

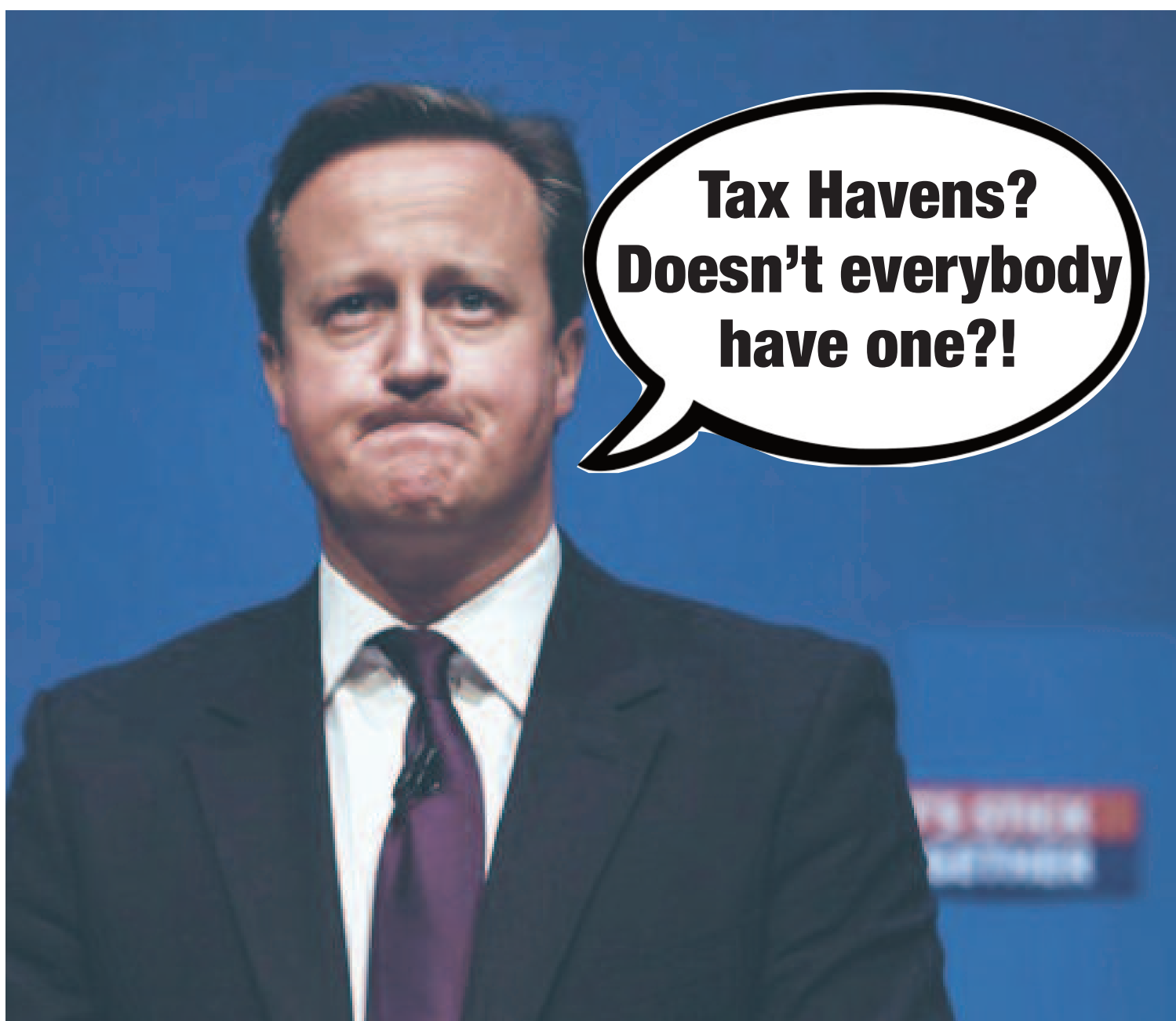


Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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A GOVERNMENT OF THE 1%, FOR THE 1%



GET THE TORIES OUT!

Back in 2012, the *Daily Telegraph*, a Tory paper, reported research which had found that two-thirds of the then Tory/Lib-Dem Cabinet were millionaires.

It reckoned the total wealth of 29 Cabinet members at £70 million, and David Cameron's at £3.8 million.

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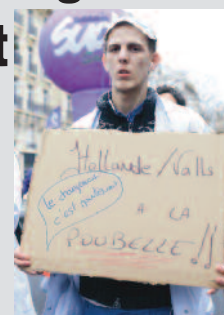
Junior doctors' escalate strikes



Two junior doctors speak to *Solidarity* about their strikes and how activists can support them.

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France: fight against new labour law



Solidarity reports from France where workers and students are linking up to fight a new labour law.

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Women who changed science



Les Hearn reviews 52 women who changed science and the world.

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Join Labour!

Jill Mountford reports on Momentum steering committee

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We need a class struggle student left

By AWL Students

The conference of the National Union of Students meets in Brighton on 19-21 April. It's the first conference since the left and soft left partially took control of the union last year, winning four of the six full time positions and a majority on the national executive.

With huge government attacks in universities, the virtual destruction of further education, the upsurge in the Labour Party, the junior doctors' strike, a burgeoning fight on academics and other significant battles, it is crucial that the student activist left is built up.

But this hasn't been the most lively year for student activism, despite student and youth support for Jeremy Corbyn in Labour Party leadership election. Unfortunately the new model — or not so new model — NUS has done little to change that.

This is partly because the record of right-wing NUS President, Megan Dunn, has been bad. The NUS failed to campaign effectively against the cut to maintenance grants; failed to back the NCAFC organised national demonstration in November 2015 (the previous year Megan Dunn was involved in getting NUS to withdraw its sup-

port for the national demonstration); and hijacked the NHS students' Bursary or Bust campaign to the extent that NHS students have started a petition calling on Dunn to respect the campaign's grassroots organising.

Disagreements have also been badly conducted. When the National Executive (NEC) voted to give money to the NCAFC to help run a national demonstration the right spread false accusations that the NCAFC was using the money to fund NUS election campaigns. Policies passed on Cage and BDS have been ignored because they are disagreed with, rather than being challenged politically.

Inactivity has also been caused by new NUS officers behaving less like militant organisers and more like bog standard bureaucratic NUS officers who happen to have different positions on e.g. Palestine.

That isn't the whole story. VP Welfare Shelly Asquith, who is a left-wing Labour person, was central to the Corbyn campaign, and is linked to NCAFC, has done some good organising; so, to differing degrees, have other left officers. But the overall picture isn't good.

Alongside unprincipled cliques, and factionalism, identity politics and reactionary anti-imperialism have mingled to produce a damaging mix. Those politics, rather than

class-struggle politics, defines the dominant left in NUS.

The left-dominated NUS national executive council (NEC) has repeatedly discredited itself by doing such things as voting down a left-wing motion in support of the Kurdish struggle because some other leftists labelled it "racist" and "imperialist" (after months of controversy it passed a pro-Kurdish motion, before forgetting about the issue completely), and voting down support for Palestinian workers organising and fighting Israeli bosses in the Israeli settlements on the grounds that this would mean recognising the occupation!

The NEC also voted to end the customary Jewish representation on the organising body for Anti-Racism and Anti-Fascism. This representation was not democratic or formally guaranteed, but now it is gone altogether. There will, rightly, be an argument about policy and attitudes on anti-semitism at the conference.

NUS has rightly opposed the government's debate-stifling, Muslim-targeting Prevent agenda, but has done so by promoting the right-wing Islamist group Cage and touring its leader Moazzam Begg round the country.

On the crucially important issue of threats to free speech and free or-

ganisation on campus, NUS has mostly contributed to the problem rather than helping solve it.

The left candidate for NUS President, Black Students' Officer Malia Bouattia, is essentially a spokesperson for all these political views. Sections of the left are the driving force here, and the right around Megan Dunn, naturally does not present a coherent or positive alternative.

TASKS

At this conference, the tasks for the serious, class-struggle and socialist left include:

- Pushing forward left policy on issues including fighting the government's higher education reforms by finally winning a boycott of the consumerist, market-driven "National Student Survey", free education, further education, student housing, and international students, as well as wider issues including the NHS, the living wage and workers' rights, and the EU referendum. NCAFC has got a lot of policy submitted on this, much of it written by Workers' Liberty activists.

- Raising big issues which are not on the conference agenda. For instance, there will not be a debate on free speech. The dominant left on the NEC has not submitted its positions on working with Cage

and on a full boycott of Israel — presumably because it thinks that it is safer to renew these at the NEC than risk defeat in a conference vote (a full boycott policy has never passed at NUS conference, and there was no opportunity to debate the policy that committed to work with Cage).

- Not dodging but tackling head on the big arguments behind these issues.

- Recruiting and organising people around the NCAFC to develop a grassroots left that can lead a successful fight against the government's policies.

- Defeating any attempted comeback by the old right while also challenging the dominant soft left. Electing serious left candidates to the NEC, which includes the NCAFC's Ana Oppenheim, Sahaya James and Omar Raii, the last of whom is an AWL supporter.

We'll be publishing a magazine for the conference, selling literature, helping produce and distribute NCAFC bulletins, participating in the NCAFC fringe meeting and campaigning for policy and candidates.

- Come and help us!
students@workersliberty.org / 07775 763 750

Indian students oppose right-wing Hindu nationalism

Tanuj Raut explains the background to growing protests at Indian universities.

To account for the events unfolding at various central universities in India, it is essential to pinpoint their inception and view them as repercussions of a larger phenomenon.

These conflicts are undoubtedly exemplary of what happens when a government affiliates itself with authoritarian and fascist organisations to consolidate power and gradually curb dissent.

9 June 2015, perhaps marked the beginning of this consolidation, as Ganjendra Chauhan, former television personality and current BJP member, was appointed as the Chairman of the Film and Television Institute of India. This was seen as the beginning of "saffronisation" of national institutions, as the government appointed an individual based on membership within the party's structural apparatus.

On 17 January 2016, Rohith Vemula, a PhD student at the University of Hyderabad, committed suicide after his suspension from the University hostel, public spaces and disqualification from student elections.

The reason for his suspension was an alleged "assault" on an ABVP (Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad) member, objecting to the

content of events organized by Ambedkar Students' Association (ASA), at UOH.

A Prevention of Atrocities case was then filed against University Vice Chancellor Appa Rao and BJP politician Bandaru Dattatreya. Recently, Appa Rao was reinstated as the UOH Vice Chancellor. Following a series of protests by university students and faculty members against this illicit reinstatement, the UOH Vice Chancellor called in state police and a consequent lathi (baton) charge was made upon students and faculty members.

On 9 February, at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, a few students arranged a "poetry-reading" session to mourn the "judicial killing of Afzal Guru" [a Kashmiri separatist] and make solidarity with the self-determination of Kashmir. Immediately after, charges of sedition and criminal conspiracy under section 124A and 120B of the Indian Penal Code were lodged against several students, including the president of the JNU student union, Kanhaiya Kumar. These student have currently been granted an interim bail for six months.

In 2008, the executive committee and academic council of Aligarh Muslim University decided to establish five off-campus sites, out of which three were made operational. The BJP led HRD Ministry intended to declare these sites illegal and stop assistance, causing



grave insecurity. Students at the North Eastern Hill University in Shillong protested against the "anti-student policies", such as a year-long halt on scholarships, lack of classrooms, and delayed clearance for a School of Technology.

After these alarming cases of police and state brutality, mainstream media has situated this tension as a "national versus anti-national" debate. The narrative portrays activities which are primarily academic, as "terrorist" or to use a redundant term, "anti-national". The popular media, most of which is concen-

trated in the hands of a few business conglomerates, makes these debates into show-trials.

It is a spectacle, which, to quote Debord, is "a means of unification... where all attention, all consciousness, converges". This convergence has replaced informed, democratic exchange over the problems of students.

The affiliation of the Government with the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) explains the involvement of tributary Hindu organizations such as ABVP in clashes against student bodies at UOH and JNU. JNU, as one of the distinguished educational institutes of India, has produced left-wing intellectuals in the past, and that has become a sore point for saffron brigades such as the RSS and parties like the BJP. The fact that the RSS, which was responsible for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, lectures "left-wing terrorists" on nationalism is both ironic and horrifying.

The general amnesia about the history of Hindutva (extreme Hindu nationalism) was revealed in the assassinations of scholars like M M Kalburgi, Govind Pansare and Narendra Dabolkar by right-wing militants, and explains why it accompanies the development of a disciplinary state. On the one hand, we have "left-leaning" JNU teachers on the Delhi police's "watch list" and on the other, the introduction of the Aadhar Bill which places

all "volunteers" under the surveillance of intelligence agencies.

Moreover, the "disciplinary action" conducted by committees at UOH and JNU against students aims to ensure ideological appropriation and manufacture of "ideal students", incapable of dissent within lecture halls.

As long as the state adheres to the ideological foundations of an organization like the RSS, which is hell-bent on burying cultural plurality, India will soon adopt a totalitarian character, one which ensures the survival of Hindutva.

Discussion about the organised attack by the government, media and right wing militant groups must be part of a larger dialogue over the reinvention of left-wing politics in India. The left must face up to issues of the Dalit communities [so-called "untouchables"] and erase any Brahminical strains left within its structures.

Expression of ideas now risks imprisonment in the world's largest democracy, and therefore, international support is a matter of moral and ideological obligation. What is clearly an onslaught on established academia is being met with a strong and historic unification of student bodies across India.

Unless the left strives to ensure the survival of dissent, the continuance of this nation-wide student movement might be short-lived.

Junior doctors: a fight for the NHS

Solidarity spoke to BMA activists about the junior doctors dispute.

Emma Runswick is a medical student at Manchester University. She is running in the elections for the BMA's Council (national executive).

I think the dispute is going well. The mood among junior doctors is getting angrier.

We are angry about the imposition of the contract, and about the government saying it finds the Equality Impact Assessment's conclusions about the negative impact on women acceptable.

When you interviewed me in February, if you'd asked if there was support for "all out" action, with no junior doctors on emergency cover, I'd have said no. Now we're about to do that for the first time and there is the support. There is wide discussion about how to escalate further.

People's ideas are still radicalising. It's interesting seeing more people start to clock that the law doesn't exist primarily to serve even people like doctors, it exists to serve the ruling class.

The BMA is also changing. Soon we'll find out who's been elected to BMA council; my guess is you'll see a very distinct shift to the left. Moves to create a left network in the BMA are progressing. The BMA is holding a "Crisis in the NHS" event on 3 May, and we'll be hold-

ing a fringe meeting there for the network. There is also more discussion about drawing the wider labour movement into supporting us, particularly through the BMA pushing for the TUC to organise a national demo, as Momentum NHS has called for Labour to do.

In Manchester we had a good march on the first day of the last round of strikes (6-7 April), and we're also seeing more community action and events. A good example is "Little Lifesavers", where mainly women doctors with children contact nurseries, parent and toddler groups and so on to hold teach-ins on basic life support whilst also talking about why we're striking.

The next strike (26-28 April), our first where emergency cover is entirely in the hands of consultants, will be harder and there'll be more pressure for people not to strike. Public support is going to be more important than ever. People should do everything they can to support us, including letting us know when they're next in hospital or at the GP.

Above all we need people on picket lines, on both days of the strike.

Ruhe Chowdhury is a junior doctor in London.

The dispute is going well, but at the same time it's disappointing to be where we are. We didn't think we'd have to withdraw all junior doctor activity in hospitals.

The government says we can stop this at any time, but it's the

other way round; they can stop this by withdrawing a contract which everyone except them thinks is terrible. We have very widespread support, from a growing number of professional and medical bodies, as well as the general public.

I think the government calculates that if they manage to impose the contract, the NHS will decline slowly over a number of years, and that junior doctors will knuckle under to help them manage the decline. But the timescale is much shorter. Many junior doctors will leave and the system will go into dramatic crisis, in months not years. Things are already very bad, but they will get much worse fast.

But, from a grassroots point of view, the action is going well. When we began our strikes we were told our public support would collapse. It didn't. Then we were told that it would collapse if we took all out action. Our support has gone down but is still strong.

This is a learning experience — people need to see what it's like to have a big strike in the NHS, which they haven't for a very long time.

It's hard to tell what's happening in the government. However, Jeremy Hunt's statements have become much more aggressive; he is saying there can be no more negotiations, and he's also started cancelling all kinds of engagements. That suggests his back is against the wall.

The 26-28 April strike will hopefully show that junior doctors are still united and increase the pressure further. After the BMA will be meeting to decide the way forward.

We want members of the public to write to the chief executive of their local hospital, and urge them not to impose the contract — particularly because foundation trusts will have some leeway for this. We want people to write to their MPs. We want people to join our picket lines, wear badges, put up posters, attend community events.

This is not just about our contract. It's also about nursing bursaries and the wider fight to save the NHS. We're doing this because we know the NHS is being dismantled, and we want to fight to stop that.



Syrian refugees protest at the Greek-Macedonian border

Let them in!

By Angela Driver

On Sunday 10 April 2016, the Macedonian authorities brutally suppressed an attempt by Syrian refugees to cross the border into Greece.

Tear gas, plastic bullets, stun grenades and water cannons were used against the refugees, including children, when they tried to scale the fence to cross the border. Médecins Sans Frontières reported seeing 200 people suffering from breathing problems, and another 100 suffering injuries. The tear gas used reached camps near by caus-

ing families to flee with children to nearby farms to escape the effects of the chemicals.

This barbaric treatment of people trying to flee to safety is a result of the decision to close the borders on the edge of Europe in an attempt to reduce the numbers of refugees entering.

The recent decision to deport refugees from Greece back to Turkey is causing further suffering and uncertainty for the 11,000 people currently camped at the Greek-Macedonian border, and the further 50,000 stranded in Greece.

A political campaign to fight the Education White Paper

By a Lewisham teacher

The Government's education White Paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere, is a threat to state education as we know it and to education workers' pay and working conditions.

It will only be defeated by a combination of industrial action by the education workers' unions and by a political campaign without and within the Labour Party and the labour movement.

It is important that this campaign isn't just left to education workers and parents. The issues affect us all. The campaign must unite education workers, parents, activists and the public.

The sheer level of private looting that is being licensed by forced-academisation, with currently public assets being given free to private organisations, is motivation enough to join this campaign. There is a huge potential to build a mass campaign which will not only defeat the White Paper but reverse the direction of the Tories' privatisation drive in education and well beyond it.

On Monday 4 April, Lewisham Momentum unanimously passed a motion to build such a campaign. It agreed to approach existing anti-academy campaigns, education unions, local Labour Parties to fight the White Paper and fight for public, well-funded, democratic, comprehensive education.

To pursue this campaign we are going to move motions in local Labour Parties and unions (a model motion is available) and to write to Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell congratulating them on their clear stance against the White Paper and asking them to vigorously campaign against it.

We will also call upon them to unequivocally support the education unions' industrial action, and visit those union picket lines when strikes occur.

Also to push for the Party to commit to guarantee better, nationally-negotiated and guaranteed terms and conditions for teachers and education workers, reversing academisation and Free Schools and bring all schools into a system of democratic local authority control.



Tata deal comes at high price

By Gerry Bates

Greybull Capital has agreed to buy the long products division of Tata Steel, in Scunthorpe, Teesside and a few other places, where around 4,400 people are employed.

The deal does not include the Port Talbot site of Tata where if no buyer can be found, the majority of the job losses from Tata Steel are expected.

Greybull Capital is a company which "rescues and turns around" businesses by making them prof-

itable again — often by forcing pay cuts and job losses. In other words it is an asset stripper.

Most recently Greybull Capital took over Monarch Airlines. Workers faced pay cuts of up to 30% and hundreds of redundancies were made.

The deal Greybull Capital is putting together (ex-Tata sites will become known as British Steel) has the agreement of unions and will include a one-year pay cut of 3% and changes to the pension scheme. Trade unions are recommending that their members vote

to accept the deal.

A reduction in job losses is coming at a high price, and one which shamefully the unions are colluding in. It is still unclear how many of those jobs will be saved, since Greybull will likely make redundancies or may decide to ditch the business later on.

No real fight has been made by the unions to argue for nationalisation of the steel industry and to mobilise members behind that political fight.

Yet that is the best option to save jobs now and in the future.

Universal basic income? Maybe, but how?

RICH AND POOR

By Matt Cooper

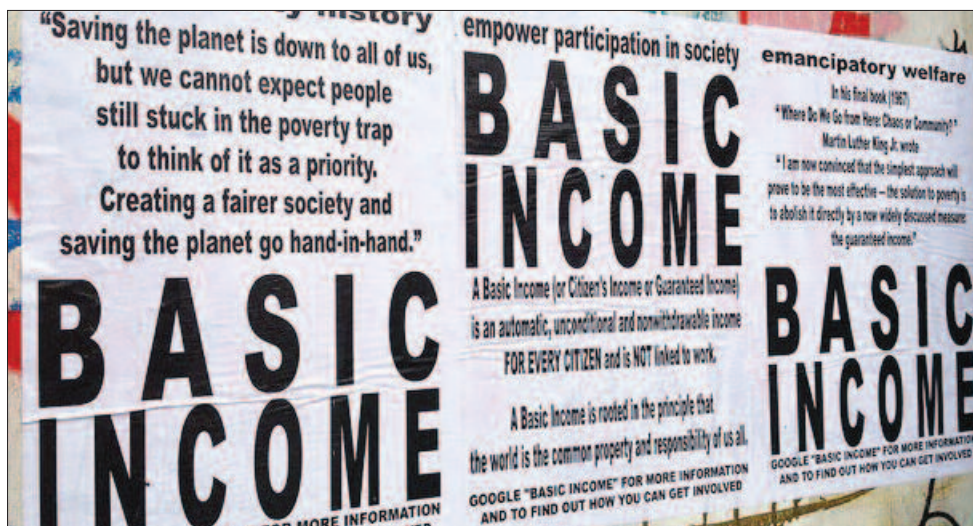
The universal basic income (UBI) is the proposal that every adult should receive an unconditional cash benefit.

The benefit is given even when the individual is working; it is given if they are looking after children, studying or spending their time on anything else they chose. UBI could, to a degree, replace some state benefits. The idea is that it is not means tested, but it could be counted as taxable income and clawed back from higher earners. The idea of UBI is distinct from a means-tested guaranteed minimum income from benefits as it is a payment to all.

Thomas Paine suggested a limited form of UBI in *Agrarian Justice* in 1797, but the idea probably emerged in its modern-form in the confusion of socialist ideas that emerged among non-revolutionaries in reaction to the Russian Revolution. In Britain the idea was popular with left-wing social democrats like the labour historian GDH Cole.

The idea emerged again in centre and centre-left politics in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. Most of its advocates saw it as a progressive reform within market capitalism, against both the socialist left and the emergent neo-liberalism. In Britain it appeared as an oddball social liberal idea, pushed by a committee in the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. The idea has attracted more widespread interest in recent years.

The policy is already supported by the Greens, and last month the Scottish Nationalist Party voted for a version of UBI. It has been seriously discussed in Finland by the centre-right government and is being introduced in the Dutch city of Utrecht by the centre-left Liberal Democratic administration (at around £660 per month). Thus, in February, when the Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, announced Labour was considering the



policy, it was not a lunge to the left.

Not so strange also that the Fabian Society, that old social-liberal think-tank embedded in the Labour Party, has moved towards the idea in an article on their website by Nicholas Harrop*. Harrop argues that income tax-free earnings allowance (currently £11,000) and similar allowances for National Insurance can be considered a transfer of money to middle and higher earners.

This may seem counter-intuitive but the model makes good sense. Currently, someone who earns nothing will not receive any benefit from the Income Tax allowance, while those earning above £11,000 will receive a tax bill reduced by £3,166 a year.

This is seen most clearly when the allowances change. In 2010 income tax/NI allowances were worth £1,921 to higher and middle earners; by 2020 this figure will be £3,500 a year. At the same time many of those on benefits will see below-inflation increases and some receiving in-work benefits will see their income fall.

Harrop shows that if all the taxes and benefits are considered, in 2020 the poorest fifth of households will receive around £10,000

(much of it in benefits) and the richest fifth will receive £9,200 (mainly through various tax exemptions). Thus the poorest and the richest receive the same tax exemption/cash benefit.

Removing tax allowances and other exemptions, and abolishing most means-tested benefits, to replace them with a UBI at £10,000 per household would therefore be a revenue neutral move. Taxing it would be at

a rate where those higher up the income scale would lose much of it, and if those lower down the income distribution paid less it would be mildly retributive, although Harrop is timid about suggesting this.

Is this an idea socialists should support? If UBI replaced many means-tested out-of-work benefits, things would better than they are now. Set at a high enough level it would alleviate much in-work poverty. It would allow people to take a more rational attitude to balancing work with caring responsibilities. It could redistribute wealth and create a little more equality.

But ultimately this is, at best, a mildly redistributive policy, and in its more attenuated forms not even that. It could be at the heart of a decently redistributive policy if we had a government that fought for it to be so.

Paine's 1797 proposal was to funded by taxing the inherited wealth of the landed elite and that was its strength. The Fabians' UBI would do nothing to address the inequalities of property at the heart of capitalism.

* www.fabians.org.uk/all-in-this-together
• More info: www.basicincome.org
citizensincome.org

Proud to be a Zionist

ERIC LEE

Jeremy Corbyn's brother recently made headlines by tweeting that "#Zionists can't cope with anyone supporting rights for #Palestine".

That the tweet took place in the context of a heated discussion about how the Labour Party is coping with increasing allegations of anti-Semitism is not the point. The point is that the word "Zionist" has become toxic on the British Left, and I have a problem with this.

On one of the Sunday morning radio shows, Jonathan Freedland was asked about this. He quoted the Israeli author Amos Oz who said that "Zionist" was like a family name. There always needs to be a first name, such as "Religious Zionist" or "Socialist Zionist". But Freedland himself, when asked, said he'd rather not use the label "Zionist" to describe his own views as it would just cause confusion.

There are really two approaches to dealing with political labels that become toxic. One is to accept reality and abandon them. The other is to be defiant and embrace them.

And there are consequences in the real world to choosing one or another of those options. For example, a generation ago, right-wing politicians in America would label every attempt at social reform, no matter how modest, as "socialism". (They still do, but with less success.) As the Cold War raged, the word "socialist" had become toxic. We on the American Left would argue that by openly calling ourselves "socialists" we were giving breathing space to liberals, and changing the political discourse in the country. Little did we realize that within a few years, an openly socialist politician would be a serious contender for the Presidency.

Still, there are terms we've been forced to abandon. Most leftists I know don't call themselves "communists", for example. While we can all claim to embrace the ideas

expounded by Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*, most of us accept that it would cause more confusion than it's worth to try to claim the word for ourselves. This is helped by the fact that up until 1918, most socialists called themselves "social democrats", and that the Bolsheviks took on the rarely-used "communist" label to distinguish the new parties they were creating. It was a label we could discard because we had a perfectly good alternative.

But this is not the case with the word Zionist. As Freedland and most others would agree, a Zionist is a person who supports the Jewish people's right to a national homeland. One could be a Zionist and oppose the current right-wing government in Israel. One could be a Zionist and support an independent Palestinian state, side by side with Israel. One could oppose the occupation and still be a Zionist.

In fact, one could even argue that if you really believe the Jewish people need a state of their own, and want it to survive, you must also support reaching an agreement with the Palestinians to share the land which both peoples claim. There is no other future for the Jewish state that I can imagine. As a Zionist, I therefore support genuine peace and reconciliation between the two peoples — and a two-state solution to bring an end to the conflict.

I am happy to embrace the label "socialist Zionist" and the tradition that represents — the kibbutz movement which for decades was a model democratic socialist society, the struggle by left Zionists including a party I was proud to be a member of (Mapam) against racism and for peace, against religious coercion and for social justice for Jews and Arabs.

I could, I guess, go along with Freedland and just call myself "a socialist who supports the right of the Jewish people to their own country" — but why not just embrace the label of "Zionist" instead?

Kick out the Blairites?

THE LEFT

By Sacha Ismail

On the 9 April demonstration against library closures in Lambeth on 9 April, the Socialist Party had placards saying "Kick out the Blairites".

This is a classic example of a slogan being a dishonest, pseudo-militant self-advertising.

What does "Kick out the Blairites" mean? It could mean joining or getting more active in Labour to push forward the fight against the Blairites in the party — as many on the

demo will have done (Lambeth Momentum and other left Labour activists have been central to the libraries campaign).

But the SP opposes people joining Labour, and opposes left unions like the FBU affiliating to Labour, so it can't be that.

Short of a Lambeth insurrection to take over the Town Hall and dissolve the council, the only other possibility I can meaning behind the slogan is, "Use elections to throw out the Blairites from office". But since the Blairites are the official Labour candidates, and the SP opposes people joining Labour to deselect them, this could only mean voting for another party.

Who? The SP's Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition front got an average vote of 0.47% in the three Lambeth parliamentary constituencies where it stood last year. The only vaguely conceivable options for kicking out Labour through elections are the Greens, who got the second most votes in the 2014 Lambeth council elections (16% to Labour's 54%), or the Tories, who got second most seats (3 to Labour's 59). Does the SP mean one of those?

In fact what the slogan means is: "Join the Socialist Party, we're really left-wing — don't worry too much about the politics".





Get the Tories out!

Back in 2012, the *Daily Telegraph*, a Tory paper, reported research which had found that two-thirds of the then Tory/Lib-Dem Cabinet were millionaires.

It reckoned the total wealth of 29 Cabinet members at £70 million, and David Cameron's at £3.8 million.

Since the Panama Papers scandal broke, Cameron has been trying to present himself as no more than a moderately well-off middle-class person.

His father's Blairmore firm was established in Panama. It made a show of being controlled by puppet directors based there, though the actual bosses were in London, so it would pay no tax. Oh, say Cameron's apologists, nothing illegal. Normal procedure for an international investment fund.

His father was on the *Sunday Times* Rich List as having £10 million assets before he died. Now David Cameron says he inherited "quite a lot of money" from his dad: £300,000.

That figure, like the £30,000 David Cameron says he made from selling shares in Blairmore, is intended to suggest modest comfort: after all, £300,000 is little enough that an "ordinary" working-class person whose parents paid off their mortgage can inherit it.

But no-one claims Cameron's father disinherited "Dave" and his siblings. Where's the rest of the £10 million?

Where is the family fortune of David Cameron's wife Samantha? Both her father and her stepfather are aristocratic landowners. She has made her own fortune as "creative director" at a luxury firm, Smythson,

which is owned through a holding company in Luxembourg and linked to a trust in Guernsey.

This is a government of millionaires, which governs for millionaires. It is a government of and for people for whom "tax management", manipulating assets to minimise taxes, is routine. For all its talk about tightening up on tax havens, it still runs a tax system in which (thanks to VAT and other regressive taxes) the poorest 10% pay a bigger proportion of their income in tax than the richest 10%.

Claiming that it wants to cut back government debt, the government has systematically cut welfare benefits, especially for the disabled; squeezed local government services to strangulation-point; starved the NHS; and chopped public-service jobs.

At the same time, it has cut taxes for the rich. A recent analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies show that the government's tax-and-benefit plans will continue that siphoning-off from the poor towards the rich for years to come.

The Panama Papers revelations (and there are more of them to come) come after the Government's political grip has already been weakened:

- by its forced retreats on tax credits and further disability benefit cuts
- by its split over Europe
- by the opportunist resignation of Iain Duncan Smith, denouncing welfare cuts as "not defensible in the way they were placed within a budget that benefits higher earning taxpayers"

• by an outcry even among Tories against its plan to force "academisation" on all state schools and abolish Qualified Teacher Status.

Still the government continues to do its work. Still the cuts continue. Still the Trade Union Bill makes its way towards becoming law and making large-scale legal public sector strikes almost impossible. Still the Tories can recover their balance if they are allowed to get through this crisis quietly.

The labour movement should go on the offensive to get the Tories out.

• Labour councils should refuse to do the work of the wounded beast. They should refuse to pass on the cuts imposed on them by central government. They should follow the example of Clay Cross in the 1970s and Poplar in the 1920s, side with their communities, and defy the government.

• Labour should redouble its drive for the 7 May elections with policies that go to the heart of the matter. That means: policies which propose to take the loot from the billionaires and put it back under the democratic control of the working class which created the wealth.

Policies which suggest socialism-by-stealth in consensus with the billionaires, like a national investment bank, are not adequate. The wretched record of the Hollande administration in France, which came to office on election promises well to the left of what Labour proposed in 2010 and then collapsed into right-wing crisis-management, shows that those softly-softly policies do not work, and in fact are abandoned or neutralised at the first crisis.

• The 16 April demonstration against austerity should be made the start of a drive to get the labour movement, and all those who backed Jeremy Corbyn last year, active and out on the streets, in support of disputes like the junior doctors' and the campaigns to save the NHS and state education.

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At Workers' Liberty in November 2015 we agreed that we wanted to improve the accessibility of our literature and events, including to those who are disabled.

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You may also be one of the many people who like to listen to audio books, while you are working, out walking, or travelling on the tube. These recordings are also for you!

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• www.workersliberty.org/audio

France: fighting to win

By Martin Thomas and Michael Elms

The Paris demonstration on 9 April against the “Socialist” government’s new “Labour Law” was livelier, noisier, and more colourful than official trade union marches are in Britain.

The nine friends of Workers’ Liberty who went to Paris were near a truck from SUD, the most radical of France’s nine or so trade union confederations (equivalents of the TUC). Its slogans included: “Share more, work less”; “A society of sharing”; “Not amendable, not negotiable: trash the ‘Labour Law’”; and “General Strike!”

The march ended at the Place de la Nation, not with windy speeches from trade-union officials and the crowd eroding slowly through boredom, but with tear gas.

The clashes between small groups of young activists and the fully-kitted-out riot police had an air of ritual about them; but police tactics have been more aggressive in this movement than they were under previous right-wing governments. Apparently most workers condemn and place the blame for violence on the police, even if they do not want to join the young street-fighters.

Some hundreds of demonstrators went from the Place de la Nation to the protest camp — a bit like the Occupy movement — which sprang up after 31 March in the Place de la République in central Paris (and then in other cities), under the title “Nuit Debout” (hard to translate: “uprisen night”? “all-nighter”?)

The chief initiators were, apparently, supporters of Left Front Presidential candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, grouped around the left-social democratic magazine *Fakir*; but the camp is run in the non-party and would-be “direct-democratic” (but often chaotic and impenetrable) style of similar ventures.

When we were there, activity was limited by steady rain. But Palestine solidarity campaigners sold falafel to raise money; militant health workers operated a first-aid stall and promoted awareness of trade union struggles in hospitals; pacifists and migrant campaigners handed out leaflets, and undocumented migrants addressed impromptu meetings.

As we were returning to Britain, on the morning of 11 April, the République camp was evacuated by riot police. It has been re-established, but surrounded by police who vow that they will demolish any shelters or structures put up there.

In the famous events of May-June 1968, student protests were able to “detonate” the greatest general strike in European history, but the students found it difficult to break through the Communist Party domination of strongly-unionised factories and to establish direct communication with workers.

Today there are many more students, of more diverse backgrounds, and the Communist Party’s base in industry is qualitatively weaker. Student mobilisations have been a major driving force in this movement, to the point even (so we heard) that some more militant groups of workers, keen to move to open-ended strikes, are inclined to wait for



the students to go first.

All this mobilisation — with, according to opinion polls, very wide public support — takes place against a supposedly “Socialist” government.

Francois Hollande was chosen as Socialist Party (SP) candidate for the 2012 presidential election in a primary (the SP’s first), in which 1.6 million people voted for him.

Campaigning for president against the right-wing incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy, he promised a policy of social equality and regulation of finance.

TAXING RICH

He promised increased taxes on big corporations, banks and the wealthy, including a 75% income tax on the super-rich.

He said he would create 60,000 new teaching jobs; bringing the official retirement age back down to 60 from 62; organise new jobs for unemployed youth; and boost industry through a public investment bank.

All that has come to nothing. In fact the Hollande government has gone with the EU capitalist leaders’ consensus that the only answer after the 2008 crash and the subsequent eurozone debt crisis is cuts, “labour flexibility”, more cuts, and more “labour flexibility”.

The SP, a party with a weak working-class base and weak democratic structures, has been completely unable to call him to account. Many SP members, and even some SP leaders, have rebelled against the new “Labour Law”, but without effect.

There’s a lesson for the British left here. Vague and piecemeal left-wing policies which evade the need for struggle against the plutocracy are almost certain to collapse into right-wing conformism in conditions of economic tension and crisis.

Since 2012, much of the mounting anger against Hollande’s wretched administration

has been channelled by the Front National (FN), a neo-fascist party which relies mostly on nationalism and racism but can offer social demagoguery from time to time. In France’s last round of elections, the regional polls of December 2016, the FN scored 27.7%, more than any other party.

The movement against the “Labour Law” has pushed the FN aside for now. The FN is evasive on its attitude to the law, and plays no visible part in the opposition to it.

Much work still remains to be done on building a strong left-wing voice against Hollande. On the 9 April demonstration, the organised left was visible, but, maybe, less confident than it used to be.

None of the organised left appeared to make more than a token effort to sell their newspapers to the demonstrators. Instead, they gave out leaflets, and, mainly, distributed large stickers (“autocollants”) which demonstrators would take to stick on their bags or their clothing.

Autocollants are surely valuable. But they are limited to short slogans. And the movement needs more than that.

We discussed with Olivier Delbeke, one of the editors of the bulletin *Arguments pour la lutte sociale*; with members of L’Etincelle, a faction which was previously an opposition group in Lutte Ouvrière; and, briefly, with members of Lutte Ouvrière.

The paradox, said Olivier, is that this large and broadly left-wing upsurge comes at a time when the organised left is on the retreat more or less across the board.

Left-wing SP members and the Front de Gauche — a loose alliance between Mélenchon, who was formerly an SP left-winger, the Communist Party (CP), and others — are focused on the Socialist Party primaries for the presidential election due in April-May 2017.

The Front de Gauche itself is in poor condition. The CP has distanced itself. Mélenchon’s own Parti de Gauche, founded in 2008, is feeble. The local Front de Gauche committees which existed for a while have withered.

The New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA), a successor organisation to the LCR, has influence in the new student mobilisations. But it too has lost members, and it tends to operate more as a conglomerate of factions and groups than as a cohesive party.

Large chunks of long-standing LCR activists quit the NPA in 2009 and 2012, wanting instead to work more closely with the Front de Gauche. But some of those have now dissolved into the Communist Party; the rest, organised as Ensemble, scarcely have a Trotskyist or revolutionary-socialist political profile.

Lutte Ouvrière holds to its principles and has a relatively sizeable base in industry; but, according to comrades we talked with, tends to be cautious, and dismissive of the student and “Nuit Debout” movements as “petty-bourgeois”.

POI

What used to be the third professedly-Trotskyist group in France, the POI, split last year. The majority (still called POI) was scarcely visible on the 9 April demonstration: its typical member now, so we were told, is a full-time trade-union official in the Force Ouvrière confederation.

The minority (POID) makes more effort at political activity, and puts out a well-produced weekly paper; but the paper has many of the traits of the old POI, identifying the main enemy against which it fights not as capital but as the European Union (censured, so Brexiters will be baffled to hear, for being under the thumb of the City of London).

It is important, then, that the healthy currents of the activist left seize the chances offered to them by this new movement to recruit, rebuild, and revive themselves.

In some lycées, for example, blockades and actions are decided by small groups liaising over social media, without face-to-face general assemblies. The comrades of L’Etincelle told us that in arguing for general assemblies, for a consistent orientation to the mass of students or of workers who have not yet or not fully been mobilised, for “maximising the surface of discussion”, they often clash with some anarchists, who oppose all representative structures; “autonomists” prefer ultra-militant gestures by minorities; trade-union and student-union officials, who often prefer to keep things in their own hands; and with difficulties arising simply from inexperience.

The immediate task is to hold together and strengthen the minorities across many workplaces and in many schools and universities who are determined to fight for ongoing strikes to defeat the law, and help them win the majority.

The law explained:
www.workersliberty.org/elkhome



Railworkers resist privatisation push

By Charlotte Zalens

In France, public service workers (“fonctionnaires”, 21% of the country’s whole workforce) have since 1946 had work conditions protected by special laws, for example giving them some job security.

Although the French rail industry (SNCF) is still publicly-owned, rail workers are not “fonctionnaires”. However, they too have a special legal regime.

The current government’s long-term plan is to erode those protections, to replace them by a new collective agreement, to level down SNCF workers’ conditions towards those of the few workers in privately-run corners of the rail network, and to open the rail network to private operators.

On 18 February, the same day as the publication of the draft for the new “Labour Law”, rail workers heard about a new government “baseline decree” on their work hours. Below are extracts from rail worker bulletins produced by L’Etincelle.

The plans include an end to double rest days and weekends. Some on-board ticket inspectors will no longer be reckoned as “train crew”, and so will lose their ability to retire early.

There will no longer be rostered workers (who receive their work rosters many months in advance), nor reserve workers — if the decree goes through, all workers will become reserve workers, and without the current extra pay.

The decree calls for longer work days and

increases annual work hours by 39 hours — that’s an extra week each year! The cherry on the cake is the reduction of rest days to 115 for train crew and 111 for other workers. That’s between 11 to 21 fewer rest days each year!

Last year hospital workers in the Paris region faced the exact same type of attack: a change in work hours which resulted in a loss of around ten rest days, and without any shortening of the work day. Hospital workers reacted with large demonstrations, general assemblies and strikes which allowed them to push back this plan. Like them and with them, the bosses have to hear our anger.

In many areas, the current work regulations, which allow for a “flexibility” scarcely compatible without our social and private lives, are a bit ameliorated by local agreements. There must be no question of letting the management trash those agreements; instead we should fight for levelling up.

These thugs, who endanger passengers and rail workers for profit, claim to be “reforming” the 35 hour work-week and the work regime! We cannot let them. Not one rest day less, not one job cut either!

The logic of management and the government is to make us work more in order to cut even more jobs. They have already calculated that if their reform passes it would allow them 10,000 more job cuts by 2020.

We need exactly the opposite: we need more people hired in order to shorten our work hours, make our rosters better, to guarantee our days off, and to ensure safety.

Students: “Enough of this society!”

By Marine Dageville

“Assez, assez, assez d’cette société qui n’offre que le chômage et la precarité!” “Enough, enough, enough of this society that offers only unemployment and precarity!”

High school and university students in France are on the streets against the planned new “Labour Law” announced by the Socialist Party government in February.

Half of all students in France are working to pay for their studies, so the link for them is very obvious. They see the terrible conditions they work in now, and the “Labour Law” will make them worse.

Even the other half of students know that the new “Labour Law” will give employers more freedom to sack people. Very few new workers will get long-term contracts. At the same time, this law allows for lengthening the working week from 35 hours to 48 or even 60 hours.

This betrayal by a supposedly “Socialist” government has pushed people over the edge and onto the streets.

The youth mobilisation started around 9 March. University students organised General Assemblies (GA). There were at least fifty Assemblies around the country. At one university, Paris 1 (the Sorbonne), more than 700 students showed up to discuss the “labour law”.

Students at senior high schools (lycées) blockaded their schools, with around 200 high schools mobilised on 9 March, which was also the first day of strikes against the “Labour Law”.

That day was also the beginning of a convergence between the workers and student movement. The call for general action on 9 March came from students, and the union leaders followed suit only under that pressure. Even the more militant CGT union confederation had previously wanted to delay until 31 March.

University students insist on being self-or-

ganised. They use the General Assemblies to make democratic decisions on the struggle, and to elect delegates to the National Coordination of the student section of the mobilisations. The National Coordination decides on mobilisation dates, elects spokespeople for the mobilisation, and writes demands and declarations. (Student unions in France are not automatic-enrolment organisations like student unions in British universities. The biggest, UNEF, claims 30,000 members out of 2.3 million tertiary students in France).

After 9 March the government made some cosmetic fixes to the law, but students were not fooled. They continued organising General Assemblies and blockading high schools. Two big student days of action followed on 17 and 24 March, and became much more aware of the need to bring together worker and student struggles.

For example, students from Nanterre in Paris went to post offices and train stations to talk to workers and help them mobilise on 31 March.

31 March was a general strike for students and workers with more than a million people on the streets across France, the biggest mobilisation since Francois Hollande took office in 2012. There were further days of action on 5 and 9 April, with fewer people on the streets but still large turnouts.

5 April saw a peak in repression against high school students, with 130 arrested in Paris alone. In several incidents CRS riot police have beaten or arrested students.

The only way to continue this fight is by having workers and students struggle together. Students are key to bringing workers onto the streets, and together they can organise an effective open-ended general strike if the government continues to push the “Labour Law”.

Students must resist being demobilised by school and university holidays (2-17 April, 9-24 April, or 16 April — 1 May, depending on region) and the exams which follow them.



Trotskyism and Stalinism in World War Two

Steve Bloom reviews *The Fate of the Russian Revolution, volume two: The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism*, edited and with an introduction by Sean Matgamna. (The second part of this review will be published next week).

An examination of Trotskyism as a historical current during World War Two, in particular how its appreciation of Stalinism evolved under the impact of events, is certainly a worthwhile and useful project.

Despite the trend among many young people today who believe that they can derive an adequate revolutionary ideology strictly from their own experience, I am among those who continue to insist that a study of history is essential. It's a conviction I share with Sean Matgamna.

Unfortunately, as I proceeded to read Matgamna's introduction I soon realised that this specific historical survey lacks the key element of objectivity. The editor discovers exactly what he expected to discover (it seems clear) when he began compiling documents:

One wing of the Trotskyist movement, whom he dubs the "Orthodox" led by James P Cannon, whatever it might have done right, was bureaucratic, narrow-minded, unable to creatively develop Marxist theory (simply repeating by rote formulas developed by Trotsky before his death), and thereby wound up in a political blind alley.

The "Heterodox" wing of the movement led by Max Shachtman, on the other hand, whatever it might have done wrong, was intelligent, creative, thoroughly imbued with a democratic spirit, and committed 100 percent to both Marxist thought and working-class liberation.

Here's a sample:

"The history of that time is told usually by supporters of the Orthodox. It is told, when it deals with the Shachtmanites, as if the Heterodox were aberrant and the Orthodox were balanced, properly pro-USSR but adequately anti-Stalinist. Pretty much the opposite is true. The Orthodox went prolifically haywire after June 1941. In important respects they ceased to be Trotskyists at all, as that term had been understood before June 1941" (p. 110).

In the present review I will challenge this picture on a number of levels:

DYNAMIC

When I joined the party built by Cannon, the US Socialist Workers Party, in 1968, it was an organisation filled with dynamic and critical thinkers.

George Breitman [is one], who is still well-known far beyond the circles of US Trotskyism because of his ground-breaking work in understanding the development of Malcolm X and Black Nationalism in the USA from a revolutionary-Marxist point of view. But there were many others.

This tiny party was able to translate the revolutionary concept of a "united front" in such a creative way that it nurtured and then lead a mass "Out Now" wing of the anti-Vietnam war movement, a wing which played a key role in ending the war. The SWP of that era brought a similar kind of creative thought to other questions, such as the relationship of women's emancipation to socialist revolution.

How did such a party grow from the roots of Cannonism, if the roots of Cannonism were as decayed as this book suggests to us? It would seem inexplicable.

My own balance sheet on the history of the SWP that I joined is, nevertheless, extremely critical. Interestingly, many of the points

where I would express a critical judgment are similar to questions that Sean Matgamna, and the "Heterodox" authors whose articles and comments he collects, also raise. The primary difference is that I insist we must nuance our critique by a. understanding the historical context in which the US SWP may have made particular mistakes and b. adequately balancing the points on which we are critical with the positive realities of party history. These things Matgamna fails to do.

[For example] the political discussions I experienced as a party member were far too often shaped by the philosophy of "stick bending" (that is, they were designed to engineer a particular result) rather than by the search for a comprehensive and balanced appreciation of social realities. Genuine theoretical education was never a priority, though some did occasionally take place. I have often expressed the thought that "theory" in the SWP was mostly taught in order to convince us about what to think, rather than educate us about how to think.

Matgamna includes a persuasive article by Eugene Shays and Dan Shelton, documenting the manner in which the SWP's weekly paper, *The Militant*, from May 1945 to June 1946, presented a severely distorted picture of the USSR and the role of the Red Army in the final stages and aftermath of the war, by being selective about what "facts" it chose to report and what facts it ignored. I was reminded of nothing so much as the distorted coverage of events in the world by the same newspaper, most notably with regard to Cuba and Iran, that was offered to us during the 1980s as the Jack Barnes leadership of the SWP made its uncritical turn toward Castroism.

[And yet] the leadership of the SWP in the 1940s did not abandon its opposition to Stalinism or the call for political revolution in the USSR, whatever distortions there might have been in the reality as portrayed by the Militant. By the time I joined, members of the party were being well-schooled in a history of Stalinism that included all of the facts and atrocities that the paper overlooked in 1945-46. So at some point a correction was made.

In the 1980s, on the other hand, the leadership of the party just continued stampeding over the cliff. It never reassessed where its errors were taking it, or the organization. The difference is [as between] day and night. Yet the editor of this volume treats these two things as if they were identical.

Any objective reader will conclude, correctly I would say, from the documentary evidence collected in this book, that the Cannon leadership was struggling with a substantial contradiction during the period in question. It had a certain expectation about what would happen during and as a result of the war, flowing from predictions made by Trotsky before the war began — that the Stalinist dictatorship could not possibly survive and would soon be overthrown either by a revived world revolution or a triumphant capitalist restoration. But something totally different was actually happening. As a result of the war the Stalinist dictatorship emerged with its power even more deeply entrenched.

Unlike Matgamna, however, I do not see this contradiction, or the resulting theoretical struggles of the "Orthodox," as an indictment of Cannon or his leadership. I consider these things to be part of the normal process by which genuine revolutionaries figure out how to orient themselves in a world that often confounds our expectations. This was, actually, the same kind of process that the Bolsheviks went through in figuring out how to make the Russian Revolution in 1917.

The Bolshevik party leadership was totally disoriented from February to April of that year, precisely because there was a disconnect between the revolutionary process as it was unfolding and their previous theories about how it ought to unfold. It was not until April that the party, thanks to Lenin, was able to reconcile this difficulty and set itself on a genuinely revolutionary course. Why is the Cannon leadership (less capable than the Bolsheviks, it is no slight on them to say so) not permitted to struggle in a similar way with a similar difficulty?

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels begin with a declaration: "There is a spectre haunting Europe, the spectre of communism." Arguably, no Marxist has ever made a more erroneous prediction. Trotsky's incorrect prognosis about the impossibility of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR surviving the Second World War pales by comparison. What's more, Marx and Engels proceeded for the rest of their lives guided by this false expectation.

My personal measure of anyone's revolutionary character is based on whether they a. demonstrate a capacity to struggle with the reality in question — in particular with the relationship of that reality to their own theories about it — and come out with a better understanding at the end of their struggle; or b. manage to make meaningful contributions to building a revolutionary movement, and developing a revolutionary ideology, despite specific errors, even major errors.

If I draw a balance sheet of the Cannon leadership of the SWP using this criterion it will, at the very least, have as much on the positive side of the ledger as there is on the negative side — even during the period of the Second World War (or, perhaps, "especially" during that period since it happens to be the historical moment which concerns us in the present conversation).

CONTRADICTION

This takes us to an appreciation of the dialectic, in particular of contradiction.

It's a key question if we are considering the differences between the "Orthodox" and the "Heterodox" during this time. Throughout the book, as I was reading, I was struck by how much I still agreed with the arguments presented by the "Orthodox" authors, even while I could see and acknowledge their mistakes as pointed out by the "Heterodox." The reason for this is simple: each side was getting a piece of the picture right, and a piece of it wrong.

This, too, is typical of genuine revolutionaries. No matter how right we may be at any particular moment, we are never quite as right as we imagine ourselves to be. Most of the time we are all dealing with one contradiction in our thinking or another. Our actions are full of contradictions, as are our justifications for those actions — because the world itself is full of contradictions.

When we are able to achieve a satisfactory resolution of the resulting difficulties it is only through a process of struggling with these multiple levels of contradiction over a more or less extended period: a messy process, full of false starts, partial understandings, and imprecise formulations. The best revolutionary cadre are those who understand that this is what they are required to deal with, who dedicate themselves to engaging with it nonetheless in a systematic and rigorous way in order to improve their individual (and our collective) understanding, and who are always honest with themselves as they do so whenever reality, or some other human being, re-

veals new truths that they had not previously seen or fully understood.

Let's consider one question in particular from this point of view. Was the conquest of territory during the Second World War by the Red Army an act of self-defence by the USSR (the "Orthodox" view) or an act of imperial conquest (the perspective militantly defended by the "Heterodox," using the word "imperial" not in its traditional Leninist sense of "the highest stage of capitalism" but in its more generic sense that includes imperialisms going back to the days of ancient Rome and even before).

It should be obvious, from our vantage point today, that there was at least a bit of both things involved. If that's true then even posing the question in "either/or" terms, as it was posed by both the "Orthodox" and the "Heterodox" during the war itself, will inevitably generate an assessment which is simultaneously true and false.

The same can be said regarding another key issue debated during this period: whether the nationalisations carried out under the auspices of the Red Army in Eastern Europe had a socialist content. To me it's obvious that the right answer is both "yes" and "no."

A dialectician can accept such contradictory realities and attempt to relate to them in an intelligent and nuanced way. I will therefore [say] the "Orthodox" viewpoint, which at least embraced the idea of dialectical thought, even if its practice was not always what it should have been, was a better choice during and after the war than the "Heterodox" view, which insisted that questions of method were irrelevant to politics.

The arguments of the "Heterodox," sought pure and clean definitions of a messy and contradictory world. They consistently started from theoretical abstractions about what a "socialist" revolution ought to look like — comparing political events, as they actually developed in life, to these theoretical projections and finding the world to be inadequate.

The real world will never measure up to our theories, precisely because our theories are, by definition, abstractions from reality and can never fully capture the richness of life itself. If we consider the "bourgeois-democratic" revolution based on our theories, for example, there was never a real "bourgeois-democratic" revolution either.

True, Shachtman is able to effectively explain why this is not an obstacle to recognising the bourgeois-democratic revolution: because the bourgeoisie can hold economic power without holding political power. All it requires from the new state is to clear away the feudal barriers to bourgeois economic development. But the working class cannot hold economic power without also holding political power. Thus the question of who holds political power is central to the socialist revolution.

And I agree with this distinction. I can assert, nonetheless, that there will never be a "socialist revolution" that is as pure as the "Heterodox" argument insists we must have before we allow ourselves to call it by that name.

I am still inclined to consider myself part of the "Orthodox" tradition, even though I try to see and acknowledge at least some of the errors and problems of that tradition in addition to its merits.

• Abridged.
• *The Two Trotskyisms Confront Stalinism* can be purchased for £23 including postage from bit.ly/twotrotskyisms.

Women who changed the world

Les Hearn reviews *52 Women Who Changed Science and the world* by Rachel Swaby (Broadway Books).

Women are notoriously under-represented in science, but the situation seems worse because such women scientists as there are tend to be misunderstood, misinterpreted, under-rated or ignored.

Out of the 52 in Rachel Swaby's book, the general reader might only have heard of Mary Anning (fossil hunter), Rachel Carson (author of *Silent Spring*), Rosalind Franklin (the "dark lady of DNA," played by Nicole Kidman in the West End play, *Photograph 51*), Ada Lovelace (Byron's daughter and pioneer of computing), Florence Nightingale (famed for nursing in the Crimean war), and Hedy Lamarr (celebrated actress, less known as an inventor).

Swaby deliberately omits Marie Curie, who has received substantial coverage (though there can never be enough about this double Nobel prizewinner, in my opinion).

In the past, it was difficult for women to gain an education or to carry on with their studies or work when they married. I will just mention a few of the 52, choosing those of earlier times or who are known for other activities.

Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) became interested in insects as a child in Frankfurt. At 13, she was bringing up a colony of silkworms, taking notes and painting the stages in their life cycle. At a time when the metamorphosis from caterpillar to moth was not understood, Merian observed and painted insects throughout their lives, showing them in their habitats. These illustrations were published in her groundbreaking book *Der Raupen wunderbarer Verwandlung* (The Wondrous Transformation of Caterpillars) in 1679.

At 52, she set off for Surinam with her children on a very early example of a purely scientific expedition to collect and study the insects of plantations and jungle alike. The result was *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium*, with 60 exquisite copperplate engravings of insects and other animals on leaves and branches, crawling, flying, eating, unfurling proboscises, attacking each other...

Her work was admired by Goethe and used by Linnaeus in developing his classification of living things.

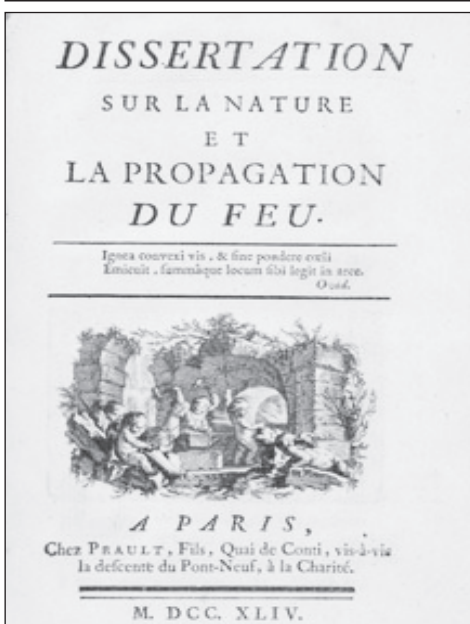
Mary Anning (1799-1847) was a child of a poor family which gained extra income by selling fossils from the cliffs of Lyme Regis to tourists. Mary learnt her father's fossil-hunting trade at ten and, after his death, carried on with her brother Joseph. Usually finding fossil shellfish, her brother noticed part of a skull protruding from the rock. This was the head of an ichthyosaur and Mary unearthed the rest of it.

This, the first example of its kind, was sold for £23, a considerable sum. In her early 20s, Mary took over the business, going out in winter (the best time for the cliff falls that exposed new fossils) with just her dog. She discovered the first plesiosaur skeleton and the first pterosaur found in Britain.

Her discoveries were evidence for extinction of species which contradicted the notion that God's creation was perfect. Furthermore, there seemed to have been an age when the dominant animals were reptiles. Her knowledge of fossils and geology was extensive and yet, being a working-class woman, gentleman geologists tended to gain the credit from writing about her discoveries. She began to be treated as a fellow scientist, gaining the respect of geologists William Buck-



From Merian's *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium* (1705)



Du Châtelet's essay on the nature of fire.

land, Charles Lyell and Roderick Murchison, and of the Swiss palaeontologist Louis Agassiz.

Never well off, she was helped by her scientific colleagues selling specimens and drawings on her behalf. Eventually she was awarded a civil list pension by the government. When she became ill with breast cancer, the Geological Society (which had earlier refused her membership as a woman) raised money for her and, after her death aged 47, paid for a stained glass window in her local church. Charles Dickens wrote of her life in 1865, ending his article with "The carpenter's daughter has won a name for herself, and has deserved to win it." In 2010, the Royal Society included Anning in a list of the ten British woman who have most influenced the history of science.

Émilie du Châtelet (1706-49) is largely known as a lover and intellectual companion of Voltaire, but she was instrumental in introducing Newton's ideas to France. Born rich (which always helps) but mainly self-taught, she followed a conventional path for the time until, aged 27 and expecting her second child, she became interested in mathematics, studying Descartes's geometry and engaging talented tutors who introduced her to Newton's work.

At 32, she entered the French Royal Academy of Sciences essay competition on the nature of fire (i.e., heat), in which she predicted what we now know as infra-red radiation:

her entry was highly praised and published by the academy. She then published *Institutiones de Physique* (Foundations of Physics), a state-of-the art textbook in which she not only put forward Newton's theories but improved on them. When this was attacked by the secretary of the academy as being the unsound ideas of a fickle and weak-minded woman, she refuted each of his criticisms and sent her response to all members of the academy. The secretary resigned soon after.

Her experimental work confirmed that the kinetic energy of an object was proportional to its speed squared (Newton had not discussed this, focusing rather on momentum). Her greatest achievement was her translation (from Latin) of and commentary on Newton's *Principia*. It remains the standard French translation. Days after completing it, she died, aged 42, after giving birth to her fourth child.

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) is famous for her innovations in nursing but is arguably one of the founders of evidence-based medicine. Gathering data on causes of death among British soldiers in Scutari, she devised a method of displaying her statistics in a visual form, the polar-area diagram (essentially a circular bar-chart or histogram). The diagram is composed of wedges, one for each month, whose area is proportional to the total deaths. The wedges were subdivided in proportion to causes of death — wounds, infections, or other. She was able to show that death rates declined as sanitary methods improved. The government soon established a Statistical Branch of the Army Medical Department.

Later, she devised statistical forms for hospitals to gather data on their patients' progress. She became the first woman member of the Royal Statistical Society in 1858.

Emmy Noether (1882-1935) was a mathematical genius who succeeded despite the active obstruction of the authorities, whether of universities, the Prussian state or the Nazis. For eight years, she worked at the University of Erlangen, unpaid, developing the theory of invariants, supervising PhD students, publishing several papers and lecturing on behalf of her professor father whose health was deteriorating. In 1915, she was invited by two of the world's greatest mathematicians, David Hilbert and Felix Klein, to work on General Relativity at the University of Göttingen, but she was refused paid employment after protests by those who thought it inappropriate to have men taught by a woman.

With Hilbert's support, she worked for several years, until 1923, unpaid. She proved "Noether's First Theorem", which states that, for each law of symmetry, there is a conservation law. This solved a problem with General Relativity where it seemed to violate the Law of Conservation of Energy. It has been said that this theorem is on a par with Pythagoras' Theorem in importance.

Despite her brilliant achievements in pure mathematics and physics, she was the first professor at Göttingen to be sacked under the Nazis' anti-Jewish laws. She carried on tutoring illegally, even to Nazi students, but soon was found a job at Bryn Mawr College in the US. She died two years later after surgery for an ovarian cyst.

Shortly before her death, Norbert Wiener described her as "the greatest woman mathematician who has ever lived; and the greatest woman scientist of any sort now living." Einstein said after her death: "Fraulein Noether was the most significant creative mathematical genius thus far produced since the higher education of women began."

Hedy Lamarr (1914-2000), better known as an Austrian-American film actor, was in the US when war broke out. Incensed by the torpedoing of ships carrying civilians by her erstwhile compatriots, she wanted to help the Allied effort. US torpedoes in 1942 had a 60% failure rate, largely due the inability to guide them. This could be improved by radio transmissions from ship to torpedo but these could be easily jammed by the enemy. Interested since childhood in machines and how they worked, Lamarr and a composer friend, George Antheil, worked on an idea of frequency changing programmed into the transmitter and receiver. This would be impossible to crack before the torpedo struck. They patented their idea and reported it to the US government, who immediately classified it as secret.

Unfortunately, for various reasons, the idea was not used in war time. However, it had a wider applicability and is used in such areas as wireless cash registers, bar code readers, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and GPS. Hedy Lamarr was awarded the Electronic Frontier Foundation's Pioneer Award in 1997.

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Momentum launches membership

LABOUR

By Jill Mountford

The third meeting of Momentum's Steering Committee took place on 5 April.

Things are taking shape around the membership structure and drive. This will not only firm up the supporter base for Momentum but will also generate a much needed income for staff wages and campaigning. As I write thousands of people have already signed up to become full members. I plan to write a longer report which you will be able to find on my new blog jillsmomentumblog.wordpress.com, but for now want to let you know about the three motions I submitted to the Steering Committee to be discussed on the fight against academisation of schools, on the steel crisis and on the Lambeth libraries occupation. (You can read them at bit.ly/5april-motions)

The schools motion, which called for Momentum groups to work with school unions and Labour Parties to build local campaigns to defend education (something we have already agreed in Lewisham), was passed without controversy. I now see it as my job to push to make sure it is implemented. At the second steering committee, three weeks earlier, Michael Chessum and I proposed a motion for a nationally coordinated campaign on the NHS. In the next couple of weeks we'll be meeting Momentum staff to discuss how both these proposals will be implemented.

The motion on steel caused more controversy. Some people said we should not object to posing things in terms of defending British industry against foreign industry as that would alienate steel workers — though it seems to me very much necessary for socialists in the current riot of nationalism to be prepared to have these arguments and discus-



Camden Momentum members supporting the junior doctors on strike.

sions. There was also a suggestion that calling for nationalisation under workers' control is old fashioned. I can't agree. It is the wave of the future. I would also note that it is what Jeremy Corbyn called for in regards to Britain's railways during his leadership campaign — was that old-fashioned?

It was agreed to get the text re-drafted, but, regrettably, six days later this has not yet happened. I am chasing it though. Given the severity and speed of the steel crisis I think we need a much quicker process.

I hope we can make sure Momentum comes out with a strong statement, at least, before it is too late to have an impact. As for the other concrete proposals contained in my motion, it seems they won't happen.

However, it was my last motion, on support for the Lambeth libraries occupation, that caused the most controversy. In the end the steering committee did not back this proposal. I am consulting with Momentum comrades in Lambeth, and hope to write something more detailed about this soon. For now I will just say that I think the committee's failure to back the Lambeth struggle, which has mobilised so many work-

ers, such wide layers of the community and such powerful solidarity, is a very poor show.

Michael Chessum reported on good progress with Momentum Youth and Students, which will be holding a national conference in Manchester on Sunday 5 June, open to all Momentum members who are students or under 30. This is a good example from the youth: surely the whole organisation needs a democratic conference to discuss the way forward?

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on the evening of Tuesday 26 April. The National Committee, which is made up of delegates from the regions as well as affiliated organisations like trade unions (and which elected the Steering Committee) meets on Saturday 21 May.

There should be regional meetings with delegates from local groups before then.

• Please feel free to get in touch with any questions, issues you want me to raise or proposals, on my Momentum blog: jillsmomentumblog.wordpress.com

Events

Saturday 16 April

March for health, homes, jobs, and education
1pm, Euston Road/Gower Street, London
bit.ly/16AprilMarch

Tuesday 19 April

Haringey Radical Readers — A star called Henry.
7-9pm, Big Green Bookshop, London, N22 6BG
bit.ly/1qNsY8g

Tuesday 19 April

Momentum Hackney meeting about education
7.30pm, Gascoyne Hall, London, E9 5AY
bit.ly/23dv52M

26-27 April

Junior doctors' strike
Across the country

Tuesday 26 April

The left and anti-semitism
Workers' Liberty public meeting
6.30pm, UCL, London (room TBC)
bit.ly/1WpNsQ9

Thursday 28 April

Students for Another Europe meeting
7-9pm, Room S-2.08, King's College, London, WC2R 2LS
bit.ly/studentseurope

Saturday 30 April

Workers' Liberty day school: where we came from, and where we're going
12 noon, meet at New Cross Gate station, London
bit.ly/WLschool

Got an event you want listing?
solidarity@workersliberty.org

Labour excludes another socialist

By Janine Booth

I joined Labour as a teenager in the 1980s and was expelled in 2003 for standing against Labour when the local Labour council was privatising housing and closing nurseries and other services.

I applied to rejoin last year. My CLP (Hackney South and Shoreditch) objected on the grounds that (a) I (allegedly) support TUSC and (b) I'm a member of Workers' Liberty.

I appealed, and had a hearing in late March in front of a panel of three members of the Regional Board. Thank you to David Osler for giving evidence in support of my application. I explained that the first objection is not true and never has been, and freely admitted the

second, arguing that there are plenty of factions in the Labour Party and that is part of healthy debate. I also explained that I have worked hard for Labour candidates in elections, and am campaigning vocally — against the stream — for my trade union, RMT, to reaffiliate to Labour.

A week later, I received a letter refusing my application to join, but not giving any reason. Apparently I may apply again in two years' time.

I get annoyed when I think about some of the people who have been allowed to join and the efforts of the Labour Party bureaucracy to keep out people who support its leftwards direction rather than keep up the Party's membership growth and unite to kick out the Tories.



• If you would like to campaign against this and other exclusions of socialists from the Labour Party, please visit the Stop the Labour Purge website: stopthelabourpurge.wordpress.com

Fighting driver only operation

By Gareth Davenport

The UK rail industry, supported by the Department for Transport, plans to move most or all passenger trains to Driver Only Operation (DOO) — meaning trains operate with only the driver on board, no guards or other staff.

This method of working is already in place across London Underground and on some parts of the main line (National Rail). Any increase in DOO will have negative consequences for jobs and passenger safety and pile more stress and responsibility on those staff who do keep their jobs.

Rail worker unions ASLEF and RMT issued a joint statement at the end of last year which committed both unions to a unified fight against any extension of DOO and to work towards reinstating the role of guard/conductor on those services and routes where it has already been introduced.

The first test of this commitment since the statement was released is coming at Gatwick Express, where Govia Thameslink Railway is trying to introduce new 12 car trains which are longer than the existing ones that are currently Driver-Only operated over those routes. ASLEF is now balloting its members at Gatwick Express and Southern for industrial action in response to the company's plan to impose this increase in DOO working. Drivers have also been refusing to operate the new trains, or have been taking them on their timetabled journeys but refusing to operate the doors at stations, leaving passengers unable to board.

Success on the Gatwick Express would be an important first step towards winning the fight against DOO, but we know that more attacks are coming elsewhere



RMT members protesting against DOO in Merseyside.

on the network. We know that plans are afoot to increase DOO on Scotrail and to introduce it at Great Western.

Perhaps the biggest battles over DOO will come on the biggest franchise in the UK — Northern. On 1 April control of this franchise was passed from a consortium of Serco and Abellio to Arriva Rail North Limited, part of the Arriva Group, which is in turn owned by DB Schenker.

The Department for Transport's Franchise Specification document placed an obligation on the winning franchise to move at least 50% of its services to DOO.

Not much has changed at Northern yet, aside from the logo and the name, but we know what is coming. Brand new and "refreshed" trains are being ordered that will bring huge improvements to capacity and comfort for passengers and staff... but probably be fitted with some or all of the equipment necessary for DOO. Rumours are circulating amongst staff that the

company is likely to offer substantial pay increases to drivers in return for "increased productivity" concessions such as agreement to run services on Boxing Day or, crucially, to operate train doors.

ASLEF and RMT need to continue to provide strong leadership to oppose such moves, as Northern drivers are among the lowest paid train drivers on the network and therefore more vulnerable to attacks using these tactics.

If the government and train operators succeed in introducing DOO on Northern, they will be emboldened to force it through on every part of the network, meaning more job losses and decreased safety everywhere. It would also be a huge defeat for organised labour in what is one of the last remaining industries with relatively high union density and militancy.

Rank and file trade unionists in ASLEF and RMT will need to ensure that their leaders do not waver on this. No DOO, no compromise!

Work conditions in the Merchant Navy

A former cadet in the Merchant Navy (the name for UK-registered commercial ships and their staff), told *Solidarity* what his work was like.

I decided to join the Merchant Navy because I thought it would give me better prospects and a more worthwhile outcome than going to study at university.

My sponsoring company paid for all my training fees and then gave me a training allowance on top of that.

College was stressful but I enjoyed it and I enjoyed the work very much.

My training was on a bulk carrier; we discharged corn in South East Asia and then sailed to Australia to pick up bauxite (aluminium ore). After delivering that to China we took on soya bean meal (animal feed) and took that back to South East Asia.



As a cadet some of the work rules did not apply to me. I was given jobs by the Chief Officer that breached health and safety and the company's own internal rules.

The ratings, the general support staff, who work all over the ship, were all from the Philippines. They were never overworked. However, they were made to do a lot of overtime. I did some calculations whilst I was on ship and worked out that 20 hours of their overtime was not logged and they were not paid for it.

In fact there were many rules posted up in the ship by the company that were ignored. For in-

stance, Sunday was supposed to be a day off (Filipinos are strong Christians), but after there was a change of Captain and Chief Officer they only had two Sundays off at most during my five months on board. The new Captain also stopped the tradition of an on-deck barbecue on a Sunday and "rewards" for hard work/overtime, such as extra cigarettes from the ship's store.

This kind of treatment made me not enjoy my time at sea and I wanted to leave.

I was honestly scared of the Chief. This made me not want to do the work and I lost will power. I really only did the lowest of menial tasks, and almost none of the work that was required as part of my cadetship.

Once a month we would have a safety meeting organised by the Captain and Chief, but there was no union organisation that I was aware of.



Over 2000 people marched to save libraries in Lambeth on Saturday 9 April, led by the activists who have occupied Carnegie library to prevent its closure.



Hundreds of activists marched in Sheffield on Saturday 9 April as part of the "Northern Poorhouse" protest against losses in the civil service.



Thousands of junior doctors and their supporters marched in Newcastle on Saturday 9 April as part of the North East save the NHS march.

Cinema workers fight back

By Peggy Carter

BECTU members at the Rio cinema in Dalston, east London, will ballot for strikes over a long running pay dispute.

Workers at the Rio have not had a pay rise since 2012. Front of house workers and cleaners are on £6.91 per hour and are some of the lowest paid cinema workers in London. On top of that workers at the Rio were forced into a pay cut in 2013 when 10% of wages were deducted to help keep the cinema afloat. They were promised that it would be repaid later but only half of it has been.

Workers at the Rio have only recently won union recognition for BECTU after the company went to a lot of trouble to try and keep the union out. In March 2015 the union went to the Central Arbitration Committee and won the right to collective union representation, but in July 2015 they had to return to the CAC as management kept refusing any meaningful collective bargaining method.

BECTU members submitted their

pay claim originally in October 2015 and asked for: a staged journey over three years towards the Living Wage for all FOH/cleaning staff (who are in band 1); an increase for staff in the next two salary bands (bands 2 and 3); and the reimbursement of the remaining wages deducted from staff in 2013. When submitting the original pay claim BECTU members at the Rio said: "In the Rio's centenary year, we feel it is fitting to recognise the achievements of the cinema but also to recognise the staff who are the life-blood of the company. Currently we are some of the lowest paid cinema staff in London, lagging behind the big chains like Odeon on £7.30ph and Cineworld on £7.70ph [and] comparable independent cinemas like The Prince Charles whose hourly rate is £7.85."

A consultative ballot in March showed 94% of BECTU members in favour of strikes, on an 83% turnout. The result of the strike ballot is expected soon.

• Sign the petition: chn.ge/1UXMivX



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FRANCE TAKES TO THE STREETS

"A reawakening of political discussions". That is how revolutionary socialists in France describe the events of the last month.

Since 9 March, a series of big demonstrations and strikes have hit the Socialist Party government's attempt to revise the labour

law and workers' conditions on the railways.

Mobilisations have been wider than the 2010 strikes against pension cuts or other campaigns of recent years. They are compared more to the 2006 movement which defeated a move by the then right-wing government to introduce a

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new, worse-conditions contract for younger workers, or to the 1995 movement which defeated earlier pension cuts.

The next steps are a railworkers' strike on 26 April, and a general day of strikes and protests on 28 April. The CGT union confederation plans further rail strikes for 10 May and 17-18 May, the second one open-ended. Many rank-and-file activists demand a move to open-ended strikes sooner and across the board.

The official union schedule is more vigorous than some recent campaigns by British unions which often have intervals between strikes more like six months, but many French activists regard the 19 days which separate 28 April from the last demonstra-

tion, on 9 April, as a worryingly long gap, indicative of a lack of zeal from union leaders.

When the government announced the draft law in mid-February, the leaders of France's nine "TUCs" (union confederations) responded critically, but with demands for amendment rather than flat-out condemnation. The CGT, the strongest of the confederations and usually among the most militant, talked only of a protest on 31 March.

Widespread anger, especially among students, forced the CGT to call action on Wednesday 9 March. Something like half a million people were on the streets that day.

There were further protests, mostly by students, on 17 March, and a big turnout on Thursday 31

March, with something like 1.2 million people on the streets, and — a new thing in recent working-class protests in France — lots of strikes in private industry, including in small private firms where workers who strike run greater risks of losing their jobs.

On 9 April there were new demonstrations across the country, with about 50,000 on the streets in Paris, and maybe 200,000-plus across the country.

Nine friends of Workers' Liberty went to Paris for the 9 April demonstration and for discussions on the movement with the French revolutionary socialist group L'Etincelle on 10 April.

More on pages 6-7

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