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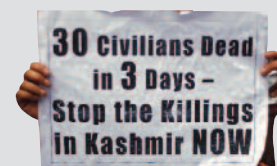
Workers at the Ritzy Picturehouse cinema in Brixton struck on Friday 7 October, and will strike again on Saturday 15 October.

On Thursday 6 October workers at Hackney Picturehouse voted by 100% to join the dispute and will join Ritzy workers on strike on Saturday. Links have been made with workers in several other Picturehouse branches in London and the dispute may spread further.

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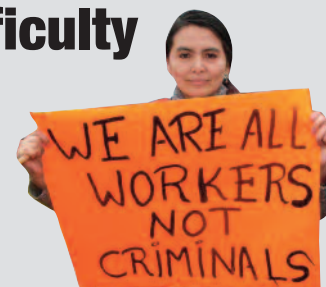
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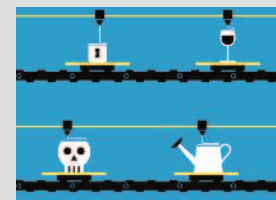
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SNP backs third runway!

An open letter to those on the left who support the Progressive Alliance. By Dale Street, Glasgow Momentum

Your pals in the SNP have just announced official support for a third runway at Heathrow.

Yes, I know what you're going to say: "It's only been reported in the MainStream Media". But take my word for it: it's true.

Only five days ago the leaders of the SNP, the Greens and Plaid Cymru had one of their periodic get-togethers. They described it as: "An occasion for us to restate the importance of working together to resist the Tories' toxic politics, and to make the case for a better future for our people and communities."

For your benefit, here's how SNP "progressive alliance" politics work in practice:

On 5 October the SNP bigs up working together with the Greens. But just five days later they commit themselves to vote against one of the Greens' most basic policies ("a disaster for climate change"), a policy that was a central plank of their London mayoral campaign.

SNP support for a third runway at Heathrow — "We want the best deal for Scotland" — will strengthen its bonds of friendship with its natural allies: the Tories, the right wing of the Labour Party, and big business.

As the *Independent* reported in June 2015:

"The Tories have a wafer-thin majority, and many MPs would join Mr Johnson in voting against. Support from the SNP would allow the PM to claim he was acting in the interests of the entire UK. Conservative ministers and the SNP ... could be very comfortable in each other's company (in the same division lobby)."

(Yes, I know the *Independent* is MSM. Even so, they sometimes do get things right.)

More recently, while attention has inevitably focused on your concerns about a Tel-Aviv-based Zionist conspiracy to undermine Jeremy Corbyn, out in the real world Labour right-wingers are using the issue of Heathrow expansion to undermine Corbyn.

At the end of September the *Independent* reported:

"Rebel MPs plan to try to bounce their party into backing a third runway at Heathrow Airport, even without the support of Jeremy Corbyn. They will call a vote of all Labour peers on an aviation report drawn up by backbenchers who sit on the PLP transport committee."

Chair of the transport committee is Smith-supporter Gavin Shaker. According to Shaker:

"On a number of key issues, on Syria, on Trident and others, we have dodged the question people have put to us about where we stand. I don't think that anyone should be surprised that we're

going to utilise those (right-wing-controlled PLP committees) to make sure that we have a clear position."

And then there's the SNP's big business pals, such as HAH, the company which owns Heathrow Airport.

In the first six months of this year it had pre-tax profits of £75 millions. But HAH is nothing if not a caring company. Only last year, for example, it donated £10,000 to Dreamflight ("provides children with serious illness or disability with their holiday of a lifetime").

But even its generosity to sick children pales into insignificance compared to its generosity to the SNP. As the *Guardian* has reported:

"Throughout the SNP's conference.. Heathrow will operate a 'private, airport-style lounge' with a free bar to promote the benefits of the expansion to Scotland, as it did at last year's event in Aberdeen."

RED PEPPER

There's nothing new in the backstabbing political calculations which lie behind the SNP's support for a third runway at Heathrow. It's just the latest example of what their 'progressive' policies are all about.

And don't say that no-one tried to warn you about this kind of thing.

An article commissioned from members of Momentum Scotland for the special issue of *Red Pepper* on sale at "The World Transformed" event at Labour Party conference spelt out the SNP's record in words so simple that even supporters of a "progressive alliance" would be able to understand them.

It's just a pity that the article was spiked and replaced by one from SNP MSP Kenny MacAskill, which, unsurprisingly, did not contain the same, or any, criticisms of the SNP's politics.

Still, maybe now you'd like to finally wake up from your dream-world "progressive alliance" with the SNP. If it helps, take a trip round the communities who live under the Heathrow flight paths and see what they think of the SNP and your "progressive alliance".

You could also have a chat with the local MP. His name is John McDonnell. In fact, this is what you could say to him:

"John, I know that the SNP have allied with the Tories, the Labour right and big business to support something which you have been campaigning against for many years. I know that SNP support for a third runway will be used by the Labour right to isolate and undermine you and Jeremy.

"But, even so, don't you think it would be a really good idea to have a progressive alliance with the SNP? By the way, Paul Mason supports the idea. So it must make sense."

Back the anti-frack protests

By Neil Laker

On 6 October Communities Secretary Sajid Javid gave the green light to plans to drill for shale gas near Blackpool.

Javid, who has received money from fracking companies, overruled the (Labour) Lancashire county council, which, thanks to a large environmental campaign across Lancashire, had blocked the necessary drilling permissions.

Javid's ruling comes following similar approvals for exploratory drilling wells in North Yorkshire in May this year. GMB, one of the unions which organise in the gas industry, has stated its support for the government's intervention.

More promisingly, hundreds of locals held a demonstration against the ruling on Saturday, led by the notorious "Nanas Against Fracking".

Following the rally, one Nana wrote, "I am in shock and I am furious. We have so many wonderful people in the UK working for community cohesion, co-operation and



sustainability. We cannot let this corrupt and arrogant minority rule us. They have to be removed".

The campaign has pledged further mobilisation, including blockades of the well site, against the fracking company Cuadrilla, which is preparing to drill from March 2017.

The labour movement should stand with the campaign and the Nanas, rather than with the Tory government and a high-carbon economy. The Labour Party's recent indication that it would ban

fracking in government is positive — but it must be combined with practical support for the activists resisting the expansion of the shale gas industry in the UK.

We need a labour movement which goes beyond the narrative of "highly skilled jobs" (in fact fracking promises a negligible number), and begins to pose demands towards a sustainable society.

£250 rises

By Ruairidh Anderson

The government's higher education reforms include plans to raise university tuition fees. And Durham, Royal Holloway, Goldsmiths and Kent have all announced a £250 increase for next year.

This, although the government's tool for doing this — a Teaching Excellence Framework — has yet to even come into operation.

Additionally, some universities, such as Manchester Metropolitan University, have announced £9000 fees for 2017-18 while also stating in smaller letters on their website that "these fees are regulated by the UK government, and so may increase each year in line with government policy".

Obviously, like Durham et al they are planning to charge £9,250 next year, but are implementing this change with an added element of dishonesty.

The government has made a decision on fees that is separate from its higher education reforms. Universities minister Jo Johnson has justified this by saying that inflation has led to the devaluation of fees over time and that a fee increase of just under 2.8% will rectify this.

In most cases, the increased fees will also be applied to students in the middle of their courses, although the University of Surrey, clearly troubled by the ethics of such an approach, have ensured that their fee rises are just for incoming students.

Join the demonstration against the fee rises and against all of the government's education reforms on 19 November in London, organised by the National Union of Students and the University and College Union.

The Corbyn shuffle

By Gerry Bates

Jeremy Corbyn's cabinet reshuffle has caused the kind of faux shock and horror we have come to expect from the Labour's right and the press.

It was inevitable that following Corbyn's re-election a new shadow cabinet would have to be constructed, not just to replace those who staged their resignations to try to oust Corbyn, but also — for Corbyn and his allies — to show some level of "unity" in the Party.

Whatever the result of the reshuffle, it will be down to the Labour membership to push for policy to be decided democratically and not at the diktat of Shadow Ministers. In that spirit the appointment of Tom Watson to Culture, Media and Sport and Jon Ashworth to Health along with Nick Brown to Chief Whip should not be viewed as disastrous.

But it is striking that the call for "unity" from the Corbyn leadership can be expressed in further compromise with the right wing of the Labour Party, the same group that could in the future undermine the leadership.

As the right were always going to condemn some appointments — several MPs once again refused to be given positions, some resigned when Rosie Winterton the Chief Whip was sacked etc. — Corbyn may have been better off appointing who he wanted and taking a stronger stance.

Three things seem to have riled left and right. The appointment of Jon Ashworth to Health is a compromise and it makes it less likely that the Shadow Cabinet will back

the junior doctors' dispute openly or take up the idea of renationalising the Health Service.

His appointment has coincided with his resignation from the National Executive and replacement with Corbyn ally Kate Osamor. The NEC composition has swung back in Corbyn's favour. This may prove to be a sensible move if Labour members campaign alongside Momentum and Momentum NHS for clear left wing policy on the NHS and don't allow Ashworth to have his way.

Clive Lewis has been moved from Defence to Business; this is being interpreted as a response to his pro-Trident and NATO comments in his speech at Labour conference. Lewis was wrong about both of these things, so replacing him with unilateralist Nia Griffith makes sense.

Most controversial has been the appointment of Diane Abbott as Home Secretary. Almost immediately subjected to vile sexist and racist abuse, Abbott is by no means a great representative of working-class interest. But she has in the broad sense been on the side of the views of the membership on key issues and opposes an increase in anti-migrant rhetoric and opinion among Labour MPs.

With a cabinet now more diverse and more gender balanced than at any point in Labour Party history Corbyn must now silence his critics by ensuring that bold socialist policy is fought for and galvanise members to fight to transform the party.

These are the only measure that will stop those in the Shadow Cabinet who still want him out.

Kashmir repression boosts sectarianism

By Will Sefton

On 8 July 2016 a young Kashmiri commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) was killed by the Indian Army. The killing of Burhan Wani has become a symbol of Indian repression in Kashmir, the major Muslim-majority area kept by India in the 1947 India-Pakistan partition.

The HM receives much of its support from the Pakistan government and has strong links to the Pakistani secret service ISI and the Islamist group Jamaat-e-Islami. Unlike the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, HM is for Kashmiri secession to Pakistan and promotes the further Islamisation of Kashmir.

Wani had a strong social media presence and had helped bring the HM a large following amongst young people. His funeral was attended by up to 300,000 people.

There has been an increasing mil-



Burhan Wani

itarisation of Kashmiri life since the early 2000s, particularly in periods of unrest in 2002 and 2010. Protests have increased despite the imposition of curfews.

The Indian state's obduracy and the consequent failure of secular liberation groups like the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) has boosted Pakistani-funded or-

ganisations like HM and the women's Islamist group Duhktan-e-Millat which pose the issues in religious-sectarian Muslim-vs-Hindu terms. Indian government enforcement of a ban in Jammu Kashmir on the sale of beef (eaten by Muslims but not by Hindus) has further fuelled religious sectarianism, though the majority of Kashmiris

still strive for political independence from both Pakistan and India. Slogans were first raised for an independent and sovereign Kashmir back in 1931.

The most recent protests have been met with extreme violence, with more than 70 civilians killed and over 6,000 protesters injured. Indian authorities have used guns firing lead pellets at protesters' faces, often causing permanent damage to their eyes or even blinding them.

The government of Kashmir is a coalition of India's ruling Hindu-nationalist party, the BJP, with the moderate Kashmiri-nationalist People's Democratic Party (PDP). The coalition has lost the PDP support among Kashmiris who wanted a stronger stance on self gover-

nance. It has been at a standstill over how to handle the crisis, and that has allowed the security forces and central Indian state to play a much more direct role.

The BJP has also pursued a policy of changing the demography of the region to create a Hindu majority. (It is currently 29% Hindu).

The curfews stop protests and public meetings and impose a partial siege on supplies and access to areas of towns and cities. Pakistani films have been banned, newspapers suppressed, and mobile phone signals and the internet have been interrupted.

The Hindu-nationalist politics on the rise in India pose a great danger to the prospects of a democratic secular solution in Kashmir.

Clampdown in Hungary

By Hannah Webb

On Sunday 2 October, Hungarians voted in a referendum over whether to accept their EU migrant quota of 1294 refugees.

The referendum posed the question "Do you want the European Union to be able to mandate the obligatory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the approval of the National Assembly?".

It was itself part of a long running campaign by Viktor Orbán and his government to retain popular support by positioning as the "defenders" of Hungary against

foreign interference. Orbán explicitly opposes liberal democracy in favour of "illiberal democracy".

The government campaign in favour of voting "no" had posters saying "Don't put Hungary's future at risk!" on 6000 of the 20,000 advertising slots in the country, probably the largest advertising campaign in Hungarian history. In addition, 4.1 million full colour 18-page booklets were sent to Hungarians home and abroad making the case for the "no" campaign.

The booklet claimed that there are "no-go" districts in London, Southampton and Peterborough, as well as Paris, Berlin, Stockholm and

Copenhagen, where as a result of migrants authorities are unable to keep control.

This campaign followed one which ran since summer 2015 when refugees were attempting to travel through Hungary (despite the government closing train routes out of Hungary, presumably to make migrants seem like more of a threat to the Hungarian population), with slogans in *Hungarian* saying "If you come to Hungary, you can't take the Hungarians' jobs!" and "If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our culture!", clearly aimed at Hungarians rather than migrants.

The referendum itself had only a 40% turnout, short of the 50% threshold to make the result valid. The liberal opposition to the referendum did not dare to call for a "yes" vote, which would have likely lost, and instead encouraged people to not vote or to spoil their ballots. However, the 98% "no" vote within the 40% turnout demonstrates a worryingly strong anti-migrant sentiment in Hungary.

Less than a week after the referendum, on 8 October, Hungary's largest left-wing and opposition newspaper, *Nepszabadsag*, was closed down, both in print and online. Its parent company claimed that was a result of "considerable losses", despite the fact it made \$480,000 profit in 2015.

Journalists working at the paper said they weren't given advance notice, and have described the move as a "coup", with parties across the political spectrum accusing the Orbán government of trying to further extend its dominance over the media.

When they are stars

By Rhodri Evans

In 2005, a live microphone picked up Donald Trump chatting on a bus with journalist Billy Bush (who is a cousin of George and Jeb). Trump is now the Republican candidate for US president in voting due on 8 November.

There were seven other people on the bus, two camera crew, the driver, a producer, a production assistant, a security guard and a PR person.

Trump told the bus about how he tried and failed to "fuck" another journalist, Nancy O'Dell, and then boasted that he did sexual assault whenever he felt like it. "When you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything... Grab them by the pussy. You can do anything."

Trump has responded by claiming it was just "locker room banter", and by citing a civil case about sexual harassment in 1991 brought against president Bill Clinton which was indeed substantial enough to force Clinton to pay \$850,000 damages to Paula Jones and to surrender his licences as a lawyer.

In fact Trump was boasting about a crime: sexual assault, which is what groping a woman without her consent is.

Civil rights lawyer Gloria Allred says she has been contacted by more women claiming they have been sexually harassed or abused by Donald Trump.

Of 130 employment cases brought against Trump and his companies over the years, 20 have involved complaints from women who claim a culture of sexual harassment dating back to the early 1980s.

This follows Trump's racist comments about Mexican immigrants; calls for banning Muslims from entering the US; attacks on



Trump boasts of sexual assault

the parents of a Muslim US soldier killed in Iraq; and sexist rants about a number of individual women, such as Rosie O'Donnell and Alicia Machado.

The day that news of the 2005 comments broke, Trump declared that he still believed the Central Park Five — five young African American men falsely convicted in the 1989 Central Park Jogger case, who spent years in prison before being cleared — to be guilty.

At the time of the trial, Trump took out a newspaper ad calling for reinstatement of the death penalty in New York.

Republicans have distanced themselves from Trump. The Republican National Committee has placed a moratorium on any spending for Trump.

Hillary Clinton's electoral strategy is now above all not to be Donald Trump. She wants to keep the focus as narrowly as possible on Trump's foul blustering, and so deflect pressure on issues like taxing the rich, health care, or refugees.

That won't quell the political and social discontent that Trump exploits for the benefit of the right. It can only fuel many people's feeling that, socially if not sexually, the wealthy elite still believes that "when you're a star, they will let you" abuse them.



Victory for Polish women's strike

On Monday 3 October 7 million Polish women went on strike (did not show up for work, took holidays, or went "sick"). In Warsaw, 30,000 people took to the streets, at just a few days' notice.

They were protesting against a proposal to ban all abortions even in case of rape, or when a woman's life is at risk. The proposal now appears to have been dropped.

While this is a tremendous victory, abortion on demand is still far from being a right in Poland. Polish women seeking abortions usually go to neighbouring countries or order abortion pills online.

Campaigners have vowed to continue the protests.

Boycott means boycotting Palestinian films?

LETTER

I agree with Martin Thomas's article ('Jackie Walker, Momentum and Anti-semitism', *Solidarity* 418) but I would like to make a few comments on the call, by the Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, for a boycott of the Jewish Film Festival which Martin briefly mentions.

Of all the areas for the "boycott Israel" movement to focus on, a Jewish film festival seems the least appropriate. Many Palestinian films have received support of one kind or another from either individual Israeli filmmakers and technicians or Israeli organisations. In fact in some cases these films simply would not have been made if it were not for this input.

Look at the credits at the end of almost any Palestinian film, and you will see Jewish names in positions such as sound engineer, lighting or editor.

In 2014 the Israeli-based New Fund for Cinema and Television announced its Greenhouse Women Programme which aims to bring together Arab and Jewish women filmmakers and a number of short films and documentaries have already resulted from this initiative.

While the situation for Palestinian filmmakers, a number of whom live in exile, remains very difficult — and we should demand that restrictions on them are lifted immediately — we should not ignore the internationalist efforts of various Israeli film personnel to improve their situation.

Calls for the kind of cultural boycott advocated by the Jewish Anti-Zionist Network are not only reactionary but also useless, and would do little to help the real situation on the ground.

Better, for example, a campaign to fund the building of film exhibition facilities in Palestinian areas. As far as I am aware there is only one functioning cinema in the whole of the Occupied Territories.

John Cunningham, Lancashire



'I love running', a film about a Palestinian woman training for the 2016 Rio Olympics, was financed by the Israeli Greenhouse Programme

How to deal with hostile press? Be bold!

THE PRESS

By Charlotte Zalens

Some lessons can be learnt from the press "exposés" about the Labour left and Momentum during the Labour leadership campaign.

First, it is worth restating, the press is not interested in representing the views of the left fairly. The media are not just gunning for the Trotskyists, they have the whole left in their targets.

Many Momentum activists have rightly expressed frustration and exasperation at the press's treatment of Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour left. Sometimes the clamour for fair treatment by the press comes from a position of forgivable naivety. Many are new to the left and have not been through past experiences that have taught others about the role of the press.

Nonetheless it should come as no surprise to us that the press attempts to demonise the movement that has grown up around Corbyn. Ours is a movement that the ruling class does not want to develop; the press is a way for the establishment to maintain their power.

Given the reality of the press, the left should be bold. It is simply not worth the trouble of trying to water down our politics or skate around an issue to appear media-friendly. Problems in our movement should be dealt with politically and as openly as possible. Sweeping bad ideas held by individuals on the left under the carpet — such as sexism, or left anti-semitism — will only make problems look worse when these views inevitably come to light.

But there is a worrying trend in Momentum towards to look "presentable" and "reasonable". Obviously we should not be unnecessarily unreasonable, rude or incomprehensible. But in some ways we are *unreasonable*. We want to completely upset the status quo.

We should not comply to the press and establishment's idea of what is reasonable on a



whole host of issues.

For instance, on mandatory reselection. Momentum have been hesitant on that (and occasional outright dismissive). Instead of being cowed we should be clear and bold — reselection of Labour MPs by their local parties should be a democratic norm. MPs are delegates of our movement not a professional elite, and they should want to be held to account.

In fact a vast majority of Momentum activists support mandatory reselection.

On the antisemitism "scandal" in Labour and Momentum it has become clear to many activists that there is a problem that needs addressing. Yet instead of admitting a problem and tackling it, those with antisemitic ideas have been treated with an air of embarrassment — like your racist old uncle that you'd rather didn't talk in public and you try and pretend you're not related to. But those tactics won't work and do not tackle the political root in the long run.

After the Channel 4 *Dispatches* "exposé" Momentum released a statement, quoted on the program, that "Trotskyists are not running the show". While true in a way (if only our ideas were more popular!) it was the wrong way to respond.

Jill Mountford, openly a Trotskyist, is on Momentum's steering committee. It is uncomradely when you are being attacked to throw other people under the bus to try to save yourself.

Those film-makers were never going to turn around and say "our mistake, we thought you were all Trotskyists, we stand corrected and commend you all as decent people now". Better to be honest and open, but also give nothing to the witchhunt. Yes some Momentum activists are Trotskyists, we don't all agree on all issues, but that it is okay.

The left needs to stop worrying about how the press will take things, and start being confident and honest about our politics.

Morning Star witch-hunts "Zionists" and Trotskyists

LEFT

By Sacha Ismail

The Communist Party of Britain newspaper *Morning Star* used the controversy in Momentum about Jackie Walker to launch an attack against the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

The CP implausibly called the decision to remove Jackie Walker as Vice Chair of Momentum a witch-hunt — she remains on the National Momentum Steering Committee which originally appointed her as its Vice Chair — while simultaneously trying to boost the actual witch-hunt by the Labour Party bureaucracy against us: "The Alliance for Workers' Liberty, which has renounced its status as a political party in order to facilitate its relocation into Labour... this supposed ex-party has well attested pro-Zionist credentials."

The significance of "supposed ex-party" is clear. The implication is nonsense: we were active in Labour long before Jeremy Corbyn ran for leader, never stopped calling for the election of Labour governments, and supported Labour in every seat last year while helping build a "Socialist Campaign for a

Labour Victory".

But there is more: in the original version of this editorial, published online and then altered, the *Morning Star* claimed that our Zionist credentials were proved by the supposed fact that we "provided four of the seven" (!) votes to remove Jackie Walker as Vice Chair.

The AWL has one supporter on the Momentum Steering Committee, Jill Mountford. The 4x multiplication seems to have been lifted from professional AWL-hater and "anti-Zionist" Tony Greenstein, who made the deranged claim on his blog that Labour NEC member Christine Shawcroft and TSSA staffer Sam Tarry are "AWL sleepers".

Christine and Sam voted the same way as Jill; they are no more linked to us than Jackie Walker is. The *Morning Star* presumably realised was embarrassingly poor journalism, even by their standards, and deleted it. The "four of seven" claim dramatises the kind of stuff we are dealing with.

Underlying this is an old-fashioned Stalinist attempt to whip up hostility to Trotskyists (including, typically, by supporting right-wing attacks on us) — and an equally old-fashioned Stalinist attempt to whip people

Vanquished challenger Owen Smith paraded his political ignorance during the election campaign by accusing the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, which has renounced its status as a political party in order to facilitate its relocation into Labour, of "left anti-semitism" — an absurd formulation comparable with left racism or left Islamophobia. In reality, this supposed ex-party confirmed its well-attested pro-Zionist credentials by providing four of the seven votes to remove Walker, thereby weakening resistance to the Labour bureaucracy "anti-semitic" witch-hunt. Meeting a witch-hunt halfway is unprincipled and doomed to failure. There should be no credence given in the Labour movement to JLM-inspired smears spread to damage Corbyn.

Related Tags:

Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn momentum

Original online *Morning Star* editorial

up against "Zionists", without explain what they mean. The editorial claims that left anti-semitism not only doesn't exist but is conceptually impossible, an "absurd formulation". That is the core of their position. What is it that makes the AWL "Zionist" in the *Morning Star* editorial writer's eyes? The fact that our support for the Palestinians involves advocating a two-state settlement and opposing blanket boycotts of Israel? But that is also the position held by many Communist Party members.

Presumably the editorial was also a factional move by the more Stalinist, "anti-imperialist" wing of the CP against their internal opponents. All in all a nasty mix.

We hope this kind of thing will make people think twice about officially promoting the *Morning Star* at events like The World Transformed.



Merkel may not be able to help May get what she wants in the Brexit negotiations

Brexit: Tories' difficulties are our opportunities

Jeremy Corbyn has defended freedom of movement for workers between the EU and Britain even after the Brexit vote.

Sections of the Labour Party machine, and even of the Labour left, are however pushing a different line. While the Tories were still on their soon-to-be-abandoned plan to compel employers to list non-British workers, the Labour Party press office responded only by complaining that the Tories have not stuck to their 2010 manifesto promise to reduce net immigration to "tens of thousands a year". (It is currently 336,000, only 0.5% of population, per year).

Then newly-appointed shadow Brexit minister Keir Starmer said: "We have to be open to adjustments of the freedom of movement rules", and that immigration should be reduced.

He did, however, say that "the terms on which we are going to negotiate absolutely have to be put to a vote" in Parliament. The Tory government has ruled out a vote and had Brexit minister David Davis say to parliamentarians that "I can't tell you in advance" about the negotiating stance.

Labour Party conference passed a motion from the TSSA union calling for a parliamentary vote and maybe a referendum on a final deal. In a sad echo of practice in the Blair years, the Party machine then briefed the media that the vote didn't mean this was Party policy. At least some people round Cor-

byn seem happy to give the Tories an easy ride on Brexit, on the pretext of respecting the 23 June referendum vote.

The labour movement should fight to conserve freedom of movement, to maximise common cause with workers across Europe, and minimise new barriers between countries. And such are the tensions and wobbles in the ruling classes about Brexit that a strong Labour stance could win real successes.

It is not a matter of undemocratically circumventing a majority. It is reasonable, predictable, obvious that the balance of opinion on an actual Brexit formula will be different from the balance on 23 June, when what "Brexit" meant was vague. The 23 June vote does not oblige Labour to become helpful when the Tories find it a Brexit formula difficult. And if, after a Brexit formula has proved unpopular or unattainable, the 52-48 balance on 23 June swings to a different outcome, there is nothing undemocratic about that.

The tensions and wobbles are not only within Britain. Europe will not stand still while the British government negotiates on Brexit. German chancellor Angela Merkel has offered the softest tone on possible terms, but Germany goes to the polls in 2017, probably in September, and the right-wing nationalist AfD party is currently running around 15%.

Before that, France will have a presidential election in April-May 2017, where Marine Le Pen of the neo-fascist Front National is likely

to do well. Italy can theoretically go without elections until 2018, but prime minister Matteo Renzi does not have a majority in parliament and his Democratic Party is being nearly outstripped in the polls

by the maverick populist Five Star Movement. Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, which work together in the EU as the "Visegrad Group", and are anxious about their many citizens working in Britain, have said that they will be "uncompromising" in the Brexit talks. They have threatened to veto an EU-British deal if they don't like it.

Greece's prime minister Alexis Tsipras is trying to pull together another subgroup in the EU, organising a "summit of Southern Europe" on 9 September with Cyprus, Malta, Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy.

In short, hardly any EU government will be easy, confident, and relaxed about the negotiations. Many are worried about rising right-wing populist nationalism in their countries.

All are anxious about reconsolidating the EU in the wake of economic turmoil and stagnation, impasse on refugees, and popular disaffection. None wants to help demonstrate that quitting the EU is an easy option.

The Tories are in strife. Prime minister Theresa May's firm-sounding but empty announcements that "Brexit means Brexit" suggest that she is trying to build cover for a "soft Brexit", as close to the "Norway option" of European Economic Area membership (effectively, semi-membership of the EU) as she dares go.

Her Tory party conference speech called for "free trade, in goods and services... British companies [to have] the maximum freedom to trade with and operate within the [EU] Single Market". She has had the Northern Ireland minister declare a will, somehow, to avoid reimposing controls on the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, which is due to become a British-EU border.

When Brexit minister David Davis said on 5 September that it was "improbable" that Britain could stay in the Single Market, May immediately slapped him down, saying that Davis was expressing personal opinion and not government policy.

There is pressure on May from big business for a "soft Brexit". Worried about anti-immigrant talk from May, and the Tories' quickly-

retracted plan to compel companies to list their non-British employees, CBI chief Carolyn Fairbairn said on 10 October than the Tories were drifting into a "hard Brexit" which "added up to a very negative environment for business". "The door is being closed, to an extent, on the open economy".

In an open letter to the government, co-signed by other business groups, Fairbairn says: "barrier-free access to the EU's Single Market is vital to the health of the UK economy, especially to our manufacturing and service sectors. Uninterrupted access for our financial services sector is also a major priority".

The option favoured by some Tories, and listed as a possibility by Davis, of "leaving the EU without any preferential trade arrangement and defaulting to trading by standard World Trade Organisation rules" should be "immediately ruled out under any circumstances".

May has said that Brexit negotiations will start before March 2017. They then have a fixed two-year span. The CBI says it is probable that the negotiations will not be complete within the two years, and is horrified by the prospect of Brexit then being triggered without a deal. "The Government should therefore secure agreement of a transitional period" in which status quo can continue until the deal has finalised. Whether the EU will agree to that is another matter.

At the Tory conference, a number of ex-ministers came out in open opposition to May, who has a Commons majority of only 16. Anna Soubry and Nicky Morgan have joined with former Labour leader Ed Miliband and former Lib-Dem leader Nick Clegg to say that there is "no mandate" for leaving the single market and to demand a parliamentary vote on the stance that the government will take into Brexit negotiations.

The fundamental socialist stance should be: reduce borders, not raise them. Fight for free movement. Maximise working-class solidarity across borders and among workers of different origins within the same country.

NATIONAL LIBRARIES MUSEUMS & GALLERIES DEMONSTRATION

Saturday 5th November

"I give my 100% support to this demonstration"

JEREMY CORBYN

Barret UNISON

pcs Public and Commercial Union

unite

Assemble outside the British Library 12 noon

More details on the route of the demonstration in September

It's the demonstration every library campaigner has been calling for and now it's soon. The march will start from the iconic British Library and end outside the House of Commons for a Rally.

"Libraries are the second most popular public service after the NHS. They offer education, inspiration and access to knowledge, the foundations of democracy. Sadly, they are under attack from government cuts as never before. It is time to stand up for libraries. Please support this demonstration."

ALAN GIBBONS, Author, signatory of 'Campaign for the Book'

Becoming a “Trot”



Jeremy Corbyn speaking at the Iraq War demonstration in 2003

HOW I BECAME A SOCIALIST

By Simon Nelson

When I was little my Dad would tell me stories with monsters he called “Lam-onts” and do an impression of Douglas Hurd’s voice. I didn’t know who Norman Lamont or Douglas Hurd were, but I knew my Dad thought they were stupid or bad. That was my first introduction to politics.

We discussed politics as a family and I was always keen to find out more. I remember the 2001 election and seeing Socialist Alliance leaflets being handed out somewhere, but I was most interested in environmental initiatives — recycling, protecting endangered species and saving the rainforest. My dad told me that socialists didn’t always care about that stuff.

I wanted to go to the demonstration against the Iraq War (2003) but couldn’t make it. I was very angry and upset on the day when the UK invaded Iraq.

By the time I started studying A Level politics I saw myself firmly as left wing, but I was a left liberal not dissimilar to my parents.

I remember studying the Russian Revolution briefly in GCSE history. Looking back, we were given a very confused history of the period; Stalinism was depicted as both inevitable and also necessary to maintain the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, and that was presented as meaning “a despotic regime that called itself communist”.

Around this time John McDonnell had indicated he would stand for the Labour leadership when Tony Blair stood down. I knew who he was as he knows my grandad. I thought this would be good because I knew he was a left winger but I also didn’t take much more attention.

I chose to study politics at university and liked the course I had chosen at Hull because it included working for an MP for a year. I probably thought I would end up working for a Labour MP though I also

thought most of the Parliamentary Labour Party were pretty bad.

A chance encounter on a bus with a member of Hull Labour Club, persuaded me to come along to a meeting. He was very anti-Blair, called himself a Marxist (in reality a Stalinist), but he convinced me that the Labour Party was still a place to have debate about and try to organise to change the world.

I still felt the Labour Party in 2006-7 was a place for Blairite students and apolitical people to find careers.

We campaigned in local elections and had MPs turn up to talk to us, and I remember arguing with them about politics and for me the key issue was getting John McDonnell on the ballot for the election of the next Labour leader.

By this time a few of us in the Labour Club had become isolated and identified as “Trots”, though none of us were! I definitely felt I wanted something more than just weekly meetings where we sorted out door knocking or going to national Labour Students events.

In May 2007 I went to my first Labour Representation Committee LGBT event. It was held in a small room in Conway Hall with less than 10 of us and including John McDonnell.

I was the youngest person there and several of the other attendees were aging members of the Communist Party. But I met a couple of comrades from Workers’ Liberty, one of whom said in the meeting “I’m a Trot”. I thought, well I am too! I meant I was a socialist and anti-Stalinist and not really thought out beyond that.

I went to the AWL’s Ideas for Freedom event in 2007 and got involved in debates, discussions and workshops — “boycotting Israel”, queer politics, and a lively debate with the journalist Nick Cohen... I could see that the AWL were serious so I kept in touch, started meeting them and having proper discussions.

Bit-by-bit I came to understand what Trotskyism actually meant and I was still very happy to call myself a “Trot.”

A clear break

Peter Frase of the US socialist magazine *Jacobin* visited the UK from 23 September to 7 October and took part in a tour of Momentum groups and student Labour Clubs to speak about his book *Four Futures: Life After Capitalism*. He spoke to Martin Thomas.

What did you think of the tour?

It was interesting to go to so many different places and see a movement which is struggling with the same sort of issues that US socialists are wrestling with after the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign. The difference, of course, is that here you have the Labour Party already as a framework. The challenges are different.

I was surprised by the heterogeneity, both political and geographical, within Momentum. From the USA it looks more monolithic.

Some people round *Jacobin* see Momentum as a model, and I’d say they need to get that in perspective and realise that there are a lot more complexities than are apparent from outside.

At the meetings I’ve asked people to say whether they are socialists, and what socialism means to them. The answers range from defining socialism as just basic fairness and being nice to each other, to full-scale control of the means of production.

But people have been open to considering alternatives after capitalism. They recognise that there are crises now which will have to be resolved in some direction, and not necessarily in a socialist and emancipatory direction.

In each chapter of my book, I’m trying to do two things, to identify something going on now and to extrapolate to the choices it will pose.

Yes, it’s an unusual book. The ideas are not that novel, but they are argued in a different way from usual. What did it come from? Reading a lot of Marx and a lot of science fiction.

I’m a big fan of Star Trek, and I started with the question: what if we had the material basis of Star Trek society, and the social structures of today? My first effort was a blog post. It got some circulation. That grew into an essay for *Jacobin* magazine in 2012, and then the book.

How did you become a socialist?

I didn’t grow up in a socialist family. It was a middle-class liberal family. I came across socialism by reading, around the age of 14 or 15, before I met organised socialists at the age of 16 and 17.

I had a brief encounter with the American SWP [no relation to the British SWP] because they had some presence in Minneapolis, where I lived. That didn’t last long; they seemed very sectarian and disconnected from everyday struggles.

Then, while I was still at high school, I worked with Freedom Road [a Maoist group]. Though I disagreed with them, I learned a lot about organising from them. Then I went to university in Chicago and drifted into the Democratic Socialists of

America, where I’ve been ever since.

You now work on *Jacobin* magazine. It has been spectacularly successful since starting in 2010, now reaching 15,000 print subscribers and 700,000 readers on the web every month. What has made it so successful?

Being in the right place at the right time helps a lot. The US left was ready for it. When Bhaskar Sunkara started it, he was just 20 years old. I’m about ten years older, but knew Bhaskar through DSA. At first I thought, well, every 20 year old has a right to an impossible dream, and I should help Bhaskar try his out.

But Bhaskar is an incredible small businessman, and has the political drive and ambition to build the magazine. It has hard politics but speaks in a way that liberals can appreciate.

Fairly early Remeike Forbes came on board as the art director of the magazine, and that’s been very important.

We got a boost from Occupy Wall Street — the *New York Times* did a profile on us — and the Bernie Sanders campaign has given us a big boost.

The initial network was independent of the DSA, but a lot of us knew each other from there. In the early stages there was a big element of what I’d call internet socialism too. A lot of the connections were formed on the internet.

When choosing a name for the magazine, Bhaskar wanted to convey militancy and yet not explicitly use a reference from our tradition, because that might trap us in a sectarian space. The name *Jacobin* conveyed militancy without tying us down.

Within the first couple of issues, a process of accretion started. Only later on was there enough money for paid staff and an office. The art director was the first paid worker. Now we have a staff of ten, including an organiser to coordinate *Jacobin* reading groups.

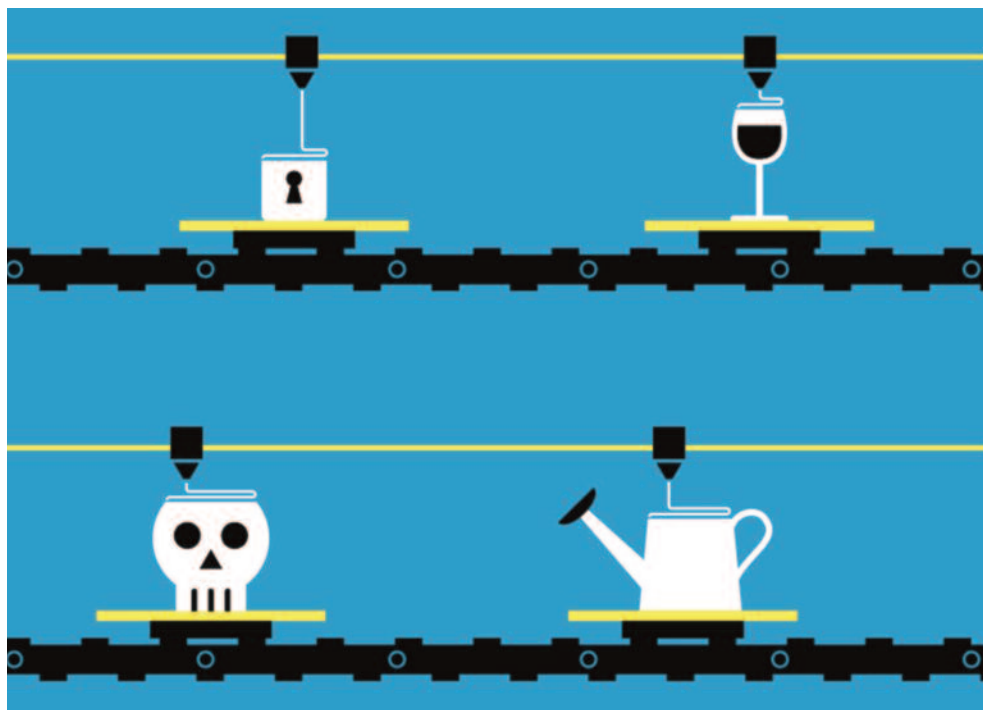
From the start Bhaskar had the idea that *Jacobin* was not just a magazine but a political project, and the reading groups are the way we pursue that at present.

The issue of democracy, in the sense of the reading groups having control over the magazine? So far it has not really arisen. No-one yet wants to go for an organisation rather than a gathering around a magazine.

The political centre of gravity of the project? We are socialists, in the sense of wanting a different system from capitalism. Beyond that there is not a party line. Obviously someone who wants to write an overt racist article will not be welcome, and we’ve had people leave the magazine when they’re not happy about its slant on a particular issue, on Syria recently for example, but there is plenty of room for differences.

Now we have organised groups involved with the magazine, mainly the International Socialist Organization [a group expelled from the British SWP’s international network in 2001]. An ISO member is on the staff, and many write articles. Many people from other groups at least write articles. We are open to various traditions.

with the old politics



Bhaskar Sunkara told me that on Stalinism he agrees with a Workers' Liberty article from 2002, "The tragedy of Afghanistan", and that he sees nothing socialist about Cuba. Yet there is a swathe of the left which sees Cuba as a socialist model. How do you negotiate such issues?

There has been a generational shift on the left. Today many see such issues as not very relevant. They are post-Cold-War socialists. The idea of seeing Cuba or somewhere as a model of socialism seems fairly ridiculous.

There are questions about what and how much we might defend in Cuba and Venezuela against US imperialism, but views which see them as a model stand outside the box of what we publish. Some of our writers have positive things to say about Venezuela, but not as a model.

Everyone involved has their own different preoccupations. You can see it in the themes chosen for the issues of the magazine. The latest issue is on organised labour in the USA.

I have written a lot about post-work trends in socialism, criticising the romanticisation of labour in some left thought. Another editor has written a lot deconstructing mainstream bourgeois economics. The politics of education have been central to the magazine.

Our demographic? Occupationally, our strongest links are with teachers. Our subscribers tend to be young, meaning mid-30s and younger, disproportionately white, a lot in academic and white-collar work. We've had a semi-intentional strategy of targeting mainstream liberal bourgeois media, such as Vox, which has given us a reach into such areas.

Geographically, our subscribers are densest in the Midwest and on the East Coast, thinner on the West Coast, mostly in big cities and places with college campuses. We're reaching out internationally. Over 10% of our web traffic is now from the UK.

How do *Jacobin* supporters operate as a

collective where there is a sufficient mass of them to make a difference, in the DSA or in unions?

Right now there is a dialectical interplay between us organising in our own various more traditional ways and the magazine. I'm in the left caucus of the DSA, which overlaps with *Jacobin*, and didn't exist before *Jacobin*, but is distinct.

Jacobin has taken the form of an ideological centre rather than a political party because in the USA we have a history of left parties being formed before they have an adequate base. I'd like to see a genuinely left socialist political party in the USA, but a lot needs to be done on a much smaller scale before that is possible.

It sounds as if some of you are influenced by what Hal Draper wrote after quitting organised socialist politics, about an ideological centre being the thing to build rather than what he called a "micro-sect", except that you are doing it and he didn't.

Yes, many of us are influenced by Draper.

And you, in your writings about labour, are influenced by Moishe Postone? By the operaista-"autonomist" current?

Yes, Postone clarified for me some things I already believed; but I didn't come across him when I was in Chicago, and I don't go all the way with him on ideas like the disappearance of the working class as an agent. The operaisti and "autonomists" have influenced me. I think Toni Negri has gone in directions which are not very useful any more, but I still read writers like Mario Tronti, and a few other people round *Jacobin* are engaged with that.

Bhaskar Sunkara said to me that he agreed with Ralph Miliband's ideas about socialist strategy.

Yes, Miliband is a common reference among *Jacobin* people, more for some than for others, especially on how to relate to social

Talking socialism

By Sacha Ismail

After attending The World Transformed with other *Jacobin* comrades, Peter spoke to meetings sponsored by Momentum groups in Newcastle, Edinburgh, Manchester, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Camden, Leicester and Tower Hamlets; and to meetings put on by the Labour Clubs at Glasgow and Goldsmiths universities.

Workers' Liberty members were also involved in making the tour happen.

The audiences varied from about 15 to 80 people. This was a good opportunity for British left activists to hear about what's going on in the States and how *Jacobin* has emerged out of that — but also to raise the political level in our own movement.

It is still relatively rare for Momentum groups to discuss political demands and ideas, let alone the wider framework of socialist politics. This was an opportunity to do that.

democracy and on linking immediate struggles to the project of overthrowing capitalism.

Some people round *Jacobin* will want you to read Trotsky. Some see Michael Harrington as a reference. And we read the classics, like Marx himself. But a variety of books attract our attention. Naomi Murakawa has written about the US prison boom and its political implications. One of our editors is a big [US] Civil War buff.

We are relatively coherent, but eclectic. We are all socialists, though I don't know that everyone would call themselves Marxist. To the extent that there is a right flank of *Jacobin*, it's people who see socialism as socialisation of investment and so on, but no more.

Our structure has always been very loose.

Peter said he was surprised to find that there is more buzz about the term "socialism" on the US left than in Britain — partly because Bernie Sanders has used it so prominently.

Throughout he stressed the need to have a clear (outline) vision of the different world we are fighting for, one we work to make popular so we can reshape political debate. That is also necessary to give sense and drive to much more limited struggles today.

The discussion at most meetings moved back and forth between visions of the future and what we should be demanding and organising for now. The wider picture produced some thought-provoking discussion on what the left should be agitating for, including debates about a shorter working week, nationalising the banks and the "universal basic income".

This kind of discussion is something Momentum itself should be fostering. We are pleased about the links the tour made with comrades in the US and hope to build on them in the months ahead.

There are periodic general discussions of the editorial staff, but it's been a while since we had a proper meeting, and day to day Bhaskar as editor takes the editorial decisions.

Hopefully in the future we will be able to build towards a national structure, but that's not where we are right now.

What has made the Bernie Sanders campaign, and other developments on the US left, possible, is the will to be bold and say you're going to do things differently.

It is a new kind of politics, not in the sense that the ideas have never been heard before, but in the sense of the clarity of the break with the old politics.

• More about *Jacobin*: www.jacobin.com

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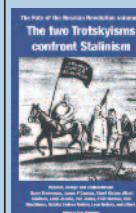
£6.20 (inc postage) from www.workersliberty.org/why-soc-fem

The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism

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

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

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



The puzzle of the 20th century

Martin Thomas reviews *Western Marxism and the Soviet Union* by Marcel van der Linden (Haymarket 2009).

For anyone who denies that capitalism is the end of history, Stalinism is the great theoretical puzzle of the 20th century.

As Marcel van der Linden notes in his heroically erudite survey — the English edition is revised and expanded from earlier Dutch and German editions — attempts to solve the puzzle have been almost exclusively from the radical left, and mostly from in and about the Trotskyist archipelago.

As the historian E P Thompson, in his day, sought to “rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the ‘obsolete’ hand-loom weaver, the ‘utopian’ artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott, from the enormous condescension of posterity”, because they essayed central issues, so van der Linden has worked on our polemics and blunderings.

He has studied writings in nine languages, and tried to be comprehensive. There are omissions — for example, the exile Mensheviks — but my own attempts on “state-capitalist” lines, and Tom Rigby’s polemic against them, are starred in the bibliography; our comrade Barry Finger’s reworking of “bureaucratic-collectivist” theory is discussed in the text.

Given only 329 pages, summaries are brief. Reading the book is like a tourist visit to a country, rather than living there. It is scarcely possible in such short space not to dissatisfy. Yet tourist visits have their value; and van der Linden is generally patient and loyal in his summaries, without being uncritical.

I never knew before that there was a flurry of debate on the USSR in West Germany, around the left of the SPD and the short-lived “Titoist” UAP, in the early 1950s. The participants all rejected the “degenerated workers’ state” and “state-capitalist” formulas, and reckoned the USSR to be a new non-capitalist formation, though all eschewed the usual term “bureaucratic collectivism”. The contributors included Paul Frölich, well-known for his biography of Rosa Luxemburg, who argued, unusually for the early 50s, that the regime would drift to stifled stagnation and downfall.

I didn’t know about the work of Josef Guttman, a former Czech Communist Party leader expelled in 1933 for Trotskyism, who as early as 1944 produced a “new formation” theory which predicted that Stalinistic planning would become increasingly ineffectual.

Over the decades, however, as van der Linden shows, most contributions were framed by “stylised facts” of their time which later seemed at best partial. From 1930s to the late 1940s, it was “stylised fact” that capitalism was in terminal decay, and also that Stalinist planning had precise control over the economy, which might be brittle but nevertheless assured good growth.

From the early 1950s to the 1970s, writers mostly assumed that the USSR was stable and robust, as well as showing superior economic growth, even though capitalism was rebounding. From the 1970s onwards, convention saw the USSR as more troubled. And then, from the 1990s, more and more writers started to see capitalism as so long-term-resilient that it was hardly surprising that alternatives went astray.

Joseph Carter, a theorist of “bureaucratic collectivism” in the WP-ISL (“Shachtmanite”) tradition, comes out as one of those less trapped by “stylised facts”: as early as 1941,

he saw the USSR as having “low efficiency in production”. (So also, though van der Linden does not mention this, does Raya Dunayevskaya, with her early demonstration that the USSR’s 1930s industrial growth was in no different league from Japan’s).

Given the harassed condition of the movement which produced them, many of the contributions which van der Linden surveys were one-off articles, pamphlets, or books, which at best became the “special theory” of some small and often ephemeral group, at worst vanished without comment.

There have been, I think, five strands of thinking which gained mass and continuity so they were checked and refined in response to events by a number of writers over time.

1. The “degenerated workers’ state” formula of “orthodox” Trotskyism. 2. Tony Cliff’s version of “state capitalism”. 3. Raya Dunayevskaya’s version of ditto. 4. The French Regulation School’s version of ditto. 5. The WP-ISL versions of “bureaucratic collectivism”.

Maybe the “Bordigist” versions of seeing the USSR as capitalist should count as a sixth: I don’t know enough to say. The numerous essays based on Karl Wittfogel’s work have probably been too scattered to count as a seventh.

Van der Linden highlights the first two strands. As he rightly says, it “is almost always overlooked in commentaries on Trotsky” that his description of the USSR as a “degenerated workers’ state” was inherently and essentially also a description of it as in radical flux, unstable in the very short term. Those who continued the same form of words for decades therefore inescapably altered the substantive theory.

TRANSITIONAL

So, writes van der Linden: “The concept of the ‘degenerated workers’ state’ was increasingly abandoned in favour of the term ‘transitional society’... as a specific, self-perpetuating type of society”.

Van der Linden tells us that Roman Rosdolsky, the intellectual éminence grise of “orthodox” Trotskyism, had rejected the “degenerated workers’ state” formula, in favour of describing the bureaucracy as at least “becoming” a class, as early as the 1950s. He could have added that other leading writers of that tradition, Michel Pablo, Michel Lequenne, Daniel Bensaid, would conclude that the bureaucracy became a class.

Under the words “degenerated workers’ state”, the substantive content often mutated into a “self-perpetuating type of society”, in fact a sort of progressive bureaucratic collectivism.

Van der Linden also shows the mutations within the current around the British SWP and its offshoots which claimed to be continuing Tony Cliff’s 1948 version of “state capitalism”.

Cliff described USSR state-capitalism as the most advanced capitalism — “only just short” of a workers’ state, as it were, with capacities for growth without crisis exceeding those of other capitalism. (Sean Matgamna has shown that on many questions such as China-Taiwan in the 1950s, Cliff’s politics were correspondingly pretty much “orthodox Trotskyist”).

Cliff’s comrades successively “de-emphasised this aspect of their theory, without, however, offering any explicit defence of the revision”. Still, right up to 1989-91, they “could hardly conceive of” — and dismissed as unlikely — “a collapse of state capitalism”.

Cliff, unlike almost all other “state-capital-



Tony Cliff

ist” theorists (the exception, I think, is Paul Mattick), and unlike many “new-formation” theorists too, argued that there was no real (even deformed) sale and purchase of labour-power in the USSR, and thus no wage-labour. In the 1970s and 80s, Duncan Hallas and Alex Callinicos disputed that.

For Cliff, what made the USSR “capitalist” despite its exemption from the usual capitalist limits on growth without crisis, and despite the absence of wage-labour, was military competition with the USA. But the description as “capitalist” was kept on when, from the 1970s, his comrades quietly dropped the thesis of a general “permanent arms economy”.

Van der Linden does not give the same attention to the other three or four strands, and in particular not to the “bureaucratic-collectivist” ideas of Shachtman, Carter, and Draper. He summarises Shachtman’s and Carter’s first contributions in 1940-1; does not report on the melding of their views in later years; and neglects Draper’s attempts, later still, to fill out the theory.

He also gets the genesis of that current conventionally garbled. He rightly rejects the “usual” view which describes the late-1930s crank Bruno Rizzi as the first theorist of the USSR as a new formation, but still gives Rizzi too much space.

Rizzi became known only because in 1939 Trotsky lighted upon a book of his as a chopping-block for Trotsky’s own argument. Trotsky did not summarise Rizzi’s analysis beyond a few bare conclusions; Rizzi’s book could influence no-one directly, since it was almost unavailable until 1977; and it was more rambling speculation than theory.

However, van der Linden repeats the conventional view that [James] Burnham supplied the theoretical rationale for the political positions on the USSR’s 1939 invasions of Poland and Finland of the US Trotskyist minority which became the WP-ISL; and that “Trotsky... pointed to the similarity of Burnham’s ideas and those of Bruno R”.

It required no special new theory to condemn the invasions (the “orthodox” majority condemned them too, only with contorted reservations). Burnham’s view at that time was that the USSR was not a radically new formation but a halfway house to restoration of ordinary capitalism. He moved to a view which had some parallels with Rizzi’s only after explicitly breaking with Marxism, in 1940.

Van der Linden concludes “that Soviet society can hardly be explained in orthodox-Marxian terms at all”.

He censures “state-capitalist” theories for not showing that market competition func-

tioned in the USSR, and comments sniffily that “this is possibly due to [the writers’] limited knowledge of Marx’s political-economic writings... Competition is dealt with... only in the third volume [of *Capital*]”.

Some of us have studied volume 3 of *Capital*! As it happens, Marx has little analysis of competition there, nothing comparable to the bourgeois economists who have lovingly dissected many variants of it. A simple wave of the hand at volume 3 is not enough to show that the undoubtedly aberrant and muffled character of the competitive pressures in the USSR economy proves it non-capitalist.

Van der Linden damns “the theoreticians of bureaucratic collectivism” because “if [they] are correct, a ruling class emerged which did not exist as a class before it came to power. In all relevant writings by Marx, it was assumed that first antagonistic classes emerge from the relations of production, that these classes... struggle with each other... and finally... a previous subaltern class is established as the new ruling class”.

His selection includes many writers who have identified the Stalinist USSR as a new formation, but denied that the bureaucracy was a class. He seems unsympathetic to the best-known of those in Britain, Hillel Ticktin, but friendly to the general “not-a-class” idea. Since Marx never offered a cut-and-dried “orthodox” definition of classes, and since the bureaucracy had a relatively stable distinct place in production, in the general organisation of society, and in the acquisition and control of revenue, I find this unconvincing.

In any case, van der Linden’s description of a new class coming to rule only after it had condensed and fought battles within the old society applies to the bourgeoisie. I don’t see that it necessarily applies to other classes in history. The feudal aristocracy, and the Ottoman bureaucracy, for example, arguably developed more from military factions than from compact classes in the societies prior to their rise to power.

None of the strands have yet flowered into a rich scientific dialogue: some have petered out, others veered into blind alleys. Our decision, in the Alliance for Workers’ Liberty, to confine our “line” to programmatic conclusions, and debate the scientific assessment as a scientific question, is unusual in a world where “line on the USSR” has been often a sect badge.

But the time will come; and those preparing for it will find van der Linden’s book a valuable resource.

• A longer review (2009): bit.ly/ph-vdl

The world of neoliberalism, three years on

By Colin Foster

Three years ago, we surveyed “the world of neoliberalism” as it had emerged from the 2008 financial crash and the acute phase in 2010-12 of the eurozone government-debt crisis.

Many patterns have continued since 2013. Overall economic growth has been slow by historical standards, even slower by comparison with the rates expected in recovery from a big slump. Of the global growth, the bulk, 63% in 2015-6, has been in China and India, and the Chinese growth figures are dubious. Output per worker-hour in the USA has stagnated, rising at only 0.4% a year between late 2010 and 2016. Real median household income in the USA is still 2.4% below its 1999 level.

World trade growth has been especially slow, slower or not much faster than output growth, where for decades before 2008 it was almost always markedly faster than output growth.

Some Marxists construe this as just continuation of “the crisis”, a state of affairs deemed to have been fundamentally fixed since the early 1970s, and only at best episodically glossed up by “artificial” credit expansions and the like. It is not. The financial crash of 2008 was a distinct crisis, and, like all other capitalist crises in fact, had its own special features. The global near-stagnation since the immediate recovery from that crash, i.e. since about 2010, is, again, a distinct new period, different from the era between 1982 and 2008 which saw many financial crises but also substantial expansion of world capitalism.

RESILIENT

In this new period, the neoliberal framework for capitalist government policy developed in the 1980s and 90s remains, however, resilient.

Governments’ priority is to craft their territories to be congenial bases for free-flowing global capital. The Irish government’s plea to the EU not to make Apple pay it £13 billion in back taxes illustrates that priority vividly. With that priority come drives for privatisation, marketisation, reduction of social overheads (i.e. welfare cuts), lower tax rates for the rich and big business, and labour-market flexibility (i.e. erosion of workers’ rights).

Central bank policies are heterodox by comparison with the norms of 1982-2008. The interest rates between central banks and commercial banks are near or sometimes even below zero (Japan, European Central Bank, Sweden, Switzerland, and Denmark). “Quantitative Easing”, i.e. buying-up of bonds by central banks, is commonplace. Governments hope for revived inflation, rather than fearing it. The gist of these policies is to subsidise the banks in the hope of speeding (or avoiding slowdowns in) flows of credit into the productive economy. They produce no easing of the neoliberal drive to increase rates of exploitation.

Despite its economic, political, and strategic troubles, the USA remains hegemonic in the world-market system. In 2008 there was talk of the G20, a broader consortium of 20 governments, eclipsing US-dominated groups such as the G7, but it has not done so. Instructively, while the G20 was urgently mobilised to offset and help with the US-centred financial crisis of 2008, there has been no talk of the G20 doing anything to help with or offset the slumps currently hitting Brazil or China.

The USA’s centrality in what Ellen Wood called “the Empire of Capital” has never been like that of a metropolis in a colonial empire, wielding strong political control over the weaker countries. It has always been a looser, more flexible affair.

Even middle-of-the-road bourgeois thinking is more sceptical and sour about the financial “Masters of the Universe” than it was before 2008; that fact is both illustrated by, and nourished by, the continuing stream since then of revelations about banks’ malpractices, and fines levied on them or negotiated with them for those malpractices. The 8 September 2016 fine of \$185 million on Wells Fargo, which had become the biggest bank in the world, is the latest in a long chain. Yet no-one really argues that any of the fines, warnings, reports, and laws have done much to control the crisis-generating tendencies of today’s high finance which were displayed in 2008.

Another crisis like 2008’s — though it will surely be different in detail — is likely enough. And, as the bourgeois strategists worriedly note, the governments have now used “all the shots in their locker” of crisis-dampening measures.

Since 2013 there has been a “third wave” of the turmoil flowing from the 2008 crash, namely, slumps and slowdowns in the stronger more-recently-industrialised countries called the “emerging economies”. Brazil has been in a slump since 2013. Real output per head in South Africa has been falling since 2014, and in Russia since 2013.

The Chinese economy is probably still growing, but more slowly.

When China’s economic slowdown may trigger an explosion into direct working-class political and social contestation from the grassroots strike militancy which has been bubbling at a great level for years we do not know: this is the greatest unknown of world politics today.

Today, “de-industrialisation” and rustbelts are not confined to the old industrial countries. China’s growth is now mostly in “services”. Manufacturing employment in China seems now to be falling in absolute numbers. In South Korea, the manufacturing share of employment has fallen from 28% in 1991 to 17% today. Manufacturing employment in India is probably rising, but manufacturing is a small part of its economy compared to “services”. Some of this trend is an artefact of the often-arbitrary line between “manufacturing” and “services” and of the growth of contracting-out, but not all.

Capitalism, including industrial capitalism, has expanded in Africa over the last decade or so. Africa was previously one of the most difficult areas for post-colonial capitalist development, but it had average real annual GDP growth of 5.4% between 2000 and 2010. That slowed to 3.3% between 2010 and 2015. Chinese capitalist investment and trade links have played a large part. The stagnation of the prices of oil and other basic commodities, and China’s slowdown, mean that, as one reporter puts it: “2016 will be the toughest year for African economies for some time. And that’s not as if 2015 wasn’t hard enough for many”.

The vote for Britain to quit the EU on 23 June 2016 was a local manifestation of a trend widespread across the world: the rise of plebeian resentments against modern globalised capitalism expressed in right-wing, populist, nationalist, “identity politics” forms. Donald Trump’s candidacy for US president, and the strength of the Front National in France, are other cases.



A poll found that 69% of those voting for Brexit thought the decision “might make us a bit better or worse off as a country, but there probably isn’t much in it either way”. (By contrast, 77% of those voting against Brexit thought that quitting the EU would be “disastrous”). The economic imprecision of the Brexit campaign — did the Brexiters want the Norwegian, the Swiss, the Canadian, the Albanian, or the Singaporean model of future relations with the continent? — evidently did not trouble Brexit voters much. Although the plebeian resentment is nourished by real economic grievances, its political expressions (Ukip, Trump, FN, etc.) offer few economic promises, even on a demagogic level — much fewer than the far-right demagogues of the 1930s offered. Their appeal is rather to identity.

That does not stop them being potent. The FN’s rise from an initial electorate heavily centred among ageing, white, male, worse-off former voters for the mainstream right to a much broader demographic shows that. In the French regional elections of late 2015, the FN’s overall vote of 28% included 35% of under-24 votes and 30% of public-sector workers.

CONFIDENCE

On the whole, it seems probable that the FN or such lack the confidence and the street-fighting base to try to crush the labour movement at the first stage, and that mainstream bourgeois interests will deter them from radical protectionism.

They can do many ugly things short of that — and those ugly things can prepare the way for worse at the next stage, maybe in a new global crash.

Those new right-wing forces have been able to scoop so much of the plebeian discontent because of the accumulated weaknesses of the left, determined by the successive setbacks since the early 1980s and the ideological disarray of the left in the aftermath of the collapse of Stalinism in 1989-91.

Yet 2008 has also produced new surges on the left: the movements around Corbyn and Sanders; Syriza; Podemos. These new left movements have emerged at first at a fairly low political temperature. Such hesitations are determined by the background of the previous decades: it is no use being impatient with them. Our task is neither to submerge

ourselves uncritically, nor to attempt to jump over the immaturities of the movement by shrill declamations, but, in Lenin’s phrase, to “patiently explain”.

The patient explanation must include explaining the lessons of Greece and of Brazil. In Greece, Syriza came from a left-Eurocommunist background and drew in a lively variety of new activists, including revolutionary socialists able to get a hearing within the movement. But it never developed beyond the stage of wanting a left government which would be in some undefined way a “step towards” socialism; it never developed a workable international perspective. So before January 2015, when it won government office, it had already reduced its political platform to a promise to negotiate hard with the EU and to redistribute the proceeds of a better deal in welfare improvements. From that unviable halfway-house program flowed its collapse into administering neo-liberalism and the EU’s anti-refugee policy.

In Brazil, the Workers’ Party, founded in 1980 out of a militant union movement in battle against the military dictatorship, long declared itself revolutionary socialist and anti-Stalinist, and had a lively internal democracy. Gradually it adapted to what seemed to “work” in the short term for administering municipalities, for assembling governing coalitions, and for winning run-off elections. By the time it won Brazil’s presidency in 2002, it had reduced its slogans to “Love and Peace” and “For a Decent Brazil”, and its economic program to modified neoliberalism. Maybe uniquely among neo-liberal governments, the PT administration of 2002-2010 made reforms which significantly reduced economic inequality in Brazil (though they still left that inequality higher than, say, the USA). When slump hit Brazil in 2013, the PT administration could find no answer than orthodox neo-liberal cuts; and that paved the way for the right-wing to oust it with its “impeachment” coup in 2016. Meanwhile, the PT’s activist base had been progressively demobilised.

The new left movements must be won, as patiently as necessary, but urgently, to class-struggle socialism. Otherwise the next economic crisis is likely to produce terrible victories for the right.

• 2013 survey: bit.ly/w-n-l

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

Friday 14 October

Poems for Corbyn book launch
7pm, Housmans bookshop, Caledonian Road, London, N1 9DX
bit.ly/2dFZYIU

Tuesday 18 October

Haringey Radical Readers
7pm, Big Green Bookshop, Brompton Park Road, N22 6BG
bit.ly/2cQ4FE5

Thursday 20 October

Shahrokh Zamani action campaign launch
7pm, Hamilton House (NUT), Mableton Place, London WC1H 9BD
bit.ly/2dG07fo

Tuesday 25 October

Haringey Momentum AGM
Venue TBC
bit.ly/2cQ651d

Saturday 5 November

National Libraries, Galleries and Museums demonstration
12 noon, British Library, London
bit.ly/2cjMI0O

Saturday 5 November

Cleaners protest at John Lewis
2pm, John Lewis, Oxford Street, London, W1A 1EX
bit.ly/2dIqpzw

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

More online at www.workersliberty.org



Workers' Liberty



@workersliberty

End the silence on Russia

LABOUR

By Simon Nelson

A group of Syrian solidarity activists disrupted a speech by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn at Stop the War's Conference on 8 October.

They wanted to highlight the ongoing and murderous bombing of Aleppo by Russian forces and the continuing crimes of the Assad regime.

Disgracefully, they were removed by the Stop the War organisers as a chant of "No more war" by the audience was used to drown them out.

Whilst we do not share the optimism of some of the Syria solidarity activists for the prospects and dominant politics of the Syrian opposition, we fully support their protest in exposing the dreadful political state of the Stop the War Coalition.

Since 2011 and the outbreak of the demonstrations against Assad, Stop the War has taken a de-facto pro-Assad line. It did not and will not call any demonstrations against Russia's bombing. Not only this, but it has refused to engage with anti-Assad Syrians, stopping them from speaking on its platforms, attempting to remove them from their demonstrations. It has allowed supporters of Assad such as Syrian nun Mother Agnes to speak from their platforms.

Jeremy Corbyn has a long association with Stop the War and he has failed to speak out against Russia's actions in Syria or to meet Syrians to discuss the situation. An open letter to Corbyn signed by over 150 activists, Labour party and Momentum members states;

"We know only too well that there are those in the anti-war movement who will denounce any move critical of Russia, Iran, or Assad as tantamount to support for Western imperialist intervention...

.We appreciate your concern not to lend support to right-wing calls for fruitless bombing campaigns. But in the face of the horrors being perpetrated across Syria, with impunity, and above all by Russian and Assad-regime forces, we believe socialists and anti-war activists cannot simply look on in silence. We ask that you condemn, clearly and specifically, the actions of Assad and Russia in Syria, which have caused the overwhelming majority of civilian deaths and which present the biggest obstacle to any workable solution to the Syrian crisis."

Corbyn should come out against the politics of Stop the War on this and many other issues. We hope he does that and begins to push for the kind of anti-war movement that puts democratic rights at the top of its agenda.

• You can sign the letter here: speakoutonsyria.wordpress.com

Corbyn under fire

By Martin Thomas

Jeremy Corbyn has come under fire from both right and left for speaking at a "Stand Up to Racism" conference on 8 October.

The complaint is that the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) plays a big part in SUTR. Its co-convenor is Weyman Bennett, a central committee member of the SWP.

For the right-wingers, this is bad because the SWP is a far-left group critical of Labour. For the left-wingers, this is bad because of the taint of the "Comrade Delta" scandal of 2010-3, when the SWP office covered up and then dealt bureaucratically with charges of sexual assault and rape by an SWP leader.

We have no sympathy with the right-wing complaints. Whatever the faults of the SWP and SUTR, they have been active in supporting the refugees in Calais and elsewhere while Labour right-wingers

have made cheap shots against the Tories for not blocking entry to Britain enough.

That Corbyn spoke at a big rally for refugee rights — as he did in September 2015, too, hours after first being elected Labour leader, at a demonstration in which SUTR was a big factor — is good, not bad.

The left-wing critics include groups like Southall Black Sisters and East End Sisters Uncut whom we respect and with whom we've worked. We know their criticism is intended to help generate a better refugee-rights movement.

And we have many of our own complaints against the SWP. We've seen the SWP physically assault our people who attend their events and seek to voice criticisms. The SWP's line of backing Brexit on the grounds that it would disrupt capitalism, and disruption must be good, showed gross irresponsibility towards the migrant workers now at risk from Brexit.

Yet the answer is to criticise — as

vehemently as necessary — and to confront politically, not to "no-platform" or boycott.

A better refugee-rights movement would be better. But it doesn't yet exist.

SUTR relies on SWP backroom work, but involves many not-at-all-SWP people who value unity in the common cause. Diane Abbott is its president; Dave Ward of the CWU is co-chair; Kate Osamor MP, Christine Blower, and Steve Hart are vice-chairs; Malia Bouattia, Shelly Asquith, and Shakira Martin of NUS spoke on 8 October.

SUTR is, in fact, a sort of transposition or recycling of an older group, Unite Against Fascism. We've had many criticisms of how UAF organised demonstrations against the EDL and others, but we have not boycotted those demonstrations.

In this case Corbyn should be commended, not denounced.

• More: bit.ly/c-delta; bit.ly/no-np



Get involved with the Clarion

An unofficial magazine by Momentum and Labour left activists. *The Clarion* will be produced monthly and welcomes contributions and debate.

After a well received launch at Labour Party conference and The World Transformed, *The Clarion's* second issue will be produced at the end of October.

Get involved by emailing theclarionmag@gmail.com

<https://theclarionmag.wordpress.com>

Picturehouse cinema strikes spread

By Gemma Short

Workers at the Ritzy Picturehouse cinema in Brixton struck on Friday 7 October, and will strike again on Saturday 15 October.

The Ritzy cinema was completely shut down by the strike, and films due to be shown as part of the London Film Festival moved to other venues. Workers picketed the Ritzy after they walked out at 1pm, they then protested outside the BFI South Bank cinema (the BFI gives large grants to Picturehouse cinemas and Picturehouses in London are part of the London Film Festival going on at the moment), before proceeding to Leicester Square to protest outside a London Film Festival premiere at the Odeon and at the Picturehouse Central cinema.

On Thursday 6 October workers at Hackney Picturehouse voted by 100% to join the dispute and will join Ritzy workers on strike on Saturday 15th.

Links have been made with workers in several other Picturehouse branches in London and the dispute may spread further.

A worker at the Hackney Picturehouse spoke to *Solidarity*:

"I think it's fair to say there are two reasons for what's happening at Hackney. One is the Ritzy and the example they've shown to Hackney workers; it's an organising point for us here, to be able to say – the Ritzy did it, so we can too. Then there were several flashpoints involving people being unfairly dismissed which the union was able to stop. It was a mixture of bullying and management incompetence.

"I'd say the most important demands for staff here are the living wage and sick pay. Currently people are only offered sick pay after eight days, and then only if you've worked for them for a year. There's another issue, which is that we've moved from fortnightly pay to monthly pay. Because staff are on

irregular, zero-hours contracts, they often solve shortfalls by working a lot one week and paying off their debts that week; it's harder to do that when you get monthly pay packets.

"On Saturday, it's the first day that the Ritzy and the Hackney Picturehouse have gone on strike together. The Ritzy and Hackney pickets will meet up in Hackney and do a joint demonstration – we think people will find that inspiring. We want to make links with local activist groups and other local unions. It costs about £2,500 per strike day, in terms of printing costs, other costs, and the hardship fund. We're looking for endorsements and collections from other organisations, MPs, and union branches.

"Come and join us at 270 Mare Street at 11:30 on Saturday 15 October. When workers walk out at 12 we want them to see a big crowd outside – so that people are cheering for them and it isn't just us



walking out under the eye of managers. But if you're in south London, the Ritzy want people down at Windrush Square from noon that day as well."

The demands of the Picturehouse workers would mean a significant improvement in working conditions them. Most precarious workers desperately need these changes. However by and large these workers have not yet in large numbers taken up the most effective tools of struggle. They have not yet piled in droves into their trade unions as previous generations did.

The Picturehouse workers are not unique. Many young workers face similar conditions and pay. The labour movement should rally round to support the Picturehouse strikes. An important act of solidarity would be to organise other such workers to spread these disputes.

Success in Picturehouse would inspire others to follow in their example.

• **Support the strike:**
facebook.com/RitzyLivingWage
facebook.com/HackneyLivingWage

Southern workers strike again

By Ollie Moore

Rail workers on Southern struck on 11 October, as their fight to defend the role of the guard and defeat the imposition of "Driver Only Operation" (DOO) continues.

The strike, which was planned to last until 13 October, is the first in a programme of planned actions. Further strikes are planned on 18-20 October, 3-5 and 22-23 November, and 6-8 December.

Southern bosses, who recently

spectacularly escalated the dispute by threatening to sack any guard who did not agree to downgrade themselves to a new role of "On Board Supervisor" (OBS), are seeking a High Court injunction to have the strikes called off.

In the face of the threat of mass sackings, the workers' union, RMT, has advised them to accept the new OBS contracts, but says it will press ahead with its industrial and political campaigns to force Southern bosses to climb down.

The union plans a national



demonstration at Parliament on 1 November to oppose the imposition of DOO.

#Unisongate hearings to start

By Simon Nelson

A number of Unison members made complaints to the certification officer about the conduct of the General Secretary election in 2015.

The complaints, together known as #unisongate, centre around the recording of regional officials discussing how to elect incumbent Dave Prentis and include how to

work around "hostile branches" and engage with "sympathetic employers". A leak of emails showing the same sort of collusion between full time employees of the union was also discovered.

Their efforts were rewarded with Dave Prentis's re-election on less than 50% of the overall vote cast but just 10% of members taking part.

Solidarity does not support the use of the Certification Officer and

the courts in dealing with matters of trade union democracy, but will follow with interest the outcome of the complaints.

The initial hearings will be 19, 20 and 21 December.

• **The first 11 complainants, many from the Barnet Unison branch, will be reporting from the hearing:**
uniondemocracyblog.wordpress.com

Traffic wardens fight for unsocial pay

By Peggy Carter

Traffic wardens in Hackney, east London, struck on Thursday 22 September in a dispute over unsocial hours pay and victimisation of trade union activists.

Workers also struck in August and October 2015 and won the London Living Wage and a company sick pay policy.

Traffic wardens are currently only being paid a normal hourly rate for working evenings and weekends, and are arguing for

overtime payments for working unsocial hours.

Unite regional officer Onay Kasab said: "The employer seems to think that our members are machines without families, home life or the need for some leisure time."

Sheffield bin workers strike

Bin workers in Sheffield struck for 24 hours on Wednesday 5 October over a derisory pay offer.

The GMB union put in a claim for a 2% pay rise but Veolia, the contractor used by the council, offered 1.5% over two years.

Workers in a variety of Veolia's rubbish collection and processing sections in Sheffield have come into conflict with Veolia over the last six years.

In April the same group of workers struck over bullying and aggressive management tactics.

JUSTICE FOR CLEANERS

RMT DAY OF ACTION

Every day, more than 3,000 cleaning workers clean stations, depots, trains, and other facilities to ensure London Underground can run.

These workers are low paid and in unstable employment. Cleaning work on the Tube is outsourced, and the contractors - such as ISS and Interserve - sub-contract to agencies such as AGS, who pressure workers into registering as "limited liability companies". This web of outsourcing means cleaners' working lives are often uncertain.

Our ultimate demand is for cleaning to be taken back in house and for cleaners to be employed directly by London Underground/TfL rather than outsourced contractors.

THURSDAY 13TH OCTOBER 2016

DEMONSTRATE: 10am, City Hall (The Queen's Walk, SE1 2AA, London Bridge Tube), and 3pm, Interserve HQ (1-3 College Hill, EC4R 2RA, Cannon Street Tube).

Bring flags, banners, and noisemakers.



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2016 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. Reason In Revolt is a day of talks and discussions to celebrate our 50 years and work out what they can teach us. We invite all comrades, friends, and curious observers — old and new — to come and take part.

In 1966, a group of socialist activists founded Workers' Fight. Their aim was to renew and rebuild the socialist movement as a revolutionary and democratic movement — free of the deadening culture of Stalinism, and inspired by a critical, Marxist spirit.

Over the years, this tendency has broken much new ground in socialist ideas, and rediscovered lost histories of the Marxist-Trotskyist tradition, especially that of the “other” American Trotskyists — the group of comrades around Max Shachtman and Hal Draper. We have developed a uniquely serious, Marxist approach to imperialism, starting with debates around the struggle for democracy and unity in Ireland.

We have also been at the forefront of the biggest struggles waged by the working class over the last 50 years: the development of a working-class women's movement, the mass strike movements of the 1970s, and the rank-and-file revolt that shook the Labour Party and the British ruling class in the early 1980s — always trying to organise the grass-roots of those movements, building organisation in the workplace, and arguing and debating to clarify the view of the way ahead.

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