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FLOOD INTO THE LABOUR PARTY



Over 100,000 new people have joined the Labour Party in the last couple of weeks, most of them pro-Corbyn. Momentum, the left Labour campaign group, has doubled from 6,000 to 12,000 members.

Dozens of constituency Labour Parties have voted confidence in Jeremy Corbyn at crowded meetings, and some no confidence in their anti-Corbyn Labour MPs.

Thousands have joined pro-Corbyn rallies and street demonstrations. About 260,000 have signed an online petition backing Corbyn against the Labour right's attempted coup. As of 7 July, Corbyn and the unions are standing firm.

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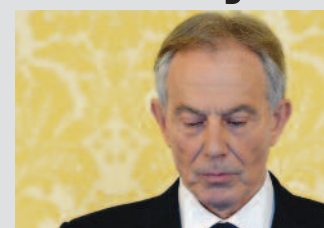
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French left attempt censure of government

By Olivier Delbeke

At 3.45pm on Wednesday 6 July, deputies on the left wing of the National Assembly (socialists, communists, ecologists not part of the government and non-party deputies) decided to issue a motion of censure of the government.

The motion opposed the forced adoption of the labour law by means of article 49-3 [which allows the French President to turn a vote on any law into a vote of confidence in the government]; however they were only able to collect 56 out of the required 58 signatures.

The motion could not be put, [Premier] Valls's constitutional blackmail succeeded, and one chapter of this story closed.

The second reading of the labour law bill in the National Assembly is now finished, and the bill will return to the Senate for a final bit of formal to-ing and fro-ing. The final vote will take place on 20 July.

Hollande and Valls have put the final nail into their political coffin — definitively burying all the hopes placed in them after their election on 6 May 2012. In the large

circles of left-wing voters, the refrain has been growing louder by the day for three years: "we did not expect the revolution [from voting for Hollande in 2012], but we didn't expect to be betrayed like this either".

On Tuesday 5 July, the last cross-union demonstrations before the summer holidays took place, with clearly smaller numbers, but a general mood that can be summed up as "the government can force the bill through Parliament, the opposition to this regressive law will carry on, in strikes and protests, but also in the political field."

Everywhere, [ruling] Socialist Party candidates will be interrogated, in an organised or a spontaneous manner, by dozens, hundreds, thousands of people who will brandish the labour law as an accusation, in the face of which the SP will have no defence, because its pro-capitalist guilt is clear.

We could speculate and gossip about the handful of possible signatures to the motion of censure in the SP parliamentary group who may have agreed not to sign under pressure. But what's fundamental is this: with, or without the motion of



censure, Valls is naked. He is only able to rule the country by means of baton charges against demonstrations, only able to rule the National Assembly by strong-arming deputies and threatened reprisals, using the pretext of the state of emergency to do both.

Last week has been full of incidents illustrating this loss of legitimacy and the fears of the SP leadership. During a public meeting in Bordeaux, Stéphane Le Foll, minister and government spokesman, was heckled by many attendees in the hall.

An old SP activist waved a modestly-sized paper sign that read "Valls, resign!" and was hurled to the ground by security, like a dan-

gerous hooligan. The video of the incident had an even greater effect...

The national secretary of the SP, Cambadélis, decided to postpone and relocate the traditional SP summer school which is normally held in Nantes. With the combination of a high level of mobilisation and struggle at Nantes since the start of March, and with the proximity of Notre-Dame des Landes, an airport project which is the target of a long-running campaign of thousands of greens and conservationists, the local elected SP representatives fear that the town will be "put to the fire and the sword" if the event is held this year.

This is to say nothing of the number of local SP headquarters or deputies' offices which have been subject to more or less vigorous visits by hundreds of demonstrators across the country.

HOLDING ON

The government is exhausted, but it is holding on for now, by a thread.

This is a result of the tactic chosen by the trade union leaders, principally CGT and FO, of not risking an overthrow of the government through a general strike that would galvanise the strength of the workers.

This is also a result of the inability of the forces previously brought together in the Front de gauche [Left Front] to create a credible opposition. In fact, over the last four months, the inter-union committee has managed what the Front de gauche was not able to do, and yet it shared with the latter a reluctance

to clearly beat the government in a trial of strength. But the immediate and historic interests of the working class demand an end to the government's anti-social activity.

The summer holidays, necessary for the masses and the activists to catch their breath, will bring to an end one phase of the social mobilisation. No-one can say in what form, and with what energy, the mobilisation will re-start in September.

If it doesn't concern the labour law, there are plenty of other issues which could ignite struggles across many sectors: hospital reforms; school reforms; reforms to working times and job cuts in public services; waves of sackings resulting from economic woes despite Hollande's famous sound bite, "ça va mieux!" [it's getting better]. But no-one can imagine that the social agitation will disappear. It will be matched, as one approaches the Presidential elections, by a political agitation which focusses on social questions and looks for a political answer.

The right wing has refused to issue a motion of censure on this occasion, preferring not to provoke a governmental crisis, and to prepare for the Presidential elections in the hope that the government will hold on for as long as possible, and thereby discredit itself as thoroughly as possible. The right wing, the natural representatives of the bosses, agrees with the labour law, but it wants to leave the SP to take the hit in the opinion polls for it. It also hopes that Valls and Hollande, by going as far as possible with the "dirty work", will sow despair and resignation on the left, so that the right wing will be able to pocket an easy win.

But political ferment is on the cards for September. And you don't need a degree from Sciences Po or the ENA (two famous higher education institutions that produce the bourgeoisie's governing elites) to know that the Presidential election will be anything but a walk in the park for the institutional parties.

"A brutal refusal to discuss"

Extracts from the motion of censure

We, parliamentarians of the left and ecologists in the National Assembly, consider that the second use of article 49-3 of the Constitution by a government of the left, on a motion to reform the Labour Code, is a very serious act.

We cannot accept this authoritarian act which would suppress democratic debate around a bill for which the government has not received a mandate from its electors.

The debates around this bill have provoked a profound social tension in our country. Like a majority of French people, we are op-

posed to the serious risks to our social model which this bill contains, to the inversion of the hierarchy of rules and the undermining of the principle of favour in labour law, which would make it generally possible for businesses to call themselves social while reducing their employees' real wages (for example by reducing overtime pay).

We are also opposed to the other dangerous measures such as facilitating lay-off on economic grounds, the agreements which have been called "offensive" which relate to the development of employment and the reduction of medical support at work, with incapacity provisions which will

henceforth offer less protection.

At a time when our country is experiencing a serious crisis of democracy, where the gap between citizens and governments is growing wider and wider, the response of the executive is a brutal refusal to discuss.

The final resort to article 49-3 thus addresses to the country, to all those who are demonstrating, the message of a power which has forgotten their shared values.

It deprives the Parliament of its most essential right: to debate and pronounce upon a bill which regards a subject which is as important for our fellow citizens' every day lives as the Labour Code...

Australia: votes scatter

By Rhodri Evans

Australia's federal election on 2 July looks like producing a hung parliament.

The full results, with all the transfers due under the Alternative Vote system (for the House of Reps) and PR (for the Senate), will not be in for weeks, but it looks like the Liberal-National coalition has lost the (big) majority they won in the House of Reps in 2013, and lost ground in the Senate too.

Liberal prime minister Malcolm Turnbull called the election in the hope of winning enough seats in the Senate to push through legisla-

tion like the reintroduction of the ABCC, a special policing and judicial agency against trade unionists in the construction industry.

The Liberals may form a new coalition government with support from independents, but the result is way off what they wanted.

Labor's vote increased, but was still low by historic standards, because an unprecedented 24% of first-preference votes went to a scattering of minor parties.

The Socialist Alliance, one of the bigger groups on the Australian activist left, stood a few candidates, but did poorly (0.13% for the Senate in NSW, for example).

Five parties named after individuals — Pauline Hanson's One Nation, the Nick Xenophon Team, the Jacqui Lambie Network, Derryn Hinch's Justice Party, and Katter's Australian Party — will be represented in the new parliament, as well as two independents elected in their own names, though the Glenn Lazarus Team failed to make it and the Palmer United Party has faded.

One Nation is a Ukip-type party, which flourished briefly in the 1990s, seemed to have collapsed, and has partly revived. The other "personality" parties are mostly not specially right-wing.

Global strike in the ports

On 7 July the International Dockworkers' Council (IDC), the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) called a one-hour world-wide strike, from 8am local time.

Under the slogan "Defend Dockers Rights," the Global Day of Union Action was organised to call for: Improved health and safety in the workplace, an end to job deregulation, respect for bargaining rights and collective agreements, the need for universal labour standards in GNTs, the concerns over automation processes in terminals, and social



justice.

IDC coordinator Jordi Aragunde said: "This is the first time the world will carry out a collective action which highlights the contribution of dockworkers to the world economy".

Junior doctors reject deal

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

Six in ten junior doctors have voted to reject the re-negotiated contract offered by the government.

In a referendum run by the British Medical Association (BMA), 58% voted to reject the contract on a turnout of 68%. It is clear that many junior doctors think this contract is insufficient improvement on the old one, and that it will do significant harm to the medical profession and the NHS.

However many who voted to accept the contract also have serious concerns. We must now win them

over, and galvanise their support.

Yesterday Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt announced that implementation of the contract would continue. The transition period for new Foundation Doctors and some other trainees will begin in October.

The BMA Junior Doctors' Committee met on Wednesday 6 July to discuss the outcome of the referendum, and the way forward. A new chair, Ellen McCourt, was elected to replace Johann Malawana who resigned after the referendum result. The committee agreed it will respond robustly to the Department of Health plans to begin implementing this contract.

In an article in the *Guardian* after his resignation, Johann Malawana said "A rejection of the contract,

with such a high turnout (68%), despite more than 130 roadshows around the country to explain the better terms and conditions, demonstrates just how much the government has mishandled this dispute. In doing so it has damaged its long-term credibility and standing with frontline NHS staff, whose trust it simply cannot afford to lose. There is very little that can be done to build trust with a profession when the government does not seem to have learned the lessons of past mistakes."

The committee has agreed that all avenues of action are open in order to get a contract that is fair and safe, and will meet again to discuss plans if the government refuses to negotiate.



Discontent over Brexit

By Omar Raii

On Saturday 2 July, tens of thousands came to London to demonstrate against Britain leaving Europe.

There were people of all ages on the march and, while many had come from outside London, the majority were probably what the right-wing press like to call London's "metropolitan elite".

The political flavour of the march was very "liberal" and far from socialist. It was reminiscent of the pro-EU marches that take place in Eastern European countries like Hungary or Ukraine whose population is split between pro- and anti-EU camps.

Revolutionary socialists were a very small minority on the march but nevertheless interesting conversations were had. Some disliked Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party and sought to blame them for the Brexit result, but there were also plenty of Corbyn supporters on the march.

The fact that some of the anti-Corbyn demonstrators seemed to have a contemptuous attitude towards "ignorant" and "stupid" (actual words I heard) working-class people was a sign that they didn't understand why the referendum was lost. Although many working-class people voted for Brexit, and were convinced by racist and chauvinist arguments, the way to counter those views is to put forward

ward a clear socialist programme addressing housing shortages, unemployment etc. Dismissing people as being stupid is unpleasant and not a winning strategy.

Likewise the call from many for either a second referendum or Parliament to overrule the results seems to have also missed the point and would only lead to an huge increase in support for UKIP, as they would be vindicated in their demagogic claim that "Westminster elites" don't listen to ordinary people.

Speakers at the end rally at Parliament Square included journalist Owen Jones, Tim Farron, leader of the Liberal Democrats, David Lammy, the MP for Tottenham who has suggested that Parliament should overrule the referendum results, and pro-EU millionaire Bob Geldof.

The demonstration helped to express the discontent among a large group of people, and the organisers probably expected to achieve no more.

It was good that Workers' Liberty was there to argue that the best way forward is for the Labour Party to win back the millions of working-class people it has neglected and lost to the likes of the SNP and UKIP, through clear socialist policies that address people's real concerns and refuses to pander to the myth that immigration is the cause of people's problems.

Osborne drops his "virtue"

"Having already broken two of his self-imposed fiscal rules", reported the *Financial Times* on 1 July, chancellor George Osborne indicated on Friday [1st] that he would activate the get-out clause on his third and final rule.

"At the Budget in March, Mr Osborne admitted he would fail to meet his promise to cut debt as a share of gross domestic product this year. Last year he rowed back on his cap on welfare spending".

Now he has dropped his promise to put the government budget in surplus by 2020.

The rules were only ever shams designed to help the Tories pretend that their social cuts are not the vindictive class measures they really are, but instead inevitable results of necessary economic virtue.

Not that Osborne will relent on social cuts more than he is forced to.

Now he is promising a big cut in taxes on corporate profits.

Minnesota nurses strike for control

By Gerry Bates

Nurses in Minnesota staged a week long strike starting on 19 June at hospitals run by health care company Allina, in a showdown over nurses' power on the job.

Allina wants to change how it makes staffing decisions; they want an automated system based on patients' electronic records, rather than human decisions. This would stop "charge nurses" deciding staffing ratios based on an evaluation of patient need.

Nurses are arguing that charge nurses consider factors not documented in medical charts — family and psychosocial issues, the intensity of nursing required, the experience and skill of particular nurses.

The dispute spreads way beyond staffing ratios. It is also about workplace violence, cost-cutting by health companies, nurses' health insurance, and about defending the union.

"The company's unwillingness to budge an inch leads me to believe they really are trying to get rid of the union," said 30-year nurse Gail Olson, a bargaining team member. "For patient safety sometimes we slow things down. They don't want to tolerate it anymore."

Nurses have had a huge amount of support from the local community with people turning up to the picket line with ice lollies, water and hats to help nurses on the picket line deal with the heat. A letter of support to the nurses was signed by over 50 local officials, campaigns and businesses.

Nurses went back to work after seven days with no progress made on the contract, but are continuing negotiations and have plans to strike again if Allina doesn't back down.

Mental health care is a right

By Colin Foster

Last year, 2015, 61% of under-18s referred to local mental health services (CAMHS) got no treatment. A third didn't even get assessed. In some areas, as few as 20% of those referred got treatment.

Those figures come from the most recent NHS statistics. Previous figures have shown that even

those who get treatment often have to wait six months or longer to get it.

NHS boss Simon Stevens says that at present the NHS is "able to respond to perhaps one in four children who might be defined as having a mental health need".

The rich should be taxed heavily to rebuild the NHS, starting with this, which Stevens calls "the most creaking" part of the system.



Protest in Baton Rouge

Two more police killings

By Charlotte Zalens

Two more black men have been fatally shot by the police in two different US states.

Alton Sterling was shot in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on Tuesday 5 July. Alton was selling CDs and DVDs outside a convenience store when police responded to a 911 call reporting a "black man with a gun". Alton was tasered, pinned to the ground, and then shot at least five times.

Video footage of the shooting quickly circulated on social media, which clearly shows Alton being pinned to the ground by two officers before one officer draws his gun and shoots. A second video, shows officers removing a gun from Alton's pocket after he had been shot several times.

Protests have been held in Baton Rouge in response to the shooting, and the two police officers have been put on administrative leave

while an investigation is conducted.

On Wednesday 6 July Philando Castile was shot and killed after being pulled over for a broken tail light in a suburb of Minneapolis.

A video shot by his girlfriend, who was in the passenger seat of the car while her young daughter was in the back, shows the aftermath of the shooting. A police officer keeps pointing his gun into the car through the driver's window and shouts at her to keep her hands where they are.

In the video she explains that Philando had informed the officer that he was carrying a gun, and was licensed to carry a gun. He told the officer where the gun was and told the officer he was going to reach for his licence and registration as requested.

According to the *Guardian's* police killings database, 532 people have been killed by police in the US so far this year.

The Tories and Brexit: where ignorant armies clash by night

By Martin Thomas

At the end of June US secretary of state John Kerry said, with a bluntness unusual in a professional diplomat, that David Cameron "has no idea how he would do it [negotiate British exit from the EU]. And by the way nor do most of the people who voted to do it".

Most to the point, the Leave leaders have no clear idea. They sold the electorate a vague grab-bag of promises, most of them never expecting to have to deliver, and many (it seems) not even wanting to.

So now the meaning of the Leave vote is being decided via confused and murky battle between candidates for the Tory leadership, all of them markedly on the right wing of the Tories.

Andrea Leadsom is suddenly one of the front-runners, potentially popular with Tory Party members. She is a social conservative as well as a free-marketeer. She seems to stand for the quickest, most thorough, most reckless break with the EU. She says she will activate Article 50, the formal two-year countdown to exit, immediately if she becomes Tory leader.

BLOCK

She has indicated that she will start blocking free entry of EU workers even before negotiations.

Yet she is now supported by Boris Johnson. Johnson said after the referendum result that he wanted "no haste" about Article 50, and a deal which would conserve British citizens' freedom to work or study or retire in Europe and British access to the European single market: things impossible to negotiate without also conserving free entry to Britain of EU workers.

Theresa May says she will not ac-



tivate Article 50 before 2017, and will sketch the outlines of a deal before that.

Former Lib-Dem leader Nick Clegg has made the straightforward democratic demand that the government must set out its negotiating stand clearly and submit to a parliamentary vote on the package before it activates Article 50.

An opinion poll has found that 48% of voters agree there should be a general election before Britain begins Brexit negotiations.

Dominic Cummings, organiser of the Vote Leave campaign, and a former adviser to Gove, suggested

before 23 June a second referendum on the actual terms of exit.

"It is perfectly possible that leadership candidates to replace David Cameron will [want] a new government team to offer the public a voice on what the deal looks like. And... I think there's a strong democratic case for it".

Even more head-spinningly, Cummings told a parliamentary committee, back in April: "In fact, there might be no need to trigger article 50 at all, because an alternative withdrawal process might be possible". He told the *Economist* magazine in January: "There is a

widespread assumption that we have to use the Article 50 process, and that has a lot of risks. That is not true. We do not have to use the Article 50 process".

The Tories have two dilemmas. They know that a majority for an actual proposal to leave will be ten times harder to get than a majority for the vague idea that there must be some way of leaving which keeps most of the advantages of EU links.

And that once Article 50 is activated, they have just two years to negotiate a deal or see a "sudden-death" exit without trade agree-

ments, without negotiated terms for British citizens living in the EU, without agreements for British-based banks to do business in the EU.

The two years can be extended, but any single EU government could block that extension. Towards the end of the two years, the pressure on the British government to accept whatever the EU offers will become immense.

They may find that they just can't get a deal. EU leaders are now worried that the Canada-EU trade deal may never get ratified, because there are strong demands to submit it to every parliament in the EU, and just a vote against the deal by, say, the parliament of the Walloon region in Belgium will be enough to scupper it. And that is a deal in preparation since 2008, negotiated with few conflicts or tensions, far less fraught than a Brexit deal.

The meaning of the Leave vote is being defined in the Tory leadership contest; but we will not know what it means even after that contest is decided. The actual definite result of the Leave vote, as Peter Catterall of Westminster University has put it, is that "we will get a change of government in the autumn to something people didn't vote for... we're going to get a more hardline Tory government, and if that had been on the ballot paper it probably wouldn't have succeeded."

THATCHER

Or as Margaret Thatcher's former Chancellor Nigel Lawson has said: "The vote to leave the EU is a 'historic opportunity' to finish the job Margaret Thatcher started".

The chief conclusion for the labour movement is to reject all arguments that the referendum result puts a democratic obligation on Labour to give up on freedom of movement in Europe, to abandon migrant workers' rights, and or to accept the definition of "Leave" given by whatever Tory faction comes out on top.

If we organise and keep up the pressure, there should be and will be a range of openings to limit the breaking of links to a minimum — perhaps to the "Norway option", EEA membership, essentially three-quarters EU membership with freedom of movement — or even to win a new and better democratic mandate to stop EU exit altogether.

The final twist to this story is: where do the pro-Leave left, the SP and SWP, stand now? They will surely oppose the different Tory Brexit options, all manifestly right-wing, if only because of their "principle" that you always vote for what puts the messiest spanner in the works.

So they're telling people: "We are for Leave, but against every halfway possible way to Leave; we're for Leave, but we'll obstruct every proposal to make it happen". And they want to be reckoned as honest socialists, not opportunist demagogues?

Fight anti-migrant racism

By Rosalind Robson

A shocking spike in hate crimes across Britain has been recorded up to and since the vote to leave the European Union.

People from quite diverse nationalities and backgrounds, including Eastern and Western Europeans, Muslims and North Americans, have reported acts of intimidation and harassment to the police and the media.

The Huffington Post and the Post-Ref-Racism initiative on Facebook have documented the abuse.

A lot of the abuse has been racist and xenophobic comments on Twitter and other social media. Much of it has been verbal and physical aggression on the streets and graffiti.

Some broadcast journalists have

experienced racism and spoken of it on TV. BBC reporter Sima Kotecha returned home to Basingstoke and was abused with a racial slur she said hadn't heard "since the 80s". BBC journalist Trish Adudu in Coventry was set upon and called the n-word.

It seems the vote has emboldened people who already held anti-migrant, racist and xenophobic views. From the nature of the attacks (on people of Asian and African and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds) some people believe, or want to believe, that the vote was against all migrants, not just EU migrants.

Who is the typical perpetrator? Not just ground-down, angry older individuals who have held on to racist views that were once commonplace. There are, unfortunately, newer forms of anti-migrant sentiments, attitudes which



are spreading to broader layers of people, including young people. For example, one of the reported incidents was the graffiti "go back to Romania" in some school toilets.

There is also an immediate material threat to EU migrants. Europeans working in the hospitality sector are vulnerable to verbal and physical abuse. In Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire anti-migrant

cards were posted through the doors of Polish people.

The labour movement has a particular responsibility to defend EU migrants and all BAME people from these attacks. Part of that fight means redoubling our efforts to fight "austerity", and developing stronger links with workers in Europe.

Chilcot and Labour democracy

By Gerry Bates

Jeremy Corbyn was right in his response to the Chilcot report on the 2003 invasion of Iraq, published on 6 July.

The invasion was “an act of military aggression launched on a false pretext... [which] led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and the displacement of millions of refugees. It devastated Iraq’s infrastructure and society. The occupation fostered a lethal sectarianism... that turned into a civil war...”

“While the governing class got it so horrifically wrong — many of our people actually got it right.

“It wasn’t that we those of us who opposed the war underestimated the brutality or crimes of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship. Indeed, many of us campaigned against the Iraqi regime...”

“We now know the House was misled in the run-up to the war...”

What he missed out was the way that Tony Blair’s suppression of democracy in the Labour Party freed Blair’s hands to back the invasion.

There was no proper debate in the Labour Party about it. Labour’s National Executive had a series of votes, effectively to give Blair a free hand. Representatives from unions opposed to the war went along with it because opaque procedures made them pretty much free from scrutiny by their unions’ members.

The rail union RMT tried to get an emergency motion onto the agenda at the 2003 Labour Party conference. It was fobbed off, with the acquiescence of the big unions, and a vote was taken only on a bland and unamendable “policy document”, after a very rigged debate.

There was nothing vivid about the democracy of the Labour Party at the time of the Vietnam war, in the 1960s and early 1970s. It was enough to rule out any serious move for British troops to join the USA in Vietnam.



Blair flouted Labour Party democracy to push through the decision to go to war. We must learn the lessons.

By 2003 the democratic channels had ceased to be able to control a leader like Tony

Blair who would write privately to George W Bush: “I will be with you, whatever”. The labour movement should never again allow its organisations to be reduced to the condition where such things can be done.

And that means, in the first place, that we must resist the Labour would-be coup-makers. Their aim — even if they eventually find someone young to front their operation who didn’t back the Iraq invasion — is exactly to reduce the movement in that way.

actly to reduce the movement in that way.

Iraq: why Bush invaded, and why he messed up

AS WE WERE SAYING

By Martin Thomas (2010)

Want to know the reasons for the 2003 invasion of Iraq? Better read the testimony by Paul Wolfowitz — US deputy Defense Secretary at the time of the invasion — to a US Congress committee on 25 February 1998 than Tony Blair’s words to the UK Iraq Inquiry on 29 January 2010.

Blair gave, as the *Financial Times* reported, a “typically smooth” and “lawyerly” story. Wolfowitz was arguing a case, not trying to gloss things over after the event.

Wolfowitz’s argument was mostly about the Gulf region, not just Iraq. After the US war against Saddam in 1991, he said: “We are in a position, essentially, of having gone to the local neighbourhood and gotten a whole bunch of businessmen or shopkeepers to say they’ll witness against the head of the mafia in the area because we’ve promised to send him up for life, and they’ll never see him again and they’ll be safe. And eight years later, the guy is on parole...”

So the USA should invade, or else see “the gradual collapse of US policy” aimed at containing and undermining Saddam’s regime.

Wolfowitz told the incredulous Congressmen that toppling Saddam would be easy. “It would take a major invasion with US ground forces”? No. That “seriously overestimates Saddam Hussein”. The USA should just create “a liberated zone in Southern Iraq”, and set up a “provisional government of free Iraq” there, which would control the largest oil field in Iraq, and all Iraq’s ports.

From that initial beachhead, Wolfowitz assured the sceptical Congressmen, US-supported Iraqi forces could easily launch war to take the rest of Iraq. “This would be a formidable undertaking, and certainly not one which will work if we insist on maintaining the unity of the UN Security Council... [but] it is eminently possible for a country that possesses the overwhelming power that the United States has in the Gulf”.

Between 1998 and 2003 two things changed. Wolfowitz and others like him came from academia into the inner circles of the new US administration of George W



The neo-cons: Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld and George W. Bush.

Bush. The Al Qaeda attack on New York of 11 September 2001 made the US public willing for war. The US administration knew that Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with Al Qaeda, but they were happy to surf on the popular confusion. A US opinion poll in September 2003 found that 47% of Americans thought Saddam had been directly involved in organising 9/11, 16% were not sure, and only 37% knew he wasn’t.

There had been three large wars in a row which the USA had fought with minimal casualties and quick victories: Kuwait 1991, Kosova 1999, and (or so it then seemed) Afghanistan 2002.

George W Bush’s inner circle thought they had a “window of opportunity” to reshape the world through US military might. They thought they could do it in the same way that the USA had reshaped large parts of the world after 1945, and that hard US diplomatic pressure, plus US aid to the Afghan mujahedeen, had toppled Stalinism and reshaped Russia and Eastern Europe in 1989-91.

Condoleezza Rice said: “In 1947... we were talking about the rebuilding of Europe. We were talking about the rebuilding of Asia. Now we’re talking about the extension of the paradigm of progress... to a whole range of

people”. She was anxious to “fulfill this historic moment in which we get to extend to the rest of the world what we and Europe have enjoyed for this last 50 years”.

US ideologues said that a short, sharp US military blow, shattering Saddam’s regime, would open the way to a world-market-friendly Iraqi regime which would be a lever to help the USA reshape the whole Middle East along the lines of world-market-friendly economics, and workable bourgeois-democratic (or semi-democratic, or quarter-democratic) regimes. And the chance given by the US public’s temporary will for war must not be missed. Otherwise Saddam’s regime would gradually re-establish its influence in the region after the setback of 1991. (Blair’s version of this: if the USA and its allies had not invaded in 2003, then they would have “lost their nerve” to act.)

The other regimes in the region, other than Israel’s, were all worrying: dynastic-militarist regimes, old, gradually-decaying, likely to be replaced by Islamic clerical-fascist governments when the dynasties finally collapsed unless the US could give a boost to a preferable alternative.

That was the calculation. That is why in the first emergency meeting of the National Security Council after 9/11, Wolfowitz’s De-

fense Department boss Donald Rumsfeld notoriously asked: “Why shouldn’t we go against Iraq, not just al-Qaeda?”

Everything in Blair’s evidence besides the admission that he had told Bush in mid-2002 that he would support him come what may was largely beside the point.

Blair tried to use 9/11 as an “excuse” for invading Iraq, but the 2003 invasion unleashed a series of smaller 9/11s on the people of Iraq. The civilian toll, at the very lowest count, is 95,158 since 2003. Even now, there were 22 bombings in the 20 days from 28 December to 16 January. The bourgeois-democratic (or semi-democratic, or quarter-democratic) transformation of the Middle East looks no nearer. Islamic clerical-fascism is stronger rather than weaker.

“What people are not grasping here”, said John Pike of GlobalSecurity.org back in 2003, “is that after Iraq they [the Wolfowitzes] have got a long list of countries to blow up. Iraq is not the final chapter, it’s the opening chapter”.

Have we at least proved Pike wrong? Has the terrible, chaotic cost of the Iraq invasion at least ruled out repetitions soon?

Wolfowitz left office in spring 2005, and Rumsfeld in November 2006. 57% of people in the USA now say invading Iraq was wrong, and there have generally been over 50% saying that ever since the battle of Fallujah in April 2004. The USA’s standing in the world is reduced, because of the financial crisis of September-October 2008 as well as Iraq, and President Obama is deliberately and openly adapting policy to the fact.

There is a relative majority in the USA still for sending more troops to Afghanistan, though many in that majority will be people who hope that a troop boost will secure half-workable conditions for quickly withdrawing, rather than people sharing the mindset of Wolfowitz or Rumsfeld.

Possibly Pike is being proved wrong. But it is not yet certain. The Iraq Inquiry will not help much. What will help is a clear drive in the labour movement to oust the Blair and Brown cliques, and restore a Labour Party susceptible to trade-union opposition to war.

• From *Solidarity* 166, 4 February 2010.

Chakrabarti emphasises free speech

By Ira Berkovic

The inquiry into antisemitism in the Labour Party, headed by lawyer and civil rights advocate Shami Chakrabarti, has concluded that, while Labour is not “over-run” with any form of racism, “an occasionally toxic atmosphere is in danger of shutting down free speech in the party”.

The report makes a number of recommendations as to how to detoxify that atmosphere.

Many are around the use of language. Chakrabarti condemns the use of the epithet “Zio”, an abbreviation of “Zionist” pioneered by the far right but disgracefully embraced by some on the far left. She counsels caution with the term “Zionist” itself, rightly advising that it should be used “advisedly”, rather than “euphemistically” or as a term of political or personal abuse.

The report acknowledges the complexity and multiplicity of the historical meanings attached to the term, within its overarching meaning as a supporter of Jewish statehood. She advises strongly against the use of “Hitler, Nazi, and Holocaust metaphors, distortions, and comparisons in debates about Israel-Palestine”, and says that “excuse for, denial, approval, or minimisation of the Holocaust, and attempts to blur responsibility

for it, have no place in the Labour Party.”

These recommendations are a challenge to the far left, inside the party and out, sections of which have been guilty of all the errors Chakrabarti counsels against. Her inquiry does not attempt an analysis of where such errors might stem from. Workers’ Liberty has long argued that they are almost-inevitable consequences of a Stalinist-originated far-left common sense that exceptionalises and essentialises Israel and, by extension, the majority of the world’s Jews who, for reasons of historical experience, feel some level of affinity with it, however loose, and however much they oppose the policies of its government.

The report emphasises the necessity of free speech and debate. “We must never”, Chakrabarti writes, “run away from dialogue and debate.” Party factions both left and right should embrace this spirit, rather than either denouncing those who disagree with them on this issue as Zionist witch-hunters (as in the case of some on the left), or attempting to suspend, ban, or expel members on the left of the party, as the right has done.

Chakrabarti also recommends the creation of a transparent complaints procedure, which she presumably intends would have a wider application than complaints about anti-semitism. She condemns the often reflex use of unilateral suspensions, notionally by the



NEC but “in practice by the General Secretary and his/her staff”. The shadowy “Compliance Unit” is not mentioned in the report, but Chakrabarti is obviously keen to inject the Labour Party’s disciplinary procedure with some basic principles of “natural justice”.

That is welcome. However, her precise recommendations, such as that disciplinary power be transferred from the NEC to the National Constitutional Committee, and that

the party appoint a “General Counsel” (a kind of resident lawyer to advise them on the legality and natural-justice-basis of their disciplinary proceedings), risk leaving the levers of disciplinary power in the hands of those whom it is not always easy for ordinary party members to hold to account. How, for example, would the “General Counsel” be removed or replaced if party members found their advice lacking?

Also welcome are Chakrabarti’s recommendation for a range of sanctions (such as warnings, fixed-term suspensions, requirements for apologies or reparations, etc.), rather than mere expulsion, and her opposition to lifetime bans.

A section on training and education within the party invokes the spirit of the working-class self-education movement of the early 20th century, which Workers’ Liberty and others have long argued should be revived.

The debate around the issues underpinning the incidents which led to the inquiry — around Israel/Palestine, Jewish nationalism, and more — will and must continue. Chakrabarti’s inquiry is less of an intervention into that, or any other, political debate than it is a series of recommendations on how such debate should be conducted.

As far as they go, many of those recommendations are welcome and should be acted on.

Free movement for all!

LABOUR

Martin Thomas argues (Solidarity 409) that immigration bans are not always a means for the capitalist class to micro-manage labour supply.

He cites Australia in 1901 as an example of a capitalist government who reluctantly introduced immigration bans to appease racists. But in 2016 in Britain, most non-EU migrants have to a. have a job offer with a salary exceeding £20,800 (preferably in a sector where there is a shortage of British workers) b. be able to financially support themselves c. pass a medical test at their own expense d. pass an English test.

Brexit Tories want to impose this or similar on EU citizens as well. Is this not micro-managing labour supply?

Immigration controls necessarily involve overwhelming state violence against people who have committed no crime but are merely moving around. Contrary to Martin’s bizarre claim, there are no means of restricting someone’s movement “gently”. Exposing this fact can lead to broader questioning about capitalist society — a society which neurotically insists on people being in the “right” place and is prepared to see people die rather than move.

In contrast, (to use Martin’s reasoning) the argument that migrants are an “economic and cultural boon” implies that we might support immigration bans for migrants will not bring economic or cultural boons, or that an Australian based points system is otherwise desirable but the overhead costs of implementation outweigh the benefits.

We should aspire to live in a world where even unproductive and bland people are free to move around.

Todd Hamer, Cornwall

Corbyn: their criticism and ours

By Colin Foster

Some of the Labour coup-makers say they have no disagreement with Jeremy Corbyn’s policies, and value his kindness and his personal qualities.

But, they say, with a sigh elaborately staged for the audience, somehow Corbyn doesn’t have what it takes to lead, to unite, to win an election.

So they’ve resigned, and try to hold the Labour Party hostage in order to force Corbyn to quit.

It’s all a fake. If they really had a better leader to propose, then they’d choose a better time, nominate that better leader, and let the Labour Party and trade union membership vote on the candidates.

Instead they have gone for a staged wrecking operation, just at the time when the Tories are at each others’ throats and politics is in flux, after 23 June.

They parade one Martin Waplington who says he met “a man who looked like Jeremy Corbyn” in a tapas bar in Waterloo on 10 June, and that man said he would vote to leave the EU.

They claim Corbyn was not eloquent enough for Remain, when in fact most of them said nothing in the referendum campaign or joined the Tories’ platforms (while Corbyn, rightly, campaigned separately), and none of them defended freedom of movement as Corbyn did.

After the Chakrabarti inquiry reported on 1 July, they said nothing about the substance of the report, but went for what Shami Chakrabarti herself called “deliberate misrepresentation of the leader’s speech by people who are very quick to misunderstand and condemn”.

Much could be said in justified criticism of Corbyn. In fact, much has been said by us in justified criticism of Corbyn. But it is not

along the lines that the coup-makers “have a point”, and we should seek some middle ground between him and then. On the contrary: it is along the lines that Corbyn has allowed himself too much to be pushed by them onto the defensive and into crisis-management mode.

As we noted back in July 2015: Corbyn “has been a consistent rebel in Parliament against the Labour leadership. His local record of support for workers’ and community struggles, including against local Labour council administrations, is excellent.”

“But Jeremy Corbyn’s broader politics have changed [from those he had when he worked with us on *Socialist Organiser* in 1979-80]. Today he writes regularly for the *Morning Star*, the paper linked to the Communist Party of Britain, which bills him as ‘a friend of the Star’...”

“On some issues publicly (and possibly on many privately) Corbyn is better than the *Morning Star*. He supports Tibet’s national rights. He opposed Russia’s seizure of Crimea and ‘Russian militarism’ in Ukraine. In... June 2015 he wrote: ‘There are strong arguments for staying in the EU’...”

SOCIALISM

But, as we also noted, “Jeremy Corbyn is surely a socialist. But... he rarely or never says that.

“He calls for a ‘popular movement against cuts’. He advocates ‘raising taxes for the very richest, collecting tax from corporations’. But not social ownership of industry...”

“On international politics, mostly, he limits himself to deploring military moves by the US and its allies and appealing for peace...”

Corbyn’s official declarations to parliament show him receiving “up to £5000” each year from 2009 to 2012 for interviews on the Iranian-government-run Press TV. Unlike some other Labour MPs who have taken money

from right-wing media, he has maintained independence, speaking out against “the arrest, torture and murder of protesters” in Iran; but his stress has usually been more, and too much more, on the desirability of diplomacy and negotiations. As Iranian socialist Maziar Razi told *Solidarity*, we should call on Corbyn to loudly “support Iranian workers... and give the £20,000 to the families of worker political prisoners”.

Some say Corbyn is “incompetent” as Labour leader. There is no single job of “Labour leader” in relation to which competence or incompetence can be judged. Harold Wilson was a “competent” fake-left leader between 1963 and 1976 — “competent” at fobbing off the left impulses of the 1960s and 70s. Tony Blair was a “competent” right-wing leader, at least up until his decision on Iraq — “competent” at swinging Labour to soft-Thatcherism and crushing labour-movement democracy.

What the coup-makers want is a leader who will be “competent” (maybe through “soft-left” tactics, like Neil Kinnock after 1983) in taming and then crushing the Labour revival of recent times, blocking moves to reopen Labour Party democracy, and marginalising the trade unions.

The Labour Party certainly needs to do more than it is doing now to rouse its members, to inspire and convince supporters who see little hope and maybe voted Leave in protest, to win over wavering voters. That has to be done by working to change public opinion. Not in the Blair-Brown way, by seeking bland speech-writers’ phrases designed to placate public opinion while avoiding commitments.

Push back the coup-makers! Create the space for a new Labour mobilisation which can convince voters and become the base for a real Labour government serving working-class interests.

Flood into the Labour Party!

Over 100,000 new people have joined the Labour Party in the last couple of weeks, most of them pro-Corbyn. Momentum, the left Labour campaign group, has doubled from 6,000 to 12,000 members.

Dozens of constituency Labour Parties have voted confidence in Jeremy Corbyn at crowded meetings, and some no confidence in their anti-Corbyn Labour MPs. Where some constituency Labour Parties (ten or so, as of 7 July) have voted no confidence in Corbyn, or defeated motions supporting Corbyn, that has been at crowded meetings where typically, as one activist reports, "the chair just kept calling 'random people' who were all Blairites".

Thousands have joined pro-Corbyn rallies and street demonstrations. About 260,000 have signed an online petition backing Corbyn against the Labour right's attempted coup. For now (7 July), Corbyn and the unions are standing firm.

To continue, to expand, to organise this flood of new people into the Labour Party, and also out of it to organise constituency Young Labour groups, is the activity now which will make most difference for the future.

Millionaire novelist and keen Blairite Robert Harris has made an appeal for people who think like him to join the Labour Party to oust Corbyn, and the right-wing group Labour First is making a similar drive. But many more people can, with an effort, be recruited into the Labour Party from the left.

RECREATE

And that new flood can recreate a living, democratic political labour movement, a movement capable of evolving serious working-class policies to address the social discontent showed both in the Leave vote and in the pro-Remain anger on the streets since the 23 June referendum, and of winning a majority for those policies by argument and debate.

The coup-makers want, instead of a party able and willing to fight to shape public opinion and convince people, a party which lives off "soundbites" crafted to placate public opinion but form a non-committal cover for continuing neoliberal policies. After 23 June, they want to aim for a Labour/Tory consensus on the mechanics of Brexit, while Corbyn and McDonnell stand for an independent Labour line, and McDonnell on 5 July reaffirmed that he would continue to fight for freedom of movement.

A strong influx can marginalise the coup-makers, and force them either to buckle under or to quit. Reviving the movement is the big issue at stake in this contrived Labour crisis, whatever happens over the next week or so.

Liam Young has written in the *New Statesman*: "I urge opponents of Jeremy Corbyn to put up their candidate... Let's... hold the one vote that counts". The Labour right and soft-left should put up or shut up.

If the coup-makers' pious talk about uniting the movement and widening Labour's support were sincere, then they would have picked a suitable time — not now, when the Tories are tearing strips off each other — got the 50 nominations for a leader candidate, and had a new vote in due order.



Liverpool Momentum demonstration in support of Corbyn and against the coup was one of many across the UK

They didn't do that, because they thought that then Corbyn would win. So they set up a crisis designed to force Corbyn to resign and enable the right-wing to push in a new leader without giving the members real choice.

Only 14 Labour MPs backed Corbyn in the summer 2015 leadership election, according to the well-connected George Eaton of the *New Statesman*. Many of the rest have been just waiting their time for a coup.

First it was the Oldham West by-election of December 2015. The Labour right hoped for a poor result which would give them a lever to oust Corbyn. But Labour won. Then it was the local elections of May 2016. The Labour right privately craved a big setback which would help them overturn the result of the September 2015 leader election. But Labour did okay.

Finally the Labour right seized on the dismay caused by 23 June. Angela Eagle had praised Jeremy Corbyn's Remain campaigning on 13 June: "Jeremy is up and down the country, pursuing an itinerary that would make a 25-year-old tired. He has not stopped". The Labour right and soft-left never really started on Remain campaigning, or joined platforms with Cameron and the pro-Remain Tories. Tom Watson and Ed Balls undermined the Remain case just days before 23 June by declaring that free movement of workers from Europe into Britain must be stopped.

WORKING-CLASS VOTERS

Now the right and soft left declared that Corbyn had campaigned too weakly.

They seized on the disaffection among older, worse-off, white-British working-class voters, caused by decades of Blair-Brown policies which had dismissed mass unemployment, contracting-out, widening inequality, and welfare cuts as inevitable blemishes on the great sun of cosmopolitan modernisation and progress, and blamed that disaffection not on themselves but on Corbyn.

Unite union general secretary Len McCluskey has charged that the coup was or-

ganised through the offices of Portland Communications, a PR firm to which Alastair Campbell (Tony Blair's spin-doctor), Jimmy Leach ("head of digital communications" for Blair and Brown), and Kitty Ussher (former PPS to Margaret Hodge, and an economy minister under Brown), are the three "Strategic Counsel".

Certainly Portland Communications had foreshadowed the coup back in January 2016: "The 'Anyone But Corbyn' MPs are getting organised.... [there is a] rumoured NATO-style pact amongst moderate members of the Shadow Cabinet which would mean mass resignations if key moderates are removed from posts". And certainly there is a whole small army of Blair-Brown "New Labour" operatives entrenched in the PR, think-tank, and NGO industries clustered round Westminster.

The famous figures of the Labour right have stayed in the shadows. They know they can't win in an open right/left battle against Corbyn. They have pushed forward people with a bland or soft-left profile. John McTernan, an ultra-Blairite, Tony Blair's former chief political adviser, has recommended Angela Eagle on exactly those grounds: a way to get the "left" to kill the left. "As a figure from the Left, neither a Brownite nor a Blairite [really? but that's what he writes], she [Eagle] can truthfully tell the party members that she tried to work with Corbyn and that it failed". Word is that Peter Mandelson and Margaret McDonagh have privately promised to campaign for Eagle.

The coup-makers evidently haven't yet resolved their differences about an anti-Corbyn candidate, but they may yet find some younger MP with some soft-left image to pose as the "unity candidate".

We should remember 1983. The Labour ranks had erupted after 1979. The "dream ticket" of Neil Kinnock (soft left) and Roy Hattersley (old right) was sold as achieving peace and unity and yet safeguarding the left-wing gains of the early 1980s, but in fact it opened the door for the relentless right-wing push which ended in Blairism and the crushing of Labour Party democracy. A soft-left "unity candidate" today, backed behind

the scenes by the hard-headed right, would have the same function.

It's a much older pattern than 1983: Thermidor. The winding back of the French revolution started with a coup in July [Thermidor] 1794, ostensibly by more moderate Jacobins to restrain Robespierre's excesses. Within months there was White Terror in many areas. Despite a number of new revolutionary surges, politics moved backwards from then for many years.

Some MPs may split. They can be seen off. In 1981 four top-ranking leaders split from Labour to form the SDP. They took 28 MPs with them. By the end of 1981, the SDP, with the new alliance it had formed with the Liberals, was at 50.5% in the opinion polls, ahead of Labour on 23.5%.

But the SDP had no solid roots. They helped to lose Labour the 1983 election and enable Thatcher to continue with her work, but in the longer term they were nothing more than a vehicle for the transfer of a few Labour personalities to the Liberals.

Defence of Corbyn now is the only way to a revived political labour movement which can bring forth better MPs, better leaders.

Join Labour and organise!

- Join Labour and get involved in your ward, constituency and Young Labour activities.
- Recruit new members; make an appeal to young people to join the party.
- Push for all-members' meetings to discuss the future of the Labour Party and call the coup-organisers to account.
- Join Momentum, get involved with and set up constituency left caucuses.
- Campaign for working-class policies in your union and Labour Party.
- Organise rallies and meetings in support of Corbyn and socialism.

Summer schedule:

Solidarity 412, 22 July; 413, 10 August; 414, 31 August

1960-1: when Labour MPs organised to defy Party democracy

By Sean Matgamna

At its Scarborough conference in 1960, the Labour Party voted in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain.

This decision had tremendous implications for British politics, for it opened a fundamental breach in Labour-Tory foreign and “defence” policy bipartisanship, one of the pillars on which class collaboration rests and on which depends the possibility of orderly changes in party government at Westminster.

British unilateral nuclear disarmament implied the disruption of NATO and probably British withdrawal from the western military alliances, all of which relied on nuclear weapons. In 1960 Britain still had an empire of sorts, claimed a “special relationship” with the USA, and still had some weight in the affairs of the world. The conference vote committed the Labour Party to challenge policies and commitments which the British ruling class considered fundamental to its interests.

The story of how the ruling class fought back, relying on its supporters in the Labour Party led by Parliamentary Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell, and how in a matter of months they whipped the Labour Party back into line with the ruling class’s political needs, is a tale that sheds much light on the problems of bringing about change in the Labour Party. The struggle one of the most important and decisive political experiences for the post-war Labour left and for the revolutionary left too.

As a result of their bitter disappointment with the outcome of the 1960-1 struggle between left and right in the Labour Party, the major Trotskyist organisation of that time — the Socialist Labour League, later called the Workers’ Revolutionary Party — would turn away from the Labour Party, pioneering the sort of politics today still expressed by the Socialist Workers’ Party.

In the late 1950s a great wave of alarm at the prospect of nuclear war ran through Britain and many other countries. People had not got used to living in a long-term nuclear stalemate, and the idea that it could continue for decades would have been considered improbable. The eruption of the cold war into nuclear holocaust seemed an imminent threat

in every conflict involving the USA and the USSR.

Of 443 resolutions at the 1957 Labour Party conference, no less than 127 were concerned with nuclear weapons or general disarmament. A resolution from Norwood Labour Party, inspired by Trotskyists, advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament was defeated at the 1957 conference — but only after Aneurin Bevan, the personality around whom the Labour left had crystallised since 1951, had marked his reconciliation with the right wing with a speech explaining that he, as a future British Foreign Secretary, could not “go naked into the conference chamber”, denuded of British nuclear weapons. But Bevan failed to carry the *Tribune* left with him.

MOVEMENT

The movement against nuclear weapons continued to grow despite the opposition of the Labour Party (and of the then 35,000-strong Communist Party, which initially denounced the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) for “splitting the peace movement”).

At Easter 1958, 59, and 60 there were enormous CND marches from the Nuclear Research Establishment at Aldermaston to London. Each year the march got bigger and bigger, reaching 100,000 at Easter 1960 and 150,000 in 1961. Support for unilateralism became powerful in the trade unions, partly through the work of Transport and General Workers Union general secretary Frank Cousins.

Even the Communist Party felt obliged to abandon opposition to CND. That gave unilateralism a big boost in unions like the engineers’ union and threw the Electricians’ Union, then controlled by the CP, behind unilateralism.

At the Scarborough conference the Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC) resolution of support for the western military alliances and their nuclear weapons was defeated by 300,000 votes. A resolution from the TGWU committing the Labour Party to unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons was carried by a majority of 43,000.

Moving the NEC resolution, Sam Watson struck the two keynotes of the right-wing

campaign. Witch-hunting — unilateralists should not be in the Labour Party: “We have no right to accept in our movement communists, Trotskyists, and fellow-travellers”. And the demand that unilateralists draw some logical conclusions: he asked them if they really wanted to leave NATO. Did they understand the implications of what they were proposing? In fact, all the leading Labour Party unilateralists wanted to stay in NATO. The politics of the unilateralists tended to be pacifistic and utopian. Generally they did not grasp how fundamental a challenge to the ruling class their proposal was.

Under Hugh Gaitskell, the Labour Party was then led by a hard right-wing sect grouped around the magazine *Socialist Commentary*, which persecuted even the soft left. Many of them went on 20 years later to found the SDP. They were not used to the “fudge and mudge” techniques of a Harold Wilson, the techniques Neil Kinnock would later use.

Before the vote at Scarborough, Hugh Gaitskell boldly told the delegates what the right would do if they lost. The Parliamentary Labour Party would, he said, not be bound by a decision it did not agree with. The MPs supported the NEC policy, “so what”, he asked, “do you expect them to do? Go back on the pledges they gave the people who elected them from their constituencies? [...] Do you think that we can become overnight the pacifists, unilateralists and fellow-travellers that other people are?” Even if they lost the vote, they would “Fight, fight and fight again to save the party we love”.

He told conference in the same speech that the leadership of the Labour Party was none of its business. “The place to decide the leadership is not here but in the Parliamentary Labour Party”.

On November 3, the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party endorsed Gaitskell’s revolt against Labour Party conference when it re-elected him as Party leader by 166 votes to 81 (for Harold Wilson) and seven abstentions. The majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party would pursue Gaitskell’s policy, not that of the party.

Immediately the right began to organise its supporters. The “Campaign for Democratic Socialism” was set up as a semi-secret right-wing combat organisation which sent circu-

lars marked “Private and Confidential” to key activists, coordinating their fight to reverse the Scarborough decision.

Its secretary was William Rodgers, later an MP and a founder of the SDP.

Gaitskell’s campaign benefited from the unanimous backing of the bourgeois press. It was adequately supplied with funds whose origins were, understandably, the subject of many rumours. The Labour Party machine swung squarely behind Gaitskell and against the Party conference, organising meetings for Gaitskell and his supporters. Polite left-wing “requests” that these meetings should also feature supporters of Labour Party policy were turned down. Naturally some of these meetings became rowdy demonstrations against Gaitskell.

Victory at Scarborough brought the left smack up against the unyielding Gaitskellites, fighting to “save” the Labour Party for class collaboration, entrenched in the Parliamentary Labour Party, using the Party machine against Conference decisions, and quite prepared to split the Party in order to “save it”.

DEFEAT

Before the Scarborough Conference, Anthony Crosland, one of Gaitskell’s lieutenants, had written in the *New Leader*, an American publication, that a conference defeat for the right wing might be to their advantage.

It would give the Parliamentary Labour Party the chance to dramatically assert its independence by defying Party conference, and thus the balance of power in the Party would be shifted in favour of the PLP.

The NEC decided to back Gaitskell and the PLP against Party conference. (Tony Benn MP, who was not then, so far as I know, a unilateralist, resigned from the NEC in protest at its attitude to party democracy). Using its majority on the NEC, the right went on the offensive immediately after the conference. On November 23 the NEC launched a witch-hunt against the youth paper *Keep Left*; in order to split the left and intimidate the feeble spirits, they picked on an easily identifiable target, the largest organised Marxist tendency in the Labour Party. (*Keep Left* was the youth paper of the Socialist Labour League).

Faced with the vigorous assault of the right, the Tribunites feebly struck out at their left. *Tribune* took up the rallying cry that the Marxists had no place in the unilateralist movement because they were not prepared to advocate unilateral nuclear disarmament by the USSR. The AGM of the broad left organisation “Victory For Socialism” in January 1961 appointed one Roy Shaw to review its membership book to see if any known Trotskyists had joined.

In contrast to the right, the official left dawdled and looked for a way to avoid a full-scale political war. To consolidate its Scarborough victory the left needed to face up to the implications of unilateralism, and to organise. *Tribune*, the organ of the “official left”, at that time still had some serious influence on the rank and file. But the organised left was quite weak. Only 100 people attended the annual meeting of the Tribunitite organisation “Victory For Socialism” in 1961. 50 attended the Scarborough fringe meeting

Socialism, direct action and democracy

Is direct action undemocratic? What methods should the labour movement use to defeat the bosses? Should we stick within the law? This new pamphlet discusses these issues and more.

There are decisive turning points in history that shape the future for many years ahead. The British labour movement was brought to such a turning point by the victory of the Thatcherite Tories in the 1979 general election and the events that came after it. The defeat of the labour movement then shaped the social, political, and ethical world we live in now. Was that defeat unavoidable? The revolutionary left argued then that it wasn’t: that if we mobilised our strength we could defeat Thatcher, as we had defeated her Tory predecessors in 1972-4.

This pamphlet deals with the clash of ideas between the revolutionary left and the traditional Labour left then personified by Michael Foot.

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CND marches from London to the Nuclear Research Establishment grew in the lead up to 1960

of the Trotskyist-influenced Clause Four Campaign Committee. But the many thousands of CND supporters and activists formed a reservoir from which a mass left wing could have developed, as part of a fight for the Scarborough decisions.

Unilateralism, then, implied a sharp break with the capitalist establishment and with its Labour supporters. Its natural complement was a break with the root cause of war and of the threat of nuclear war — capitalism. In principle all the leaders of Labour's unilateralist left were long-time reform-socialist opponents of capitalism. But there was for all of them a great gap between being "socialists" in principle and mobilising for a serious anti-capitalist struggle.

If Labour's left had faced up to the fact that unilateral nuclear disarmament could only be carried in society or sustained as Labour Party policy as part of a general anti-capitalist mobilisation of the working class against both Labour's right wing and the capitalists they served, then such a mobilisation could have given real life to a struggle for socialism in the Labour Party. It could have linked up the unilateralists, especially the youth, with activists in the trade unions to transform the Labour Party.

For that to be possible the left would have had to take their own ideas seriously. But they didn't.

In fact the left responded to the Gaitskellites by an ignominious self-disavowal. Immediately after Scarborough, Michael Foot, soon to be returned to Parliament for Nye Bevan's old seat of Ebbw Vale (Bevan had died in July 1960) declared his libertarian support for the right of MPs who disagreed with the Scarborough decisions to vote in Parliament according to their conscience. In other words, the Gaitskellites had a right to defy conference and hijack the Labour Party!

The necessary response to the revolt of the

MPs, a fight to kick them out and replace them, was not even aired for discussion by Tribune. The executive of Victory For Socialism rejected out of hand a proposal by Hugh Jenkins that they should advocate the selection of new candidates where Labour MPs refused to abide by conference decisions.

FIGHT

Rejecting a fight with the Gaitskellites, Tribune had nothing else to do but surrender to the unyielding PLP. Tribune's leaders proclaimed there was an alternative to both surrender and a fight to break the stranglehold of the Gaitskellites: a compromise.

Prominent left-winger Anthony Greenwood MP said at the end of October: "I believe it would be a disaster for anybody to split the Labour Party on an issue which changes from day to day. Neither side can be too dogmatic or demanding". Talk like Greenwood's couldn't mollify the Gaitskellites; it could, however, not fail to dampen down the fighting spirits of those who took Greenwood seriously, and many Labour Party activists did.

Greenwood resigned from the shadow cabinet and told Gaitskell publicly that his behaviour was "quite incompatible with the democratic constitution and spirit of the labour movement". But what to do about it if you rejected the only serious course, a fight to deprive the PLP oligarchs of their position as MPs?

"No doubt also there must be consequential changes in the Labour Party itself. It is too early to discern their exact nature", wrote *Tribune* after Gaitskell announced that the PLP would defy conference. Since no bilateral compromise was possible with the Gaitskellites, *Tribune* now opted for what might be called a "unilateral" compromise, by way of

unilateral political disarmament.

Tribune and the left leaders like Foot shifted their ground decisively. While they remained nominally unilateralist, their specific focus became a criticism of NATO (within which they wished Britain to remain) for being too reliant on nuclear weapons. Their "proposal" changed to the demand for a British declaration that it would never use nuclear weapons first. Should Prime Minister Macmillan and President J F Kennedy be "pressed" to "declare" that they would never use nuclear weapons first? That question, Michael Foot wrote in *Tribune* on 3 March 1961, "goes to the root of the recent controversies about defence in the Labour Party".

Foot was looking for a compromise, or rather a ladder to climb down. But the Gaitskellites gave the left MPs no points for their willingness to "compromise" and to climb down from unilateralism. They insisted that they toe the line of the PLP or get out. They gave them no credit, either, for their docile unwillingness to organise to deprive Gaitskell and the PLP of the right to speak for the Labour Party. A few days after Foot's *Tribune* article, in March 1961, he and four other MPs were expelled from the PLP for daring to defy the PLP whip and vote against the Tory government's air estimates.

Then a dramatic opportunity to endorse something that could be passed off as a "compromise" presented itself to Foot and his friends — the lyingly misnamed "Crossman-Padley compromise".

In February a drafting committee from the TUC and the NEC agreed by 8 votes to 4 to accept a new right-wing "defence" statement (drafted by Denis Healey) for the next Labour Party conference. The dissident minority — Walter Padley, Tom Driberg, Frank Cousins, and the cynical operator Richard Crossman MP — produced their own defence statement. Though three of them at

least were prominent unilateralists, they came out with a "compromise" based on the idea of a British pledge not to strike first.

Tribune jumped at the chance to advocate the "Crossman compromise". Thus it undercut and in effect abandoned the official Labour Party unilateralist position. Foot wrote that it would be a major step forward if the Crossman document (or a less cynical variant on similar lines worked out by Frank Cousins) could "secure the general backing of the Labour Party".

In fact there was never any chance that it would get the backing of the Pentagon and Whitehall-linked Gaitskellites. What was happening was that the left leaders were selling a fake compromise to the unilateralist rank and file. The "compromise" now became the left's alternative to the Healey draft of the right-wing position, and it was touted as a basis for unity. The Crossman-Padley "compromise" was a transparently cynical device to get the left off the hook.

Gaitskell? He referred contemptuously to the wriggling of the Tribunites and justly scorned them for their "lack of principle". The right would concede nothing. Padley's union, the shop workers' union USDAW, adopted the "compromise". Once it had done its work of demobilising and undercutting unilateralism, USDAW abandoned the "compromise"; they did not even move it at the Blackpool party conference of 1961.

The unilateralist victory at the 1960 conference had been something of a windfall, for which the left was unprepared. Almost by accident they had begun to pull down the structures and political prerequisites of class collaboration in Britain, and thus provoked a backlash from the ruling-class agents in the labour movement that, as it turned out, they couldn't handle. Intimidated by the right's threat of a split, the official left ran away in confusion.

The Gaitskellites had the interests of the ruling class and its state system to relate to and preserve. They knew where they stood and were in no doubt where the base line was, beyond which they could not move without betraying their own cause.

By contrast the official left was utterly confused, only half-understanding the meaning and implications of the policy they had won. When the right wing brutally spelled things out for them and told them it wasn't on, they crumbled.

The programme of class struggle and working-class socialism was not adhered to by the mainstream unilateralists, who were at best utopians and frequently conscious left-fakers like Crossman. Hence it was more than a question of the personal character of the lefts. Foot's record before 1960 was not contemptible. It was fundamentally a question of their left-reformist politics and their characteristic failure to think things through to the end and to draw the necessary conclusions in practice from political positions like unilateralism.

Gaitskell followed up his victory at Blackpool in October 1961 with an anti-EEC [the early European Community] campaign that largely disarmed the left. Wilson, succeeding Gaitskell at the beginning of 1963, proceeded to disarm them completely. A former "career leftist", he knew how to throw them inconsequential sops.

The Labour left counted for nothing throughout the 1960s, and until well into the 70s. No defeat is so demoralising as a craven capitulation without a struggle. The tendency that suffers it must inevitably have its belief in itself sapped and undermined. The Bevanite/Tribune left never recovered. It was a new left that grew in the 70s.

• This is a modified version of an article published in *Socialist Organiser* in 1980.

Fossil fuels and the rise of capitalism

Neil Laker reviews *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* by Andreas Malm (Verso, 2016).

“The millowners told the workers to bow down to the steam idol or starve”

Fossil Capital explores the crisis posed by climate change by looking at the origins of capital’s dependence on fossil fuels. It is a significant contribution and a sound introduction to Marxist ecological thought. Above all the book demonstrates how capital accumulation and the global climate have a deep and inseparable relationship, and in particular that the history of the working class is an environmental one.

The question of why capitalism is still overwhelmingly wedded to fossil fuel consumption is approached in two ways: by investigating the original transition to fossil fuels, then asking what the nature of their interrelation with accumulation suggests about the prospect of a sufficient transition to renewable energy. Malm proposes a rereading of the eclipse of water by steam power in the period 1825-1850, arguing that the defeat of the British working class movement was a key moment in the emergence of fossil fuels as the “general lever for surplus value production”. The consequences of the transition — the compulsion to accumulate capital through relative surplus value (the speeding up of production by technical means) — illuminate the difficulties of a going beyond fossil fuel-based capitalism in the present day; while the workers’ movement’s original confrontation with steam offers our movement much to aspire to.

The first trial of Watt’s double-rotating engine in the cotton industry ended poorly, principally due to the costs of the machinery and its fuel compared to the naturally-occurring power of rivers and waterfalls. For a technology with these attributes to court mass popularity, the conditions in industry could only have been such that mill owners prioritised concerns for control over the labour process above the cost of mechanisation. Mill owners sought solutions to the industrial crisis in 1825, which compounded the recurring lapses of wages beneath the cost of subsistence.

In this setting embezzlement was rife and labour militancy was fermenting. But wage rises were “out of the question”, other than where mass strikes forced employers into concession, endangering profits and deepening the crisis further. In this setting a shift to the power loom was a preventative investment against theft; for cotton capital as a whole, it achieved the consolidation of power over the labour process.

Steam power also “had the prime advantage of overcoming the barriers to procurement not of energy, but of labor” in its ability to adapt to the urban environment, thereby “relieving us,” as JR McCulloch referred to his class, “from the necessity of building factories in inconvenient situations merely for the sake of a waterfall. It has allowed mills to be placed in the centre of a population trained to industrious habits”. The proximity of factories to populous towns moreover freed the capitalist from the care and responsibility for child labourers — an advantageous development as many capitalists puzzled over how the coercive apprentice system instilled “no desire to perform labour” among its young participants.

In Marx’s view, machinery is “is a power

inimical to [the worker], and capital proclaims this fact loudly and deliberately, as well as making use of it. It is the most powerful weapon for suppressing strikes, those periodic revolts of the working class against the autocracy of capital”. It was a crucial tool which the mill owners employed to stymie the labour unrest which “threatened to drive the infant factory system into crisis”.

Ultimately the transition to steam power offered capital the ability to discipline labour through relocation to settings with a high surplus population, enabling it to seek out the most profitable pools of labour power, to level down wages, and to enforce an accelerated and regular industrial output. This presentation of the transition as a form of crisis resolution in response to workers’ agitation offers a key insight as to why capital has continued to fuel climate change.

The general adoption of high pressure steam power in British cotton production after 1850 entailed the increasing dependence of economic growth upon a steady expansion in coal supply. In a competitive market this translated to “grow by burning or die”. Malm suggests that this developed to the extent that fossil fuels became “the general lever for surplus-value production”. Thus a significant part of the climate crisis with which we are confronted today was itself the infant of crisis conditions. Capital’s response in that instance was to subject labour to the rhythm of machines — an approach maintained throughout its history.

RESISTANCE

Malm tentatively highlights the environmentalist dimensions to worker resistance to the imposition of machinery, and in particular the 1842 general strike.

“There is a current of unsuccessful opposition to steam running all the way from the Albion Mill to the late nineteenth century, waiting to be uncovered”; its literature bore “the persistent imagery of belching smoke and consuming fire, noxious atmosphere and receding nature, extinct vegetation and unbearable heat — ‘the people looked parboiled.’” But capitalists’ opposition to legislation to limit pollution and the unbearable climate of the factories was successful. Manufacturers commonly claimed the quantity of smoke in Manchester was a barometer of its prosperity.

The effect of the Ten Hours Act (1847) was limited by speeding up the machines through higher pressure. Indeed, according to von Tunzelmann, the Ten Hours Act was “probably the most important determinant of the rise of high-pressure steam and, by extension, the final victory of the engine in the cotton industry (and beyond)”. This illuminates how relative surplus value is a response compelled by labour insurgency in its struggle against capital.

It was a technological and organisational fix to the crisis presented by militant labor, a victory for capital on the back of a military intervention against the attempts at insurrection. The working class movement took



How is climate change linked to the rise of capitalism?

decades to recover from this defeat — with its environmental concerns largely suppressed until the work of avant-garde writers such as William Morris.

The path of capital in spite of the scientific research into global warming reinforces Marxian value theory: “capital recognizes no boundary in nature... solely concerned with the expansion of abstract value, it can drain nature on biophysical resources without really noticing what is in there, its eyes firmly fixed higher” — on its profits. Moreover Malm has transposed Marx’s argument on the organic composition of capital (the ratio of dead to living labor, increasing over time and producing a falling rate of profit) into a rising fossil composition of capital. “[O]perating over the span of history,” the tendency of capital to reduce the portion of human labour relative to machinery “translates into a law of a rising concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere”.

SURPLUS VALUE

These dynamics, plus those of relative surplus value, having been first properly expressed during the consumption of coal and the cotton trade, lay the contradictory foundations of global climate change, through the necessary production of CO₂ as condition to surplus value.

Part of the conditions to accumulation is the primitive accumulation of fossil fuels — “for capitalists to burn fossil fuels, there have to be other capitalists specialized in their production, and for the former to burn more, the latter have to deliver it in greater quantities, the two cycles ever intertwined” — which forms a permanent foundation for the fossil economy.

Malm polemicalises against the dominance of geography in Marxist thinking, but spatial contradictions are dominant in the tendencies he identifies.

The transition to steam was dependent upon the reordering of nature to produce in a “unique form of spatiality” out of the tension between the mobility of the stock (coal) vis-à-vis the “stillness of the

waterwheel”. Likewise, as he traces the development of fossil capital into the present, the dynamic of relocation and mobility is central. For example, Chinese industrial militancy — steadily rising in confidence since 2010 — poses a threat to cheap labour power (pertinently China’s output counted for 55% of the global emissions figure between 2000 and 2006, and up to two thirds afterward).

Yet business owners were shocked at prospects of relocation due to poor fossil fuel infrastructure at alternative sites: Asian and sub-Saharan locations suffer from overburdened electricity grids, while to counter this the Vietnamese state “pledged to accommodate incoming capital — above all by establishing coal mines and coal-fired power plants”. The basic tendency of capital to relocate in pursuit of cheap labour therefore increases carbon intensity. Indeed, “[s]preading factories across more Asian countries to safeguard against bolshiness would translate into more chimneys in more places, more fragmented-integrated production chains, more self-reinforcing spirals of accumulation...”

On this basis Malm adds to Beverly Silver’s observation that “where capital goes, labour-capital conflict shortly follows” by suggesting that “where capital goes emissions will immediately follow”.

Capital’s drive for mobility and flexibility paradoxically “capital ends up fixing it in ultra-heavy means of production and transportation” (power stations, factories, railways etc.), undermining further relocation, as capitalists are inclined to keep their sunk investments in operation for as long as possible. As David Harvey has noted, when “capitalists purchase fixed capital, they are obliged to use it until its value (however calculated) is fully retrieved”.

This basic tendency behind the continued burning of fossil fuels stems from the geographic characteristics of fixed capital, and is exemplified in the fact that two-thirds of American power plants built since the 1890s still remain in use. Until labour challenges the movements inherent to capital accumulation, this is likely to remain the case.

Not their army, or their country

By Sean Matgamna

"The trenches in France are healthier than the slums of Dublin!"

British army recruiting poster, 1916

The big, framed, multi-coloured certificate on our wall in Ennis, in the West of Ireland, puzzled me for a long time when I was very small.

To the right of the fireplace, near the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (in which Jesus Christ wore his wounded, thorn-bound, bleeding heart outside his shirt) it was decorated at the top by a semi-circle of little flags of different sorts. The inscription was what I could not make sense of. It testified that John O'Mahony "had given his life" in July 1916, "to defend the liberty of his country".

It was not my uncle's name – my own name, too, in English, in memory of him – that confused me, but the reference to "his country". Which country? John was in the English army. England was not his country, or mine; and England's army was not the army of Ireland, his country.

I could not identify the Empire flags on the certificate, but I knew the Irish tricolour, and that was not there.

At first I was just puzzled; later, as I learned official 26 Counties history at school, I became vaguely ashamed, even angry. My uncle John died "defending his country" just a few weeks after the English army burned the centre of Dublin and killed 16 of their captured prisoners of war. These were the heroes who, with the earlier Republicans and the Irish saints and missionaries of ancient times and of our own time, were held up to us as embodying the highest ideals of Catholic Ireland.

SEPIA

I was uneasy, but pitying too. I knew John's face, and his story. On the staircase there was a big framed old-fashioned sepia picture of a couple posing in a photographer's studio.

The man, though he had a broad moustache and was in uniform, looked a bit like my father. The woman was bareheaded, in a long-skirted tight-bodied dress. Good-looking people in their twenties, both of them looked out at you boldly, seemingly afraid of nothing.

It was a wedding picture. John and Bid were married, then John's leave was up, and he was gone, for good. I knew Bid. The handsome, bold-eyed woman in the photo was a tall, strong-boned, gaunt-faced old woman, one of the few women in the town who still dressed not in a coat but in the old-fashioned all-covering long black tasseled shawl. She never remarried. She had had a husband for one week.

As I got older, I could make more sense of my father's stories. The high-spirited John got drunk one evening, broke some windows, in a fight perhaps (I can't remember), and the magistrate press-ganged him into the army.

But the magistrates and the others who wielded the pressures of the established order to herd men into the Army did not press-gang all the hundreds of thousands of Irish men who joined up.

Sometimes it was "economic conscription". In places like Ennis, a market town with little industry, the town poor eked out a living as

best they could, hiring out as drovers at fairs, doing building work, cutting firewood in the woods outside the town and hawking it, cutting hazel saplings ("scollops") and selling bundles ("barths") of them for use in thatching houses.

John's brother, Bob, joined the British Army too. He was carrying an enormous bundle of scollops from the woods on his back down miles of country road into the town one day, and having a back-breaking time of it as always. He stopped to rest against a wall, and there and then decided that the army was "better than this". He survived, shell-shocked.

A younger brother, Patrick, followed after them and went through the war unscathed, only to be crippled by a hand-grenade when fighting, probably for mercenary reasons, on the wrong side, the government side, in the Irish civil war of 1922-3.

Another force, the force of family tradition, also pulled them and, I guess, many others towards the British Army. Three of their uncles, and namesakes, John, Bob, Patsy, had been professional soldiers. Two of them, I think, went to India. From all over Ireland the class of town labourers, victims of perpetual underemployment and the half-starvation that went with it, had for generations supplied recruits to the British Army.

LOYALTIES

My father and another brother escaped the pull to go too only because they were still children. But they did not escape the pull of inbuilt, albeit conflicted, loyalties.

To my childish exasperation, not even the struggle for Irish independence and the terrorist campaign of the Black and Tans to suppress the elected Irish parliament, which declared Ireland a Republic in January 1919, eradicated those loyalties. My father would tell stories about the Black and Tan terror, as my mother would, but the ordinary British soldier, my father would say, was decent enough, and would try sometimes to stop the Black and Tans ill-treating people.

He would tell a story about himself aged 14 and his half-blind father being cornered and bullied by sportive Tans on a country road, and "rescued" by ordinary soldiers. Apparently this was a not uncommon experience, and a common feeling about the soldiers.

Nor was it only for economic reasons that men went off to kill other "young men they did not know" and with whom they had no real quarrel. Everywhere in the armed camps of the nations – in Germany, Britain, France, Austria – there was delirious enthusiasm for the war.

It was a break in the dull routine. Men were to be destroyed in the clash of enormous de-personalised military machines. They would go out "over the top" for as long as they lasted against machine guns which scythed them down like corn standing in a field. They had gone off to join the army with images of war as gallantry, adventure, and personal initiative. They died in their millions.

In Ireland people of all sorts and classes flocked to "the colours". By April 1916, when the Rising in Dublin led by Connolly and Pearse began to change the course of Irish history, 150,000 Irish men were in the British army. By the end of the war, over 200,000 Irish were fighting under British flags.

The historian Roy Foster sums up some of the reasons why. "Town labourers predominated over agricultural labourers, often en-



A British Army recruitment poster used in Ireland

couraged by unemployment at home and the prospect of a generous separation allowance for their families; Belfast provided a higher proportion for reasons of proletarianisation as much as Protestantism".

In the north of Ireland, the men who had organised in the Ulster Volunteer Force and armed themselves with imported German guns on the eve of the war to resist the British Liberal Government if it tried to coerce them into a united Ireland, joined up en masse. In Catholic Ireland many thousands had organised and armed themselves in the Irish Volunteers to back Home Rule, and if necessary fight the Northerners and their Volunteer Force. They joined the British Army too, in their big majority, to prove that a Home Rule Ireland would be "loyal" to the Empire. That is what their leaders told them to do.

They met, Northerners and Southerners, Catholics and Protestants, Nationalists and Unionists, far away in France, and found that they could after all unite – in the mass graves of places like Ypres and the Somme.

Orange and Green were united not in the fraternity of an all-Ireland national identity, and not by the benign white with which those who designed the Irish tricolour in the 1840s had linked the Orange and the Green, but by the red, white and blue of the UK flag and the red of their own blood.

MILLIONS

Over a million men, including my uncle John, died in the battle of the Somme, in July 1916, most of them workers from the slums of Berlin, Paris, Manchester, London, and similar places.

Many thousands of them were Irish. A great compact mass of them, 12,000 strong, were Ulster Protestants. The men who had first come together to fight Home Rule, and if necessary England, perished en masse fighting Germany on behalf of England.

Yet that great slaughter helped to transform Ireland. It was not only, perhaps not even mainly, the 1916 Rising that changed the course of Irish politics. It was the attempt to force conscription (introduced in Britain in 1916) on to Ireland which united Catholic Ire-

land behind the coalition that regrouped under the flag of the newly Republican Sinn Féin party – it was a monarchist party until 1917 – which won the November 1918 election on a platform of secession from the United Kingdom.

In the last half of the war, recruitment in Ireland fell off dramatically. According to Foster, "By 1917, figures prepared for the Cabinet showed that the percentage of the male population represented by enlistment was down to 4.96% in Ireland, compared to 17% in England, Scotland and Wales".

The Rising, with the cold-blooded killing afterwards of some of those who surrendered, was no doubt one reason for this.

The great campaign against conscription, in which the Catholic Church and its organisations where central, completed the alienation from the United Kingdom. The young men of Ireland turned from "defending the liberty of their country" to attempting to win it from those with whom they had far greater reason to quarrel than they ever had with Germany.

Some of them helped drive Britain out of Southern Ireland: the most successful Republican field commander in Ireland's war of independence, Tom Barry, had gone through the entire World War in the British Army.

John O'Mahony crawled out of a trench and hoisted a wounded comrade crippled in no-man's-land on his back to bring him in. They were both cut to pieces by machine gun fire. The officer who wrote to tell his wife that he was dead (part of whose letter was printed in the local paper, the *Clare Champion*, from which I take this information) said that he had been "mentioned in dispatches". He was 25 years old.

Everywhere in Europe, soldiers returned embittered. Many of them turned to communism, elaborating a new definition of freedom. One of the millions who died in the great imperialist slaughter, my uncle John, like all the other uncles, brothers, fathers, sons, cousins and nephews who died, was past learning.

• Originally published in *Socialist Organiser*, July 1991

We can do better than this



By Esther Townsend

I was always interested in fairness and justice, and aware that these weren't always so easy to come by.

I had family who were trade unionists and described themselves as socialists and I thought this "socialism" I read about in history books sounded like a great idea, but it was all a bit vague. I had no clue that there were still people out there organising and arguing for it. When I say that now I feel daft, but the left (and to some extent the labour movement) has been pretty invisible to most people for the last 30 or so years.

Some people describe learning about socialist ideas as a "lightbulb moment". It wasn't quite as dramatic for me, but there's something exhilarating about finally understanding how the world really works. Learning a new history, including powerful and moving histories of struggle; understanding what creates problems like poverty, oppression, climate change; that we can fight back; and that there is another way to live.

Working as a children's services social worker I see what capitalism and class society do to people's daily lives.

It leaves people with so little they can't afford to properly feed or clothe their children — then blames them for it. Makes people bully and pick on each other and those more vulnerable, including their babies and children, because better than directing their anger and frustration at those who really cause the problems. Leaves young people feeling so lonely, disempowered or unloved that they run away; get involved in gangs, offending and being exploited; or hurt themselves and other people. I also work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children — families are pushed into sending their chil-



dren, alone, across continents to try to keep them safe and give them opportunities. Yet too often when they arrive they're viewed with suspicion, repeatedly assessed and tested, and treated as "just economic migrants" — as if wanting education, work and a better life is wrong; or as if travelling to an unknown country, alone, at 13, 14, 15 (or any age) isn't terrifying enough.

Every day I think "isn't there something better than this?" The system I work in could be improved — better resourced, more democratic and accountable to workers and families. But it's still based on the idea that abuse and deprivation "just happen". It's down to "bad" individuals. On some level it's acknowledged that problems are socially created, but all we can do is address abuse where we notice it — stick a plaster on to try to heal the damage underneath.

As a socialist you know that this suffering and injustice is unnecessary — that makes it all the more barbaric. In capitalism the means of producing wealth, well-being and happiness exist on a huge scale, but they are owned by, and run in the interests of, a small minority of people. But, as a socialist you also see an alternative and the hope of change. The people who produce the wealth, the working class, can take power, take control of the means of production, make them collective property and use society's wealth for the good of all. This could create a society based on solidarity, where we stop blaming each other and organise collectively to address our problems.

Whether it's dragging down carbon emissions to avoid climate change; abolishing structural forms of oppression; removing the need to worry about basic necessities like

food, housing or healthcare; or making freedom of movement a right for all.

There must be lots of people out there who, like I did, know there's something wrong with the way the world works and feel that we need to fix it, but don't know what the alternative is, or how to achieve it. I felt silly not knowing, but then no one ever helped me think it through! I'm a socialist activist because socialist ideas provide a framework for creating a more equal and liberated society — but also show us it won't happen unless we share those ideas, and organise for that better world.

I'll keep sticking on the plaster — we all will. Because you do what you can now to make life a bit less shit for you and people around you. But can we do better? Yes — I think we can, and I think it's worth fighting for. That's why I'm a socialist.

Arm yourself with the arguments for socialism

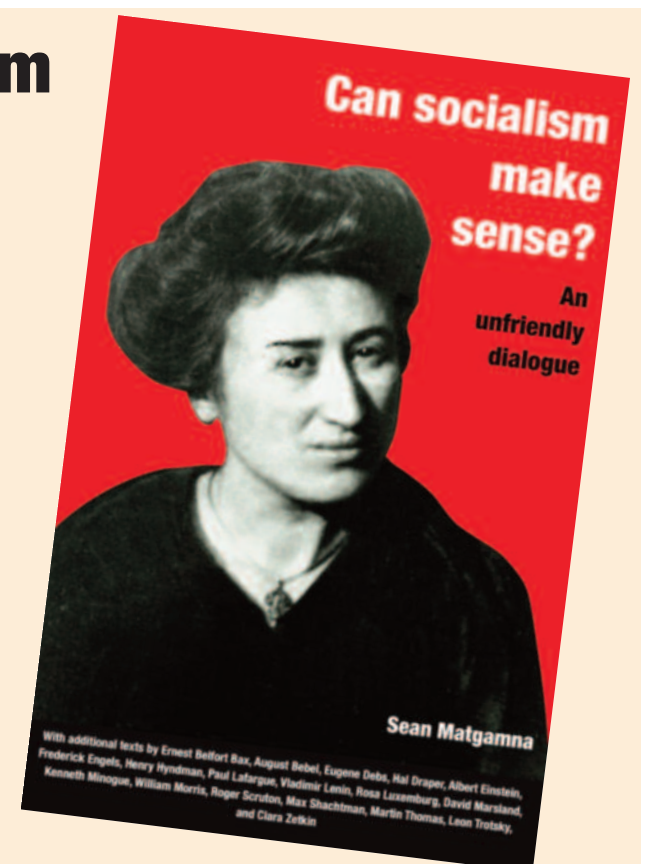
With more and more people calling themselves socialists, in a time when socialism is the most searched word on the Merriam-Webster dictionary website, and a self-confessed socialist is leader of the Labour Party, Workers' Liberty's new books aim to answer the what, why, and how of socialism.

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Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Events

Tuesday 12 July

JC4PM London event
7pm, O2 Forum, 9-17 Highgate Road, London NW5 1JY
bit.ly/29oQ2XF

Wednesday 13 July

Stop Trident lobby of MPs
Noon, Houses of Parliament
bit.ly/29zg4av

Wednesday 13 July

PIPfightback National day of action
1pm, Capita PLC 71 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0XA
bit.ly/29qvvtA

Wednesday 13 July

Lewisham Momentum meeting
7.30pm, Amersham Arms, 388 New Cross Road, SE14 6TY
bit.ly/29zgs8Q

Thursday 14 July

Sit down for the NHS
5pm, St Barts Hospital, London EC1A 7BE
bit.ly/29qU5Bg

Saturday 16 July

National demo: No to austerity, no to racism, Tories out!
Noon, Portland Place, London, W1A 1AA
<http://bit.ly/29tiDsp>

7-10 July

Haringey radical readers
7pm, Big Green Bookshop, Brampton Park Rd, London, N22 6BG
bit.ly/29kwuhI

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Build support for Corbyn in the unions!

LABOUR

By a Unite member

The general secretaries of ten trade unions (all affiliates of the Labour Party) have signed a joint statement giving their continued support to Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader.

It would seem to many that the trade unions are solidly behind Corbyn. However, trade union members should not presume this is so.

Even though the statement gave support to Corbyn against the coup, it didn't say that if a leadership election was called they would back him in that election. The statement calls for unity. And the purpose of Unite leader, Len McCluskey's offer (on 4 July) to broker a deal between Corbyn and the Labour right would have been to seek political compromise. As we go press talks look like being ongoing. If there is a deal we should not expect it to be good.

For many years it was the trade union bureaucracy that kept the Labour right in power. They backed right-wing candidates and supported the right as they removed the democratic structures in the Labour Party. They did this in the name of anti-Toryism. They failed to push Labour to campaign for even basic demands which were in the interests of trade union members, such as repeal of the anti-trade union laws. At party conferences they refused to push for basic democratic rule changes. They would only submit motions to party conferences on subjects that the right would agree with.



Jeremy Corbyn speaking at TUC conference in 2015

A year ago the leadership of the trade unions had no idea that we would soon be in a situation where it was possible to transform the Labour Party into a party that could provide a working-class alternative in British politics. I doubt many of them want the movement that makes this a possibility to continue.

LEADERS

However, when trade union leaders make their decisions they are influenced by factors other than their own wishes.

They know that many trade union activists and members were among those who voted for Corbyn. They have seen the large protests in many cities backing Corbyn. They know that Corbyn's politics are closer to union policies than any other potential Labour leader. And they know that for them to stay in position or get re-elected they will need the support

of those members. They are under pressure.

We need to continue to demand that the trade unions continue to back Corbyn and don't shift to their support to a "soft left" figure in Labour who will reopen the road for the right wing to regain political dominance.

We need to demand that the unions go out and convince their members to join the Labour Party and that it is done quickly before the Labour Party machine stops new people joining.

We need to argue against any deal in the future which involves Corbyn standing down, that allows a curtailment of democracy or agreement to ditch commitment to policies such as those on trade union rights.

The union's actions could be decisive in determining the outcome of this battle. We need to keep up the pressure in our unions.

SUPPORT JEREMY? THEN VOTE TO GIVE HIM THE TEAM HE NEEDS TO WIN

As a Labour Party member you now have the opportunity to choose your representatives on the National Executive Committee, Labour's governing body between annual conferences. It has 33 members - six of whom you elect.

Momentum is backing a team of six activists - also supported by the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance - who will work flat-out to put Jeremy Corbyn in No 10 by 2020.

These women and men reflect the range of views of the quarter of a million people who last summer voted for an end to austerity, radical economic reforms, greater democracy within the party and Jeremy's straight talking, honest politics.



IF YOU SUPPORT JEREMY, VOTE FOR OUR TEAM FOR LABOUR'S EXECUTIVE

Labour Party members receive their ballot papers by post in July. You can vote for all six NEC candidates, online or by post, by 12 noon on Friday 5 August. (If you have not received your ballot paper by 20 July, email info@peoplesmomentum.com.)

Momentum supports the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance backed candidates for the NEC:

Ann Black, Christine Shawcroft, Claudia Webbe, Darren Williams, Peter Willsman and Rhea Wolfson

Come to Workers' Liberty summer camp!

**11-14 August 2016
Height Gate Farm,
Hebden Bridge.**

Come and join our now-legendary annual socialist summer getaway in beautiful Height Gate Farm, above Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire. This is the sixth year we've run the camp; it's always great fun.

This will be a long weekend of music, campfires, food, drink, socialist discussions, workshops, tree climbing, and arsing about in the great outdoors — organised by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but open to all!

www.workersliberty.org/camp

Teachers strike and protest

By Peggy Carter

Teachers struck on Tuesday 5 July in a well supported national strike for guaranteed terms and conditions across all schools, increased funding to schools, and the resumption of negotiations on teacher workload.

The strike saw large protests. The march in London was overwhelmingly young, and many young teachers told *Solidarity* sellers that they had joined the Labour Party in the past year.

The government claims two thirds of schools remained open. However that figure masks a whole range of partial closures, and the increasing use of cover supervisors and support staff to keep schools open.

The demands of the dispute have been unclear despite the dispute conference motion calling for a national contract for teachers. Without a clear demand that teachers are fighting for a national negoti-



ated, contract which applies in all schools, academies or not, it will become difficult to mobilise teachers beyond the level generated by desperation and anger at the situation in schools. It will be particularly difficult to mobilise teachers in academies if the strike is not seen as applying to them.

Clear arguments were made on the day about school funding, and the huge cuts faced by schools in the next year. The NUT must fight redundancies on a local level, and

go on the offensive against funding cuts.

The NUT executive on 29 June agreed to make it clear that further strikes are planned for after the summer if the government does not back down. However, this was not clear on the day.

Unison local government conference on 19-21 June voted to seek to ballot members and strike alongside the NUT over funding cuts and for a national contract for all support staff.

Progress for left at Unison conference

By Simon Nelson

Unison members met in Brighton for Local Government and National Conference between 19 and 24 June 2016.

The vast majority of debate was consensual and disappointingly routine. Several motions were ruled out on the basis of "legal jeopardy". Despite this, some gains were made by the left.

In Local Government conference a heated debate and card vote was taken to reprimand the NJC for ignoring members' rejection of the 1% pay offer. The motion also called for a full investigation as to how the decision was made.

Conference also voted to have a national ballot on forced academisation of schools and seek to combine any action with the teachers' union. The resolution moved by Barnet Local Government Branch included speeches by Workers' Liberty supporters who emphasised the need for joined-up and coordinated strike action.

National Conference saw amend-

ments on nationalisation of the banks fall with the leadership making spurious arguments about "not wishing to bail out bankers any further", precisely the sort of policy that nationalisation is aimed at stopping. Nonetheless Unison again committed itself to progressive taxation to halt the cuts. The Union must stand up for those councillors that seek to fight the cuts imposed by the Government and enforced by Labour councils. An important debate on branch funding was lost on a card vote, meaning that a more democratic and better funded system for branches was lost in favour of a reformed system that will pass more control to regional officials and limit the ability of branches to increase their funds.

On 21 June over 250 delegates met to discuss the kind of Union we needed and highlight the growing opposition and disaffection with the current leadership. The meeting was organised and supported by a number of delegates and figures from the North West

Region and chaired by Paul Gilroy from the NEC. Speakers from the platform were Paul Holmes, NEC and Labour Party member, Roger Bannister, NEC and Socialist Party, Karen Reissman, SWP and NEC member, and Paula Barker, North West convenor. This reflects a step forward, with the Socialist Party agreeing to take part in further discussions on some kind of left group within the Union. It also clear there is now a split within former supporters of the current leadership, and this provides opportunities to lead a real fight within the union.

Whilst the SP and SWP stressed the importance of having joint agreements on elections, others stressed the need for any organisation to go further, to organise in branches, take up democratic demands and seek to build a real rank and file.

Regional meetings will be called in the future and Workers' Liberty will seek to have discussions with activists both beforehand and there about the kind of union we need.

Driver-only operation fight continues

By Ollie Moore

ScotRail workers are preparing for strikes against "Driver-Only Operation" on 10-11, 14, and 17 July.

Talks between ScotRail bosses and the RMT were continuing as *Solidarity* went to press, but with the company remaining intransigent on its plans to downgrade the safety-critical role of the on-board guard, further industrial action is likely.

Meanwhile, a dispute over similar issues on Southern, operated by Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR),

is fast developing into a mini-labour war, with unions and the Labour Party calling for GTR to be stripped of the franchise. Southern have recently cancelled 341 train services in an attempt to improve reliability. In a win for the union, the company was forced to u-turn on its decision to remove travel passes from staff and prevent them from swapping shifts, which it had done as a punitive measure in response to strikes.

The fight against DOO suffered a setback on Gatwick Express (also operated by GTR), as drivers' union Aslef dropped its legal chal-

lenge to an injunction against its recent strike ballot, and so effectively accepted the extension of DOO to Gatwick Express's 12-car trains. It will also pay a £250,000 legal bill to cover GTR's costs.

A rail worker and supporter of the *Off The Rails* blog told *Solidarity*:

"Our unions are firefighting at the moment, attempting to resist DOO in a defensive way as its proposed, or extended, by individual Train Operating Companies or franchises. We need to take the offensive, and work out a coordinated national strategy to push DOO back."

Unjust, sexist pay and casualisation

By Ben Tausz

Last week, 51 universities saw strikes by UCU in the ongoing campaign over pay, with many disrupting open days or examination boards (which ratify students' marks).

On Tuesday 5 July, UCU members at another 33 universities were set to walk out to coincide with the teachers' national strike against school funding cuts.

UCU is demanding: a 5% pay increase to begin reversing the 14.5% real-terms cut since 2009; action to close the 12% gender pay gap by 2020; and a roll-back of casualisation. An estimated 54% — and rising — of UK university academic workers are on some sort of casual, insecure contract. 21,000 teaching staff are on zero-hour contracts, and women and black workers are disproportionately affected. The union is demanding a reduction in the use of these contracts and that casual workers are paid equally and in full for their labour. Surveys by workers at universities like SOAS have shown that many teaching assistants are unpaid for as much as half of their work hours.

The UCU's last campaign over pay ended in a disappointing de-escalation and climbdown by the leadership. Demands against gender inequality were quietly dropped, and a derisory pay increase was sold to union members as a win.

This time, there has been a concerted campaign by activists to raise the profile of the gender and casualisation issues and make them too big for the union leadership to drop. Fighting Against Casualisation in Education — a grassroots network of local campaigners — has created a social media buzz and sparked conversations in branches and on picket lines. In May many branches specifically devoted strike days to each of these demands.

The Brexit vote, however, poses

two challenges for the campaign. First, for many migrant workers in the sector, their most pressing concern is not now pay injustices but their right to remain in the country at all. They were not helped by the UCU's silence during the referendum. The dominant left faction in the union is led by the Socialist Workers Party, which backed a "Lexit" position and prevented the union coming out against Brexit. Second, some union members have asked whether the demands, particularly against pay cuts, are sustainable in the newly "uncertain" climate.

The UCU must urgently launch a wholehearted campaign in defence of free movement and migrant workers and students — as a universal demand, not just a sectional request for special treatment of higher education.

European research funding is now uncertain, as well as the overall state of public finances. Employers, the rich and the Conservative government will want to make the working class pay for any crisis, through cuts to pay, jobs, benefits and services. We should not accept this without a fight. The labour movement, and UCU as part of it, must fight for the financial consequences to be borne by the rich, not by us.

These two campaigns can go hand-in-hand. A fight in defence of migrants and for secure, decently and equally paid jobs for all workers — part of the wider struggle to reverse the widening inequality and deprivation hitting workers of all origins, on which nationalism and anti-migrant sentiment has been left to feed.

Rolling local strikes are set to continue through July alongside an ongoing work-to-contract, with the potential for further national strikes and assessment boycotts later.

Unison and Unite, which represent other groups of workers in higher education, are considering joining in with industrial action.

ISS must investigate chemicals

By Ollie Moore

Cleaning contractor ISS, a multi-billion pound corporation which provides cleaning services on London Underground's Jubilee, Northern, and Piccadilly Lines, has withdrawn the graffiti remover it issues to cleaners, after evidence emerged that it is harmful, including potentially to unborn children.

The rank-and-file bulletin *Tube-worker* said: "It's scandalous that cleaners have had to work with a dangerous chemical.

"ISS should now conduct a full investigation, with full participation by union reps, into the chemical's effects on cleaners, and be prepared to pay compensation if

any ailments can be linked to it."

Tube cleaners currently face extreme uncertainty at work, as competing contractors jockey for position ahead of London Underground's consolidation of all its existing cleaning contracts into one "super contract". It is thought that it might award the contract to an entirely new outside contractor such as Mitie, rather than to Interserve, ISS, or Vinci, the companies currently providing cleaning services on the Tube.

Both Interserve and ISS are in the process of making cutbacks, which could see cleaners' jobs slashed.

• For regular updates: workersliberty.org/twblog



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FIGHT FOR MIGRANTS' RIGHTS AND WORKERS' UNITY

**By Jill Mountford,
Momentum Steering
Committee, p.c**

There are strong voices in the Labour Party, in the trade unions and even on the Labour left arguing that, after the Brexit vote, the labour movement should support further restrictions on freedom of movement and migrants' rights.

Paul Mason, Len McCluskey, even some in Momentum have taken such a position.

On 1 July, Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell was reported in the press as saying that with exit from the EU, the limited freedom

of movement that exists would come to an end.

McDonnell has since said that he was misrepresented — that he was talking about the legal situation, that he and Jeremy Corbyn support freedom of movement and will defend it. That's good.

On 5 July, a Labour motion to defend the rights of EU nationals in the UK passed 245-2 after the government abstained — though that is obviously a different question from future migration from Europe, let alone extending free movement.

Whatever the twists and turns at the top of the labour movement, the rank-and-file left needs to assert and impose a clear position to



defend and extend migrants' rights and actively challenge lies about migrants and migration.

Without that, the urgent task of strengthening workers' class consciousness and building a real

movement to fight the Tories' continuing attacks will be impossible.

In a few days, hundreds of Momentum activists across the country have signed a statement calling for the Labour left organisation to take a clear stand as part of mobilising the Labour Party and labour movement to do the same. This position has been backed by the Lewisham and Liverpool Momentum groups, both at packed meetings.

We will be building support in the run up to the Momentum National Committee on 23 July. Please add your name to the statement and put it forward for your Momentum group or other labour movement body.

Statement in support of freedom of movement and in defence of migrants

We the undersigned Labour Party/Labour-affiliated union activists and Momentum supporters believe that the labour movement must fight to guarantee the right to remain for migrants already in Britain, but also defend freedom of movement more broadly, and fight to extend it. Equal rights for all!

The social distress on which nationalism and anti-migrant sentiments have fed — spiralling inequality and insecurity, the housing crisis, services stretched to

breaking point — was not caused by migrants. It was caused by the bosses, the rich, their government and its "austerity" program. We want unity of workers of all backgrounds to fight for better jobs, homes, services and rights for all.

Labour must not give any ground to the push against migrants, but instead start to really fight for clear, radical policies on jobs, homes, services and workers' rights — funded by redistributing wealth from the rich — which can really begin to address the problems in our communities.

That is what Momentum should fight for.

A selection of signatories

Jill Mountford, Momentum Steering Committee; Michael Chessum, Momentum Steering Committee, Young Labour National Committee LGBT rep; Ed Whitby, Momentum National Committee North East and Cumbria rep, Unison Newcastle Labour Link Officer, Newcastle East CLP exec; Joanne Land, Momentum NC NE and Cumbria rep; Yannis Gourtsoyan-

nis, BMA Junior Doctors' Committee, Holborn and St Pancras party conference delegate; Councillor Rachel Heywood, Lambeth; Rida Vaquas, Young Labour NC West Midlands Rep, Momentum Youth and Students NC; Hannah McCarthy, Manchester and Trafford Momentum Vice Chair, Momentum Youth and Students National Committee; Dee Lashley-Johnson, BAME Officer Manchester Labour Students, Momentum Youth and Students NC, NUS Black Students Campaign Committee; Anastazja Oppenheim, NUS National Execu-

tive Council; Pete Firmin, Hampstead & Kilburn CLP TULO, Brent Trades Council Chair; Janine Booth, Co-Chair, TUC Disabled Workers' Committee Emma Runswick, Manchester Labour Students Committee, Salford and Eccles CLP, BMA; Dan Jeffery, Lambeth Unison Vice Chair; Leonie Hannan, Labour Party of Northern Ireland, Belfast Forum Vice Chair; Yoni Higsmith, Jewish Voice UK

• For full list see jillsmomentumblog.wordpress.com

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