



# Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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# VOTE

The "Vote Leave" campaign has become an ugly spate of migrant-baiting. "Twelve million Turks say they'll come to the UK", screamed the *Daily Express* on 22 May.

Around the same time Vote Leave launched a poster saying simply "Turkey (population 76 million) is joining the EU". Not 12 million now, but 76 million!

Tory cabinet minister Michael Gove was more restrained: he predicted 5.2 million extra immigrants.

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# REMAIN

## LOWER BORDERS, DON'T RAISE THEM!



## Inside:

### Refugees stuck in Greece



Dashty Jamal talks to *Solidarity* after a trip to refugee camps in Greece.

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### Anti-semitism and reactionary anti-capitalism



Moishe Postone talks to *Solidarity* about anti-semitism and the left.

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### Stand up for socialism



Jill Mountford reviews our new book *Can Socialism Make Sense?*

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## Join Labour!

No united front with Cameron on EU!

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**Student activists from the student University College London Cut the Rent campaign hosted a flash occupation of the Estates department on Tuesday 31 May over the university's refusal to provide a guarantor service to international students participating in the rent strike, denying them the ability to find housing for the next academic year.**

**The occupiers won a victory after a mere twenty minutes when Andrew Grainger, Director of Estates, gave a guarantee that a meeting would soon be arranged to discuss the strikers' demands. Well done comrades!**

**Vijay Jackson**

## Cop slams "thought police"

**By Chris Reynolds**

**Simon Cole is not a left-winger. He is a lifelong cop, and the chief cop working on the Government's much-criticised "Prevent" program.**

"Prevent" is supposed to stop young people being drawn to ideologies like Al Qaeda's, but its bureaucratic workings make it ineffective or even counterproductive.

Even Cole, though, says that the Government's planned new "anti-extremism" law risks legislating "a kind of thought-police control of

what people can and can not say".

The planned new law would criminalise speech (rather than action) previously quite legal. Cole and others think it is unenforceable and could well do harm by unnecessarily alienating and antagonising people.

In any case, they don't want to have to police such a slippery law.

Peter Fahy, Cole's predecessor as chief cop working on "Prevent", has already condemned the planned legislation.

**The criticism from Cole, a young police chief surely anxious for promotion, is even more significant.**

## Post-capitalism or ultra-capitalism

**By Colin Foster**

**Sell tat online in the morning, write software in the afternoon, drive for Uber in the evening?**

The term "gig economy" was coined only in 2009, but now some are hailing it as the wave of a thrilling, versatile, flexible future.

US economists Lawrence Katz and Alan Krueger have found that the percentage in "alternative work arrangements" — contractors, on-call workers, agency temps — rose from 10.1% in 2005 to 15.8% in 2015, in the USA.

Their figures may underestimate, since they include only those whose main work is "alternative".

There are more "gig" workers in the 55-75 age bracket than in others. And there are more among those with university degrees than among those without.

Arguably, in fact, the big change here may be that "precarious" employment has become more common among previously-secure university-educated and older workers, who are more likely to get media attention for their complaints (or, in a minority, for their self-congratulations), while it had always been common (though less noticed) among worse-off younger workers.

"Precarious" work is still almost

always an unwanted makeshift or fallback, rather than a liberated "post-capitalist" lifestyle.

In a recent survey of 19,000 21-36 year olds across the world, 87% of them cited "job security" as a top priority ([bit.ly/gig-ec](http://bit.ly/gig-ec)).

73% are in full-time jobs, and only 3% in the full-on "gig economy" (working only "gigs" arranged one-by-one online). And they are working long hours, a quarter of them averaging over 50 hours a week.

The "gig economy" minority is largely only the next stage in from the 17% of 16-24 year olds (in Britain) who over a three-year period have at least six months without jobs, without education, and without training.

Actually, many recent developments make job regularity more, not less, important. Without that regularity, it's hard to get a mortgage or even a rental, a car loan, a mobile phone contract, or to afford training.

**The socialist future of work is not the "gig economy", but everyone doing their share of the necessary drudgery — in good conditions and in short hours, made possible by technology — and getting an adequate income, and everyone having, on that secure basis, much more free time for creative and social development.**

# Reject junior doctors' deal

**By Pete Campbell, BMA Junior Doctors Committee, p.c.**

**The BMA junior doctors' council will meet on Friday 3 June to decide its response to the "deal" that the BMA has made with the government.**

I will be arguing for the council to reject the contract and to campaign for a "no" vote in the contract referendum.

The proposed new "negotiated" contract for Junior Doctors has caused a great amount of debate and discussion. It has caused a certain amount of division.

It highlights a clear demand from some to continue the fight. There are still important issues with the contract, particularly for part-time trainees, those who mainly work high intensity evening shifts (often Accident and Emergency), and around cost neutrality and the wider state of the NHS.

There is plenty of opposition amongst junior doctors to the contract, and there are some who want to accept. But there is not a clear "yes" and "no" camp, more like a "hard yes", "soft yes", "soft no" through to a "hard no".

The "soft no" is the "almost there but not quite option". Clear progress has been made in the last round of negotiations. But the negotiators did not extract all they wanted from negotiations. The



equalities issues were not fully addressed and the contract will be implemented before a lot of the positive elements are a reality. From the system of exception reporting to the accelerated training system — these do not exist yet, and to introduce this contract without even knowing if they will work is unfair and unsafe.

Those arguing the "hard no" say that the government can not be negotiated with in good faith. The government demands any deal is "cost neutral", has utter contempt for health workers, and is running the NHS into the ground.

A "hard no" may require us to halt negotiations and discussions of a new contract altogether, until the

future of the NHS is less in the balance.

On the yes side the "hard yes" declares a victory over weekends and patient safety. Everything will be back to "normal" and the fight abandoned. The "soft yes" argue that we accept but are critical and want to keep up the pressure for further negotiations.

A "no" vote comes with risks. The government will almost certainly move back to imposition of the contract by August, likely rowing back on some of the better bits. But we have stopped imposition before and we can again. And we must not give up the political fight for a fully-funded, safe, NHS.

I am arguing "no" because I think the proposed contract has big problems. The main one is the supposed "cost-neutrality". The contract means junior doctors will be paid "for all work done", and that will cost more than the current budget. In a year's time when the pay bill has grown due to the NHS paying doctors for the work they do, how will the government respond?

**In order to keep the pay bill cost neutral will it cut doctor numbers? Will it ask hospitals to cut services? Will it try to close whole wards or hospitals?**

• For more information follow Pete's blog:

<https://ahealthyblog.svbtle.com/where-next-for-junior-doctors>

# Stop the steel pension rip-off!

**Ralph Peters (former steel worker)**

**The sell-off, or potential closure, of Tata Steel will affect not only the 14,000 current UK steel workers but also at least 110,000 former steel workers. All former workers will have their pensions reduced.**

From the 70s onwards occupational and private schemes were promoted as a means to take pension out of the hands of the state and away from any argument for democratic political control.

There was the added ideological benefit for capitalists — the health of the pension fund, the chase for high profits and all that goes with it, could be presented as being in the future pensioners' interests.

A sop was given to trade unions with occupational pension schemes. Trade union representatives was allowed on the board of the trustees of the funds. However very little advantage was ever taken of that — either to ensure ethical investments or to hold businesses to account. Indeed some companies, most infamously the Mirror Group with its former CEO Robert Maxwell, plundered the pension funds for their own business ends.

Mirror Group workers lost up to 50% of their pension entitlement in the 1990s.

In 2005 Blair's government brought in the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) following increasing concern about the solvency of many pension schemes. Insolvent pension funds could be passed over to the PPF; pensions would continue to be made available but workers suffered losses of 10 to 20% of their entitlements.

On this occasion the government is suggesting that greater power be given to the Trustees to reduce the steel pensions than is currently allowable by existing Tory law. They want them to be able to make unspecified changes to the pension scheme without needing to consult the members.

The pension fund trustees say that the results will be better than under the PPF. But clear proposals about possible changes are not being made explicit — other than a change of inflation measurement — a switch to the Customer Price Index (CPI) from the Retail Price Index (RPI). The desired saving of £200 billion before 2030 seems unlikely to be made by such a measure.

The government has started a to-

kenistic consultation exercise in which they claim they will make sure that the pension scheme has changes "in the best interest of the scheme members". But what guarantee is that?

This government is clearly not to be trusted. The scheme is under pressure to not obstruct the selling off of British steel-making capacity to yet another foreign investor. There is no certainty that the sell-off, if it goes ahead, will not lead to closure or another sell-off.

There is a very real threat that other pension schemes will be similarly "legally enabled" and then compelled to follow the British Steel scheme example and negotiate down pension entitlements under market and closure threats.

The labour movement needs to articulate an alternative pension policy. Although the principle of a PPF is better than government steel pension plans, it is a poor safety net with unjustified losses for the workers.

**We need a rejuvenated state pension scheme, pulling in the private pension funds, ending the vulnerability and manipulation that comes from the market, ending the huge inequalities in the income of pensioners.**



# Inside a Greek detention centre

Thousands of refugees are now trapped in Greece. Recently the Greek government broke up the makeshift camp of 12,000 people at Idomeni on the Macedonian border, forcibly moving people to warehouses in Thessaloniki. Many families have been split up, people are missing. *Solidarity* spoke to Dashty Jamal, Secretary of the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, who recently visited a camp on the island of Samos in search of missing Kurdish refugees.



**I have been looking for information about 70 missing Kurdish refugees.**

In May I went to the camp in Samos (an island close to Turkey). I had to get police permission to go inside the camp and talk to people. I had pictures of 15 of the missing Kurds to show to people.

The Samos camp is in the mountains. It is a detention centre in fact, and holds around 1500 people. The majority of people are Syrians but there are around 500 Iraqi Kurds.

I saw many upsetting things. There were children there who had

pen to them in Turkey. They do not trust the Turkish government. I saw a father with his family crying out that he would rather they were dead.

People have to sign a piece of paper every time they receive food. Conditions are inhuman. The food is basic — bread, pasta — and the same every day. People are not allowed visitors. Many people have been split up from their families and they do not know what has happened to them.

I went to a police station and to a hospital in search of the missing Kurdish people. At the hospital I was shown bodies in two fridges. These were not the people I was looking for.

**Refugees who do not make the crossings from Turkey are buried after 40 days (or earlier if the condition of the bodies necessitates it) if they are not identified. So my task is very urgent.**

• IFIR are asking for donations to help them in the work of tracking Kurdish refugees. Account name: International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR). Account number: 21449591. Sort code: 40-04-07. For more information contact: 07856032991

been injured by an ISIS operation, but people cannot get to the hospital if they are injured or unwell. And Médecins Sans Frontières only come into the camp on two days a week.

Many people are desperate. They have no hope. They feel that the deal with Turkey (for Greece to deport recent refugees to camps there) is a matter of then being “sold on”. And they have had no information about what will hap-

## Two cheers for neo-liberalism?

**By Martin Thomas**

**Jonathan Ostry, an IMF economist with a long record of arguing that extreme income inequality harms capitalist growth, has published a new article on the theme with two IMF colleagues, Prakash Loungani and Davide Furceri.**

Capitalist crises generally come through sudden shutdowns of investment and luxury spending by the rich which then snowball through the economy. The poor are less apt to go in for sudden bouts of holding on to our cash. The greater the proportion of spending controlled by the rich, the more

unstable.

That is the basic idea behind Ostry's argument (bit.ly/ostry-eq). Extremely unequal capitalist economies may have rapid growth surges, he points out, but they are more likely to end in big crashes.

In the new article, Ostry criticises extreme cuts policies on the grounds that they increase inequality, and expands his reasoning to criticise over-easy flows of capital. He points to 30 financial crises since 1980 generated by inflows of “hot”, speculative, money into poorer economies, quickly followed by outflows.

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell has seized on Ostry's arti-

cle to indict Osborne and the Tories.

So far, so good. But not very far! Ostry's argument is for elephant-sized inequality rather than whale-sized, and for moderate neo-liberalism rather than the gung-ho, mouth-frothing, eyes-bulging sort.

He sees “much to cheer in the neo-liberal agenda”. We don't. Moderate neo-liberalism has, after all, been tried. That is what Blair and Brown did.

**The left should argue our own case for outright socialism, rather than deferring to the advocates of moderated capitalism.**

## Wins for Verizon workers

**By Ollie Moore**

**Workers at US telecommunications giant Verizon have forced significant concessions from their bosses, after a strike that lasted more than six weeks.**

Around 40,000 Verizon staff are expected to return to work on Wednesday 1 June after the company reached a settlement with their unions, the Communication Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, which sees the company retreat from its plans to cut staff pensions and increase outsourcing. Workers will now vote on the proposed settlement before it comes into effect.

The deal, which would last for four years, gives a pay increase of more than 10%, as well as small increases in bonuses and profit sharing. The deal Verizon offered before the strike involved a basic pay increase of only 6.5%.

The new settlement also includes stipulations about distribution of work between the cable and wireless sides of Verizon's business, the former of which is much more heavily unionised. Verizon has also agreed to create 1,000 new call centre jobs between now and 2020, which would be covered by union agreements, and reduce the number of planned call centre closures.

Significantly, the new contracts will also cover unionised workers

at Verizon Wireless stores. This is the first time staff on the wireless side of the business, historically far less well unionised, have been included in a collective bargaining agreement. It should give a boost to efforts to unionise Verizon wireless workers.

Verizon bosses claimed that some of the agreements would still allow them to make efficiency savings, and even cut jobs. Under the terms of the settlement, they retain the right to offer workers voluntary severance packages once a year.

**Nevertheless, CWA President Chris Shelton described the outcome as a “huge win” that “affirmed the power of working people”.**

## Daesh attacks near Aleppo

**Aleppo continues to be worn down by Russian airstrikes and Daesh has attempted to take areas near the Turkish border.**

Instability in Syria increasingly means aid routes being cut off and medical facilities evacuated and understaffed.

Daesh hopes to expand its territory near the Turkish border, where up to 100,000 civilians are trapped. It is targeting these areas after coming under sustained pressure in both the Iraqi city of Fallujah and Daesh's de facto capital, Raqqa.

Whilst seriously weakened in Fallujah, having possibly just 700 fighters, the group is now trying to gain territory from Syrian rebels. Azaz and Marea are under threat from Daesh takeover. These towns are of key strategic importance to the rebels, as they control major supply lines from Turkey.

Médecins Sans Frontières has evacuated its medical facility in

the northern Syrian town of al-Salamah, now under two miles from the Isis frontline.

“For some months, the frontlines have been around 7km away from the hospital. Now it is only 3km... There is nowhere for people to flee to as the fighting gets closer.”

The countryside north of Aleppo is an increasingly fraught area with rebels, government troops and Kurdish groups vying for control.

Meanwhile peace talks have completely broken down. The chief negotiator of Syria's main opposition umbrella group, Mohammed Alloush, has announced his resignation, claiming that the regime's continuation of bombing and aggression makes any agreement meaningless.

**Since the start of the civil war more than 250,000 Syrians have been killed, and an estimated 11 million people have been displaced.**

## Turkey: reaction grows

**By Dan Katz**

**Last November the Turkish Islamist Justice and Development (AK) party won a victory at the polls.**

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's thin-skinned Islamist president, and an increasingly intolerant persecutor of his many critics, had refused to accept losing the AK majority in the June general election. He ramped up the war on the Kurds in the Turkish south east and then ran on a platform of defending the security that he himself had undermined.

Recently, in May, Can Dündar and Erdem Gül of the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* got five year prison sentences for writing about the Turkish security service's support for Islamist militias in Syria.

### JAILED

**Many journalists have been jailed for “insulting” Erdogan.**

State prosecutors have opened 1800 cases against people accused of insulting Erdogan. The crime of insulting the President can carry a four year jail term. 900 journalists have lost their jobs in the first four months of 2016.

On 20 May the parliament lifted the immunity of its members, allowing the prosecution of 50 of the 59 Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) MPs on trumped-up terror charges. The HDP opposition is liberal and pro-Kurdish.

On 22 May Erdogan replaced his own Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, with the loyalist Binali Yildirim, ensuring an ever firmer grip on power.

This week Erdogan has called on Muslims to reject contraception; he says he expects women to have at least three children.

Already, in 2010, Erdogan had publicly rejected the equality of



**Erdogan**

men and women. He has condemned male violence by saying men are the custodians of women and have to protect them.

Since the Turkish state renewed operations against the Kurdish PKK militia in July 2015 it claims to have killed 5000 PKK militants in Turkey and northern Iraq. Hundreds of civilians have died and scores of curfews have been imposed as the army has fought and repressed Kurds in towns and villages across south east Turkey — using tanks against its own citizens, and patrolling with armoured personnel carriers inside its own towns.

The Turkish signatories of an open letter to Erdogan, which denounced the war on the Kurds as a crime, have all been placed under investigation. In January 14 Turkish academics were arrested for signing the letter.

The area Kurds call Northern Kurdistan is effectively occupied by special units of the Turkish state.

**The violence against the Kurds is largely ignored by Obama and the EU leaders, who are more concerned with Turkish support to stop Syrian refugees getting to Europe than they are with the democratic rights of Turks and Kurds.**



# Challenge trans-exclusion through debate

By Elizabeth Butterworth

**The *Morning Star* has come under fire for publishing two articles written by “trans-critical” / trans-exclusionary feminists.**

The first, by Rebecca Riley-Cooper, addresses the issue of women as a class, and the consequences of self-identification in defining gender.

She argues that, “...The logical conclusion of shifting our definitions of gender from objective characteristics to inherently subjective and personal ones is that the categories of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ effectively become meaningless. This is not a satisfactory outcome, especially for those who strongly feel that they identify as one particular gender”.

Traditionally, the radical feminist argument goes that, women are oppressed by men, partly (and originally) due to our biology and sex characteristics, but also (latterly, and largely) by the social construct of gender. Riley-Cooper seems to be arguing against the social construct of gender, which is a basic tenet of feminist theory.

Radical feminists such as Martha Nuss-

baum argue that trans-inclusion in mainstream feminism may undermine the struggles of those who are considered biologically female. That is a misguided but somewhat logical line of argument. But Riley-Cooper’s half-baked “questioning” of the consequences of trans-inclusion is poor.

As nearly all feminists acknowledge, it’s not just biology that oppresses us: it’s socialisation; the way people perceived as women (regardless of biology) are treated; it’s the expectations placed upon us and the discrimination against us — which trans women experience just as much as cisgender women.

The second article, by Jennifer Duncan, pursues a more rational, though wrong, line of argument. She straightforwardly makes the case for gender roles being separate from biological sex: something trans-inclusive feminists would very largely agree with. After this, though she flips back around to a biological essentialism, arguing that, “The fact that [women] are generally smaller, have less upper-body strength, and can become pregnant makes us physically vulnerable, and we are also vulnerable socially due to widespread sexual abuse of women by men

that is based on our female anatomy.”

This line of argument is dangerous in the extreme. Men do not rape women simply because they can or because of our anatomy! Men rape women because they think it’s acceptable to do so. Rape and sexual assault, the normal feminist argument goes (including the normal radical feminist argument), are about power and control, not sexuality.

Sexual violence is an abuse of power. This is why the most common victims and survivors are those with less power in society: children, women, LGBT people, and trans people, who actually suffer more sexual violence than any other group. Trans women, and trans people generally, are not just our allies and comrades because of the way they identify or because we want to be nice to them, but because they are oppressed by the same forces. It’s the same people who abuse “sluts” and “trannies” for not conforming. The cognitive dissonance in Duncan’s argument is mind-boggling. It also dangerously ignores the violence experienced by trans people.

After the publication of these two articles, a letter was subsequently published with hundreds of signatories, in defence of the

*Morning Star* publishing these articles and praising the newspaper for “giving a platform for a sex-class based analysis of women’s position”. On the other side, there have been accusations of transphobia at the paper and to stop donating to them and buying the paper.

The *Morning Star* does have the right to publish these articles. The articles were not hate-filled bile, though they are poorly argued and illogical. They also may make trans people feel excluded. I hope the *Morning Star* publishes responses from the trans-inclusive feminist movement.

The fact that hundreds of people have signed the letter shows that these arguments need to be tackled head-on. If any “trans-critical” / trans-exclusionary feminists reading this would like to engage with me in a public debate, I would be more than willing to do so.

**We still have a long way to go in understanding gender, sex and class, and how we can overcome the oppression of women. The ideas need to be hashed out and trans-exclusionary thinking should be robustly challenged through debate.**

# Meanings of Zionism

## LETTER

**The difference [the AWL] has with me may simply be a continental difference, so to speak. Among Jews I know, in the US, if you call yourself a Zionist, then that means that you’re inclined to agree with whatever the Israeli government does. If you don’t, then you’re non-Zionist or anti-Zionist.**

Of course, the most awful Zionists in the US are Christians United For Israel (CUFI) and similar groups. (Jews are wonderful, you see, as long as they’re Over There for when Jesus comes back and tells them they must convert or they’ll be left behind after The Rapture...)

In any case I don’t have a problem talking about the continuing “colonial project at the heart of Zionism” and such. The AWL seems to want to eschew this. If it’s because antisemitism is a bigger problem in the UK than the US then I understand. But I don’t see how one can discuss Zionism *as an ideology* without bringing this up.

**So while many UK Jews who oppose the colonialism and brutality of the Israeli state may think of themselves as Zionists, they probably really aren’t.**

Jason Schulman, New York  
(from AWL website)

Ira Berkovic replies:

**To be perfectly honest, my personal wish is that the term “Zionism” be consigned to history.**

I think it ceased to have much material grip in 1948, when its historical project was accomplished. What has it meant since then? Support for the continued existence of the Israeli state, in any form? Support for its continued existence as a Jewish state? Support for its colonial project in the Palestinian territories? Some combination of all of these things? Something else entirely?

Much of what is spoken about today as “Zionism” (by people who are actually trying to make the word means something,

rather than crypto-antisemites simply using it as a code-word for “Jews”) would be more accurately termed Israeli-Jewish chauvinism or ultra-nationalism. Those terms are clunkier, perhaps, but they also avoid the flattening out of a complex historical category and the provocative and fruitless affront to the complex, historically-developed identity of (probably) most Jews alive.

Imagine a Jew who is for two states, who opposes the occupation, who wants to end settlement building, who supports civil rights and equality for Israeli Arabs, etc., but for reasons of historical affinity sees themselves, in however loose a sense, as a “Zionist” (as in, they support the existence of the Israeli state and would “defend” that existence against those who oppose it). There are many such Jews in Britain, and I imagine in America too.

Theirs is a “Zionism” one hopes would “with away”, “in struggle”. But if the far left they encounter maintains an “absolute anti-Zionism” that insists they immediately jettison this complex aspect of their historically-developed identity, and tells them, “you might think you’re a Zionist, but you’re not really: Zionism is colonialism, Zionism is racism! Unless you accept that you are not, in fact, a Zionist, you must be a colonialist and a racist!”, then I think they are more likely to end up retreating behind the cordons of ethno-cultural identity that growing beyond them.

Yes, context, both geographical and historical, matters a great deal. In Israel itself I suspect I’d have less of a problem with straightforwardly describing myself as “anti-Zionist”. I also have no problem identifying as a “pre-World War anti-Zionist”.

**But in the contemporary context in Britain, something called or understood as “Zionism” both a) forms an integral aspect of the historically-developed identity of most Jews, and b) is perhaps the key term used by antisemites, on both the right and the left, to attack not just the Israeli state or government but all Jews. I prefer “non-Zionist”.**



Disabled People Against Cuts organised a demonstration during the TUC conference, stopping traffic on Tottenham Court Road for over an hour

## Fight back against austerity cuts!

### DISABILITY

**By Janine Booth, co-chair, TUC Disabled Workers’ Committee, p.c.**

**Nearly 200 delegates from dozens of trade unions gathered in London on 19 and 20 May to discuss issues affecting disabled workers and plan a fightback against discrimination and cuts.**

TUC Disabled Workers’ Conference debated and agreed over twenty policy resolutions, on subjects including the disability pay gap, disability hate crime, and disabled people in the arts. A resolution highlighting suicides linked to Work Capability Assessments provided a platform for delegates’ anger and determination, and was selected to go forward to TUC Congress in the Autumn. Pretty much all resolutions were passed unanimously, leaving the “debating” aspect of the conference feeling rather flat.

The Labour Party is currently running a Disability Equality Roadshow around the country. The conference gave it a two-hour slot, to enable delegates to tell Shadow Minister Debbie Abrahams what demands they want Labour to adopt. These ranged from keeping guards on trains and bringing public transport into public ownership, to building social housing that is affordable and accessible to disabled people.

Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell addressed the conference on the second day, promising that he and Labour’s new left leadership were building a social movement that would be with us every step of the way. This made a very welcome change from years of Labour Party spokespeople throwing a few crumbs and taking our support for granted because they were not quite as bad as the Tories.

Aside from the direct action fringe-meeting-turned-protest reported alongside, there were no fringe meetings and a small selection of stalls. A social event showcased disabled performers as well as providing a chance for less formal discussions.

While conference discussions covered various issues, perhaps three themes ran through them, which together point the way forward:

- active opposition to austerity cuts and their impact on disabled people
- the social model of disability, tackling the barriers that society puts in the way of people with impairments
- the TUC Manifesto for Disability Equality, launched earlier this year, which articulates our demands and provides a unifying basis for action, in workplaces, on the streets, and in politics.

**The task for the incoming TUC Disabled Workers’ Committee, for trade unions and rank-and-file activists, is to use these tools to build an effective movement for equality and liberation.**





## Sudden love for NHS is sham

To give some “left cover” to its basic migrant-bashing message, “Vote Leave” is claiming that quitting the EU would boost the NHS because “£350 million a week” currently paid in EU contributions could go to the NHS instead.

But net British contributions to the EU are only about 40% of the figure which “Vote

Leave” quotes ([bit.ly/350-nhs](http://bit.ly/350-nhs)).

That is less than 1% of total British government spending.

And the love for the NHS from the Tories and Ukip people who run “Vote Leave” is something we didn’t hear from them before the referendum, and probably won’t hear again.

The top Brexiter Tories are in the Cabinet, and could have got more for the NHS before now if they wanted.

**Ukip’s only MP, Douglas Carswell, is on record as proposing the abolition of the NHS and its replacement by a system of vouchers with which people could buy health-care in a free market.**

## Brexit would mean free rein for capital

**88% of six hundred economists surveyed for the *Observer* newspaper (29 May) reckon that Brexit would reduce economic growth in Britain.**

Economists often get things wrong, and the gist of the economists’ opinion is that Brexit would disrupt the regular flows of the global capitalist economy, thus pushing down trade and investment into Britain.

Most enlightening is what the pro-Brexit minority of economists say. The “Economists for Brexit” group led by veteran Thatcherite Patrick Minford has produced a report.

As ardent free-market ideologues, they argue that a capitalist Britain outside the EU will do well because it will have fewer constraints on the rapacity of the free market.

They object to the EU because “the EU has pressed for social legislation (such as the 2003 Working Time Directive and the 2004 Gender Equality Directive) that adds to companies’ costs”.

Their list would probably also include the Agency Workers’ Directive, TUPE, and redundancy-payment laws.

They also object because “European governments have been more emphatic than the global average about the dangers of global warming” and so the EU has pushed Britain to “adopt the renewables agenda with greater zeal... Coal-fired power stations have been closed down, offshore wind farms built and so on...”

The Brexit campaigners disagree among themselves on what trade deals Britain should do on quitting the EU. The economists go for a radical option: “What other trade agreements do we need? My advice would be: none”. Not the Norwegian model, not the Swiss model, not the Canadian model, not even the Albanian model favoured by Michael Gove.

The pro-Brexit economists argue that Britain should scrap all barriers to imports, and seek nothing more than World Trade Organisation rules for its exports. In their calculations the benefit of cheaper imports outweighs the consequent job losses.

On immigration, the economists differ from the Ukip-minded majority of Brexit campaigners in that they want more non-EU immigration and less immigration from the EU.

There, spelled out clearly, is the second core Brexit argument after the basic Ukip “hate-migrants” case. It is an argument for Britain as an offshore, low-regulation, low-social-overheads, environmentally-reckless site for global capital.

Whether their scheme would “work” in its own terms is doubtful. That it represents the way Brexit points, socially and economically, is not.

**The way to fight the neoliberal policies of the EU leadership is by starting from the limited integration across borders created by the EU, and working for cross-border solidarity around demands for social levelling-up, democracy, and more open borders.**

• [bit.ly/ec-brexit](http://bit.ly/ec-brexit)

## Brexitters step up migrant-hating message

**The “Vote Leave” campaign has become an ugly spate of migrant-baiting. “Twelve million Turks say they’ll come to the UK”, screamed the *Daily Express* on 22 May.**

Around the same time Vote Leave launched a poster saying simply “Turkey (population 76 million) is joining the EU”. Not 12 million now, but 76 million!

Tory cabinet minister Michael Gove was more restrained: he predicted 5.2 million extra immigrants.

The *Express* and Vote Leave were keen to nudge all prejudices. The murder rate in Turkey is higher than in Britain, they said. They didn’t say that Turkey’s rate is lower than the USA’s.

Turkey’s citizens own nine million firearms. (The USA’s own over 300 million). And, muttered the *Express*, Turks are “predominantly Muslim”.

Fact: Turkey has been trying to get into the EU since 1987. It is not likely to get in soon.

Fact: Germany deliberately started recruiting Turkish workers in 1961. Over 55 years since then, the number of people in Germany with at least one Turkish parent has risen to three million (not 12 million, not 76 million!)

12 to 15% of all marriages in Germany are now “intermarriages”. Turkish workers in

Germany have contributed hugely to the country’s prosperity. The discrimination and racism which they still face is a problem, but their presence in Germany is not.

The *Express*, the *Mail*, and Vote Leave systematically smear migrants, presenting them as a “cost” and not a cultural and economic boon.

*Express* front page headline, 17 May: “Migrants cost Britain £17 billion a year”. 16 May: “Soaring cost of teaching migrant children”.

All these were screaming front-page headlines:

*Mail*, 30 May: “Britain’s wide-open borders”. *Express*, 27 May: “EU migrant numbers soar yet again”. *Mail*, 26 May: “England’s population to rise by 4 million in 8 years”.

*Express*, 24 May: “EU threat to family life”. (“Mothers”, claimed the *Express*, are worried about “the damage immigration does to family life”, though the *Express* offered no argument as to how the EU might make children surly, parents uncaring, or siblings rancorous).

*Mail*, 20 May: “Migrants spark housing crisis”. *Express*, 19 May: “Migrant worker numbers surge”. 13 May: “Britain’s 1.5 million hidden migrants”.



Anti-Turkish poster

Yet the conservative Social Market Foundation reports (27 May) that “only 12% of EEA [EU or Norway] employees currently working in the UK would qualify” to stay here if they had to meet the same visa requirements as non-EEA people.

In other words, without a deal with the EU reinstating many of the conditions of EU membership, Brexit would be an impoverishing blow to social and economic life in Britain.

**Push back the scaremongers and the migrant-haters! Vote remain. Fight for democracy, social levelling-up, and solidarity across Europe.**



# Anti-semitism and reactionary anti-ca

**Moishe Postone, a Marxist writer based at the University of Chicago and author of *Time, Labour, and Social Domination*, and *Critique du fétiche-capital: Le capitalisme, l'antisémitisme et la gauche*, was in London in May, and spoke to Martin Thomas from *Solidarity* about anti-semitism on the left and reactionary anti-capitalism.**



**I don't feel as if I know the ins and outs of the situation in the Labour Party, so part of what I say may not be completely accurate. First of all, there is an extremely unfortunate polarisation with regard to the relationship of anti-Zionism and anti-semitism.**

It is a polarisation which makes political discourse very difficult. On the one hand, you have the Israeli Right, as, let's say, exemplified by Netanyahu, who treat any criticism of Israel as being anti-Semitic. As far as I'm concerned, this is completely illegitimate.

Not all forms of anti-Zionism are anti-Semitic. There are too many people on the left, and I think it's increasing, who argue that *no* form of anti-Zionism is anti-Semitic: that anti-Zionism is anti-Zionism, and anti-Semitism is something else.

In the world of the metropolitan left, it is really quite remarkable that the left has almost nothing to say about Syria, had nothing to say about Saddam, has nothing to say about the fact that we are witnessing a complete crisis of the Arabic-speaking world. That crisis cannot simply be blamed on imperialism. There needs to be at least an attempt at serious analysis of why every single post-colonial Arab country is characterised by the secret police, and a secret police that would do the Stasi proud. Some of them were trained by the Stasi and the KGB, in fact.

The left seems to be unable to say anything about these issues. In a sense, and this is extremely hypothetical on my part, I think the more helpless the left feels conceptually on dealing with the world, the more it zeroes in on Israel-Palestine, because that seems to be clear: the last anti-colonial struggle.

## NEW LEFT

**There are some leftists who will not be happy for me to say this, but retrospectively one could say that the rise of the New Left globally implied a tacit recognition that the proletariat was not the revolutionary subject.**

I think that there was a move away from working-class politics. The new leftists had not only separated themselves from Communist Parties and social-democratic parties; even though they sympathised with the plight of workers, I think they were tacitly casting about for a new revolutionary subject. The colonised peoples fighting for freedom became the new revolutionary subject.

I think that along with that there was a curious fusion, in part because of Vietnam, of the anti-colonial struggle and anti-Americanism. One of the differences between the massive demonstrations against the American war in Vietnam in the 1960s and early 1970s, and the massive demonstrations against the

invasion of Iraq, is that for many — not all, but many — of those who fought against the Americans, in the 1960s, there was the idea of supporting a progressive revolution.

The Americans, as the world's imperial, but also conservative force, were hindering a positive historical development. So the demonstrations weren't only against the Americans. They were also for the Vietnamese revolution — however one retrospectively evaluates that thinking as justified or not, and whether or not one thinks there should have been further criticism of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

None of that existed in the massive demonstrations against the American invasion in Iraq. There were very few people who could on any level have regarded the Ba'ath regime under Saddam Hussein as representing anything progressive, and nobody talked that way. Anti-Americanism became coded as progressive.

In a funny way, it is a remnant of the Cold War, spread among people who were actually not Cold Warriors. Israel has become fused with America in the minds of many of these anti-imperialist leftists. An enormous amount of power is attributed to Israel which it actually doesn't have.

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, who are colleagues of mine at the University of Chicago, claim that the American invasion of Iraq was against American interests, but pushed by the Israelis. Of course, they never state what Israeli interests were. Really, as both those writers had connections to Washington, their book was a brief that the State Department should listen to them more than to the neo-cons that they did listen to.

Israel is, in a sense, the manipulator, and Washington is sometimes just a stupid dolt which is manipulated by these incredibly clever Jews. And at that point the picture of Zionism is anti-semitic.

## ZIONISM

**There were leftwing critiques of Zionism from the very beginning, frequently by communist Jews. Zionism was criticised by the communists as a form of bourgeois nationalism. That's something completely different from the criticisms today.**

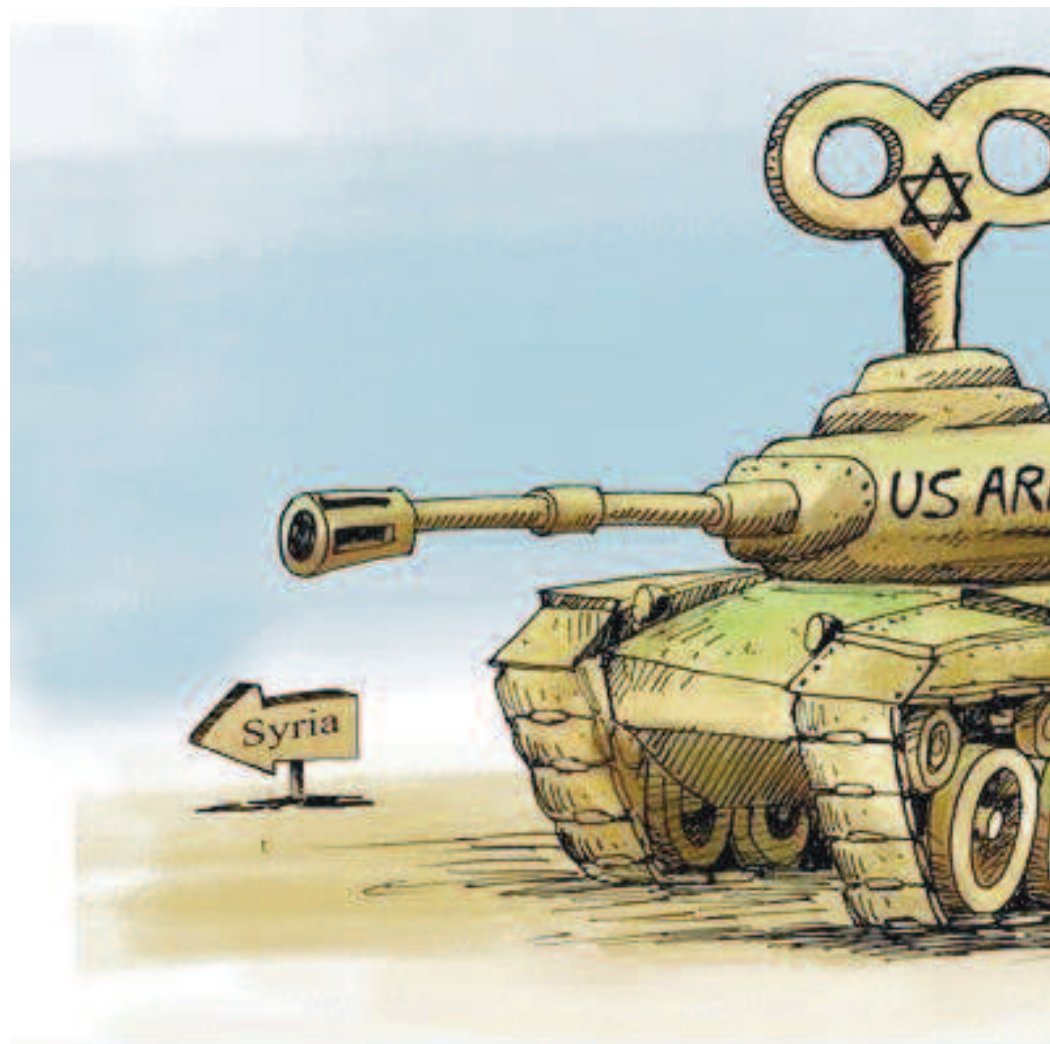
Trotsky, early in his life — I think he changed his views later on — referred to the Bundists as "sea-sick Zionists". That critique had nothing to do with Palestine or the Palestinian people. It simply has to do with nationalism.

The change may have happened in the 1930s, but one marker of it was the trial in Czechoslovakia in 1952, where the Stalinists tried the entire Central Committee of the Czech Communist Party.

It was 14 people. Eleven were Jewish. These were old Communists. Many had fought in Spain. They were accused of being Zionists. If you read what "Zionists" meant, it was exactly what the fascists called "Jews" — a shadowy conspiracy, inimical to the health of the Volk, and working to undermine the government which was for the people. The Stalinists couldn't use the word "Jewish" — this was only seven years after the war — so they used the word "Zionist".

That was one of the origins of a deeply anti-Semitic form of anti-Zionism. It exploded after 1967. The USSR was furious that Israel had defeated its two major client states, and it began to support the Palestinian movement.

The anti-Semitic cartoons and statements



**It is common on the left to hear the idea propagated that Israel controls the actions of the USA, as in the**

coming out of the Soviet Union were pretty appalling. That's where you got the idea that Zionism is Nazism — generated by the Soviet Union. And unfortunately, that Arab nationalists picked up on it is not surprising.

The Western left started to pick up on that too. I think that was deeply unfortunate.

I think anti-semitism is almost a litmus test for whether a movement is progressive or not. There are a lot of anti-capitalist movements that are not progressive. And I think that anti-Semitism is a marker.

I think there is a great deal to criticise in Israeli policies, the Israeli occupation, certainly the present Israeli government. But political discussion cannot take place if the choice is between Netanyahu on the one hand, and a certain kind of anti-Semitic anti-Zionism on the other.

Anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism is a world view. It is not prejudice against individual Jews. It can go with being perfectly civil, although I've been reading about the way some Jewish students are pilloried in terms of "you look Zionist". Who could "look Zionist"? It means, "you look Jewish".

I was struck by the UN Arab Human Development report of 2002, which was written by Arab scholars. It talked about the *misère* of the Arab-speaking world and its massive decline since the late 1970s. The decline was nearly as precipitous as that of sub-Saharan Africa.

At the same time other areas of what used to be called "the Third World", have risen. It seems to me that it is not only the decline of the Arab-speaking world, but the rise of other parts, which makes an anti-Semitic form of

anti-Zionism more plausible.

The power of the Jews! It is the Jews who are pulling everything down. This is only a little variant on the idea that the problem is all imperialism.

Well, imperialism is very important, was important, was distorting. But after all the British were in India much longer than anyone was in Syria. Or in Iraq. But I know more serious analyses of India from the left than I do of the Ba'ath. I find that politically unfortunate, and when it becomes anti-Semitic, I find it a marker of a move towards a reactionary populism.

## CAMPUSES

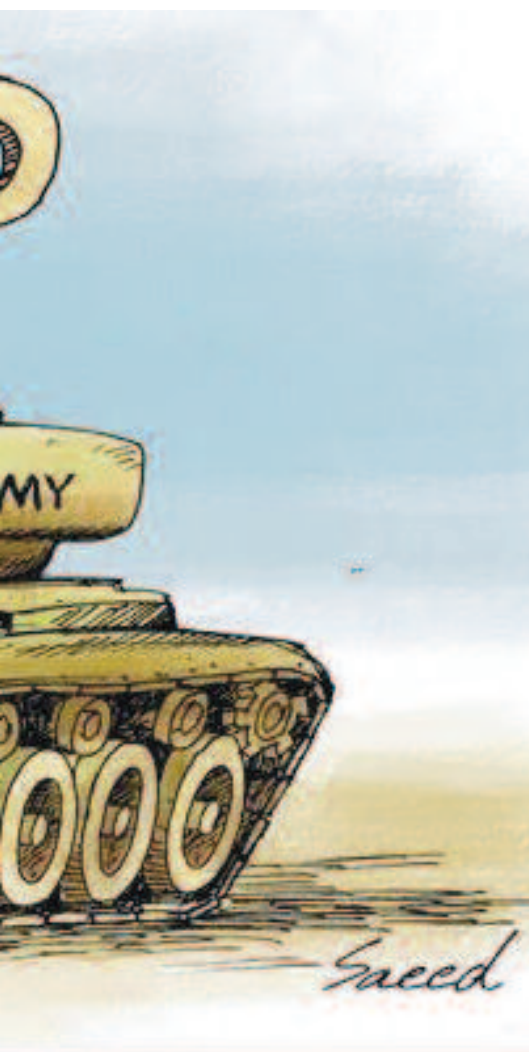
**On many campuses, the hostility has spread to all Jews. It has made many young Jews very confused and they identify more with Israel than they did.**

It is creating a reaction. Many of them are naïve politically, and because Israel's very existence is being called into question, they also frequently are uncritical in terms of what is going on in Israel-Palestine.

When Israel under comes such attack — because it doesn't feel like a political attack but an existential attack — there is very little discussion. There are campaigns such as BDS [Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against Israel], which is basically dishonest. [Norman] Finkelstein picked up on this quite a while ago. Some people are confused, and BDS tries to promote the confusion. People think it is against the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza period, but it is not. Because if it were, then it would not be a boycott of all



# capitalism



is cartoon from a pro-Iran publication.

Israeli academics, most of whom are very opposed to the settlements and Netanyahu.

It is significant I think, that at the height of the Vietnam War, or the Iraq invasion, or other American adventures, there never was a call for a boycott of all American academics, ever.

The West takes the model of South Africa; many Palestinian militants think the model is Algeria; and there is no analogy. I don't mean a moral analogy, I mean the analogy falls down because of demographic and political facts. There was in South Africa, only a small minority of white South Africans. There are as many Israeli Jews as there are Palestinians. So the Algerian or South African tactics are not going to work.

But you have an extremely unfortunate marriage, as it were, between the Israeli right, which is becoming further and further right, and what I regard as the Palestinian right. For me, the signal event was when [Israeli prime minister Yitzhak] Rabin was assassinated [in 1995, by an Israeli right-winger]. The right-wing campaign against Rabin was appalling and vicious, and Netanyahu was at the head of that. After Rabin was assassinated, it was assumed that Labour would be swept into power on a sympathy vote. Instead a Palestinian group began a campaign of suicide bombs. That elected the first Netanyahu government [in 1996].

The two work hand in glove. Each side thinks that ultimately, in the long run, it is going to prevail. But in the meantime, politically, they are united. It is a united rightwing front.

# Scapegoating Jews for the slave trade?

By Dan Katz

**There was a lot of Jewish support for the US Civil Rights movement in the 1960s.**

Martin Luther King spoke out against anti-Semitism: "How could there be anti-Semitism among Negroes when our Jewish friends have demonstrated their commitment to the principle of tolerance and brotherhood..."

"It would be impossible to record the contribution that the Jewish people have made toward the Negro's struggle for freedom — it has been so great." (1965)

That Black-Jewish unity broke down, partly because of the emergence of radical Black Nationalist organisations which identified with the Palestinians, especially after the Six Day War of 1967, and which were heavily influenced by a Stalinist Marxism which was comprehensively "anti-cosmopolitan", "absolute anti-Zionist", and anti-semitic.

By the 1990s, so US historian Henry Louis Gates argues, a new layer of Black intellectuals had emerged who were prepared to write and speak extensively against Jews.

The old anti-Semitism was "from below". The new strand was promoted by Black leaders, from above.

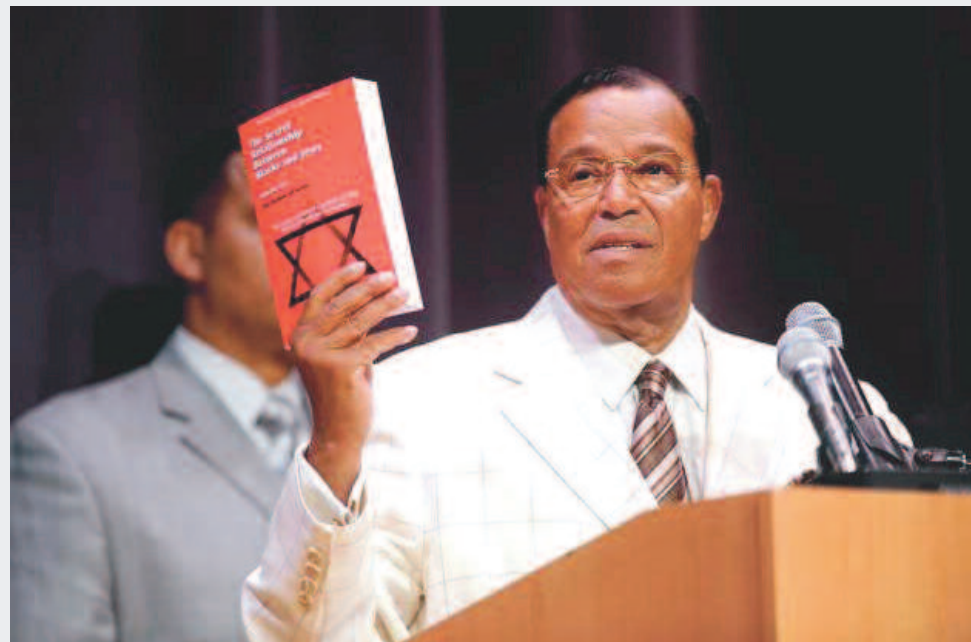
In a 1992 article in the *New York Times* — *Black Demagogues and Pseudo-scholars* (bit.ly/gateshl), for which he received death threats — Gates wrote: "[Older] anti-Semitism ... common among African American urban communities in the 1930s and 40s, followed ... a familiar pattern of clientelistic hostility toward the neighbourhood vendor or landlord."

Because of shifting class positions, "In American cities [in the 90s], hostility of this sort is now commonly directed toward Korean [and other minority] shop owners." That hostility — against ethnically different small shop owners — amongst some poor Black Americans was seen very clearly in the LA riots of April 1992, a few months before Gates' article appeared.

Christian anti-semitism had weight too, partly because of the great importance Christian churches had for very many Black Americans.

But there has been something new in recent decades. Gates cites a 1978 book by Michael Bradley, *The Iceman Inheritance*, which suggested that white people are unpleasant and aggressive because — unlike the rest of humanity — they are descended from Neanderthals. The Jews, Bradley argued, were the worst of the Neanderthals, apparently explaining the "particularly odious nature" of Jewish culture.

Louis Farrakhan, leader of the right-wing



**Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, holding up their book *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews***

reactionary sect, the Nation of Islam, remarked that "Hitler was a great man." In 1985 the NoI had the KKK leader Tom Metzger at one of their rallies in Los Angeles, accepting a \$100 donation from Metzger.

Elsewhere Farrakhan had called Judaism a "gutter religion". And the NoI had circulated the notorious anti-semitic forgery, *The Protocol of the Elders of Zion*.

One major theme of the NoI's anti-Semitism is the allegation that Jews organised, or financed, or at least were disproportionately involved in, the slave trade and slave-owning. The comments which Jackie Walker made on Facebook and led to her suspension from the Labour Party (now lifted) were fragmentary, but an exact fit with that theme.

Her comments included, "Millions more Africans were killed in the African holocaust and their oppression continues today in a way it doesn't for the Jews... Many Jews (my ancestors too) were the chief financiers of the sugar and slave trade which is why of course there were so many early synagogues in the Caribbean..."

The NoI's book, *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews* (bit.ly/noi-sr), runs to over 300 pages and 1200 footnotes. It presents itself as a scholarly work which aims to convict the Jewish people using "their own words". Gates calls this widely available book "sophisticated ... hate literature."

Gates comments, "[O]f all the African slaves imported into the New World, American Jewish merchants accounted for less

than 2 percent, a finding sharply at odds with the NoI's claim of Jewish 'predominance' in this traffic... in the domestic trade it appears that all of the Jewish slave traders combined bought and sold fewer slaves than the single gentile firm of Franklin and Armfield."

*The Secret Relationship* has also been debunked by an Anti Defamation League publication, *Ministry of Lies*, by Harold Brackman. Brackman shows how many of the themes of the NoI's anti-Semitism reflect the writings of Henry Ford, the motor manufacturer, union buster and notorious anti-Semite ("Judaism is a business masquerading as a religion"; "Jews are warmongers motivated by greed").

Brackman shows the NoI downplays the Arab involvement in the African slave trade. The Jews, heavily persecuted in Europe, were in many countries prohibited from participating in the slave trade. Brackman cites a survey from 1830 which states that there were 23 Jews (from 59,000 slave owners) who owned more than twenty slaves and four Jews (from 11,000 slave owners) who owned more than fifty slaves. 99.9% of the South's big plantation owners were non-Jewish.

Brackman also offers an alternative explanation for synagogues in the Caribbean. In some period European Jews fleeing persecution could see parts of the Americas as a safe haven (although Jews were banned from Portuguese and Spanish colonies, and from the French West Indies in 1685); in addition some Jews were forced into European colonies (for example by the Portuguese King John II, who compelled many Jews to convert before shipping them to settle in Sao Tome).

Jews were expelled from France (1453), Netherlands (1440s, 1582), Italy (1492), Portugal (1496), Spain (1492) — and scores of other towns and states across the centuries.

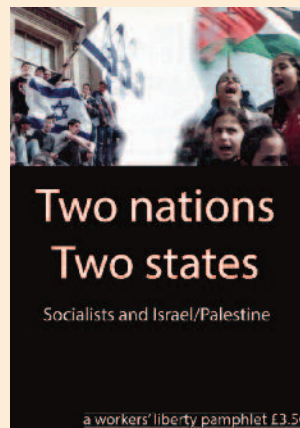
No leftist would describe the persecuted French Huguenots who formed a trading community in London in the 18th century as "of course" having come there only as super-exploiters.

**Black Africans, forced into slavery in the Americas, suffered terribly over centuries. But it is reactionary nonsense to blame that on the also-persecuted Jewish people.**

## Two Nations, Two States

**A pamphlet by Workers' Liberty. Israel out of the Occupied Territories! For a Palestinian state with the same rights as Israel! For Arab-Jewish workers' unity on a basis of consistent democracy! For a socialist Israel and a socialist Palestine in a socialist federation of the Middle East!**

**Third edition 2016. (1st edition was 2001, 2nd edition 2002).**



**bit.ly/2n2sorder**



# Changing Labour, changing politics

Ideas for Freedom 2016 • 7-10 July • Student Central, Malet St, London WC1E 7HX

The main theme of this year's event, Changing Labour, Changing Politics, will be ideas about rebuilding the labour movement and renewing socialist ideas in the wake of the election of a new leader in the Labour Party.



**Marxism and Autism** with Janine Booth, Chair, TUC Disabled Workers' Committee and author of *Autism Equality in the Workplace*; and Dr Dinah Murray.

**Did the Grunwick strike change the labour movement for black and migrant workers?** With speakers from the Grunwick 40 campaign and migrant workers' campaigns today.

**Introduction to the 1979 Iranian Revolution**, with Morad Shirin from the Iranian Workers' Solidarity Network.

**New unionism: organising the unorganised** with Alastair Reith and Victoria Hopgood from the Unite New Zealand fast food rights campaign, Henry Chango Lopez from the IWGB union at the University of

London and others.

**Should we renew Trident?** Labour activist Laura Rogers debates Luke Akehurst of Labour First on whether the Labour Party should be in favour of renewing Trident.

**Changing labour: Work in global capitalism.** Is the way we work changing in the modern world? with Professor Ursula Huws, author of *Labor in the Global Digital Economy*, and Bruce Robinson, Workers' Liberty.

**History PLC: The Commodification of the Past.** With the increase in TV history dramas like *Wolf Hall*, is history being distorted to make good TV? With Cath Fletcher, author of *The Black Prince of Florence*.

**From Chartism to the Labour Representation Committee.** Sam Greenwood of Workers' Liberty and Colin Waugh, Independent Working-Class Education Network, traces the development of workers' movements in Britain from the 1830s to the foundation of the Labour Party.

**The fight for free speech around the world** with Gita Sahgal, Centre for Secular Space; Melanie Gingell, lawyer involved in the Free Raif Badawi campaign; Imad Habib, Council for ex-Muslims of Morocco; and Omar Raii, National Union of Students National Executive.

**Fighting for reproductive rights.** Feminist Fightback and Ana Oppenheim, National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts and National Union of Students National Executive, discuss the attacks on women's reproductive freedoms and the movement against them.

**How do we change the Labour Party?** With Ian Hodson, President of the Bakers, Food, and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU); Jon Lansman, Momentum; Pete Radcliff, Broxtowe CLP; and more speakers TBA.

**How the Labour left organised in the past: the story of the Rank-and-File Mobilising Committee**, with John Bloxam, Workers' Liberty and former National Organiser of the Rank-and-File Mobilising Committee.



**The struggle for LGBT rights in the labour movement.** How did we win some recognition for LGBT rights in the labour movement, and what still needs to be done? With Peter Tatchell, former Labour Parliamentary candidate in Bermondsey; and Maria Exall, TUC LGBT committee.

**100 years since the 1916 Easter Rising.** 100 years after radical republicans tried to take power in Dublin, Liam McNulty and James Heartfield discuss the event and its legacy.

**1926: The revolution that might have been.** Professor Keith Laybourn takes us through the history of the 1926 General Strike, the lessons we can learn from it, and why it was defeated.

**50 years since the foundation of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.** Sean Matgamna, founding member, discusses how he and others launched our tendency in 1966.

**Can religion play a progressive role in politics?** With Maryam Namazie, Worker-Communist Party of Iran; Kate Harris, Workers' Liberty; and Lev Taylor, organiser of BirthWrong Tours and Anarchist Torah Study for the Jewdas collective.

**The fight for disability rights**, with Paula Peters, Disabled People Against Cuts; and Mandy Hudson, National Union of Teachers Executive disability rep.

**Anti-semitism, anti-Zionism and the left.** A discussion and debate on whether the left has a problem with anti-semitism with David Rosenberg, Jewish Socialists Group; Daniel Randall, Workers' Liberty; and Hannah Weisfeld, Yachad.

**Fighting for solidarity across Europe.** Whatever the outcome of the referendum on 23 June, we need to build workers' solidarity across Europe. Activists from across Europe will discuss how we build that solidarity.

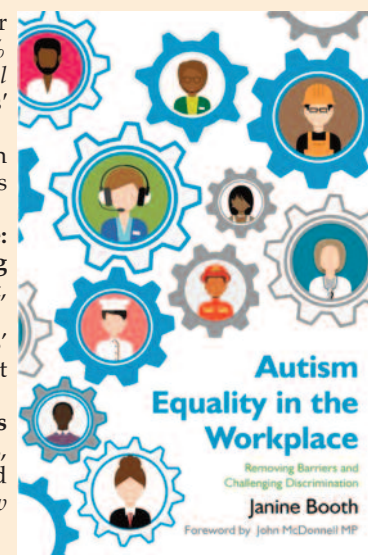
**How inequality is killing us** with Professor Danny Dorling, author of *Inequality and the 1%* and *Injustice: Why social inequality still persists*; and Ellie Clarke, Workers' Liberty.

**The politics of crime dramas**, with Clive Bradley, writer of the BBC's *Trapped*.

**How does capitalism continue: housework, caring, and bringing up children**, with Cathy Nugent, editor of *Solidarity*.

**Hungary 1956, how workers' fought against Stalinism**, with Matt Cooper, Workers' Liberty.

**The story behind the junior doctors strike**, with Dr Yannis Gourtsoyannis, BMA Junior Doctors' Committee; and Dr Youssef El-Gingihy, author of *How to dismantle the NHS in 10 easy steps*.



## Saturday night social: Our memories of the Grunwick strike

The Grunwick strike, 40 years on — with a film showing and presentation from the Grunwick 40 campaign, plus memories from the picketers

## Walking with Minnie

Thursday 7 July

A radical walking tour around London's East End, following in the footsteps of Minnie Lansbury, socialist suffragette, teacher trade unionist, and leader of the Poplar Rates Rebellion.

Separate £5 tickets available.



## What is the future of the Labour Party? The left debates John McTernan

Friday 8 July

Tony Blair's former special adviser debates Jill Mountford of the Momentum Steering Committee on the future of Labour. Chaired by Jon Lansman of Momentum.

Separate £5 tickets available.

Buy tickets online and find more information at [www.workersliberty.org/ideas](http://www.workersliberty.org/ideas)



# Alessandro: The Black Prince of Florence

By Cathy Nugent

**Cath Fletcher's book about Alessandro de' Medici, the bastard son of a Duke and a servant, or possibly slave, of a black African background, is a work of historical detection.**

The text weighs up the often contradictory, dishonest and sparse accounts of Alessandro's life. Sometimes the only information about moments in his life comes from household inventories, lists of fine clothes, or letters of thanks for elaborate gifts. But such are the records that must be used to track Alessandro's installation as the Duke of Florence in 1532, only to be assassinated less than five years later by a distant Medici cousin.

Alessandro was buried in his father's sarcophagus with no prominent sign to show where he lay. After his death he was described as a brute, a rapist and a tyrant, and all-round best-forgotten Duke. One subtext here is reference to his lowly origins and, to a lesser extent, racial background. But who was the real Alessandro? Under what circumstances, and for what purpose, could a "black prince" come to power in 16th century Italy? Cath's answers form an entertaining story of a turbulent and dangerous world.

Alessandro's rise in status was unusual, but, as Cath says, the bastard children of European aristocrats were often promoted; often used, for example, to make advantageous marriages. And the idea of race in Renaissance Italy was not, as it would be by the nineteenth century, understood through fixed categories, or contested through critiques of those categories. On the other hand black servants were treated as exotic objects.

What I found interesting about Alessandro's short period of rule — and I found strange that it should be forgotten — is how important it seems to have been in marking and establishing a transition to a different political order in Florence. That was a reflection of political change in Italy, as the world of city-state republics declined, and was replaced by a more princely order.

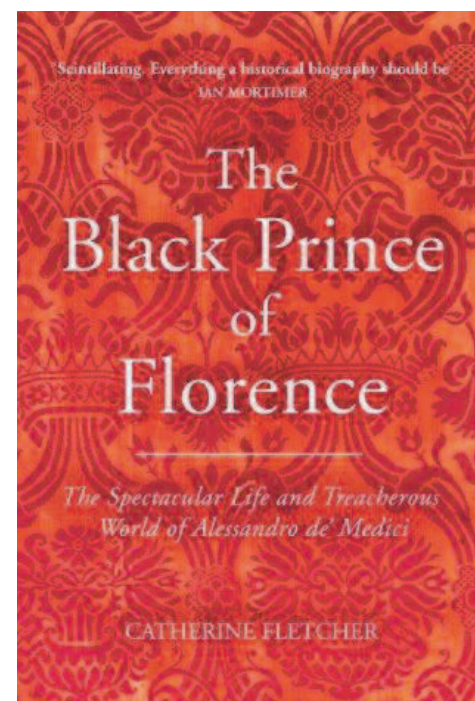
The Medici family were important merchants and bankers in Florence by the early fourteenth century. Florence's republican system of government — which Alessandro was to reform into an aristocratic government — was highly unstable. A Signoria of eight chief magistrates oversaw two consultative councils elected by guilds (around a quarter of the population). The Signoria were elected for two months only. Factionalism, family feuding and nepotism were endemic. For a cen-

tury the Medicis struggled for ascendancy within this system and because of that effort they were twice expelled from the city. Then in 1523 a Medici son became a Pope. Clement VII decided to get Florence back for good and, more by accident than by design, used his nephew Alessandro to further that ambition. In 1530, with help from the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, Clement got an army to blockade Florence and starve the republic into submission.

Alessandro's job was to secure Florence for the Medicis against the prospect of armies raised by exiled republican leaders. To build new fortifications inside the city and wider Tuscan region. To seek out rebels, to employ spies, to disarm potential enemies and punish others and to a certain extent win support through a populist appeal to the lower classes. Although eventually he did not avoid the plotting of his republican-sympathising cousin, he did his job well enough to ensure a 37-year rule by his successor, a distant cousin, Cosimo de' Medici.

This book is not primarily an analysis about class and state formations in 16th century Italy and Europe. It is more of a reconstruction and description of the events, relationships, property, art and philosophy.

**Nonetheless this book will have you**



reaching for your Machiavelli and your Gramsci to better understand the shockingly violent lives of a warring and ferociously ambitious ruling class.

## An inspiring dialogue



By Jill Mountford

**There is now a renewed interest in socialist ideas, an appetite to better understand how the world works and why it works in the interests of such a small minority.**

There's a craving among a much bigger layer of people for ideas about what we do about the preposterous injustices of capitalism.

These appetites and cravings need to be fed with ideas and arguments about what socialism is and importantly, what it is not (i.e. the 57 varieties of the Stalinism of the twentieth century).

Sean Matgamna's book, *Can socialism make sense?* An unfriendly dialogue, is, as he writes in the introduction, "a contribution to the urgent work of rebuilding a mass working class socialist consciousness and perspective, and a movement that embodies and fights for them".

This book is just what is needed at just the right time. This is not a book to be put in a pile by your bed, or on the bookshelf next to other good books you dip into now and again to bolster yourself up. This is a book to be read in a couple of sittings and to be discussed with anyone you can get into a conversation with about socialism. It's a book you should always have a spare copy of to sell. And it's book that should be part of your basic tool kit in the fight to create a world where meeting human need is the start and end point.

The big ideas in *Can socialism make sense?* are presented the first part in a really useful

format — as a dialogue between a Marxist and a critic. It goes through fundamental arguments about socialism and leaves you inspired to go and find someone to persuade. The second part of the book is key texts from Marxists and useful debates with leading right wing theoreticians. It's readable and inspiring. It focuses and invigorates the mind. It educates and agitates the reader and leaves you with no other honest conclusion than you have to organise. You've got to go and fight for these ideas.

And we have to fight for them in a confident, self-assured way. It's not really a question of can socialism make sense? It's an assertion that the liberation of humanity depends on fighting for and winning the ideas for socialism. We're pitched against a class that has a sense of self-entitlement in its very DNA. Even when rocked by their self-inflicted crisis of 2008, their confidence and audacity leads them to conclude that working-class people the world over can be sacrificed in order that these few can hold their power and profits.

*Can socialism make sense?* asks the reader to rise to the occasion, and grasp the new opportunities facing us. Our class has to develop a sense of entitlement and take, as a class, what is rightfully ours. We can only do this through self-education and educating each other. We have to do this in a way that relates to people where they're at, and the real world around us.

We do it through discussion and argument, the opposite to hectoring, glorifying and repeating mantras. We have to learn to think for ourselves, in the interests of our class. We have to set out to make a long-lasting, useful impact on the current situation.

To do this we have to be confident, bold and unflinching, armed with a set of ideas that can turn the world upside down; ideas that will help us reshape the world to meet human need.

***Can socialism make sense?* is a useful contribution to this task.**

## Books by Workers' Liberty

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A new book from Workers' Liberty which makes the case for socialism. In a time when socialism is the most searched word on the Merriam-Webster dictionary website, more and more people call themselves socialists, and a self-confessed socialist is leader of the Labour Party, this book explores what socialism means, whether it can rise again, how, and why.

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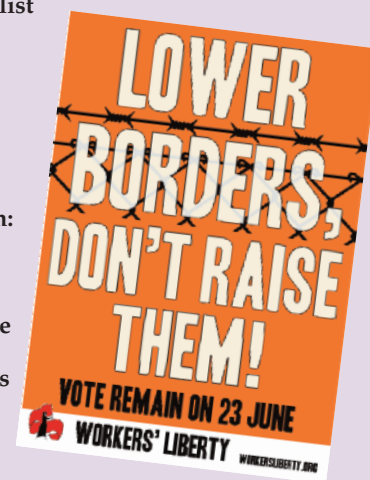
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20 stickers £3.50  
50 stickers £7  
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# Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## Events

### 31 May to 4 June

Vote in — Another Europe is Possible National Tour.

Various places.

Newcastle: [bit.ly/newcAEIP](http://bit.ly/newcAEIP)

Sheffield: [bit.ly/sheffAEIP](http://bit.ly/sheffAEIP)

Manchester: [bit.ly/mancAEIP](http://bit.ly/mancAEIP)

### Saturday 4 June

Bursary or Bust National Demonstration

1pm, St Thomas' Hospital, London SE1 7EH

[bit.ly/bursarymarch](http://bit.ly/bursarymarch)

### Sunday 5 June

Momentum Youth and Students conference

10.30am-6.30pm, Steve Biko Building, University of Manchester, M13 9PR

[bit.ly/momYandS](http://bit.ly/momYandS)

### Monday 6 June

Haringey Momentum debates the EU referendum

7pm, West Indian Cultural Centre, London, N8 0DJ

[bit.ly/1UrXtdv](http://bit.ly/1UrXtdv)

### Monday 6 June

Barnet Momentum debates the EU referendum

7pm, Greek Cypriot Centre, London, N12 9RU

### Thursday 9 June

Parents For Education Leeds

5pm, Bankside Primary School, Leeds, LS8 5AW

[bit.ly/22vYioX](http://bit.ly/22vYioX)

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Workers' Liberty



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# Organise a youth movement

## LABOUR

By Michael Johnson

**This weekend, two important events are taking place in Manchester for young members of the labour movement: an extraordinary national conference of Labour Students, and the first democratic conference of Momentum Youth and Students.**

The Labour Students extraordinary conference on Saturday 4 June is ostensibly organised to introduce a new voting system of One Member One Vote (OMOV). However, the proposed constitution, presented as "take it or leave it" with no opportunity for parts and amendments, represents a preemptive attempt by the Blairite incumbents to shore up their position in the event of a pro-Corbyn surge breaching the ramparts. OMOV is only the cover.

According to a Scottish Labour Young Socialists (SLYS) critique ([bit.ly/25xvMVP](http://bit.ly/25xvMVP)), party staff have only booked the venue for an hour and a half. In this time, a constitution will be discussed which introduces new aims and values to Labour Students, including an obligation to "secure support for Labour Student candidates standing in Students' Union and National Union of Students Elections". This is at a time when, according to SLYS, "candidate selection for NUS elections remains unreformed and undemocratic."

These new aims and values are to be enforced by an Executive Committee with beefed-up powers to suspend members and clubs who

don't comply with its interpretation of the rules. A clear target could be leftists who wish to support candidates in NUS elections who are left-wing Labour members but not "official" Labour Students' candidates. Or socialists who are deemed insufficiently "democratic socialist." It is a recipe for the arbitrary and authoritarian exercise of power.

The new constitution should be rejected, both on its own merits and in objection to the lack of democratic procedures at this conference. Any new constitution should be subject to full discussion, and members given the ability to amend it or vote on it in parts.

Momentum Youth and Students (MYS) is holding its first democratic event on Sunday 5 June.

The conference, which for the first time will ratify a set of structures for the new organisation, democratically elect a committee and decide on MYS's key campaigning priorities, is a big step forward.

Previously, MYS existed only as a social media vehicle, and was used to put together a slate for the Young Labour national committee elections. It had no grassroots democratic life nor any accountable structures.

Some of this was perhaps inevitable given the level of improvisation in establishing new structures for the vibrant Momentum movement. In any case, the conference now provides a great opportunity to move on and consolidate MYS as a functioning democratic organisation, allowing



young Momentum members across the country to link up, campaign together and transform both Labour's youth structures and the party more generally.

One amendment has been submitted to the conference to remove those parts of the constitution establishing a committee and setting out its size and composition. Instead, it proposes that the conference elect only two people, who will be empowered to liaise with the Momentum National Committee.

This amendment would in effect scrap the committee, preventing the organisation effectively taking decisions between conferences. It would hugely reduce MYS members' ability to get involved in the organisation and should be opposed by anyone hoping that the conference will establish a more democratic youth movement for Momentum.

**Workers' Liberty will be arguing at Momentum Youth and Students conference for a democratic MYS, and we will be advocating the class-struggle socialist politics we believe necessary to transform the labour movement to fight effectively for a workers' government and a socialist alternative to capitalism.**

# No united front with Cameron on EU!

By Rhodri Evans

**After the grim result of Labour's tagging-along with the Tories in the Scottish referendum campaign, the Labour Party decided — without much open controversy — to campaign independently for a vote for Britain to remain in the EU.**

Yet on 30 May, the newly-elected Labour mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, flouted that policy to join with David Cameron — who only weeks ago was smearing Khan as "terrorist-linked" — to launch a "pledge card" for the cross-party "Britain Stronger in Europe" campaign.

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell are doing good work, touring the country, making a distinctively labour-movement argument for remaining in the EU as a better starting-point to fight for social equality across national borders.

The leading Labour people who, like Khan, instead chime in with status-quo, "Brexit-bad-for-bosses" platforms are undermining Labour.



And undermining the job of mobilising working-class people and youth to vote remain: if they see "remain" motivated only by arguments that the status quo is ok, then some will be tempted by "vote leave" demagoguery.

Officially, Labour has its own "Labour in" campaign, led by Alan

Johnson. But its budget is tiny (by Westminster standards), a fraction of a single MP's office budget.

**Its latest intervention is a scraping-the-barrel claim by Johnson that "Britain's hopes of staging big sporting events like the Olympics or World Cup could be put at risk by Brexit".**



# Students help uni workers win

Catering staff at the University of Manchester have won a deal for no compulsory redundancies, no loss of hours, and no pay cuts. Their employer, UMC, a subsidiary company wholly owned by University of Manchester, had said in March that it would sack 46 of its 280-odd catering workers and move the rest to term-time only contracts — meaning a pay cut of about one third. Hannah McCarthy, the student union Campaigns and Citizenship Officer and vice-chair of Manchester Momentum, spoke to *Solidarity*.



build solidarity. We quickly launched a petition, got social media stuff going, and discussed actions including the possibility of disrupting summer graduation ceremonies.

We got lots of students out in support, leafleting around campus every week, but also making the effort to constantly talk to workers around campus to build links and boost their confidence.

I think people have an impression of students as self-interested consumers, and so the support the workers got was quite unexpected. It gave them a boost to see students as on their side and not in line with university management.

We weren't sure how workers would feel about us taking militant direct action, particularly because union officials often frown on that, but they welcomed it, particularly because we have more leeway to do those things than they do. We burst into the Vice Chancellor's office and disrupted management meetings where they were talking about spending on new vanity project buildings.

We had joint rallies with the workers and some joint meetings.

The workers voted overwhelmingly in a consultative ballot [96% to strike] but in general the union

[Unison] was very reserved about the possibility of strikes. Obviously it's tough for low paid workers to go on strike but I think people were angry and determined enough with a bit more leadership. Sometimes union officials saying "We're member-led, it's up to you" functions as a way to avoid giving leadership and thus undermining the possibility of a confident fight.

We're going to hold together the group of students who want to mobilise around labour disputes, and strengthen our links with workers. Similar attacks will continue as the universities restructure on neo-liberal lines, and workers also need to look for opportunities to push forward.

We drew in, for instance, a lot of people focused on the Living Wage. We were able to have discussions linking the immediate issues to bigger things, about the way the university is run but also the economic system we live under.

**It was impossible not to draw some socialist conclusions, because once you get beyond the social responsibility marketing nonsense, a dispute like this shows the reality of the way the university works as a capitalist entity and the nature of its management.**

**This is far from a complete victory.**

There will still be restructuring. But there will be no compulsory redundancies and workers who lose hours will have them made up to full-time in alternative university employment.

Also it was revealed during the dispute that many people hadn't received additional shift payments, and now they'll get five years' worth of back pay. If there are any reductions of hours in the future, staff will receive "buy out" payments...

A group including student activists and workers at the university was brought together by an earlier dispute involving lay offs in IT and changes to the redeployment policy — imposing a time limit of six months where there was none before.

We've published an independent, class-struggle focused publication for workers and students at UoM, the *Bee Hive*.

We used those links to call students and some directly employed workers together to prepare to

# Lecturers strike for fair pay in HE

**By Cath Fletcher**

**UCU Higher Education members struck for two days on 25 and 26 May in a dispute over pay.**

Strikers demanded "Fair Pay in HE": a better pay rise than the 1.1% on offer, an end to the gender pay gap (women in the sector are paid, on average, £7000 less than men), and action against casualisation.

This is a difficult time of year to organise action in universities. Most teaching has finished, and it's therefore hard to judge how many staff were formally on strike and how many opted to stay at home without declaring their participation. It also means disruption will be limited, although the work-to-contract will delay exam marking to some degree. A more serious threat to the exam process, in the medium term, is UCU's call on external examiners (academics who monitor the quality of examining



for another institution) to resign their posts.

Reaction to the strike has been mixed, with many members querying the focus on pay as opposed to the more pressing issues of workload (in the case of permanent staff) and casualisation (which precarious staff fear has been tacked on as an afterthought). A lot of work will be needed by local branches to convince members that the pay fight is one worth having, both in the next

few weeks before campuses empty for the summer, and in the run-up to the start of the autumn term.

UCU has asked branches to identify a third strike day and to time it to maximise local pressure (for example, to hold it on an Open Day).

**Combining these strikes with action to engage members — protests, rallies, stunts — is essential to keep up momentum over the summer.**

# No to the DWP “employer” deal

**By John Moloney**

**From 6 to 22 June, workers in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will vote on the so-called “employee deal”.**

A far better name would be the “employer deal”. The dominant Left Unity faction in PCS claims that the deal busts the Treasury's pay cap. Yet DWP got everything it wanted.

The famous safeguards are DWP just saying it will obey the law; the money on offer overall is not much more than 1% of the pay budget per year; AAs and AOs (the lowest grades in the department) are just getting a fraction over the minimum wage (misnamed as the living wage); many staff on the max are not getting 1%; staff getting a box 3 in their annual staff report are getting nothing; and if you opt out, which many women (as the main carers) will have to, then you get 0.25% (hurrah for equality).

In return, DWP can make staff work a certain number of Saturdays (the union is literally selling the weekend) and late Monday to Friday. This will greatly decrease its overtime bill.

The deal also changes the mobility clause. We all know that the department intends to close many offices in the next years. The “new” mobility clause allows them to more easily force staff to move even if this causes great hardship for carers (the double whammy to women) and reduces

the need for redundancy pay outs (another saving for DWP).

Since coming to power over then years ago the DWP Group Executive majority and PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka have not won one material lasting benefit for members. They are talking up this deal because they are desperate to claim that they make a difference.

The union leadership also know that DWP will try to get workers to sign up to the deal individually if the union does not agree it.

They fear that. But in fact it would allow a generalised campaign among the members and deliver the one thing DWP really fears — chaos. Only a deal agreed by the union can deliver a uniform change in terms and conditions for all staff; individual sign-up, particularly if there is a vigorous campaign by the union, would mean many staff, possibly a majority, not signing up.

In many offices there would be not enough staff to work Saturdays, and a majority on the existing mobility clause. Such a mixture of terms and conditions would allow the union to campaign for industrial action to get all staff onto a good deal.

The PCS Independent Left is implacably opposed to the employer deal. By agreeing a bad deal the union ends up championing the deal, misleading members as to its nature, policing the deal, and attempting to quash dissent.

**It demoralises members and activists.**

# Train bosses hire scabs

**By Ollie Moore**

**Abellio, the company which operates ScotRail train services, are attempting to rush staff from elsewhere in their UK operations through a four-week training course to use them to undermine potential strikes.**

Rail union RMT is currently balloting its members on ScotRail for strikes against attacks on the safety-critical role of the guard, in a dispute that mirrors fights against “Driver Only Operation” also taking place on Southern Rail, Northern Rail, and Gatwick Express.

The RMT described the attempt to recruit scabs as a “declaration of

war” which proved that the company had “no intention of reaching a negotiated settlement in the dispute”.

Elsewhere, RMT has demanded Southern publish the sickness records and bonus and benefit schemes of its senior bosses, after franchise owner Govia Thameslink Railway continued its campaign of intimidation against staff by publishing sickness records in the press.

**RMT said the company had come “within in an inch of releasing the personal medical records of its frontline staff as part of their justification for the shambolic running of the Southern routes”.**

# Cabin crew vote to strike over safety

**Cabin crew with airline Thomas Cook have voted in favour of strikes over health and safety.**

74% of workers voted for strikes when balloted by their union Unite over dangerous changes to rest breaks. The changes would see cabin crew only getting one 20 minute break in an 11 hour 29

minute duty period rather than 20 minutes every six hours, raising concerns of the health and well-being of cabin crew and the safety of passengers.

**Cabin crew have been voicing increasing alarm across the industry over intensification of work at the expense of safety.**





# Solidarity

For a workers' government

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## FRANCE: STRIKE MOVEMENT GROWS

By Olivier Delbeke\*

**Over the last week, the balance of forces has shifted in favour of the working class.**

This was a surprise for its enemies, who responded with howls of anger, and a powerful and growing cause for confidence and unity within the ranks of the social layers in the battle — but also for those who haven't yet joined in, but who are watching, listening and learning. But you wouldn't hear this by watching or reading the national media, who, for just this reason, have taken up a shrill tone of outrage, which is becoming fouler and more ridiculous by the day.

There were more demonstrators on 26 May than on 19 May, and more demonstrators on 19 May than on 17 May. Above all, there is now a real layer of "repeat demonstrators" (eight days of action since the start of March), from different generations, who number hundreds of thousands of persons, who are determined to continue the movement. There is, above all, this strike, which, slowly, is spreading.

The slow spread of the strike (dockworkers in Le Havre, petrochemical workers in all of France's eight oil refineries, road-freight drivers) is a result of the tactic of the union leadership, in the first instance CGT and FO, which was not to organise a central confrontation to checkmate Hollande on the "Labour Law", which aims to do what Sarkozy would never have dared during his term in office.

Strikes in refineries; in transport; at the Peugeot PSA Mulhouse works on Thursday 26 May; at Amazon, whose workers, pre-

carious and super-exploited, are blockading their distribution centres all over France, for both their own demands and for the withdrawal of the El Khomri law ("Labour Law"). In small and medium workplaces, in particular in the region around Le Havre, in Finistère, in the Northwest, strikes, like those at Amazon, are based on their own demands, which, quickly, will provide the basis for greater unity, because, seeing as they are mostly about pay and hours, they necessarily oppose everything that the El Khomri law would mean.

If the government tries to force the situation, in particular, by militarising the refineries, then a clear call for a general strike will be needed, and rallies in front of the prefectures. The movement is not only a workers' strike movement, but also a democratic movement which is confronting and threatening the regime of the 5th Republic, its executive and its "state of emergency".

### VIOLENCE

**Incidents of police violence and attacks on trade unionists have seen many victims in recent days, including some serious injuries, and they are clearly increasing, although not reported by the national media, much more than the incidents which have received much more publicity, such as the burning of a police car in Paris on 18 May.**

The next official stage planned by the leaders of the CGT, FO, FSU and Solidaires unions is the national demonstration on 14 June, due to coincide with the discussion of the Senate's motion in the Assembly. How will the strike develop between now and then?



Placards read (from left clockwise): High school students of today, not the unemployed of tomorrow; Enough is enough, youth against the labour law; The youth are angry.

Everything will depend on initiatives taken by local teams of activists, on the way that workers of whatever sector enter the action next, bringing their own demands and joining them with those of the movement for the withdrawal of the Law. Close attention should also be paid to the developments in the SNCF [French rail system] around the mobilisation against the deregulation of working hours, the reform of the collective labour agreement, and the opening of the way for full competition on the rails.

Without a doubt, in order to

take part in the 14 June demonstration, people will need to go on strike. On the other hand, if the demonstration is big and politically successful, it will make it possible to bring people out on strike the following day, to carry a decisive blow against the government. But all of that depends on the way that things are organised, concretely, at the grassroots, with methodical preparations, general assemblies, necessary transport to Paris, collections of money from workers, or organised by the unions.

French workers are playing for

high stakes in terms of their conditions of life and work. The most conscious part of the movement knows this full well, and will organise to beat a Hollande-Valls government which is running out of steam.

**It will pose the question of the defeat of the government, and therefore its fall, be it through parliamentary vote, or by the knock-out blow of a general strike, or both.**

\*Olivier Delbeke is an editor of the French socialist newsletter *Arguments pour la lutte sociale*.

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## Contact us

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[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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