



# Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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## EDUCATION, NOT EXAM FACTORIES



Between 16 May and 29 June, students in Britain's schools will write around 16 million exam papers.

A scurry of marking will then, in August, produce a stream of gradings, which will be used to exert market-type discipline on students, teachers, and schools.

Increasingly, the whole education system is geared to this exercise in market-type discipline. The drive of the Tories' Education White Paper is to gear it even more that way, to increase competition, insecurity, and stereotyped measurement.

**More page 5**

### Inside:

**France:  
"labour  
law"  
imposed**



France's "labour law" is pushed through without a parliamentary vote, but railworkers will strike from 17 May

**See page 2**

**The fight  
for  
disability  
rights**



TUC disabled workers' conference is 19-20 May. *Solidarity* looks at the fight for disability rights.

**See page 8**

**Can  
socialism  
make  
sense?**



Paul Hampton reviews our new book.

**See pages 6-7**

**Join Labour!**

**Rhea Wolfson:  
Give the power  
back to the  
members!**

**See page 10**

## STOP TORY PLANS FOR SCHOOLS!





The annual fete organised by the French revolutionary socialist group *Lutte Ouvrière* in grounds in a village near Paris drew large crowds again this year on 14-16 May 2016. The fete draws between 20,000 and 30,000 people each year. Workers' Liberty ran a stall and a forum this year, as we (or our forerunners) have done almost every year since the early 70s, and a number of friends of Workers' Liberty came to enjoy the weekend event. Above *Lutte Ouvrière* debates the *Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste*

## French railworkers strike

On Wednesday 11 May the Hollande-Valls Socialist Party government in France forced the anti-worker Labour Law through without a parliamentary vote, using a piece of the constitution which allows laws to be adopted without a vote unless the government loses a vote of no confidence. Trade unions and left activists have been fighting the law for months, and college and university students have been staging protests and sit-ins against the law. The government has also been trying to change conditions for railworkers in the state-run SNCF. The fight against the Labour Law is closely linked to this as railworkers' are one of the strongest sections of the labour movement. Luca, a rail worker, spoke to *Solidarity*.

The union leaderships have done everything they can to put off the start of an open-ended strike; but the leaderships of the [more left-wing, minority] SUDRail and FO federations have called for an open-ended strike to begin from 17 May.

The CGT is only calling for a two-day strike. Revolutionary militants in the SNCF are calling for people not to content themselves with a two-day action, but to get stuck in for the long haul.

Since the start, very large numbers of CGT activists have been wanting to go on an open-ended strike. For example, in my local union, on 9 March, we sent a motion to our national leadership, calling for an open-ended strike. But it is becoming clear that the CGT leadership is absolutely against such an action and are trying to get round that. For example, the CGT union at the Austerlitz station in Paris has called for

open-ended action alongside the minority unions, without waiting for the nod from the national union.

I think this will bring the whole CGT federation into the strike, if people move without waiting for the leadership.

The management plan to get rid of the current railway working regulations, and to replace them with a decree from the government, and with a collective agreement.

According to what we've heard, this would mean getting rid of 10 out of 27 days holiday in a year; having a 48-hour working week with only one rest day in the week; and lots more flexible working.

In France the situation is very different from the UK. The SNCF has 150,000 rail workers. There are private companies within the network which may employ around 5,000 workers.

About ten years ago the network was opened to competition, mainly in goods freight. Conditions for private company workers are much worse than in the still-public sector, much fewer rest days, much more work. The motivation for the current reforms is to "equalise" the conditions of public sector rail workers with those of private sector.

There is a plan to open up competition for regional passenger transport by 2017, but currently there are virtually no private passenger carriers on the network.

When rail workers became aware of management's plans, the immediate reaction was a very strong mobilisation. The first strike day was 9 March, and on that day in some places the strike was observed by 80-90% of workers. From early March there was a support for an open-ended strike.

**But the action of the union leaderships put a powerful brake on things, and all we have been able to pull together since then has been additional one-off strike days in April.**

# Venezuela: shift to the right

The government of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela is in trouble. Destabilisation after the death of Hugo Chavez has fractured the government's political base. An economic crisis due to low oil prices and mobilisations by the political right have brought the government to a state of collapse. The following text is an extract from an interview with César Romero of *Marea Socialista* (MS), a socialist organisation, which last year left the government party, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV). Though this group is some distance from us politically — we are more critical of the "Bolivarian revolution" — the interview gives some valuable insight.

**Chávez proposed a new economic model consisting of a mixed economy, but one in alliance with the needs of the Venezuelan business class, a parasitic class since it relies on oil revenue.**

This deepened the country's dependency on oil income. For businessmen, it's always much cheaper to import than to invest because they then can obtain dollars much more easily.

For Chávez [this] would encourage the business class to invest more in internal production. But this never happened. Thus, we get to the alarming situation where 98 percent of our export income is from the oil fields, with 2 percent from everything else. This difference had never been so great.

Chávez's politics were very state-centred, and that greatly limited what he could do. The Venezuelan state is a capitalist institution, and for this reason, it always remained a clientelist and paternalist institution, not a revolutionary one.

With Maduro, there was a political change in relation to Chávez's regime that accelerated after the "peace talks" of 2014 (negotiations between the government and key business leaders in 2014 that Maduro convened in response to a wave of protests and violence led by middle- and upper-class youth demanding his resignation).

With Chávez out of the way, all of the historical sectors that had always benefited from oil wealth wanted more. And now the new bureaucracy wanted more, too.

This forced Maduro to make a decision: he either had to radicalize the process to preserve the support of its social base, or he had to make alliances with the dominant political and economic sectors to stay in power. Unfortunately, he opted for the latter. This resulted in a deepening crisis for the neediest, since the easiest way to maximize revenue is by cutting back on the social programs that had been achieved in prior years.

New anti-popular measures



were implemented: tax cuts for leading businesses, easier access to dollars, and the establishment of new Special Economic Zones in strategic regions, where companies don't have to abide by labour laws or pay any taxes.

And with plummeting oil prices, the government is accelerating the extraction of other natural resources, including mining, which seriously harms the enormous biodiversity of some of the oldest and richest lands in the country.

All of this led to a dramatic decline in Maduro's popularity, to which the government is responding with authoritarian measures. This never happened with Chávez. The state is restricting the democratic rights of parties like ours. There is also more repression in poor neighbourhoods, always with the pretext that the state has to fight drugs and crime.

### WORSE

**The crisis has been going on for years, but things are now worse than ever.**

The main difference between Chávez's government and Maduro's is that with Chávez, when there was a crisis, workers never paid the consequences. With Maduro, it's always the workers who suffer the most.

Wages are deteriorating extremely rapidly. There is a lack of basic necessities, which is important because the government has reduced imports by as much as 30 percent from 2012 levels. Social conditions are very bad, and the sense of insecurity has increased dramatically. There are also signs of new diseases, the reappearance of extreme poverty. All public services are eroding. And to top it off, we are experiencing a drought, and 70 percent of our energy comes from hydro power.

When we entered the PSUV, there was a total of four or five million militants who participated in community assemblies of hundreds of people.

But as time wore on, the PSUV became a party of the caste, and the vehicle by which the leadership negotiates and reaches agreement with the leading opposition figures and with the traditional right wing in Venezuela. The party has lost all its participatory and democratic character.

One of the main factors in the cri-

sis [all over Latin America] is represented by Chávez's death. In Latin America since 2000, there were two projects being contested: Chávez's project, which sought Latin American integration to counter US and European imperialism, with victories such as the defeat of the FTAA, the exit of the Andean community, proposals such as the Bank of the South, etc. — and former Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's project, one more linked with financial capital, the extraction of natural resources by transnational companies, and the creation of Mercosur. Chávez was, of course, influenced by Lula's ideas as well — that was one of the moments of retreat in Venezuela. But I'm talking about contesting projects, because Chávez served to mobilize the people of Latin America against imperialism.

With his death, the crisis was accentuated because in his absence, a period of stalemate emerged, which coincided with the impact of the worldwide economic crisis hitting South America. There has been a huge drop in the price of commodities — not just oil — and that has brought an increase in debt servicing in Argentina and Brazil, the most important countries of Latin America economically.

So we see... the end of the progressive cycle known as the pink tide... electoral defeats for Evo Morales in Bolivia, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina and Maduro here in Venezuela — plus we will see how things develop with Dilma Rousseff in Brazil.

At the same time, new cycles of popular mobilization have arisen, mostly around environmental issues, racism, LGBT rights, etc. These issues have an anticapitalist character because they are focused on the government. These struggles, however, exposes the weaknesses of the traditional left-wing parties that implemented progressive measures only halfway during the previous cycle. They had an opportunity to create an alternative to the politics of the right, and yet they didn't do it. Nor are they going to do it.

**That's what we, as the revolutionary left, have left to do. We have to create that alternative.**

• Full interview here [venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/11933](http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/11933)



# Higher Uni fees and private providers

## By the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts

The government's Higher Education White Paper, released on Monday 16 May, is a clear ideological attack on students, workers, and universities as public institutions. Here are our initial responses.

### Free Education is "value for money"

One of things we keep hearing about from the government is that universities need to be "value for money". This value will come from bringing in more "choice" for students in where and what they study.

This is very much an illusion and we should treat it as such. When you have to pay at least £9,000 a year upfront, you don't have a proper choice. Students are valued only as consumers. The only choice they are offered is where to spend their money. The proposals are vague on Student Unions, mentioning more government oversight and scrutiny into how their funding is used. Really the only true value for money option is free education.

### The privatisation of the UK's higher education system

We're seeing a gradual end to public higher education in this country. Under the proposals, we will see private providers, including the likes of Google and Facebook, able to open their own universities if they wish.

It will also create the possibility of institutions failing and leaving the market. This is most likely to affect universities which are traditionally known for widening participation such as London Met. The institutions most at risk have more working class and BME students than their Russell Group counterparts. These reforms won't necessarily create the possibility of institutions failing but what they do mean, explicitly, is that the government won't help them if they do.

The government also claim that

the market will squeeze out certain degrees. A lot is said about "mickey mouse degrees," deemed useless as they don't produce the most employable graduates.

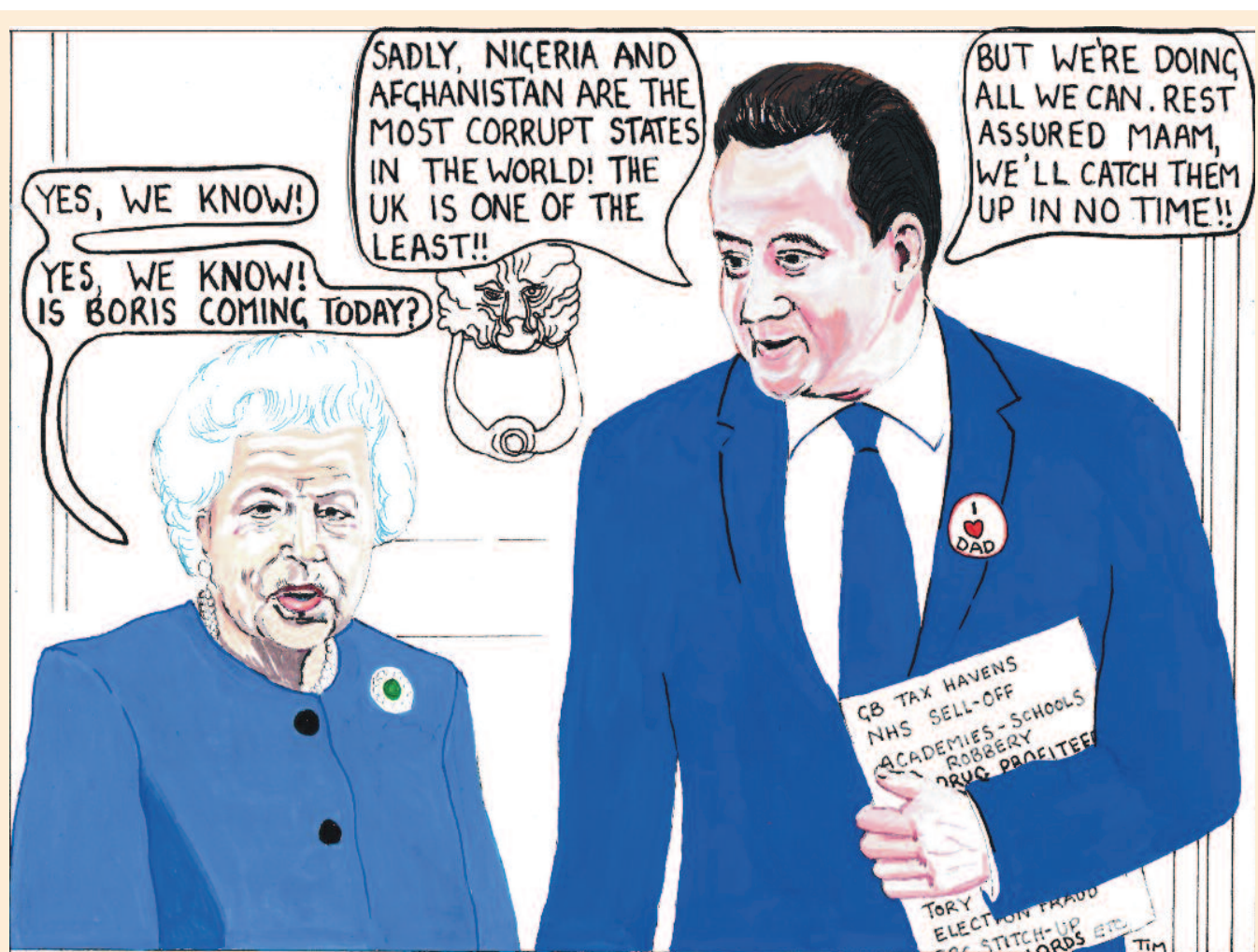
In reality, this will hit the arts and humanities. Society needs both artists and biochemists, but the goal of the government is to see university become a pipeline for employers. This will at the very least mean funding cuts for lots of less profitable degrees and even the closing of some departments.

We've already seen this happening with the increasing marketisation of education — Queen's University Belfast completely cutting sociology is just one example. The White Paper will make this more common.

There are a couple of silver linings. We've seen the government drop the idea to exempt universities from Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, and that the process for lifting the fee cap won't change — it will still require a vote in Parliament. The plans to introduce variable fees have also been delayed, although not abandoned. This buys us more time to fight them.

### What does "Teaching Quality" mean for workers?

The flagship proposal in the HE White Paper is the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Proposed to mirror the much detested Research Excellence Framework



(REF), the TEF measures neither "teaching" nor "excellence" in any sense that you would imagine. but looks at things such as graduate employment to see if teaching is "excellent".

This will undoubtedly lead to metric-driven teaching and increased pressure on staff to meet pointless targets rather than a focus on teaching. It will also justify universities continuing to casualise teaching staff. Casualised teachers cannot teach as well as teachers on fixed contracts due to stress, financial pressures, and having to find employment in summer months.

Moreover lecturers' pay has fallen by 14.5% in real terms since 2009 and UCU members (the academics' trade union) will be going

on strike on 25-26 May 2016 over pay including the ever persistent gender pay gap.

Does the White Paper "put students at its heart"?

If by students you mean a pliant future workforce, then yes. It is quite clear to all that the government calling the White Paper "student centric" is a highly cynical move. It's about getting private providers in Higher Education and dressing it up as "choice".

It's also about pleasing big business — employers will be represented on TEF review panels, which means that Apple and BP could influence the curriculum. When the government talk about "student choice," they mean making the "right kind of choice" — to get a job. But might be a good time to mention that graduate employment is far more linked to what your parents do than what you study, and students from liberation groups are more likely to struggle on the job market regardless of their degree.

Under these measures, university education would mean nothing but expensive training for the job you won't get. You cannot have a truly transformative, liberating education when the trade-off is a lifetime of debt. Competition under the guise of choice will not give us the education we want and need. Only robust public funding, more democracy and collaboration between staff and students can do that.

### Why we need to fight the NSS and DLHE

The government has proposed an increase in fees linked to TEF, in large part using scores from the National Student Survey and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (the survey taken six months after graduation looking at employment).

This measure has been delayed until TEF Year 2, which is academic year 2017/18. Then, institutions that score highly will be able increase fees in line with inflation, and by the 2018/19 the government would introduce varied levels of fee caps.

The NSS and DLHE are key parts of the TEF, the central pillar of the government's proposals. We have proposed to wreck them with the policy passed at NUS, calling for a boycott or a sabotage of the surveys. A successful boycott or sabotage will render these surveys useless, thus destroying the credibility of TEF.

We now need to pass motions supporting the boycott/sabotage at as many student unions as possible.

**From the start of the new term NCAFC will be running campaigns up and down the country to collect pledges from finalists agreeing to boycott or sabotage the 2017 NSS and 2018 DLHE.**

• Find out more at [anticuts.com](http://anticuts.com)

## Junior doctors: deal imminent?

### By a junior doctor

On Saturday 14 May the BMA held a junior doctors' conference, followed by a meeting of the junior doctors' committee on the next day.

It was hoped that these meetings would have heard the outcome of renewed negotiations held between the government and the BMA between 9-13 May. However a last minute agreement (bro-

kered by Brendan Barber of all people!) to extend the talks for another week meant that junior doctors did not get a chance to give judgement on any proposed deal.

An announcement from the negotiations is expected on Wednesday 18 May; at the moment it is impossible to tell what the result will be but it does look like there has been movement in the talks. Junior doctors will need to analyse any deal carefully. And any deal will be put to a referendum of

BMA junior doctor members and to medical students within two years of finishing their degree..

Junior doctors' conference voted for greater collaboration with other unions and organising health based events with other unions — a step forward.

**However a motion in favour of the BMA affiliating to the TUC, put by left-wing activists, was defeated with arguments that the TUC was "too political" and "too left-wing".**



# Leaving principles for later?

## THE LEFT

By Martin Thomas

At the Lutte Ouvriere fete on 14-16 May we met comrades from IZAR (Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Left), a group expelled in 2015 from the “Mandelite” (Fourth International) organisation in Spain because they called for a stance more independent from the leadership of Podemos, the new broad leftist party.

The following critique is part of a document published by IZAR with sympathisers in France, the USA, Germany, Greece, and Italy.

“There has been no balance-sheet on the many attempts to build ‘broad parties’ over the last 25 years by the sections of the Fourth International.

“Whether in the framework of Syriza, of Podemos, or before that with Rifondazione in Italy, the PT in Brazil, the Bloco de Esquerda [Left Block] in Portugal, or even within the NPA [in France], the leadership of the Fourth International has followed a policy that has been limited to entering (or launching) broad organisations without simultaneously building demarcated revolutionary currents or organisations. This has led to the dissolution (Portugal, Denmark) or the dispersion (Italy, Brazil, France...) of whole sections.

“The support by Rifondazione for the formation of a bourgeois government (the Prodi government in 2006) and the vote for war

credits [for Italian military action in Afghanistan]; the position of the comrades of the Left Bloc [in Portugal] in favour of the austerity measures in Greece in 2012; the vote of the comrades of the RGA [Red Green Alliance] in Denmark to support the left government [of the Social Democratic Party] there in 2011-2012; the participation of the old section of [the Fourth International] in Brazil in Lula’s government [i.e. they took ministerial positions]...

“Entry into these broad organisations and the abandonment of the revolutionaries’ own organisational structures has been accompanied by an political adaptation policy to the leaderships of these reformist currents. Organisational independence (whether through independent organisations or through organised currents within broader groupings) is not a minor issue. It serves to carry out a policy: what is at stake in maintaining organisational independence for the revolutionaries is the need to fight for our revolutionary ideas.

“For us, the revolutionary program is not an identity that we should leave for later, when conditions are more favourable. This program is relevant today to respond to the current crisis of the capitalist system.

**It is not a program that consists of once-and-for-all fixed formulas but an always-updated concrete program based on our method, which remains the same: class independence, the transitional method...**

• [bit.ly/izar-es](http://bit.ly/izar-es)

# Make high salaries public

## LETTER

**Elizabeth Butterworth is right to highlight the threat the Tories’ White Paper on broadcasting poses to the BBC (“Don’t Close the BBC!”, *Solidarity* 404).**

One minor reservation: it’s hard to argue with the “White Paper calling for presenters’ wages to be made public”. Shouldn’t we be in favour of the high salaries paid by the Corporation to its executives and “stars” being made public?

On the issue of bias towards and interference from Government, I think this operates on three levels.

Firstly, there is interference by ministers in programming, by lobbying or seeking to in-

fluence the composition of the BBC board, either directly through their contacts or by threatening its licence fee revenue.

Secondly, the Corporation in its news coverage has a “small c” conservative outlook, generally favouring the status quo, whatever that is. It often therefore echoes the Government: pro-EU, anti-Scottish independence, pro-Trident, pro-monarchy etc.

**Finally, the BBC’s political correspondents are much more focussed on Westminster and its backroom battles than others, notably Channel 4’s Michael Crick who has almost single-handedly exposed the abuse of election expenses in dozens of constituencies at the last General Election.**

Matthew Thompson, Manchester

# “Peak stuff”? Time for socialism!

By Colin Foster

Steve Howard, a manager at Ikea, says: “In the west, we have probably hit peak stuff. We talk about peak oil. I’d say we’ve hit peak red meat, peak sugar, peak stuff...peak home furnishings”.

Other people studying retail markets have come up with similar ideas. Kevin Jenkins, a manager at the Visa credit-card company, says: “We increasingly see a trend for consumers to spend more on experiences rather than on products”.

Lorna Hall, a market-researcher, says: “People are interested in servicing a lifestyle rather than buying stuff”.

Dan Nixon of the Bank of England comments that orthodox

“economic theory generally assumes that more consumption means greater happiness. [In fact] we may achieve greater happiness by seeking to simplify our desires, rather than satisfy them... The result is less consumption yet more utility”.

On one level, this is babble. Even in relatively-rich Britain, many people lack the “stuff” of a decent place to live, and rely on food banks for “stuff” to eat. According to official research published on 17 May, 6.5% of people in Britain are in long-term poverty, but maybe a third are likely to be in poverty at least for a spell during a three-year period.

On another level, the “babble” tells us something profound. Leon Trotsky wrote that the precondition for a socialist society was that “the steady growth of social wealth has made us bipeds forget our miserly attitude toward every excess minute of labour, and our humiliating fear about the size of our nation”.

For the middle-class, and a swathe of better-off workers too — the people these market-researchers focus on — we’re getting there. And it would take only the first steps of socialist economic reorganisation to bring the whole population up to that level.

In a capitalist society, a huge advertising industry — £20 billion a year in the UK, £300 a year for every child, woman, and man — bombards us continuously and cleverly with messages that consuming more, more, more is the way to happiness. You need a new smartphone! New clothes! A new car!

Things would be different with even the beginnings of socialist reorganisation. Yet even now, even under capitalist bombardment, a lot of people recognise a better life comes more through shared experiences, which can’t be bought, than through competitively consuming more “stuff”.

With food, the transition happened a while back. For a long epoch of human history, the rich were fat and tall, and the poor were thin and short. Now, a rich person does not necessarily eat more than even a modestly-getting-by worker.

For a long epoch, too, access to music other than your own and your friends’ sing-song with the simplest instruments was limited to the rich. Now everyone can get music free or cheap from the internet.

Anti-socialists have long argued that it is irrepressible human nature always to want more “stuff”. There will never be enough to go round. The capitalist market system may have its faults, they say, but it is a more efficient and robust system of managing the inevitable competitive scramble than the only alternative: rationing from above by authorities who will always take the best for themselves first.

**Now there is enough to go round. The problem is that it doesn’t go “round”, and that the capitalist structure of society systematically blights and makes difficult, for many, the social experiences that go beyond “stuff”.**



Have we reached “peak stuff”?

## CHANGING LABOUR, CHANGING POLITICS

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Tickets bought before the event are £38 waged, £18 low-waged/university student and £7 unwaged/school student.

Tickets on the door will be more expensive.

bit.ly/ifftickets





# Education, not exam factories!

**Between 16 May and 29 June, students in Britain's schools will write around 16 million exam papers.**

A scurry of marking will then, in August, produce a stream of gradings, which will be used to exert market-type discipline on students, teachers, and schools.

Notionally exams are a way to test knowledge and skills. Exams which really do that, and certify people as competent to be surgeons or surveyors, make sense. But the school exams are only the basis for a vast sorting exercise.

Some students will get good enough grades in GCSE to study A level subjects which will get them into "good" universities: others will be branded failures.

Some A level students will get into "good" universities; others will fail.

Some schools will score well in the league tables, others will fail. Some teachers will pass their "performance management", heavily based on exam scores, others will fail.

Increasingly, the whole education system is geared to this exercise in market-type discipline.

The drive of the Tories' Education White Paper is to gear it even more that way, to increase competition, insecurity, and stereotyped measurement.

The Tories have retreated from their extravagant plan for blanket compulsion on every school to become an "academy" — directly government-funded, outside local democratic control, outside agreed national terms and conditions, geared to head-teacher "entrepreneurship". But they still want to go in that direction.

In a careful report last year, commissioned by the National Union of Teachers, education expert Merryn Hutchings wrote: "Children and young people are suffering from increasingly high levels of school-related anxiety and stress, disaffection and mental health problems. This is caused by increased pressure from tests and exams; greater awareness at younger ages of their own 'failure'..."

"The increase in diagnosis of ADHD has been shown to be linked to the increase in high stakes testing... some children are being diagnosed and medicated because the school environment has become less suitable for

them, allowing less movement and practical work, and requiring them to sit still for long periods.

"Increasingly, children and young people see the main purpose of schooling as gaining qualifications, because this is what schools focus on. This trend has been widely explored, including by universities and employers, who have argued that the current exam system does not prepare children for life beyond school".

Hutchings concluded: "Schools are not yet all exam factories, but if the current policies continue, this is what they will become".

Even big-business bosses criticise the system. John Cridland, director of the bosses' confederation CBI, last year called for GCSEs to be abolished.

## TABLES

**"The only purpose they serve now is to allow measurement of schools through league tables".**

The Institute of Directors, in a report on 18 April, said that schools must be shifted from being "'exam factories' that primarily test students' ability to recall facts and apply standardised methods, two things computers do much better than humans".

And Natasha Devon, sacked by the government on 4 May from the figleaf post of "mental health champion" because she is too forthright, has denounced "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".

The system in Britain, even now, before the Tories' new plans, exceeds other countries' in the vehemence of its exam obsession.

The exam obsession is not, however, just a matter of the competitive obsessions of Blairites and Tories. It has a capitalist logic.

This is about the production of labour-power. Unlike other branches of production, that branch cannot directly sell its products and be market-regulated that way.

Fumblingly, capitalist governments have evolved schemes of market-like discipline, which flow over into actual markets.

Thus, the exam system is about students "buying", through exam grades, a place at a "good university". And that in turn, almost regardless of what knowledge the students retain or don't retain from their university studies, "buys" them a good chance of a well-paid job.

The Social Mobility Commission, in its 2014 report, found that only 10 per cent of the top graduate employers target more than 30 universities to recruit new workers, out of a total of nearer 120.

That's not because you learn nothing at the other 90 universities. It is because the employers base recruitment much more on ability and willingness to jump through hoops — as evidenced by getting to and through a "good" university — than on whatever particular knowledge students have crammed into their heads to pass exams.

For many jobs, they insist you've passed uni exams, but don't care in what, or whether you retain what you crammed for the exam. The "performance" of the exam is what matters, not the intellectual content.

When Microsoft, for example, recruits graduates, it asks for: "2:1 or higher in *any* relevant discipline". PriceWaterhouseCooper wants those with "2:1 or above in *any* degree discipline".

Over 200,000 of the average cohort of about half a million students in British universities are studying social sciences, humanities, psychology, arts, usually with little specific relevance to their subsequent jobs.

Some 80,000 are studying "business", but what's important about business courses, for jobs, is just that they "sort" some people into the category of having got passed uni exams, rather than anything they teach.

Research in the USA has found that more than one in three uni students graduates with no improvement in writing and analytical skills. Business students learn least. 89% of surveyed employers said that they prefer students from what the USA calls "liberal arts" to business graduates.

## TRADE

**At the other end, academy chains and "entrepreneurial" head teachers trade on student exam grades for success to get government funds.**

The recent exposure of Liam Nolan shows how that segues into regular capitalist market economics and profit-grabbing. Nolan spoke at Tory party conference as Michael Gove's star head teacher. David Cameron personally praised him. He became "CEO" of an expanding chain of academies.

Now Nolan has been forced to resign because "his" academies were paying large sums, without contracts, to a company, Nexus Schools Ltd, which in turn paid cash to him, on top of his declared salary, through a business of which he was the sole director.

The relentless pseudo-market pressure squeezes out real education, creativity, imagination, life, from students and teachers alike. Many subjects are marginalised. Others, like mathematics, are reduced to stereotyped mechanical procedures, because those are easy material for setting exams and marking them cheaply.

The great 20th century mathematician David Hilbert famously remarked of a student who gave up maths in order to become a poet: "Good. He did not have enough imagination to become a mathematician". But the exam boards' thin substitute for maths is almost imagination-free.

Tony Blair said: "Education, education, education!" He meant: "Exams, exams, exams!" The Tories say: "Marketise, marketise, marketise".

**The fight against the Education White Paper should become a springboard for a fight for real education, without exams, grades, and league tables.**

# Battle on academies is not over!

**The existing legislation around academies and the government's revised proposals still amount to a threat to make all schools academies. These include:**

- Every single school rated "inadequate" by Ofsted will be turned into an academy
- Coasting schools will be put on a "notice to improve". "Coasting" will be based on data on pupil progress (and in primary schools attainment) over a three year period.
- 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 LA can no longer viably support its remaining schools or (b) "where the LA consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools".
- DfE will continue to encourage "good" schools to convert.

It is vital, therefore, that the campaign continues with the same energy and drive. To oppose as many individual conversions as possible and what the academy plan means for our school system. To argue for a different system.

Every school that converts brings all the other schools in its area closer to that "critical mass" and forcing all schools to convert. A decision by a school to become an academy is not just a matter for that school, its pupils, parents and staff.

**We also need to press Labour local authorities to take a harder line on academy proposals. They can and should put more obstacles in the way, promote themselves as the most effective school improvement support service, advocate for all children and under no circumstances promote academy conversions.**



# What is German Bolshevism?

By Rosa Luxemburg

**The revolution that has just begun can have but one outcome: the realisation of socialism!**

The working class, in order to accomplish its purpose, must, first of all, secure entire political control of the state. But to the socialist, political power is only a means to an end. It is the instrument with which labour will achieve the complete, fundamental reconstruction of our entire industrial system. Today all wealth, the largest and most fruitful tracts of land, the mines, the mills and the factories belong to a small group of Junkers and private capitalists. From them the great masses of the labouring class receive a scanty wage in return for long hours of arduous toil, hardly enough for a decent livelihood.

The enrichment of a small class of idlers is the purpose and end of present-day society. To give to modern society and to modern production a new impulse and a new purpose — that is the foremost duty of the revolutionary working class.

To this end all social wealth, the land and all that it produces, the factories and the mills must be taken from their exploiting owners to become the common property of the entire people. It thus becomes the foremost duty of a revolutionary government ... to issue a series of decrees making all important instruments of production national property and placing them under social control. But... the most difficult task, the creation of an industrial state upon an entirely new foundation, has only just begun.

Today production in every manufacturing unit is conducted by the individual capitalist independently of all others. What and where commodities are to be produced, where, when and how the finished product is to be sold, is decided by the individual capitalist owner. Nowhere does labour have the slightest influence upon these questions. It is simply the living machine that has its work to do.

In a socialist state of society all this will be changed. Private ownership of the means of production and subsistence must disappear. Production will be carried on not for the enrichment of the individual but solely for the creation of a supply of commodities sufficient to supply the wants and needs of the working class. Accordingly factories, mills and farms must be operated upon an entirely new basis...

In the first place... the productivity of labour must be materially increased. Farms must be made to yield richer crops, the most advanced technical processes must be introduced into the factories, of the mines only the most productive, for the present, must be intensively exploited. It follows, therefore, that the process of socialisation will begin with the most highly developed industries and farm lands.

We need not, and will not deprive the small farmer or artisan of the bit of land or the little workshop from which he ekes out a meagre existence by the work of his own hands. As time goes by he will realise the superiority of socialised production over private ownership and will come to us of his own accord.

In order that all members of society may enjoy prosperity, all must work. Only he who performs useful

service to society, manual or mental, will be entitled to a share of products for the satisfaction of his needs and desires. Idleness must cease and in its stead will come universal compulsory labour for all who are physically capable. Obviously those who are unable to work, children, invalids and the aged, must be supported by society. But not as it is done today, by niggardly charity. Bountiful sustenance, socialised education for the children, comfortable care for the aged, public health service for the sick — these must form an important part of our social structure.

For the same reason, i. e., in the interest of general welfare, society will be more economical, more rational in the utilisation of its commodities, its means of production and its labour power. Waste such as we find today on every hand, must cease.

The production of munitions and other implements of warfare must pass out of existence, for a socialist state of society needs no tools of murder. Instead the precious materials and the enormous labour power that were devoted to this purpose will be used for useful production. The manufacture of useless and costly foolishness for the edification of wealthy idlers will stop. Personal service will be prohibited, and the labour power thus released will find more useful and more worthy employment...

## WORK UNDER SOCIALISM

**Today labour in industry, on the farm and in the office is usually a torture and a burden to the proletariat. Men and women work because they must in order to obtain the necessities of life.**

In a socialist state of society, where all work together for their own well-being, the health of the individual worker, and his joy in his work must be conscientiously fostered and sustained. Short hours of labour not in excess of the normal human capacity must be established; recreation and rest periods must be introduced into the workday, so all may do their share, willingly and joyously...

Today the capitalist with his whip stands behind the workingman, in person or in the form of a manager-or overseer. Hunger drives the worker to the factory, to the Junker or the farm-owner, into the business office. Everywhere the employer sees to it that no time is wasted, no material squan-

dered, that good, efficient work is done.

In a socialist state of society the capitalist with his whip disappears. Here all workingmen are free and on an equal footing, working for benefit and enjoyment, tolerating no waste of social wealth, rendering honest and punctual service.

To be sure, every socialist plant needs its technical superintendents who understand its workings, who are able to supervise production so that everything runs smoothly, to assure an output commensurate with the labour power expended by organising the process of manufacture according to most efficient methods. To ensure successful production the individual workingman must follow his instructions entirely and willingly, must maintain discipline and order, cause no friction or confusion.

In a word: the workingman in a socialist industrial state must show that he can work decently and diligently, without capitalists and slave-drivers behind his back; that of his own volition he can maintain discipline and "do his best". This demands mental discipline, moral stamina, it demands a feeling of self-respect and responsibility, a spiritual rebirth of the workingman.

Socialism cannot be realised with lazy, careless, egotistic, thoughtless and shiftless men and women. A socialist state of society needs people everyone of whom is full of enthusiasm and fervour for the general welfare, full of a spirit of self-sacrifice and sympathy for his fellow men, full of courage and tenacity and the willingness to dare even against the greatest odds.

But we need not wait centuries or decades until such a race of human beings shall grow up. The struggle, the revolution will teach the proletariat masses idealism, has given them mental ripeness, courage and perseverance, clearness of purpose and a self-sacrificing spirit, if it is to lead to victory.

The young people of the proletariat are ordained to carry out this great work as the true foundation of the socialist state. They must show, even now, that they are equal to the great task of bearing the future of the human race upon their shoulders.

**There is still an old world to be overthrown. A new world must be built!**

• December 1918. From *The Class Struggle*, New York, Aug 1919

# Only soc

Paul Hampton reviews *Can Socialism Make Sense?*, by Sean Matgamna, with additional socialist texts

**The last period has been tough for the working class, arduous for the labour movement and a nightmare for socialists.**

We've had decades of accelerated capitalist globalisation, the US hyper-power bestriding the world and the mass belief in markets as the regulator of all social affairs. But the tremendous mystique world capitalism built in the two decades after the collapse of Russian and European Stalinism fractured during the economic crisis of 2008 and its after-shocks.

The need for socialism has never been greater and yet a credible socialism is absent. Where is the compellingly-made case for the democratic control of the economy and society? Authentic socialism is still buried under the ruins of Stalinism, the fraudulent, counterfeit, anti-socialist "socialism" of the 20th century. Socialism is eclipsed, everywhere.

This book, *Can Socialism Make Sense?* edited and introduced by Sean Matgamna for the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, is an essential contribution to making the case for twenty-first century working class revolutionary socialism. It sets out some of the most fundamental objections to this conception of socialism and provides evocative answers to those questions.

The introduction is dialogical in form, meaning it is written as an interactive argument between a Marxist (A) and a sceptic (B). Why a dialogue? Because that is how knowledge develops. We ask questions — difficult questions and we seek to answer, as clearly and as coherently as possible, those questions. Five overarching objections are considered in depth, with a host of related arguments discussed: Stalinism, class, democracy, human nature and individualism.

## STALINISM

**One of the joys of selling socialist newspapers on the streets during the last century was the regular repost from hostile passers-by to "get back to effin Russia".**

This equation of the Soviet Russia, the USSR and its satellites in Eastern Europe, along with China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea — all Stalinist totalitarian states — has "anthraxed" real socialism.


Stalinism, which Trotsky called the "syphilis" and "leprosy" of the labour movement, undermined, sapped, butchered, and discredited the old socialist movement. It turned the Stalinist-controlled part of the labour movement into a confused enemy of liberty, equality, fraternity, and unfettered reason — in short, into an enemy of socialism.

Today socialists must live and do our political work amidst the ideological ruins, the discouragement, the revulsion, and the poisonous ideological vapours that constitute the legacy of Stalinism. Old socialism, pre-Stalinist and anti-Stalinist socialism, has been buried beneath the ruins of the collapsed Stalinist, but self-named socialist, system. The book demarcates authentic socialism from the nightmare of Stalinism, rescuing the authentic democratic collectivist aspirations of the October 1917 Russian revolution from Stalin's horror that destroyed it a decade later.

The book also tackles arguments around

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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/twetrotskyisms](http://bit.ly/twetrotskyisms)**



# cialism makes sense

public ownership and planning. The equation of socialism with bureaucratic state ownership, as James Connolly pointed out, would make “the army, the navy, the police, the judges, the gaolers, the informers, and the hangmen, all would all be socialist functionaries”. Ironically, the free market capitalists reached for “bankers’ socialism” during the crash in 2008, nationalising the risks and milking the public finances to keep their ship afloat, only to make workers’ pay to bail out the system.

Socialism is both the ideal of working class self-rule but also a concrete goal that can be understood in terms of the best humanity has developed under capitalism. Socialism is human solidarity raised from a system of working-class bonding in resistance to our exploiters to be the guiding principle of all society. It is the enthronement of unfettered reason armed with enlightenment and democracy in all the social, economic and political affairs of society. Society will collectively own and democratically control and administer the bulk of productive wealth. Every major industry will be reorganised roughly like the NHS at its ideal best — with full provision for need as its reigning principle. It will be democratically controlled by workers, by consumers, and by the overall community.

## CLASS

**The second major objection to socialism resolves around rejecting the centrality of the working class.**

Far from disappearing, the world’s waged workforce increased from 0.9 billion in 1991 to 1.7 billion in 2014. We say that the proletariat, the wage-labour class of people who, to live, must sell their labour-power, is the bearer of socialism. Why? Because it alone can resolve the contradiction within capitalism between private ownership and socialised production. And how? By establishing collective social control, democratic control, over the production processes that knit together vast social networks. The working class will do that because it needs to free itself from exploitation and social mistreatment and general social mismanagement by the buyers of labour-power.

But what about the state of the labour movement? The long history of the working class, of its defeats, its declines, and its revivals, shows us what will happen in the future, though not of course in exact detail. It is sure and certain that the working class will revive. The working-class socialist movement will revive. Everything in history shows that it will. Why? Because capitalism can live only by exploiting the “labour force”.

## DEMOCRACY

**The third major objection revolves around democracy.**

The book dissects the pluto-democracy under capitalism, where tremendous economic powers and social-financial forces dominate the democratic discourse, elections, the shaping of opinion and their capture of legislators.

But for Marxian socialists democracy is a central, all-conditioning and all-defining, principle and central value of socialism. We advocate consistent democracy in every avenue of life: democracy as far as possible within the boundaries of capitalism and its states, democracy as the answer to national and other forms of oppression, democracy within the bounds of the labour movement, democracy among the revolutionaries and



“Freedom is always the freedom of the one who thinks differently”

collective democratic control as the socialist economic alternative.

## HUMAN NATURE

**The book confronts another widely raised objection to socialism, namely human nature.**

If human beings are just animals — naked apes — then (so the argument goes) you can’t change human nature. Competition, individualism, selfishness, predatoriness — nourishes capitalism. Socialists do not deny or idealise human nature, or the facts of our biology, nor humanity’s place within the natural environment. But human beings are self-aware, self-controlling, self-shaping, self-reshaping. We can aspire to a society governed by something higher than the dog-eat-dog morality that capitalism teaches.

Human nature is socially malleable and has all sorts of possibilities. The question is what a given society, or a given state, encourages to develop. Capitalist society prizes and rewards those who prey on other people. That is not, or not just, human nature. That is also nurture — what capitalist society makes of a human nature that also has vastly different possibilities which capitalism inhibits and stifles.

To those who believe that wealth and power are the only spurs to action in humankind, socialists answer: what a miserably diminished view you have of human beings! It is a piece of humanity slandering social-Darwinist self-approving bourgeois superstition! Actually much of the history of human ingenuity has been driven by different goals.

But who will do the dirty jobs in socialist

society? In reality, most such work can be done now, or soon, by machines and robots. Even the most automated society will never eliminate all the unpleasant jobs. Under socialism such work will be minimised and shared out.

And there is a natural-ecological imperative for socialism. The justified, necessary and healthy fear of ecological ruination and social regression as a consequence faces us with stark urgency. There is a serious possibility that capitalism, which first opened up the socialist “option” in history, will close it again by way of doing irreparable damage to the ecological system on which humankind depends.

## INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION

**Opponents of socialism point to the improvements brought by capitalism over many decades and the individual liberties enjoyed by many more people in the modern world.**

This assumes that the desirable traits are inseparable from capitalism and cannot exist without the present arrangement of society. It assumes that under capitalism the gains will continue indefinitely and go on improving. Socialists believe that the social and human gains won under capitalism can survive the overthrow of capitalism, and that they can develop much more fully once the limits imposed on them by capitalism and private ownership of the economic bases of society are broken.

Marxists base our socialism on certain social and economic achievements of capitalism — in the first place the development of the

productive forces to a very high level of productivity. But the fundamental fact of capitalism is that it exploits the workers.

Every individual has to work and whether they become a teacher, lecturer, doctor, nurse, charity worker, journalist or other job and whether they find this work fulfilling or not, they will be exploited. It will stifle their individuality and restrict their creativity because the social system acts as a constraint on human flourishing.

The book alludes to how this can be reconciled through becoming a socialist, a tribune of the exploited and oppressed, by fighting for what you know is right and necessary. The liberation of humankind from class society, and of the working class within that society is the greatest cause in the world.

## DEBATES

**The book is partly made up of debates between Marxists and the opponents of socialism such as Roger Scruton, Kenneth Minogue and David Marsland.**

This is because, as the philosopher Hegel put it, “Genuine refutation must penetrate the opponent’s stronghold and meet them on their own ground: no advantage is gained by attacking them somewhere else and defeating them where they are not”.

The clash of ideas is how people learn. The cultural on the left is impoverished by the refusal to debate. Developing a political culture that discusses real issues, where socialists fight for clarity, is essential to the renewal of the labour movement.

The book includes a selection of texts from the tradition of classical Marxism (including a text by Rosa Luxemburg, reprinted here), which lasted for approximately a century from its foundation in the mid-1840s by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels until not long after the murder of Leon Trotsky in 1940. Texts written by some of the finest representatives of revolutionary socialism (and a few who later became rogues) such as Luxemburg and also Engels, Paul Lafargue, August Bebel, Clara Zetkin, William Morris, Eugene Debs, Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Max Shachtman, Hal Draper, Ernest Belfort Bax and Henry Hyndman. Albert Einstein the great scientist also makes the case for socialism.

The book is entertainingly written. It is coarse and obtuse in places, politically incorrect for some and profoundly jarring for others. But the vocabulary is rich, the metaphors illuminate and the results enlighten, whether you are a jaded ex-radical or a raw newcomer. The book is accessible but also demanding: it requires careful reading and willingness to learn. It breaks down complex arguments but demands the reader make themselves familiar with the rich tapestry of modern history.

Can socialism make sense? Not only does socialism make sense — it is an unavoidable imperative. Socialism is necessary for the majority of the world’s population to live well.

**Socialism is essential for general human flourishing. Socialism is indispensable to preserve the planet we live on. Socialism is required for social and personal liberation. Socialism is necessary for the next stage of human evolution.**



# The attacks on disabled people are not over

**Paula Peters from Disabled People Against Cuts spoke to *Solidarity* (in a personal capacity).**

**The government may have backed down over cuts to Personal Independence Payments [PIP, non-means tested benefit], but the new Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Stephen Crabb, has already said more cuts are in the pipeline.**

There are now attacks on the rights and living conditions of disabled people from almost every direction:

- The cuts in benefit for new claimants on Employment Support Allowance (ESA), who are in the work-related activity group (WRAG) will be going ahead. This will be a £30 a week cut. From April 2017 nearly 500,000 will be hit by the ESA-WRAG cut. People who are being transferred over to Universal Credit from other benefits will have their claim treated as a new claim, and will also be affected by this cut. This cut will mean ESA claimants getting the same amount of money as those on Jobseeker's Allowance, a cut of £1.4 billion off the government's welfare budget.

- PIP itself is a step backwards from what we had before [with the Disability Living Allowance]. Many claimants have lost their entitlement to the higher rate mobility allowance, which enabled them to hire Motability cars. The loss of Motability cars is impacting on disabled people's independence; many use their cars to get to work and without it travel becomes nigh impossible

- Due to cuts in local government funding for social care, disabled people are seeing massive cuts in care packages.

- Claims on the Access to Work Fund have been capped [this has particularly affected deaf people's access to signing services].

- The cut to the Independent Living Fund has been given transitional funding, but it is not ring-fenced, so that too could be cut.

- Other cuts, such as those in mental health services, on libraries, as well as the attacks contained in the Housing Bill, also impact badly on disabled people.

However I believe our campaigns are beginning to have an impact.

When DPAC stormed Parliament in June 2015 we put the fight for the Independent Living Fund on the map. In March this year we stormed Parliament again over the ESA-WRAG cut. Our action was also to highlight the tragic human cost of the welfare reforms. Our slogan was "no more deaths from benefit cuts". This occupation was reported in the *Times*. A group of us happened to be on the train the next day. A woman reading the *Times* recognised me from the report. She got up and told the whole carriage: "Hey, this lady and a group of disability activists occupied Parliament". The carriage erupted in cheers. People wanted to know what was going on.

We have had a successful name and shame campaign against MPs who have voted for those cuts [#Nameandshame]. We asked charities to remove these cut-voting MPs as patrons [#Torydump]. Zac Goldsmith was one of those MPs — he was forced out of Richmond AID.

On 17 March we went to Croydon when Goldsmiths was out on the campaign trail. We asked him about the ESA cut and his reply was, "Why are you worried about the

cut, it's not happening until next year?" Some of these MPs don't even know what they are voting for! On the 18 March we forced Osborne and Goldsmith to abandon a photo shoot in north London and hide from our protest in a portakabin for two hours. A few days later Iain Duncan Smith resigned.

So we feel after six years our protests are beginning to have an affect. We have made Duncan Smith the most hated man in Britain. The public are starting to wake up and say "this isn't right."

The new leadership of the Labour Party — Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell — have been a great support, and were before they were elected. DPAC broke with our tradition and supported Corbyn in his election for leader of the Labour Party. John McDonnell is going to announce DPAC's September week of action at TUC Disabled Workers conference (19-20 May). It is important, that Labour party activists, trade unionists, and grass roots campaigners scrutinise what the Labour front bench talk about on Labour Party policy and have input into the shaping of policy. All of us must pile on the pressure for Labour to oppose the Tory austerity agenda. We want change, not more years of austerity. We have some interesting times ahead.

Rank-and-file workers who maybe want to take action are also feeling they are being let down by their union leadership. They want support from them when action is required. It's their workers' rights, their jobs on the line. They need support out there, not to be hampered by the leadership of the union. So when workers are losing their jobs and their rights, they need trade union support to fight



their corner. To protect their jobs and rights. All the fights — our NHS, our welfare state, libraries, workers' rights — impact on each other. When any of us take action, we should all be there to support it. It is only by showing solidarity to one another, by uniting together and fighting together, that we will win against the Tory government.

It's important that when disability activists take action, the trade unions are there to support it. Unions have many disabled members, many of whom have been impacted by a multitude of cuts. We need to work together to stop that.

DPAC, the Mental Health Resistance Network (MHRN) and Winvisible have been asked to support the TUC Disabled Workers Conference with a demonstration on 19 May.

**Let's put the joint solidarity into action in the fight for disabled people's rights.**

## Removing barriers for autistic workers

**Cathy Nugent reviews *Autism Equality in the Workplace: Removing barriers and challenging discrimination* by Janine Booth.**

**This is not a book of advice for autistic people on how to adapt to work or how to socialise with colleagues. There are other books and resources for that.**

This is a book, based on many interviews with people with autism, as well as the author's own experiences, which says employers should remove barriers that autistic people face at work.

As Janine argues, "if we wait for employers to make their workplaces autism friendly voluntarily we will be waiting a long time — far longer than a fair society would expect anyone to wait for progress and equality." Not least because some autistic people need a good deal of support and employers just don't do "support"!

Janine advocates a political goal — wider democratically-organised public ownership of industries and services, where equality and inclusion for all is at the heart of work organisation. But she also recognises we need to mobilise our labour movement to fight for goal, and in the meantime as much equality as we possibly can.

In the meantime labour movements (and the socialist movement) need to educate ourselves about the relevant issues, exactly what an autism-friendly workplace (and world!) would look like.

First and foremost Janine says we need to expand our appreciation, acceptance and tolerance of neurodivergence, human qualities

which relate to the autistic spectrum (but also to conditions such as dyslexia and ADHD).

At the moment societal emphasis on adaptation is creating problems and distress. It is for instance pushing people on the autistic spectrum who are able to adapt into "masking" (e.g. by anxiously "practising" social skills). Many autistic people are ashamed to "come out". Or are, if they can find work at all, channelling themselves into jobs and occupations which they are stereotypically seen to be suitable for. At best social acceptance may be based on being "gifted" or "nerdy" or the go-to person for scientific and technical information. This is a one-dimensional view of any human being, a recipe for misunderstanding and miscommunication. And worse, having one's emotional life dismissed as either non-existent or unacceptable.

On the other hand if society, starting in the world of work that Janine writes about, was prepared to (or forced to) attempt better understanding and remove the barriers to acceptance, then a world of possibilities opens up for people on the autistic spectrum. In fact — it is clear to me from reading this book, and the point is made by Janine at various points — a world of possibilities opens up for all of us. Janine raises quite fundamental questions about what work is, who it is for, and how it should be organised.

Take for instance the current emphasis by employers on employees having so-called "soft skills" and "emotional intelligence"; ideas which underpin customer services. Service sector workers especially are expected to connect with, anticipate, and emotionally identify with a customer's needs to a ridiculous extent.

Being forced to mimic emotional connection (doing "emotional labour") is a great effort. For some of us this is okay. For many of us, whether we are autistic or not, it is not. And, as Janine points out, it is often obvious to customers (i.e. the rest of us) that this effort is false, shallow, unnecessary and demeaning to everyone. Certainly, I don't want to have someone be forced to wish me a nice day with a degree of well-performed cheerfulness. But I do often want accurate, concrete information, delivered in a straightforward way. These are not only skills an autistic person might be able to acquire, they are also ones with a great deal of virtue in any economy based on rapid exchanges.

Janine's argument is based on the "social model" — the idea that society disables impaired people. It is a guide to social action, to identify barriers for disabled people in society, then work to remove them. Janine points to a debate on this model (one we have had in the AWL). The danger may be that the social model understates the difficulties people face when they have severe impairments. For autistic people this may mean those who are relatively better able to function in our society become the "spokespeople" for others, and get their needs prioritised. These issues clearly need more discussion, alongside continuing research into diagnosing and understanding autism itself.

Janine's book is eye-opening, should be read by all trade unionists. It is a manifesto for a future workers' government and it is full of ideas for workplaces, things for unions to fight for now. This requires that trade unions have better, fighting policies for access to work for all disabled people as well as

drives to organise the unorganised.

**Many of the practical ideas here — such as getting rid of strip lighting; shorter meetings; quieter work spaces; written as well as spoken instructions; jargon-free information; banning "hot desking"; ending supervisory bullying, micromanaging and performance management — are things that autistic and non-autistic workers can unite around.**



**At Workers' Liberty's annual conference in November 2015 we discussed and passed a document on disability and disabled peoples' struggles.**

As a result of this we have committed ourselves to making our organisation, events and publications more accessible. We are now producing our newspaper in an audio format weekly, and are working on making other materials available in other formats. We are also publishing accessibility information for all our events and changing the venues we use.

**Please get in touch if you wish to help with that work.**

• Read the policy we passed at: [bit.ly/dispolicy](http://bit.ly/dispolicy)



# Irish nationalism and the socialist republic

The fourth part of Michael Johnson's series on the life and politics of James Connolly.

**Building on the ideas of John Leslie (of the Independent Labour Party) in his 1897 pamphlet *Erin's Hope*, Connolly claimed that the essence of the national question in Ireland was a battle over "fundamentally different ideas on the vital question of property in land".**

Between, on the one hand, a supposed Irish "primitive communism" and, on the other, an "alien socialist system" of private ownership.

Drawing on the contemporary anthropological works of Lewis Morgan, which had also influenced Friedrich Engels, Connolly argued that a form of "primitive communism" had survived in Ireland much longer than in other European countries, and was only destroyed by the British when the clans were dispersed after the break-up of the Kilkenny confederation in 1649.

As with Leslie, this view allowed Connolly to puncture the pretensions of the tepid Home Rulers, whose simple concentration on forms of government was portrayed as superficial.

It also opened out the possibility of an alliance between socialists and radical nationalists. Socialists, Connolly wrote, could "join with the Irish patriot in his lavish expressions of admiration for the sagacity of his Celtic forefathers who foreshadowed in the democratic organisation of the Irish clan the more perfect organisation of the free society of the future."

Conversely, due to the dual political and social character of the national question, Connolly argued that if "the national movement of our day is not merely to re-enact the old sad tragedies of our past history, it must show itself capable of rising to the exigencies of the moment. It must demonstrate to the people of Ireland that our nationalism is not merely a morbid idealising of the past, but is also capable of formulating a distinct and definite answer to the problems of the present and a political and economic creed capable of adjustment to the wants of the future."

For Connolly, this meant proclaiming its aim as an Irish Republic. Not a corrupt capitalist republic as in France or the plutocratic republic found in United States. Rather, it involved "linking together of our national aspirations with the hopes of the men and women who have raised the standard of revolt against that system of capitalism and

landlordism" in a Workers' Republic.

In one sense, this is an innovative attempt for Connolly, leader of an extremely marginalised socialist propaganda organisation, to place socialism full-square in the middle of the Irish nationalist revival movement. Indeed, modern socialism is seen as the culmination of centuries of struggle between Ireland's communal inheritance and a "feudal-capitalist system of which England was the exponent in Ireland."

In this sense, the ISRP can be seen as part of, and an intervention into, the new nationalist movement. Indeed, later, in 1910, Connolly was to write in the foreword to his *Labour in Irish History* that his book "may justly be looked upon as part of the literature of the Gaelic revival." Like the cultural revivalists, Connolly was, for his own purposes, reaching deep into Irish history to root his socialism in the Irish revolutionary tradition.

However disputable as "history", *Labour in Irish History* and *Erin's Hope* can be seen as "living books", in the sense Antonio Gramsci understood Machiavelli's *The Prince*: "not a systematic treatment, but a 'living book', in which political ideology and political science are fused in the dramatic form of a 'myth'."

Connolly's historical analysis was intended to destroy the myths of Irish middle-class Catholic history, reveal the class lines within the national movement, and forge a proletarian world-view and as a spur and a guide to action.

Connolly's approach, too, was a creative attempt to explore a more multilinear approach to social development than was found in most contemporary Marxism with its notions of pre-ordained "stages" of development, through which all nations must pass. Analytically and politically, however, it had problems.

As David Howell has written, Marx held out the hope of Russia in the 1870s developing into communism on the basis of its peasant communes, dependent on support from working-class revolutions in western Europe. Such communes did still exist in Russia (though, as Plekhanov and then Lenin were to argue, they were already dissolving into capitalism), and their existence made Marx's view plausible.

Yet in Connolly's case for Ireland "involved no institutional inheritance — only a historical memory with a substantial accretion of myth." Connolly himself admits this when he writes that the "clans are now no more and could not be revived, even if it were desirable to do so, which is more than questionable, but the right of ownership still lives on." Connolly's view of Irish "primitive communism" is now discredited, with the discovery of a hierarchical form of native Irish feudalism predominating before the Norman Conquest and even the existence of slavery.

Perhaps admitting that the argument for an inherited cultural pre-disposition towards communal property is weak, Connolly seeks to supplement it with economic claims to make an objectivist case that an independent capitalist Ireland is impractical, and that therefore socialism offers "the clue of the labyrinthine puzzle of modern economic conditions."

Connolly makes an underconsumptionist argument, in which it is possible to detect the possible influence of the SDF's Ernest Belfort Bax, to the effect that Ireland "cannot create new markets. This world is only limited after all, and the nations of Europe are pushing their way into its remote corners so rapidly



Members of the Irish Socialist Republican Party in Dublin in 1901

that in a few years time, at most, the entire world will have been exhausted as a market for their wares."

In *Erin's Hope* and contemporary article of Connolly's on the 'Irish Land Question', he also dismisses the possibility of capitalist agriculture in Ireland, arguing that: "Every perfection of agricultural methods or machinery lowers prices; every fall in prices renders more unstable the position of the farmer, whether tenant or proprietor; and every year — nay every month — which passes sees this perfection and development of machinery going more and more rapidly on. We are left no choice but socialism or universal bankruptcy."

And while Connolly in the same period can be seen defending a more orthodox Marxist view that socialism is "the legitimate child of a long, drawn-out historical evolution, and its consummation will only be finally possible when that evolutionary process has attained to a suitable degree of development," he sometimes argues another case for Ireland in his writings on nationalism.

As Andy Johnston, James Larragy and Edward McWilliams have pointed out, the specifically Irish socialism outlined in *Erin's Hope* at times resembles "a strongly autarkic programme for an isolated national system of production."

Moreover, there is a strong implication running throughout Connolly's arguments on socialism and nationalism that, if legislative independence is an illusory, and a capitalist Ireland seemingly impossible, any true nationalist will logically develop socialist conclusions.

For example, when leading separatist nationalist Arthur Griffith backed an ISRP candidate in 1902, Connolly wrote optimistically that: "We have always maintained that every honest friend of freedom would sooner or later find themselves in accord with us. The support now spoken proves this."

Yet Griffith was in no sense socialist. His vision was for an independent capitalist Ireland, not a socialist republic. Drawing on the work of the nineteenth century German protectionist economist Friedrich List, alongside political independence Griffith advocated economic self-sufficiency protected by high tariffs to develop Irish industry.

When Connolly does criticise the revolutionary nationalist tradition, it is often on tac-

tical questions, such as the commitment to conspiratorial methods above mass politics, rather than for their non-working-class basis.

Connolly's catastrophist and dichotomous view of "socialism or universal bankruptcy" also neglected the growing conservative Catholic rural bourgeoisie which was consolidating itself in this period, as a result of the British Tory Land Acts, which provided loans for tenants to buy out the landlords.

As Henry Patterson wrote in *The Politics of Illusion*, this view "failed to anticipate the space which existed in Catholic Ireland for a nationalism that was not as obesely bourgeois as that of the Irish Parliamentary Party and yet in no sense socialist — a space which the revived Sinn Féin organization would fill in the afternoon of 1916... There would prove to be a space for a revolutionary nationalism with conservative social content."

While Connolly's radical excavation of Irish history was intended to build a working-class socialist movement, it was double-edged in that it did not sufficiently distinguish the working-class view from other forms of republicanism. It provided later raw material for a revived Irish populism in the form of left-republicanism, which sought to enlist the working-class in the service of nationalist aims.

But this was in the future. Connolly's schema for Ireland co-existed in his mind with a sharp working-class socialism and a warning that "no revolutionists can safely invite the co-operation of men or classes, whose ideals are not theirs, and whom, therefore, they may be compelled to fight at some future critical stage of the journey to freedom."

"It may be pleaded", he wrote, "that the ideal of a Socialist Republic, implying, as it does, a complete political and economic revolution would be sure to alienate all our middle-class and aristocratic supporters, who would dread the loss of their property and privileges."

"What does this objection mean? That we must conciliate the privileged classes in Ireland!..."

**"As a Socialist I am prepared to do all one man can do to achieve for our motherland her rightful heritage — independence; but if you ask me to abate one jot or tittle of the claims of social justice, in order to conciliate the privileged classes, then I must decline."**



Arthur Griffith backed an ISRP candidate



# 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.

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## Give power back to the members

### LABOUR

**Rhea Wolfson, who has replaced Ken Livingstone on the Centre-left Alliance slate for Labour's National Executive (NEC), spoke to *Solidarity*.**

**I think the campaign is now going very well.**

It started off with an unexpected torrent of abuse from fascists, which was very difficult emotionally, for me and my family. But that has calmed down, and we have seen huge amounts of support from my union, which helped. But apart from that and an attempted smear of me as someone not interested in winning elections, it has gone well.

I'm coming to the game late. I don't have as many CLP nominations as most people. CLP nominations are very important, because they can inform people on who I am. They are my priority at the moment. On the Campaign for Socialism website, you can get model motions and notes to help you get nominations for me and the left slate through your CLP.

We also need money to run the campaign! I would like to run a campaign on the basis of lots of small donations from people who support the ideas I'm standing on.

### NAME

**This vote is a vote for everyone in the Labour Party — so name recognition is very important.**

If people want to spread the word through any medium, that would be great; I am happy to travel around and speak at meetings. Fundamentally I have the issue that I don't have 50 years' experience in Labour and I am coming to this as a relatively new person.

I think that the priority for left-wingers on the NEC is to give power back to members within the Party — to Conference, and to their CLP. For too long, power has been taken back from members and



given to the Labour bureaucracy. That's power over policy and how the party is run.

Other priorities are about making sure that our rules are about having a party that works for us. We need a more nuanced approach to dealing with discipline in the party.

I have suffered anti-semitism, but really this needs to be dealt with through discussions and education, rather than through disciplinary measures and expulsions.

I am not a huge fan of the 8 Point Plan [of "Progress"]. I think it does cover some important things. But what it lacks is any way to fundamentally deal with the problem of anti-semitism in the party. It talks about extending the powers of the Compliance Unit, but not about how to deal with the issue. It talks about having caucuses. But I think that being told by non-Jewish

members that I have to go to a caucus is... difficult.

What it lacks is talking about how we educate at the grassroots. Some of the anti-semitic language we see from certain groups comes from a lack of education and engagement with Jewish community. The Scottish Labour Young Socialists, a group I am co-chair of, is running education around historical anti-Semitism and how to address these issues.

**Socialists have to take the issue on and educate from the grassroots up.**

- Crowdfunding site : [www.crowdpac.co.uk/campaigns/33/rhea-wolfson-for-labour-nec](http://www.crowdpac.co.uk/campaigns/33/rhea-wolfson-for-labour-nec)
- Campaign for Socialism: [www.campaignforsocialism.org.uk](http://www.campaignforsocialism.org.uk)

## Events

### Saturday 21 May

**Lewisham March for Libraries.**  
12 noon, starting from Lewisham Library, Lewisham High Street.  
[bit.ly/LewishamLib](http://bit.ly/LewishamLib)

### Saturday 21 May

**Workers' Liberty day school: Where we came from and where we're going**  
12-5, "The George", Leeds LS1 3BB  
[bit.ly/leedsdayschool](http://bit.ly/leedsdayschool)

### Saturday 21 May

**State of the Economy conference.**  
11-4.30, Imperial College, London.  
[bit.ly/ec-21May](http://bit.ly/ec-21May)

### Sunday 22 May

**Haringey Momentum EU "remain" stall**  
11am, 472 High Road (outside Santander), Bruce Grove, London  
[bit.ly/momentumstall](http://bit.ly/momentumstall)

### Monday 23 May

**Lewisham Momentum debate on the EU referendum**  
7pm, Ian Gulland Lecture Theatre, Goldsmiths, SE14 6NW  
[bit.ly/lewishameu](http://bit.ly/lewishameu)

### Tuesday 24 May

**Nottingham Trades Council EU referendum debate**  
7.15pm, Nottingham Mechanics Building, NG1 4EZ  
[tinyurl.com/nottinghameu](http://tinyurl.com/nottinghameu)

### Saturday 28 May

**Vote in — Another Europe is Possible Conference.**  
11-5pm Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, WC1H.  
[bit.ly/AEIPrally](http://bit.ly/AEIPrally)

**Got an event you want listing?**

[solidarity@workersliberty.org](mailto:solidarity@workersliberty.org)

## BECTU votes for right-wing merger

By Kelly Rogers

**Delegates to BECTU conference, held this year in Eastbourne on the 14-15 May, voted overwhelmingly to endorse a merger with the right-wing union Prospect, with only a handful of branches voting in opposition.**

The merger has been proposed as a solution to a pensions deficit of £7.5 million.

This means that between the end of June and the end of August, BECTU members will be balloted on whether the merger should go ahead.

Prospect is a considerably more right-wing union than BECTU, for

example, coming out in favour of much of the regressive Trade Union Bill. Also, one of the stipulations of the deal is that BECTU will give up its affiliation to the Labour Party.

It looks very likely that the merger will go ahead, with both the BECTU Executive and conference endorsing it. If it does, then it will be a sad day indeed. At a time when the Labour Party is shifting left under Corbyn, it is more important than ever that the historic relationship between unions and the Labour Party remains in tact. BECTU would be giving up its political representation in parliament, and limiting its ability to represent and organise its members on the



big political issues.

**It would also be turning its back on a party that is making big steps to becoming the kind of Labour Party that trade unionists have been crying out for many years; the kind of Labour Party that we all need.**



# School janitors step up strike

By Dale Street

Glasgow school janitors are on strike from 16 to 20 May as part of their ongoing dispute with Cordia — an arm's length company of Glasgow City Council — over Working Context and Demands Payments (WCDP).

WCDP, worth between £500 and £1,000 a year, are paid to employees who undertake dirty duties, heavy lifting, and regular outside working. The janitors meet all the criteria, but Cordia is refusing to pay them WCDP.

This week's strike follows on from earlier three-day strikes in March and April, and a boycott of the disputed duties which began in March. The janitors, all members of Unison, will be staging lobbies of the City Council and the Scottish Parliament, and also holding a teatime street rally in Glasgow.

Cordia's response to the janitors' campaign of industrial action has been to use non-union and non-janitorial employees, and to pay them enhanced payments. According to Unison, the money spent by Cordia in an attempt to break the boycott and strikes is greater than the cost of awarding the janitors WCDP.

5,000 Unison members employed in Glasgow City Council's Residential and Emergency Services and other departments are also cur-



rently being balloted on industrial action in response to plans to slash terms and conditions of employment. The ballot closes on 20 May.

In an attempt to undermine support for a "yes" vote, the Deputy Director of Social Work has issued a letter to staff wrongly claiming that Unison has agreed to the scrapping of six days of public holidays. 1,500 GMB members are also being balloted on strike action to prevent imposition of the Council's attacks on terms and conditions, which would see their pay cut by £1,500 a year.

The GMB ballot closes on 19 May. Glasgow City Council is Labour-controlled, and Scottish council elections are taking place next May.

The Labour Group's readiness to pass on funding cuts imposed by the SNP government in Holyrood, and its willingness to turn a blind eye to the strike-breaking tactics of the Council's arm's length companies, will cost it dear.

Momentum and the Campaign for Socialism need to organise a campaign within the Glasgow Labour Party, in alliance with council unions, to build support for the janitors and other council workers.

**Not just because the Labour Group's current policies play into the hands of the SNP. But more importantly because, like any other Labour Group, Glasgow Labour Group should be fighting cuts rather than implementing them.**

## Topshop cleaners protest across country

By Darren Bedford

**Hundreds of trade unionists and other activists blockaded London's Oxford Street on Saturday 14 May, to demand justice for cleaning workers at Topshop.**

Two cleaners, employed by contractor Britannia, have been suspended and sacked on spurious grounds after they joined the United Voices of the World trade union and began campaigning for living wages and other workplace rights. The demonstration, which saw banner drops and pickets at Topshop's flagship stores, demanded their reinstatement, as

well as real living wages for Topshop cleaners.

Topshop boss Sir Philip Green is one of the wealthiest capitalists in Britain, earning an estimated £10,000 per hour, compared to the £6.70 per hour earned by those who keep his shops clean.

The demonstration was attended by Labour Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell MP, who had earlier spoken at a meeting of the Hungry for Justice campaign, a Bakers, Food, and Allied Workers' Union (BFAWU) initiative to win a £10/hour minimum wage, an end to zero-hours contracts, and union rights for workers in the fast food



industry.

**Delegates from Unite New Zealand, which has successfully campaigned for significant wage increases and the abolition of zero-hours contracts, also attended.**

## Strikes against Sheffield job losses

By Gemma Short

**PCS members working at a Department of Business, Innovation and Skills site in Sheffield (the largest office), Warrington, Bris-**

**tol and Darlington will strike on 19 May over plans to close the office and move work to London.**

Workers voted by 97% in favour of strikes against the closures, which they argue will actually cost money as the government will

need to recruit and train workers to do the equivalent jobs in the London office.

The plans have caused outrage at a time when the government claims it is trying to create a "northern powerhouse".

**In April a demonstration was held in Sheffield which condemned the plans as actually creating a "northern poor-house".**

• Sign the petition: [bit.ly/bispetition](http://bit.ly/bispetition)  
• Tweet messages of support @pcsbis using the hashtag #KeepSheffieldOpen

### Strikes in Sheffield food company

**Workers at Pennine Foods in Sheffield will strike on Thursday 19 and Friday 20 May in a dispute over changes to pay.**

The union, the Bakers', Food and Allied Workers' Union (BFAWU) says that Pennine Foods is trying to recoup the cost of raising the minimum wage to the government's new "living wage" by making workers sign new contracts which remove extra pay and lieu days for weekend work.

**Further strikes are planned every fortnight for June and July.**

# FBU conference votes to remain in EU

By Jack Horner

**FBU conference in Blackpool last week witnessed sharp debate over the European Union, with delegates eventually voting for a remain vote after much wrangling.**

FBU's executive council proposed a statement to the conference calling for a vote to remain.

This argued that the consequences of leaving would be detrimental to firefighters: the working time directive is built into firefighters' national pay and conditions, while retained firefighters have won gains as part-time workers in the EU, such as pensions, sick leave, holiday pay and other leave.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary said it was not "our" referendum, but was taking place at the behest of wrangling among the Tories, spurred on by UKIP. He said most of the current debate involved pro-business politicians debating how best to exploit workers, whether inside or outside the EU.

Wrack argued that a vote to remain must not be taken as an endorsement of the current EU, but "a recognition that the forces of labour are not in a position to replace it with something better". He called for an independent labour movement approach, with no sharing of platforms with official campaigns. He condemned ex-TUC general secretary Brendan Barber for writing a joint letter with David Cameron supporting remain.

A Brexit motion from London moved by regional secretary Paul Embery received little support. Its supporters produced a terrible document before conference, which referred to "an explosion of cheap labour". Numerous delegates stood up to defend migrants and to reject the false and xenophobic stereotyping of these workers.

The main threat was the "take no position" view. This was not an active boycott or abstention argument, but one motivated by concerns about divisions among members such as in Scotland – reflecting a lack of confidence and political education.

West Midlands brigade chair Andy Scattergood summed up the answer when he said it was "important to get off the fence", even if the choice was becoming a "lose/lose situation". Wrack agreed, but said the consequences of leaving were serious for workers and that "our main enemy is here at home", not in Brussels.

The night before Alberto Durango from the London cleaners' union and Kieron Merritt from "Another Europe is Possible" comprehensively rebutted Enrico Tortolano from Trade Unions against the EU in a fringe debate.

Jeremy Corbyn addressed the conference on the final day, the first Labour leader to do so in over 20 years. Corbyn has a consistent record of support for the FBU, going back to the 1977 pay strikes, the 2002-03 dispute and the subsequent disaffiliation. He was warmly welcomed by delegates, who had agreed to reaffiliate the FBU to the Labour Party last November. The night before, a useful Momentum fringe meeting heard several delegates advocate the need for a serious organised trade union intervention into the Labour Party.

The main industrial debate concerned firefighters responding to emergency medical calls alongside (but not instead of) paramedics. Over half the brigades across the UK are engaged with trials and the union voted to extend these, to evaluate the results and use the outcome to fight for better job security and pay for firefighters.

The award for wackiest resolutions was tied. There was a motion to "condemn hypocritical propaganda", which inadvertently boosted states such as Russia, China, Cuba and Venezuela opposed to "US-NATO hegemony". An emergency resolution on the "right to criticise" effectively denied there is a problem of anti-semitism in the labour movement.

**Generally there were fewer resolutions than usual, suggesting the FBU needs to renew itself at workplace and brigade level, in order to ready itself for attacks from central government and police and crime commissioners that are on the horizon.**

## Southern strikes continue

By Ollie Moore

**Members of the RMT union on Southern plan further strikes on Wednesday 18 May as part of their dispute against the extension of "Driver Only Operation".**

Southern management has consistently attempted to bully workers out of striking, threatening severe pay deductions and the re-

moval of various benefits, including travel and parking permits. RMT has said it will pay strike benefit of £80 to all workers involved in the strikes, and is considering legal action against Southern.

**The union also plans a demonstration outside a meeting of railway bosses at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in Westminster on the morning of Wednesday 18.**





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## TORIES THREATEN HUMAN RIGHTS

By Colin Foster

**The Queen's Speech on 18 May — the government's announcement of its plans for new laws — is likely to include the Tories' implementation of their Education White Paper and replacing the Human Rights Act.**

The Tories stated their thinking on the Human Rights Act as far back as 2005: "to liberate the nation from the... politically correct regime ushered in by Labour's enthusiastic adoption of human rights legislation".

The Human Rights Act, legislated in 1998 by the Labour government, wrote the European Convention on Human Rights into British law. It enabled people to bring cases citing that convention in British courts, including challenges to government regulations and decrees.

The European Convention on Human Rights dates from 1950, and was largely a British initiative, implemented through the Council of Europe (which had ten member states when founded in 1949 — before the EU or its predecessors — and now includes almost all European states).

Before 1998, British citizens could bring legal cases under the Convention, but only by laboriously going through the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.



Home Secretary Theresa May has said that Britain should not only repeal the Human Rights Act, but quit the Convention. The official Tory policy is that they will write the 1950 text of the Convention into British law; reject all the subsequent extensions-through-interpretation by the European Court; install "a threshold below which Convention rights will not be engaged" so as to invalidate "trivial cases"; and provide that "Britain's courts will no

longer be required to take into account rulings from the Court in Strasbourg".

Aware that "under the terms of the current treaty it will remain open to individuals to take the UK to the Strasbourg Court claiming a breach of their Convention rights, and resultant judgments of the Court will be seen to be binding on the UK as a treaty obligation", they will "seek agreement" from the Council of Europe to modify that, and, if they don't get that, quit the

Convention.

The gist is clear: the Tories will make it harder to claim human rights, and make the remaining rights ones which can be changed at any time by a parliamentary majority.

An "Extremism Bill" is also promised which will provide for anyone with "extremist views" — defined as something like "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values", or what the government deems "British values", anyway — to be

banned, for example, from working in schools.

David Anderson QC, the official reviewer of anti-terrorist legislation, has already (in a September 2015 report) warned that this means making it "legitimate for the state to scrutinise (and the citizen to inform upon) the exercise of core democratic freedoms by large numbers of law-abiding people".

### ACADEMIES

**The Tories have drawn back from a blanket rule that all schools must become "academies" by a certain date, but plan to go on with pressure to make schools academies and forcibly to intervene in local authorities deemed to be "failing".**

National terms and conditions for teachers, from which academies and free schools are already exempt, will be shredded. Recognised teacher qualifications will be abolished to be replaced by head teachers' say-so.

Also likely in the Queen's Speech is a Higher Education Bill which will lift the ceiling on university tuition fees and, at the other end of the "market", make it easier for cut-price universities on the US model to award degrees.

**A new regime for prisons will allow "failing jails" to be taken over on the model of "academy schools".**

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## Contact us

020 7394 8923

[solidarity@workersliberty.org](mailto:solidarity@workersliberty.org)

Write to us: The editor  
(Cathy Nugent), 20E Tower  
Workshops, Riley Road, London,  
SE1 3DG

Solidarity editorial: Cathy Nugent  
(editor), Gemma Short, and Martin Thomas

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