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AFTER KHAN BEATS RACIST SLURS IN LONDON



STAND UP FOR MIGRANTS

On 4 May, the Tory government backed down and said it would after all admit some lone-child refugees from Syria.

On 25 April the Tories had voted down proposals in Parliament to admit 3,000 children, but by 4 May they had to retreat.

It was another victory against the migrant-haters on 5 May when Labour's Sadiq Khan won mayor of London despite Tory Zac Goldsmith's slurs against him as "linked to extremists" on grounds of his Pakistani family background.

Now the left can and should be working for another victory on 23 June: a vote against Brexit. A vote against re-raising borders between Britain and Europe.

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VOTE AGAINST BREXIT 23 JUNE

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to fight
anti-semitism**



The case for a political answer to anti-semitism.

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Republicans break the bottom of the barrel

By Danny Katch*

It's big psychic shock coming to terms with the reality that Trump — a bigoted, buffoonish blowhard, loathed by 70 percent of the population — will have his name on the ballot in November as the presidential candidate of one of the two political parties that run the most powerful nation in the world.

Of course, Trump's victory didn't come out of nowhere. For years, the Republican Party has cultivated white middle-class fear and rage — the meat and potatoes of the Trump campaign — to build a rabidly right-wing voting base in support of its traditional ruling-class agenda of promoting corporate power and American empire.

But in this election, the [traditional] base has refused to heel — despite increasingly desperate pleas from prominent, though not exactly beloved, Republican leaders such as Mitt Romney and Lindsey Graham.

In early April, it looked like Republican insiders might finally have hit on a strategy for their #NeverTrump campaign. Ted Cruz rode a mobilisation of the religious right to several good showings, while political operatives working for him and others used the Republicans' arcane party rules to get convention delegates selected who would abandon Trump at a contested convention.

At the top levels of the Republican Party, Cruz is widely detested — but at least he wasn't Trump.

But Republican voters rebelled against these underhanded manoeuvres. An April opinion poll [showed] that while only 40 percent of Republican voters had Trump as their first choice, 62 percent thought the nomination should go to the candidate with the most votes. Before the April 19 New York primary, Trump had never won more than 50 percent of the total vote. In New York and after, he did, making him the run-away popular favourite.

...But while Trump is an outsider who won the presidential nomination over the opposition of most, if not all, top party leaders, he's hardly the "anti-establishment" candidate.

Trump is often compared to Bernie Sanders, but Sanders' campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination has been based on concrete proposals that would make both the Democratic Party and the country as a whole more just and democratic.

Trump, by contrast, is a billionaire real estate tycoon funding his own campaign — and getting billions of dollars in free advertising from a "news" media desperate to fill airtime with his carnival show.

While there has been much talk in the media about Trump's support among white working-class voters, the median annual household income of his supporters is \$72,000. That's lower than many of his former rivals for the nomination, but well above the national median of \$56,000.

The biggest weakness with the Republicans' #NeverTrump strat-

egy was the part where voters were expected to vote for one of the other guys.

Ted Cruz actually managed to match Trump in hatefulness — his main strategy in the Indiana campaign was to accuse Trump of not being bigoted enough against transgender people on the question of what bathroom they use. But he coated it with a level of holier-than-thou creepiness that made him, unbelievably enough, more repulsive than Trump.

Kasich, meanwhile, campaigned as an old-fashioned Republican — ready to bust unions and ban abortions with a contented smile.

MESSAGE

The party is able to dominate many states in the South, Midwest and West by combining hard-right social policies with mammoth tax breaks for locally based corporations.

But it has no coherent message for national elections because its three central tenets have been severely weakened over the past decade.

For one, the ongoing disastrous consequences of the Iraq War, supported by most Democrats but infamously and incompetently led by George W Bush, has weakened the Republicans' reputation as the party of national security.

Second, the global financial crisis and bailout of the banks that caused it has undermined the dogmas of the free market and capitalism — also shared by most Democrats, but traditionally most associated with the Republicans.

Lastly, the historic victories of the movement for LGBTQ equality, both legally and culturally, while incomplete, have deprived the Republicans of their favourite of the culture wars on anything beyond a regional level.

The Republican Party establishment has a complicated relationship with Donald Trump. They hate him because he isn't one of them, and they hate him because, in a lot of ways, he actually is.

Trump does challenge Republican orthodoxies on issues such as trade and national defence. Trump has long opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement "The Mexicans want it, and that doesn't sound good to me," he said back in 1993 (in case you were wondering whether he was always such an ass).

And while Trump is lying when he says he opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq before it happened, he did turn against the war within a year.

But in a lot of other ways, Trump is a quintessential 21st century Republican, both in policy and style.

He's a nativist Islamophobe who wants to cut taxes for the wealthy at a time of the greatest wealth inequality in almost a century. He combines the bullyboy persona of Chris Christie, the billionaire arrogance of Michael Bloomberg and the endless conspiracy theorizing of Glenn Beck.

Trump is a mirror that proper Republican Party leaders hate to look at because it reminds them of what a national joke they have been for a good long while.

Corporate America has historically preferred the Republican Party to represent its interests within the US two-party system, and one part of the shock at Trump's victories is that business interests haven't done more to prevent it.

Preliminary opinion polls show Trump trailing far behind Clinton in the November election. But that doesn't mean that he isn't a threat.

It might seem impossible for Trump to overcome his unpopularity, but he's already proven that he knows how to take advantage of the corporate media's hunger to put him on camera. He will appeal to both the vile sexism and well-founded hostility that have given Clinton a likewise high unfavourability rating of 55 percent. And there's the threat of the unknown — a sharp downturn in an economy that is already weakening or a large-scale terrorist attack.

Whatever the case, though, there will be six more months of Donald Trump spreading his racism, sexism and Islamophobia across the airways, legitimizing those politics and creating a more hateful and potentially violent country for years to come.

The millions of people who despise Trump and everything he stands will be right to challenge him wherever and however they can — while also recognising that they can't trust the "lesser evil" to stop the "greater evil."

* Abridged. Originally published by Socialist Worker (US) at bit.ly/1QXgz6z

A failed attempt to silence

By Martin Thomas

On Wednesday 4 May the government sacked Natasha Devon from her unpaid post as "mental health champion for schools".

Evidently it concluded that the parents' protest the day before against excessive testing, when thousands kept Year 2 children off school, showed that Devon was having too much effect.

Devon describes herself as "a bleeding heart liberal leftie", but the government appointed her in August 2015 to show it was doing something about mental health.

Devon continued to speak out. "This government and the coalition before them have engineered a social climate where it's really difficult for any young person to enjoy optimal mental health. Parents work every hour God sends to make ends meet... spiralling poverty..."

She pointed that anxiety is the fastest growing illness in under-21s, and three students in the average school classroom have a diagnosed mental illness.

She linked that to a "culture of testing and academic pressure



detrimental to mental health", a "fiercely competitive" culture in schools, and a society of "social inequality" where "fundamental values are set not by kindness but by consumerism".

"It's not actually me that's being silenced", she commented on the sacking, "it's young people and teachers" for whom she could be an amplifier.

We won't be silenced. Now we need our unions and the Labour Party to take up the cause. No more exam factories! No more box-ticking in schools whose only purpose is to increase anxiety!

Schools should about striking off what William Blake called "the mind-forg'd manacles", not welding new ones.

Don't close the BBC!

By Elizabeth Butterworth

Broadcasters, actors and screenwriters have jumped to defend the BBC against the Culture Secretary, John Whittingdale, who recently reportedly told Cambridge University's Conservative Association that closing the BBC was a "tempting prospect".

According to the comedy writer Armando Iannucci, writing in the *Guardian*, John Whittingdale has been assuring BBC bosses that its future is safe, that the TV Licence is safe and that it will preserve its editorial independence — while also "running down" the BBC by releasing a White Paper calling for presenters' wages to be made public, stopping the production of shows which compete with commercial channels (such as *Strictly Come Dancing*) and increasing the number of government representatives on the Board to a majority.

This followed an earlier gaffe in which a civil servant was photographed with documents about the privatisation of Channel 4, also a public service broadcaster, after



Wolf Hall director Peter Kominsky attacked the government at the Baftas.

Whittingdale had denied any plan to sell the service off.

Iannucci rightly describes the proposed changes to the BBC as "statist, centralised and authoritarian", and therefore far from the free market model the Tories say they emulate.

This has led to a string of reactions from Wolf Hall director Peter Kominsky, who used his Bafta acceptance speech to attack the government's proposals; as well as criticism from Mark Rylance, Ian Hislop, Tom Hiddleston, Stewart Lee, David Attenborough, Gary Lineker, and even Craig Revel-Horwood.

They are right to be alarmed. As

public service broadcasters, the BBC and Channel 4 are not a socialist institutions, but their existence is a good thing, not only for the quality of broadcasting in the UK (I can't remember the last time I used ITV or Channel 5's On Demand services, whereas iPlayer and 4OD are almost-constantly-open tabs on my PC), but also so we can receive news and information that is at least a bit less influenced by private commercial interests or the government.

I hope that Kominsky's call to "stand up and fight" for the BBC will be acted upon so we can stop the attempted state takeover coming from the Tories.

U-turn over lone-child refugees

By Colin Foster

On 4 May, the Tory government backed down and said it would after all admit some lone-child refugees from Syria.

On 25 April the Tories had voted down proposals in Parliament to admit 3,000 children, but by 4 May they had to retreat.

They are still evasive. They won't say how many. None will be admitted until the end of 2016, and none that hadn't been registered in other EU countries before 20 March this year. The government suggests it will supply funds to councils to help settle the refugees, but won't be specific.

It was another victory against the migrant-haters on 5 May when Labour's Sadiq Khan won mayor of London despite Tory Zac Goldsmith's slurs against him as "linked to extremists" on grounds of his Pakistani family background.

Now the left can and should be working for another victory on 23 June: a vote against Brexit. A vote against re-raising borders between Britain and Europe. And a vote won by unashamed argument for lower borders and a more open and democratic EU rather than "play safe" arguments that Brexit may be "bad for business".

More — much, much more — remains to be won. From Syria alone, 4.6 million people are refugees (in addition to the 6.6 million displaced within the country). World-wide over 55 million people are seeking asylum.

That is a big number, but also a small number (0.7%) compared to the world's 7 billion population, and a small number compared to the world's wealth (to allocate \$10,000 to settle each refugee



Unaccompanied Afghan children in the Calais "Jungle" camp.

would take just 0.5% of world output).

1.2 million Syrian refugees are in Lebanon and 2.7 million are in Turkey. About one million refugees (by no means all Syrian) have recently come to Europe.

The arguments of the right wing against are based on mean-spirited pseudo-economic arguments. Even if settling thousands, or tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of refugees, were costly, the cost would be small compared to the loot siphoned off to tax havens.

And the pseudo-economic arguments are also wrong. Migrant workers keep the NHS and many other public services going, rather than overburdening them, and migrants contribute £2.5 billion more in tax, per year, than they claim in benefits. The majority of migrants are of working age and so contribute more to the social provision that children and elderly people depend on.

In the year to April 2009 migrants from Eastern Europe were 59 per cent less likely to receive welfare

benefits than UK natives; or 49 per cent if they had been here for more than two years. They were 57 per cent less likely to live in social housing.

Detailed economic analyses show that more immigration increases average wage levels in a country, rather than pushing them down. Generally, countries with more immigration are economically more dynamic and prosperous.

A study by Christian Dustmann and Tommaso Frattini found that in Britain between 1997 and 2005 middle earners gained 1.5p an hour and upper earners 2p from the effects of immigration. Wages of the worst-paid 5%, they found, were 0.7p an hour worse than they would have been without immigration. That drop is still tiny compared to the positive effect of workers of all origins uniting to win a living wage — and tiny compared to the negative effect of dividing workers by country of origin.

Bringing down the borders!

Junior doctors in contract talks

By Gemma Short

Talks between the Department of Health, NHS employers and junior doctors' representatives have restarted.

The talks, offered by a Health Secretary who has up until now been resolutely refusing to talk, will happen over five days, ending on Friday 13 May. For the period of the talks the government has agreed to pause the imposition of the junior doctors' contract.

The fact that the talks are happening shows the Health Secretary feels unable to face down the mounting pressure on him. However the government has said nothing which indicates that they are willing to compromise on the key issue — weekend working.

Junior doctors on the BMA junior doctors' committee are arguing for the BMA to hold its position, and not negotiate any contract that would lead to a seven-day elective NHS without increased staffing

and resources.

Regardless, any changed contract to come out of these negotiations will be put to the BMA membership to accept or reject. Junior doctors will also have an immediate opportunity to give their thoughts on the outcome of the negotiations as the BMA junior doctors' conference will be held in London this Saturday (14 May), followed by a meeting of the junior doctors' committee on the Sunday.

Even if junior doctors eventually reject the contract in a ballot, if the government has stopped the imposition of the current contract in order for the BMA to ballot then it may prevent them achieving implementation before this August when junior doctors start their next rotation. This means that there will be a whole year in which to win the fight against the contract.

It currently seems very likely that there is going to be a full u-turn from the government on the key issues. Junior doctors should be pre-



pared to keep on fighting and take note that their escalation of strikes in April worked and should be built on.

Whilst this process is going on the dispute must not be allowed to lose momentum. Already is has been too long since the last national demonstration linked to the dispute.

Whatever the result of the negotiations the broader fight to save the NHS must go on, and junior doctors should continue to mobilise as part of that wider fight.

Victory for blacklisted construction workers

By Anna Clark

Various large construction companies are to pay compensation to workers they illegally prevented from finding jobs.

Balfour Beatty, Carillion, Costain, Laing O'Rourke, Sir Robert McAlpine, Skanska UK and Vinci Construction will pay out around £75 million to 771 of the people they victimised through putting confidential details into secret vetting documents.

In 2009, a raid by the Information Commissioner's office uncovered a database of 3,123 workers and activists used by 44 companies to vet potential employees and exclude known trade unionists.

Seven years later, these workers have finally won some recognition for the hardships they have undergone as a result of these mercenary practices. The payments vary according to each case.

Unite's legal services director, John Beckett, has said that the companies "had to be dragged kicking and screaming to make unprecedented admissions of guilt" in October last year. The companies have issued a statement saying they wish to "draw a line under this matter", yet some of the executives involved still hold top positions.

The unions have called for a pub-



Blacklist campaigners outside the Royal Courts of Justice.

lic inquiry. Merseyside carpenter Roy Bentham has refused his offer of £35,000, saying, "This grand scale conspiracy needs a big light shining on it to bring full closure."

Construction workers should keep fighting for a full disclosure from these companies, and for harsher consequences against those involved in these sordid activities, with the full support of the labour movement.

But the payout and apology issued represent a victory for those who have been fighting construction industry blacklisting for the last seven years, and organisations such as Blacklist Support Group should be congratulated for their work.

It goes to show the importance of union solidarity and of keeping up the fight against seemingly untouchable multinational capitalists.

Trade Union Bill becomes law

By Peggy Carter

The Trade Union Bill received Royal Assent and became law on Wednesday 4 May.

The final law that was passed included amendments including: an independent review of electronic balloting with a view to implementing it shortly after its conclusion; the opt-in to political funds will now only apply to new members and will have a 12 month delay on starting; plans were dropped for the compulsory ending of "check-off" in public services; dropping of requirement to provide detailed picketing information and social media campaigning two weeks in advance; strike mandates will now last 6 months, or nine months with employer agreement rather than the originally proposed four months; a guarantee of no ministerial influence on the Certification officer.

However the law still includes: strike ballot thresholds of 50% turnout and a 40% yes vote from all those eligible to vote in "important public services"; a requirement to identify picket leaders at each picket line with picket violations becoming a criminal offence; an increase in strike notice to 14 days; the ability for employers to cap facility time; and increased role and powers for the Certifica-

tion officer and unions having to pay a levy for their running costs.

The law will not be enacted straight away, but it is expected that all of its components will be enacted by the end of October this year. This is a serious defeat for the whole labour movement, and one which the labour movement has failed to put up a significant fight against.

Many trade union activists will have been left unaware that the bill has now become law, many unions have nothing on their front pages about the passing of such a deliberate attack. Unison's front page carries an article entitled "The Trade Union Bill — how we campaigned for key changes". Clearly what is important for them is face saving rather than a serious discussion about how the workers movement is going to fight the laws that will hamper it from staging any fight on national pay, conditions, cuts or from running effective local disputes with picketing.

It is essential that discussion is had on how to break the law, and how to defend those that do. Unions will ballots coming up soon should not only mobilise to beat the thresholds but must commit to calling strikes if members are clearly up for it, even if they do not meet the thresholds.

Scottish left banging the nationalist drum

SCOTLAND

By Dale Street

In elections for the Scottish Parliament the SNP triumphed (although with six seats less than in 2011, and two seats short of an absolute majority). The Tory vote was up by 9%, doubling its number of seats. And Labour slumped — down by 8%, costing it 13 seats and pushing it into third place.

This was a remarkable achievement by the SNP. During its nine years in power at Holyrood it has imposed cuts on local authorities doubled the size of the cuts imposed on Holyrood by Westminster, slashed student places and teacher numbers in further education, and cut spending on the NHS.

It has presided over increases in class sizes in schools and increasing class inequalities in levels of educational attainment, repeatedly voted with the Tories against increasing income tax rates to avoid cuts, and ditched successive commitments to scrap the council tax.

Its last term of office (2011-16) was dominated by the independence referendum, in which it made a series of economic predictions now proven to be embarrassingly wrong and a promise of a sterling union which Salmond has now admitted was a non-starter.

The SNP's success — like the increase in Tory support and the decline in Labour support — is rooted in the fact that Scottish politics has yet to move on from referendum politics.

The SNP began its election campaign by asking voters to “judge us on our record” (not a good idea), moved on to promising radical improvements in education (which only highlighted its failures over the past nine years), and ended up with vague promises of another referendum and independence.

Flying the flag and banging a nationalist drum allowed it to retain not just its traditional support but also the support of most “yes” voters in the 2014 referendum.

Many “no” voters, on the other hand, looked for the party which was loudest in its support for the Union and opposition to another referendum. Inevitably, it was the Tories, as the unabashed party of British nationalism, which fitted the bill. In rural areas there were large-scale desertions by previous SNP voters to the Tories, as an act of opposition to another five years of referendum-mongering.

Labour was squeezed between these political mobilisations based on national identities. That clash eliminated the “space” for Labour's attempt to move on from referendum politics and win support for some traditional social-democratic politics. This analysis is confirmed by experiences on the doorstep during the election campaign.

SNP voters could not give a single example of a redistributive policy implemented by the SNP over the past nine years. And they still talked about “Red Tories”, despite the SNP-Tory alliance to oppose tax rises instead of cuts.

SNP voters backed the SNP because it would be “Stronger for Scotland”, because “only independence” would bring any improvements to Scotland, and because Scotland had been “cheated” out of independence in 2014. Not infrequently, all of

this was bound together by the wildest of conspiracy theories.

The results were bad news for the “left” electoral interventions.

RISE

RISE — the successor to the Radical Independence Campaign — was beaten in Glasgow by Sheridan's “Solidarity”.

In the North East region it was easily beaten by the Scottish National Front. And wherever they competed against each other, RISE was beaten by the Scottish Christian Party.

In the Highlands, where an ex-SNP MSP topped its list, RISE could manage only 0.4%. Across Scotland as a whole it managed just 0.5%.

Although Sheridan did better than RISE, he secured nowhere near enough votes to win a seat in Holyrood. On the Glasgow regional list “Solidarity” scored just 1.4%. Across Scotland as a whole it picked up only 0.6%.

The Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) stood six candidates in selected constituencies, picking up 1.5% to 3% of the vote (usually between 500 and a thousand votes). But the “coalition” which TUSC supposedly involves was clearly absent: all TUSC candi-

dates were Socialist Party members.

In previous years the SWP has stood candidates under the TUSC banner. This time it took the position that “it is impossible to call for a vote for Labour”. Instead, it called for a vote for TUSC (without taking part in it), while also stressing that “it is important to vote RISE or Solidarity” in the regional lists.

The Scottish Labour Party right wing has pounced on Labour's poor electoral performance to demand a shift to the right.

According to ex-MP Thomas Docherty, the Scottish Labour manifesto was “unambiguously socialist” (! — he clearly has a very modest concept of unambiguous socialism) and amounted to “self-immolation for dummies”.

In fact, the cause of Scottish Labour's poor performance is rooted in the legacy of Docherty's own politics (which alienated traditional Labour voters) and ongoing illusions in the SNP as a progressive party (which owe not a little to the collapse of the ‘far left’ into nationalism in the referendum campaign).

Labour and trade union activists need to organise to block any attempt to push Scottish Labour to the right. And what passes itself off as the far left needs to wake up from its nationalist daydreaming, now manifesting itself in pro-Brexit campaigning, and return to a focus on class politics.

Left gains in Northern Ireland elections

THE LEFT

By Michael Johnson

On 5 May, Northern Ireland went to the polls for the first Stormont elections since 2011. Once again we see an Executive dominated by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin (SF), but with the exciting breakthrough for the far-left People Before Profit Alliance (PBPA) and an increased vote for the non-sectarian Green Party.

102 of the 108 seats have gone to the five parties who comprised the last Executive, with the main two parties, the DUP and SF, taking 66 seats between them. Both now have a mandate to continue with the so-called Fresh Start agreement, involving welfare cuts and a reduction of corporation tax to 12.5%.

The two main parties' domination of the Executive will be aggravated by the continuing decline of the junior partners in Northern Ireland's permanent multi-party coalition. The Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) were down 0.2% to 12.6%, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) fell 2.2% to 12% and the liberal Alliance Party declined by 0.7% to 7%.

However, the DUP clearly emerges as the stronger of the two main parties. Despite predictions of a decline, it held its 38 seats with only a slight drop in support, owing to a successful “keep Martin McGuinness from becoming First Minister” campaign and the baffling popularity of its new leader, Arlene Foster.

SF did not have a great election, a fact masked by the SDLP having an even worse one. Despite the electorate increasing in size since 2011, the combined vote for SF and the SDLP was down 5.1% and there are only 40 nationalist seats in the new Assembly. SF is shedding support particularly in its urban working-class heartlands, where its long-

held dominance and complicity in government cuts mark it out to younger voters and disillusioned former supporters as the establishment.

Disgruntled former nationalist voters are turning to the socialist left for answers.

In SF's West Belfast power-base, Belfast City Councillor Gerry Carroll from the SWP-linked People Before Profit Alliance (PBPA) grabbed the headlines with a poll-topping 8,229 votes, blasting through the quota with around 3,000 votes to spare and depriving SF of one of its seats. Veteran leftist and journalist Eamonn McCann took a seat from the SDLP in Derry with 4,176 votes. First-time candidate PBPA Fiona Ferguson scored an impressive 1,286 votes.

PBPA will designate itself as “Other” in the new Assembly, rather than as Nationalist or Unionist, and when elected Carroll said: “People often are presented in this city as Unionist or Nationalist. We see ourselves as representing working class people of Belfast, from the Shankill or the Falls.”

Younger, more liberal-minded voters, disgusted by ostensibly left of centre nationalist parties' equivocation on issues such as abortion rights are also behind the strong result for the Green Party, which took a seat from the SDLP in South Belfast.

In the last Assembly, legislation providing for an opposition was grafted on to the sectarian architecture of Northern Ireland's political system, in which the main parties had hitherto formed a permanent cross-community coalition. The UUP pulled out of the last coalition, and the other two junior partners, the SDLP and Alliance, will now be weighing up the merits of opposition.

Provision for an opposition can only cast in sharper relief the DUP-SF domination of the Executive and their responsibility for the next Programme for Government. This is likely to hurt SF more than the DUP, and the presence of the PBPA on the opposition benches will further expose SF's attempt to both impose and be seen to reject austerity at the same time.

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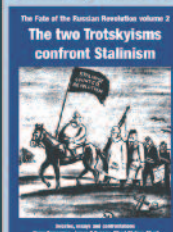
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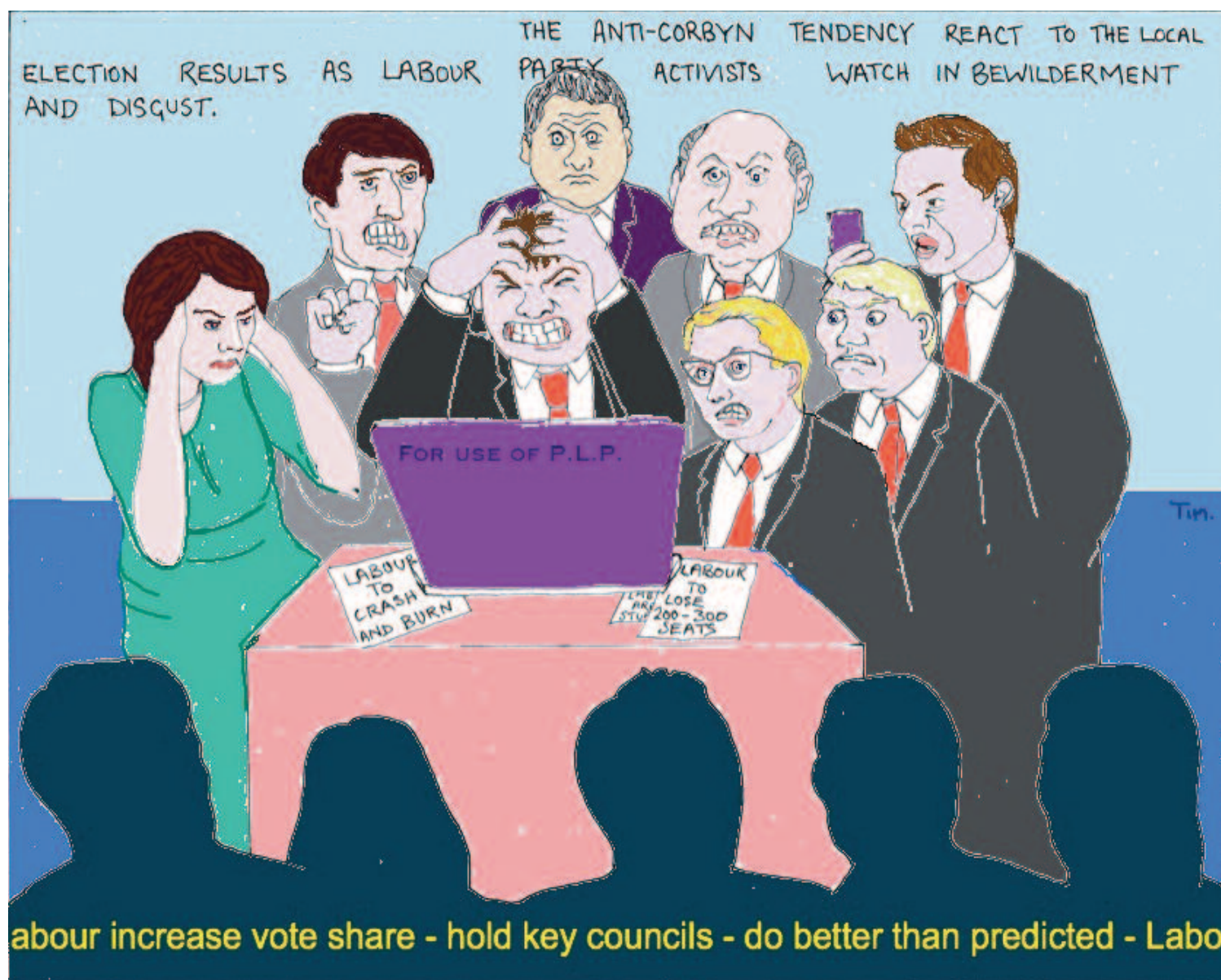
The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism

For the revolutionary socialists, the Trotskyists, it has been a very long march through the 20th century and beyond, and over sometimes uncharted, unexpected, terrain. Central to it has been the fight against Stalinism, to understand it, to wipe the labour movement clean of it. This book surveys and documents for the first time the formative debates in the 1940s between the two main strands into which Trotskyism divided.

£23 (inc postage) from bit.ly/twotrotskyisms



Stand up for socialism!



All in all, Labour didn't do too badly in the 5 May elections. Everything was weighted against them.

The media had its own anti-Labour agenda and tried to force events into its own pre-set patterns. It spent much of its time discussing Jeremy Corbyn and who liked him and didn't like him.

A big chunk of Labour's Blairite right wing behaved as if they were trying to whip up an electoral catastrophe for the party. Some who claim to be on the left, notably Ken Livingstone, behaved in the same way. Labour's "Compliance Unit" continued to behave like the Red Queen in Alice: "Off with their heads!"

To get someone of Muslim background elected as mayor of London was, in these circumstances, an achievement in itself.

Nobody sensible would argue that elections, winning elections, beating the Tories, is not important to the Labour Party and the labour movement. Unfortunately, a lot of otherwise sensible people argue, or thoughtlessly assume, that winning elections is the central and all-defining thing for the labour movement — irrespective of whether, having beaten the Tories, we have a political alternative to Toryism and Blair-Brownism.

There is only one segment of the labour

movement for which such an approach makes any sense: the "give me a job" political careerists. But those people are allowed to set the tone and the pace.

They — and the media, which comments on political questions and on the performance of Labour politicians as if it were talking about football and football management, or reviewing a film: how was so-and-so's performance? do you think this policy is a vote-winner or not?

That is the media's way these days of controlling the political agenda, focusing it on its chosen concerns, defocusing it from everything else, stifling discussion on serious political questions or, often, making it more or less impossible.

EDUCATION

But political parties don't just exist to win elections and good jobs for slaving political careerists. Serious political parties have another, all-determining political purpose: to shape, educate, and call into being support for what they think are important ideas of public policy.

The Labour Party, and trade union leaders like Ernest Bevin, did that in the years following the defection of Labour's lead-

ers, MacDonald and Snowden, to the Tories in 1931, and Labour's crushing defeat in the general election that followed.

They worked to elaborate an alternative to the dominant bourgeois economic wisdoms, and to shape public opinion to support that alternative. If they hadn't done that, the modern welfare state, and specifically the National Health Service, wouldn't have been won in 1945 and after.

And not just the Labour Party: serious bourgeois politicians have often done the same thing. When in 1885-6 the Liberal leader and prime minister William Ewart Gladstone became convinced that Home Rule for Ireland was necessary and just, he campaigned at giant mass meetings all over the country to convince his party and the electorate.

A Home Rule Bill was defeated in 1886, and Gladstone lost power. By 1893 he was able to get a majority for Home Rule in the House of Commons. The Lords then had an absolute veto, and used it to scuttle Home Rule.

Or take Joseph Chamberlain, the Liberal Imperialist who broke with Gladstone over Home Rule and joined the Tories to form a "Unionist" party.

When Chamberlain became convinced that free trade should end and be replaced

by a system of "Empire Free Trade" (tariffs on trade outside the British Empire), he did what Gladstone had done: he launched a campaign to shape opinion for the policy he thought right and necessary.

The notion that political parties exist at all times primarily to win elections, on any terms, cuts them off from one of the great historical functions of serious political parties. The Tories can do that without thereby putting out their own social and political eyes. For them, policy is hammered out, opinion formed and shaped, reformed and reshaped, by the serious bourgeois press, the *Economist*, the *Financial Times*, through to the *Guardian* on the left.

The labour movement and the Labour Party, in so far as they aspire to anything outside the contemporary bourgeois consensus, can't do like the Tories, and for policy feed off existing bourgeois opinion.

The media at the other end of the spectrum from the serious press, the *Sun* and *Daily Express* end, function as ideological thugs to beat down any stirrings of thought independent of the bourgeois norms, using demagoguery, caricature, misrepresentation, and downright lies to shape public opinion to the needs of the bourgeoisie.

GREAT CAMPAIGN

The Labour Party leaders should launch a great campaign against the policies and values of Toryism and for the central ethos of the labour movement and the socialist working class: solidarity.

It will not necessarily be the sort of socialism that would satisfy Marxists like those who publish this paper. But a campaign for the ideas of social responsibility, against the present-day rule of, by, and for the rich; a campaign to defend the NHS; an educational campaign about the inadequacies of present-day democracy and for real improvements in it — all those and many others can and should be proclaimed and fought for by the Labour Party.

Much of the work that prepared public opinion for what Labour did in the 1940s was done in the 1930s by campaigning socialists, including Labour leaders.

We have made such suggestions in this paper over the last few months. If the Labour leaders can't and won't do it, then the rank and file must act independently.

We need to put together a broad socialist coalition to educate public opinion about socialist ideas and anti-capitalist ideas and possibilities.

Setting up this campaign, and preventing from being aborted at the start by disputes over fine points of policy, would be a task to daunt Karl Marx himself. Yet we need to do it.

If the labour movement does not move on from Corbyn's victory, then it may regress. The left has not for decades had such a chance as it has now. We must not miss the tide. If we do, it may not come again for decades.

Mobilise reason to fight a

REASON IN REVOLT

By Sean Matgamna

Jackie Walker, vice-chair of the Labour Party's left-wing group Momentum, has been suspended by the Labour Party on grounds of anti-semitism.

The charge of anti-semitism is based on a fragment of a Facebook conversation from some months ago. Her "anti-semitism" consisted in the statement that Africa too had experienced a "Holocaust".

The Labour Party now has a regime of capricious and arbitrary instant exclusions. This paper and its predecessor *Socialist Organiser* have argued that anti-semitism in the labour movement needs to be rooted out. But this Red-Queen-in-Alice-in-Wonderland "off with their heads" regime is not the way to do it.

For decades, from Israel's June 1967 "Six Day War" and with renewed energy after the

1973 Yom Kippur Israeli-Egyptian war, hostility to Israel has been a major, and seemingly ever-growing, force in the labour movement and in the Labour Party.

Some of that is a just hostility to Israel's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. But there is more than that. There is often a blatant anti-semitism.

In June 1967 Israel occupied that part of pre-1948 Palestine which the United Nations partition plan of 1947 had designated for an independent Palestinian state to exist side by side with Israel. That Palestinian territory had been occupied and annexed in 1948-9 by Jordan and Egypt, and a small part of it by Israel.

Now all of pre-war Palestine and Gaza was under Israeli control. Various Israeli offers to vacate the newly conquered territories in return for peace and recognition by the Arab states were rejected.

Israel's occupation of that Palestinian land has so far last half a century. It has turned Israel into a regional imperialist power (in the

sense that Marxists had called the pre-World War-2 Czechoslovakian, Polish, and Yugoslav states imperialist — they ruled over minority peoples repressed to various degrees by the Poles, Czechs, Serbs).

Israel has been a grubby and brutal imperialist power in its treatment of the Palestinians. As with any other imperialist occupation, Marxists have demanded that the occupying power, Israel, get out of the Arab-majority territories and allow the Palestinians to have their own state there.

That there were special problems was not to be denied. In 1967 no Arab state recognised Israel's existence, or its right to continued existence. Only the PLO and a couple of states, Egypt and Jordan, do today.

The PLO before the June 1967 war had been controlled by Egypt and fronted by Ahmad Shukeiri, who proclaimed the PLO's objective in the slogan: "drive the Jews into the sea".

This was altogether too reminiscent of Hitler, then only 20 years dead. Any taint, approximation, or suggestion of anti-semitism was still held to be unclean politics, far outside what was acceptable to labour-movement people.

With an enormous exception: the Stalinist movements everywhere had spent the years from 1948-9 to 1953 in a scarcely-disguised anti-semitic clamour against "the Zionists" and against Israel.

In Stalinist show trials in Russia's satellite states in Eastern Europe, such as the Czech Slansky trial of 1952, recently-prominent Stalinists accused of all sorts of treasons were indicted above all as being "Zionists". They were jailed, and some hanged.

The Stalinist parties everywhere conducted large-scale propaganda against Zionism. It was then that the assertion that "the Zionists" were tools, and political and moral accomplices, of Hitler and the Nazis, appeared and went into circulation.

In the USSR, a projected show trial of Jewish doctors who attended the leading Stalinists was set in train. It was abandoned when Stalin died in March 1953. When Stalin's successor Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin in 1956, his anti-semitism suddenly became a matter of public record. Many Jews left the Communist Parties.

Stalinist "anti-Zionist" anti-semitism was banked down. But not everywhere. Open anti-semitism became a force in Poland in 1967-8.

The orthodox Trotskyists, including the Palestinian Trotskyists, declared themselves against both sides in the Israeli war of independence in 1948. The Workers Party in the USA supported Israel's right to exist and defend itself. Naturally, Trotskyists denounced the Stalinist anti-semitic campaigns of 1948 to 1953. In 1956 and after, the anti-semitism of Stalinism was part of their denunciation of it.

How did those attitudes turn into fervent support for the Arab states against Israel? What were the political processes by way of which much of what had been official Stalinist doctrine in 1948-53, denounced by the orthodox Trotskyists, came to be fervently accepted by them?

The objective basis for it was the brutalities of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian-majority territories. The subjective basis was the peculiar version of "anti-imperialism" which the Trotskyists adopted from the outbreak of the Korean war in 1950, an "anti-imperialism" coloured and sculpted by the belief that in the colonial and semi-colonial world the Stalinists were, by virtue of their militancy against the US and its allies, leading the first stage of an anti-capitalist and essentially working-class world revolution.

The orthodox Trotskyists came to be impassioned defenders and advocates of one of the great imperialist blocs contending for mastery in the world. They made criticisms of Stalinism, but never allowed them to affect the basic commitment to "defend" the USSR and its spawns and replicas.

The same sort of "anti-imperialism" was brought to bear on the antagonisms between Israel and the Arab states. The anti-colonial movements in the Arab world were construed as part of an "Arab Revolution", which in turn was part of the world revolution.

The Grant tendency (later Militant, and today the Socialist Party and Socialist Appeal) even declared in 1965 that Ba'thist (non-Stalinist) Syria had become a "deformed workers' state".

Israel, which after 1967 though not before became closely allied with the USA, was part of the imperialist bloc. The Palestinians and the Arab states opposing Israel were part of the "progressive" anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist bloc.

And of course the Palestinians facing the superior might of Israel naturally attracted sympathy and support.

SHIFT

The Trotskyists' shift from their attitude in the 1948 war and after was first a shift to a new denial that Israel was a legitimate state.

From the end of Arab-Israeli hostilities in 1949, the Trotskyists had taken the existence of Israel as a fact. When in 1956 Israel joined France and Britain in invading Egypt (the Suez crisis), the Trotskyists properly took sides with Egypt, but did not conclude that Israel, the ally of Britain and France, had no right to exist.

In the grip of a belief that "the Arab revolution" was or would soon become "socialist", Gerry Healy, the leader of the main British orthodox Trotskyist group, published a small pamphlet on the Suez crisis in which, astonishingly, he threatened that if the Israelis did not change to the right side in the world revolution — the side that the Arabs and their "colonial revolution" were on — they would soon face "a bloody holocaust that will make Hitler's crimes seem a tea party".

The organisation that could allow Healy to publish such a thing — what could make the murder of six million Jews in Europe seem like a tea party? — was politically sick; but the same organisation, at roughly the same time, could publish a valuable expose of Stalinist anti-semitism.

The shift to a radical opposition to the exis-

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anti-semitism

tence of Israel came by way of acceptance of the post-1969 PLO “proposal” to replace Israel with a “secular democratic state” in all of pre-1948 Palestine in which Jews and Arabs could live as equals.

The PLO no longer shouted “drive the Jews into the sea”, but, with its seemingly benign proposal for Jewish-Arab equality in a common secular democratic state, it was thereby all the more effective in spreading the idea that Israel was not a “legitimate” state, that it should never have come into existence, and that it should be put out of existence as soon as possible.

Any idea that this could ever be done by Israel agreeing to abolish itself as a state and put its citizens at the mercy of its long-time bitter enemies was ludicrous. And it was an approach unique to the Jewish state: to no other nation state was there such an attitude.

In practice the approach could only mean what Shukeiri’s “drive the Jews into the sea” had meant — conquest of Israel, depriving the Hebrew nation of national rights, and killing as many Israeli Jews as necessary to do that. A combination of hostility to Israel’s continuing occupation of Arab-majority territories and the pseudo-benignity of the “secular democratic state” proposal made the formula widely acceptable to people who would never accept the same program — that Israel was not a historically legitimate state and should go out of existence — packaged as “drive the Jews into the sea”.

Thus the idea of Israel’s historical illegitimacy became widely accepted on the left, including the Labour Party left; and then, what followed from it, since Israel was so unreasonable as to refuse to abolish itself — support for any armed Arab (or, latterly, Islamic, i.e. Iranian) action against Israel.

Not just a proper socialist and democratic support for Palestinians attempting to drive out the Israelis from Palestinian territories, but support for suicide bombs against Israeli civilians and for the mouthings and actions against Israel of such as Saddam Hussein.

Labour MPs held to such views, and not only honest and well-meaning political fools like the late Ron Brown MP. When in 1994 the soft-left Labour MP George Galloway, on camera, addressed Saddam Hussein, praising the butcher’s strength and in Arabic pledging support for the conquest of “Jerusalem”, the right-wing Labour establishment left it to the Tories and the press to protest. Galloway’s continued membership of the Labour Party was at that point never questioned, other than that *Socialist Organiser* (forerunner of *Solidarity*) said that he should be removed as an MP.

Now, under a left-wing leadership, we have a regime in the Labour Party where Jackie Walker, a woman of mixed African-Jewish background, can be summarily suspended for daring to call the long historical martyrdom of Africa, notably the slave trade, a “Holocaust” equivalent to the Hitlerian massacre of six million Jews.

Are such glosses on history now full-blown anti-semitism? Not something maybe to disagree with or question, but something incom-

patible with membership of the Labour Party? The Labour Party that for so long had George Galloway as one of its ornaments?

I repeat: anti-semitism on the left needs to be fought against and destroyed. This paper, and its predecessor *Socialist Organiser*, have been fighting it within the left and the labour movement for over three decades. The main fight, however, has to take the form of debate, discussion, political education and re-education.

The suspension from the Labour Party of a Ken Livingstone for pretty blatant anti-semitism on the air is just and necessary. The removal of Jackie Walker is preposterous.

It is the sort of response — in mirror image — that the hysterical left in student unions have sometimes employed against those they deem not hostile enough to Israel and thus “Zionist” and “racist”.

The Palestinians are oppressed by Israel and therefore are entitled to the support of honest socialists and consistent democrats. Is heated support for the Palestinians to be incompatible with Labour Party membership? Is indignant, or exaggerated, denunciation of specific Israeli acts to be branded “racist”, incompatible with membership in the new Labour Party?

CLARIFY

We need to specify what “left anti-semitism” consists of, in order to debate, educate, and clarify.

1. The belief that Israel has no right to exist. That is the core of “left anti-semitism”, though it comes in more than one version and from more than one root, ranging from the skewed “anti-imperialism” of the orthodox Trotskyists through Arab nationalism to Islamic chauvinism.

2. The belief that Israeli Jewish nationalism, Zionism, is necessarily a form of racism. That this racism can only be expunged if Israel, Zionists, and Jews abandon Israeli nationalism and support of any kind for Israel. That Jews — Jewish students, for example — can only redeem themselves if they agree that the very existence of Israel is “racist”.

3. The view that Israel alone is responsible for the conflict with the Arab states (and, now, Islamic states). The idea that Israel alone is responsible for creating Arab refugees, and is uniquely evil in doing so. In real history about 700,000 Palestinians fled or were driven out in 1948. In the following years the Jews who fled or were expelled from Arab territories numbered about 600,000. Israel integrated the 600,000; the Arab states mostly refused the Palestinians citizenship or even the right to work.

4. The Palestinian “right of return”, that is, the right to organised settlement in Israel of six million people, only a tiny and dying-off number of whom were born in what is now Israel, is one of the many codes for in fact demanding the self-abolition of the Jewish state and justifications for war to conquer and abolish it because it will not accept the demand.

It is not the equivalent of free immigration to the UK, or even of mass migration to the



The equation of Israel with Hitler and the Holocaust is anti-semitic

UK of millions from Syria, Libya, and Africa. Its equivalent for Britain would be the organised settlement in the country of sixty million people. Socialists should be in favour of agreements between Israel and the Palestinians for compensation and for letting individual Palestinians into Israel. Support for a collective “right of return” is only another form of the demand to conquer and destroy Israel.

5. The idea that the forced migration of 700,000 Arabs was a “unique” evil is also wrong. In 1945, about 13 million Germans were driven out of Eastern Europe and German East Prussia. They were driven into a Germany reduced to ruins by wartime bombing, where economic life had seized up and millions were starving. At least half a million are reckoned to have lost their lives in that “ethnic cleansing”. Only obscure German nationalists now propose to reverse that forced population movement and to drive out the Poles and Czechs who live where Germans once lived.

6. There is a peculiar form of Holocaust semi-denial current on the left. I have never heard of anyone on the left who denies that six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis (though, in the nature of things, someone will now jump out from behind a bush wearing a “Hitler was framed” badge, to call me a liar). What many on the left “deny” is that this unique fact of history had repercussions that we should at least try to understand, with

some sympathy for the surviving Jews. It is relegated almost to a “virtual fact”.

In truth, the Holocaust discredited all Jewish-assimilationist programs, including ours, the socialist one. It created the will for a “Jewish solution to the Jewish question” and for the creation of Israel. The Holocaust should be appreciated as a real fact of history, with repercussions and reverberations, and not as something outside the history we are all part of, as a sort of side-show, as a two-dimensional hologram rather than the weighty event it was and continues to be.

7. The idea that there are good peoples entitled to all rights, and bad peoples, entitled to no rights. That too is something I have never heard anyone voice. It is there as an underlying subtext, or implicitly in the idea that we are concerned with national rights only for the presently oppressed, i.e. in this case the Palestinians.

8. There is no one-state solution — not through, as now, Israeli domination of the whole territory and Palestinians living indefinitely in a limbo of Israeli occupation, nor through a Palestinian state “from the river to the sea” incorporating Israel after its Jewish population have been killed or overpowered by Arab or Islamic states.

The only just solution that can serve both Jews and Arabs is two states: a sovereign Palestinian state in contiguous territory, side by side with Israel.

Home Rule and the Gaelic Revival

Michael Johnson continues a series on the life and politics of James Connolly

Connolly's period in Dublin coincided with the period of the Gaelic Revival, and the rediscovery (and re-invention) of Ireland's historical, literary and cultural past.

It also led to a deepening of Connolly's understanding of Irish history and the Irish national question, establishing some themes which, in various form, would be present throughout his political life.

The Gaelic Revival was in full-swing when Connolly moved to Dublin in 1896, as sections of the Irish middle class, many of them Protestant, were looking to create an elite national culture appropriate for a future independent Ireland.

The Gaelic League was gathering a huge following after its foundation by Douglas Hyde in 1893 to promote the use of the Irish language. The previous year, Hyde had given a lecture entitled 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland' calling for the Irish people to discover their language, names, literature and history. The Gaelic Athletic Association had been formed earlier, in 1884, to promote interest in Irish sports such as hurling in order to counter the influence of British soccer, cricket and rugby.

At the same time, the young poet William Butler Yeats fuelled an Irish literary revival geared at creating Irish forms of verse, stories and history. In 1892 Yeats founded the National Literary Society in Dublin and along with Hyde and the poet Katherine Tynan, he hoped for "a school of Irish poetry — founded on Irish myth and history — a neo-romantic movement" which was steeped in Celtic mythology, then-fashionable Victorian medievalism and echoes of the earlier pre-Raphaelite movement.

REVIVAL

As with many nations in the throes of modernisation, the revival movement was often romantic and backward-looking, appealing to a mythical and idealised national past.

Their Ireland was, in Liz Curtis's words, an "ideal Ireland as imagined by a member of the Protestant ascendancy caste, influenced by Victorian romanticism" in which an idealised aristocracy ruled benevolently over the peasantry. This romantic vision displaced the modern-day reality of Ireland, with exploitative landlords, rural unrest, growing sectarian division and the growth of urban life.

Yet at the same time, the new culture nationalism had a virile quality lacking in the then seemingly moribund Home Rule movement. While warning that "you cannot teach a starving man Gaelic", Connolly recognised the movement's hostility to colonialism and its potential receptivity to socialist ideas. Some of Connolly's earliest articles in Ireland would be published by Alice Milligan, a young Protestant from Omagh in County Tyrone, and editor of the republican *Shan Van Vocht* newspaper.

In these years, Connolly was involved in practical co-operation with the radical nationalists because, on certain questions, he reckoned, there was scope to work together against the bourgeois Home Rulers and the British Empire.

One such issue was Queen Victoria's jubilee celebrations in 1897. On 3 April, Connolly joined with the English-born Irish nationalist and women's suffrage activist Maud Gonne to organise a counter-demon-



Above left, Irish nationalist and suffrage campaigner, Maud Gonne; right James Fintan Lalor

stration to the jingoistic celebrations planned for Dublin. On a huge screen in a Parnell Square window-front, they displayed pictures of evictions along with pictures of the activists who had been executed or died in prison during Victoria's reign.

The *Daily Mail* recorded that a "large crowd assembled carrying a black flag bearing a statement in silver-coloured letters to the effect that during the Record Reign over 1,500,000 people have been starved in Ireland, over 300,000 were alleged to have been evicted, and more than 4,000,000 compelled to emigrate."

The day after, the ISRP marched in a procession with a black coffin bearing the words "British Empire" on it, while a workers' brass band played a funeral dirge on rickety instruments. Following a police attack on the demonstration, Connolly called for the coffin to be thrown into the River Liffey, while the crowd proclaimed: "Here goes the coffin of the British Empire. To hell with the British Empire."

Later that night, a police baton-charge on the crowd fatally injured an elderly woman, causing a riot during which shop windows displaying jubilee decorations were smashed up. For the ISRP the day's events were a propaganda success: so much for "loyal Dublin".

The following year was the centenary of the 1798 United Irishmen rebellion, the revolutionary bourgeois movement inspired by the French Revolution. So successful were the republican-inspired commemoration committees that the constitutional nationalists felt the need to attempt a hostile takeover. Even the millionaire capitalist and royalist William Martin Murphy got involved, much to the anger of the republicans and the ISRP, who formed their own rank-and-file committees to give a radical interpretation of the uprising.

1899 saw the Boer War break out between Britain and the Dutch-descendent Boers in southern Africa. Instinctively, many Irish backed the Boers against Britain, who wanted to seize the Boer-controlled Transvaal in order to open its diamond mines up to even more ruthless capitalist exploitation. Arch-imperialist and diamond magnate Cecil Rhodes quipped that he "would annex the planets if [he] could."

The first protest against English policy in the Transvaal came from the ISRP on 27 August 1899, and from October the movement

against the war saw the Irish Transvaal Committee founded, with the involvement of Maud Gonne and Arthur Griffith.

On 17 December, a protest meeting was organised against the visit of Liberal Unionist Joseph Chamberlain who had been awarded an honorary degree at Trinity College Dublin. The venue was occupied by the police, so Connolly, Maud Gonne and Griffith rode into a nearby square in a horse-drawn carriage.

When the police hauled the driver away, Connolly took the reins, driving through the police lines to what the *United Irishman* newspaper described as "the enthusiastic cheers of the people, who immediately fell in behind the brake [carriage] and formed an impromptu procession" around Dublin city centre. In retaliation, the police smashed the press of the *Workers' Republic*.

Such antics drew the ire of moderate Fabians, such as Bruce Glasier, who wrote of Connolly in Robert Blatchford's *Clarion* of March 1900: "How I envied him his self-indulgence and irresponsibility."

Connolly took a dim view of both men, denouncing Blatchford's support for Britain in the Boer War as "unqualifiedly chauvinist", and referring to Glasier when he was chosen by the Fabians for their Dublin lecture tour "as the man most fitted to succeed" in inducing "the Irish working class to confine themselves to the work of municipalising, and to fritter away their energies and break their hearts on the petty squabbles of local administration, to the entire neglect of the essential work of capturing the political power necessary for social reconstruction."

IRISH POPULISM

Underlying this practical co-operation with the revolutionary nationalists was Connolly's increasingly developed thinking about the Irish national question in these years.

During spells of unemployment, Connolly could be found in the National Library, reading and republishing extracts from the writings of James Fintan Lalor, the Irish revolutionary from the 1840s, who fought for tenants' rights and land reform.

Lalor's work had been resurrected by John Leslie in the 1890s, who hailed him as "the man who first pointed out the class nature of the Irish movement." This view was adopted by Connolly, and was a source of some of the insights in and also the problems with Con-

nolly's early writings on the national question, and the relationship between nationalism and socialism.

Writing in the 1840s, after the classical Jacobin-inspired bourgeois revolutionaries of the 1798 rebellion who wanted an independent capitalist Ireland but before the development of an Irish working-class movement, Lalor did indeed recognise a class basis to the national question, but the class in question for him was the Irish peasantry.

The national question was redefined by Lalor as a "question between a people and a class — between a people of eight million and a class of 8,000." The people, for Lalor, meant the Irish peasantry, and its enemy, English landlords and their system. In his schema, the peasantry would rise up and replace landlordism with a utopian system of peasant proprietorship.

Like the pre-Marxist Populist movement in Russia, Lalor hoped that this would allow Ireland to bypass capitalism completely. As the Irish Workers Group's *Connolly: A Marxist Analysis* has argued, if the peasantry acted in according to Lalor's schema, at best they would have hastened the end of quasi-feudal landlordism in Ireland in a revolutionary-democratic way. In the end, it would have paved the way for a class of capitalist farmers, as market forces took grip, just as market forces dissolved the Russian peasant communes and created a working-class.

In his work *The Irish Question in 1894* Leslie employed Lalor's 'social-revolutionary' approach to the national question. He was using Lalor as an analogy for his own criticisms of the Home Rulers of his day, whose aim was purely for more legislative autonomy within which to develop an Irish capitalism. In an ingenious and seductive analysis, Leslie replaced the peasantry in his scheme with the urban and rural workers but the structure of the argument is unchanged. As in Lalor, the national question is collapsed into the question of land ownership, "the right of ownership of the soil." For Lalor this meant peasant proprietorship; for Leslie, the nationalisation of land. On this basis, Leslie argues, the national and social questions are fused, and Ireland can industrialise on a socialist basis without experiencing the horrors of industrial capitalism.

Connolly would adopt and develop Leslie's position in his pamphlet *Erin's Hope*, published in 1897. This will be the subject of my next article.

Brazil: the plans of the right

On 10 May the acting speaker of the lower house of Brazil's parliament, appointed after the previous speaker was forced out on charges of corruption and money-laundering, declared the 17 April impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff invalid. The chief of the upper house, the Senate, however, declared that a Senate vote to confirm the impeachment and force out Rousseff would go ahead.

On 4 May Alfredo Saad Filho, a Brazilian Marxist economist working in London, spoke to *Solidarity* about the political turmoil in Brazil.

At the level of the institutions of the state, and from the point of view of the right, things are going well. There is a lull in right-wing mobilisation on the street: they get tired, distracted, and their level of motivation to keep on mobilising is low. Effectively the state is doing their job for them.

There has been an increase in activity and extra-parliamentary mobilisation from the left. But I expect it has been less than what they were hoping for. They are still trying to build up a coalition that can bear the tension that exists within the left between the defence of the PT [Workers' Party, the party of Rousseff], of Lula [president 2003-11], of the President, and being critical of them from a left perspective.

The MST [landless movement] has stepped up occupations of land, they've done road blockades. The movement of the homeless, which is an urban parallel to the MST, has been occupying spaces and doing road blockades too.

But there have not been organised protests led by trade unions including political strikes. The left organisations are divided in terms of how they perceive the situation and what should be done; and mostly they are not in a strong enough position to lead mobilisations.

On 11 May the Senate will vote on the impeachment process which comes from the Chamber of Deputies. If the senate votes in favour — and it is inconceivable that it will not — then the President will have to leave office for a period of up to 180 days, and the Vice President becomes the President of the country. He can appoint a new government and continue in that role, as the Constitution says, until the next elections in 2018.

For the right, the next step is to put Lula in jail, and demolish the possibility that he might become a candidate in 2018.

To trigger early elections would need a constitutional amendment. There is a debate in the left about whether that would be a good strategy or not. The positive side of this tactic would be the possibility that Lula might win. I think that the country would explode well before that happened. But there is a downside, and I think this outweighs the positive side: that it would almost certainly lead to a victory by the right. It would give legitimacy to their government to do what they want.

The right don't want early elections because they believe that Lula might win — and also because they do not have a candidate. The right is tremendously split. The main opposition party, the Social-Democratic Party, is split into three. The PMDB, the party of the Vice President, does not have the strength to launch a candidate — it has not launched a candidate for more than a decade



— because the party is essentially a federation of local interests and thieves, essentially.

A right-wing government will drive to privatise everything they can: infrastructure, airlines... It will go for the transformation, or more likely the extinction of Mercosur [the customs union of South America], and an alliance of Brazil with the United States.

There will be a contraction of social policy — not the extinction, but the limitation of social programmes, in the name of fiscal restraint. Changes in labour law to make the labour market more flexible.

TAX

The right have announced that there will be no tax increases, but they cannot deliver that because they need tax increases. So the measures that Rousseff tried to introduce and which the right blocked in the Senate, they will need to introduce now for their government.

The PT has not revived. My evidence is anecdotal, but a large number of members of the PT have essentially abandoned political life in disappointment. People on the left of the party are still active, but the mainstream of the party, aligned with Lula, has essentially been neutralised and dismantled, I think.

The description that the right makes is that the PT became a criminal organisation. That is incorrect, but it did become a mainstream organisation. A lot of the efforts of the party were directed at doing deals with individual members of that cohort of capital which I call the internal bourgeoisie, and using some of the proceeds of growth to finance social policy.

The PT has now lost everything at the same

time: lost the support of capital, lost growth, lost the resources to do social policy. The party is adrift, quite badly. It has become an organisation trying to defend Lula personally.

By "internal bourgeoisie" I mean the bourgeoisie which is oriented towards the internal market, towards infrastructure in Brazil, or to exporting but with the grounds of accumulation based in the country itself. Meat exporters for example, or even agribusiness: their accumulation strategy is organised around export, but they are grounded in the domestic market.

Durable consumer goods firms are not. Their capital comes from abroad, and the strategies of these firms — auto-makers as well — are decided abroad. Foreign-owned firms directed towards the internal market are mostly aligned with the neoliberal platform too. They benefited from the rise in domestic consumption under PT governments, but they flipped very quickly.

The whole focus of the corruption investigations is on domestic capital, is on infrastructure firms, the oil sector — groups that were close to the PT. The investigations have selectively targeted the PT and businessmen funding the PT. Evidence against everybody else — which is abundant — has been ignored.

This, in my opinion, has been an organised political attack on the PT, a really carefully-structured operation.

The left wing within the PT is the minority, and has been so for a long time. It has been disarticulated to a large extent. They lost most of the positions they held within the organisation, and they lost the narrative. That's because they could not really criticise the

policies of the government, and now they find themselves tainted by the corruption scandals.

As for PSOL [a left split from the PT, dating from 2004], my impression is that for several years they have concentrated on the issue of corruption. It was not even class politics as such. There were precedents. The PT grew [in the 1990s] on that basis; after it abandoned its transformative aspirations, it grew on the back of the corruption issue. PSOL did a similar thing, but criticising the PT as well.

When it became clear after the elections in 2014 that there would be a conspiracy to overthrow the President, PSOL came closer to a broad umbrella of the left and worked together with them. But it is a party without a significant base outside of parliament itself and outside of the political circles of the left. So it has not benefited from this crisis, it has not captured the left of the PT. I have not heard of any special growth in PSOL.

PSOL performed well in Congress in this impeachment process. In moments when the PT could not control its own deputies, could not come up with a narrative, could not lead the resistance, it was the PSOL and the Communist Party that did it, in a way that was completely disproportionate to the number of deputies that they had.

In 2006, PSOL got 7% in the Presidential election; in 2014 they got 1.5%. I think the 2006 score was the candidate they had, Heloíse Helena, who was popular because of television and the corruption issue. I don't think she was a good candidate overall — she was very closely associated with religious forces and overtly religious — but she was popular.

LEFT

Following that I think there was a left-right polarisation, and the PT absorbed the entire vote of the left. This did not have to happen, because, as in France it is a two-round electoral system.

To the left of the PT and PSOL the biggest group is the PSTU [a would-be Trotskyist group of the "Morenist" stripe]. They say is that there is no coup, and their slogan is "general strike to get rid of them all".

I think that is nonsense. There is a coup. It is the biggest defeat of the left in 50 years. There is no prospect of mass insurrection on the left. There is no way that the radical left is going to polarise around anything other than the defence of the government.

To go out campaigning to "get rid of them all" and to call early elections is a fundamental political mistake.

There is a real dilemma here. The PT government was bad. The government was implementing neoliberal policy, trying to ally itself with capital. On the other hand, the only realistic alternative is much worse. What do you do?

Sadly, there is no radical, consistent, revolutionary mass left in Brazil. To the extent that it is emerging through the MST and the homeless movements and other organisations, it is not aligned with political parties.

The real world is one in which the right is stronger and gaining strength; the left's strength is draining away. There is a huge fog on the political struggle because of the corruption issue, and the external environment is extremely hostile. There is no prospect, no programme, no revolutionary aspiration amongst the masses, there is no vision of a reality beyond neoliberalism. We are discussing shades of neoliberalism here.

It is a shame to be in this position, but I think this is the reality.

Where we stand

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.

The capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class must unite to struggle against capitalist power in the workplace and in wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses and to militantly assert working-class interests.

In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. For reproductive justice: free abortion on demand; the right to choose when and whether to have children. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.

If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!



Events

Saturday 14 May

"How we defeated zero hours contracts": Forum with New Zealand & UK fast food workers 3pm, SOAS, London, WC1H 0XG bit.ly/zerohoursforum

Monday 16 May

"Why Socialist Feminism" Leeds book launch. 6.30-8pm, The Packhorse Pub, 208 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS2 9DX. bit.ly/24KE8wq

Wednesday 18 May

Is there still power in the union? Discussion organised by Newcastle Workers' Liberty. 7pm, The Trent, Leazes Lane, NE1 4QT. bit.ly/1ZBphgL

Saturday 21 May

Lewisham March for Libraries. 12 noon, starting from Lewisham Library, Lewisham High Street. bit.ly/LewishamLib

Wednesday 25 May

Unison nurses lobby of Parliament, against bursary cut. 2-5pm, House of Commons. bit.ly/bursarylobby

Saturday 28 May

Vote in — Another Europe is Possible Conference. 11-5pm Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, WC1H. bit.ly/AEIPrally

Got an event you want listing?

solidarity@workersliberty.org

More online at www.workersliberty.org Workers' Liberty @workersliberty

Due process for Jackie Walker!

LABOUR

A statement from Momentum on the suspension of Jackie Walker from the Labour Party.

Momentum condemns the suspension of Jackie Walker, Vice Chair of our Steering Committee, from the Labour Party on 4 May.

Jackie, a black activist of Jewish heritage and lifelong anti-racist campaigner and trainer, was suspended by the party for alleged antisemitism following an article that appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, which quotes statements she made on Facebook discussing her family history.

We are extremely concerned by the lack of due process in this case, and the failure to apply the principles of natural justice. Journalists were briefed about Jackie's suspension by party staff before she had been informed.

Indeed, she is still yet to receive any formal notification of either her suspension, the basis for it, or a timetable for her hearing. As the suspension was not briefed to the press as "without prejudice", it has been interpreted by some as a presumption of guilt before any process has taken place.

Momentum calls for the immediate lifting of her suspension and for new rules to be put in place by the party to govern the handling — and the press briefing — of sensitive disciplinary matters, and for all suspensions to be agreed in advance by NEC members after the person concerned has the right to make representations.

Momentum unambiguously condemns antisemitism and welcomes Jeremy Corbyn's launch of an expert-led inquiry.

We hope that this inquiry is the start of a process of investigating how all forms of racism and oppression that exist in society replicate themselves in any way within

the Labour Party. For the labour movement to fight racism and oppression effectively, we need comrades self-criticism, education, and awareness raising of these complex issues.

We pledge that Momentum will play a productive role in this process.

• *Solidarity* discussion on this issue, centre pages

LEWISHAM MOMENTUM EU Referendum, What should the left say?

**Monday 23 May, 7pm
Ian Gulland Lecture Theatre,
Goldsmiths, University of
London.**

Momentum will be deciding its position at its National Committee meeting on 21 May, and Momentum groups are debating the issues. Lewisham Momentum is holding a public debate

For "in":

- Matt Wrack, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union
- Ruth Cashman, Lambeth Unison branch secretary and leading activist in the campaign to save Lambeth libraries

For "out":

- James Kerr, National Union of Teachers activist
- Eddie Dempsey, RMT rail union national executive member

Chair: Jill Mountford, Lewisham Momentum chair and Momentum National Committee

All welcome.

More info:
lewishamforcorbyn@gmail.com
— 07883 520 852



Alongside Ann Black, Christine Shawcroft, Claudia Webbe, Darren Williams, and Peter Willsman, the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance is now supporting Rhea Wolfson for the constituency section of Labour's National Executive Committee.

Rhea is former President of Oxford University Jewish Society; former Secretary of London Young Labour; current Women's Officer for Scottish Young Labour; current Co-op Party rep on UK Young Labour National Committee; and a full-time branch secretary for GMB Scotland. Please urge your CLP to nominate Rhea by 24 June.

Rhea writes: Britain needs a Labour Party that can deliver a confident and credible democratic socialist agenda; an alternative to the inequality of conservatism and the inertia of nationalism — with fairness and equality at its heart.

Labour must be the party that stands against austerity to improve

the lives of working people across borders. Our party needs to be strong and united, with all levels of the party working in a transparent and tolerant manner.

I will work to empower members, local parties, and activists; to fight for a more democratic party that can deliver change — and ultimately, deliver victory.

Rhea is a member of Eastwood CLP, L1205274.

Momentum Youth and Students National Conference Sunday, June 5, 2016 from 10:30am to 6:30pm Manchester Students' Union, Oxford Road, M13 9PR

On Sunday 5 June, Momentum will be holding its first conference for youth and student members.

This will be a space for Momentum's young supporters to come together to learn from each other, organise campaigns and collectively decide on a strategy for building a grassroots socialist youth movement in support of the Labour Party.

Workshops on the day will include trade union organising, building local Young Labour groups, fighting for liberation and equality, and the case for an alternative and progressive economic policy.

This conference will decide a constitution for Momentum Youth and Students and elect a committee to take forward the work of the organisation for the next year.

In order to attend this conference, you must be a member of Momentum and under the age of 30, or in education. Join Momentum here: <http://join.peoplesmomentum.com>

If you need help getting to conference, or if you need more information, please email momentumyouthandstudents@gmail.com



Anger at Nottingham University

By a Unison member

UCU at University of Nottingham is balloting for industrial action against threatened compulsory redundancies in the Faculty of Arts.

The University that claims to be “Britain’s global university” wants to reduce its offer in archaeology, and theology and religious studies, and close language courses including Dutch. 11.5 FTE posts are at risk.

The student body is up in arms over the threat. They have organised several protests, a petition and a Facebook group: Resist Restructuring Nottingham.

The proposed cuts come against a background of changes to the way students access student services. So-called “Project Transform” will require students to access more student services online and will reduce their link to home departments. The change is driven by the University’s £45m investment in



Students have protested over the cuts in modern foreign languages.

Oracle’s Peoplesoft Campus Solutions software to create a seamless “student journey”. The more joined-up approach has been tried and generally not fared well at other universities. Nottingham decided to go for a big bang, and have forced many of their admin staff to change jobs and jobsites, and work extra hard to compensate for the glitches in the system.

This “change programme” has left staff feeling demoralised and angry, and the unions representing

admin staff — Unison for levels 1-4 and UCU for higher levels — are both in dispute with the University.

The University is also in dispute with Unison members in operations and facilities, after a recent re-grading led to pay cuts for some low-paid workers. The University also refuses to implement the living wage despite a strong campaign in favour by unions and student societies.

It says it won’t brook outside interference — some global university!

Victory at the John Roan School

By Gemma Short

NUT members at The John Roan school in Greenwich, south London, announced on 10 May that they have won a major victory in their dispute over job and course cuts at the school.

NUT members have suspended their strike action after the following was agreed: RE, Psychology and Drama are to be reinstated at GCSE; posts will not be cut in Science, PE, RE, Psychology, and Drama; Site Supervisors will not be cut; daily tutor time will be kept; no compulsory redundancies and a reduction on voluntary redundancies to four posts from 17 proposed; maximum teaching hours remain at 21 hours a week; no redundan-



cies for admin staff; the establishment of a working party, including unions, to look at curriculum and timetabling for the next academic year.

The victory comes after numerous strike days and a campaign by teachers, support staff, parents and students to bring to light the targeting of union reps, and questions over why the Head was able to

suddenly claim a budget deficit when the school had had surpluses the year before, as well as huge spending on things like new CCTV systems.

This victory will give hope and confidence to other teachers fighting around workload, management bullying, academy threats and job cuts.

Labour is battle ground on Lambeth libraries

By Ruth Cashman

The fight to save the library service in Lambeth has become a key battleground between the left and right of Labour locally.

Labour Party activists have been essential to the libraries campaign. They joined the Carnegie Library occupation, were on strike, and on marches. We have policy at ward and CLP level against the Council’s proposals. But it is also a Labour Council closing our libraries.

The attitude of councillors has shocked many people, including members. One councillor described campaigners (of which there are thousands) as “trots with megaphones” on Twitter (he later publicly apologised for his comments). Cabinet members accused those occupying Carnegie of being “wine quaffing middle classes who don’t care about Lambeth’s vulnerable”.

Strikes by Unison members were branded a “disgrace” and “not legitimate” and “a political campaign alongside libraries groups” in reference to the anti-union laws.

For many “Labour” has become a byword for pretty narcissism, vindictive cuts and misinformation and vitriol against the people they should be representing, at a time when we are attracting so many new members who are inspired to fight against the Tories. But we still believe that those looking to fight Tory cuts should join Labour. Join and fight.

Not all Labour Councillors are unpopular. Over 100 turned out to protest in support of Cllr Rachel Heywood, who has spoken out against library closures, on 4 May.

Heywood has called on the Labour Group to change their direction:

“In times of crisis organisations

facing huge pressure can close ranks, pull up the drawbridge, and develop a siege mentality. Any challenge or difference of opinion is interpreted as an attack, and debate experienced as a direct result. The elite, inside their castle, or town hall, can lose sight of what life is like outside the walls, whilst the people on the outside can longer see or understand why certain things are being done to them. There are instances where it seems we’ve lost sight of what our communities want and need.... Sometimes the bravest act, and the one commanding most respect, is to admit that a change of direction is needed.”

Several Labour Party wards are discussing motions of support of Heywood’s stance and it seems the divisions in the Labour Party in Lambeth will play out for months to come.

Lecturers to strike over pay

By Charlotte Zalens

UCU members in Higher Education will strike on Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 May in a dispute over pay.

Members voted by 65% in favour of strikes, and 77% in favour of action short of strikes, after the employer body, the Universities and Colleges Employers’ Association, only offered a 1.1% pay rise.

The union argues that universities, who are spending millions of pounds on showy building projects and overseas and London campuses, can afford more. Pay and benefits for university leaders has increased, and the average pay and pensions package for a vice-chancellor is now over £270,000.

Stop victimisation at London Met

UCU London Met branch chair Mark Campbell, and UCU branch secretary David Hardman are being made redundant by the university as part of the wave of cuts that campus unions have been fighting for several years.

The university announced compulsory redundancies of permanent faculty staff on 30 April. The union argues that the job cuts will have a negative impact on the student experience. This at the same time as the university is trying to make itself more attractive and “competitive” in the university market.

However amongst members pay is not the issue with the most grip. The gender pay gap and issues of casualisation must be kept prominent in the campaign.

UCU’s record in the past few pay disputes has been poor. Few resources have been put into developing campus organisation in advance of strikes, leaving weaker branches struggling to sustain the action. The leadership has then used those struggling branches as an excuse to call off strikes.

Limited preparation on the ground means activists will need to put in a lot of work to make sure this dispute doesn’t go the same way.

The union is also concerned that the university is targeting the union by making Mark and David redundant. The same thing happened to Unison representatives earlier in the year.

• Sign the petition: bit.ly/1WINnOu

Hands off our weekends!

Workers at National Museums Wales have been on all-out strike since Thursday 28 April in a dispute over weekend working pay.

As previously reported in *Solidarity*, the workers, members of the PCS union, have been fighting for two-years against the removal of weekend and bank holiday premium payments. Many of the workers are low paid, and due to the nature of the job work most weekends, meaning they could face a pay cut of between £2,000-£3,000.

Bosses have been ramping up the pressure and demanded that workers sign up to new contracts that in-

clude the pay cuts by 20 May or face dismissal and reengagement.

However the start of the all-out strike has already brought them back to negotiations and forced the Labour First Minister of Wales to intervene.

• Donations to the strike fund: Unity Trust Bank, account Name: PCS Amgueddfa Cymru 107006 Branch, account Number: 2033182, sort code: 08-60-01. Send messages of support to branch chair Neil Harrison at tubz1917@live.com or branch secretary Peter Hill at denishill20@hotmail.com.

Cabin crew fight for breaks

By Peggy Carter

Over 1000 Thomas Cook airlines cabin crew are being balloted by their union Unite for strikes over dangerous changes to rest breaks.

The changes would see cabin crew only getting one 20 minute break in an 11 hour 29 minute duty period rather than 20 minutes every six hours, raising concerns of the health and well-being of cabin crew and the safety of passengers. Cabin crew have voiced increasing alarm over the impact of tiredness on in-flight safety. Cabin crew regularly work 10-15 hour shifts, and on short-haul flights crew will fly more than one flight in a shift with a

short turn-around time in order to restock the plane under increasing pressure to achieve tighter turn-around times.

Unite national officer Oliver Richardson said: “Our members are deeply concerned about the impact these changes to rest breaks are having on in-flight safety. Fatigue is a major contributory factor to accidents and slower response times when there is an incident.

“The primary purpose of cabin crew is the safety of passengers, but instead Thomas Cook seems intent on working them to the bone to extract as much money as possible out of passengers at the expense of safety.”



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For a workers' government

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FORCED ACADEMIES U-TURN: ONLY HALF A VICTORY

By Patrick Murphy

Nicky Morgan's announcement that she was withdrawing proposals to legislate to force all schools to become academies was both a real success and a major danger to the campaign against forced academies.

On 6 May Nicky Morgan announced that, as a result of listening to MPs, teachers, school leaders and parents, she has decided that, "while reaffirming our continued determination to see all schools become academies in the next 6 years, that it is not necessary to bring legislation to bring about blanket conversion of all schools to achieve this goal".

CAMPAIGN

The speed and breadth of the campaign to expose the weaknesses of this proposal undoubtedly had the effect of mobilising maximum opposition before the government had got its act together.

There is no doubt that the internal Tory opposition was a significant factor as Morgan and Cameron clearly calculated that they might not get these measures through Parliament. As the campaign developed there were more and more reasons to think that was an accurate calculation.

A retreat was always possible but the most likely version seemed to be a recently-leaked suggestion that "the best Local Authorities"

would be allowed to form their own multi-academy trust (MATs). On the surface the announcement is better than that, but the Department for Education (DfE) were careful to reaffirm their objective to make all schools academies, clearly they feel like they can achieve their aims just as well without the "blanket conversion".

Even if you allow for a certain degree of "standing on pride" to cover a retreat, they are right about that. The existing legislation around academies (especially the recent Education and Adoption Act) and the revised proposals Morgan made on 6 May threaten to have much the same effect as the proposals she abandoned. This includes:

- Every single school rated "inadequate" by Ofsted being turned into an academy.
- Coasting schools being put on a "notice to improve". Definitions of "coasting" are very opaque but it is clear that it will be based on data on pupil progress (and, in primary schools, attainment) over a three year period. Primaries will need to be below standards in attainment and progress to fall within the definition. Progress measures are, in primary, progress from end of KS1 to end of primary school and, in secondary, progress from entering school to leaving as measured by Progress 8.
- All schools in a Local Authority will be forced to convert if (a) the number of academy schools in that area reaches a "critical mass"



which means that the Local Authority can no longer viably support its remaining schools or (b) "where the Local Authority consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools". Meaning Local Authorities deemed to be "failing" will have all their schools handed over to an academy chain, regardless of what the individual schools want, or the performance of individual schools.

- The DfE will continue to encourage "good" schools to convert and form MATs to support other schools.

It is vital, therefore, that the cam-

paign (under whatever label, Hands Off Our Schools, Rescue Our Schools, No Forced Academies) continues with the same energy and drive. The momentum built needs to be turned into opposition to as many individual conversions as possible, and an education campaign on what the academy plan means for our school system, and what a different system could look like. It is clear from the points above that every school that converts brings all the other schools in its area closer to that "critical mass" which would force all schools to convert. That should make it much easier

to argue that a decision by a school to become an academy is not a matter only for that school or only affecting the pupils, parents and staff at that school. We also need to press Labour local authorities to take a harder line on academy proposals in their areas.

They don't have the power to prevent conversions but they can and should put more obstacles in the way, promote themselves as the most effective school improvement support service and the advocate for all children and, under no circumstances, promote academy conversions.

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