



Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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DON'T BLAME MIGRANTS

- Free movement across borders gives individual freedom; makes cultures more diverse and richer.
- Migrants have rights; and migrants are a boon, not a burden.
- To win democratic control against the rapacious profit-drive of the capitalist multinationals and the global financial markets requires joint action by many countries.
- The working class, to win gains, must unite across borders. The lower the borders, the better..

• Social levelling-up across borders is better than unchecked competition between capitalist states to offer the most profitable terrain to the multinationals.

- Confederation, unification, peaceful negotiation, is better than war between nations.

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BLAME THE BOSSES! OPPOSE BREXIT!

Inside:

French strikes grow



Strikes continue to spread across France against the "Labour Law".

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Sanders: where next?



Traven Leyshon, organiser for the Sanders campaign, explains what he thinks might happen now.

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Workers' Liberty



How the "left exit" myth poisoned the left

Pull-out

Join Labour!

Chakrabarti inquiry to report by 1 July

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Solidarity with Iranian workers!

The Shahrokh Zamani Action Committee is calling on union branches to discuss the following motion.

This union branch notes that:

- The July 2015 nuclear deal between the Iranian regime and the US and European governments has opened up trade and diplomatic relations.

- There are now many international organisations like the World Bank, IMF and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) advising the Iranian regime on modernising its methods of exploiting waged labour.

- So far there has been no ‘peace dividend’ for Iranian workers, economically or otherwise; as shown by the flogging of 17 gold miners in late May 2016.

- Sajid Javid’s imminent trip to Iran, as with David Cameron’s appointment of Norman Lamont as British trade envoy, and the various investments summits, are all aimed at maximising profits and not workers’ rights.

We further note that:

- The continuing plight of the working people of Iran: unemployment is still 11.8% and is predicted to stay between 10% and 12% for a number of years, with youth unemployment at around 25%; inflation is now supposed to be 8.9% but many workers still cannot make ends meet; around 18% of children suffer from malnutrition.

- The continued imprisonment and repression of workers, teachers and other political activists for exercising what should be considered basic democratic rights such as forming independent trade unions, expressing dissent and calling for equality for women, national minorities, the disabled, LGBTQ people and so on.

- Despite the continuing repression there has been a resurgence in the workers’ movement. So far, these protests and strikes have been relatively small (just a few hundred workers at a time) and spread out. However, they are increasing in frequency and cover nearly all economic sectors: from automotive to the metro, from miners to nurses, from oil refining to steel, from sugar cane workers to teachers and so on.

This union branch believes:

- European and American capitalists and their governments will not allow the rights of workers to form independent trade unions and the right to strike, or women’s equal treatment by the state and society, or the rights of national and religious minorities and all other oppressed layers in Iranian society, to come in the way of the multi-billion pound trade and investment deals that they and their Iranian counterparts are planning. Inside Iran the economic bene-

fits of the new deals have gone to Iran’s capitalists and the regime’s officials in the state bureaucracy, military and clergy. So while workers’ expectations have been raised — and they can see the luxury cars and all the money that the regime’s officials are flashing about — their standard of living is sinking ever lower.

The aim of the ILO is to bring the worst aspects of European and American trade unionism into Iran; to set up compliant or even neutered trade unions. This new danger can only be thwarted by militant labour activists intervening in all rank and file workers’ organisations.

- The struggle to win independent trade unions in Iran is linked to the struggle to defend our class elsewhere. While there are differences many of the same issues are occurring in Europe (e.g., the Trade Union Act in Britain and the new Labour Law in France) which show that the capitalist offensive is very similar everywhere. The only way workers can win their struggles against these attacks is through strengthening their cross-border solidarity.

The union branch resolves to:

- Publicise issues like political executions, political prisoners, detention without trial, torture, flogging and other abuses that sustain the dictatorship in Iran.

- Expose the hypocrisy of our own government which, while espousing democracy, curtails our freedoms here and makes lucrative deals with Iran’s despots.

- Support the struggle for independent trade unions and the right to strike with practical activities such as pickets of the IRI embassy, email campaigns and letter writing, attending demonstrations and solidarity photo-calls.

- Consider making a one-off or more regular donation to the Shahrokh Zamani Action Campaign and encourage members to make individual donations.

**Bank account: “WSN”
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In 2014 gold miners from Agh Darreh gold mine protested against layoffs. In May this year 17 workers were flogged for as punishment for protesting

French strikers defy bosses

By Lutte Ouvrière (editorial 12 June)

The government, the bosses and the media ... have used the victims of the floods as part of their grotesque moral blackmail [in a fight over France's new labour laws].

They used Euro 2016 to demand that the strikes stop. And, in spite of everything, the SNCF [French rail] strike is carrying on, the refuse workers are sticking to their guns, and Air France pilots have carried out their threat to strike. They are right to do so.

Are the government and the bosses observing a truce in their offensive against the workers? Clearly not — so why should the workers stop fighting back?

We are constantly being lectured about the image of France, and how Euro 2016 is supposed to be a party. That’s a good one. You can be a football fan, you can even be a victim of the floods, without accepting the demolition of the labour code!

Are workers’ rights worth nothing? Euro 2016 lasts a month, but we will suffer the effects of this law for years if it goes through.

Workers have been making sacrifices for years. They always have to be more flexible, to work more, to put themselves out, to commit 110% over and over again. And why? So that shareholders and CEOs can line their pockets.

Hollande and Valls bear full responsibility for what is happening. They are accusing the opponents of the El Khomri law of being fanatics, a minority, irresponsible. But who



Thousands march in Paris, 14 June

is the minority here? Who is insisting on imposing a bill which has been rejected by the mass of the population and almost all workers? As for irresponsibility, it means pushing back the condition of workers by years!

If the bosses can, by means of a workplace agreement, waive rights which are written into collective conventions, then there will be more attacks on working conditions. If it becomes easier to sack people, there will be more sackings and more precarious work.

Job cuts and attacks on pay and conditions make up the daily reality of millions of workers. From rail workers to air pilots, from Peugeot workers to workers at Michelin, the offensive is the same: competitive plans which oblige workers to work more, with more flexibility and fewer benefits, or else wage cuts, like at Air France.

Now is not the time to be silent, and we have to continue to denounce this latest attack by the government — as we have been doing for months. The national demonstration organised in Paris on 14

June, and the many initiatives which are being taken locally, are an opportunity to show the massive rejection of the El Khomri law. For as long as the mobilisation continues, nothing is decided.

The mobilisation has drawn on a more general loss of patience, a broader anger against the general offensive of the bosses, and the regression we are seeing across society. The proof of this is in the variety of sectors which have joined the mobilisation, the youth, public and private sector workers, workers in large workers, and in small and medium enterprises.

It shows the will of a part of the working class to turn the tables on the bosses. It is still a minority. But in all the workplaces across the country, workers are organising, calling others to come out, striking, and demonstrating.

This is not the last attack from the bosses that workers will face, and if they take up the habit of resisting, then things will start going differently.

The government and the bosses are counting on the movement running out of steam. Some workers have already spent 8, 10, 20 days on strike, many rail or refinery workers have already lost a month’s salary in the strike.

So it’s a long-distance struggle. But the labour movement has resources, and it has forces in reserve.

Let’s show that our anger is still intact, and that we will not allow the bosses to dictate their laws to us!

• www.lutte-ouvriere.org/

Anti-racists rally in Tel Aviv

By Ira Berkovic

Thousands of people participated in a demonstration in Tel Aviv on Saturday 28 May, protesting the appointment of the far-right Avigdor Lieberman as Defence Minister.

Demonstrators chanted “Lieberman is a racist and a fascist”, and “Lieberman is the minister of war”. Placards proclaimed “Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies”, and “Israel, Palestine, two states for two peoples”.

The demonstration was organised by Meretz, a left-wing political party, the Peace Now coalition, and the Joint List, a coalition of Arab parties. Meretz leader Zehava Galon said “only a joint Jewish-Arab effort can beat this [...] the struggle against racism must be a shared one.” Joint List leader Ayman Odeh said, “we are in this together, Jews and Arabs, and we will overcome [Lieberman].”

The appointment of Lieberman, who heads the ultra-nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home) party, marks a sharp rightwards turn for Benjamin Netanyahu’s al-

ready hawkish government.

Lieberman has advocated “land trades” that would incorporate West Bank settlements into Israel in exchange for predominantly-Arab areas becoming part of a Palestinian state. He has also said he would support the execution of Arab members of the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, who met with Hamas or Hezbollah. He opposed the 2005 withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, and has advocated its reoccupation, saying that Israel should conduct a “thorough cleansing of the enclave”.

After a terrorist attack in Tel Aviv on 8 June, in which Palestinian gunmen killed four people and injured seven others, Lieberman refused to return the bodies of the perpetrators, in a reversal of the Defence Ministry’s previous policy. He also asked the Attorney General to explore the possibility of truncating the legal process the Israeli state must go through to allow the demolition of suspected terrorists’ homes.

The appointment of Lieberman was a u-turn for Netanyahu, who initially sought a coalition with the Labor Party’s Isaac Herzog, who

heads the more liberal Zionist Union coalition. Netanyahu has a one-seat majority in the Knesset, and his decision to link with Yisrael Beiteinu prompted the incumbent defence minister, Moshe Ya’alon, a member of Netanyahu’s own party, Likud, to resign in protest. Ya’alon said Israel had been taken over by “dangerous and extreme elements”.

He said that “extremism, violence, and racism” were “threatening the sturdiness” of Israeli society, as well as “trickling into the Israeli Defence Forces”. The Foreign Ministry of the Palestinian Authority said Lieberman’s appointment “confirms the lack of a peace partner in Israel”.

The liberal newspaper Ha’aretz said: “For the second time since the last election, Netanyahu had to choose between the Zionist Union and the extreme right, and once again he chose to veer right and establish an ideological, racist coalition that aims to entrench the occupation, expand the settlements in the territories, oppress the Arab minority and undermine Israeli democracy”.

Lewisham fights academisation... again

By a Lewisham teacher

Last year teachers, students and parents in Lewisham ran a campaign that successfully fought off the threat of academisation to four schools in the borough.

Activists were confident that this left them in a good position to launch a vibrant campaign against the government's proposals for forced-academisation contained in the recent White Paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere.

Just as this campaign was starting to gain some momentum it became clear that we faced a more immediate and local threat.

In December 2015, Sir Steve Bul-

lock, the directly elected mayor of Lewisham set up an Education Commission which had the remit, "Given the rapidly changing local and national context" to develop "a long-term vision for education in the borough". The people appointed to the Commission, all had backgrounds of working in or supporting different types of multi-academy trusts (MATs).

The backdrop was a perceived problem with Lewisham's "under-performing" secondary schools. No surprise then that the Commission's report positively endorsed and encouraged Lewisham schools to become multi-academy trusts.

Despite the report surfacing, cynically, during half-term — when

over-worked teachers are away, secondary teachers are focused on examinations and primary teachers are writing reports — the response from Lewisham NUT, parent activists and local Labour Party members was swift and quite impressive.

Lewisham NUT and Stop Academies in Lewisham (SAIL) organised a lobby of the council's Young People and Children's select committee while it was discussing the document on 8 June.

Two days later Lewisham Deptford Constituency Labour Party's

General Committee passed an emergency motion saying, "We call on Lewisham Council that if they agree or implement any changes to the existing ownership and organisational model for education in the borough, such changes do not involve any kind of academisation at least until the national debate is resolved. We call on our councillors to act in accordance with this motion".

It was good that Labour councillor Luke Sorba made one of the motivating speeches.

This was followed by a petition

being launched on Change.org.

On Saturday 11 June NUT and SAIL activists held a successful stall in Lewisham town centre to build for a public meeting on Tuesday 28 June (RHB 142 at Goldsmiths' College, 7.30pm), and a lobby of the Mayor and Cabinet when they discuss the Commission's report on Wednesday 29 June.

This speedy response has shifted the mood in the local Labour Party and among some councillors.

They can keep trying to academise our schools, but they should know we will fight them every time they try.

Cash cows, cramming and cronies

The Observer of 12 June described one of Britain's new academy chains, the "Bright Tribe Multi-Academy Trust".

Last year it took over Colchester Academy, in Essex. Cleaning, catering and building maintenance were promptly outsourced to a company called Blue Support.

The managing director of Blue Support is Andrew Dwan, brother of Mike Dwan, the boss of the Trust. Its parent company is Equity Solutions, Mike Dwan's main business.

The school's IT services were outsourced to another firm owned by Dwan. The websites of the Trust and all the academies it runs were designed by yet another Dwan company.

The National Audit Office is investigating, but this is pretty much routine. There are many other cases of academy, or academy-chain, bosses using their school budgets as cash-cows for businesses run by themselves, their family, or their friends.

Cases like that of Jo Shuter — awarded "head teacher of the year", then found to have spent £30,000 of public money on her 50th birthday party, meetings in five-star hotels, and personal taxi fares — are the froth on the top.

The solid base is those academies, or academy trusts, creating hierarchies of "executive heads", "CEOs", and so on, paid huge salaries.

Michael Wilshaw, the retiring head of the official school-inspection agency Ofsted, is a friend of academies and a former academy head teacher himself.

Yet even he is disgusted. In March he reported that some academy chains are doing worse than the much-reviled "failing" local authorities, and commented that "salary levels for the chief execu-

tives of some of these Multi Academy Trusts do not appear to be commensurate with the level of performance... The average pay... is higher than the prime minister's... [and] some of these trusts are spending money on expensive consultants or advisers..."

Wilshaw's latest answer, however, is to repeat his call for new public exams — at age 14 — to be added to the already-packed schedule.

So even more of school time can be taken away from learning and given over to revision and exam-cramming!

Wilshaw has, however, worked in a school.

He overestimates the extent to which intellectual and creative growth can be identified with exam grades, and underestimates the damage done by the stress of the exam system (designed above all to brand the majority as failures), but he has been a teacher.

His successor as Ofsted chief, Amanda Spielman, has never been a teacher. She is an accountant by trade, worked in high finance until 2001, became a boss in the Ark academy chain, and has also been chair of Ofqual, the agency which supervises Britain's exam boards, since 2011.

She comes to education entirely from the run-it-as-a-business, measure-everything-by-exam-grades angle.

The National Union of Teachers' ballot on strikes, which closes on 22 June, names its demand as nationally-negotiated pay and conditions for teachers.

That is the first step in fighting back against the conversion of schools into "exam factories", with "success" measured by grades and the amount of money siphoned off to the bosses and their cronies.

The shaming of Sports Direct boss

By Charlotte Zalens

Mike Ashley, the Chief Executive of Sports Direct, has admitted to paying workers less than minimum wage.

The admission came while he was being questioned by MPs on the Business, Innovation and Skills House of Commons select committee. He recognised that for a "specific time" workers were effectively paid less than minimum wage due to the practice of keeping workers after their shift to be searched before they were allowed to leave. He is now saying he will pay back pay to those workers effected.

This is a huge win for an energetic campaign by the union Unite and others, and campaign which involved actions such as a displaying a huge banner reading "#SportsDirectShame" at a Newcastle United Football Club game (NUFC is owned by Ashley).

Unite gave hard hitting evidence to the select committee. Luke Primarolo, a regional officer at Unite, said there was a culture of fear at Sports Direct's warehouse in Shirebrook, Derbyshire. "People are scared because they are working under a system when they know they could lose their



employment at any moment."

Unite has found that there has been 110 ambulance callouts to the warehouse in Shirebrook, including 38 incidents of workers complaining of chest pains. Five ambulances had been called to Sports Direct's warehouse for birth and miscarriage related matters, including for one worker who gave birth in the toilets.

Unite is continuing its campaign against Sports Direct as Ashley has not yet been made to fundamentally change anything in his warehouses. On 13 June activists staged a street theatre protest in

Chesterfield — Dick Turpin on his horse turned up to steal Sports Direct workers' wages.

This campaign has brought to light Sports Direct's abuse of workers and has turned public opinion against them. Sports Direct's shares are now in freefall, but a collapse of the business will not help those workers in Shirebrook and other warehouses.

Hopefully workers in the warehouses will be given confidence by these protests to organise unions to protect their rights long term and go on the offensive against their vile boss.

Concessions on the "Snooper's Charter"

By Gerry Bates

Home Secretary Theresa May has made concessions on the so-called "snooper's charter".

An amended version of the Bill, passed through the House of Commons on 6 June, still gives the government, police, and security services unprecedented powers to invade the privacy of ordinary citizens without warrant, regardless of whether or not they are accused of committing any crime. The Bill also brings in powers to compel communication companies to cooperate in investigations, and to store and hand over records.

The Bill contains sanctions against whistleblowers and gagging orders that prevent public knowledge of when data has been sequestered or when surveillance has taken place.

The concessions made by the government last week include: a privacy clause which stipulates warrants should only be granted where the information cannot be gathered by other means; protection for journalists meaning that the judicial commissioner will be required to consider "the overriding public interest" when granting warrants; rules which mean the prime minister must give explicit approval for surveillance of MPs

phones and computers; and the legal test for warrants for bulk personal datasets and medical records to be raised to "exceptional and compelling" cases only; and protection from surveillance of "legitimate" trade union activities.

These concessions do not amount to much — merely the government setting itself slightly tighter regulations while having the same powers.

Given the history of blacklisting and state surveillance during the miners' strike, what the state would like to consider "illegitimate" trade union activities could be quite wide!

Why Blair is the guy whose face is on the placard

DAVID OSLAND

Richard Nixon famously told a press conference that he was “not a crook”. And in the sense that the late US president was never found guilty of anything whatsoever, the statement is factually incontestable.

Likewise, Tony Blair is not a war criminal, even though contention to the contrary is a longstanding commonplace among anti-war campaigners, repeated endlessly on social media to this day.

Britain’s former prime minister finds the very suggestion deeply offensive, as one supposes anyone might. He genuinely cannot see why he has ended up as the guy whose face is on the placard, as he put it in his interview with Bloomberg TV. Nor does he know why people “hate that guy”. What exactly is his mugshot doing being waved at the end of that stick, anyway?

But he does seem to know where the blame for all this rests. His ire is directed squarely towards the current Labour leader, patronisingly dismissed as the guy holding the placard. Blairism, you see, is the politics of power; Corbynism the politics of protest.

After that, the assault steps up a gear, with the man famously accused by the Stop the War Coalition (StWC) of having blood on his hands attempting to turn that jibe back on StWC’s erstwhile chair.

Blair uses a bizarre form of words that seemingly credit himself single-handedly for taking out Saddam. Then he berates Corbyn

for sitting back while the barrel bombs rain down on Syria.

Although Blair has long been convinced that God will give him a retrospective OK for the hundreds of thousands of killings that resulted from the Iraq, this grisly exercise in comparative death tolls almost makes it feel like guilt has somehow entered the equation.

There can be few historical parallels for an attack of quite this degree of vehemence mounted by a former party leader on an incumbent.

Yet despite the insinuations otherwise, Corbyn has never been among those hanging the “war criminal” label on his predecessor. Not quite. What he did say, in an interview given to *Newsnight* last August, was that if Blair has committed war crimes, he should be face war crimes charges.

Analytically, such a proposition is difficult to dispute. If there are grounds to prosecute someone for a serious crime, she or he should be prosecuted. To make that point is not to judge the matter in advance.

There has also been a more recent article in the *Telegraph*, couched in “the *Telegraph* understands...” terms, that Corbyn is preparing to call for Blair to be investigated for war crimes, should the Chilcot report prove damning. On what grounds the *Telegraph* understand this, it does not tell readers.

But again, making “preparations to call for” something to be investigated, should evidence emerge that there are grounds for investigation, is not the same thing as to proclaim guilt.



Why does everybody hate me?

Corbyn is right to be mindful of exact formulations. While the basis for any future legal action against Blair is not nugatory, the chances of the guy holding the placard seeing the guy on the placard in the dock currently look slim.

The invasion of Iraq was neither in self-defence against armed attack, nor sanctioned by UN Security Council resolution. As such, it may be construed a war of aggression, making it both contrary to international law and in breach of the UN charter.

But not even a war of aggression is not a war crime in the correct usage of the term, as defined in the Geneva and Hague conventions and in jurisprudence.

War crimes have subsequently taken place in Iraq, sometimes perpetrated by the very troops Blair sent there. The brutal death of Basra hotel worker Baha Mousa even resulted in the first-ever conviction of a British soldier on a war crimes charge. But Blair is not legally liable for any of this.

But just because Blair isn’t a war criminal doesn’t let him entirely off the hook. We are still left with his assertion that endorsing military intervention can be morally superior to not endorsing military intervention.

There are even circumstances in which this proposition may be true. But the specific Iraq v Syria comparison that Blair adopts, the better to undermine the guy holding the placard,

is not one of them.

The sheer scale of the mental disconnect at work is staggering. Blair either does not acknowledge — or, more frighteningly, does not even realise — that there could be any relationship between the course in which he acquiesced 13 years ago and unintended consequences that spill beyond Iraq’s borders today.

The invasion, for which Blair bears significant responsibility, ultimately proved a catalyst for the deleterious transformation of an entire region. By sharpening Sunni-Shia rivalries it was a material factor in bringing about Syria’s agony; by creating the conditions for the emergence of Islamic State, it has helped to prolong it.

To use either war rhetorically in the way he has done, in order to discredit the leader of the party to which is still adheres, is as distasteful as it is hypocritical. In no small part, both countries’ troubles have Blair’s fingerprints all over them.

Iraq remains to this day the biggest single foreign policy blunder Britain ever made. It’s one of the many reasons why so many people “hate that guy”, and Labour has gone with the guy holding the placard instead.

• David Osland blogs at www.leftfutures.org/

The state and Pride

QNEWS

By Elizabeth Butterworth

The LGBT+ movement has made enormous strides in Britain in the last thirty years. It’s a huge achievement for us and I don’t wish to downplay the massive change in social attitudes and laws that our comrades have fought for and won.

Having said that, it seems that we have an increasingly short memory about how we got here and who our friends are.

The massive changes have come about because of the bravery of our forerunners and older LGBT+ people, not because people suddenly “saw sense” or because “love wins”. Without them, we would still be criminalised and we would still be getting beaten up.

The excellent film ‘Pride’, released in 2014, brought a specific part of our history to light: the struggles of LGBT+ people and the miners in the 1980s and the challenges both groups faced. Both groups were brutalised by the police and demonised in the press, for being “perverts” or “violent”.



The police’s role in the miners’ strike exposes their real role in capitalist society: protecting capital and the state; beating up pickets whilst protecting vans of scab labour; acting as a paramilitary force on behalf of Thatcher’s government and the ruling class.

It was only thirty years ago or so that the police who now march in full uniform at Pride were beating us up, using laws that criminalised us to intimidate and crush us. We won against them with the spirit of solidarity. But their fundamental role in society and the state hasn’t changed.

“No Pride in War” campaigners are rightly angry about the Red Arrows flyover at Pride, pointing to the profits made from war by companies like BAE Systems, and the British state’s use of the Red Arrows to trade arms.

Astonishingly, the section of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act that gave a “homosexual act” as a legitimate reason for someone to be discharged from the armed forces was only repealed this year in the Armed Forces Bill 2015-2016.

Additionally, the “pinkwashing” of the military, or draping tanks in rainbow flags, does not take away from the misery and suffering that so many people have been subject to at the hands of the British state.

It’s our responsibility as LGBT+ people to make solidarity with people living in places where it’s relatively common to be murdered for your gender identity or sexuality, and to recognise the link between the struggles of queer people across borders rather than having a “we’re alright Jack” attitude.

Books by Workers’ Liberty



Can socialism make sense?

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.

It answers questions such as: What about Stalin? Are revolutions democratic? How can we have a planned economy? and is socialism still relevant?

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www.workersliberty.org/socialism

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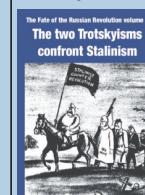
£6.20 (inc postage) from www.workersliberty.org/why-soc-fem

The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism

For the revolutionary socialists, the Trotskyists, it has been a very long march through the 20th century and beyond, and over sometimes

uncharted, unexpected, terrain. Central to it has been the fight against Stalinism, to understand it, to wipe the labour movement clean of it. This book surveys and documents for the first time the formative debates in the 1940s between the two main strands into which Trotskyism divided.

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



Don't blame migrants, blame the bosses!

Free movement across borders gives individual freedom, and makes cultures more diverse and richer.

Migrants have rights; and migrants are a boon, not a burden.

To win democratic control against the rapacious profit-drive of the capitalist multinationals and the global financial markets requires joint action by many countries. Socialism cannot be built in one country alone.

The working class, to win gains, must unite across borders. The lower the borders, the easier it is to unite.

Social levelling-up across borders is better than unchecked competition between capitalist states to offer the most profitable terrain to the multinationals.

Confederation, unification, peaceful negotiation, is better than war between nations.

Those six arguments sum up the socialist case for voting "remain" on 23 June. We oppose the status quo; but we want to reduce borders, not raise them. The best starting point for struggle against the capitalist and undemocratic policies of the EU and of all EU states is lower borders. Higher borders mean discrimination against migrants and less-fettered rivalry between capitalist states to offer cheap operating bases to the multinationals.

Migrants are not to blame for shortages of housing and services. On the contrary, many migrants work in the NHS and other public services, and in construction. Government cuts are to blame for the shortages.

Migrants are not to blame for unemployment. Government cuts are to blame there, too.

Whether Britain is in the EU or not, capital will flow freely across borders. The Brexiters want only to stop people moving, not capital. In fact, as anything but an emergency measure by a beleaguered workers' state, to stop capital moving across borders would be to try to wind the economic clock by many decades, and would impoverish rather than emancipate.

We want people to be able to move freely, too. We want the best conditions for workers to unite across national barriers.



Brexit would mean that 90% of the EU migrants now working in Britain — your workmates, your friends, your neighbours — would lose their status here and have to apply for visas under new conditions which no-one knows.

Britain has more citizens working or retired abroad — three million — than any other well-off country. With Brexit, you would lose your EU citizenship and your automatic right to go to work or study elsewhere in the EU.

The "leave" campaign scapegoats migrants for social problems which arise most where there are few migrants! Ukip support is strongest where the migrant population is smallest. By and large, the map of Ukip support and the map of migrant population are opposites.

Where migrants are numerous, especially

in London, Ukip support and anti-migrant feeling are low. By contrast, in the only parliamentary seat to have a Ukip MP, Clacton, migrants are scarce. It has one of the lowest foreign-born populations of any constituency, just 4.3 per cent. The biggest single foreign-born group there is people born in Germany in the 1950s and 60s to British parents doing military service there.

Economic life has long outgrown national frontiers. It long ago ceased to be possible for capitalist countries to operate side by side, with only marginal flows across frontiers. The only options are voluntary economic integration, or forceful rivalry between the bigger powers to win regional supremacy. Voluntary integration, even done badly as it is done in the EU, is better.

John Downey of Loughborough University has studied TV and press coverage during

the EU referendum campaign, and found: "Coverage about the referendum is still largely a 'Tory story' and a male dominated, 'blue-on-blue' tale at that". He counted 1082 media appearances by top Tories and by Ukip's Nigel Farage between 6 May and 8 June, and only 52 for Jeremy Corbyn and 12 for John McDonnell.

The debate has been projected as between two Tory alternatives — "vote leave" migrant-baiting and "vote remain" safety-first-ism, in a way calculated to push all the discontented towards the "vote leave" demagogues.

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell have spoken for a third alternative — voting for "remain" as the start-point of a fight for a social Europe — but have been sidelined by the media.

There is a risk of diverse strands of frustration and discontent being assembled behind the Tory and Ukip demagogues to produce a "leave" majority on 23 June.

The demagogues will then translate their vague talk of "taking control" into new barriers against migrants; stigmatisation and sifting of the millions of EU migrants already living in Britain; and trashing of worker rights brought into Britain by EU levelling-up ("excessive regulation").

It will be an ugly time. Socialists can hope to limit the regression, as people realise how the Brexiters have deceived them, and will fight to do so in the long process of EU-British renegotiation; but it will be uphill.

If the vote goes for "remain", then we must go on the offensive for migrant rights and for workers' unity across borders.

Strategies to transform, not illusions about escape

A group of left-wing "Economists for Rational Economic Policies" published a report on 15 June: "Remain for Change: Building European solidarity for a democratic economic alternative". Below is an excerpt from the section by Engelbert Stockhammer on "Why the left should vote remain".

An EU exit would not solve the British left's problems and it would strengthen the xenophobic right.

British neoliberalism simply does not rely on EU integration. Britain is one of the leading countries of neoliberalism. Britain has been there first and it has gone further than most continental European countries.

Britain has attacked labour unions and collective bargaining arrangements well before the EU; it has deregulated financial markets earlier and more thoroughly. Neither university fees nor the stealth privatisation of the NHS nor the bedroom tax were imposed on Britain by the EU. Austerity was home made.

EU membership in Britain does not have much of an impact on neoliberalisation. If anything — in terms of regulating the City

and labour laws — EU rules moderate (but do not fundamentally change) neoliberalism.

What Brexit would change is the situation of immigrants. The official Brexit campaign is either an argument about sovereignty that exaggerates the role of the EU in law-making, or it is outright xenophobic.

The only area where an EU exit would make an immediate impact is regulation of immigration, and it is hard to see a Conservative government not making use of that. This is a strategy of blaming the miserable state of public infrastructure, a crumbling NHS and a shrinking welfare state on immigrants instead of domestic policy choices. What is on offer is a discourse of racial (or religious or ethnic) superiority instead of real economic improvements.

It is divide and conquer, where poor Brits are pitted against the newly arriving future working classes. British workers are given a new underclass to look down on, rather than a pay rise.

Real wages today are below what they were before the crisis. Union laws are being tightened. There is chronic underinvestment

in public infrastructure. The health and education system are being privatised. None of these is because of the EU, but because the left has not developed an effective domestic political strategy.

Economically, British neoliberalism has given rise to a debt-driven growth model that has relied on property bubbles and credit booms, and it has a dangerously oversized financial industry. It is also a highly fragile growth model.

Britain needs a wage-led growth strategy, better public infrastructure, a green investment plan. It needs to regulate its banks and make sure that the rich pay taxes.

But does EU membership not potentially restrict a progressive government in Britain? Hasn't the treatment of Greece demonstrated that there can't be a progressive policy in the EU? The EU undoubtedly could constrain progressive policies, but the analogy with Greece is misleading.

First, Britain is not part of the Euro system; it has its own central bank, and it is not as easily blackmailed as countries without their own. Second, the EU's large countries are more equal than small ones, and do take lib-

erties with the application of treaties to themselves. No Troika was imposed on Spain despite the fact that it needed EU help to save its banks. Germany and France have in the past repeatedly violated budget deficit limits, with little effect. A progressive government would have to explore the boundaries of that.

But the underlying issue is a deeper one: in today's globalised economy any economic strategy that relies on autarky is doomed. Transnational corporations, international capital markets and an increasingly assertive Germany are reality that the left has to face and to do that it will need state structures on a larger scale than current nation states. The EU may be an unlikely candidate for that, but it is the only candidate.

The British left has to confront the challenges of Britain today, not those of Greece last year. Today the option is a small England Brexit or a neoliberal EU. Not a pleasant choice, but the latter is the lesser evil.

The left needs to develop strategies for transforming Europe, not illusions that it can withdraw from it.

• (Abridged).

Sanders: Whither the “political



By Traven Leyshon

This is an extraordinary time. We could be at a turning point in American political life.

Sanders is receiving mass support for the message of Occupy — the 99% versus the 1%. He has used his candidacy to popularize key radical demands: \$15 and a union, an end to mass incarceration, universal healthcare, free public higher education, legalizing millions of immigrants, a carbon tax, and banning fracking, to name a few, even if articulating them within a social democratic framework; impacting millions who were unfamiliar with such ideas, or had dismissed them as impossible. Sanders says there is a billionaire class who benefit from the status quo, and we need to take them on. Emphasizing that antagonism is an important part of the campaign, and it is a class perspective that we haven't seen expressed in any mass electoral effort in the U.S. since Eugene Debs.

Through this campaign a significant sector of the working class is becoming politicized and exhibiting a shift in mass consciousness to an extent not seen in generations. We are at the beginning of a new radicalization particularly among youth.

A new generation is forming its political identity — large numbers of youth, the majority of whom belong to the working class or a collapsing “middle class,” have been shaped by the Sanders phenomenon in ways that will last long after this election. They are open to socialist ideas, and have gained experience in organising.

Of course the contradiction at the heart of this process is that while Sanders' success has revealed that there is a mass base for a left party, he would not have reached this vast audience if he hadn't run in the Democratic primary. It is an open question as to whether millions learn through their experience that the Democratic Party is a road block to fun-

damental change that must be removed or split, or end up being sucked into fruitless efforts to transform a rightward moving, neo-liberal party.

Despite the reams of advice by older men (who learned nothing from their failure to realign the Democrats in the 1960s when the labour and social movements were much stronger and the Dixiecrats were leaving) advocating strategies to reform the Democrats, and divers Sanders supporters planing to build a “party-within-the-party” (for some this is a long term strategy to realign the party, for others a tactic with a split perspective), I think it unlikely that the youth that have put so much energy into the Sanders campaign will be interested in joining a Democratic reform movement. Already 43% of voters don't identify as either Republican or Democrat, and this is particularly true of millennials.

EXPLOSIVE

The conflict with Clinton and the DNC has become more contentious. The Sanders campaign is looking to a contested convention.

We don't know how explosive that may become, but there is a likelihood of mass demonstrations both inside and outside the convention. Sanders' plan to press for strong progressive planks in the party platform (though usually unread and ignored) has potential value in that if delegates get progressive language into the platform which Clinton ignores, that would help expose Democratic hypocrisy; or if attempts to amend fail, that could deepen the fissure between the party establishment and its progressive base. Either outcome could further the eventual possibility of an independent left party. A fissure has been created between the Democratic base, along with independents, and the Democrats neo-liberal leadership that will fester and at some

unpredictable time may lead to a split.

However, while Sanders is serious about a “political revolution” that lasts beyond his campaign, encourages social movements, and was a member of Labor Party Advocates, he is not a movement organiser.

The question for us, broadly defined, is how to help this movement flourish after this electoral cycle.

There are myriad signs that the Sanders movement, which has from the beginning been more than a one-off electoral campaign, is not going to fold as did most of the Rainbow Coalition, or deteriorate into another version of DFA, MoveOn, or PDA. One effort, the June National People's Summit, has a goal of beginning to assemble a “force” out of the Sanders campaign and other social movements which will “seek to bring together activists committed to a different kind of agenda: a People's Agenda that can enhance and expand issue campaigns and hold elected officials accountable to popular demands for justice, equality and freedom.” The Summit includes sessions such as “Building Independent Political Power” and “Down-Ballot Political Revolutionaries: Electing People from the Movement to Public Office.”

A new period has opened where there will be a lot of partial breaks from the Democratic Party, first in local and then in statewide races. It will be bit by bit and ambiguously as we already see with efforts like the Richmond Progressive Alliance, Chicago's United Working Families, and Vermont's Progressive Party and Rights & Democracy. For example, the Vermont Progressive Party is fielding 30 candidates in the 2016 election, the most in its history, most of them running on both Progressive and Democratic ballot lines. Inevitably, most Sandersistas will support individual Berniecrats who run on progressive or radical platforms, have no loyalty to

the Democratic leadership, yet run within Democratic primaries. In partisan races this will involve “primarizing” neoliberal Democrats. In reality, many election districts are basically one-party districts where a left party can compete without facing marginalisation as a “spoiler.” Predominantly non-partisan local elections are less problematic as independents are not as hampered by the dynamics of the two-party system.

This is not a time for routinist passivity. In my opinion, these developments require Marxists to rethink our preconceptions about how we might contribute to breaking the strangle hold of the two-party system. While the “political revolutionaries” doing these campaigns will be skeptical or disgusted with the two-party system, they will not for the most part share our strategic rejection of the Democratic Party. I think that we should evaluate and work with promising efforts while being clear that we believe that trying to realign the Democratic Party is a dead end, that we are partisans of creating an independent, mass working class party.

Yes we should argue against lesser evilism, and concretize that by promoting a protest vote for [Green Party candidate] Jill Stein (perhaps even resulting in securing ballot lines for future elections). However, it would be self-isolating to break off working relations with people advocating a “vote against Trump”. This election is extraordinary in that while many people will be voting against Trump, none of our potential base will be working for, or enthusiastically voting for, the “lesser evil” neo-liberal with the worst unfavourable ratings of any Democratic nominee in modern times.

We have an opportunity to work with the militant minority of Sanders supporters who are in motion, moving left, and becoming increasingly hostile to the Democratic Party. We should encourage them to keep their commitments going to work on local issues like \$15

al revolution”?

minimum wage, universal healthcare, racial and climate justice, etc., anticipating a rise in social movement organising, along with these movements recognizing the need for a political expression.

SOCIALIST

In this process we can recruit the best of them to socialist organisation, as socialist groups working with the Sanders campaign are already doing.

However, I think its important that we recruit people to a perspective of advocating for steps that would open up a broader terrain of struggle for a party of our own. While recognizing the reality of the left’s limited capacity to affect events, in this new more favourable situation we should be doing

everything possible, against the odds, to open the road to an independent party of the 99%.

The Labor for Bernie network is an all volunteer, independent, grassroots, rank and file based network that has already had a big impact on the broader labour movement. The network includes thousands of elected officers, shop stewards, organisers, and rank-and-file members. It has tapped into the widespread disgust with bureaucrat-driven, transactional, business as usual politics, insisting that our unions should only endorse candidates that actually support union values. Labor for Bernie has organised rank and file networks to demand broad membership debate and discussion about the candidates and their stands on the key issues, pushing

back against premature and top-down endorsements by officials.

While the bulk of the labour bureaucracy is joined at the hip with the Clinton and the neoliberal Democratic leadership, the dynamism of the Sanders campaign, and Labor for Bernie’s organising, has fostered cracks in labour’s slavish alignment with the Democratic Party establishment. Seven national unions endorsed Sanders (NNU, CWA, APWU, NUHW, ATU, UE and ILWU), and many locals have endorsed Sanders in defiance of their internationals’ endorsement of Clinton. A fissure in terms of a Sanders endorsement is a step forward.

From the beginning, Labor For Bernie was intended to last past the 2016 elections with the perspective of creating new grassroots political structures in the labour movement – perhaps even a new party – capable of continuing the “political revolution” in contests for elected office in tens of thousands of municipal and state level races. Already we are seeing more local unions running candidates.

The last attempt at organising a labour party during the brief mid-1990s labour movement upsurge was, according to the former Labor Party national organiser Mark

Dudzic, “premised on the understanding that you cannot have a party of labour that does not have at the table a substantial portion of the actually-existing labour movement. The Labour Party had to start with the assurance that it wouldn’t play spoiler politics and that it would focus on building the critical mass necessary for serious electoral intervention.” As the 1990s attempt at labour’s revitalization foundered, so did prospects for moving the labour movement away from its lockstep relationship with the Democratic Party.

While many unions and labour activists have had it with “politics as usual”, labour is not yet ready to disengage from the political entanglements in a two-party, winner-takes-all system. This is just the beginning of the messy differentiation within the unions.

Building a movement for a party of our own is inextricably linked to the project of transforming and revitalizing key sections of the labour movement.

The activity of the labour militants brought together around the Sanders campaign can play a key role in the inter-related tasks of promoting independent working-class politics and putting the movement back in the labour movement.

Changing Labour, changing politics

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

Saturday

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.

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 Kelly Rogers, Bectu member at the Ritzy Cinema.

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.

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*.

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.

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 Sophie Namezi, Co-chair Kings Labour Club.

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. 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.

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

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.

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

Thursday 7 July: Walking with Minnie

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.

Friday 8 July: What is the future of the Labour Party?

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 for Thursday and Friday evenings.

Buy tickets online and find more information at www.workersliberty.org/ideas

Saturday night social: The Grunwick strike, 40 years on, with a film showing and presentation from the Grunwick 40 campaign, plus memories from attendees at the pickets

Sunday

Introduction to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, with Morad Shirin from the Iranian Revolutionary Marxist Tendency.

Martin Thomas on the **World Economy**.

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

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.

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.

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.

Fighting for solidarity across Europe. Whatever the outcome of the referendum on 23 June, we need to build workers’ solidarity across Europe. Michael Chessum, Another Europe is Possible; Vicki Morris, Workers’ Europe; and strikers from France join us to discuss how to build this solidarity.

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.

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.

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.

Sanders: is America going through a political revolution? With Eric Lee from London for Bernie, and others.

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.



Moscow's fight against Trotskyism in Spain

Andrew Coates reviews *Lions Led By Jackals, Stalinism in the International Brigades* by Dale Street

During Franco's dictatorship "the defeated in Spain has no public right to historical memory" observed Paul Preston in *The Spanish Holocaust* (2012). The movement to recover these memories, beginning in the new millennium, continues to expose this past.

The defeated side in the Spanish civil war, and those who fell during and after the Caudillo's victory in the 1939, are honoured across the world as fighters against fascism. As Preston states, Franco's war against the "Jewish-Bolshevik-Masonic" Republic brought the murder of hundreds of thousands in its wake.

Those who escaped prison, death or slave labour faced systematic persecution well into the 1950s. Many exiles passed by Bayonne to France, some joining the French army to fight the German invasion. Amongst the refugees were those who ended up in the invaders' hands, portrayed in Spanish exile Jorge Semprum's *Le Grand Voyage* (1963). Spanish republicans perished in the extermination camps. Around 60% of these died in Mauthausen.

Dale Street is concerned with one of the saddest aspects of the Spanish tragedy: the role of Stalin's Comintern in the International Brigades. *Lions led by Jackals* underlines the political and organisational hold of the Comintern after it took the decision to form the Brigades in September 1935. André Marty, the leader of the "Back Sea Mutiny", who joined the CP on his release from prison in 1923, and became secretary of the Comintern in the 1930s, was the Brigades' effective "commander in chief".

Marty emphasised the Popular Front politics of the Spanish government. The International Brigade had been formed to offer military support to that government against

the Franco-army rebellion. Street states that many volunteers "found the idea of Popular Frontism incomprehensible. From their point of view, they were in Spain not just to 'fight fascism' but also to fight for socialism and working-class revolution." The Stalinists, he writes, confused such people with this talk of a "bourgeois democratic revolution". As he points out, had they — and no doubt those Spaniards who elected the Popular Front and fought for it — read Trotsky, they would have known that this was "Menshevism" and "utter disregard for the ABC of Leninism."

ORWELL

Socialists will be familiar with George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) and Ken Loach's film *Land and Freedom*. (1995). Orwell inspires his readers with his account of Spain's "foretaste of socialism" where one "had breathed the air of equality." Loach puts these moments on screen.

Orwell was to experience first hand the other side of Comintern influence: its war on "Franco's Fifth Column" — the "Trotskyist traitors". The POUM, (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista), a fusion between two small anti-Stalin groups, backed the Popular Front and their leader, Andreu Nin (who had indeed originally been close to Trotsky), entered the Catalan government. They believed that socialist objectives tallied with the front against fascism, war and revolution went together. Trotsky himself accused Nin of having rallied to the defence of property. He advocated that the small group should be opposed to all other Popular Front parties, and teach radical forces, notably within the powerful anarchists and syndicalists of the FAI and CNT, to form soviets.

Trotsky's strategy barely belongs even to the realm of historical might-have-beens. Nin was drawn into practical politics, in a Spain where it is hard to see how a sharp "Bolshevik" vanguard party could be made out of

disparate republican, socialist, and anarchist movements, let alone supplant a Communist Party funded by the only international power offering the Republic serious military aid. Along with that help went a propaganda campaign against the POUM, its banning, and the dissolution of its militia. After the 1937 Barcelona May Days of anarchist and POUM resistance it was tracked down and "liquidated". On Russian orders, and with NKVD direct participation, their leaders were arrested. Nin was taken from his house and shot. Fabricated documents pointed to POUM co-operation with Franco's Falange.

Lions led by Jackals describes the way into which those in charge of the International Brigades were infected by this Moscow-driven hunt for "Trotskyists", "wreckers" and "saboteurs". Their training material included the instruction that "As in all other counties, so too here in Spain, the Trotskyists are the conscious enemies of the freedom of the people". To Marty, Trotskyists formed just one part of "multiple networks", "the Gestapo, OVRA (Italian secret police), the Polish police, the Caballero group, anarchist, socialist and above all the Deuxieme Bureau (French secret service)." Articles intended for Brigaders asserted "the POUM was working in favour of Fascism". The Independent Labour Party, linked to the POUM through the International Revolutionary Marxist Centre (the non-Trotskyist anti-Stalinist left international grouping, founded in 1932, known as the London Bureau), and whose own volunteers took part in their militia, was singled out. Any dissent, which could include the most minor disagreements, was noted with suspicion.

Street breaks new ground by indicating the details of these politics, and, more strikingly, in the endless, petty and spiteful reports on all Brigaders by the Political Commissars. Real issues of national frictions, personal problems and tensions, are overshadowed by the documents known as "Characterisations". Often exaggerated concerns about

possible infiltration by enemy agents and discipline aside, "thumbnail assessments" range through people's sexuality, drinking habits, and temperament. Categories such as Cadre, Very Good, Fair, Bad and Very Bad, were used.

With this licence to the small-minded, it is not surprising that along with allegation about somebody's alleged Trotskyist or "criticisms of the Soviet Union", the sexual activity of some women volunteers was noted.

Stalinism, Street conclude, had "absolute political and organisational control". On the most prominent Comintern representative, André Marty, *Lions Led by Jackals*, states that his "paranoid incompetence and general buffoonery guaranteed his failure, even in his own terms, as commander-in-chief of the Intentional Brigades."

The paranoiac and murderous cadres who exported the purges and efforts to duplicate the Moscow trials to Spain, should nevertheless not be allowed to diminish the courage and sacrifice of the Brigaders, including Communists.

As for Marty, he was portrayed under that name in Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), as a suspicious thug with a "mania for shooting people". These killings earned him the sobriquet of the Butcher of Albacete. 1943 found him the representative of the French Communists in the de Gaulle led Resistance based in Algiers. There was an ascension to become the "Number 3" in the Parti Communiste Français (PCF).

Following the "Marty-Tillon Affair" which included accusations that Marty was a police agent, he was expelled from the Party in 1952.

- *Lions led by Jackals* is £4 including postage from <http://bit.ly/1UQFdYH>
- Andrew Coates' blog tendancecoatesy.wordpress.com/

For a world where diversity is normal

Val Graham reviews *Autism Equality in the Workplace* by Janine Booth

Janine Booth, poet and author of *Autism Equality in the Workplace*, is both a worker and trade union activist.

A member of the TUC Disabled Workers Committee, her handbook *Autism in the Workplace* was published on line by the TUC in 2014. Her radical approach to removing barriers and challenging discrimination against autistic people is developed in this book which is both practical and visionary.

It needs to be. Despite the positive changes in education, including access to work experience, only a small minority (15%) of autistic people in the UK are in full time employment.

Booth argues that autism should be seen not as a deficit but as a neurological difference. Neurodiversity is part of humanity's make up — a different wiring of the brain which should be embraced alongside other differences. The social model of disability requires society and the workplace to change to cater for diversity rather than the individual to fit in.

In Derbyshire ten years ago we produced an "Autism Friendly File" for schools, guiding on changes that could be made before the first autistic child even skipped through the door.

Booth's book identifies the barriers to an autism friendly workplace and proposes solutions. None of them is impractical but the visionary part is Booth's recognition that achieving them for every autistic person is an integral part of the struggle to change the nature and purpose of work itself — the struggle for a socialist society.

Chapter 1 graphically illustrates the difficulties facing autistic people, even those well qualified, in getting and keeping suitable and rewarding employment, and busts some of the myths about autism.

Chapter 2 identifies ten barriers in the way of autistic workers from getting work in the first place, through encountering negative attitudes, different expectations about communication and social interaction as well as a hostile physical and sensory environment, bullying and harassment. Austerity and the growth of insecure employment impacts very hard on autistic workers. They are more likely to be found among the precariat. The impact on autistic workers' mental health of constant job insecurity and fear of a punitive welfare regime should not be underestimated.

Chapter 3 unpicks each of these barriers and proposed ways they can be removed as obstacles to autistic people's full and equal participation in the workplace. Although Booth and research clearly favour integra-

tion, she is not dogmatic and recognised that for some autistic people with very significant needs, sheltered employment should be an option.

Booth emphasises the positive role that advocacy from a trained support worker or trade union representative can play and that autistic workers should be fully involved in decisions- nothing about us, without us.

Chapter 4 surveys the legislative framework impacting on the workplace in terms of access and discrimination and its differences across the English speaking world. The legal framework in terms of mandatory requirements on all employers to meet autistic workers' needs, recognise trade unions and outlaw discrimination, bullying and harassment must be strengthened.

Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell has written a foreword to the book, and pays tribute to Booth's groundbreaking work, in which she was encouraged and supported by her union. His announcement that Labour will have a Shadow Cabinet member for Neurodiversity is a major development which can help to ensure that under a Corbyn led government; laws are changed to benefit autistic and other neurodiverse people alongside all disabled workers.

The impact of Booth's activism as an autistic worker and trade unionist on trade union and Labour policy validates her emphasis on

the importance of autistic people organising as disabled people and inside the trade union movement. Our unions and organisations must include us, listen to us, support us and value our abilities.

Booth makes clear that her vision of the truly autism friendly workplace is a vision of a place where work is people not profit centred, collective in spirit and purpose, and under democratic control. Autistic people have a struggle and a goal in common with others of a world where each receives according to need and everyone matters equally. Her solutions are transformative not administrative.

Bur the daily battle is hard and full of suffering as well as determination and optimism. Booth's moving poem "Manifesto from Behind a Mask" juxtaposes hidden pain, fear and insecurity with fierce longing to fit in and for a world where "diversity is normal and no-one is weird."

***Autism Equality in the Workplace* puts us on the right path.**

- Val Graham is one of the two autistic vice-chairs of the Labour Representation Committee.
- Janine Booth will be speaking on "Marxism and Autism" at Ideas for Freedom, on Saturday 9 July. www.workersliberty.org/ideas

Connolly, the rise of Irish labour, and Home Rule

Part seven of Michael Johnson's series on the life and politics of James Connolly

By January 1908, Connolly finally had an organ of his own once again, when he founded *The Harp* as the newspaper of the Irish Socialist Federation (ISF) in the USA.

The ISF was inspired by Connolly's work alongside Italian workers in the Il Proletario group, which prompted him to learn Italian and organise free speech protests against police harassment of the group's meetings.

Irish-Americans did not have their own national federation. Indeed, New York Mayor George B. McClellan had declared that "There are Russian Socialists and Jewish Socialists and German Socialists. But thank God there are no Irish Socialists!"

Setting out to disprove this, the Irish Socialist Federation (ISF) aimed to educate Irish-American workers about socialism, promote knowledge of Irish working-class history and encourage solidarity with the Irish workers' movement.

Connolly's intention was not to separate Irish workers. Rather, he aimed to break Irish workers from the corrupt Irish Democratic Party politicians at Tammany Hall, to "broaden and develop the mental horizon of our countrymen... and prepare them to take their place in the revolutionary army of the American proletariat." He declared: "To the capitalist organisations of Irish-America we will oppose a socialist organisation of Irish-America."

This brought him into closer contact with socialists in Ireland, organised in the ISRP's successor organisation, the Socialist Party of Ireland (SPI). These renewed links, especially with William O'Brien, would pave the way for Connolly's eventual return to Ireland in 1910.

In May 1908, *The Harp* made an appearance at the National Convention of the Socialist Party of America, bringing it to the attention of the party's activists and leaders. On the strength of his journalism, Connolly was offered a speaking tour for the SPA in 1909.

The tour was a success but Connolly's attentions were increasingly turned to Ireland, writing to O'Brien in May 1909 that moving to America was "the greatest mistake of my life."

The SPI was small and had no newspaper of its own, so Connolly made plans to transfer *The Harp* to Dublin. Compared to when Connolly left in 1902, depressed and demoralised, conditions for socialist activism in Ireland by 1910 had greatly improved. A major reason for this was the formation of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) by the Liverpool-born socialist Jim Larkin.

ITGWU

The ITGWU combined the same militant spirit and industrial strategy favoured by Connolly, emphasising short, sharp and offensive strikes backed up by solidarity action. Connolly saw in it the potential of combining the existing unions into an all-Ireland workers' union.

He wrote to O'Brien in May 1910: "Tell comrade Larkin that I believe his union to be the most promising sign in Ireland that if things were properly handed on those lines, the whole situation...might be revolutionised."

The ISF held a leaving banquet for Connolly and on 16 July he set sail for Ireland, arriving a week and a half later.



John Redmond spoke for rural bourgeoisie and urban middle class

While Connolly had been in America, Ireland had experienced profound changes. As well as the foundation of the ITGWU and the beginnings of militant trade unionism, the separatist tradition had re-organised itself around Griffith's organisation, Sinn Féin.

Founded in 1905, Sinn Féin promoted its founder's idea of a "dual monarchy" between Ireland and Britain, on the model of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. In 1907, the republican Dungannon Clubs, led by IRB man Bulmer Hobson, and a network of nationalist organisations Cumann na nGaedheal, merged into the new Sinn Féin.

However Sinn Féin was floundering within a few years. It would not flourish until after the Easter Rising, in which its involvement was only indirect. In 1910 it was the Home Rule party which had the momentum, due to a brewing constitutional crisis in Britain.

After coming to power in 1906, the Liberals had continued to the Tory policy of attempting to "kill Home Rule with kindness", establishing a National University and improving the terms on which tenants could purchase their land.

However, in December 1909 the Liberals called an election. Expecting a close result, Redmond pushed for Home Rule. The British Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, promised him "a policy which, while explicitly safeguarding the supreme... authority of the Imperial Parliament, will set up in Ireland a system of self-government in regards to purely Irish affairs", adding that "there is not, and there cannot be, any question of separation."

Redmond, the inheritor of the newly-unified Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), was in any case not advocating separation. The political representative of the well-off farmers created by the Land Acts, and the penumbra of small capitalists and traders who serviced them, Redmond spoke for those who wanted to carve out their own niche within the British Empire, which he saw as "an instrument of civilisation and progress whose existence was not incompatible with freedom."

Redmond stood at the head of a network of rural bourgeois, urban property-owners, publicans and professionals, glued together by the sectarian Ancient Order of Hibernians, which saw itself as a bulwark against socialism and atheism.

Part of the motivation for Home Rule was to do away with the limited Liberal welfare introduced by Asquith. A good patriot, Redmond opposed the extension of the Feeding of School Children Act to Ireland though the IPP voted for it for England.

Yet, at the same time, the Home Rulers were nourished by the same Irish national myths and traditions which inspired their

separatist rivals. While Redmond may have made his peace with imperialism, it was not at all the case that his followers fully agreed. Thus the fear amongst Ulster Unionists and the elements of the British establishment who opposed Home Rule, that self-government would acquire a logic and momentum of its own, leading to full independence.

In the election the Liberals were cut from 400 MPs to 275, while the Tories won 273 and Labour won 40. With their 82 MPs, the Irish nationalists held the balance of power. The Liberals intended to curtail the power of the House of Lords, who had rejected the party's People's Budget of tax rises to pay for old age pensions and other social measures, and called a second election in December 1910 which delivered a similar result. With nationalist support, the Liberals passed the Parliament Bill, stripping the Lords of its veto and allowing it merely to delay legislation for two years.

HOME RULE

Home Rule now looked likely. Connolly's attitude to Home Rule was straightforward.

While denouncing the Irish nationalists as a "slimy capitalist organisation...fighting to maintain every kind of reaction and obscurantism in our Irish cities", and condemning them for refusing to extend National Insurance to Ireland, he thought the achievement of Home Rule would settle the constitutional question and usher in an era of class politics.

Regarding Home Rule and its Unionist opponents, Connolly wrote in the ILP's newspaper *Forward* in March 1911 that both "the professional advocacy of it, and the professional opposition to it, is the greatest asset in the hands of reaction in Ireland, the never-failing decoy to lure the workers into the bogs of religious hatred and social stagnation."

"Believing that the day is approaching", the task for socialists was "to prepare for it by laying now the foundations of that socialist movement, whose duty it will be to guide and direct the efforts of labour in Ireland, to find and fashion a proper channel of expression and instrument of emancipation." He wrote later that "as Socialists we are Home Rulers, but that on the day the Home Rule Government goes in to power, the Socialist movement in Ireland will go into opposition."

At this time, Connolly was a member of the Socialist Party of Ireland (SPI), which remained a small group, organised on a loose basis, issuing socialist propaganda of a very general kind.

Retreating from Connolly's earlier revolutionary formulations, it proclaimed its methods to be "political organisation at the Ballot Box to secure the election of representatives of socialist principles... and thus to gradually transfer the political power of the state into the hands of those who will use it to further and extend the principle of common or public ownership."

In 1910, it did not even take a position on what would become the defining question of the period — the movement for Irish self-determination. This would come back to haunt the party in the turbulent years to follow.

However, in parallel to building the SPI, Connolly, writing in the *Harp* just months before he returned to Ireland, laid out the perspective of forming a wider Irish Labour Party, based on trade unions and labour organisation, within which socialists would be active.

The basis for this, Connolly argued, was

that while "the knowledge of theoretical socialism is but meagrely distributed amongst the workers, that feeling or knowledge which the socialists call class-consciousness is deep-seated, wide-spread and potent in its influence."

He recalled with anger the fact that workers' political representation had taken a step forward in the local government elections back in 1899, only for the elected representatives to betray their class independence and side with the Home Rulers. Now, however, he proposed "that it is time to make an effort to retrieve the situation, and once more to raise the banner of a militant Irish labour movement upon the political field."

Optimistically, Connolly wrote, there is a "strong socialist movement, representing some of the best intellects in Ireland, an independent socialist feeling and education on socialist thought in every city of industrial activity in Ireland..."

How realistic were Connolly's expectations of the forward march of labour and the prospects for its position in a future Home Rule parliament? With the passing of the Parliament Act, limiting the powers of the House of Lords, gone was the reactionary bulwark which had scuppered the Second Home Rule Bill in 1893. On 11 April 1912 Asquith presented the Third Home Rule Bill providing limited self-government to Ireland.

UNIONISTS

But with constitutional means of blocking Home Rule neutered, opposition took the form of a naked show of force by the Tory establishment and the Ulster Unionists.

The resistance of Ulster Unionists to their incorporation into an all-Ireland parliament was more powerful than the nationalists, Connolly or the Liberals had imagined, and utterly transformed the political situation in Britain and Ireland.

Ever since the foundation of the Ulster Unionist Council (UUC) in 1905, bringing together local Ulster Clubs, MPs, Orange lodges and skilled shipyard workers, the Unionists had been quietly consolidating a powerful cross-class movement against Irish self-government.

The Unionist leader was Edward Carson, a Dublin barrister from a wealthy professional Anglican background. Though a southern Unionist, Carson recognised the power of Ulster resistance to Home Rule. This brought him into a close alliance with the more pugnacious James Craig, a Boer War veteran and son of a Presbyterian whiskey millionaire from County Down. Plans were made for a Provisional Government with the support and funding of Ulster's Protestant bourgeoisie.

This rebellious talk was matched from the very citadel of the Tory establishment, when Andrew Bonar Law, with strong family links to Ulster, became the Conservative Party leader in November.

At the Duke of Marlborough's residence at Blenheim, Bonar Law denounced the British government as a "revolutionary committee" and announced that his party "shall use any means to deprive them of the power they have usurped... I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster will go in which I will not be ready to support them."

Though nationalist Ireland was initially slow to realise the depth of the Unionist challenge to Home Rule, the stage was set for a major confrontation. The Unionists' methods, in "putting back the gun in Irish politics", would see the situation in Ireland transformed utterly.

Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Events

Saturday 18 June

National Demonstration against the Housing Act
12 noon from Hyde Park Corner, London, W1J 7
bit.ly/1YcAMgo

Saturday 18 June

Convoy to Calais
Central London, various
bit.ly/calaisconvoy

Saturday 18 June

Orgreave Anniversary Rally
5pm, Orgreave Lane, Sheffield, S13 9NE
bit.ly/orgreaverally

Monday 20 June

Lewisham Momentum meeting on anti-semitism, anti-Zionism, Labour and the left
7pm, New Cross Library, London, SE14 6AS
bit.ly/1UNuFfl

Tuesday 21 June

Haringey Radical Readers
7pm, Big Green Bookshop, Brompton Park Rd, London, N22 6BG
bit.ly/21k97JJ

Tuesday 21 June

Nottingham Workers' Liberty public meeting: the left and anti-semitism
7.30pm, YMCA international community centre, NG1 3FN
bit.ly/1ZOeLmO

Saturday 25 June

Pride in London
12pm, Baker Street, London
bit.ly/1XUDA3i

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

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

Labour's antisemitism inquiry to report by 1 July

LABOUR

By Darren Bedford

The Labour Party's internal inquiry in antisemitism closed for submissions on 10 June.

It was convened at the end of April in the wake of numerous allegations of antisemitism against various Labour Party members, including Ken Livingstone, many of whom have been suspended from the party.

The inquiry is headed by Sami Chakrabarti, formerly head of the human rights organisation Liberty, with Professor David Feldman, an academic based at Birkbeck, Uni-

versity of London, and Baroness Royall, the leader of the Labour Group in the House of Lords, as deputy chairs.

Royall also conducted a separate investigation into allegations of racism at Oxford University Labour Club, concluding that the Club had a "clear cultural problem which means some Jews feel unwelcome", but it was not institutionally anti-semitic. The Chakrabarti inquiry consulted with and received submissions from a wide variety of Labour Party supporters, as well as Jewish community institutions including both the Board of Deputies (the main "official" leadership body in the Jewish community) and the Jewish Social-

ists Group, a group of leftists who identify with the Bundist tradition of Jewish cultural autonomy.

Chakrabarti announced that, while the inquiry had to "address specific concerns of antisemitism", but that "antisemitism is a form of racism and we don't believe in hierarchies of racism".

The inquiry is expected to make recommendations on how Labour deals internally with members accused of antisemitism and other forms of racism. Chakrabarti said: "I have got the opportunity to make recommendations and guidance in ways of conduct and language."

The inquiry will report by 1 July.

Greater Manchester mayor — doubly undemocratic

By Rob Beeson

The selection of a Labour candidate for mayor of the Greater Manchester region is under way.

Elected mayors were part of the deal between George Osborne and the ten leaders of the Greater Manchester councils for devolution, despite the lack of any democratic mandate for the plan as a whole, and particularly the control of those devolved powers by a mayor. (An elected mayor was overwhelmingly rejected in a referendum in Manchester in 2012.)

The Labour procedures for selection of a candidate for the election in May 2017 have been equally top down.

The National Executive has drawn up rules which excludes members who joined after 19 July 2015 from nomination meetings and a vote in the final ballot. It can hardly be coincidence that this excludes anyone who joined during or after the leadership election as part of the "Corbyn surge". (The normal period of exclusion is six

months.) Candidate Tony Lloyd has calculated that this will disenfranchise 8,000 people, 40% of the total membership.

There are three candidates standing in the selection, none of whom represent the "Corbynite" left of the party — and none of whom will inspire a sceptical electorate.

Ivan Lewis, MP for Bury South, is the candidate of the right. Andy Burnham is the "Gi's a job" candidate, whose website is full of vague aspirations but no commitments. Tony Lloyd is the Interim Mayor, previously Police and Crime Commissioner and before that a soft left MP for 30 years. He has been part of the Manchester Labour establishment.

His platform is somewhat to the left of the others: he supports a Greater Manchester Living Wage, including imposition in public contracts, opposes academisation of schools and privatisation in the NHS. But his platform says nothing about how he'll fight the Tory cuts and is very vague about what he'll do with his powers over the NHS.

However, given the inability of the serious left to field our own candidate, he has won the support of the major unions and should be supported critically.

Looking beyond the election, the key issue will be ensuring the accountability of the mayor to the Party and the wider labour movement. There are barely any existing democratic party structures at regional level and even at a city level, where they do exist, they are moribund.

If the left does not draw up plans for regional structures, fight for them to be implemented and actively fight for its positions within these structures, decisions will be taken by the mayor and ten council leaders (one Tory!) without any control by the Labour Party membership.

This is not just of concern in Greater Manchester. What happens here is likely to become a template for other devolved administrations, currently under consideration in Merseyside and Yorkshire.

Rhea Wolfson back on NEC ballot paper

Rhea Wolfson's bid to be elected to Labour's NEC is back on after she secured a nomination from her home CLP in early June.

Rhea's nomination had been blocked by the CLP where she had been living temporarily to provide end-of-life care for her father, after Jim Murphy intervened.

Rhea has now been nominated by her home CLP, Almond Valley.

In a statement Rhea said: "Thank you so much to my home Constituency Labour Party, Almond

Valley, for unanimously nominating me for election to the Labour Party National Executive Committee. I now have the nominations needed to go onto the ballot.

"And thank you to everyone who has supported me so far: the messages of support, the nominations from Constituency Labour Parties, and the generous donations."

• Support Rhea's campaign: www.facebook.com/rhea4nec

Thank you!

RHEA WOLFSON
FOR NEC



Bosses dodge “living wage”

By Gemma Short

Workers at Pennine Foods in Sheffield have suspended their strikes after negotiations meant bosses agreed not to implement changes to their contracts.

Negotiations also got bosses to agree to all employees receiving a lump sum for their 2015 pay rise. Negotiations will continue on the contract and further strikes are not ruled out.

The contract changes at Pennine Foods were in order for bosses to try to recoup some of the money from implementing the government's new “living wage”. A similar fight by members of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union (BFAWU) has been going on at Samworth Brothers factories in Leicestershire.

Since the introduction of the “living wage” Samworth bosses have



cut paid breaks and premium rates for working unsociable hours and overtime. Workers responded by joining the BFAWU and holding large meetings about the issues.

Bosses attacked back by sacking one of the union organisers, Kumaran Bose, on Friday 3 June. Kumaran has been targeted for successfully organising a union

which the majority of workers have now joined.

Despite the support for the union in the workplace, Samworth is refusing to recognise the BFAWU.

• Send letters of protest to:
Paul.Davey@
Bradgate-Bakery.co.uk

Teachers to striking to stop job cuts

By a Camden NUT member

Teachers at Regent High School in Camden, north London, have voted 84% to strike over job cuts.

Five senior, experienced, teaching staff who currently hold the roles of Directors of Tutorial (heads of house and in charge of pastoral care) are being made redundant. The restructuring of the pastoral system also means support staff may lose their jobs.

The NUT is arguing that the plan for redundancies has come very late in the school year, with very minimal consultation, and if the purpose is money-saving then compulsory redundancies are unnecessary as they could have been achieved through “natural wastage” of teachers who already planned to leave.

However any job cuts, compulsory or not, will impact negatively on teachers and students. The overhaul of the pastoral system will se-

verely impact teachers' conditions and ability to reach out to students, parents and the community, who know and trust the current Directors of Tutorial. Fewer staff with pastoral responsibilities means fewer staff hours on pastoral issues.

Teachers have voted for discontinuous strikes, and plan to escalate over a period of three weeks, starting the week beginning 20 June, from one day, to two days, and then to three days if no agreement is reached.

Bosses make £11m profit, workers get 16p

By Luke Hardy

On Monday 13 June over 1000 Leeds bus drivers from Unite the union struck over pay.

First Leeds made £11 million profit last year and with bonuses and pay rises the bosses got a 5% increase. The drivers in Leeds got 16p an hour pay rise. In other parts of the First network across West Yorkshire bus workers are being paid up to £2 more per hour.

Unite regional officer Phil Brown said “First Bus makes massive profits from the travelling public in

Leeds and the hard work of our members who keep the city on the move day in, day out. Strike action is very much the last resort, but faced with management's refusal to improve on its pitiful pay offer and negotiate meaningfully at Acas, our members feel forced into taking this action. All our members are looking for is fair treatment and recognition for their hard work. We would urge First Bus management to drop its hard-line attitude, which risks causing disruption for the travelling public and enter into meaningful negotiations to resolve the dispute.”

This strike is the first on First Leeds for many years and shows a growing rank and file movement willing to assert itself amongst the workers in the depots. These workers have also faced 45 redundancies as First cuts the number of services and withdraws the hi tech bendy buses.

Public transport in Leeds and elsewhere shouldn't be in the hands of private profiteers like First who squeeze workers and passengers to maximize profits. It needs to be under democratic public ownership with workers control.

Cleaners fight back against sackings

By Peggy Carter

Cleaning workers employed by Thames Cleaning and Support Services at an office building in the City of London are on all out strike after their bosses refused them the London Living Wage and sacked more than half the cleaners.

The building houses the London offices of global financial giants

such as J P Morgan and Schroders, and Thames Cleaning have threatened the cleaners' union, United Voices of the World, with an injunction to stop picketing unless they stop having solidarity rallies on the picket line.

One of the cleaners said, “I feel like they are stepping on and completely disregarding my rights. How can we be dismissed without any consideration. Where are my rights?”

Another said, “I really feel oppressed by Thames Cleaning and by these unjust dismissals.

“We all deserve a dignified job and a dignified wage. We want these cuts to end and our dismissed colleagues to be reinstated.”

• Workers are appealing for support, find out more on their facebook page:
www.facebook.com/uvwunion

ScotRail guards vote for strikes

By Ollie Moore

Guards on ScotRail have voted by 75%, on a 75% turnout, for strikes against the extension of “Driver Only Operation” (DOO) on ScotRail routes.

A statement from the RMT union, which organises ScotRail guards, said: “This dispute is very simple. We have been negotiating for months over what we see as the very real and serious threat of a further extension of Driver Only Operation on ScotRail with the introduction of new rolling stock next year.

“RMT's policy, arrived at through the democratic structures of the union, is totally opposed to any extension of DOO. We firmly believe the conductor should remain in full control of the doors and has a critical safety role to ensure the safety of the railway and its passengers. This has been our policy for decades so it cannot plausibly be expected that we

would just sit on our hands and let DOO go without challenge.”

A further statement added: “RMT members should not have to face the risk of their role and responsibilities being reduced and undermined.

“The workforce also know only too well that there is a very real threat to passengers of watering down and wiping out the safety critical role of the guard on these ScotRail services. That is a lethal gamble with basic rail safety.

“This ballot has demonstrated in the clearest possible way the strength of feeling across the Scot Rail network over the threatened extension of driver-only operation and the rock-solid mandate for action will now be considered by RMT's executive.”

The dispute on ScotRail is one of several, across several Train Operating Companies, against DOO. RMT, and drivers' union Aslef, also have live disputes on Southern and Gatwick Express.

Council sacks all teaching assistants

By Charlotte Zalens

Teaching assistants in Durham have been fighting a months long battle against pay cuts and changes to their contract.

Durham county council wants to move teaching assistants from their current 52-week-a-year contracts onto term-time only contracts which would see workers losing up to 23% of their wages, between £1000 and £5000 a year.

In order to force through the plans against opposition from trade unions and campaigners, Durham County Council decided to dismiss its entire workforce of

teaching assistants and attempt to reengage them on the new contracts.

This shocking behaviour has angered the local labour movement beyond just teaching assistants, and Durham Trades Council hosted a huge solidarity rally in Durham Miners' Hall attended by hundreds.

The campaign by the teaching assistants has gained the support of local MP for Easington Grahame Morris, despite the fact that Durham County Council is Labour run.

• Follow @suptstaffdhm on twitter for updates

Capita workers strike over pay cuts

By Neil Laker

Capita workers in the life and pensions sector in Manchester are striking against pay cuts affecting three quarters of the workforce this week.

The Unite dispute comes after the widespread rejection of the below-inflation pay offer, and a strong ballot for action short of strike (90%) and strike action (75%).

There has been an overtime ban in place since Friday 3 June, including any “knowledge transfer” work relating to the restructure.

Moreover, in response to man-

agement's obstinacy during negotiations, a strike has been announced for Thursday 16 June, involving workers from Belfast, Bristol, Glasgow, Manchester and elsewhere. The action will affect Capita's major clients, such as Royal London, Guardian and Aviva.

In 2013, Unite in Capita was successful in a similar campaign based on militant industrial tactics to counter pay cuts.

It was good to hear that the Manchester section are calling for public solidarity in disrupting work at the Oxford St/Great Bridgewater St. offices on the morning of the strike.



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ORLANDO: WE WILL NOT BE SILENCED

By Gemma Short

On Sunday 12 June 49 people were murdered in an LGBT club in Orlando, Florida, in the largest mass shooting in US history.

At around 2am the attacker Omar Mateen entered the Pulse nightclub and opened fire; shortly after he took a number of people hostage, barricading them and himself in a bathroom. Police used an armoured vehicle to demolish the wall into the bathroom, before engaging in a gun battle in which Mateen was killed.

53 more people were injured in the attack. The victims ranged from 20 to 50 years old, and were apparently overwhelmingly from black and Latino communities.

This was a deliberately targeted homophobic attack.

During the attack Mateen reportedly called 911. During the call he pledged allegiance to the leader of Daesh (ISIS). However it seems that Mateen did not plan this attack as part of the network of an organisation like Daesh. No communication between Daesh and Mateen has been found, but clearly the ideas and actions of Daesh had an influence on Mateen.

Mateen's father has released a statement in which he said the attack had "nothing to do with reli-

gion". He also said his son had seen two men kissing a few months ago and been angered by it. In a later interview with TV broadcaster NBC he downplayed the influence he thought this had on Mateen's motivation but said of the incident "they were kissing each other and touching each other, and he [Omar Mateen] said, 'Look at that. In front of my son, they are doing that.'"

Mateen's homophobia does not come from nowhere. Mateen was not born homophobic. Mateen's father has posted a video online in which he argues that his son's actions were wrong. But he also seems to suggest that it is for God to punish gay people. Speaking in Dari he uses the word hamjensbazi for gay people, which Dari speakers say is used in a derogatory way.

Religious ideology is still a deep well-spring of homophobia around the world. We can and should not ignore that. Not all religious people are homophobic; still less are all predisposed to be violent towards LGBT+ people. But recognising that religion plays a significant role in oppressing people is crucial here.

Daesh is currently murdering our LGBT+ brothers and sisters in Syria and Iraq. In August 2015 six people were stabbed, one fatally, in an attack by an ultra-orthodox

Jewish man on a Pride march in Jerusalem. The Iranian state systematically oppresses and murders LGBT+ people — recently a gay mullah who had been secretly conducting gay weddings fled Iran in fear of his life. The Christian far-right in the US have put forward more than 200 anti-gay laws and propositions in the last six months alone.

This growing climate of homophobia in the US, particularly through the vile transphobic "bathroom laws" put through by the populist right, could have very easily have led to this sort of attack by a Christian fundamentalist. Indeed Florida Senator, and former runner in the Republican presidential nominee race, Marco Rubio has repeatedly opposed gay equality, including wanting to repeal same-sex marriage and protection against discrimination for LGBT+ employees.

It has been suggested by some regular customers of Pulse that Mateen had visited the venue a lot and may have been struggling with his own sexuality. This is a possibility. We may never know. But the main issues would remain the same. Many people internalise homophobia from their surroundings and use it against themselves. Many closeted gay people can be homophobic.

Much could be said about gun



control in the US — it is despicable that it is still in the state it is. People will continue to die if it stays that way.

It is a sad fact that the state of politics is such that an anti-Muslim racist backlash in the US and elsewhere is also likely. We should oppose this without reducing one bit our opposition to Islamist movements who have anti-LGBT+, anti-woman, and anti-working class ideas and will act on them. The primary victims of Islamism across the world are Muslim-background LGBT+ people, women, secularists, and socialists. We must not forget those who have been fighting for, and dying for, secularism and against religious bigotry across the world for decades.

At the same time there have

been attempts to downplay the homophobic motivation of this attack. Owen Jones was right to be angry at the attempt to sideline homophobia when he appeared on Sky News. It would suit right-wing politicians if they were able to portray this as a generalised attack on "western values" and "western people", and take the focus off homophobia, because they themselves perpetuate homophobia!

This is a reminder that the battle is not over on LGBT+ rights. Homophobia still exists, and the perpetrators discriminate, shame, hurt and murder people around the world every day.

We will not be silenced. The struggle continues.

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