists — like Bakunin himself⁴⁶ — were deeply impressed by Marxist economics, whilst a number of political socialists, such as Eugene Debs, were sympathetic to radical industrial unionism even if they did not repudiate their own political views. Clearly, some organizations could include in their ranks both revolutionary syndicalists and state socialists: the parties of the Second International were rarely politically homogenous.

However, this organizational overlap does not signify the absence of basic differences between the political and libertarian socialist approaches, the very differences that split the First, Second, and, later, the Third Internationals. Thus, any conflation of revolutionary socialism with political socialism can only distort and limit our understandings of the complexity and richness of pre-Communist Party "socialisms" in particular countries, tending (if structured around a teleological arc) to treat such alternative socialisms as, at best, temporary deviations in the onward march of Marxism, with anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism presented as, at most, a declining force confined largely to "undeveloped" Spain and Italy.⁴⁷ It is, indeed, striking to note how little research has been done on the history of revolutionary syndicalism, particularly with regard to revolutionary syndicalist movements outside of France, Spain and the United States. Thorpe attributes this to the ostensible success of political socialism in the Russian Revolution: following the Bolshevik seizure of power after the November 1917 Russian Revolution, "the movement of political socialism subsequently came nearly to monopolize the attention of those who write on labour and radical history."⁴⁸ That political socialism may have become dominant from the 1930s onwards, however, does not negate the history of libertarian socialism, nor reduce its relevance.

In addition, it is also worth noting that a number of libertarian socialist movements have been misrepresented as belonging to the political socialist tradition, with negative consequences for our understanding of the history of socialism.⁴⁹ This paper suggests that the International Socialist League is a case in point of the latter practice. Despite the common presentation of the organization as a mainstream Marxist organization, the ideological orientation of the International Socialist League was not based on classical Marxism, but, instead, on revolutionary syndicalism. It is thus within the revolutionary syndicalist milieu of the 1890s-1920s that the International Socialist League may be best understood.

The First World War and the Emergence of the International Socialist League

The early South African labor movement, which centered around the large urban center of the Witwatersrand and the gold-mining industry (see below), was not unaffected by the global rise of revolutionary syndicalism. The biography of Bill Andrews, one of the key figures in the International Socialist League, captures the atmosphere of the 1910s as follows:

...In common with the Labour movement elsewhere in the world, South Africa passed through a period of vigorous reaction against politics on the working-class front... The disillusion of the workers' movement in the value of parliamentary reform was now spreading from Europe, from Britain, America, Australia and New Zealand... From America came the ringing call to action of Haywood and Eugene Debs of the I.W.W., while from France was spreading an enthusiasm for the doctrines of the revolutionary Syndicalists with their faith in the industrial struggle and the general strike and their mistrust of politics...⁵⁰

In 1910, there were at least two revolutionary syndicalist organizations operating in South Africa. The first, as mentioned above, was a South African section of the I.W.W., which was active between 1910-1912. The second organization was the Socialist Labour Party. Also founded in 1910,⁵¹ the Socialist Labour Party was linked with the American party of the same name. The Socialist Labor Party in the United States advocated an interesting variant of revolutionary syndicalism, which was lucidly articulated by its key theorist, Daniel De Leon. The complex relationship between the Socialist Labor Party, Daniel De Leon, and the I.W.W. in the United States will be discussed in more detail below.

In 1910, another important organization was established in South Africa: the South African Labour Party (not to be confused with the Socialist Labour Party). The South African Labour Party combined a vague commitment to the "socialization of the means of production" with a "White Labour" policy based on demands for political and social segregation, racially-based job reservation, and the repatriation of Asians.⁵² The party had joined the Second International in 1913, despite the fact that its professed program was a systematic violation of the principle of labor internationalism. The South African Labour Party had been founded with the support of trade unions established by white workers, and its views closely matched those of these unions. With few exceptions, these unions, which emerged from the 1880s onwards and which were based, for the most part, on craft union principles, did not admit to membership African, Coloured or Indian workers. From the 1890s, they instead demanded job color bars (particularly in the skilled trades) to protect the conditions of their members from undercutting by cheaper African, Coloured and Indian labor.⁵³

Although the historical record is quite patchy, it seems to be the case that both the South African I.W.W. and Socialist Labour Party had ceased operating by 1914. That same year, however, the nucleus of a new revolutionary syndicalist body, the International Socialist League, began to emerge from a conflict within the South African Labour

Party sparked by the outbreak of the First World War in Europe in August 1914.

The First World War was a turning point in the history of the socialist and radical labor movement internationally. The war precipitated the collapse of the Second International, with almost all sections supporting the war efforts of their national governments — a violation of the basic tenets of international socialism, not to mention the formal anti-war commitments of the Second International itself, reaffirmed as recently as 1913. There were a few exceptions to this general trend within the Second International, and these included the Bulgarian majority party (a split took place in 1903), the Russian Bolsheviks, the Serbian socialists, and anti-war left-wing Marxist minorities in some belligerent parties. In contrast to the parties of the Second International, however, every major anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist organization — with the single exception of the C.G.T. of France and a few prominent individual anarchists — opposed the war.⁵⁴

The upheaval in the socialist and labor movements had its echo in South Africa. Immediately upon the outbreak of war, the South African Labour Party condemned the conflict as one that could "only benefit the International Armament Manufacturer's Ring, and other enemies of the working-class" and appealed "to the workers of the world to organize and refrain from participating in an unjust war."⁵⁵ However, this radical statement was clearly at odds with the sentiments of the great majority of South African Labour Party members, and was rejected at a special party conference held on August 22-23, 1915.

Consequently, a minority of internationalist and socialist South African Labour Party members, previously grouped around a dissident War on War League and the War on War Gazette, resigned from the South African Labour Party, and helped found the International Socialist League in September 1915.⁵⁶ The dissidents included a number of members of the South African Labour Party executive: J. A. Clark, the vice-chair, David Ivon Jones, the secretary, Gabriel Weinstock, the treasurer and Bill Andrews, the chair.⁵⁷ The International Socialist League was also joined by former members and supporters of the South African I.W.W. and Socialist Labour Party.

The new International Socialist League issued a weekly newspaper, *The International: the Organ of The International Socialist League (S.A.)*. This paper was characterized by its political homogeneity: unlike earlier left-wing papers in South Africa, such as the *Voice of Labour*, published between 1908 and 1912, not to mention the *War on War Gazette*, *The International* only carried the official views of the International Socialist League, espousing its very clearly defined and fixed program.

Racial Capitalism in South Africa: The Material Basis of a Segregated Society

At its founding, the membership of the International Socialist League was largely based amongst immigrants from Britain, and to a lesser extent, the United States and Eastern Europe (notably, Jewish immigrants). Many of the founders of the International Socialist League were skilled workers. W. H. Andrews, who was born in Suffolk in 1870 and had

arrived in South Africa in 1893, was a member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers.⁵⁸ Also prominent in the International Socialist League was Andrew Dunbar, a blacksmith, who was born in Scotland in 1879. Coming to South Africa in 1906, Dunbar led a strike of 2,500 workers on the railways in Natal in 1909 over wages and working hours, before moving to Johannesburg.⁵⁹ Dunbar was the former general-secretary of the South African I.W.W. of 1910-1913. David Ivon Jones was born in Wales in 1883, and came to South Africa for health reasons in 1909, where he worked for the white labor movement as a clerk.⁶⁰ Other activists included George Mason, a carpenter from England who worked on the mines (and who was one of the 1913 deportees) and T.P. Tinker, about whom rather less is, unfortunately, known. An exception to this general pattern was S. P. Bunting, an Oxford graduate from a middle-class English family, who operated a law practice in Johannesburg.⁶¹

The International Socialist League was based primarily in the Witwatersrand region, where it established branches in towns such as Benoni, Germiston, Krugersdorp and Johannesburg. It also established branches in Durban and in Pretoria. In addition, the League established contact with other socialist groups in South Africa, such as the Social Democratic Federation in Cape Town (an eclectic group whose ranks reportedly "included anarchists, reform socialists, guild socialists" and classical Marxists),⁶² the Pretoria Socialist Society, and the Social Democratic Party in Durban. However, relations with the Social Democratic Party appear to have broken down in 1917 over the latter's newfound support for the war and growing conservatism on racial issues, and rivalry broke out between the local International Socialist League branch and this party.⁶³

Bringing with them experiences and traditions of labor and socialist organizing from their home countries, these militants operated in a context in which capitalism had been constructed upon relations of colonial domination.⁶⁴ South Africa's industrial revolution followed the discovery of rich deposits of diamonds in 1867 and the world's largest gold bearing reef in 1886. The result was the rapid emergence of a substantial mining sector in this previously marginal, agriculturally-based area of the world. The resultant inflow of capital and labor reshaped the political economy and international relations of the area that would become known as "South Africa." Soon after the mineral discoveries, large capitalist combines emerged to dominate the mining sector, and were further unified with the formation of the Chamber of Mines in 1887.

Although a range of factors undoubtedly fed into renewed British imperialist intrigue in the region in the late 19th century, there is little doubt that the economic and strategic value of the growing mining sector contributed directly to the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 in which (officially) 28,000 Afrikaners (descendants of colonists who arrived from the 17th century onwards) and 14,000 Africans died in concentration camps. After the war, the two British colonies in South Africa — the Cape Colony and Natal — and the two defeated Afrikaner republics — the Orange Free State and the South African Republic,

or Transvaal — were unified into a British dominion called the Union of South Africa.

Facing the new bourgeoisie was a new working-class made up of workers from across the world. The majority of this proletariat were African workers, whose labor was forced out of their historic economies and into the market through hut taxes, labor taxes, restrictions on access to land and other direct State interventions.⁶⁵ However, African workers were not "free labor" at this point. On the one hand, African workers were typically male migrants employed in industry on contracts of limited duration, sometimes lasting a year, following which they returned to their rural homes and families. They were not, therefore, fully separated from the means of production, a fact advantageous to employers in that it allowed the payment of "bachelor wages" on the grounds that the worker's family subsisted by farming. On the other hand, African workers were also subject to a battery of coercive labor practices ranging from indenture laws, to pass controls over movement, to housing in tightly regulated closed compounds. African workers' wages were also held down by the Chamber of Mines, which set up official agencies in 1896 in order to recruit African workers for its members: the aim was to set a standard level for African wages in order to prevent wage increases due to bidding for labor between the different companies.

These mechanisms helped to suppress worker organization, and to hold wages at the extremely low levels needed to make the Witwatersrand's vast amounts of low-grade ore profitable on world markets.⁶⁶ Industrial action by African workers was, as a rule, forcibly suppressed.⁶⁷ When, for example, 162 mineworkers at the Vereeniging Estate Coal Mine tried to desert (thus breaking their contracts) in September 1901, soldiers shot nine dead and wounded 15. Similarly, the 1902 strike wave by African mineworkers was defeated by soldiers and mounted police, as were sporadic strikes in 1913. It was in large part because of these measures that by 1917 African workers had never been organized into a trade union, although the earliest recorded African mineworkers strike took place in 1896, and attempts by African mineworkers to unionize seem to have taken place as early as 1912.⁶⁸

In addition to the 195,000 Africans on the mines in 1913 (concentrated in actual mining work, but also including clerks and police), the labor force on the Witwatersrand also included an estimated 37,000 African workers in domestic service, and 6,000 Africans in factories, workshops and warehouses.⁶⁹ Of the 38,500 white workers employed on the Witwatersrand at this point, 22,000 worked on the mines, 4,500 on the railways, and the remainder in building, tramways, printing, electricity and other industries.⁷⁰ Initially most white miners were immigrants from abroad, with possibly 85 percent in the 1890s being British-born (albeit arriving in South Africa via other mining regions),⁷¹ but by 1913 the majority were reportedly Afrikaners. This reflected the proletarianization of poor Afrikaners as a result of stratification within rural Afrikaners society, and the devastation caused by the Anglo-Boer war.

White workers were generally free of the direct labor coercion that dogged Africans, and from 1907, there was full manhood suffrage for whites in the area that would become South Africa. By contrast, the vast majority of African, Coloured and Indian people were disenfranchised in the Union of South Africa, with the exception of the Cape Province where a qualified franchise based on educational qualifications and property ownership was retained. Precisely because of the absence of direct coercion, white workers were generally better paid than Africans, a position reinforced by white domination of skilled work. On the mines, wages for professional miners and also artisans were generally at least double, and sometimes up to five times, higher than wages for comparable categories in other settled mining areas. The white miners typically earned about five times the wages of the Africans, although it must be noted that not all white workers on the mines were miners, nor were all white workers employed on the mines.

Many of the white miners were single migrants: in 1897, 54 percent of white mineworkers were bachelors.⁷² Living costs on the Rand were also high, housing was poor and expensive for all, and the ravages of silicosis affected white and African miners alike: in the first decade of the 1900s, the average working life of Witwatersrand miners was estimated at to be on average twenty-eight years shorter than that of the average male population.⁷³ It would be a mistake to identify the white working-class as a whole with the professional miners and artisans: a population of at least 200,000 unskilled “poor whites” — underemployed and usually unskilled laborers and their families drawn from the rural poor extruded by the commercialization of agriculture — had emerged in the cities by the early 1920s, whilst wages and conditions in non-mining sectors tended to be lower.

In addition, the white workers were vulnerable to employer undercutting of jobs and conditions by the use of cheap, coerced labor. In response to this threat, the organized white workers demanded job reservation and endorsed policies of segregation, which they hoped would protect their positions. These unions denied that their opposition was due to color prejudice, arguing that their call for job reservation was imposed by management’s practice of designating all Blacks, Coloureds and Indians as unskilled labor irrespective of work performed, and paying them accordingly.⁷⁴

State repression of industrial action by white workers was repeatedly demonstrated in the 1910s. When, in May 1913 a dispute over working hours at New Kleinfontein Mine in Benoni escalated to affect 63 of the 69 Witwatersrand mines and bring out 19,000 white miners, the government called out imperial troops to defend scabs and disperse crowds with pick handles, batons and swords. At least 100 strikers and onlookers were killed during the strike, 25 of whom died when imperial troops opened fire on a crowd in Johannesburg on July 5 (the second day of the strike). A follow-up general strike in January 1914 was crushed by troops, more than 70,000 of which were mobilized when martial law was declared; nine key trade unionists were then arrested and secretly deported to England.

“The Most Effective Means of Emancipation”: The International Socialist League and Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

It was within this context of labor repression, colonial history and a racially divided labor force that the International Socialist League emerged. The specificity of South African capitalism — particularly its racial structures, and the deep divisions this created within the working-class — clearly posed important issues for the class and race politics of revolutionary socialists. How should the South African working-class organize against capitalism? Indeed, what was the South African working-class? Did it include both African and white labor, or should labor organizing be directed towards whites only?

Initially, the International Socialist League lacked clear answers to the challenges posed for socialist analysis and strategy by the South African context. In its first four months, the organization had only a provisional constitution, outlining a vague commitment “to propagate the principles of International Socialism and anti-militarism, and to maintain and strengthen International working-class organization.”⁷⁵ The early issues of *The International* were equally eclectic, and drew on a range of socialist currents. Reprints from the Socialist Labour Party’s *Socialist* (of Glasgow) sat alongside articles from the Independent Labour Party’s (I.L.P.) *Labour Leader*; and reports on various anti-war movements. A book service carried a anti-war literature ranging from the (anarchist) Peter Kropotkin’s anti-imperialist *Wars and Capitalism* to the (libertarian socialist) Leo Tolstoy’s *Patriotism and Christianity*, the I.L.P. journalist Fenner Brockway’s *Is Britain Blameless?* and *Anti-Patriotism* by the syndicalist Gustav Herve.⁷⁶

The new organization openly admitted that it lacked, at this point, a clearly defined program. Responding to an inquiry from the Social Democratic Party in Durban in November, *The International* stated that “since definitely severing with the SALP, the League’s object is not to conserve the principles contained in that party’s constitution.” However, it frankly admitted that an alternative program had not yet taken form: “branches will have to find time to thrash out and clarify their outlook on such important matters as the Coloured and Native questions, Industrial Unionism, Taxation of Site Values, etc.”⁷⁷ As *The International* noted, the war question was “merely an index of fundamental disagreement over the whole field of Labour tactics and working-class philosophy.”⁷⁸ The paper assured readers that the upcoming January 1916 conference “shall definitely fix basic principles and a name.”⁷⁹

Opposition to the war would always remain a keynote of International Socialist League thought. According to the International Socialist League’s analysis, the war was simply a conflict between contending capitalist groups dressed up in the language of nation and culture. War was a structural feature of capitalism. “The very conditions of existence” of “the whole ruling class of the earth, including South Africa,” argued an International Socialist League manifesto, inevitably led to “universal conflict”: “its competition for economic predominance on the most gigantic scale, its race for control of world markets to absorb the

ever-increasing over-production and for sources of raw material and cheap labor, wherewith to produce yet more, coupled with its continual degradation of the great mass of humanity...MUST necessarily and always produce world-conflict."⁸⁰ Instead of being tricked by "Imperialistic clap-trap" into "bleeding in their masters' cause," workers should refuse to take sides in the conflict, and cleave only to their own class's struggle for freedom. At the core of this argument was the primacy of common class interests over national divisions and solidarities.

The first annual conference of the International Socialist League was held in Johannesburg on January 9, 1916. Echoing a recommendation by the provisional management committee of the organization in *The International* in December 1915, the conference endorsed the following resolution as "the significant implication of our anti-war stand":

That we encourage the organization of the workers on industrial or class lines, irrespective of race, colour or creed, as the most effective means of providing the necessary force for the emancipation of the workers.⁸¹

From this point onward, the vague positions of late 1915 were replaced by a constant reiteration of the need for revolutionary industrial organization. The 1917 conference reaffirmed this stance, declaring the object of the organization to be "To propagate the principles of International Socialism, *Industrial Unionism* and Anti-Militarism, and to maintain and strengthen International Working-Class organization."⁸²

That the "Industrial Unionism" in question was taken to refer to a strategy of revolutionary industrial unionism is clear from International Socialist League documents. The first issue of *The International* after the 1916 Conference explained the International Socialist League's position as follows:

Parliament is after all only a house. Its function is to regulate and adjust the Capitalist system, and to legislate the necessary violence for its preservation. But whichever power controls industry can dispense with parliament in extremity and remain unscathed.⁸³

The International then turned to the question of the control of industry: "If an industry is not to be dominated by a paternal bureaucracy how shall it be administered if not democratically by the workers themselves." And if so, "does it not follow that [workers'] organization should be along the lines of their particular industry?"

What was required, argued an article a few weeks later, was a "new and definite" socialism based on "immediate action" which recognized "capitalism, yea and the capitalist State" as "unmitigated evils" to be "swept away here and now."⁸⁴ The content of the "new" socialism was "the control of industry by organized labor." The "imperative need of the hour for South African labour is the union of all workers along the lines of industry; not only as a force behind their political demands, but as the embryo of that Socialist Commonwealth which...must take the place of the present barbaric order."⁸⁵ In contrast to the "disease of Civilisation," which began with the "crack of the slave drivers' whip" and the institution of private property, the socialist system would have "no room for government, as only slaves require to be kept in subjection; no room for laws, as

no restriction will be required in a society of social equals; no soldiers or policemen, who are only required to enforce class-made rules."⁸⁶ Given that the State was an "engine of class tyranny," it was necessary that "the workers organize in their industries outside of the machine, and...overawe the political machine...with the greater power...of industrial solidarity."⁸⁷

At about this time the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland took place. The Easter Rising was essentially a military revolt against British imperialism led by republican nationalists who hoped to take advantage of Britain's preoccupation with the war. However, the revolt also involved members of the Irish Citizen's Army, a workers' militia which had originally been set up to protect strikers in the 1913 Dublin Lockout. The latter was a confrontation between employers and the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, a body organized by the revolutionary syndicalists Jim Larkin and James Connolly.⁸⁸ Connolly himself was martyred in the Rising. Commenting on the events, *The International* argued that the "bitter lesson" to be learnt by Irish labor in its fight for freedom was that "barricades are the relics of the revolts of half a century ago." The article continued:

If an effective working-class revolt depends on the purchase of adequate armaments, then the working-class can resign itself to slavery. If an effective working-class revolt depends on securing mere parliamentary representation, it can with equal resignation say good-bye to emancipation... Both activities betray the workers, and lead them eventually in despair to death on the barricades.

The workers' only weapon are their labour... All... activities should have this one design, how to give the workers greater control of industry... With greater and greater insistence comes from sad tragedies like that enacted in Dublin, the need for men to forego the cushion and slipper of parliamentary ease, and recognize the Industrial Union as the root of all the activities of Labour, whether political, social or otherwise.

The key to social regeneration...to the new Socialist Commonwealth...is to be found in the organization of a class conscious proletariat within the Industrial Union.⁸⁹

There are three key points in the above excerpt. The first is the absolute priority given the revolutionary industrial union as the weapon of the working-class, the means to greater workers' control of industry, and as the framework of a future self-managed socialist society. The second point is that the International Socialist League did not envisage the workers' struggle — or the revolutionary industrial union — as focussing merely on "bread and butter" questions of wages and the like. Rather than being based on an "economistic" approach, the revolutionary industrial unionists of the International Socialist League believed that the revolutionary union was a weapon in the fight against all the issues — "political, social or otherwise" — which affected the working-class.⁹⁰ In the context of the above article, this clearly included national oppression. The third point is that the International Socialist League generally depreciated violence, and envisaged revolutionary industrial unionism and the "lockout of the capitalist class" as a peaceful means of socialist transition, in contrast to "physical force" methods. So, as argued in *The International*,

Neither in non-resistance nor in resort to violence is the way

of emancipation. But in that higher resistance made possible by the growth of capitalist industry, the resistance of the Industrial Union.⁹¹

Like revolutionary syndicalists elsewhere,⁹² and in contrast to many political socialists, the International Socialist League viewed State welfare reforms and State control of the economy with deep misgivings. The International Socialist League held that the State might seek to incorporate workers into its structures (and under its control),⁹³ commenting that "It is significant that the cry of 'Syndicalism' has taken the place...all over the Industrialised World, of 'Socialism' to stampede the mass of law abiding citizens today."⁹⁴ This was because "State Socialism is now being strongly advocated by the *Capitalist Class*" as a means of co-opting and pacifying the workers and their organizations.⁹⁵ Thus, proposed pension schemes on the railways and mines were characterized in *The International* as methods of "knee haltering" the workers devised in the "Dung Market" of parliament in order to promote worker loyalty to the firm.⁹⁶

Commenting that "it is our duty to expose any attempt to waste the energies of the working-class in fruitless agitation and false lures," *The International* warned against the "the thistledown of parliamentary office" and against the "State Serfdom" and labor repression which characterized government-controlled industries.⁹⁷ State ownership of industry was criticized as a "fantastic scheme" that could lead to "State Serfdom," the "Servile State" run by "officials in uniforms and brass buttons." The "transformation into State ownership will not do away with the capitalistic nature of production and distribution." On the contrary, the "the more it [the State] becomes the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit, and the workers remain wage slaves without any control over their conditions of Labour."⁹⁸ "State Socialism" was simply "State Capitalism imposed from above." Consequently, "Socialism in the true sense" was "industrial democracy, a socialism from below up. Men must be citizens in industry to be free."⁹⁹

Such themes would be the mainstay of International Socialist League analysis well into 1920. What is remarkable about the literature is the extent to which this revolutionary syndicalist approach has been disregarded and de-emphasized in almost all studies of the organization.¹⁰⁰ Some accounts make no mention at all of revolutionary syndicalist influences on the International Socialist League.¹⁰¹ Other accounts do contain a few asides that indicate that revolutionary syndicalism influenced the International Socialist League, but these accounts fail to draw out the implications of this data and shy away from suggesting any link between revolutionary syndicalism and the overall outlook and activities of the International Socialist League. Thus, the Simonses' 64-page account of the International Socialist League only mentions in passing that the organization favored non-racial "industrial unionism" and the "organization of all workers for industrial action" in "one big union." The content of this "industrial unionism" is not made clear, nor is the single reference to "the 'general strike'...[which]... would finally eliminate the capitalist's rule" is neither explicated, nor integrated into an analysis of the how the International Socialist League saw the link be-

tween industrial organization and the struggle for socialism.¹⁰²

Elsewhere, revolutionary syndicalist influences on (or rather, in) the International Socialist League are noted,¹⁰³ but are then treated either as a minority current juxtaposed to the Marxism of the International Socialist League leaders (and Communist Party of South Africa founders),¹⁰⁴ or as a variant of — or perhaps, deviation within — Marxism itself.¹⁰⁵ Such approaches help confine the International Socialist League as a whole to the political socialist and radical Marxist tradition, and lend themselves readily to teleological versions of the history of South African socialism as a linear progression towards the "correct socialism," which I outlined earlier. Hence, Cope speaks of "a shake-out of Socialists" that "began to take place" over "the question of principles and tactics" in 1918, leading to the withdrawal of the "ultra-left" elements.¹⁰⁶ Serious splits in the organization did not, in fact, take place until two years later, but, in any case, the effect of Cope's outline is to convey the impression that there was a recalcitrant revolutionary syndicalist minority, which was firmly dealt with by leaders with the correct understanding of "Marxian" principles.

"Scabbing on Judas": The International Socialist League's Critique of the White Trade Union Movement

As an advocate of inclusive and revolutionary unionism based on industrial lines, the International Socialist League was highly critical of the white trade unions. These were, it argued, unsuited to the emancipation of the working-class. The white unions were castigated as bureaucratic, conservative and divisive of the working-class, as they organized on a craft basis, excluded unskilled workers and discriminated against Africans, Coloureds and Indians. This critique underlined the distance between the International Socialist League and the "White Labour" tradition that was consolidating itself in South Africa.

Like the I.W.W. and the Socialist Labour Party internationally, the International Socialist League argued that craft unions divided the forces of the working-class, and allowed small sections to be bought off by capital and turned against the mass of workers.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the South African Mineworkers Union (the successor to the Transvaal Miners Association) was taken to task for its bureaucratic structure, its craft organization and its exclusion of African workers. In addition, the International Socialist League opposed any form of partnership between the unions and the employers. In 1913 and 1914, the prospect of such collaboration seemed remote — union recognition was a key issue in the general strikes of this time — yet after the outbreak of the war, a number of employers were willing to recognize the craft unions in exchange for industrial peace. Disputes were typically handled by the South African Industrial Federation representatives on joint Boards of Reference.¹⁰⁸ Even after the war, this process continued, with a National Industrial Council being established in the printing and newspaper industry in 1919.¹⁰⁹ In 1916, the Chamber of Mines, which had experienced local strikes by white miners at the Meyer and Carlton, Van Ryn and Randfontein mines, made further concessions. It offered a 48-hour bank-to-bank working week, a minimum wage after six months underground, and a "status

quo" provision that fixed the ratio between white and African workers.¹¹⁰ In return, the Chamber requested strong executive control of the union and a ban on local strike action, and the union accepted these terms.

Noting the increasingly close relationship between the Chamber of Mines and the South African Mine Workers Union, the International Socialist League accused the union of aiming to sell out and become a "Scab Union of suborned well-fed slaves, the like of which has not yet been seen in South Africa."¹¹¹ The S.A. Engine Drivers Association on the mines was condemned for "craft scabbery" when they accepted a small raise in return for signing a five-year no-strike pledge: "no class conscious Engine Driver should barter away the working-class for an extra one and eight pence."¹¹² The mechanics' union was accused of "scabbing on Judas" for making a similar deal: Judas at least "demanded thirty pieces as his price."¹¹³

Craft unionism was seen as particularly inappropriate in an age characterized by the "combination of capital" into giant corporations and trusts, and the formation of powerful employers' associations.¹¹⁴ Craft unions had "no earthly hope" of opposing such associations. At a time where capitalist unity was rendering working-class unity ever more essential, craft unions divided the workers in each workplace into innumerable trade-based bodies that catered only for craftsmen and scabbed on each other during strikes. What was needed was industrial organization: "One big union is the only form of organization powerful enough to oppose the united organization of the capitalist class, a class conscious union of workers to oppose the class conscious association of employers."

The International also condemned the craft unions for their "complete oblivion to the sufferings of the lower paid unemployed white workers, mainly women" and for their "intolerant" attitude "towards the native wage slave." "Slaves to a higher oligarchy, the white workers of South Africa themselves batten on a lower slave class, the native races." The result was a labor movement corrupted by racism and unable to honor the basic principle of workers' solidarity.¹¹⁵

The racial prejudice of the white trade unions was characterized by the International Socialist League as treacherous to the cause of the working-class as a whole, not to mention incapable of protecting the white workers themselves. Although it was possible for craft unions to make gains for their members at the expense of other workers, such achievements were seen as, at best, transitory. "The vanity of the craft unionists," argued *The International*, "blinds them to the process which was levelling all, skilled and unskilled, before the great lord of machinery."¹¹⁶ Unskilled white and, more particularly, African labor would inevitably take over the tasks of the craftsman as dilution took place. Moreover, cheap African labor would inevitably exert a downward pressure on high white wages. The job color bar was argued to be incapable of holding back either dilution or the downward pressure on wages exerted by the existence of a vast coerced labor force alongside the "free" white workers. "Make no mistake," wrote *The International*, "your puny breakwater — the color bar" cannot hold

back the "big coloured Industrial Army coming in on the tide of every evolution...demanding that place in the sun to which every single human on this earth is rightfully entitled."¹¹⁷

As a result, as Andrews argued, "All segregation schemes are doomed to failure. We must either lift the Native up to the White standard [of living], or sink down to his."¹¹⁸ Equal wages and equal rights for all workers were the surest safeguard of decent conditions for all workers, as well as a just policy for the working-class as a whole. Given that workers all had the same interests, and given the inability of racist practices such as color bars on the job and in the unions to protect workers, the only realistic way forward for all workers was unification into industrial unions, and the lifting of African workers to the "political and industrial status" of the white; equal rights for all would help remove divisions between workers and lay the basis for socialism and freedom. Thus, socialism required a united struggle against capitalism and racism. Through such a policy the working-class could be united and mobilised for the struggle against capitalism and the State. At the same time, the International Socialist League argued that the pressures of industry were removing ethnic divisions between African workers: "capitalism was killing that more effectively than anything else."¹¹⁹

The International suggested that two paths lay ahead for the skilled white workers. They could stick "to their own little trade union parlours...becoming a kind of association of compound managers, an oligarchy of Trade Unionists, working bailiffs for capitalism for the better hoodwinking of the mass."¹²⁰ In this case the artisans would be co-opted as a "closed guild of favoured White workers to police it over the bottom dog, the great mass of the unskilled," both black and white.¹²¹ Alternatively, they could give "up their craft and colour vanity and [throw] in their lot with their fellow workers" in the struggle for the "control and administration of industry by the workers." While pleased with the amalgamation of a number of craft unions into a Building Workers Industrial Union in mid-1916 (former Socialist Labour Party member C. B. Tyler was secretary of the provisional committee)¹²² *The International* ("at the risk of being thought hypercritics") asked if the new union would admit the "colored fellow workers?" "A generous declaration of solidarity with all workers is the only true test" of an industrial union.¹²³ The alternative to racially exclusionary craft unionism was all-inclusive industrial unionism: here the artisan would be placed "side by side with the poor white labourer, and...the native, in organization."¹²⁴

Overall, the International Socialist League condemned racial discrimination as unjust and as opposed to the interests of all workers — African, Coloured, Indian and white. The International Socialist League's opposition to racism did not only, however, revolve around the limitations of racially exclusive trade unionism and segregation. The International also ran articles critiquing the pseudo-science of "scientific racism" which held that the different races had inherently different (and highly unequal) abilities. "Recent work in the study of the brain has disproven such 'biology'," wrote S. G. Rich, "Let us not invent biological facts

to excuse our remisness [sic] in reaching the natives."¹²⁵ It also condemned a range of racially discriminatory legislation, including the pass laws. This approach was informed by the view outlined in *The International* in October 1915 that:

...an internationalism which does not concede the fullest rights which the native working-class is capable of claiming will be a sham ... If the [International Socialist] League deal resolutely in consonance with Socialist principles with the native question, it will succeed in shaking South African capitalism to its foundations. Then and not till then will we be able to talk about the South African Proletariat in our international relations. Not until we free the native can we hope to free the white.¹²⁶

Thus, contrary to the claim of the Communist school of South African socialist historiography, which argues that the International Socialist League ignored the issue of racial oppression (a view cited with approval in many scholarly studies), the organization was clearly explicitly opposed to racial prejudice and discrimination.

It should, however, be noted that while the International Socialist League argued that the homogenization and deskilling of labor would facilitate workers' unity, the organization did not claim that such developments would by themselves automatically lead to socialist revolution.¹²⁷ Whereas proletarian unity was a necessity, it was not the necessary product of "economics" (the development of the forces of production), but had rather to be fostered by "politics" (the development of revolutionary industrial unions).¹²⁸ Hence the need for an organization such as the International Socialist League which could propagate revolutionary industrial unionist ideas. What was required was a "new movement" which would overcome the "bounds of Craft and race and sex": "founded on the rock of the meanest proletarian who toils for a master" the new movement must be "as wide as humanity" and "recognize no bounds of craft, no exclusions of colour."¹²⁹

Ultimately, "Socialism can only be brought about by all the workers coming together on the industrial field to take the machinery of production into their own hands and working it for the good of all... the man who talks about a Socialism which excludes nine-tenths of the workers is not being honest with himself."¹³⁰ Certainly, some International Socialist League members argued that the then more organized and militant white workers were likely to play a central role in the revolution,¹³¹ but none disputed the impossibility of a revolutionary struggle without the involvement of the whole working-class, regardless of color, or without a struggle against racism. Thus, racism was a barrier to the final emancipation of labor.

There is some support for the International Socialist League argument that white workers were harmed by the existence of a coerced African labor force. In South Africa, a strong case can be made that the conditions of the "poor whites" (300,000 out of 1.8 million whites in 1931) in the early 20th century were the direct result, not of their antipathy to "native work" (in the hoary old stereotype of liberal scholarship), but rather of employer preference for cheap, coerced African labor.¹³²

However, while the International Socialist League may have been correct when it argued that welfare reforms could be used to control workers and warned of the prospect of a reactionary white labor aristocracy emerging, it could be argued that the International Socialist League failed to anticipate that the incorporation of sections of labor by the capitalist State could be used to systematically counteract capitalism's tendency to homogenize the workforce. This, some have suggested, was precisely what happened in South Africa from the 1920s onwards. According to these arguments, a systematic State-sponsored (if capitalist supported) policy of protecting and co-opting white workers, both skilled and unskilled, was used to win this previously volatile and well-organized strata to support for the *status quo* well into the 1980s. In the International Socialist League's defense, it could be argued that before 1924 (when such policies began in earnest), "the future relation of white and black labour, of skilled and unskilled workers, was still in the melting pot."¹³³ In relying so heavily on arguments for homogenization under capitalism, the International Socialist League downplayed the full implications of its own argument that institutions such as craft unionism and State co-optation could undermine working-class struggles.

"The Marvellous Influence of De Leon's 'Philosophy'": The Peculiarities of the International Socialist League's Revolutionary Syndicalism

Phrases used by the International Socialist League such as "Industrial Unionism," "industrial democracy," "craft scabbery" and "labor fakers" indicate the influence of I.W.W. ideology on the organization. However, the international I.W.W. organization was not itself homogenous, and it is instructive to consider which variants of I.W.W. ideology most influenced the organization.

Three years after its establishment in 1905 in the United States, the I.W.W. underwent a split over the question of "political action," meaning here electoral activity.¹³⁴ Although both parties at the 1908 convention believed in the primacy of revolutionary "economic" (revolutionary trade union) action, the "Chicago" I.W.W., associated with Vincent St. John, argued that involvement in elections to the capitalist State was altogether futile. The "Chicago" I.W.W. was fundamentally opposed to all attempts to use the State to transform society, arguing in the first place that political sectarianism divided the workers, who supported different parties: hence the I.W.W. could not be aligned with any one party. In addition, it was argued that the ballot was irrelevant to millions of disenfranchised workers (notably the African-Americans, immigrants, women and children).¹³⁵ To place the struggle for labor and social legislation at the center of union activities, moreover, was a mistake, as such laws were not enforced where they would harm the capitalists. On the contrary, such laws were often a positive danger to labor's emancipation, as they were used to extend capitalist control over the working-class to "keep the workers from revolt," and had the effect of encouraging workers to be passive and wait naively for government to solve their problems.¹³⁶ Government was, in any case, "employed to police the interests of the capitalist class," whose economic

power made them the true masters of the country.¹³⁷ The alternative to the political State was not a socialist State, but workers' self-management through the One Big Union.¹³⁸

The considerably smaller "Detroit" I.W.W.,¹³⁹ associated with Daniel De Leon and the Socialist Labor Party, bear some discussion as their views are rarely outlined in the literature.¹⁴⁰ The "Detroit" I.W.W. did not differ at all from the main I.W.W. in its opposition to labor and social legislation, opposition to political government, or the future vision of industrial democracy exercised through labor unions. De Leon and the Socialist Labor Party had, in the late 19th century, been bulwarks of classical Marxism, adhering to the notion that the maturation of capitalism would inevitably lead to the emergence of a proletarian majority which would "sweep presidential and congressional elections, and then utilize its governmental majority to legislate into existence public ownership."¹⁴¹

During the course of the founding convention of the I.W.W. in 1905, however, De Leon's program underwent "dramatic and thoroughgoing alterations" with the "heart of his revolutionary theory" revised in direction of revolutionary syndicalism.¹⁴² Now De Leon argued that only revolutionary "trade union action could transfer property from individual to social ownership."¹⁴³ He rejected the parliamentary road to socialism as "a more gigantic Utopia than Fourier or Owen ever dreamed," based on the illogical idea that a small clique of elected officials beyond the direct control of the working-class could use the State apparatus — "built up in the course of centuries of class rule for the purpose of protecting and maintaining the domination of the particular class which happens to be on top" — to overthrow class society.¹⁴⁴ Instead, the working-class could only emancipate itself through "Industrial unionism, an economic weapon, against which all the resources of capital...will be ineffective and impotent."¹⁴⁵ The "*Industrial Unions will furnish the administrative machinery for directing industry in the socialist commonwealth*" after the "general lock out of the capitalist class"¹⁴⁶ and "razing" of the political State¹⁴⁷ to the ground.¹⁴⁸ The Industrial Unions were to be built in opposition to existing craft unions, which were denounced as sectional groupings led by treacherous "labor fakers."¹⁴⁹ Self-management in industry would be impossible under the State, whose electoral districts were based on regional demarcations; only on industrial lines could workers organize control over the different sectors of the economy.¹⁵⁰

Where the "Detroit" I.W.W. differed from its Chicago rivals was in its call for workers to take part in electoral activity and to vote for the Socialist Labor Party. Seats in parliament were not, however, defended as an end in themselves, or characterized as a road towards socialism. Rather, running in elections served two primary functions. First, it provided a platform for spreading revolutionary syndicalist propaganda. Second, De Leon argued that a socialist majority in parliament would be able to paralyze, and then abolish, the capitalist state, on the day of the "general lockout of the capitalists class" by the revolutionary industrial unions.¹⁵¹ The State was to be taken only "for the purpose of abolishing it...the political movement of labor is purely

destructive...[in the event of an electoral victory the labor candidates would] *adjourn themselves on the spot.*"¹⁵²

These positions may be contrasted with political socialism in three ways. Firstly, the Socialist Labour Party, which explicitly opposed "State Socialism," would not use the State to win reforms, and its election platforms would include one demand: "abolish the wage system." Second, the "abolition of the wage system" would be undertaken by the revolutionary industrial unions through the "lockout of the capitalist class." The party, which had dedicated all its efforts towards this goal, would aid the unions one last time by disrupting the Capitalist State on the day of the revolution. If the political party did not immediately abolish the State, argued De Leon, it would "usurp" power from the trade unions leading to (at best) "a commonwealth of well-fed slaves" ruled by "a parliamentary oligarchy with an army of officials at its back, possessing powers infinitely greater than those possessed by our present political rulers."¹⁵³ The very idea of introducing socialism by *using* — as opposed to immediately *destroying* — the State was thus damned as counter-revolutionary.

Thirdly, it was impossible for the party to even win the elections in the absence of a powerful "One Big Union." Only the existence of a huge revolutionary industrial union movement would make it possible in the first place to elect a revolutionary syndicalist majority to parliament; in parliament this majority would act only once, and that would be to aid the revolutionary action of the One Big Union. As such, the "political movement is absolutely the reflex of economic organization."¹⁵⁴ If labor candidates won a political majority in the absence of revolutionary industrial unions capable of taking and holding the means of production, it would be the "signal for a social catastrophe," as capitalists would sabotage production. The "general lockout of the capitalist class" by the revolutionary unions had to be absolutely coterminous with the *abolition* of the State: "as the slough [is] shed by the serpent that immediately appears in its new skin, the political State will have been shed, and society will *simultaneously* appear in its new administrative garb."¹⁵⁵

Thus, for De Leon the primary actor in the process of revolutionary transformation was the revolutionary industrial union movement. While political action was viewed as necessary, its function was, at most, to aid the One Big Union, the real agent of revolution. In other words, parliamentary action would play an entirely secondary and supportive role in the revolution. The party itself would not be a multi-class machine for attracting workers' votes, but simply a working-class organization associated with the revolutionary industrial union movement (which would itself remain formally independent of all political parties). And socialism would not be created through the State, but only in direct opposition to it. This may be distinguished from classical Marxism which, whilst arguing that trade unions were "schools of war" (Engels) which heightened class consciousness, and so, played a important role in the formation of a political party of the working-class able to seize and use State power for socialist transformation, at no point

identified trade unions as the primary agents of socialist revolution.¹⁵⁶

The influence of De Leon, the Socialist Labor Party and the "Detroit" I.W.W. on the International Socialist League was marked. It is clear that the publications associated with this current exerted a profound influence on International Socialist League ideology. From 1915, too, the International Socialist League book service was based almost entirely on the catalogue of the Socialist Labour Party press in Edinburgh, with De Leon's writings, such as *The Burning Question of Trade Unionism*, and the *Preamble of the I.W.W.*, in the forefront. In 1916, *The International* also advertised subscriptions to the Socialist Labour Party's British journal, *The Socialist*.¹⁵⁷

The South African supporters of De Leon — the veteran "SLP men" as they were referred to in *The International* — were prominent at the January 1916 conference of the International Socialist League, where they were in their "favourite element" in the discussion of revolutionary industrial unionism. While a motion by the Benoni branch at the conference that the International Socialist League "adopt the constitution of the Socialist Labor Party of America" was ruled out of order, the International Socialist League management committee was instructed to "make inquiries" into the matter.¹⁵⁸ As a result, Jones wrote to the Socialist Labor Party in America in May 1916, requesting copies of their publications and platform, and commenting that "I should pay one tribute to the marvellous influence that has been exercised by De Leon's works and SLP 'philosophy' generally here during the last year or so."¹⁵⁹ In a subsequent letter Jones requested copies of the Party's catalogue, and if possible, the printing matrices of existing publications for printing in South Africa.¹⁶⁰ The International Socialist League's own report to the Third International in March 1921 emphasized that at this time the International Socialist League had been "captured by the De Leonites" of the former Socialist Labour Party in South Africa.¹⁶¹

Electoral activity was downgraded at the 1916 International Socialist League conference to a tactic for "demonstration and education."¹⁶² This view that electoral campaigns had an essentially propagandistic role was regularly reaffirmed.¹⁶³ In addition to propaganda, the International Socialist League also envisaged that "political action" could be used to adjourn the "Class State." The weapons of the working-class, argued Bunting, are "industrial and political action," the latter deftly summarized in a 1918 statement as;

(a) propaganda through Press, platform, election campaigns, leaflet, pamphlet and book distribution, classes, study groups, etc., in economics, history, etc., and

(b) the attempt to gain political control of Parliament with a view to supplanting Parliament and substituting the administration of production by the producers, suitably organized not on a mere territorial basis, but rather by industries. Such political action obviously requires the support of industrial or economic organization to exercise the necessary pressure on the possessing class, and in the fullness of time to take over possession from it.¹⁶⁴

In elections, the party would not produce a "big genealogical tree of two-penny reforms," but run on a single issue: "the demand for the complete destruction of the Capitalist

system by the industrial combinations of the workers."¹⁶⁵ After all, "government by the State is only necessary because there is an exploited class in society."¹⁶⁶

On occasion, the International Socialist League went somewhat further than De Leon, suggesting that "vigorous political action" (here apparently referring to involvement in elections) could — *if* backed by revolutionary industrial unions — "sweep away" the "chief barriers to efficient working-class solidarity." These included the "denial of equal civil liberty to the natives" and the cheap labor system based on compounds and indenture.¹⁶⁷ Even so, argued *The International*, "political action" was at most the "foliage" of the "Industrial tree."¹⁶⁸ "Political action" could only wrest reforms from the bourgeoisie if supported by the might of the industrially organized working-class: "Parliamentarism is only effective when backed by force, actual or potential."¹⁶⁹ The real "Party of the workers when they again revive in class consciousness, we trust will be their own industrial organizations, now functioning politically, now industrially" which may accept as its affiliate a political organization of "idealist elements."¹⁷⁰

Although the International Socialist League had a revolutionary syndicalist ideology, it did make occasional, and generally favorable, references to Marx and Engels (although readers were referred to De Leon's works for "the more fluent and practical applications of Socialism").¹⁷¹ It is also true that the International Socialist League maintained contact with some of the left-wing anti-war groups in the ruins of the Second International, and even, on a few occasions, reprinted news articles from mainstream political socialist newspapers such as *Vorwärts* (associated with the German Social Democratic Party) and the *Appeal to Reason* (associated with the Socialist Party of America).

However, three points need to be made at this juncture. The first relates to citations of Marx and Engels. The standard approach in the literature is to utilize these quotations as evidence of the International Socialist League's "Marxism." The flaw in this line of argument is its failure to understand the ideological context in which these quotations were deployed, and the political purposes for which they were used.

What is remarkable about International Socialist League references to Marx and Engels were the manner in which they were utilized: like De Leon, the International Socialist League invoked Marx and Engels in support of revolutionary syndicalist positions. To understand Marx's statement that "every class struggle is a political struggle," the International Socialist League directed the reader to revolutionary unionist literature: "The full significance of that declaration is only grasped by a study of De Leon's pamphlets."¹⁷² Engels' comments in the *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* and *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* that the State "withers away" or "dies out" under full communism after an intermediate phase of "socialism" were re-read as compatible with — and as backing for — the De Leonite notion that the State would be *immediately* abolished with the advent of the "general lockout of the capitalist class."¹⁷³ Marx's advocacy of the need to conquer and utilize State power to usher in the tran-

sition to socialism was, similarly, presented as an endorsement of the De Leonite position that the State should be immediately adjourned by a party backed by revolutionary industrial unions, which would replace territorial political constituencies with a stateless industrial republic.¹⁷⁴

Secondly, and related to this point, it should be noted that both De Leon and the International Socialist League invoked Marx and Engels in support of libertarian socialist ideas *directly counter* to those endorsed and defended by Marx and Engels themselves. There is a clear contradiction between the post-1904 De Leonite vision of the replacement of the State by revolutionary industrial unions and Marx's insistence that the proletariat could only make the revolution by "constituting itself as a distinct political party" to take State power.¹⁷⁵ The belief in the immediate destruction of the State at the start of the socialist revolution, defended by De Leon, and endorsed by the International Socialist League, had been vehemently attacked by Engels in his polemics against the anarchists in precisely the same books cited by De Leon as supposed support for the "immediate adjournment" of government.¹⁷⁶ Here Engels defended the need for a transitional period of State-managed socialism. Similarly, De Leon's belief that State ownership would be more onerous and oppressive than private ownership jars with the *Communist Manifesto's* call for the "the centralization of credit in the hands of the State...the centralization of the means of transport in the hands of the State...extension of national factories and instruments of production...the organization of industrial armies."¹⁷⁷ It is also impossible to reconcile De Leon's faith in the "general lockout of the capitalist class" with Engels' polemic, *The Bakuninists at Work*, which not only (accurately) attributes the notion of a revolutionary general strike to the anarchists of the First International, but also (unsurprisingly) rejects the idea with contempt as impractical and unnecessary.¹⁷⁸

De Leon's attempts to claim classical Marxist support for his revolutionary syndicalist positions ultimately placed him and his party in the unenviable position of defending their views on Marx and Engels by citing non-existent quotes from Marx¹⁷⁹ and printing an edition of *The Communist Manifesto* ("undoubtedly the finest English version going," in the view of the International Socialist League)¹⁸⁰ with an introduction making the unjustifiable claim that the document explicitly endorsed revolutionary industrial unionism and stateless socialism.¹⁸¹ Insofar as De Leon often labeled himself a Marxist, and the International Socialist League accepted De Leon, there is a justification for regarding the International Socialist League as "Marxist." Yet insofar as De Leon's politics were not, in fact, "Marxist," but instead something quite different — revolutionary syndicalism — this reasoning is fallacious. De Leon's occasional nods to Marx and Engels in no way negated the change that had taken place in his socialist vision: the scaffolding supporting his new political platform remained revolutionary syndicalist, even if traces of Marxist paint on the infrastructure obscured the anarchist manufacture of the materials.¹⁸² The ultimate irony of post-1904 De Leonism was surely that, notwithstanding its polemics against anar-

chism, it based itself on a political program ultimately rooted in mainstream anarchism.

The third point that needs to be made relates to the International Socialist League's international connections. That the International Socialist League reported on, and maintained contact with, socialist organizations and minorities linked to the collapsed Second International does not establish the existence of a common political outlook with these organizations. It could equally be noted (but rarely is in the literature) that the International Socialist League was in contact with the British syndicalists associated with Tom Mann and his journal *Solidarity*,¹⁸³ and avidly reported on the revolutionary shop-stewards movement in Britain, which sought to build independent revolutionary base committees in the mainstream unions, the activities of the De Leonites, and the I.W.W. in Australia and the United States (coverage of the I.W.W. increasing greatly from 1917 onwards). While the International Socialist League was willing to carry news materials from a variety of sources, it is clear that the international tendency with which the International Socialist League aligned itself was the "Detroit" I.W.W., or De Leonism. Articles — including theoretical articles — from the revolutionary syndicalist press, such as *Solidarity* and the *Socialist* were regular features of *The International*, and, the general line of argument in *The International* seems strikingly close to that of the *Socialist*.¹⁸⁴

In 1917, the International Socialist League sent Andrews as its delegate to Britain en route to the socialist Stockholm Peace Conference. Although the conference did not take place, Andrews used his time in Britain to renew his friendship with Tom Mann (he had invited Mann to South Africa in 1910 on Mann's way back from Australia), and to make contact with a range of left-wing and labor organizations.

These included the Socialist Labour Party, which praised the International Socialist League's stand on "the race question and on industrial unionism."¹⁸⁵ Andrews also met the I.W.W. and attended meetings of the revolutionary shop-stewards movement, the Clyde Workers' Committee,¹⁸⁶ which was led by Socialist Labour Party members,¹⁸⁷ and applied for affiliation to the I.W.W. in January 1920.¹⁸⁸ The Clyde Workers Committee excited Andrews' "particular admiration," and "desire to organize the South African workers on similar lines."¹⁸⁹ In his speeches, Andrews reportedly "reminded the British workers of the struggle in South Africa, and the task of liberating the Native peoples there and elsewhere in the Empire."¹⁹⁰ Upon his return from his 11-month stay in Britain in July 1918, Andrews placed great emphasis on the need to form shop-stewards committees within the existing unions.¹⁹¹ At his reception upon his return to Johannesburg, he gave an enthusiastic account of the Shop Stewards Movement, which he described as the means by which "Industrial Unionism will most rapidly be brought about in England."¹⁹² At a special International Socialist League conference in mid-August 1918, Andrews was appointed full-time industrial organizer for the organization.¹⁹³ In this capacity, he addressed over 20 trade union meetings in the remainder of the year, and "regularly

preached antagonism to the leadership of the SAIF [S.A. Industrial Federation] and the extension of industrial unionism and worker-controlled shop committees.”¹⁹⁴ Andrews hoped that the committees could form district groups and later come together in a Witwatersrand Shop Stewards Council.¹⁹⁵

“The Council of Workmen is the Russian form of Industrial Union”: The International Socialist League’s Response to the Russian Revolution of 1917

The International Socialist League, like revolutionary syndicalist organizations across the world,¹⁹⁶ greeted the Russian Revolution of 1917 with “exultation.”¹⁹⁷ South African workers were advised to look towards the “dramatic and inspiring rapidity of the revolution”¹⁹⁸ and the “bold and inspiring lead of the Russian Workers.”¹⁹⁹ The 1918 International Socialist League congress stated that it “rejoices beyond measure at the triumph of the Russian Revolutionary proletariat under the banner of the Bolshevik wing of the Social Democratic Party, and pledges on behalf of the advanced proletariat of South Africa its growing support to stand by the Russian workmen against the Capitalist Governments of the whole world, that of South Africa included.”²⁰⁰ The congress also resolved that the International Socialist League would make contact with the Bolsheviks.

Like revolutionary syndicalist organizations elsewhere in the world,²⁰¹ too, the International Socialist League’s enthusiastic support for the Russian Revolution of 1917 did not follow from a belief that the Revolution was a seizure of State power by a political party of the working-class, but rather from an interpretation of events of 1917 as a *syndicalist revolution in action*. The “Council of Workmen” (the Soviets) was, *The International* informed its readers, simply “the Russian form of the Industrial Union.”²⁰² Lenin and Trotsky were not the leaders of the Revolution, but “only the delegates of the Russian Federation of Labour, otherwise the Council of Workmen, or the Soviet.”²⁰³

As for the Bolshevik, or (majority) Social Democratic Party, it was presented as a political party along the lines advocated by De Leon: a shield and supplement for the real revolutionary force of industrial organization. “The Socialists do not want to be responsible for the Political State, especially at a time when that State has piled up overwhelming world wide disasters, until they are in a position to destroy that Political State in step with the world wide movement of the working-class.”²⁰⁴ Knowing they could never “triumph by the ballot alone,” the workers had organized the industrial bodies which could (the article cites De Leon here, as elsewhere) undertake the “lockout of the capitalist class” and supplant the State: “the Council of Workmen has great regard for the State, hugs it like a bear; kills it with kindness, leaves it without a single function, except to endorse the decrees of the Commissaries of the People.”²⁰⁵ There was “no State Socialism in Russia.”²⁰⁶ The State “having died out through disuse, the Council of Workmen, or the Executive Board of the Industrial Workers” becomes “the directing authority” based on (here the International Socialist League again quoted De Leon) “industries...regardless of former political boundaries...the constituencies of that new central authority.”²⁰⁷

The overthrow of the Provisional Government in October 1917 was thus explained as follows:

Marx said that the Capitalist system contains the germ of its own destruction...that the State must be captured, not for proletarian use, but to be destroyed...Engels said that the “the government of men will be replaced by the administration of things.”

Further they did not go. But De Leon added: Yes, the Industrial Organization of the Workers is the embryo that will burst the shell of capitalism and become the directing authority for the administration of things in the Commonwealth of Labour.

The Word becomes Flesh in the Council of Workmen. The Council of Workmen is the dictatorship of the proletariat.²⁰⁸

The International Socialist League did not, then, interpret the “dictatorship of the proletariat” as referring to a necessary and transitional State essential for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the suppression of counter-revolutionary activity. Rather, the dictatorship of the proletariat was simply Industrial Unionism in power. It being “no longer possible to obtain freedom under the most advanced form of political democracy,” what was required was “Industrial democracy.”²⁰⁹ The Provisional Government was therefore demolished by the Council of Workmen, and the “industrial solidarity of Labour” became the “only constituency and the only Parliament for bringing emancipation.”

Thus (other than a flurry of favorable references to Marx in late 1917 and early 1918),²¹⁰ the immediate impact of the Russian Revolution on International Socialist League politics was to *reaffirm* the organization’s revolutionary industrial unionist beliefs, seemingly vindicated by the course of the Russian Revolution. For example, an International Socialist League manifesto issued late in 1918 in English, Zulu and Sesotho, and entitled *The Bolsheviks are Coming*, charted the way ahead for South Africa workers as the struggle for the “free commonwealth of labour...an actual fact in Russia today.”²¹¹ To achieve this aim, it was vital to “combine in the workshops...as workers, regardless of colour...While the black worker is oppressed, the white worker cannot be free. Before Labour can emancipate itself, black workers as well as white must combine in *one organization of Labour, irrespective of craft, colour or creed. This is Bolshevism: the Solidarity of Labour.*” Jones, the author of the tract, explained that his intention with this publication was to help promote “the establishment of revolutionary industrial organizations by workers to form the skeleton of the Social[ist] Commonwealth.”²¹² Similarly, an International Socialist League election manifesto issued in January 1920 stated that “we declare that working-class emancipation must be the task of the workers themselves, direct through their own class organizations.” It added:

In previous elections, THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE proclaimed that ... [“THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION”] ... could only be done by the organization of the workers in one great INDUSTRIAL UNION.

Today we have a practical application of the idea: THE SOVIET ...

We make use of the present parliamentary elections, as in previous elections, to proclaim the Soviet or INDUSTRIAL UNION principle AS THE ONLY HOPE OF THE

WORKERS.²¹³

Thus, the claim in the literature that from the time of the Russian Revolution, the "entire outlook" of the International Socialist League became "ever more deeply colored by...the teachings of Lenin"²¹⁴ is not convincing. Similarly, while Roux was undoubtedly correct when he noted that "the Bolshevik revolution in Russia [was] welcomed by the South African socialists as tangible proof of the ultimate triumph of their faith,"²¹⁵ it must be noted that the "faith" thus vindicated was not at that stage Bolshevism but revolutionary syndicalism. Granted, there were definite similarities between the anti-war positions of the International Socialist League and Lenin, but given that Lenin was by no means the only socialist to oppose World War I, such parallels in no way establish that the organization was necessarily aligned with radical Marxist politics. Finally, given that the Russian Revolution in fact moved in a rather different direction to that envisaged by revolutionary syndicalism, the International Socialist League's interpretations of the development of the revolution are somewhat difficult to reconcile with the claim by some of the literature that one of the main achievements of the International Socialist League was the "unerring accuracy" of its analyses of the monumental events of 1917.²¹⁶

"Here for the Salvation of the Workers": The International Socialist League and the Industrial Workers of Africa

Further evidence of the revolutionary syndicalist foundations of the International Socialist League between 1916-1920 is furnished by the organization's activities. In addition to publishing a newspaper advocating revolutionary industrial unionism, and distributing a multitude of leaflets on this theme, the organization also held regular public meetings where revolutionary industrial unionism was put forward as the solution to working-class problems. Elections provided another opportunity to advocate revolutionary industrial unionism, although the message does not seem to have been a popular one with the mainly white electorate. The votes attracted by the organization were negligible. In October 1916, for example, the International Socialist League stood candidates in the municipal elections in the Witwatersrand.²¹⁷ The candidates' manifesto, entitled "Call to the Workers of South Africa," argued that the key task facing the workers was the formation of industrial unions open to all workers. Not one International Socialist League candidate won a seat. In mid-1917, the International Socialist League stood candidates in the provincial elections and urged workers to organize across racial lines, and to follow the road opened up by the February 1917 Russian Revolution. The International Socialist League candidates, Andrews and Bunting, lost their deposits, receiving 335 and 71 votes, respectively. On this occasion, opponents made the organization's support of African freedom the centerpiece of their counter-campaign. According to a South African Labour Party leaflet issued at Benoni, to "Vote for Andrews" was to "vote for the downfall of the workers and the blanket or kafir vote."²¹⁸ The Party went on to promise its services as a body "entirely against equal rights for white and Black."

There is also no doubt that the International Socialist League's anti-racism — a central part of its revolutionary industrial unionist creed — alienated many white workers and the organization faced increasing levels of violence and harassment. The International Socialist League's 1917 May Day rally, which included among its speakers Horatio Bud'Mbelle of the African National Congress (a unique event for the time), was broken up by mobs, whilst its weekly public meetings came under regular attack from September that year.²¹⁹ In September, too, the International Socialist League was forced to vacate its offices in the Trades Hall in Johannesburg after it refused to accept a management order barring Africans from using its facilities.²²⁰ Although a number of founder members of the League had been in the South African Labour Party, few ex-Labour Party members remained in the new organization for long. *The International* was able to report in mid-1918 that of the 13 members of the management Committee, 11 had never been members of the Labour Party, whilst "a glance at the local branch lists shows barely a score of ex-S.A.L.P.-ites."²²¹

The International Socialist League also sought to move beyond abstract propaganda by involving itself in workplace issues. Some International Socialist League members, including Andrews and Mason, were prominent in the mainstream (white) trade unions, which they sought to reform on the lines of non-racial revolutionary industrial unionism. International Socialist League members also set up an integrated Solidarity Committee in August 1917 to campaign within the unions for the formation of a "National Industrial Union" through which workers would take power in industry, so that "the one Industrial Union will become the Parliament of Labour and form an integral part of the International Industrial Republic."²²² This appeal, which was circulated to white trade unionists at the December 1918 conference of the South African Industrial Federation, met a poor response, and only members of the International Socialist League and several African activists attended an Easter 1918 conference on industrial unionism advertised in the appeal.²²³

Attempts were also made to establish new unions on revolutionary syndicalist principles for those workers excluded by the mainstream trade unions. In March 1917, International Socialist League activists helped launch an Indian Workers' Industrial Union "on the lines of the I.W.W." in Durban.²²⁴ The Industrial Union organized in a number of industries, including printing, tobacco, laundry and the docks. It also reportedly attracted waiters, mine-workers and the "sugar slaves" of the plantations.²²⁵ Sigamoney was born in Durban, and was a teacher; in the 1910s, he was the most prominent Indian labor activist in Durban and a member of the International Socialist League, but he became an Anglican pastor in the 1920s.²²⁶ The Industrial Union in conjunction with the International Socialist League organized regular study classes, at which the writings of De Leon, among others, were examined, and held regular open air meetings where "the Indian Workers Choir entertained the crowds by singing the Red Flag, the International and many I.W.W. songs."²²⁷ Plans were also

made to print International Socialist League literature in Tamil, Hindi and Telegu.

Three months later, the International Socialist League advertised a meeting in Johannesburg to “discuss matters of common interest between white and native workers.”²²⁸ The meeting, which was attended by 10 white International Socialist League members, and 20 Africans,²²⁹ became the first of a series of weekly “study groups.” Andrew Dunbar played a prominent role at the first meeting on July 26. Police records report that Dunbar stated that the purpose of the meeting was:

For all the workers black and white to come together in a union and be organized together and fight against the capitalists and take them down from their ruling place and let them come and work together with us ... and not own what other men produce.²³⁰

He stated that “they can do it only [by] coming together and at the end of the month...refuse to go and register their pass at the pass office”: “the native affairs [Department] cannot arrest the whole lot of them” and would be forced to “abolish the pass laws.” Once the passes were destroyed, the African workers should organize “into one Union” and launch a general strike across the Witwatersrand for higher wages.²³¹ Dunbar said the “thing they are trying to do is to make...both black and white...get the same wages because they are both workers.”²³² If workers were arrested, the strikers should demand their release. “If we strike for everything,” Dunbar continued, “we can get everything...If we can only spread the matter far and wide amongst the natives, we can easily unite.”²³³

Similar revolutionary syndicalist themes were the mainstay of the weekly “study groups.” Matters were taken further on the September 27, 1917 when the “study groups” were transformed into an African trade union with an all-African committee.²³⁴ The new union — the first trade union for African workers in South African history — was initially named the I.W.W., or the “Industrial Workers of the World,” a title suggested by Dunbar in obvious reference to the American revolutionary syndicalist organization. The union’s name was slightly modified on October 11, 1917, to the “Industrial Workers of Africa,”²³⁵ but the general outlook of the organization remained that of revolutionary industrial unionism.²³⁶ At the founding meeting it was also stated the new body would be linked to workers in Durban, where “the natives and Indians had formed their branch”(presumably the Industrial Union). Dunbar also suggested hopefully that as the new organization became “stronger and stronger,” “the white workers will...join us and all will strike and see the result.” At a later meeting, “Comrade Cetiwe,” one of the members of the committee, stated that “we should go to Compounds and preach our gospel” of the Industrial Workers of Africa:

We are here for Organization, so that as soon as all of your fellow workers are organized, then we can see what we can do to abolish the Capitalist-System. We are here for the salvation of the workers. We are here to organize and to fight for our rights and benefits.²³⁷

Thus, contrary to the presentation of the Industrial Workers of Africa in the literature as, at worst, simply a “general” union for unskilled workers, “an ‘all-in union’ for

unskilled laborers,”²³⁸ or, at best a vaguely “socialist group” for African workers,²³⁹ it is evident that the union was based on revolutionary syndicalist ideas, influenced by the model of the I.W.W., and established by the International Socialist League in line with its own commitment to revolutionary industrial unionism.

Although a fuller discussion of the Industrial Workers of Africa falls outside the scope of this paper,²⁴⁰ four points need to be made. Firstly, the Industrial Workers of Africa was the first African trade union in South African history. Like the I.W.W. in Australia, Mexico, and the United States,²⁴¹ the International Socialist League in South Africa was a revolutionary syndicalist organization that pioneered union organizing amongst racially oppressed workers. Secondly, in undertaking this work amongst the most down-trodden layer of workers, the International Socialist League was not only acting in line with its sister organizations, but was also following the logic of its revolutionary industrial unionist politics of organizing all workers, and acting upon its opposition to racism. Thirdly, the Industrial Workers of Africa was based upon revolutionary syndicalist aims and principles. As such, it was analogous to the revolutionary syndicalist unions established across the globe in the early 20th century; the first African trade union in South Africa history was a revolutionary syndicalist union formed during the wave of international syndicalist organizing in the 1910s. Finally, contrary to the claim that the International Socialist League saw African workers as secondary to the labor movement, and racism as irrelevant to workers in any case,²⁴² the formation and ideology of the Industrial Workers indicate that the organization not only saw African worker organization as an essential part of the working-class struggle, but saw working-class struggle by African workers as essential to the abolition of racially oppressive laws.

The young union’s political outlook was well summarized in a leaflet prepared by a committee of two International Socialist League and two Industrial Workers of Africa members in October 1917, and issued in Zulu and Sesotho in a print run of 10,000 copies:

LISTEN, WORKERS, LISTEN!

Workers of the Bantu race:

Why do you live in slavery? Why are you not free as other men are free? Why are you kicked and spat upon by your masters? Why must you carry a pass before you can move anywhere? And if you are found without one, why are you thrown into prison? Why do you toil hard for little money? And again thrown into prison if you refuse to work? Why do they herd you like cattle into compounds? WHY?

Because you are the toilers of the earth. Because the masters want you to labor for their profit. Because they pay the Government and Police to keep you as slaves to toil for them.

If it were not for the money they make from your labour, you would not be oppressed.

But mark: you are the mainstay of the country. You do all the work, you are the means of their living. That is why you are robbed of the fruits of your labour and robbed of your liberty as well.

There is only one way of deliverance for you Bantu workers. Unite as workers. Unite: forget the things which divide you. Let there be no longer any talk of Basuto, Zulu, or Shangaan.

You are all labourers; let Labour be your common bond....Workers of all lands unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a world to win.²⁴³

In Conclusion: Rediscovering (Libertarian) Socialist History

The history of international libertarian socialism is a very undeveloped area of research. This is due to a variety of reasons, including the persistent conflation of revolutionary socialism with Marxism in much of the literature, teleological interpretations of socialist history, limited scholarship, and the practice of claiming libertarian socialist history for other political traditions. This latter practice is represented by claims that Marx founded or led the First International, the presentation of the Mexican anarchist movement of the 1880s-1920s as Marxist,²⁴⁴ the claiming of James Connolly for "Marxism,"²⁴⁵ the argument that the I.W.W. in Australia was not syndicalist but "Marxist,"²⁴⁶ and the appropriation of the anarcho-syndicalist-influenced Augustino Sandino, leader of a guerrilla war against the United States' occupation of Nicaragua between 1927-1933, and his red-and-black banners, by the nationalist "Sandinista National Liberation Front" in the 1980s.²⁴⁷

The presentation of the International Socialist League in the literature is a case in point. Although generally described as a "Marxist" organization, this paper has demonstrated that the International Socialist League is better understood as a political organization in the tradition of revolutionary syndicalism. Likewise, the Industrial Workers of Africa, the first African trade union in South African history, was a revolutionary syndicalist industrial union. The labeling of the International Socialist League as "Marxist" can only be sustained on the basis of an exceedingly selective reading of International Socialist League material. A focus on the part (in this case, occasional nods to Marx) as opposed to the whole (revolutionary industrial unionism) is precisely the tactic employed by almost all accounts which claim the International Socialist League as "Marxist." The International Socialist League (and the Industrial Workers of Africa) are better understood as organizations in the tradition of libertarian socialism; the rediscovery of these bodies as revolutionary syndicalist organizations, and the critique of their appropriation by political socialism, is a contribution to the rediscovery of libertarian socialist history more generally. The history of the International Socialist League in South Africa underlines the fact that revolutionary syndicalism in the early 20th century was not simply an internationalist, but also an international, movement with a genuinely inter-continental scope.

Notes

¹ This is a substantially revised version of a paper presented to the Institute for Advanced Social Research at the University of the Witwatersrand, October 12, 1998. I would like to thank both the Centre for Science and Development, Pretoria, and the Institute for Anarchist Studies, New York, for helping finance this research. I would also like to thank the reviewers of my article for their useful comments.

² A fuller discussion of race and the International Socialist League may be found in my "Race, Class and Revolutionary Syndicalism in South Africa: the International Socialist League and the Industrial Workers of Africa, 1915-1920," *Archiv für die Geschichte des Widerstandes und der Arbeit*, (forthcoming in 1999). See also Lucien van der Walt, *Revolutionary Syn-*

dicalist Organising in South Africa: The International Socialist League and the Industrial Workers Of Africa, 1916-1919 (Paper presented at Syndicalism: Swedish and Historical Experiences conference, Department of Economic History, Stockholm University, March 13-14, 1998a) and Lucien van der Walt, *Revolutionary Syndicalism and Anti-Racism in South Africa: a re-examination of the politics of the International Socialist League, 1915-1919* (Paper presented at South African Sociological Association Congress, Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit, Johannesburg, June 30 to July 3, 1998b).

³ S. W. Johns, *Marxism-Leninism in a Multi-Racial Environment: the International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa, 1914-1932* (Ph.D. thesis. Harvard University, 1965). This was reprinted with a new introduction in 1995 as *Raising the Red Flag: the International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa, 1914-1932* (Mayibuye Books, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, 1995). All references in this paper are to the Mayibuye edition of Johns. p. 52.

⁴ Precise figures are hard to come by. The International Socialist League's January 1919 congress was, according to one source, attended by 39 delegates representing "less than a dozen branches," indicating that the total membership could not have been "more than a few hundreds." See E. Roux, *S. P. Bunting: a political biography*. (Mayibuye Books, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, [1944], 1993). p. 82. In 1921, the International Socialist League estimated that its membership never exceeded four hundred: see David Ivon Jones, March 29, 1921, "Communism in South Africa," presented to the Executive of the Third International on behalf of the International Socialist League, reproduced in B. Bunting (ed.), *South African Communist Speak: Documents from the History of the South African Communist Party, 1915-1980* (London: Inkuleleko Publications, 1981).

⁵ Henry R. Pike, *A History of Communism in South Africa* (Christian Mission International, South Africa, 1985); N. Weyl, *Traitor's End: The Rise and Fall of the Communist Movement in Southern Africa* (Cape Town/Johannesburg: Tafelberg-Uitgewers, 1970).

⁶ G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism: The Coming Struggle for Africa* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1956). pp.347-348.

⁷ N. Dixon, "The Transformation of South Africa's Communists [Book Review]," *Green Left Weekly* (Australia, February 12, 1997); A. Hammond, "South Africa's First Revolutionary Paper: *The Internationalist*," *Socialist Worker* (Johannesburg, South Africa, May 1997).

⁸ South African Communist Party [J. Cronin], *The Red Flag in South Africa: A Popular History of the Communist Party* (Johannesburg: Jet Printers, [1991?], n.d.), p. 6; J. Cronin, "Origins and 'Native Republic'," in C. Bundy, (ed.), *The History of the South African Communist Party* (University of Cape Town, Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, 1991), p. 9.

⁹ Govan Mbeki, *The Struggle For Liberation in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philips, and Mayibuye Books, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, 1992), p. 27.

¹⁰ Lungisile Ntsebeza, *Divisions and Unity in Struggle: The ANC, ISL and The CP, 1910-1928* (B. A. Honours dissertation in Economic History, University of Cape Town, 1988), p. 30.

¹¹ See Jack and Ray Simons, *Class and Color in South Africa, 1850-1950* (London: International Defense and Aid Fund, [1965] 1983); R.K. Cope, *Comrade Bill: The Life and Times of W.H. Andrews, Workers' Leader* (Cape Town: Stewart Printing [1940?] n.d.); E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2nd ed., [1948] 1978), p. 134. Also see Roux, 1993, op. cit. All of these accounts identify "Marxism" with classical Marxism.

¹² Cope, n.d., op. cit., p. 194.

¹³ "Introduction by Dr Yusuf Dadoo, National Chairman of the South African Communist Party," in B. Bunting (ed.), 1981, op. cit.

¹⁴ "Editorial" in *Party Organizer: Organ of the Cape District C.P.S.A.*, "23 Birthday Special," (March 1944), p. 1. Held in the Simons Collection, African Studies Centre, University of Cape Town. See also "Introduction by Dr Yusuf Dadoo, National Chairman of the South African Communist Party," in B. Bunting (ed.), 1981, op. cit., p. xv.

¹⁵ L. Forman, *Chapters in the History of the March to Freedom*, reprinted in S. Forman and A. Odendaal (eds.), *Lionel Forman: A Trumpet from the Rooftops* (London: Zed Books, Cape Town: David Philips, and Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, [1959] 1992).

¹⁶ A. Lerumo, (M. Harmel), *Fifty Fighting Years: The Communist Party of*

South Africa 1921-1971 (London: Inkululeko Publishers, 1971), p. 34.

¹⁷ Eddie Roux and Win Roux, *Rebel Pity: The Life of Eddie Roux* (London: Rex Collings, 1970), p. 19. An identical statement is made in E. Roux, 1978, op. cit., pp.134-135. Oddly enough, E. Roux, *S. P. Bunting: A Political Biography* (Mayibuye Books, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, [1944], 1993), p. 90, is more subtle on this issue. See also B. Bunting (ed.), "Introduction," in his *Letters to Rebecca: South African Communist Leader S. P. Bunting to His Wife 1917-1934* (Mayibuye Books, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, 1996). This introduction treats the International Socialist League and Communist Party of South Africa as interchangeable.

¹⁸ Johns, 1995, op. cit.

¹⁹ The first accounts of socialist history in South Africa were produced from within the movement, and include Cope, n.d., op. cit.; Forman, 1992, op. cit.; W.H. Harrison, *Memoirs of a Socialist in South Africa 1903-1947* (Cape Town: Stewart Printing, [1948?] n.d.); Roux, 1993, op. cit.; Roux, 1978, op. cit.; Simons and Simons, 1983, op. cit.

²⁰ This is emphasized by Bunting, 1981, op. cit.; Cope, n.d., op. cit.; Cronin, 1991, op. cit.; Forman, 1992, op. cit.; Lerumo, 1971, op. cit.; South African Communist Party, 1991, op. cit.; Simons and Simons, 1983, op. cit. The quote is from Cope, n.d., op. cit., p. 205.

²¹ Cope, n.d., op. cit., pp.206-208.

²² E.A. Mantzaris, "Radical Community: the Yiddish-speaking Branch of the International Socialist League, 1918-1920), in B. Bozzoli (ed.), *Class, Community and Conflict* (Braamfontein: Ravan, 1988), p. 161; also see c.f. Johns, 1995, op. cit., pp.51-52. Also see Ntsebeza, 1988, op. cit., p. 30.

²³ Johns, 1995, op. cit., p. 52.

²⁴ B. Hirson, *Syndicalists in South Africa, 1908-1917* (paper for discussion at postgraduate seminar, on "Comparative Labour and Working-class History," University of London, November 12, 1993) and J. Philips, "The South African Wobblies: the origins of industrial unions in South Africa," *Ufahamu*, 8,3 (1976).

²⁵ Such assessments constitute a core part of most works dealing with the International Socialist League. See, *inter alia*, Bunting 1981, op. cit.; Cope, n.d., op. cit.; Cronin, 1991, op. cit.; Forman, 1992, op. cit.; M. Legassick, "Class and Nationalism in South African Protest: the South African Communist Party and the 'Native Republic,' 1928-1934," *Eastern African Studies*, XV (1973); Lerumo, 1971, op. cit.; Ntsebeza, 1988, op. cit.; Roux, 1978, op. cit.; Roux, 1993, op. cit.; South African Communist Party 1991, op. cit.; Simons and Simons, 1983, op. cit.

²⁶ For example, Bunting, 1981, op. cit.; Cronin, 1991, op. cit.; Lerumo, 1971, op. cit.; South African Communist Party, 1991, op. cit.; Simons and Simons, 1983, op. cit. c.f. also Dixon, February 12 1997, op. cit., A similar criticism of the Communist school has been leveled by A. Drew, "Writing South African Communist History," in *Science and Society*, 61,1 (1997), p. 110.

²⁷ See A. Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press, 1991), p. 8.

²⁸ Cf. the case of Chinese historiography: here the assimilation of socialist history to the history of the Communist Party has led to a foreclosure of any recognition that anarchism was between 1905 and 1925 "the most popular of and pervasive of all socialisms in China." Dirlik, 1991, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries*, cited in Dirlik, 1991, op. cit., p. 2.

³⁰ W. Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves: Revolutionary Syndicalism and International Labour 1913-1923* (Dordrecht/ Boston/ London Kulwer: Academic Publishers, and the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, 1989); also see R. Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, (London: Pluto Press [1938] 1989).

³¹ Thorpe, 1989, op. cit.

³² See Thorpe, 1989, op. cit. An important empirical critique of the claim that syndicalists lacked an analysis of the State or "politics" is developed by R. J. Holton, "Syndicalist Theories of the State," *Sociological Review*, 28, 1 (1980).

³³ Thorpe, 1989, op. cit., p. 3.

³⁴ A succinct history of the Second International is provided by J. Joll, *The Second International, 1889-1914* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1966).

³⁵ The "ultra-left" tendencies that developed into council communism were the target of V. I. Lenin's 1920 polemic, "*Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder* (Moscow: Progress Publishers). On council commu-

nism, see R. Gombin, *The Radical Tradition: A Study in Modern Revolutionary Thought* (London: Methuen and Co., 1978) and M. Shipway, "Council Communism," in M. Rubel and J. Crump (eds.), *Non-Market Socialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (London: Macmillan, 1987).

³⁶ The collapse of the First International is often given as 1873. This is, however, the date of the collapse of the Marxist faction, whose only Congress — held in Geneva that year — was "as the Bolshevik historian Steckloff admitted, 'a pitiful affair' attended almost entirely by Swiss and German exiles in Switzerland." The majority "Anti-Authoritarian" section — which was not purely anarchist, but was certainly dominated by anarchism — held its final congress in 1877. See G. Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, new ed., 1975), pp.230-240, the quote is from p. 230.

³⁷ See Thorpe, 1989, op. cit.

³⁸ See D. Geurin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

³⁹ The four "Haymarket Martyrs," whose execution in the United States in November 1887 is annually commemorated through May Day, were anarchist organizers of the revolutionary syndicalist Central Labour Union in Chicago. See P. Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). On Spain, see M. Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868-1936* (New York/ Hagerstown/ San Francisco/ London: Harper Colophon Books, 1977); T. Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia, 1868-1903* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

⁴⁰ W. Z. Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936), p. 49.

⁴¹ The role of disenchantment with the dominant labor strategy in the rise of revolutionary syndicalism from the 1890s is comprehensively discussed in M. van der Linden and W. Thorpe, 1990, "The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism," in Marcel van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe (eds.), *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990).

⁴² For partial overviews of the history of anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism, see Thorpe, 1989, op. cit.; van der Linden and Thorpe, 1990, op. cit.; P. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: Fontana, 1993); M. Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, [1934], 1996); Rocker, 1989, op. cit.

⁴³ An extremely important discussion of I.W.W. theory is S. Salerno, *Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).

⁴⁴ See Philips, 1976, op. cit.

⁴⁵ On Mann and Connolly, see, *inter alia*, B. Holton, *British Syndicalism: Myths and Realities* (London: Pluto Press, 1976) and E. O'Conner *Syndicalism in Ireland, 1917-1923* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1988). For Haywood, see M. Dubofsky, "*Big Bill*" Haywood (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987). De Leon is discussed below.

⁴⁶ Even Mikhail Bakunin the anarchist had this to say about Karl Marx's *Capital*: "nothing, that I know of, contains an analysis so profound, so luminous, so scientific, so decisive, and if I can express it thus, so merciless an expose of the formation of bourgeois capital and the systematic and cruel exploitation that capital continues exercising over the work of the proletariat. The only defect of this work...is that it has been written, in part, but only in part, in a style excessively metaphysical and abstract...which makes it difficult to explain and nearly unapproachable for the majority of workers, and it is principally the workers who must read it nevertheless." See M. Bakunin, *The Capitalist System* (Libertarian Labour Review, 1994), endnote 2.

⁴⁷ The highly prevalent "Spanish exceptionalism" interpretation of revolutionary syndicalism, according to which the only anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist mass movement to sustain itself in the 20th century was that of Spain, needs to be critically assessed. Although the Spanish movement was numerically substantial (the anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Labour, the C.N.T., claimed two million members in 1936) it only organized slightly more than half of the union movement in that country. If we assess the size of revolutionary syndicalist unions *relative* to the size of the overall union movement in each respective country, we find that the largest syndicalist movements of all were those of Latin America, where revolutionary syndicalism regularly dominated the largest (and often the only) union centers.

⁴⁸ Thorpe, 1989, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴⁹ See, for example, the discussion of the Mexican literature in J. Hart,

Anarchism and the Mexican Working-class 1886-1931 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), pp.16, 185, 210. For Chinese parallels, see Dirlik, 1991, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Cope, n.d., op. cit., pp.108-110.

⁵¹ Although earlier dates are sometimes given in the literature, the Socialist Labour Party itself claimed to have been constituted in March 1910. See "Socialist Labour Party of South Africa — Incorporation" (Department of Law, file LD 1806-AG677/10, National Archives, Pretoria).

⁵² Johns, 1995, op. cit., p. 29; Katz, 1976, op. cit.

⁵³ Katz, 1976, op. cit., p. 70.

⁵⁴ See, *inter alia*, Thorpe, 1989, op. cit. Lenin's claims to the contrary — that the revolutionary syndicalists, generally, endorsed the war — cannot be sustained. See V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (London: Martin Lawrence, [1917] 1933).

⁵⁵ B. Hirson, with G. A. Williams, *The Delegate for Africa: David Ivon Jones, 1883-1924* (London: Core Publications, 1995), p.138.

⁵⁶ A detailed narrative of the split in the South African Labour Party is provided by D. Tickin, "The War Issue and the Collapse of the South African Labour Party," *South African Historical Journal*, 1 (1969).

⁵⁷ Johns, 1995, op. cit., p. 46.

⁵⁸ Cope, n.d., op. cit., provides a biography of Andrews.

⁵⁹ Simons and Simons, 1983, op. cit., p. 150.

⁶⁰ Hirson, 1995, op. cit., provides an excellent biography of Jones.

⁶¹ Roux, 1993, op. cit., provides a biography of Bunting, which tends, however, to exaggerate Bunting's role in the International Socialist League, particularly with regard to the question of an anti-racist policy — thereby downplaying the contribution of radicals such as Campbell, Dunbar and Tinker to the development of an anti-racist analysis by the organization. See, *inter alia*, van der Walt, 1998b, op. cit.

⁶² Johns, 1995, op. cit. p. 31.

⁶³ On this point, see Johns, 1995, op. cit., pp.87-88.

⁶⁴ C. Bundy, "Left, Right, Left, Right: the CPSA in the 1930s and 1940s," in Bundy, 1991, op. cit., p. 32.

⁶⁵ E. Webster, "Background to the Control and Supply of Labour in the Gold Mines," in E. Webster (ed.), *Essays in Southern African Labour History* (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1978); also see J. Lever, "Capital and Labour in South Africa: the passage of the Industrial Conciliation Act, 1924," in *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Webster, 1978, op. cit.

⁶⁷ See P. Warwick, "Black Industrial Protest on the Witwatersrand, 1901-1902," in E. Webster (ed.), 1978, op. cit.; S. Moroney, "Mine Worker Protest on the Witwatersrand: 1901-1921," in *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Philips, 1976, op. cit., p. 125. Philips is citing a report in *The Voice of Labour*, a radical weekly of the time associated with the South African I.W.W., and edited by the socialist Archie Crawford.

⁶⁹ D. Hobart Houghton, *The South African Economy* (Cape Town/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 141; Hirson, 1995, op. cit. pp.106, 116.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ E. Katz, *The White Death: Silicosis on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines, 1886-1910* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), p. 65.

⁷² Katz, 1994, op. cit., pp.67, 75-78.

⁷³ Katz, 1994, op. cit., p. 4; also see E. Katz, *A Trade Union Aristocracy: A History of White Workers in the Transvaal and the General Strike of 1913* (Johannesburg: Institute for African Studies, 1976).

⁷⁴ Katz, 1976, op. cit., p. 70.

⁷⁵ Cited in *The International*, October 1, 1915, "International Socialist League."

⁷⁶ *The International*, November 5, 1915, "League Literature." Ironically, both Kropotkin and Herve ended up supporting the war effort.

⁷⁷ *The International*, November 12, 1915, "Towards One Socialist Party."

⁷⁸ *The International*, December 10, 1915, "League Conference."

⁷⁹ *The International*, November 12, 1915, "Towards One Socialist Party."

⁸⁰ *The International*, June 1, 1917, "The League Undaunted: Manifesto for the Elections."

⁸¹ *The International*, January 7, 1916, "League Conference;" January 14, 1916, "The First Conference of the League."

⁸² *The International*, January 19, 1917, "The Second Annual Conference," my emphasis.

⁸³ *The International*, January 21, 1916, "The Most Effective Means."

⁸⁴ *The International*, February 11, 1916, "The Break up of Capitalism."

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*; cf. *The International*, March 24, 1916, "Branch Notes."

⁸⁶ *The International*, June 1, 1917, "The Disease of Civilization;" "League Notes;" June 14, 1918, "Civilization."

⁸⁷ *The International*, September 21, 1917, "The Uses of the Labour Politician."

⁸⁸ See Holton, 1976, op. cit.; and O'Connor, 1988, op. cit.

⁸⁹ *The International*, May 5, 1916, "What's Wrong With Ireland;" cf. also August 4, 1916, "Chopping off Heads."

⁹⁰ This confirms Holton's general critique of the charge of "economism" often leveled at revolutionary syndicalism: R. J. Holton, 1980, op. cit., Cf. Rocker, 1989, op. cit., pp.63-65: "just as the worker cannot remain indifferent to the economic conditions of his life in existing society, so he cannot remain indifferent to the political structure of his country...he needs political rights and liberties, and he must fight for these himself in every situation where they are denied him, and must defend them with all his strength when the attempt is made to wrest them from him." Also see S. Bird, D. Georakas and D. Shaffer, *Solidarity Forever: the I.W.W.: An Oral History of the Wobblies* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985), pp.139-140.

⁹¹ *The International*, May 26, 1916, "Violence and the Labour Movement." The International Socialist League provided a useful overview of its own statements on the matter in *The International*, August 16, 1918, "Incitement to Violence."

⁹² See, for example, Holton, 1976, op. cit., and Holton, 1980, op. cit.

⁹³ *Contra* Ntsebeza, 1988, op. cit., p. 32.

⁹⁴ *The International*, February 2, 1917, "Thoughts on Sabotage and State Socialism."

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, emphasis in the original.

⁹⁶ *The International*, February 25, 1916, "Mineworkers and Political Action;" March 24, 1916, "Scab Manufacture;" cf. also March 2, 1917, "The Mineworkers to be Made a Scab Union." Cf. Holton, 1980, op. cit. on syndicalist theories of the State. The phrase "Dung Market" comes from William Morris's 1890 socialist utopia, *News from Nowhere*. See G.D.H. Cole (ed.), *William Morris: Prose, Verse, Lectures and Essays* (London: Nonesuch Press, centenary edition, 1948).

⁹⁷ *The International*, June 16, 1916, "State Mines, State Serfdom;" also see July 21, "Branch Notes" and November 17, 1916, "Branch Notes."

⁹⁸ *The International*, December 8, 1916, "State Socialism;" *The International*, November 3, 1916, "'State Socialism' in Practice;" April 27, 1917, "Revolt or Revolution?;" June 16, 1916, "State Mines, State Serfdom;" also see July 21, 1916, "Branch Notes;" November 17, 1916, "Branch Notes;" August 16, 1918, "Our Objective."

⁹⁹ *The International*, November 3, 1916, "'State Socialism' in Practice."

¹⁰⁰ Hirson's own work on the early South African left is generally an exception to the rule here, and is considerably more nuanced than most accounts. See, *inter alia*, Hirson, 1993, 1995, op. cit.

¹⁰¹ For example, Roux, 1978, op. cit.

¹⁰² Simons and Simons, 1983, op. cit., pp.191, 196, 199, 205, 209, 215, 245.

¹⁰³ Revolutionary syndicalist themes and individuals are mentioned in Simons and Simons, 1983, op. cit., pp.191, 196, 199, 205, 209, 215, 245.

¹⁰⁴ The Simonses, op. cit., juxtapose syndicalism and International Socialist League politics by speaking of a "syndicalist faction" within the organization: p. 215, also see p. 245; Forman, op. cit., mentions in passing that some International Socialist League members were revolutionary syndicalists, and others anarchists, but does not point to the existence of syndicalist influences on International Socialist League policy: p. 74. Cope, n.d., op. cit., speaks of opposition between "syndicalist ideas of direct action and opposition to politics" and the International Socialist League leadership (p. 206). South African Communist Party [Cronin], 1991, op. cit., notes the existence of different currents in the International Socialist League, but states that the leaders were revolutionary Marxists (p. 6).

¹⁰⁵ Lerumo, op. cit., speaks of the International Socialist League as having a "distorted version of Marxism" which denounced "all types of parliamentary political activity" and held that "the formation of 'one big Industrial Union' and the subsequent calling of a general strike was the panacea for the winning of workers' power and the overthrow of capitalism," p. 39. Such ideas, however, are not "Marxism," but revolutionary syndicalism.

¹⁰⁶ Cope, n.d., op. cit., p. 206.

¹⁰⁷ See also *The International*, September 15, 1916, "Liberty Sold for

6/3d;" September 22, 1916, "Liberty: Price 6/3;" March 2, 1917, "The Mineworkers to be Made a Scab Union;" May 25, 1917, "Is the White Miner a Miner?"

¹⁰⁸ Cope, n.d., op. cit., p.185; see also Gitsham and Trembath, 1926, op. cit., pp.43-44.

¹⁰⁹ Walker and Weinbren, 1961, op. cit., pp.84-85.

¹¹⁰ Cope, n.d., op. cit., p. 187.

¹¹¹ *The International*, March 2, 1917, "The Mineworkers to be Made a Scab Union;" June 2, 1916, "Mineworkers, Unite!"

¹¹² *The International*, August 4, 1916, "More Craft Scabbery." Since the 1890s the Engine Drivers were notorious for "scabbing" on other unions on the mines during strikes.

¹¹³ *The International*, September 22, 1916, "League Notes."

¹¹⁴ *The International*, August 9, 1918, "Craft Unions Obsolete."

¹¹⁵ *The International*, December 3, 1915, "The Wrath to Come."

¹¹⁶ *The International*, March 3, 1916, "The War After the War;" see also *The International*, February 18, 1916, Bunting, "Workers of the World Unite."

¹¹⁷ *The International*, February 16, 1917, "'The Poor Whites' and a Page From History;" also February 23, 1917, op. cit., "Race Prejudice."

¹¹⁸ Cited in Cope, op. cit., p. 181.

¹¹⁹ *The International*, April 7, 1916, "Call to the Native Workers;" see also May 26, 1916, "The Last of the Baralongs."

¹²⁰ Dilution did come to the Witwatersrand in subsequent years, and a large number of one-time white artisans moved into supervisory roles. See E. Webster, *Cast in a Racial Mould* (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1983).

¹²¹ *The International*, February 16, 1917, "'The Poor Whites' and a Page From History;" March 2, 1917, "The Mineworkers to be Made a Scab Union."

¹²² *The International*, July 14, 1916, "Union of all Building Workers" (article by Tyler).

¹²³ *The International*, June 9, 1916, "Trade Unions Reforming."

¹²⁴ *The International*, March 3, 1916, "The War After the War."

¹²⁵ Quote from *The International*, March 16, 1917, "Notes on Natives no. 1," emphasis in the original; March 23, 1917, "Notes on Natives no. 2;" also see June 2, 1916, S. G. Rich, "Anti-Segregation."

¹²⁶ *The International*, October 1, 1915, "The Parting of the Ways."

¹²⁷ Revolutionary syndicalists do not, therefore, suppose (*contra* Ntsebeza, 1988, op. cit.) that workers will become organized simply due to capitalist industrialization, and "*a fortiori*, suddenly become revolutionary," p. 32.

¹²⁸ *The International*, March 3, 1916, "The War after the War." In revolutionary syndicalist theory, it is *through* political education and the aegis of the industrial union itself that the working-class is *formed* as an active social force. To cite Rucker, 1989, op. cit., the trade union is "the elementary school of Socialism in general" in which the worker "becomes aware of his strength," gaining a "definite direction" for "social activities," and "through direct and unceasing warfare with the supporters of the present system" developing "the ethical concepts without which any social transformation is impossible: vital solidarity with their fellows in destiny and moral responsibility for their own action" (n.d.: pp.52-53).

¹²⁹ *The International*, December 3, 1915, "The Wrath to Come."

¹³⁰ *The International*, June 16, 1916, "Inviting Jim Sixpence to Tea."

¹³¹ E.g., Ntsebeza, 1988, op. cit.; Roux 1993, op. cit.

¹³² M. Lacey, *Working for Boroko: The Origins of a Coercive Labour System in South Africa* (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1981).

¹³³ Roux, 1978, op. cit., p. 123.

¹³⁴ A standard history of the I.W.W. in the United States is P.S. Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917* (New York: International Publishers, 1965). For the I.W.W. (including the De Leonites) in Australia and Britain, see *inter alia* Verity Burgmann *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: The I.W.W. in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Holton, 1976, op. cit.; and J. Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards' Movement* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973) respectively.

¹³⁵ Foner, 1965, op. cit., pp.167-168. The division was reflected in two rival versions of the *Preamble of the I.W.W.*, the "Chicago" I.W.W. deleting all reference to political action in its version, the "Detroit" I.W.W. adhering to the original I.W.W. *Preamble* which referred to workers taking action on both the "industrial" and "political" fields.

¹³⁶ Foner, 1965, op. cit., p. 168; cf. also Holton, 1980, op. cit.

¹³⁷ Foner, 1965, op. cit., pp.169-171.

¹³⁸ Foner, 1965, op. cit., pp.143.

¹³⁹ On relations between the two I.W.W.s in the United States, see Foner, 1965, op. cit., and M.H. Ebner, "The Passaic Strike of 1912 and the Two I.W.W.s," in D. J. Leab (ed.), *The Labor History Reader* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

¹⁴⁰ The "I.W.W." referred to in most histories, for example, is the Chicago I.W.W. In 1915, the Detroit I.W.W. was renamed the Workers International Industrial Union.

¹⁴¹ This metamorphosis is traced in D. McKee, "The Influence of Syndicalism upon Daniel De Leon," in *The Historian*, 20 (May 1958); and D. McKee, "Daniel De Leon: A Reappraisal," in *Labor History*, 1 (Fall 1960). This quote is from McKee, 1958, op. cit., p. 276.

¹⁴² McKee, 1958, op. cit., pp.276-277. See also L. G. Seretan, *Daniel De Leon: The Odyssey of an American Marxist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Holton, 1976, op. cit., p. 211.

¹⁴³ McKee, 1958, op. cit., p. 277.

¹⁴⁴ Socialist Labour Party, *The Socialist Labour Party: Its Aims and Methods* (Edinburgh: Socialist Labour Press, n.d.), p. 18; also see De Leon, *The Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World* (address delivered at Union Temple, Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 10, 1905, printed by Socialist Labour Press, Edinburgh), p. 23.

¹⁴⁵ Socialist Labour Party, n.d., op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁴⁶ De Leon explicitly stated that this term was synonymous with the idea of a revolutionary general strike, but had the advantage of being a more accurate and positive formulation.

¹⁴⁷ I.e., not just the capitalist State, but "political" (State) organization altogether.

¹⁴⁸ Socialist Labour Party, n.d., op. cit., p. 23, emphasis in original; De Leon, 1905, op. cit., pp.23, 27.

¹⁴⁹ Socialist Labour Party, n.d., op. cit.; De Leon 1905.

¹⁵⁰ De Leon, 1905, op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁵¹ De Leon 1905, op. cit., pp.23-24, 25, 27-28.

¹⁵² De Leon, 1905, op. cit., p. 23, emphasis in the original.

¹⁵³ De Leon, 1905, op. cit., pp.23-24; Socialist Labour Party, n.d., op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁵⁴ De Leon, 1905, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁵⁵ De Leon, 1905, op. cit., p. 24, my emphasis.

¹⁵⁶ See *inter alia*, R. Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism* (London: Pluto Press, 1971).

¹⁵⁷ *The International*, January 7, 1916, "The 'Socialist'."

¹⁵⁸ *The International*, January 14, 1916, "The First Conference of the League."

¹⁵⁹ Cited in Hirson, 1995, op. cit., p. 157.

¹⁶⁰ Hirson, 1993, op. cit.

¹⁶¹ David Ivon Jones, March 29, 1921, "Communism in South Africa," presented to the Executive of the Third International on behalf of the International Socialist League, reproduced in Bunting (ed.), 1981, op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁶² *The International*, January 7, 1916, "League Conference;" also see Cope, 1940, p. 178.

¹⁶³ *The International*, March 10, 1916, "The Resurging International in All Lands;" August 4, 1916, "Politics and Labour Leaders;" August 11, 1916, "Politics and Labour Leaders II;" October 20, 1916, "Municipal Politics and the Revolution."

¹⁶⁴ *The International*, September 6, 1918, "Socialism and Violence."

¹⁶⁵ *The International*, "Facing North by South."

¹⁶⁶ *The International*, August 18, 1916.

¹⁶⁷ *The International*, June 16, 1916, "Socialism and the Middle Class."

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *The International*, January 28, 1916, "Socialism Must Act."

¹⁷⁰ *The International*, February 25, 1916, "Mineworkers and Political Action."

¹⁷¹ For example, *The International*, January 21, 1916 (book list).

¹⁷² *The International*, February 22, 1918, "The Two I.W.W.s."

¹⁷³ See *inter alia*, *The International*, April 21, 1916; August 10, 1917; December 14, 1918, "The Russian Revolution Explained."

¹⁷⁴ *The International*, December 14, 1918, "The Russian Revolution Explained."

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in Thorpe, 1989, op. cit., p.10.

- ¹⁷⁶ See McKee, 1958, op. cit., p 278; McKee, 1960, op. cit., pp.296-297.
- ¹⁷⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, [1848] 1967), p. 30.
- ¹⁷⁸ Cited in Bookchin, 1977, op. cit., p. 136.
- ¹⁷⁹ De Leon claimed, for example, that Marx had stated in 1869 that "Only the economic organization is capable of setting on foot a true political party of labour, and thus raising a bulwark against the power of capital." Yet De Leon himself was repeatedly unable to provide a reference for this citation when challenged to do so: see McKee, 1958, op. cit.; and McKee, 1960, op. cit.
- ¹⁸⁰ *The International*, February 1, 1918, "The 'Planks' of the Communist Manifesto."
- ¹⁸¹ See McKee, 1958, op. cit. and McKee 1960, op. cit., and the "Translators Preface," 1909, *Communist Manifesto* (Edinburgh: Socialist Labour Press).
- ¹⁸² The use of the following quote from an early edition of *The International* to establish the International Socialist League's Marxist credentials misses the point: "What the labor movement requires is a return to the limpid, unequivocal affirmations of the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx," (Lerumo, 1971, op. cit., p. 31). This begs the question of what the International Socialist League understood these "limpid, unequivocal affirmations" to mean.
- ¹⁸³ For example, *The International*, January 11, 1918, "A Message from Tom Mann."
- ¹⁸⁴ On the *Socialist*, see J. Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards Movement* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973).
- ¹⁸⁵ *The International*, August 16, 1918, "An Appreciation from the S.L.P."
- ¹⁸⁶ Cope, n.d., op. cit., pp.191-192. For background on the British movement, see Holton, 1976, op. cit. and J. Hinton, 1973, op. cit.
- ¹⁸⁷ See Hinton, 1973, op. cit., pp.122-123.
- ¹⁸⁸ See F. Thompson and P. Murfin, *The I.W.W.: Its First 70 Years* (Published by the I.W.W. Chicago, 1976), p. 135.
- ¹⁸⁹ Cope, n.d., op. cit., pp.191-192.
- ¹⁹⁰ Cope, n.d., op. cit., p. 192.
- ¹⁹¹ Johns, 1995, op. cit., pp.68-69.
- ¹⁹² *The International*, August 2, 1918, "Revolution in Britain."
- ¹⁹³ *The International*, August 23, 1918, "Our 'Great Push.'"
- ¹⁹⁴ Johns, 1995, op. cit., p. 69.
- ¹⁹⁵ Johns, 1995, op. cit., p. 102.
- ¹⁹⁶ See, for example, Marshall, 1994, op. cit.; Thorpe, 1989, op. cit.; Woodcock, 1975, op. cit.
- ¹⁹⁷ *The International*, December 7, 1917, "Long Live the Commissaries of the People."
- ¹⁹⁸ *The International*, June 8, 1917, "The Star in the East."
- ¹⁹⁹ *The League Undaunted: Election Manifesto* (June 1917).
- ²⁰⁰ *The International*, January 11, 1918, "Our Annual Gathering."
- ²⁰¹ Marshall, 1994, op. cit.; Thorpe, 1989, op. cit.; Woodcock, 1975, op. cit.
- ²⁰² *The International*, May 18, 1917, "Russian Workmen Vindicate Marx."
- ²⁰³ *The International*, March 1, 1918, "The Call of the Bolsheviks League Manifesto."
- ²⁰⁴ *The International*, August 3, 1917, "The Russian Drama."
- ²⁰⁵ *The International*, December 14, 1917, "The Russian Revolution Explained."
- ²⁰⁶ *The International*, April 5, 1918, "Notes of the Bolshevik Movement."
- ²⁰⁷ *The International*, December 14, 1917, "The Russian Revolution Explained."
- ²⁰⁸ *The International*, November 30, 1917, "The Word Becomes Flesh," emphasis in the original.
- ²⁰⁹ *The International*, February 1, 1918, "The Decline and Fall of Political Democracy."
- ²¹⁰ See, for example, *The International*, November 2, 1917, "What Keeps Back the Native Worker?"; May 3, 1918, "The Life of Marx;" May 3, 1918, "The Work of Marx;" May 10, 1918, "The Great Criminal;" April 12, 1918, "'Federation' Labour Day and International May Day."
- ²¹¹ This is reproduced in B. Bunting (ed.), 1981, op. cit., pp.38-40. Emphasis mine.
- ²¹² Cited in Baruch Hirson, "David Ivon Jones: The Early Writings on Socialism in South Africa," *Searchlight South Africa* (1988) 1,1, pp.117-119.
- ²¹³ *The International*, January 23, 1920, "The League's Election Manifesto: The Revolutionary Issue."
- ²¹⁴ Cope, n.d., op. cit., p. 194.
- ²¹⁵ Roux, 1993, op. cit., p. 81.
- ²¹⁶ See "Notes by Brian Bunting," in Roux, 1993, op. cit., p. 186; Bunting, 1918, op. cit., p. 27; Cronin, 1991, op. cit.; and South African Communist Party, 1991, op. cit.
- ²¹⁷ *The International*, October 6, 1916, "Call to the Workers of South Africa."
- ²¹⁸ Cope, 1940, op. cit., p. 180.
- ²¹⁹ *The International*, May 4, 1917, "Mob Law on Mayday" and "Hooliganism: The Last Ditch."
- ²²⁰ Johns, 1995, op. cit., pp.75-76.
- ²²¹ *The International*, June 28, 1918, "The Lying Jade."
- ²²² Cited in Johns 1995, op. cit., p. 67.
- ²²³ Johns, 1995, op. cit., pp.67-68.
- ²²⁴ *The International*, August 3, 1917, "A Forward Move in Durban." For more details, see, in particular, Mantzaris, E., "The Indian Tobacco Workers Strike of 1920," in *Journal of Natal and Zulu*, VI (1983).
- ²²⁵ *The International*, October 26, 1917, "Indian Workers Waking Up" (article by Gordon Lee).
- ²²⁶ Mantzaris, 1983, op. cit., p. 84.
- ²²⁷ Mantzaris, 1983, op. cit., p. 117.
- ²²⁸ From the start, these meetings attracted police interest, and the following account draws heavily on the reports submitted to the Department of Justice by police spies who infiltrated the meetings. These are in the files of the Department of Justice, JD 3/527/17, National Archives, Pretoria. The reports cited in the main body of the text are, unless otherwise stated, drawn from this source.
- ²²⁹ Record in Department of Justice, op. cit.
- ²³⁰ Wilfrid Jali, report on meeting of July 26, 1917, in Department of Justice, op. cit.
- ²³¹ William Mtembu, report on meeting of July 26, 1917, in Department of Justice, op. cit.
- ²³² Simon, report on meeting of July 26, 1917, in Department of Justice, op. cit.
- ²³³ Wilfrid Jali, report on meeting of July 26, 1917.
- ²³⁴ Wilfrid Jali, report on meeting of September 27, 1917, in Department of Justice, op. cit.
- ²³⁵ R. Moroosi, report on meeting of October 11, 1917, in Department of Justice, op. cit.
- ²³⁶ I discuss the Industrial Workers of Africa in more detail in my papers *Race, Class and Revolutionary Syndicalism in South Africa...and Revolutionary Syndicalist Organizing in South Africa...*, op. cit.
- ²³⁷ Unlabeled report, May 1918 (full date illegible), in Department of Justice, op. cit.
- ²³⁸ Roux, 1993, op. cit., p. 77.
- ²³⁹ Johnstone, 1979, op. cit., pp.248, 250.
- ²⁴⁰ See previous note.
- ²⁴¹ See, *inter alia*, Norman Caulfield, "Wobblies and Mexican Workers in Petroleum, 1905-1924," in *International Review of Social History*, 40 (1995); Burgmann, 1995, op. cit.; P. S. Foner, *Organized Labour and the Black Worker 1619-1973* (New York: International Publishers, 1974).
- ²⁴² Prominent in the Communist Party of South Africa/South African Communist Party literature: for example, Simons 1983, op. cit.
- ²⁴³ Translation by Wilfrid Jali, attached to report on meeting of November 1, 1917, in Department of Justice, op. cit.
- ²⁴⁴ See, for example, the discussion of the Mexican literature in J. Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working-class 1886-1931* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), pp.16, 185, 210.
- ²⁴⁵ Allen, for example, has pointed to the appropriation of Connolly by forces ranging from Irish communists, to conservative Catholics and republican militants. See K. Allen, *The Politics of James Connolly* (London: Pluto Press, 1987), pp.9-18.
- ²⁴⁶ For example, Verity Burgmann, 1995, op. cit.
- ²⁴⁷ For example, B. Marcus, (ed.), *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution: Speeches by Sandinista Leaders* (New York/London/Sydney: Pathfinder Press, 1985); Tomas Borge, Carlos Fonesca, Daniel Ortega,

Humberto Ortega, and Jaime Wheelock, *Sandinistas Speak: Speeches, Writings, and Interviews with Leaders of Nicaragua's Revolution* (New York/ London/ Sydney: Pathfinder Press, 1986). For discussions of Sandino's anarchist influences, see Marshall, 1994, op. cit.; A. Bendana, *A Sandinista Commemoration of the Sandino Centennial* (speech given on the 61st anniversary of the death of General Sandino, held in Managua's Olaf Palme Convention Center, distributed by Center for International Studies, Managua, translated by F. S. Courmeyuer, 1995); *Declaration of the Chilean Libertarian Movement on the Nicaraguan Revolution*, July 14, 1987, translated by S. Dolgoff in *Libertarian Labour Review*, 5 (1988).
