



# & Workers' Liberty Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

No 426 11 January 2017 50p/£1

## RED CROSS DECLARES NHS CRISIS



# EMERGENCY CASH FOR NHS NOW!

For many healthworkers, the NHS is facing its worst crisis in memory.

Small wonder the British Red Cross, called in to provide support with discharging patients from hospitals safely, describes the situation as a humanitarian crisis. Yet Jeremy Hunt and Theresa May deny there is a problem.

More page 5

## Inside:

### Defend freedom of movement!



Solidarity answers the arguments against freedom of movement.

See pages 5, 6&7

### Northern Ireland and Brexit



Solidarity examines the likely impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland.

See pages 6-7

### The ANC and the South African left



Luke Hardy assesses the situation for the left in South Africa.

See page 8

## Join Labour!

A new chance for unity in Momentum

See page 10



# Turkey shifts fast to the right

**“The country is drifting step by step, under the ‘presidential system’, using the state of emergency, to one-man administration”, says Turkey’s Union for Democracy in a recent statement.**

“However, Turkey needs, not a one-man administration, but a participatory pluralist secular parliamentary democracy and peace”

The statement describes the widespread sackings of officials, shutting-down of TV and radio channels and newspapers and magazines, and the tens of thousands of people jailed. The state of emergency declared after the defeat of the coup attempt in July against President Erdogan’s AKP regime has been continued and intensified as repeated terrorist attacks, mostly claimed by Daesh, have hit the country.

“Amendments to the Constitution [sought by Erdogan to strengthen his rule] cannot be discussed when freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and freedom of organisation are suspended...”

The Union for Democracy statement has been published by the Turkish socialist group Marksist Tutum, with which Workers’ Liberty has had links. Tutum itself comments:



Police on the streets of Istanbul after the New Year bombing of Reina nightclub

“The military coup attempt of July 15 [2016] is a crucial turning point... In a sense, it can be likened to the Reichstag fire [of February 1933] in German history. Like the Reichstag fire it has played a key role in suppressing the last remnants of bourgeois democracy and establishing an authoritarian regime based on a state of emergency and rule by decree...”

“More than 100,000 public servants have been suspended and some 30,000 people arrested. With the decree issued on 2 September,

51,000 public servants were fired. Around 30,000 of them were teachers and academics. By decree they were denied any trial or appeal. With a second decree on 8 September, another 11,000 teachers were fired...”

“The coup attempt was not an insignificant rebellion of a tiny group of desperate officers.

“It appeared that many officers with some of the detachments under their command were involved in the coup plot... [But] the AKP’s propaganda argument that

the coup was defeated by the movement of popular masses is not true... It was not mass action that defeated the coup, but the balance of forces within the state, particularly the army. On balance, the putschists were weaker than the other side.

“This was essentially a power struggle between reactionary bourgeois forces within the state with no progressive aspect. The [regime’s] zeal to portray the Gulenists [an Islamist current formerly allied with Erdogan] as an ominous religious sect is very misleading. The Gulenists make up a huge fraction of capital with enormous international ties...”

“A war has been going on since at least 2011 between these bourgeois factions on many fronts ranging from key state institutions to media, education, international relations, economy and so on. Many private schools preparing students for university entrance exams, which are key for Gulenists, have come under government attack. Many national and local TV channels, newspapers, magazines have been taken over, along with financial institutions.

“Despite all the attacks to intimi-

date the public, HDP [a left-wing party supporting Kurdish rights] managed to get a record 13% vote in the June 2015 election. Angered at this result, Erdogan forced a quick new election [in November] and he pressed the button for war against the Kurds... Around 200 HDP offices across Turkey came under attack from government-led fascist mobs...

“The less than five-month period between the two [2015] elections changed the whole political climate of the country to one of rabid nationalism, warmongering, and authoritarianism. This is the main determinant of the political arena in Turkey since the spring of 2015”.

All this comes together with direct measures to raise the rate of exploitation of the working class.

“Since the start of the AKP rule we have seen the 8-hour working day removed legally. Doing overtime has become a standard for workers to compensate for the low level of monthly pay.

## RULE

**“With overtime work becoming the rule, the working day in practice has become 12-14 hours.**

“Sub-contracting has become all-pervasive, including in the public sector. Deaths caused by work accidents have reached 1500 a year.

“The latest moves are to legalise agency work (agency workers are not allowed to unionise where they work, since they are not considered to be employed in that particular industry)... to abolish the right to severance pay... to make all workers under age 45 be part of a private pension system alongside the existing public pension system...”

**“In general the government tries to impose the rule that under the state of emergency there can be no strikes or any other sort of mass actions (marches, rallies and so on). Their pretext is always ‘security’.”**

## Daesh losing grip on Mosul

By Keith Road

**Iraqi forces have reached the Tigris River in their campaign to take Mosul back from Daesh.**

Lieutenant General Abdal-Amir al-Lami, the Iraqi deputy chief of staff for operations, confirmed on 8 January that the Iraqi security forces (ISF) had seized the eastern end of one of the bridges linking the two sides of the city.

Iraqi forces are now present in

35 of east Mosul’s 47 districts. Thousands of Iraqis have fled but displaced numbers are not yet as high as expected. There is still a lack of clarity on the distribution of aid and humanitarian resources with corruption endemic.

The BBC reports: “The number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Mosul city itself was estimated by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at 42,000 in early December,

around 4-6% of Mosul’s remaining population...”

The flow of IDPs from the city has increased since 29 December... However, OCHA announced that security in liberated areas has also allowed 14,000 IDPs to return to Mosul city.”

**In seven bombings in 2017, Daesh are said to have killed almost 90 people in Baghdad. The group is shifting its activity to outside of Mosul.**

## Assad forces move forward, Russia and Turkey cooperate

By Simon Nelson

**Assad’s so-called “liberation” of Aleppo has destroyed and ransacked the city. More than 400,000 people have been displaced in a city that once had a population of 1.5 million.**

Attempts to rebuild the infrastructure will be a slow process. Much of the city was obliterated in Russian-aided bombardments that sought to show both the might of Assad and the determination of Russia to cement itself as his key ally.

Any lasting ceasefire is likely to break down.

The UN’s efforts to provide humanitarian relief in Syria remain

blocked by various obstructions including the need for permits from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, local governors and armed groups. A UN spokesperson said: “Russia and Turkey both said ... that they will facilitate humanitarian access to all civilians as part of the cessation of hostilities agreement that they function as guarantors, and we will actively hold them accountable for their promise to help us.”

How accountable Russia and Turkey will be remains to be seen. After widespread reports that UN contracts for humanitarian aid were often being run by members of the Assad family and Ba’ath party functionaries, it is doubtful much aid will reach the civilians who need it.

Assad’s second front, against rebel-held districts of Damascus, has intensified since the fall of Aleppo. The river valley, Wadi Barada, just 30 kilometres north-east of the capital has been under siege, with 100,000 people trapped. 5.5 million people in Damascus now have limited access to fresh water as a result of Hezbollah assaults on the Ain al-Fijeh spring, the source of over 70% of Damascus’s water. Alongside many other atrocities committed in this war, this targeting of water resources is considered a war crime by the UN.

Eastern Ghouta, to the east of Damascus, is likely to fall to Government troops soon. The only notable areas not under government control could soon be those held by

Daesh and the Kurdish YPG.

Ceasefires exclude “terrorist groups” meaning that Jabhat Fatah al-Sham can be targeted. The former Al Qaeda affiliate is heavily embedded with other rebel groups and other shades of Islamists. Attacks targeting it are almost inevitably indiscriminate in their consequences, both on any other rebels and on civilians who still live in areas outside government control.

The support for the ceasefire from both Turkey and Russia is signs of a significant rapprochement between the two countries, following the downing of a Russian plane by Turkey in 2016. Even the assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey by a member of Er-

dogan’s AKP has failed to stop collaboration.

Two of the largest Islamist groups which have Turkish government support, Ahrar al-Sham and Nour al-Din al-Zinki, have kept to the ceasefire, but both have refused to attend peace talks. Turkey accuses Iran of failing to control Hezbollah and other Shia militias, who it blames for continuing many of the hostilities in the Damascus suburbs.

**Attempts by Russia in alliance with Turkey to downgrade the role of the US have also taken a significant step forward, with Turkey closing a major airbase that had been used for the US led coalition airstrikes.**



# Brexit and Irish borders

By Micheál MacEoin

As the House of Lords EU Committee put it, with considerable understatement recently: UK-Irish relations “are often overlooked on the British side of the Irish sea”.

Both before and after the EU referendum, the consequences of Brexit on Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic have been an afterthought in the public debate. Often there has been no thought at all.

After the referendum result, Theresa May was quick to reassure Stormont that “nobody wants to return to the borders of the past”. Yet, under the pressure from the Tory right, and despite quietly believing in a Remain position during the campaign, the drift of May’s policy, however muddled, seems to be heading towards a so-called “hard Brexit”.

Britain could, at the very least, leave the single market. From the Tory right in the cabinet, there have even been suggestions about leaving the customs union — a call which, when it came from Liam Fox in July, caused tension with Dublin government, which proclaimed itself “very surprised”.

The effect of leaving the single market and the customs union would be to entrench the border between the Republic of Ireland and the North. As a recent House of Lords EU committee report stated, “the only way to maintain an open border would be either for the UK to remain in the customs union or for EU partners to agree to a bilateral UK-Irish agreement on trade and customs.”

The latter will not be forthcoming without some special dispensation for the Republic of Ireland during the negotiations between Britain and the 27 EU countries and, without it, some system of customs checks would seem inevitable at the border.

Moreover, the Common Travel Area (CTA) between the UK and the Republic of Ireland would be cast into doubt. One legal expert has suggested that: “In the event of a UK withdrawal, much would depend on the terms of its subsequent relationship to the EU. To the extent that customs checks applied to goods moving across the border on the island of Ireland, or to traffic between the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, there would be pressure for controls on the movement of persons as well.”

Even if the CTA provisions, which have existed in some form or other since the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922, are preserved, there will at least be some change to the ability of EU and



Swiss/EEA citizens to move between the Republic of Ireland and Britain.

Ironically given that the largest Unionist party, the DUP, supported British withdrawal from the EU, one option could mean border checks to enter Great Britain — not at the Irish Border but at ports and airports both North and South.

It is this sort of Brexit which Irish capitalism fears most, as the UK is Ireland’s second largest EU trading partner after Belgium, and its key market for exports in the crucial agri-food and drinks sector. This is not to mention the potential complications for the close family and cultural ties between millions of workers in Ireland and the UK, and the position of Irish workers and students living in Britain.

## ECONOMICS

**The position of Northern Ireland is, typically, a complicated one.**

Economically, in the agri-food sector, £700 million of its annual £1.15 billion exports go to the Republic, and customs duties would reverse the moves towards greater economic integration since 1998. Perhaps the only growth industry from a return of a customs border would be organised criminal diesel smuggling.

In an atmosphere of fiscal retrenchment, with no appetite for further funding for Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK, the effect would be to accelerate the Stormont Executive’s attacks on public sector workers, benefits and services, in a region that is already suffering from high levels of deprivation.

Of importance, too, would be the effect a tangible border would have on politics in the North. In the short-term at least, it would puncture the optimistic nationalist assumption that economic growth plus demography would deliver a united Ireland. The almost invisible border, diminished in relative importance by its contextualisation within Britain and Ireland’s shared EU membership, would suddenly

become a presence in everyday life once more.

This should worry Sinn Féin, which is already losing some working-class support in republican areas to People Before Profit on account of the Executive’s austerity measures. Part of the party’s appeal and prestige lies in its all-Ireland organisation, and the ostensible momentum towards Irish unity generated by its expanding vote share. Brexit could arrest this forward movement.

At the same time, a majority of Northern Ireland voted to Remain, creating the potential for discontent with Brexit and with England as there has been in Scotland. Those unionists who absurdly contend that Northern Ireland is straightforwardly a part of the UK will confront the fact that the six counties is near the bottom of the British government’s list of priorities.

Many commentators have expressed alarm about the impact on the “peace process”. Socialists should of course welcome the cessation of sectarian violence, and the opportunities it opens for the elaboration of working-class and socialist politics. The Good Friday Agreement itself, however, cannot be politically endorsed, as it fails to tackle the roots of the national question and has institutionalised sectarian politics at Stormont.

Nevertheless, we should not be complacent about its incidental undoing in the maelstrom of a turbulent and unpredictable Brexit. Down that road lies potential sectarian polarisation and further attacks on workers, as the capitalist class off-loads the cost of economic disruption.

**Rather, the overthrow of Stormont should be the positive work of conscious political forces: a working-class movement which, in advocating its replacement with a federal united Ireland with a measure of regional autonomy for Protestant-majority areas, would have the potential to unite workers across the sectarian divide.**

# Trump, Putin and the CIA

By Charlotte Zalens

**The CIA’s report to US senators — that Russia intervened in the US presidential election to help the election of Donald Trump — is extraordinary.**

That’s not just because of the fact that Russia seemingly interfered in an election in the world’s most powerful country, but also because the US intelligence agency chose to make it public.

Corey Robin comments on US socialist website Jacobin: “That the nation’s security agencies could go public with this kind of accusation, or allow their accusation to go public, is unprecedented. The United States traditionally does this kind of thing, covertly, to other countries: that is the prerogative of an imperial power... that

an imperial power would admit that it happened... That’s the real shocker.”

Trump’s pro-Putin and pro-Russian views are no secret. However the jury is out on the extent to which US foreign policy towards Russia will change.

Russian commentator Viktoria Zhuraleva wrote “Against him is the majority of the Republican Party, the Pentagon, the CIA and the State Department. There may not be any improvement in relations with Moscow. The best Trump may be able to do in this situation is block only even more aggressive measures.”

**Others speculate that Trump could normalise Russia’s annexation of Crimea and back pro-Russian fighters in the east of Ukraine.**

# No refuge in Sunderland

By Gemma Short

**Sunderland may become the first major UK city without any domestic violence refuges for women.**

Local charity Wearside Women in Need have been told by Sunderland council they will have their funding cut. The charity warns it won’t be able to continue running their four refuges, accommodating 173 women and 107 children. They also provide the only specialised service in the north east for black women and can provide accommodation for women with severe disabilities.

Sunderland council has recently started a consultation with local residents ahead of setting plans for their budget. But the council says it must cut £74 million by 2020, and despite claiming no decisions have been made yet has told Wearside Women in Need that the £568,000 currently provided will end by June 2017.

**Local campaigners warn that women will be left hoping that provision in neighbouring local authorities can help them. But a 2015 survey by Women’s Aid found that UK refuges are forced to turn away around two thirds of referrals because of lack of space and funding.**



# A police execution

By Simon Nelson

**The shooting of Mohammed Yassar Yaqub on the M62 near Huddersfield is another example of a police “hard stop” — similar to the killing of Mark Duggan by the Metropolitan Police.**

The killing was the outcome of a “planned police operation.” Yaqub was shot three times through the windscreen of his car. Subsequently the police announced that a non-police issue firearm was found. No shots were fired at police, there was no suggestion that anyone stopped alongside Yaqub or attempted to attack the police.

Several other arrests have been

made across West Yorkshire as part of the operation.

A vigil was held in Huddersfield after a demonstration in Bradford saw roads blocked by police.

Yaqub had been previously tried for firearms offences and attempted murder several years ago but the police are yet to release any further details of the operation. Press reports of the shooting, quoting “anonymous neighbours” about Yaqub — that he was a drug dealer etc. — only justify the police actions. There is nothing to suggest he posed any immediate danger.

**Yaqub’s death is more of a summary execution than a routine police operation.**





## Don't let Unite right close down Labour revival!

By Dale Street

**We should vote for Len McCluskey in the Unite general secretary election for which nominations open on 16 January because it is a first-past-the-post poll, and without left-wing votes going to McCluskey there is a real risk Gerard Coyne will win.**

Coyne is heavily backed by the Labour right wing around Tom Watson and Progress. If he wins, he will swing Unite decisively to the anti-Corbyn camp. That could close down all the openings for Labour revival opened by Jeremy Corbyn's leadership victories.

Vote Coyne, and get Watson and Progress: that's the deal.

In the 2013 general secretary election there was no right-wing candidate. In the 2010 poll the right-wing vote was split between two right-wing candidates. Their combined vote was only 16,000 less than the vote for McCluskey.

A good chunk of the 53,000 votes won in that ballot by Jerry Hicks will have been by no means tightly anchored to the left. Many members who voted Hicks because they saw him as closer to the old AEU strand in Unite,

or because they backed his promise to boost the role of retired members, or because they liked his complaint about "the relationship with Labour being put ahead of members' interests" (as Hicks put it), may be seduced by a well-crafted Coyne campaign.

Coyne probably has a better "machine" behind him than Bayliss or Cartmail did in 2010. The media will be much more aggressively anti-McCluskey than in previous elections (partly using ammunition which, it has to be said, McCluskey has manufactured for them.)

If there were no difference between McCluskey and Coyne, there would be a good case for backing Ian Allinson, a genuine left-wing challenger albeit from a small base. But there is a real difference.

We have many criticisms of McCluskey, including as regards his role in the Labour Party. But McCluskey is right about one thing: "Gerard Coyne's campaign is not being driven by concern for Unite and its members' interests."

**"It is being scripted by the failed plotters in the Parliamentary Labour Party... in their political project to bring back Blairism".**

## Build independent rank-and-file links

**During his time in office McCluskey can rightly claim credit for the re-organisation of the union's branch structures (replacing amorphous and often moribund geographical branches by workplace-based ones) and building the union's Organising and Leverage Department.**

He has presided over the development of Unite community branches, targeted at bringing community activists, the unemployed, and students into the trade union movement, and bringing trade union resources to bear in support of their campaigning.

McCluskey eventually backed Corbyn in the 2015 Labour Party leadership contest, and backed him again in the 2016 leadership contest.

But that is only one part of McCluskey's record.

Unite's record on industrial disputes has fallen well short of what's needed. The union has endorsed industrial action where members have pressed for it, but its industrial policy has been reactive rather than strategic. And Unite's campaign — or lack of it — against the new anti-union laws has been pitiful. Shortly before the Manchester TUC demonstration which was due to be the unions' big mobilisation against those laws, McCluskey undermined the effort by an ad-lib offer to accept large parts of the laws if the Tories would make concessions elsewhere.

McCluskey is backing Trident renewal. Instead of campaigning for Unite policy for a million green jobs, McCluskey backs environmentally destructive projects such as Heathrow expansion. And what his current position is on freedom of movement of labour is anybody's guess.

McCluskey initially backed Andy Burnham for the Labour leadership in 2015, and in January 2017 undermined Jeremy Corbyn (maybe only inadvertently or by ineptitude) by suggesting Corbyn should stand down in 2019.

In 2013 McCluskey backed the Collins Review. All members of all Regional Political Committees, plus the entire Executive Coun-



cil, were summoned to London to hear him declare his support for the Review.

But when the Review "kicks in" properly, probably in 2020, it will radically diminish the role of trade unions in the Labour Party — the exact opposite of what McCluskey declares he supports.

There have also been issues about Unite's record as an employer: A study leaked last year found that over half of Unite's female full-timers had been bullied or harassed, either by fellow employees or by lay members.

McCluskey appointed Andrew Murray, an avowed supporter of the North Korean regime, as chief of staff of the union. Under McCluskey and Murray, Unite has become an increasingly top-down trade union. Overpaid, unelected and unaccountable full-timers make key decisions while members are allocated, at best, a role as stage extras. Activists are left isolated, and communication in Unite is often one way (top-down).

The United Left grouping in Unite helped McCluskey win general secretary back in 2010, and will be relied on to get out the vote for him again. But under McCluskey's leadership the United Left has not been improved into a lively activating element within the union. Rather, it has become more and more a simple electoral machine.

**Coyne needs to be defeated. But this cannot be at the expense of pretending McCluskey's record is anything other than what it is, nor at the expense of throwing away the openings — however few they may be — for rebuilding genuine rank-and-file and left-wing organising in Unite.**

## Equality for autistic and neuro-divergent people!

By Joe Booth and Janine Booth

**Socialist activists are drafting a manifesto for the Labour Party of radical policies to advance equality for autistic and other neurodivergent people (those with an atypical "brain-wiring", usually a condition such as dyspraxia or attention deficit disorder).**

Supported by John McDonnell, a steering group has drafted a proposed manifesto and, having launched it at Labour Party conference in September, is now inviting input from Labour Party and trade union bodies and interested individuals.

The manifesto is based on five political pillars:

- The social model of disability: identifying and removing the barriers that society creates for neurologically-different people.
- The neurodiversity approach: recognising that different people have different "brain wiring", that autism, dyslexia, ADHD and other conditions are neurological differences.
- Opposition to austerity
- Socialism, democracy and solidarity:

tackling the deep social roots of discrimination.

- Nothing about us without us: policies and services, and the manifesto itself, must be shaped by autistic and other neurodivergent people, with solidarity from neurotypical people. We can not pretend there is equality when there is not.

Autistic and other neurodivergent people find many environments and social structures hostile and disabling.

There is a desperate lack of diagnostic (or identification) services, with waiting lists of up to three years. Neurodivergent people are among those who have been driven to suicide by benefit sanctions. There is a shortage of appropriate social care, with some autistic people placed in institutions far from their families and support networks.

Schools and colleges are under-funded and over-stretched. Few have specialist provision for neurodivergent students, and the way schools treat autistic youngsters can be problematic — trying to make us "normal".

Only 15% of autistic working-age adults are in full-time employment. ADHD adults often experience periods of unemployment.

This is not because only a fraction of neurodivergent people can work: it is because workplaces are hostile environments for us.

Bullying and hate crime against autistic people has risen as Tory austerity has been accompanied by demonisation of people who are disabled and/or different, and there have been several reported cases of police brutality against autistic people.

Identifying these barriers enables us to identify policies which can start to remove them. The draft manifesto includes commitments to: stop and reverse cuts; expand services; ensure that local authorities have decision-making forums that include representatives of autistic people; provide adequate benefits for all who need them, and appropriate, publicly-controlled and accountable care close to home.

It also suggests policies for: well-funded, publicly-run and accountable schools and colleges, with smaller class sizes and provision for neurodivergent students; a legal requirement on employers to make work more equal and accessible and less hostile; a review of the workings of the justice system to ensure that it is accessible to people of all neu-

rologies; and for neurological status to be added to the 2010 Equality Act as a 'protected characteristic', giving people legal rights against discrimination without having to prove impairment.

You can read the draft Manifesto at [bit.ly/n-div](http://bit.ly/n-div)

To help:

- Raise this issue at your Labour Party, union branch or other group; invite a speaker from the Manifesto steering group.
- Like our Facebook page ([bit.ly/n-div-f](http://bit.ly/n-div-f)) and join the discussions there.
- Send in your ideas for policies to add, and any disagreements with the existing draft (via the website or Facebook page).

Workers' Liberty members including ourselves are involved in this, alongside others. We are helping with the organisation, and putting forward policy ideas that are centred on working-class demands that challenge capitalism's failures to support and acknowledge neurological diversity.

**We think this manifesto process is a good example of making the Labour Party democratic, accessible and radical; and of building a solidarity movement.**



# Emergency cash for the NHS!

For many healthworkers, the NHS is facing its worst crisis in memory. Small wonder the British Red Cross, called in to provide support with discharging patients from hospitals safely, describes the situation as a humanitarian crisis. Yet Jeremy Hunt and Teresa May deny there is a problem.

The deaths at Worcestershire Royal Hospital A&E are tragic, but sadly no surprise to those who work in the NHS. Increased A&E waiting times are now so common enough we don't care about the four hour target, but only whether we have enough physical space for the extra beds and trolleys. Everybody is terrified that somebody will die on their watch, working at a level which is completely unsustainable.

This is not, as the newsreaders would have it, "just another winter crisis". Indeed that dismissal displays a horrendous defeatism: increased demand at winter is predictable; a fully functional health system would have capacity to cope with seasonal variation by using a surplus capacity. This crisis cannot be blamed on, in fact, fairly mild weather. Nor is it due to a demanding and ageing patient population. Or "health tourists" (who account for 0.2% of our budget).

This crisis is a political choice. It has been caused by chronic underfunding, understaffing and the drive to privatisation. These three factors feed off each other in a vicious cycle, creating a perfect storm which produces crises like this one.

Year on year, the UK spends a smaller proportion of GDP on healthcare. At the same time, costs to the NHS from PFI debt continue to rise: St Bartholomew's and the Royal London hospitals pay £2 million a week in PFI debt interest alone. At the same time, transaction costs increase as more and more services are pushed into the market. And more and more funding is sucked out into the profits of private providers, who increasingly win contracts to provide services.

The massive contraction in the funding available for care has led to deliberate and chronic understaffing in most grades and



professions. This has been assisted by the corporatism of the NHS, which is deliberate antagonistic to healthcare professionals. Poor workforce planning is part of the picture: gaps in staffing on specific rotas make our jobs unsafe. The upshot then is bed, service and hospital closures.

Cuts and closures are covered up by administrators and politicians mouthing the "efficiency" mantra. But there is no surplus capacity anywhere in the system. Bed occupancy is well over 95% in many places, although 85% is considered to be the safe level. The UK has fewer beds per person and fewer doctors per person than most countries in Europe. According to the OECD the UK lost 7,525 beds between 2010 and 2014.

Social care has also been cut to the bone by councils struggling to manage cuts. That means frail patients cannot be discharged to the community. The same patients without support and care in the community end up at A&E.

Regardless of the current crisis, the govern-

ment are pushing ahead with the Sustainability and Transformation Plans — further cuts and privatisation — which will lead to a third of regions losing an A&E, and half of regions losing significant numbers of inpatient beds. This is dangerous.

Make no mistake, the "long-term solution... ducked by government over the years" that Theresa May describes is yet more privatisation. It may mean patients paying for some care. This will lead to further decreased provision and quality of care. The NHS, our great redistributive health system, free at the point of use, will become even more of a profit machine; it will be destroyed.

The NHS needs a massive injection of cash to help it deal with this emergency. In the long-term solutions lie in the total removal of the market from healthcare — the renationalisation of the NHS. This must in-

clude a cancelling of all PFI debt, which is predominantly owned by RBS. That could free up 9% of the NHS budget to be spent on staffing the NHS properly and providing patient care.

If those reform are insufficient for need, we must commit to higher funding levels; the BMA has called for UK health spending to rise to the European average. That's a good start.

The Labour Party has good policy on the NHS, due to the work of Momentum NHS at last year's Labour Party Conference. We need to ensure that this policy is in the next manifesto and that any Labour government implements it. Corbyn and Jonathan Ashworth, the Shadow Secretary of State for Health, need to put political pressure on the government for emergency funding for the NHS and social care.

Constituency Labour Parties should participate in the campaign day for the NHS on 4 March, and reach out to support local NHS campaign groups to build bigger campaigns and actions on the back of this latest crisis. Many local areas will lose hospitals and services under the STPs, so battles may be won on a local basis by strong campaigns.

**We can learn from the Save Lewisham Hospital campaign about community mobilisation and organisation.**

*Claudia Raven, healthworker*

**NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION  
SATURDAY 4 MARCH 2017**

**#ourNHS**  
no cuts | no closures | no privatisation

**12pm, Tavistock Square, London WC1 (tube: Russell Sq / Euston)  
March to Parliament**

Called by Health Campaigns Together & The People's Assembly  
For info, coaches & supporting organisations visit:  
[www.ournhs.info](http://www.ournhs.info)



## Left must defend freedom of movement

**After weeks of intense pressure from the Labour right (and from some supposed to be on Labour's left), Jeremy Corbyn has retreated on freedom of movement.**

In a speech on 10 January he said: "Labour is not wedded to freedom of movement for EU citizens as a point of principle... Labour supports fair rules and reasonably managed migration as part of the post-Brexit relationship with the EU".

But the same day he told the BBC that he was not proposing new restrictions on the rights of people to move to the UK and does not think immigration is "too high".

In his speech Corbyn hinted that Labour might back freedom of movement as part of a deal to keep Britain in the EU "single market": "But nor can we afford to lose full access to the European markets on which so many British businesses and jobs depend. Changes to the way migration rules operate from the EU will be part of the negotiations".

This is a weak political position: it has neither leverage to convince working-class voters currently hostile to migrant workers, nor capacity to placate them and hold them back from UKIP.

Nevertheless, it keeps the issue open.

Despite a large majority vote for freedom

of movement at the 3 December National Committee meeting of the Labour left organisation Momentum, Momentum has put out nothing, not even a press release, to support that freedom. Jeremy Corbyn and Diane Abbott have been left alone, as individuals, to deal with the concerted push against freedom from the Labour right.

Momentum members should demand Momentum speaks out now.

### RETREAT

**The political retreat here is huge.**

Solidarity supports open borders — freedom of movement for all workers. That principle may take some time to win. But the immediate issue here is about retaining a right of free movement for workers from neighbouring countries which has been in operation for 44 years (for the core EU countries), over 30 years (for Spain, Portugal, and Greece), or 13 years (for Poland and the Baltic states).

The issue is not about how far we can push forward for freedom right now. It is about stopping a retreat to decades past.

A bold, clear campaign by Labour could win over, or at least win assent from, the majority. Almost certainly a majority for at least

accepting freedom of movement for EU workers has already been won in London, which has by far the biggest concentration of EU migrants.

London has high house prices and rents: but a majority understands that the answer is increased council house-building and rent controls, not the exclusion of immigrants from the EU (or, for that matter, of "immigrants" to London from elsewhere in the UK, though the fact that a quarter of all English university graduates are gathered in London six months after graduation surely creates market pressures pushing up housing costs).

The answer to strain on the NHS and other public services is to tax the rich. In fact, those services depend on migrants working to provide them, and on the fact that migrant workers, mostly young and fit, pay much more in taxes than they get in benefits and services.

Jeremy Corbyn declared: "Labour will take action against undercutting of pay and conditions by closing down cheap labour loopholes, banning exclusive advertising of jobs abroad and strengthening workplace protections".

Labour should strive for working-class unity to win social improvements and freedoms — unity between British-born workers;

the 3.5 million EU-citizen workers already in the UK; their friends, families, and compatriots who wish to join them; and other migrant workers.

Meanwhile, the Tories and the ruling class are in disarray, disarray that would give Labour great openings if only it had a bold policy.

Ivan Rogers, the British ambassador to the EU, resigned from his job on 3 January, saying that he did not know what the government's "negotiating objectives" for Brexit would be, and urging his staff to "continue to challenge ill-founded arguments and muddled thinking". Theresa May said on 8 January that Britain would not retain "bits of EU membership", a position which (if she understands what she is saying) excludes Britain remaining in the "single market" or even in the customs union. It would mean Britain being more walled-off from the EU economically and socially than, for example, Turkey, or Albania.

**As the Financial Times commented (10 January), "markets [are] now concerned by Mrs May's lack of a clear plan". And so are the millions of EU-citizen workers now under threat, and their workmates and friends.**



# Help us raise £20,000 to improve our website

By Cathy Nugent

From Trotskyist newspapers of the 1940s and 50s, to older Marxist classics, to discussion articles on feminism, national questions, religion and philosophy and resources such as guidelines for Marxist reading groups — it's all there on the Workers' Liberty website.

But this enormous archive of historical and socialist literature needs to become easier to research and access if it is to be any use to socialist activists today.

Workers' Liberty was founded fifty years ago in a maelstrom of working-class militancy, industrial militancy the like of which none of today's young activists (or even the creeping-towards-middle-aged activists) have ever seen. The confident combativity of working-class struggle made many more things potentially possible for the fight for socialism.

One of the lessons of the last fifty years, for us, has been the need to build a left that is open to debate, to ideas critical about existing beliefs, and is serious about self-education.

Our archive, with its range, as well as depth of material, can help build a different kind of socialist culture — one where discussion and self-education are cherished.

To make our archive of real use we need professional help to make all content fully integrated, searchable by date and subject and optimised for mobile reading. We need to finance a website co-ordinator to ensure our news coverage is up to the minute and shared on social media. We want to raise £20,000 by our conference in November 2017. Any amount will help.

**Our fund was kick-started last month with a collection and merchandise sales at our Reason in Revolt anniversary event, raising £254.**

• If you would like to donate by paypal please go to [www.workersliberty.org/donate](http://www.workersliberty.org/donate)

• Or set up an internet bank transfer to "AWL", account 20047674 at Unity Trust Bank, Birmingham, 08-60-01 (please email [awl@workersliberty.org](mailto:awl@workersliberty.org) to notify us of the payment and what it's for); or

• Or send a cheque payable to "AWL" to AWL, 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Rd, London SE1 3DG (with a note saying what it's for).

Take a look at our website: [www.workersliberty.org](http://www.workersliberty.org)

By Ira Berkovic

**In responding to the growth of right-wing, anti-immigrant populism in many countries and to increasing calls for Labour to concede to an anti-migrant agenda Jeremy Corbyn initially indicated a firm defence of migrants. He has now apparently bent to that pressure and endorsed some (unspecified) limits on free movement.**

For some months a number of arguments have been made by left-wing advocates on ending free movement — that is, leaving the EU on a basis which abolishes the rights of free movement to the UK that EU citizens currently have, and which UK citizens currently have to other EU states.

This article responds to some of those arguments, and presents a positive case for defending and extending existing freedom of movement.

## CLOSED

**Argument One: "By ending free movement we can make Britain a giant closed shop"**

(An argument made by Clive Heemskerck of the Socialist Party and by Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey.)

A closed shop is a workplace in which membership of the recognised union is a condition of employment — it only occurs when a union is strong enough to impose it on the employer. It was outlawed by Thatcher's anti-union laws in 1990, and now exists only in a handful of places where workers are able to establish a culture where choosing not to join the union is universally understood as a very bad idea.

Some have suggested that the existing free movement arrangements could be replaced by a form of immigration controls that legally compels bosses who wish to "hire abroad" to operate quasi closed shops, so the foreign workers they recruit must be union members in order to get jobs, or be covered by collective bargaining agreements.

The implication is that if employers are legally forced to only hire union workers covered by collective bargaining agreements, there will be no financial incentive for them to hire cheaper, migrant labour.

The demand relies on two assumptions: one, that migrant labour necessarily has a depressing effect on the pay, terms, and conditions of domestic workers. And two, that employers deliberately and directly hire migrant workers in order to drive down their costs, because migrant workers will work for less.

But in a genuine closed shop, the enforcing body is the trade union. In this version, the British state will apparently become the enforcer. How will this work in practise? Will it involve uniformed border police checking people's union cards at Calais and Heathrow? And why will the proposed law apply only to international migrants? Why will a Polish worker looking for work in London require a union card, but not an English worker from, say, Blackburn looking for work in London?

How will the existing labour movement, that has not been able to overturn the law banning closed shops in order to force employers to recognise them for domestic labour, succeed in forcing employers to operate closed shops for migrant labour?

Some advocates of this policy on the revolutionary left justify the approach with reference to the First International, which did indeed try to resist attempts by employers to "play off" workers from one country against those of another.

But two key differences with the contemporary situation are missed out. Firstly, the disputes to which the First International was responding were ones in which employers who faced strikes in Country A attempted to directly hire workers from Country B, in

order to break the strike in Country A. Almost no migrant labour in Britain today is directly recruited abroad, and none of it on the explicit basis of doing the work of striking workers in Britain.

And secondly, the methods of the First International were solidaristic, linking workers' organisations across borders to appeal directly to workers not to allow their labour be used to undermine the struggles of their brothers and sisters abroad. This approach has nothing in common with the hostile attitude to migrants and immigration implied by the policies of today's anti-free-movement left.

The implication here is that British workers are unionised, militant, and in an almost permanent state of struggle to defend their conditions — which is why bosses want to use migrant workers, who of course have no trade union consciousness and are little more than scabs, to undermine it.

Yet we know strikes are at historically low levels and the labour movement has halved in size since its 1979 height. The picture of a militant and combative "native" labour movement having its struggles undermined by bosses shipping in migrant strikebreakers is simply false. In fact, some of the brightest spots in contemporary class struggle in Britain are migrant workers' struggles, such as the organising by the Independent Workers' union of Great Britain (IWGB) and United Voices of the World (UVW).

Overturning the law on closed shops, and reintroducing them as a feature of the industrial landscape in this country, is a worthy aspiration. But that will be achieved through organisation and struggle. To demand a state-enforced "closed shop" as a means of "solving" the largely illusory "problem" of migrant labour depressing wages for domestic workers is, at best, bizarre.

It either functions as a demand that migrant workers have adequate trade union consciousness before they move to Britain, or is simply a dishonest obfuscation. Uneasy with straightforwardly expressing the political core of their demand — that immigration be reduced — the policy is wrapped up in "trade union" verbiage to make it appear like something other than what it is, a demand for boosting one group of workers at the expense of another, in this case on the basis of nationality and immigration status.

## CONTROLS

**Argument Two: "We need fair immigration controls"**

Versions of this argument are used by a range of people in the labour movement, from Blairite and soft-left MPs through to some on the far-left.

Some far-leftists draw a parallel between controls on the flow of capital and controls on the flow of people: we're for the former, they argue, so why not the latter? As long as the controls are "fair", what's the problem?

In this perspective, immigration is reduced to an inhuman force which needs "controlling", as if migrants and refugees are a raw material scooped up by "neo-liberalism" and "dumped" in Britain (as in the phrase "social dumping", shamefully recycled by some trade unions). This may well be how capital views labour, but migrants and refugees are also human beings, people making choices, often in dire circumstances, to migrate in order to seek a better, safer, life for themselves. They need our solidarity, not our hostility.

In a more explicitly authoritarian and statist version of this argument, the aim is said to be to "control the supply of labour", as if "labour" was a mechanical force rather than something that does not exist separately from the humans who provide it.

The idea that the left is unambiguously for "controlling the flow of capital" is itself wor-



# Three against and th

thy of some unpacking. We are for legal restrictions on the ability of capitalists to do whatever they want — we are for legally-enforced living wages, living benefits, nationalised public services, and so on. But we are against protectionist, autarkic trade policies counterposed to free trade and globalisation. Workers' movements should recognise that free trade and globalisation embody greater progressive potential, as they erode national boundaries and provide platforms for international working-class struggle.

But what is really egregious about the argument on restricting the flow of labour is that there is no realistic way to do this without coercion: without guns, fences, detention centres, police. The ruling class already knows this. That is what borders are.

Anti-free-movement leftists say they want to replace "uncontrolled" immigration with "fair" controls. But who is to be the arbiter of fairness? How many migrants is enough, or too many? Must some existing immigrants be made to leave? If so, how? Will there be a





# e arguments free movement, free responses

points system? Will immigrants from certain countries be given preference?

Advocates of this empty policy, which is in fact not even a policy and barely a half-baked slogan, need to take responsibility for their perspective. Even controls which are claimed by their architects to be “fair” must be enforced. Who will do the enforcing?

Any border control necessarily implies violence and coercion. It cannot but be a mechanism for discriminating against some workers, on the basis of their national origin. In its application, it cannot be other than racist. This is not to say that socialist advocates of immigration controls are themselves racists, or that they intend their policies to have a racist application. The vast majority are sincere and active anti-racists. But a policy which has at its core discrimination between workers has an unavoidably racist impact.

Immigration controls are systems our bosses use to divide a global class on the basis of our immigration status, to decide

that some workers are “legal” and others “illegal”. Our slogan should be “no-one is illegal”, not “let us decide who is illegal!”

## WORKING CLASS

**Argument Three: “We must listen to the concerns of working-class voters who are worried about immigration”**

If the phrase “post-truth politics” has any useful application, this must surely be it: the idea that it does not matter whether immigration has depressed wages (it hasn’t); whether migrants have “taken” “our” jobs (they haven’t); whether they’re given preferential treatment by the housing and benefits systems (they aren’t); what matters is that people feel like these things are true, and if political parties wish to win their allegiance, or, more narrowly, their votes, they must be seen to address these feelings.

Yes Labour needs to be able to talk to working-class voters worried about low pay, a lack of jobs or struggling services who, out of desperation and despair, or because they are

convinced by the political narrative pushed by almost the entirety of mainstream politics and the press, “blame” immigration and immigrants for these things. That conversation is about how Labour’s policies could address the core issues: by implementing living wages; reversing cuts to public services; building social housing. It is about convincing working-class people that Tory (and, indeed, New Labour) policies are the causes of their grievances. It is a conversation that most advocates of “listening to people’s concerns” rarely seem to want to have, preferring to insist on starting from an acceptance that people are right to be “concerned” about immigration per se.

But with voters hostile to immigration because an influx of migrants (real or imagined) threatens their white, English identity, the conversation has to be different. Moralistic denunciation of these attitudes is worse than useless; nationalism, xenophobia, and racism have social roots that have to be understood. But they are real phenomena which must be confronted. Pretending that there is no real bigotry within our class, and that all anti-migrant sentiment is only a cipher for an implicitly-progressive critique of austerity, is self-defeatingly naïve. It is particularly grotesque when it comes from those, like Blairite MPs, who designed many of the austerity policies which created the social conditions on which nationalism and racism feeds.

It is also conspicuous the “concerns” to which it is insisted that Labour must “listen” and “respond” are always the anti-immigration concerns of British communities (and the actual communities referred to are almost always majority-white), and never the “concerns” of migrant workers or refugees worried about threats to their civil and human rights.

Len McCluskey’s disingenuous formulation that the benefits of free movement are “easier to see in Muswell Hill [a relatively affluent north London suburb] than they are in Middlesbrough” is a case in point. Of course the concerns of working-class communities in Middlesbrough should be of paramount importance for Labour, but so should the concerns of working-class communities in multicultural, “metropolitan” cities like London, including migrant communities.

Integral to this perspective is the bizarre idea that Labour has historically “ignored”, these “concerns” about immigration. Whatever else might be said about the Blair/Brown leaderships of the Labour Party, they could hardly be accused of “ignoring” the issue of immigration. In fact Labour has gone along with, and at times enthusiastically contributed to, the anti-migrant clamour which has now established itself as a political common sense so apparently concrete that, according to the very people who helped establish it, it can no longer be challenged or confronted in any way.

The Blairite advocates of this approach, like Stephen Kinnock, know exactly what they’re doing. It’s beside the point whether Kinnock himself is profoundly ideologically committed to tougher immigration controls. What matters for him is getting into power, and whatever ideological twists and turns are necessary to accomplish that are admissible.

But for those of us for whom winning a Labour government is not an end in itself, but part of the means to affect a wider and more fundamental transformation of society, a strategy of triangulating to the “concerns”, real or imagined, of potential voters will not do. Rather, our job is to convince people of an alternative political narrative, not only, or even primarily, for them to vote for but for them to become active around, at work and in their communities. And anti-racism and internationalist solidarity are essential aspects of that alternative.

It has become fashionable to decry “identity politics”, where that term is a synonym

for liberal disregard for working-class economic hardship in favour of exclusively focussing on the smaller-scale issues involving gender or sexuality. The whole critique is toxic and needs dismantling, but even on their own terms, these born-again left-wing critics of identity politics are hypocrites. The approach they advocate is precisely a form of “identity politics”, based on appealing to a romantic “working-class” identity where one’s class identity is bound up with one’s nationhood.

Labour movement figures like the Fire Brigades Union’s Paul Embury have written euphemistically of “uncontrolled” immigration disrupting “community cohesion”. What can this possibly mean, other than that a settled community feels itself to be threatened, on an identitarian basis, by the arrival of outsiders? In rhetoric barely distinguishable from that of Ukip, Gerard Coyne, the right-wing challenger in the Unite General Secretary election, goes beyond the argument that an influx of migrant labour has depressed wages to decry the mere “presence” of a “very large number of foreign nationals”. This is a call not only for tighter restrictions on future immigration, but for reducing, presumably through deportations, the “foreign nationals” already here.

## POLICIES

**What should Labour say about immigration? Could Labour fight an election on a programme that advocates open borders, and win?**

There are very many socialist policies which are currently “unpopular” and marginal. If simply winning electoral power is one’s aim, any policy or principle can be jettisoned. But for us, the socialist, class-struggle left, “power” does not simply mean winning a general election, but growing class power on the basis of winning hegemony for socialist ideas within the labour movement and wider working class.

What is “popular”, “electable”, a “vote winner” are not fixed quantities. They change depending on consciousness. A Labour Party that sought to reshape consciousness, rather than simply adapt to it, could take on the anti-migrant consensus.

What, then, would a “transitional programme” for immigration look like?

- Solidarity with refugees and migrants: we are part of a global class, and migrant workers and refugees coming to Britain are our brothers and sisters, not our enemies.

- Defend free movement: the existing rights that EU citizens have to migrate to the UK, and vice versa, should be retained.

- Restore and increase the Migration Impact Fund: communities that have accommodated large numbers of migrants should receive increased subsidies to expand housing and services.

- A £10/hour minimum wage, properly enforced.

- Abolish all anti-union laws: restore and extend trade union rights.

- Reverse cuts to public services.
- End detention: close Yarl’s Wood and other detention centres, end private sector involvement in the immigration system.

We should have faith in the ability of fellow members of our class, including in the most depressed, de-industrialised communities now targeted by Ukip, to reach internationalist, and revolutionary, political conclusions. To give up hope of promoting open-borders policies to some utopian socialist future is to conclude that the seam of nationalism within our class is now so deep that it cannot be challenged.

**We owe it to our class, in its global entirety, both local and migrant, to hope and fight for better.**

- Abridged. Full text at: <http://bit.ly/2jyxrMo>



# The ANC and the South African left

By Luke Hardy

**The African National Congress (ANC), the party that has been in power since 1994 when majority rule was established in South Africa, is coming apart at the seams.**

This is in a context of radical student struggles, protests against austerity, and a growing rank-and-file movement in the unions and the ANC itself.

The ANC was the main party of protest against apartheid, but when it came to power, and despite its official stance of being a socialist party, it quickly dashed the hopes of millions of black and other non-white workers that it would attack poverty and inequality as well as the institutions of apartheid. Instead a new black capitalist class grew up, nurtured by ANC patronage, and took its place alongside the existing white and Asian bourgeoisie. Meanwhile millions of mainly black workers and farmers languished in poverty and squalor.

Splits at the top the ANC were often more about patronage and power than the politics of post-apartheid South Africa. Such a faction fight propelled the current head of the ANC and president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, to power.

Initially popular amongst the voting base of the ANC, Zuma has been implicated in a series of corruption scandals. After it was revealed the Treasury had spent the equivalent of £13.7 million on Zuma's rural home, he was forced to pay some of it back. Most damaging has been Zuma's close relationship with the billionaire Gupta brothers, who are said to have great influence over government policies and appointments.

Public dissatisfaction with the ANC is deeper than issues with Zuma. Anger is mainly directed against inequality, terrible housing, power cuts, unsafe and unreliable water and an unequal education system.

Unemployment in South Africa stands at 25%. Economic growth is at a near standstill. The Treasury, led by finance minister Pravin Gordhan, has been pushing through an austerity programme, freezing public sector jobs, cutting spending, and threatening attacks on workers' rights and the privatisation of public services. Zuma tried to sack Gordhan and to curtail some of the austerity measures. But this move was probably more to do with Gordhan's attempts to break up the Zuma's patronage networks. When financial markets and big capital revolted against Gordhan's sacking, Zuma retreated.

In the 2016 municipal elections the ANC got their lowest ever percentage vote — 54% — and were ousted from power in major municipalities like Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Nelson Mandela Bay (what was Port Elizabeth). Unfortunately these were political gains for the neo-liberal Democratic Alliance Party. The new DA mayor of Jo'burg, Herman Mashaba, is a millionaire who is against affirmative action and for a massive sell off of government owned assets.

The third party in South Africa is the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). The EFF are a populist and at times seemingly left split from the ANC, founded and led by Julius Malema, a former leader of the ANC youth movement. He was expelled from the ANC for criticising the leadership.

But is the EFF a genuine party of the left with an opportunist leader, or merely a vehicle for a demagogue who opportunistically tacked left?

The EFF has built links with workers revolting against the increasingly corrupt and boss friendly trade union federation, COSATU. After the massacre of striking mineworkers at Marikana in 2014, the EFF accused the ANC leadership of murder. There have been further disaffiliations from COSATU and the EFF has built relations with these unions.

However, the EFF also is propping up the neo-liberals of the DA in various municipal governments. Malema has been accused of having his own corrupt links to businesses seeking government tenders. He is a strong supporter of Robert Mugabe and has been accused of racism, homophobia and misogyny.

## STALINISM

**Even if you take Malema out of the equation the EFF's version of leftism is strongly infused with black nationalism and Stalinism, taking inspiration from Thomas Sankara, a pan-African leftist military officer who was president of Burkina Faso in the 1980s.**

Despite some real attempts to improve the lives of the people, Sankara ended up brutally suppressing the workers' movement and the independent left.

The EFF is a dead end, but other opportunities have recently opened up for the left through a massive radical student movement. First mobilised against tuition fees, the movement has taken on broader issues such as the pay of workers, the availability of accommodation, and the curriculum. Despite brutal police attacks students have shut universities and led strikes and occupations.

Fees Must Fall was only the most internationally famous part of this mass revolt. The movement has won some concessions and

will continue into 2017.

The "Occupy Luthuli House" campaign of mainly young ANC members has been inspired by the student movement. It marched on the ANC headquarters demanding Zuma and the entire ANC Executive resign. They accuse the ANC leadership of betraying the promise of "Economic Freedom" for the masses and branches of the ANC across South Africa have supported their call.

A key area for the left will be to link up with the rank and file revolt in the unions. Some progress has been made with joint campaigns like the Outsourcing Must Fall campaign.

Can this revolt in the ANC transform that party into any kind of workers' party? During 22 years of being the ruling party it has become deeply entwined with the machinery of capital and the state. Given the Stalinist roots of the ANC, the levers for democratic control by the members were weak to begin with and are much weaker now after years of patronage, nepotism and corruption.

The most prominent Trotskyist group in South Africa, the Democratic Socialist Movement (the sister party of the Socialist Party of England and Wales), is calling for a new workers' party independent of the ANC and EFF. However their initiative, the Workers' and Socialist Party, failed utterly at the polls (it got 0.05% at the 2014 election). Others on the left orientate towards the EFF or the ANC.

Building solidarity with those in the ANC fighting for socialist policies and the overthrow of the entire current leadership seems crucial.

**Out of that fight, the basis for a militant party of workers, students and poor farmers could be built.**

# History minus the workers

**John Cunningham reviews Vienna: Empire, Dynasty and Dream, BBC 4**

**Normally I wouldn't have bothered with Sebag Montefiore's three-part documentary on Vienna (broadcast December 2016). His approach to his topics is somewhat predictable and conservative.**

But when I lived in Hungary for nine years I tasted some of the splendours of the architecture and the cultural inheritance of the Hapsburgs, not to mention its many contradictions and unpleasanties, in Budapest, Pécs and elsewhere. I never visited Vienna. So, I looked forward to at least the visual aspects of Montefiore's documentary.

I wasn't disappointed. Magnificent vistas followed one after the other: the Belvedere Palace, the Schönbrunn, the Prater, the Ringstrasse in a dizzying kaleidoscope of architectural and cultural splendour. There's nothing wrong with this and no-one on the left should apologise for admiring beauty from whatever source.

However Montefiore's view of history is classically top-down. For him the people who really matter are Kings and Queens, other aristocrats, and the wealthy like the Rothschilds, who, he casually tells us, are distant relations of his family. Few others get a mention. The viewer is treated to one splendid exterior and interior after another: palaces, castles, salons, ornamental gardens, sumptuous boudoirs and living rooms, and we are told, in detail, about the great and the good

who inhabited them. It all gets a bit tedious.

The Austrian royalty seem to divide into three rough categories: plodders (like Franz Josef); schemers (his nephew Franz Ferdinand) and inbred dimwits (take your pick). Only the odd one stands out as in any way exceptional. Occasionally, Montefiore does stray from the script. How could you, after all, make a documentary on Vienna and not mention Mozart, Sigmund Freud or the painter Gustav Klimt? However, others get short shrift or simply don't cut the mustard: he makes no mention of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Popper, Joseph Horowitz, Stefan Zweig, Frederic Hayek, Franz Lehar, Ernst Gombrich, the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle and many more.

The two to get more than a mention are, predictably, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. Montefiore obviously enjoys the historical coincidence that both men lived in Vienna at the same time; Hitler had been in Vienna since 1907 and Stalin arrived in January 1913. Stalin soon moved on to St. Petersburg, where he was arrested on 23 February and deported to Siberia. Hitler was to leave Vienna (for Munich) a few weeks later. Montefiore over-eggs this coincidence (a matter of a few weeks), milking it for more than it is worth and even talks about their final showdown on the Eastern Front during World War Two. As if the fact that they may have passed each other at a sausage stand is a cue for a pan-European gunfight at the OK Corral-Stalingrad. He doesn't mention Trotsky, whose stay in the city was much longer than

Stalin's, nor does he mention a mechanic at the nearby Daimler car works in Wiener Neustadt, who would regularly, on his weekends off, hit the fleshpots of the capital city. Born in Croatia, the Saturday playboy Josip Broz would later adopt the name Tito.

We never see a worker's dwelling or how the servants lived in the splendid palaces where they toiled. What jobs did the workers do? What drove the economy? What about their politics? Their leisure pursuits and culture? It is a classic case of what the Marxist historian E. P. Thompson once called the "condescension of history".

The Austrian Social Democratic Party was a powerful mass party. Austrian social democracy and the political strand of it known as Austro-Marxism was extremely influential (although criticised in robust fashion by Trotsky and others) and its leading figures, men like Max Adler and Otto Bauer, were central players in the European socialist movement.

When Montefiore does mention ordinary people it is almost always as the "mob" — not even a nod in the direction that this "mob", largely consisting of paid-up members of trade unions and the Social-Democratic Party, was highly organised and politically motivated. Nor does he mention the year 1934 when the Austrian authorities shelled the workers quarter with artillery and mercilessly crushed the workers' movement, driving thousands into exile and executing their leaders, events which helped pave the way for the Anschluss — the annexation of Austria



by Nazi Germany.

History is too important to be treated as if it were a plaything, to be discussed with the after-dinner port; these events matter, people died, and the consequences for our continent were terrible.

One day I will visit Vienna but I will also go to the Karl Marx-Hof — the huge complex of flats where the Social Democratic workers lived with their co-operatives, libraries and their socialist Sunday Schools. I will have a coffee in the Central Cafe where Trotsky used to sit and argue with Adler and other Austrian socialists.

A better introduction to Vienna is Frederic Morton's *Thunder at Twilight*, chapters in *My Life* where Trotsky talks about his time in Vienna, and the film 'Colonel Red' (directed by Hungarian István Szabó)

**The film, although, in places, not historically accurate, gives a good "feel" for what it must have been like to live in the Hapsburg Empire in the period leading up to the First World War.**



# Learning from the three Ls

**It was once a tradition for revolutionary socialists to mark every January by remembering the life and work of Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. In this 1949 article, the US socialist Hal Draper discusses the relevance of the socialism of "3Ls" for the German working class, then under the yoke of imperialist occupation, and for the American working class facing a war-mongering ruling class.**

**We socialists are not hero worshippers. But we have our heroes.**

Socialists are not hero worshippers because the very essence of socialism — far deeper than demands for specific social reforms or changes, or demands for nationalisation, for any specific programme — is the idea that the emancipation of the working class can only be the job of the working class itself. That as long as it sits back trusting passively in some leader or hero or even party to "do good" for the people, it will never get an inch nearer to the great goal of freedom.

Our heroes are not those who have promised to "do good" for the people, but those who have called on the people to take their fate into their own hands — called on them, stimulated them, lashed them into action and mass movement, pointing a direction and a way, a programme and a road of struggle.

January is the month of heroes for us because it commemorates the death of three who, more than any other, believed with all their hearts and souls and intellects that this wretched, degenerating madhouse of a world could be changed only when the people no longer leaned back watching the powers that be manipulate the reins but surged forward and took charge themselves, conscious, aware, moving and suspicious of "do-gooders."

These were three of the greatest socialist fighters of all time — Lenin, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. By birth a German, a Pole and a Russian. (And though his name does not begin with L, and though January does not mark his anniversary, we would add a fourth who, in the memory of the socialist working class, stands out as a believer in the power of the people to free themselves — Eugene V. Debs, an American)

They did not seek to "bring democracy" to the people; they sought to lead the people in the fight to win democracy for themselves — real democracy, thoroughgoing democracy, the democracy of a socialist world.

Today, when Germany is again — or still — the centre of world attention, the cockpit of the tug-of-war between American and Russian imperialism, we point first to the two Ls who gave their lives that the German work-

ing class might be spared the horrors of war and oppression: Liebknecht and Luxemburg.

They had something to say to American workers who are wondering which of the would-be saviours today will give them what they want and need.

Today the German people lie at the feet of their conquerors. But that has been true not only since the war and the defeat in war: that has been true since their defeat by the conqueror who preceded Eisenhower — Hitler and Nazism. For it was the German people who were the, first victims of the Nazi power, before Czechoslovakia, before France, before Norway and the rest. Washington and London and Moscow triumphed over Hitler, after Hitler had first triumphed over the German people.

And now the new conquerors ask: What to do with the Germans? How shall we "re-educate" them? How shall we "bring democracy" to them? How shall we wean them away from notions of world conquest?

This is the hypocritical question asked by the Big Two who, right over the backs of the Germans, are sparring for world conquest themselves.

## ZONES

**How shall we wean them away from war-like pursuits? This is asked by the Big Two who, using Germany as a no-man's-land, are girding for war at a pace unprecedented.**

How shall we teach them that it is wrong to oppress other peoples and national minorities? This is seriously spoken of by two powers, one of which is an outstanding practitioner of minority persecution (of African Americans), and the other of which is the cruelest tyranny on the face of the globe in 1949; and both of them aiders and abettors of anti-democratic suppression on every continent.

They are going to teach them! They are going to "bring democracy"! They are going to educate them in democracy by — keeping them disunited in split-up zones against their will and national desire, by denying them their own government!

Today Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, one the brain and the other the flaming spirit of the Germans' long struggle against tyranny and oppression, would say to their countrymen: You will be free only when you get rid of your foreign "educators," you can develop your democracy only when you kick out your hypocritical tutors, you will have peace only when these two organisers of the third world war are no longer on your soil!

Take Germany into your own hands — in a united and independent Germany undominated by the capitalist west or the hideous



despotism to the east!

Take your country into your own hands — in each country, in each period, this has to mean something different in the concrete. The United States is not occupied by foreign powers nor dictated to in foreign accents. But here in the United States a powerful labour movement — stronger in many ways than it has ever been before — sees (and its leaders even make speeches about the fact) that Washington is dominated and run by powers altogether alien to the interests of the people. The profiteers, the big corporations, the Sixty Families, the Dillon-Reed-Morgan-US Steel economic rulers, fronted by fair-promisers and campaign pledgers, sometimes ticketed Democrat and sometimes Republican, run an American Military Government of their own in Washington, our native AMG.

They pass a Taft-Hartley Act, and the leaders of American labour look for salvation to a capitalist politician who, only two years ago, proposed a little Truman Act of his own to curb labour's rights and who now, after election, reiterates that he still wants it. They push up prices and raise a stop-signal on wages, and the leaders of American labor say: wait for the Democratic Party to bring us what we want and need.

Take your country into your own hands: that goes for our labor movement too. The first step is in front of it: it does not have to get rid of foreign brass, or kick put foreign uniforms. All it has to do is to organise its own political strength, organise its own party, put the name of labour in the political arena where it belongs, independently — organise its own Labour Party.

That is how the American working people can start on the road to their own emancipation as their own job.

But for Lenin and Liebknecht and Luxemburg, as for Gene Debs, as for our people today, one horror stood out among all others as the outcome of the subjection of the people to powers above them and out of their control — the most terrible result of the subordination of the will of the people. War.

When the people want peace, but wait for peace to be arranged for them; when the people want an end to mutual slaughter, but merely content themselves with placing hope in one or the other of the "peace agencies" of capitalism — then their very yearning for peace becomes a means to push them into the pit.

War — for peace; war — for democracy; war — to end war; war — to preserve the

sanctity of international agreements; war — to defend the United Nations, it may be; war — to stem Russia's expansion. It is a kind of jiu-jitsu — where the strength and momentum of the opponent are turned against him; in the politics of the capitalist democracies, the passive yearnings for peace are turned into justifications for war. Our modern war-makers are skillful navigators: they tack against the wind, but make their way to the appointed port of war for world conquest — in the name of peace. As long as the people are depending on them, and not on the Germany and Russia of twenty-five years ago had their liberals, and "socialists" and even "Marxists" who were against capitalist war in the abstract.

When it broke out, they had no difficulty finding the most "practical" and "realistic" reasons for supporting the Kaiser's government and the Tsar's government in the actual war. There were a handful, to begin with, who remained true to socialism and the anti-war struggle, and in the first place the three Ls.

"Shamed, dishonoured, wading in blood and dripping with filth, this capitalist society stands. Not as we usually see it, playing the roles of peace and righteousness, of order, of philosophy, of ethics — as a roaring beast, as an orgy of anarchy, as a pestilential breath, devastating culture and humanity — so it appears in all its hideous nakedness."

Rosa Luxemburg wrote that in 1915, and this:

"This madness will not stop, and this bloody nightmare of war will not cease until the workers of Germany, of France, of Russia wake up out of their drunken sleep; will clasp each others' bands in brotherhood and will down the bestial chorus of war agitators and the hoarse cry of capitalist hyenas with the mighty cry of labour, 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!'"

They fought against the war. Only one country, then, lifted itself put of the war by its bootstraps, by the will of its people for peace, by their own movement — the revolutionary Russia or Lenin and Trotsky.

**That revolutionary Russia has gone under, and in its place is the nightmare of Stalinism, but the fire of anti-war struggle and socialist democracy that it raised and fanned is still the only beacon in the world to keep our feet from the abyss of capitalist barbarisation and Stalinist degeneration.**

*Labor Action, 31 January 1949.*

## Liberation

An acrostic poem, i.e. one in which the first letters of each line spell out the key word:

Looks like this, does it, liberation?  
Isolated from supplies, routes closed, blown from the skies  
Barrel bombs bowled along alleys  
Enclaved civilians tweet from their graves, farewells from beneath  
Rubble, the stones where their homes used to be  
Aleppo cries, crumbles, defeated, they see  
Tyranny returning, triumphant, burning  
Inhabitants gathered, culled, or running for their lives  
Out of the city, fleeing as they wouldn't if they had actually been freed  
No, this is not what liberation looks like.

*Janine Booth*



# 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 13 January

Best supporting workers —  
Picturehouse strike fundraiser  
7pm, Earl Haig Hall, 18 Elder Avenue, London, N8 9TH  
[bit.ly/2j3j9mf](http://bit.ly/2j3j9mf)

### 14-15 January

NCAFC Winter Conference  
Warwick University  
[bit.ly/2go6x70](http://bit.ly/2go6x70)

### Saturday 14 January

Against Borders for Children  
Conference  
12.30pm, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, London, WC1H 0XG  
[bit.ly/2go7o7M](http://bit.ly/2go7o7M)

### Saturday 14 January

Stop mass deportation march  
12 noon, Brixton  
[bit.ly/2j1AdZy](http://bit.ly/2j1AdZy)

### Saturday 14 January

Momentum London LGBT  
meeting  
1pm, Crossroads Women's Centre,  
25 Wolsey Mews, London, NW5  
2DX  
[bit.ly/2jrkjY](http://bit.ly/2jrkjY)

### Tuesday 17 January

The Handmaid's Tale: Haringey  
radical readers  
7pm, Big Green Bookshop,  
Brampton Park Rd, London, N22  
6BG  
[bit.ly/2jrbXgr](http://bit.ly/2jrbXgr)

### Thursday 19 January

Orgreave: the fight for justice  
goes on  
7pm, Annesley Woodhouse Work-  
ing Mens Club, Nottingham,  
NG17 9HA  
[bit.ly/2i9UtJa](http://bit.ly/2i9UtJa)

Got an event you want listing? [solidarity@workersliberty.org](mailto:solidarity@workersliberty.org)

More online at [www.workersliberty.org](http://www.workersliberty.org) Workers' Liberty @workersliberty

# A new chance for constructive unity in Momentum

## LABOUR

By Simon Nelson

**Workers' Liberty welcomes the statement "Momentum — a way forward", circulated online on 6 January by around 50 members of Momentum, including Steering Committee member Michael Chessum. It "call[s] on all in Momentum — both the central office and our fellow members and supporters — to focus our energies on active, outward-facing campaigns and initiatives".**

It proposes conciliation to restore unity and the ability to "tolerate difference, tension and contradiction" in Momentum. It wants "a mixed democratic system for Momentum, which blends together delegate and online systems". It suggests that the Momentum conference set for 18 February should be delayed; but says it will be "a disaster for Momentum if the National Conference is cancelled".

This initiative could be a lever to bring about what we have called for since writers such as Paul Mason, Owen Jones, and Laura Murray raised an outcry, online and in the mass media, against Momentum's 3 December committee decisions: a chance "to talk quietly without media-provided megaphones and howling about sabotage, to discuss what adjustments or compromises can best keep Momentum on the road". "Those who disagree with the decisions at the National Committee should discuss within Momentum: on our side, they will find no closed doors, and a strong will for unity".

Workers' Liberty has since the beginning of Momentum argued for it to have the active campaigning orientation which the new statement favours. We have worked to promote Momentum campaigning on a range of issues: we were some of the key motivators in setting up Momentum NHS; we took the lead in Momentum Youth and Students to push for Momentum to be active for freedom of movement.

The Way Forward statement says: "The current date for the Conference is too soon. It does not allow for local deliberative democracy to decide delegates and motions. Most groups cannot organise that quickly and most people cannot attend a face-to-face meeting in the next three weeks."

True, a conference organised starting from now, with a deadline of 28 January for motions and very limited time for people to meet and choose delegates to send to an as yet unnamed city, is likely to be a shambles. Despite the best efforts of the Conference Arrangements Committee, the Momentum office has not provided the resources needed to get a conference functioning. Whatever about that, the

problems are a fact. If we are to postpone conference, then a new date must be set now. As the Way Forward statement says, it will be "a disaster for Momentum if the National Conference is cancelled" or postponed indefinitely.

Some people in Momentum have presented the current problems as a deadlock between those who support the mandate and decisions of the National Committee, in this case a delegate-based conference, and an allegedly hostile "wider membership" who feel disengaged and unable to contribute to the debate. We do not accept that decisions made by local groups, including the committees that are elected from them, are exclusionary or seek to disenfranchise Momentum members who are not currently active. We agree that Momentum should remain united and focused on transforming the Labour Party. That means Momentum must have some definite policies that it can take into the Labour Party, and must have the capacity for its elected conferences and committees to take decisions which will be carried out, rather than vetoed or ignored, by the office staff. Momentum should be defending freedom of movement, and not leaving Diane Abbott and Jeremy Corbyn alone to fight for this principle against a growing anti-immigrant outcry from the right wing and even from some Corbyn-supporting MPs.

The Way Forward statement also says, rightly: "The survey sent out [by the Momentum office on 20 De-

cember] with a covering email from Jeremy Corbyn... failed to recognise the National Conference and to present compromise positions. It should not be used as the basis for any decision making". The survey — of which results will be released shortly, perhaps? we don't know — was an ill-judged manoeuvre to overturn a democratically-made decision of the National Committee.

Michael Chessum says he will be formulating a hybrid proposal incorporating delegate meetings and some online voting. The draft constitution which we are inclined to support, circulated by steering committee member and FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack and National Committee member Nick Wrack, allows for the election of officers by an OMOV vote and gives provision for local groups to decide their motion to the national conference through an OMOV vote of the local group members.

Other "hybrids" are surely possible which will retain a basic democratic facility for Momentum to develop, vote on, and act on collective majority opinions formulated through discussion, rather than just being a phone-bank database "consulted" from time to time by the office staff in plebiscitary fashion — for democratic decisions made by elected committees to have right of way.

**We are open to discussion with all wings of Momentum activists to help the elected committees resolve the current difficulties in a constructive way.**

## Organise now for Labour conference 2017

**Elections for Constituency Labour Party delegates to Labour's annual conference on 24-27 September 2017, and nominations for the Conference Arrangements Committee and National Constitutional Committee, are likely to be decided soon in many local Labour Parties.**

CLPs can elect delegates at any

time between 1 January and a deadline of Friday 23 June, but many have a custom of doing so at AGMs in February.

**The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has called on Labour activists to be alert and ensure that good delegates and nominations are proposed and canvassed for.**

• More details: [bit.ly/lab-del](http://bit.ly/lab-del).

## Books by Workers' Liberty



### Can socialism make sense?

A new book from Workers' Liberty which makes the case for socialism. In a time when socialism is the most searched word on the Merriam-Webster dictionary website, more and more people call

themselves socialists, and a self-confessed socialist is leader of the Labour Party, this book explores what socialism means, whether it can rise again, how, and why.

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

£12 (£14.80 including postage)

[www.workersliberty.org/socialism](http://www.workersliberty.org/socialism)

### Why socialist feminism?

Workers' Liberty makes class struggle and radical social change central to our feminism. We are socialist feminists. This pamphlet explores what "socialist feminism" might mean in the context of the latest "wave", and global conditions.

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

### The two Trotskyisms contrast 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](http://bit.ly/twotrotskyisms)



# More cinemas to join strike

By Ollie Moore

Workers at Picturehouse Cinema's flagship "Picturehouse Central" location, near London's Piccadilly Circus, will shortly begin balloting for new strikes, as part of a growing dispute which also involves workers at Picturehouse's Brixton, Hackney, and Crouch End sites.

The ballot, the timetable for which has yet to be announced, is for further strikes to demand the London Living Wage, decent sick pay, and other improvements to workers' terms and conditions.

Workers at Picturehouse Central, Brixton, and Hackney recently concluded a ballot for joint strikes, which returned huge majorities on a large turnout. However, Picturehouse bosses threatened legal action over a technicality, and the workers' union, Bectu, decided that the ballot should be re-run.

A Bectu rep told *Solidarity*: "It's frustrating to have to run the ballot again, especially after securing such excellent results. The turnout and majorities for strikes showed the strength of feeling in the workplace so hopefully we can replicate that and not lose momentum. The only advantage to having to re-ballot is that it allows us to bring the Crouch End site into the dispute. Spreading the strikes is the key to



**Hackney Picturehouse strikers and their supporters braved the rain on New Year's Day to picket.**

victory."

Workers at the Hackney Picturehouse struck for five days between 16-21 December, and on 23 December and 1 January. Workers at the Ritzy Picturehouse in Brixton struck on 16 December.

Picturehouse bosses managed to keep the cinemas open by paying managers from Picturehouse locations in Cambridge, Oxford, and elsewhere to cover shifts, including providing hotel accommodation for them. They have also attempted to bully workers by threatening legal proceedings against union reps for

their alleged conduct on picket lines.

Workers at a further Picturehouse cinema in East Dulwich may soon begin their own ballots for strikes.

**Benefit gigs for the workers' strike fund are planned in Crouch End on 13 January and Hackney on 18 January.**

- Crouch End fundraiser: [bit.ly/2j3j9mf](http://bit.ly/2j3j9mf)
- Hackney fundraiser: [bit.ly/2izZgQa](http://bit.ly/2izZgQa)

## "Second-tier" cabin crew fight back

By Gemma Short

**Cabin crew working for British Airways struck on 10-11 January in a dispute over pay.**

The 2900 workers are part of the so-called "mixed fleet", workers who have been recruited by BA since 2011 and paid far worse than those who worked for BA prior to 2011. The workers' union Unite says that the level of wages are so

low that many workers are forced to take a second job.

The "mixed-fleet" was the result of a long-running dispute from 2009-2011 which saw several strikes by cabin crew. The deal struck protected the pay and conditions of existing workers but created a two tier workforce.

**Workers have rejected a pay offer of 2% in the first year, and 2.4% in years two and three, say-**



**ing it comes nowhere near addressing their poverty wages.**

## Durham TAs keep close eye on negotiations

By Charlotte Zalens

**Negotiations between Durham County Council and teaching assistants have restarted after strikes stopped the council's plans to sack them all on December 31 and re-hire them on inferior terms and conditions on 1 January.**

The council has now committed to conducting a review into the plan which is due to be completed by September. Teaching assistant Trish Fay said: "This is not over. They have only suspended, not withdrawn, the new contracts while negotiations are under way, but we do now have the opportunity to work with the council to re-



view our roles, which have changed massively over the last five years.

**"However, if we don't see real progress in the next few months**

**TAs, Unison and ATL, are clear that we will not hesitate to reinstate our industrial action to ensure we get a fair solution for all teaching assistants."**

## Harrods: pass on tips!

By Peggy Carter

The United Voices of the World union held a protest outside Harrods on Saturday 7 December to protest at the department store's policy on tips and service charges in its cafes and restaurants.

Harrods reportedly keeps up to 75% of the service charge, meaning staff lose out on up to £5,000 a year. Staff who have joined the UVW report that it is unclear what percentage of the service charge is kept by the employer and how it is divided amongst workers.

Meanwhile Harrods owner, Qatar Holding, paid itself £100.1m in dividends in 2016, pre-tax profits rose by 19%, and the highest paid director earned £1.6m.

UWV secretary Petros Elia was arrested at the demonstration along with several other UVW members and supporters. Petros was held by police for 17 hours before being released without charge but on bail conditions which pre-



venting him going within 50 metres of Harrods.

Upon release Petros said: "The police have therefore temporarily banned me from representing members of UVW at Harrods or from protesting outside their store. This has all sorts of human rights implications.

**"The police would appear to be, once again, politically policing — and perhaps even acting, in this case, on behalf of the Qatar Royal Family, who own Harrods and apparently even more of London than the Crown Estate — to stamp out United Voices of the World's unionisation of Harrods workers".**

## Fujitsu workers strike again



**Workers at Fujitsu in Manchester are striking again on 12-13, 16 and 19-20 January.**

The strikes are the latest in a dispute over pay, pensions and job security. Workers have struck for 9 days so far.

Fujitsu is warning of 1800 UK job cuts, and about 2600 workers have received letters telling them they are "in scope" for redundancy.

Workers at the Manchester site have previously fought off some job cuts and won better redundancy and redeployment terms — however Fujitsu is now breaking those agreements.

**Manchester Fujitsu strikers have been holding rallies and pickets of business who use Fujitsu, and were part of a solidarity rally organised by Manchester Trades Council in December.**

## Publisher derecognises unions

**Unions at Penguin Random House were left stunned in mid-December when the publisher announced it would be terminating its collective agreements with unions.**

The publisher announced it would not be recognising the unions at its London sites after management failed to agree redun-

dancy terms with unions in talks. The decision affects workers represented by both the National Union of Journalists and Unite.

**Following outrage from staff and high profile authors who are published by Penguin Random House, talks resumed between the unions and the employer late in December, but there is no clear resolution yet.**

## Merseyside bus drivers strike

**Bus drivers in Merseyside struck for a fortnight from 28 December — 10 January in a dispute over pay.**

Drivers voted for 81% for strikes after rejecting a pay offer of just 1.5% for 2016, and 2% for 2017. Workers have also rejected offers which would have seen a slight improvement on their pay but created a two-tier workforce where all new

drivers were worse off by £620 a year.

Unite regional officer Ritchie James said: "The offer for 2016 of 1.5 per cent is in the bottom ten per cent of pay settlements that have been negotiated with Stagecoach across the UK by Unite.

**"The two per cent offer for 2017 is well below the inflation forecasts for next year."**





# Solidarity

For a workers' government

No 426 11 January 2017 50p/£1

## Keep the guards on the trains!

By Ollie Moore

**Workers on Southern Rail are striking on 10-13 and 24-27 January, as they attempt to force Southern bosses to reverse the imposition of "Driver Only Operation" (DOO).**

Guards on Southern, who are members of the RMT union, also struck from 31 December to 2 January.

The 10-13 January strike had originally been scheduled for 9-14 January, but drivers' union Aslef reduced it to three days, with their General Secretary Mick Whelan saying they had listened to "concerns" which suggested a six-day strike was "disproportionate".

Rail strikes are set to spread, after RMT began balloting its members on Northern Rail for strikes, in a vote which runs between 10-25 January. The dispute is over the latest pay offer from Arriva, Northern's franchise owner. Arriva has also previously expressed an intention to expand DOO across its routes.

Guards and drivers are also concerned at the possibility of DOO being implemented on Merseyrail after Liverpool's council approved a fleet replacement plan which would be in new trains where doors are operated by drivers.

A solidarity visit by Aslef reps nationwide to Southern pickets on Friday 13 January, initially organised by reps from Sheffield, is a good initiative and can hopefully be the start of wider public campaigning about DOO across the country.

The London mayor, Sadiq Khan, has suggested that integrating the routes currently operated by Southern into the TfL network

could be a solution to the dispute.

Greater integration, under the aegis of a publicly-owned body, would certainly be a step forward. But TfL operates several forms of semi-privatisation under its current model: the London Overground, Docklands Light Railway, and bus networks, while overseen by TfL, are operated by private companies. London Overground and TfL Rail services are driver-only.

Sadiq Khan, who intervened in the London Underground workers' dispute to denounce the strike and "urge" unions to call it off (while saying nothing about LU's job cuts), is hardly a reliable ally for transport workers.

Labour members should expect better of a Labour Mayor. On Tuesday 10 December Jeremy Corbyn told BBC Radio 4's Today program that he would join Southern picket lines. He said "Yes I would, because I think Southern Rail have behaved in a terrible manner and the government seems to be more interested in protecting Southern Rail despite its appalling service and shortage of trains, overcrowding, and continues allowing them to run the franchise. I would want that franchise brought back into public ownership because we provide the rails and the trains and they make the profits." Corbyn said he could not attend picket lines on the 10th due to other commitments — we hope he holds to his promise.

**Rail unions should push for real public ownership, and democratic control, of all transport services. Public ownership could guarantee a guard on all trains, and maintain service and passenger safety.**



## Tube station staff strike

**Station and revenue staff on London Underground struck on 8-9 January.**

They were demanding the reversal of job cuts carried out under the "Fit for the Future" restructure programme. The RMT union is also demanding the abolition of the new "CSA2" grade, an entry-level grade of station staff paid £7,000 less than colleagues doing similar work.

The strike closed most busy Tube stations.

An RMT told *Solidarity*: "Today's excellent strike must be the opening of salvo of an ongoing campaign of action."

**"It's not feasible to run stations with the skeleton staffing levels the company has imposed. We need to do whatever it takes to force our employer to reverse job cuts."**



## Subscribe to Solidarity

Trial sub (6 issues) £7 ☐  
Six months (22 issues) £22 waged ☐, £11 unwaged ☐  
One year (44 issues) £44 waged ☐, £22 unwaged ☐  
European rate: 6 months €30 ☐ One year €55 ☐

Name .....

Address .....

I enclose £ .....

Cheques (£) to "AWL" or make £ and Euro payments at [workersliberty.org/sub](http://workersliberty.org/sub)  
Return to 20e Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London, SE1 3DG.

### Or subscribe with a standing order

Pay £5 a month to subscribe to Solidarity or pay us more to make an ongoing contribution to our work

To: ..... (your bank) ..... (address)

Account name ..... (your name)

Account number ..... Sort code .....

Please make payments as follows to the debit of my account:  
Payee: Alliance for Workers' Liberty, account no. 20047674 at the Unity Trust Bank, 9 Brindley Place, Birmingham, B1 2HB (60-83-01)

Amount: £.....

To be paid on the ..... day of ..... (month) 20.... (year) and thereafter monthly until this order is cancelled by me in writing.  
This order cancels any previous orders to the same payee.

Date ..... Signature .....

## Contact us

020 7394 8923

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

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

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

Printed by Trinity Mirror