



Solidarity & Workers' Liberty

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No 434 29 March 2017 50p/£1

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FIGHT BREXIT ALL THE WAY

On 29 March, Theresa May will trigger Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union, starting the clock on the UK leaving the EU. Unless the UK and all the EU states agree to a special extension on negotiations, the UK will quit the EU in or before March 2019.

Already, the Brexit vote is leading to stresses on migrant workers, and an increase in nationalism and xenophobia in the UK; and strengthens the worst, most right-wing elements in the ruling class and their political party, the Tories. The labour movement needs to carve out a pro-worker, pro-migrant vision of the future, with ties as close to the EU as possible, and fight to protect workers' rights.

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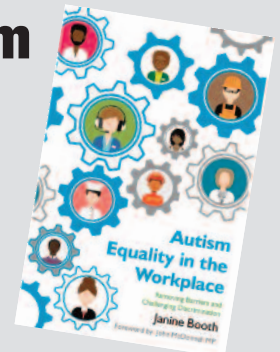
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LETTER FROM BRAZIL

By Luiza Lago

On 22 March Brazil's coup government of Michel Temer brought forward a law, previously shelved, to legalise the expansion of outsourcing.

Businesses will now be able to outsource workers for their primary activity (for example, teachers in a school). Government owned institutions can now use sub-contractors, opening the door for private sector interference in nationalised sectors.

Outsourced workers in Brazil earn on average 24.7% less than directly-employed workers, work three more hours per week, and have a total employment time of less than half of non-outsourced workers.

Expansion of outsourcing will also mean companies will no longer have to guarantee the same amount of benefits (such as health insurance or holidays) to all workers; these are expected to be "given" by the outsourcing company.

This will further fragment the workforce, so whereas, before all public school teachers could come together to oppose one employer (i.e. the local government), they will now be struggling against different outsourcing companies.

Many in Brazil fear that this law will entrench corruption. Government officials will be able to pick and choose between companies to hire for outsourcing, many of which will have financed political campaigns or will be property of the families of government officials.

Until now there have only been small protests against the law, but a national day of action has been

called for the 31 March by the PT's sister organisation CUT (a national organisation of trade unions).

This reform is not the first outright attack on Brazilian workers since Temer took power after the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. During the first month of government a constitutional amendment put a cap on any extra investments in welfare programmes, health or education for the next 20 years.

The government is threatening to pass a pension reform that would: push the minimum age for retirement from 55 for women and 60 for men to 65 for both; increase the minimum time of work needed for a person to retirement from 15 to 25 years; increase workers' pensions contributions from 11% to 14% of a salary.

Having faced resistance from trade unions, social movements and the wider public, the government decided to play dirty and released a TV commercial stating that "without the pensions reform: say goodbye to the Bolsa Familia and FIES; no more new roads; the end of all social programmes" (Bolsa Familia is the main benefit program in Brazil, and the FIES is a programme of loans for students going to private universities).

But people have not retreated; on International Womens' Day tens of thousands of people took the streets in at least 17 state capitals of Brazil to fight against the pensions reform. The protesters highlighted the pensions reform as a feminist issue — women are more likely to take time out from work to take care of children and will therefore more affected by the changes.

Teachers, underground workers, metal industry workers, bank workers, and more also went on strike on IWD to protest against the pensions reform.

Scottish nationalism's priorities

By Ann Field

It is now over a year since the Scottish Parliament passed a piece of legislation. But Scotland is no SNP-ruled utopia which has no need of legislative reform or intervention.

Over the past year the number of people in Scotland living in relative poverty has increased by 2%. Child poverty has increased by 4%. The income of the top 10% of the population is now 38% higher than that of the bottom 40%. Two years ago the difference was 15%.

Spending on schools has declined by 5% in recent years. For seven years in a row the number of teachers for pupils with Additional Support Needs has fallen. Under the SNP, pupil performance in numeracy and literacy has declined.

Since the SNP came to power in 2007 the number of FE student places in Scotland has slumped from 379,000 to 270,000. With another 10,000 places being cut last year, the decline continues.

Apart from English students, stu-

dents in Scotland do not pay undergraduate tuition fees. But the amount of money allocated for non-repayable student bursaries is falling while levels of student debt are increasing.

Scotland has the worst record in the UK for getting poorer students into university.

Life expectancy and health lag behind the rest of the UK in many areas. This was the case before the SNP came to power. But the gap between life expectancy in Scotland and England is increasing — to Scotland's disadvantage.

NHS CUTS

After adjustment for inflation, spending on the NHS under the SNP has declined.

NHS Scotland cancelled almost 8,000 operations last year for "non-clinical" reasons, such as a lack of beds or staff, or dirty equipment. Nearly 700 patients died in Scottish hospitals last year despite being medically fit to leave, with delays caused by a lack of care home vacancies or a failure to put in place support in their own home.

Housebuilding in Scotland in recent years has been stagnant or increased only slightly.

Scotland's economy is growing at just a third of the rate of the UK as a whole (0.7%, compared with 2.1%). Scotland is currently running a deficit of £15 billions, representing 10% of its Gross Domestic Product. Annual oil revenue is running at £76 millions, compared with £2.3 billions in 2014/15.

This is not the record of a left-leaning social-democratic government. It is not even the record of a half-efficient centre-right government. It is the record of failure by a nationalist party whose sole prior-

ity is a policy (i.e. independence) rejected by a majority of the electorate in 2014.

Despite its record of failure in government, the SNP has found time to stage a Holyrood "debate" on a second referendum on Scottish independence; this was suspended after the Westminster attack.

The cybernats knew, of course, that it could not be a coincidence that such an (alleged) incident occurred just as Holyrood was debating a second referendum:

"How convenient that they [the media] were all there, helicopter and all, when the random 'terrorist' attack occurred! It's becoming all so predictable, on the day when Holyrood were debating #Scotref."

But SNP was always going to back a second referendum, despite opposition from a majority of the electorate. The Scottish Greens were always going to back the SNP, despite their manifesto commitment to support a second referendum only if a million Scottish voters signed a petition calling for one.

And Theresa May had made it clear well that the Tories in Westminster would not — at least in the immediate future — agree to the "Section 30 order" needed to allow a second referendum to take place.

The SNP's pretext for a second referendum is that a majority in Scotland voted "Remain" in last June's referendum on membership of the EU, whereas a majority at UK level voted "Leave".

But now the SNP has pulled back from linking independence for Scotland to membership of the EU. This is to avoid alienating the 38% of Scottish voters, and the 34% of SNP voters, who backed "Leave" last June.

Mosul casualties

By Gerry Bates

The recent deaths of more than 150 civilians in airstrikes in Mosul was the result of US military action.

The US has accepted responsibility but has not confirmed there were civilian casualties.

Amnesty International reports a significant rise in civilian casualties since eastern Mosul was taken by the Iraqi army. Reports suggest residents were told *not* to leave their homes before airstrikes began. Such a casual attitude to civilian casualties was sadly very likely from the outset of operations in Mosul.

Amnesty points to evidence of "an alarming pattern of US-led coalition airstrikes [in Mosul] which have destroyed whole houses with entire families inside". There has also been a complete lack of centrally-coordinated rescue efforts. Mosul's local authorities say that the fighting prevents them from conducting rescue operations. But a lack of resources and corruption in their allocation is also causing civilian suffering.

Western Mosul is more densely populated and a much older part of the city. The streets are narrow and the buildings far older. This has been factored into decisions by the US and Iraqi military to use more artillery and rely more heavily on airstrikes. The Iraqi army say they are concerned about large scale displacement and that is why they have asked residents to stay in their homes.

400,000 people now remain in Mosul, vulnerable to these military attacks.

Grassroots and grammars

By Colin Foster

Philip Hammond's Budget on 7 March, while continuing plans for large overall cuts in school funding, allocated money for new "free schools". Some of those, the Tories, indicate, will be new selective secondary schools, "grammar schools".

On 19 March, Lucy Powell, Labour shadow education minister until last year's post-23-June mass resignations designed to push Jeremy Corbyn out, joined with Tory former education minister Nicky Morgan and Lib-Dem Nick Clegg to oppose this move.

"All the evidence is clear that grammar schools damage social mobility", they wrote in the Observer. "In highly selective areas children not in grammars do worse than their peers in non-selective areas".

They are right about that. A Social Mobility Commission report

at the end of February found that "Free School Meal pupils make the least progress in selective Local Authorities".

But the campaign against new grammar schools should be part of an active, lively, grassroots general campaign against the cuts in school budgets, drawing in students and teachers, rather than an alliance at the top with dissident Tories.

Angela Rayner, Labour's current shadow education minister, has stressed the class dimension. "This is an ideological attack on the working-class people of this country being able to get a decent education... it's about sucking money out of the current state public sector".

Rayner, however, has failed to lead local Labour Parties into building the needed activist anti-cuts campaigns.

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Since 21 March Bristol Sisters Uncut have been occupying Cheltenham Road Library to protest against the housing crisis and the loss of public services. The library is due to be demolished and turned into luxury accommodation, turning a valuable community space into a profit-making venture which will only benefit developers and those who can afford to buy the flats. The group have been campaigning for survivors of domestic violence to be given priority housing. They want the occupied space to be a much needed community space for women, non-binary and trans people and have been holding workshops on self-defence, DIY Punk and arts'n'crafts, and meetings on immigration controls, prison abolition, exploring gender and more. Find out more at www.facebook.com/sistersuncutbristol



Tackle the roots of the new jihadism

By Simon Nelson

It is probably not possible to know and therefore pointless to speculate why Khalid Masood carried out the attack on Westminster Bridge and the Palace of Westminster on 22 March.

Better to focus our thoughts on sympathy with the victims of the attack and building the better society that can work against such behaviour.

Daesh were quick to claim that Masood was a soldier of the Caliphate, who had responded to their call. Masood was a “soldier” in the same sense that the attackers in Nice and Berlin were soldiers who attacked civilians using vehicles. In Masood’s case he also used a knife.

Daesh can claim these attacks as coming out of their network; but there is no evidence that Masood had ever contacted them directly. This is unlike the attacks in Paris in November 2015 which were coordinated by people who had ongoing links with Daesh inside “The Caliphate”.

We do know that Masood was an Islamic convert who had worked in Saudi Arabia. MI5 say they knew who Masood was but nothing has so far been reported to suggest he was someone they believed to be a real risk. Masood had a previous convictions for violence but also a history of being racially abused. He was known to have abused steroids and used cocaine. None of this behaviour could predict such an at-

tack.

This sort of attack is very different to those that happened when Al Qaeda were the dominant force in international jihadism. Those earlier attacks required lengthy planning, used carefully curated video statements and more infrequent.

Given the scaled-down nature of the current attacks, it is surprising that more of them don’t happen. Nonetheless they are happening more frequently, and then wall-to-wall media coverage makes them seem more terrifying still.

RANDOM

These attacks are increasingly random.

They contrast strongly with those carried out by the IRA in Britain. They often killed civilians, but generally aimed at state or business targets, had a stated political aim, could be ended by political changes. The much more random and chaotic violence of jihadists, yet the ability of these groups to find sympathisers without ever having talked to them, is a distinctly modern development.

The attack by Masood parallels that of James Harris Jackson who stabbed to death Timothy Caughman, seemingly just because he was black. Jackson had travelled to New York because it was the “media capital of the world” and he wanted to make a statement that “I hate blacks”. The police are uncertain whether Jackson had any formal links to hate groups.

As with many Islamist killings,

Masood’s actions blur the line between ideological violence and psychotic rage. Some will view his action as proof of severe mental health issues, others as a clear terrorist attack.

In the *Guardian* Kenan Malik argues that: “The social and moral boundaries that act as firewalls against such behaviour have weakened. Western societies have become socially atomised. The influence of institutions that once helped socialise individuals and inculcate them with a sense of obligation to others, from the church to trade unions, has declined. So has that of progressive movements that gave social grievance a political form.”

The government will not attempt to address some of the root causes of such violence. Their first action has been to claim the need for further powers to snoop into our private lives. This is doomed to failure.

The government’s obsession of getting a “master key” to break through social media encryption is based on a big misunderstanding—encryption only exists if such a thing does not exist! Their view that the “innocent have nothing to hide” is worrying. The right to a private life, space to think, breath and communicate with others, away from any dominating authority, is fundamental.

But beyond that no one should have faith in the secret state can keep us safe or is even able to judge what is or is not appropriate about digital communication.

Stop giving money to private health providers!

By Charlotte Zalens

The crisis in the NHS cannot be solved by increasing funding alone. Some funding needs to be reallocated.

According to research by the Health Foundation, half of last year’s nearly £2 billion government cash injection for the NHS was given to private providers. That practice has to end!

The Health Foundation’s report also says £1 out of every £8 of the budgets allocated by local commissioners in England is now spent on care provided by private providers.

Health campaigners say this is the result of a toxic mix of long-term chronic underfunding to the NHS resulting in the NHS not being able to handle increased de-

mand, and legislation designed to enforce competition in the “health market”.

This situation will only get worse, points out Anita Charlesworth, director of research and economics at the Health Foundation: “NHS hospitals were left squeezed by sharply rising drug and staff costs with little additional funding. The result was big deficits that had to be covered by raids on investment budgets.” Investment budgets would usually enable the NHS to cope with increasing demand, work on prevention, or invest in new technologies.

It is good that Labour’s Shadow Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth has promised to reverse “the Tory privatisation agenda.”

Young people and mental health — a political issue!

By Joe Booth

Statistics show that help for young people with mental health issues is dramatically decreasing.

A 2016 investigation by the *Guardian* and 38 Degrees showed that trusts around England were “drawing up plans for hospital closures and cutbacks” in an attempt to avoid a £20 billion shortfall by 2020. This means that young people aren’t getting the help they need or deserve.

Some 75% of mental health issues begin before the age of 18. The charity, MQ, estimates that on average, there are three children in every classroom with a diagnosable mental illness or unrecognised mental health problems.

In January, a 16-year-old friend of my family committed suicide: she was severely depressed, and the problems in the world were hard for her to cope with. She was not alone. 26% of young people in the United Kingdom experience suicidal thoughts.

Likewise, the 44% of 16-24-year-old LGBT+ people who are frequently bullied are at a higher risk of suicide, self-mutilation and/or depression.

Looked-after children and care leavers are between four and five times more likely to attempt suicide in adulthood. 18.9% of looked-after children below the age of five (19.3% of boys and 17.4% of girls) showed signs of behavioural or emotional problems.

These statistics emphasise that there are too many young people — and adults — who kill themselves, harm themselves or suffer from depression because of living under an oppressive and alienating

society. Depression and self-hatred may come from loneliness or pessimism, or from alienation and oppression. We need improvements in facilities to help young people.

YoungMinds is the UK’s leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. According to them, more than 850,000 children and young people in the UK have been diagnosed with a mental health condition.

YoungMinds do the best they can as the leading organisation committed to philanthropically helping people, but they are limited by being a charity. Young people may receive help from this charity, or from CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), but we also need to discuss and address why young people are suffering, and the ultimate solution to it.

I want to respond to the death of my family friend by learning from her and campaigning for the politics that will prevent it happening again. We need not just philanthropy but political demands and a significant change.

I think we need help groups or services to become politically radical and open to the prevention of young people harming themselves or become depressed.

We need a fund or organisation that is socialistic, with an overall objective to understand why young people with mental health issues, and neurodivergent young people, commit suicide, harm themselves and/or suffer from depression, and to consider the solution to it.

We need solidarity against the causes of mental ill-health and low self-esteem; we need activism and revolutionary socialist politics.

The story of Martin McGuinness

REASON IN REVOLT

By Sean Matgamna

The young Martin McGuinness was a typical Catholic boy who grew up in the six north-east counties of Ireland, in the Protestant-sectarian backyard of the British state, the “Protestant sub-state for a Protestant people”.

The sub-state had a one-in-three Catholic minority. In McGuinness’s Derry, two miles from the border with the 26 Counties, it was the other way round: there was a Catholic majority of two-to-one. In the Protestant state for a Protestant people, inconveniences like that could be dealt with by a little judicious gerrymandering of election boundaries. The Protestant one-third could have a two-thirds majority on the city council, and they did.

Young Martin McGuinness learned as he grew that, to the people who ran the world in which they lived, he and his were inferior beings: taigs, micks, Fenian bastards. Jobs were scarce in an economy which, even as the rest of the UK economy boomed, was run down and decrepit. And who got most of the jobs, and the best jobs? Those who weren’t taigs, micks, and Fenian bastards.

Houses were scarce, and council houses brought local government votes. So who got the council houses? Not the taigs, micks, and Fenian bastards. A single Protestant woman could get a house ahead of big Catholic families living in slums.

When young Martin McGuinness, like other boys, played cowboys and Indians, he could look up at the great walls of the perfectly preserved 17th century Protestant fortress city, and imagine himself as an Amerindian playing among the teepees outside the walls of the cavalry fort.

In times of “emergency” — and there were a lot of those — he would feel alarm if he encountered rifle-carrying patrols of the mobilised sectarian bully-boys of the Special Constabulary — the “B-men”, the B Special constables.

But there were good things too. The British welfare state operated in Northern Ireland, and the Catholics like everyone else had social security benefits for the unemployed, better health care, better schools, and far better chances of going to university, than peo-

ple like them in the 26 Counties. Vastly better.

But second-class citizens they were. People kept down by the ever-present threat of force, and sometimes by the use of it.

His people began to grow confident, and organised to win equal rights — as they sloganised it: “one man, one vote; one man, one house; one man, one job”. When Martin McGuinness was still in his teens, marches and agitation for civil rights gripped the Catholics of Derry. Fighting between the police and Derry’s Catholic young people became a fact of everyday life.

On 13 August 1969, a provocative march by Orange sectarians on the walls of the old fortress city — an annual event — sparked clashes with resentful Catholic youths. The Orange police, in a pogrom mood, tried to invade the Catholic Bogside, the slum outside the city walls.

They had done that before. A few months earlier they had beaten an old man to death there. The people put up barricades to stop them, and fought them off for three days. Fighting spread to Belfast.

ARMY

The British Labour government put the army on the streets to stop what was the beginning of a civil war, and quickly forced through every reform the civil rights movement had asked for.

For the Catholic youth roused up, McGuinness one of them, that was now anti-climactic. The Republican movement split at the end of 1969. The left wing were Stalinists. The right wing were avid for an anti-British military campaign like the one they had been forced to abandon, defeated, in 1962. They reorganised, recruited, and trained the anti-imperialist, anti-Crown youngsters.

The political consciousness of those young people had been shaped by nationalist songs, stories, histories, myths, martyred heroes. It was a minority culture, easy for the Republicans to build on.

In March 1971 the Provisional IRA started shooting British soldiers. It was the start of a war that would go on for 23 years. The still very young McGuinness emerged as a leader in the armed conflict.

Nothing better was on offer to him and many like him. Politics? The gun and the bomb. The enemy? The Crown forces and



their Irish “collaborators”.

McGuinness had talent and he had guts. What he didn’t have was the glimmer of a world outlook besides the Republican one.

Within a year, by March 1972, the Republicans had won all they would win in the long war. The Protestant-sectarian home-rule government was abolished, and Britain insisted that from now on, any government must be a coalition in which Catholics and Protestants would share power.

The Protestants had before the First World War won a veto over a united Ireland; now the Republicans won for the Catholics a veto over a Protestant-only government in the Protestant state for a Protestant people.

That was institutionalised in the Sunningdale Agreement of November 1973. It stipulated compulsory power-sharing, in a more flexible version of the Good Friday Agreement accepted by the Provisionals a quarter of a century later, in 1998.

The Protestants rejected Sunningdale. A Protestant general strike destroyed the power-sharing government in May 1974. It was made very plain that the block on a united Ireland was a section of the Irish people, not Britain.

After a year’s ceasefire in 1975-6, the Pro-

visionals resumed war. With what objective? A united Ireland. How would their war achieve that? Could they hope to persuade the Protestants to agree to a united Ireland by shooting and bombing them?

No, but they could, they thought, compel Britain to become “persuaders” of the Protestants. Britain had not been able to “persuade” enough of the Protestants to agree even to share power with the Catholics within the Six Counties. In fact, by “persuade” the Provisionals meant “coerce”, in every way open to the British government, including financial pressure.

These Republicans fought a war, in which a big bulk of the casualties were Northern Ireland Protestant-Unionists, to compel Britain to force the Northern Ireland Protestants into a united Ireland. Put plainly, it was a mad undertaking. Yet that is what they were trying to do.

DEFEAT

McGuinness and his comrades slowly, all too slowly, realised that their war was unwinnable, and accepted defeat.

They turned to politics. And Martin McGuinness, the young Derry Republican of 1971 and after, kissed the Queen’s hand, became co-equal Deputy First Minister in the Northern Ireland government. The Queen sent condolences to his widow.

Thousands on both sides were killed and maimed in a war that after 1972-3 achieved nothing and could achieve nothing greater than to raise Sinn Féin, the militarists of yesterday, the one-time devotees of physical force on principle, to its present eminence in bourgeois Irish politics.

They fought for a British solution — Britain to “persuade” the Protestant Unionists. They got a British solution, but not the one they wanted. And it was McGuinness and his comrades who were “persuaded”.

The pattern of Irish politics, again and again — Cumann na nGaedheal, Fine Gael, Fianna Fail, Clann na Poblachta, the Workers’ Party — is one of physical-force revolutionaries becoming bourgeois politicians as anything but revolutionaries.

The tragedy of McGuinness and others in his generation is that they repeated that pattern, that they could not break out of it. McGuinness’s surviving comrades are still caught in the pattern.

Lament for David O’Connell

“Ireland without her people means nothing to me” — James Connolly

“They think they have pacified Ireland... They think that they have foreseen everything, think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! they have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland un-free shall never be at peace” — Patrick Pearse

Six hundred years of strife behind,
Of conflict, slaughter, sept and sect;
And Tone* said, we needs must grow blind
To creed and race, for self-respect.
But History spawns on rancid need
Malign sly ghosts who mesmerise
With hate and hope; who plead, mislead,
And, pleading, seed in subtle lies:
Two peoples yet, not citizens, peers,
Still Talbot’s children, William’s heirs*.

Saviours in-bred on poisoned soil,
Souls shaped to a Fenian shout,
Minds rough-hewn in turmoil, toil,
Meeting, ambush, camp, redoubt,
And civil, fratricidal war,
Unleashed in Tone’s and Emmett’s name,
By ardour tender as a roar,
And love impervious to blame:
The wandered blind, by Murder led,
Calling Tone — Tyrconnell came instead!
To finish what Wolfe Tone began,
They masked the face in England’s blame
Of Irish folk, and aimed the gun:
Republican name, communal game!
Old watchwords changed, old hopes recast,
“Unity” sunk to sect war cry,
The Rights of Man defined by blast
Of bomb and gun — sectarian lie!
Two peoples fight to hold, regain,
Two songs with one hate-loud refrain.

They’d knock down walls, let in the light;
A mystic’s war would malice drain,
Fresh blood and magic would unite
Hate-scarred tribes mad with disdain!
The fools, the fools! Demented choices:
Known history disowned, misread —
Talk to yourself in pantomime voices
And think to hear the Fenian dead!
Can Erin unite, blood-soldered stones,
Despite her peoples, trampling their bones?

* Richard Talbot, Duke of Tyrconnell, was the Catholic leader in the wars at the end of the 17th century, William of Orange the Protestant king, victor of the decisive battles at the Boyne and Aughrim. Both strove for sectional victory. Wolfe Tone, the founder of Irish republicanism tried to break with that sectional past, proclaiming the goal of uniting the people of Ireland, “Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter”.

Fight Brexit all the way

By Vicki Morris

On 29 March, Theresa May will trigger Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union, starting the clock on the UK leaving the EU. Unless the UK and all the EU states agree to a special extension on negotiations, the UK will quit the EU in or before March 2019.

Already, the Brexit vote is leading to stresses on migrant workers, and an increase in nationalism and xenophobia in the UK; and strengthens the worst, most right-wing elements in the ruling class and their political party, the Tories. The labour movement needs to carve out a pro-worker, pro-migrant vision of the future, with ties as close to the EU as possible, and fight to protect workers' rights.

We should champion the right to remain, and to move across borders — both that of other EU nationals living in the UK or wanting to move here, and of UK nationals living, or wanting to live, in the EU

The UK is one of the biggest economies in the world, the second largest in the EU, and will remain so after Brexit. But with Brexit its competitive edge against its European neighbours — which will become more sharply its economic rivals — will be maintained or increased on the backs of workers. Migrant workers will be more ruthlessly exploited

than some EU migrant workers are at present.

Loss of EU migrant workers who staff public services, and pay a lot of taxes into the state budget, will increase pressure for social cuts.

A whole wing of the Tories want a Britain which competes with Europe as an offshore production base for global capital offering lower social overheads, fewer workers' rights, less regulation of capital, to offset the costs of tariffs and border paperwork.

The claims by Theresa May and other Tories that "no deal is better than a bad deal" signals their openness to that option.

ALTERNATIVE

Our alternative to Brexit is to fight for workers' rights and solidarity across Europe and the world! For freedom of movement! Against nationalism everywhere!

Lexit — an exit from the EU shaped by the left, to the benefit of workers — was advocated last year by influential forces on the left, such as the *Morning Star* and the SWP. It was always an illusion.

It is obvious now that it was an illusion. No-one on the left now really argues that pressure on the Tories can shape Brexit to be positively advantageous to workers. The only way Brexit damage can be minimised is



by minimising Brexit, by keeping the borders between Britain and the EU low.

The Labour leadership has wavered and wriggled on Brexit. In the June 2016 referendum Jeremy Corbyn rightly argued for "Remain", and rightly insisted that Labour should campaign independently from pro-"Remain" Tories.

However, he then said that the referendum result must be accepted as the last word. Until November 2016 he continued to defend free movement across European borders, and said that Labour would vote against Article 50 unless the Tories committed to staying in the Single Market.

Then he bowed to Labour's right wing. When Theresa May brought Article 50 to parliament in February, making clear that she wanted a "hard Brexit" taking Britain out of the Single Market and (for most purposes) the broader Customs Union, and refused accountability to parliament on the negotiations that would ensue, Labour imposed a three-line whip on MPs to vote with the Tories. 47 of Labour's MPs defied the whip and voted against.

HEADLINES

After the Article 50 trigger vote in Parliament, the headlines could have read that Labour opposed Brexit, a Brexit in which the Tories' policies and approach will dominate. Instead, Labour's amendments were a damp squib that will scarcely be noticed by most voters, including Labour supporters.

Labour Party membership, which soared with Jeremy Corbyn's two leadership victories, has now dropped from about 543,000 to about 483,000, while Lib-Dem membership has doubled (to about 80,000).

Shadow EU-exit minister Keir Starmer now says that Labour will refuse to back an exit deal unless it meets six tests.

Trouble is, Labour has already voted to authorise the Tories to negotiate without provision for checks or vetoes by parliament, and on the final deal to offer only an "our way or no way" vote, either the Tories' formula or a crash exit with no deal. When the SNP put an amendment calling off Brexit if parliament fails to approve the exit deal, Labour MPs were whipped to oppose it. (19 Labour MPs

defied the whip and voted for the amendment).

The six tests are:

1. Does it ensure a strong and collaborative future relationship with the EU?
2. Does it deliver the "exact same benefits" as we currently have as members of the Single Market and Customs Union?
3. Does it ensure the fair management of migration in the interests of the economy and communities?
4. Does it defend rights and protections and prevent a race to the bottom?
5. Does it protect national security and our capacity to tackle cross-border crime?
6. Does it deliver for all regions and nations of the UK?

The tests say nothing about the "management of migration" being fair to migrants and their families.

On a "Question Time" TV special on 27 March, Starmer claimed that Labour had won some "boring and process-y" concessions from the Government during debate on the Withdrawal bill.

Unfortunately, nothing boring and process-y is going to stop Brexit or the worst effects of Brexit.

There have been a number of large demonstrations opposing Brexit since the referendum vote. The recent Unite for Europe march on 25 March drew tens of thousands. Labour has not been involved in organising these, or intervened into them in any concerted way. The Lib Dems have an undeserved prominence among those campaigning around Brexit. Labour should give a bold lead against re-raising borders.

Since the referendum, the stock market has fared relatively well, and some Brexiters argue that this proves that re-raised borders are no problem economically.

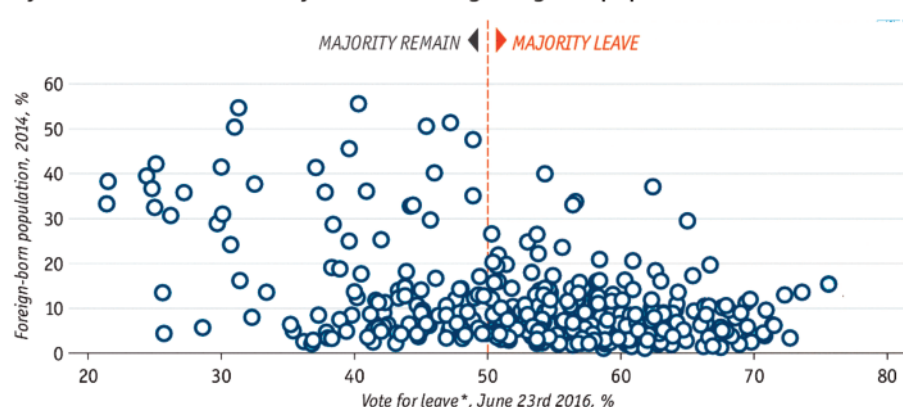
However, the pound has weakened by 15% relative to the dollar and 12% to the euro. This makes imports more expensive, and is one of the factors leading to increasing prices in the shops.

Most economists reckon that Brexit will damage economic growth, and an ultra-hard Brexit even more so.

Solidarity 435 will be out on 12 April.

Who voted leave?

By far most local authority areas with high migrant populations voted Remain



In the referendum on 23 June 2016 51.9% of voters voted to leave the EU; national turnout was 72%.

There were significant differences between the UK's constituent parts.

Opposition to Brexit in Scotland has given the Scottish National Party a lever to seek a new independence referendum. The prospect of a new "hard" border with the Republic of Ireland complicates the political situation in Northern Ireland.

	Remain	Leave %
England:	46.7	53.3
N. Ireland:	55.8	44.2
Scotland:	62.0	38.0
Wales:	47.5	52.5
London:	59.9	40.1

Source: YouGov

Age difference: younger people, those whose future will most be shaped by Brexit, opposed it.

	Remain	Leave %
18-24:	75	25
25-49:	56	44
50-64:	44	56
65+:	39	61

Source: YouGov

Most Labour voters backed remain: the pro-leave minority among Labour voters was not much higher than among SNP or Lib-Dem voters

	Remain	Leave %
Conservative:	42	58
Labour:	63	37
Lib Dems:	70	30
UKIP:	4	96
Green:	75	25
SNP:	64	36

Source: Lord Ashcroft Polls

Help us raise £20,000 to improve our website



We need to build a left that is open to debate and is serious about self-education.

Our website, including its extensive archive could help build a different kind of socialist culture — one where discussion and self-education are cherished.

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 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.

In the last week *Solidarity* sellers have increased standing orders, bringing in £235.

- If you would like to donate by paypal go to www.workersliberty.org/donate
- Or set up an internet bank transfer to "AWL", account 20047674 at Unity Trust Bank, Birmingham, 60-83-01 (please email awl@workersliberty.org to notify us of the payment and what it's for); 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 www.workersliberty.org

Marxism and autism

By Janine Booth

Can Marxism can help us to understand autistic experience in modern capitalism? How might Marxism inform our struggles for equality and liberation?

There are different approaches to understanding autism. Perhaps the dominant approach is a medical one: seeing autism as a disease or tragedy, and autistic people as being broken and needing fixing.

Over recent years, a more progressive approach has developed. It stresses acceptance of autistic people rather than simply "awareness", and demands rights, equality and support rather than abusive "treatments". This approach is based on the concept of neurodiversity: the recognition that the human species is neurologically diverse; that different people have different brain wiring.

But this more progressive approach, while welcome, does not necessarily locate autism and neurodiversity within the social, economic and political structures of society.

It is important to do this — firstly, because all disability exists in a social context; and secondly, because autism is largely an issue of how people interact socially. We are all expected to follow social rules, but who makes those social rules, and how?

Definitions: Autism and Marxism

Autism is an atypical neurology, an unusual brain wiring. Perhaps if the majority of the population is Windows, autistic people are Mac. This atypical neurology leads to atypical processing, cognitive functioning and communication, differences in social interaction and sensitivity to sensory inputs such as sound or light.

Marxism is scientific socialism. It studies socialism rather than just wishing for it, providing a critique of capitalism and advocating the self-emancipation of the working-class, the basic exploited class under capitalism. Marx described the working class as having "radical chains", meaning the potential and power to liberate not just itself but other oppressed people too. Marxism sees change — and social liberation — coming through class struggle, with the ultimate aim of abolishing the division of society into classes.

The impact of capitalism on autistic lives

When capitalism became the established system, it brought development, knowledge, understanding, scientific enquiry, and the potential of providing more support for people. It accelerated production. It was a big improvement on what came before it.

However, it also increased — and still increases — social pressure. It brings people together in a much more intense way, and puts a premium on how "good" you are socially. Capitalism also increases light, noise and other sensory stimulation.

For autistic people, modern capitalism is both developed and distressing. It brings huge advantages, great potential, but it also brings great distress. When we talk about autistic people being disabled, we mean that capitalism disables autistic people.

Explaining increasing diagnoses

There has been a significant increase in autism diagnosis over recent years. Why?

Some who take a medical model approach explain it as an epidemic. A graphic circulated in the US declares: 10 years ago, 1 in 1000; 5 years ago, 1 in 500; today 1 in 88; and asks "scared yet?" I am more scared of the thinking behind that graphic than I am of the increasing recognition of the prevalence of autism.

The more progressive and accurate explanation is that rather than the prevalence of autism increasing, it is our recognition of it that is growing: society has an increased awareness of autism; there is a greater availability of diagnosis; and the criteria for diagnosing autism have been steadily widened over the years.

We can go further than this. The increasing social pressure that capitalism places on people, the increasing sensory overload that it throws at us, is causing more and more distress, so more and more autistic people are seeking diagnosis in order to access help. Society and its autistic members are coming into conflict with each other more and more. A lot of autistic people get their autism diagnosis having initially sought help for a mental health problem such as anxiety or depression.

Austerity and class differences in autistic experience

Since the economic crisis started in 2008, governments have pursued austerity policies, making working-class people pay for an economic crisis that we did not create. Those policies have deepened poverty and taken away access to support.

In that situation, and in difficult situations generally, autistic people from wealthier families can often cope better. This is not to say that life is easy if you are from a wealthy

background, but at least there is more access to resources and care.

Public spending cuts are directly affecting autistic people. Services have had their funding cut or have closed, including family support services, employment support services, day centres and other services. Austerity also causes social distress and insecurity, so it increases autistic people's need for support with one hand, and takes away that support with the other.

Charity?

Often you are expected to turn to charities when there is no public support available. But although some autism charities do provide some useful services, they play a negative role too.

They reinforce the view of autistic people as objects of pity, often using patronising imagery to attract donations. They are rarely led by autistic people, and they don't always stand on the same side as those of us fighting for liberation.

The misnamed US charity Autism Speaks promotes horrendous negative views of autism as a "tragedy", and is regularly picketed by autistic activists. In the UK, the National Autistic Society is not nearly as bad, but it has an unacceptably wide pay gap between its senior managers and its support workers, and in 2013/14 it provoked teaching unions to strike by expecting teachers in its schools to work for lower pay than nationally-agreed rates for teachers in mainstream state schools.

Autism, neurodiversity, and production

In any Marxist analysis, it is important to look at the exploitation of labour.

Autistic people are disadvantaged in employment. These statistics are for the UK, but the situation is similar elsewhere:

- 43% of autistic adults have left or lost a job because of their condition
- 41% of autistic adults over 55 have spent over 10 years without a paid job
- 37% of autistic adults have never been in paid employment after the age of 16
- 15% of autistic adults are in full-time employment

Under the pretext of the economic crisis, employers have waged an offensive, with high-pressure management techniques and insecure employment. The rise of short-term contracts, unpredictable working hours and zero-hours contracts has a detrimental effect on all workers — but if you have an autistic mindset, and rely on predictability and routine, the impact can be even worse.

We have also seen a shift towards "customer service", towards "soft" or "social" skills being valued above technical skills, even in quite technical industries such as public transport. We have seen public services commodified, with service users now seen as "customers". This can cause problems for people whose focus is their technical ability at the job rather than on narrowly-defined social skills.

But alongside that, we have seen employers making more effort to recruit and accommodate autistic workers. While that is



Janine's book is available to order on her website www.janinebooth.com



Janine with Labour Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell at the launch of her book

welcome, sometimes those employers let slip that one of their reasons is that they see the potential to exploit autistic people. They talk about how much more productive certain autistic people may be, and how they are less likely to be distracted by social gossip. They may well be “cherry-picking” those autistic workers with the highest level of skill and the lowest level of support need. Such employers are commodifying autistic people’s talents rather than valuing them.

Workers’ control

Work under capitalism is highly regimented, in its pace, its methods, its processes and its targets. Work provides very little or no scope or flexibility for people who think differently and who want to do things in a different way.

Crucial to winning a better future for autistic people, particularly in the area of work, is to change work not workers. There is plenty of advice available to autistic people on how to get or keep a job, but most of it is based around how to change ourselves to impress the employer and to “fit in” at work – basically, how to act like you are not autistic. Far

better than that would be for work itself to change, with the work environment, the pace and methods of work made more accessible to people whatever their brain wiring.

Central to that is the idea of workers’ control: both individually and collectively, workers having control over, for example, the sensory environment in the workplace and how the job is done.

From the collective to the individual

Over the last few decades, in the shadow of labour movement defeats, the political discourse has shifted focus from the collective to the individual. Rather than bringing recognition of individual rights and differences, though, it has undermined the prospects of collective progress.

We also have an emphasis on “success” that sets people up to fail. Because if society sets standard of success that you don’t meet then the implication is that you have fallen short, that it is somehow your fault.

One example is the legal notion of “reasonable adjustments”, changes that must be made to enable an autistic or otherwise disabled person to participate equally. It was a

step forward that this was incorporated into disability discrimination legislation. However, you only get these adjustments as an individual, they are only made when you identify yourself and your disability, and you have to prove that you are somehow flawed to get the adjustments you need. It would be far better for workplaces, services and society to change generally, to become more accessible and more autism-friendly, to address autistic disadvantage in a collective rather than just an individual way.

The political economy of autism

Karl Marx wrote about “the political economy of the working class”, meaning the working class fighting for laws and policies that benefit us even if that is costly to capitalism.

If we wrote a list of the changes we want in order to achieve equality for autistic people, then the bill for capitalism might be quite hefty. But that’s just tough — we want those changes, those measures to alleviate distress, to stop discrimination and exclusion. We want to advance equality, regardless of the cost to the existing capitalism system.

A group of autistic and otherwise neurodivergent activists are currently working with Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell to draft an autism/neurodiversity manifesto — a list of policies for Labour to deliver significant progress towards equality.

Labour movement demands will only win for autistic people if they reflect the neurodiversity of the working class — if, instead of assuming typical methods of thinking, they recognise that just as the working class is ethnically diverse, gender diverse, sexually and otherwise diverse, it is also neurologically diverse.

This opens up the discussion of what sort of society we are fighting for. What will socialism look like? How will it acknowledge and accept neurological diversity in a way that capitalism does not?

Transforming the labour movement

Autistic people fighting oppression want to be part of a united labour movement and left. We can facilitate that by auditing the failures of the left and the Labour Party, and by recognising our agency for change, our historical consciousness. We are not just analysing or commenting on society, we are trying to change it.

Our own movement will only be effective on this issue if it is habitable and accessible to autistic people. Trade unions, Labour Party, socialist groups — think about your

events, your activities, your publications, your members’ behaviour: would an autistic person find them welcoming or distressing? What changes can you make? What are you missing out on while you remain inhospitable?

Trade unions have recently increased work on this issue, but there is still a long way to go.

Taking this discussion forward

We might look in more detail at whether these and other theoretical approaches can be useful in understanding autistic experience under capitalism:

Historical materialism: Karl Marx’s method of understanding society by studying how it has produced and reproduced the material requirements of life through history, rather than just taking a snapshot of society as it currently stands.

Commodity fetishism: Marx wrote about the way in which under capitalism, the social relationships involved in production are presented as economic relations; human factors become commodities.

Alienation: Marx also wrote about how under capitalism, the products of your labour are taken from you, leading to social alienation from various aspects of our humanity.

Anomie and forced division of labour: Sociologist Émile Durkheim developed theories of breakdown of social norms and of how the profit motive drives people into unsuitable work.

Cultural hegemony: Marxist Antonio Gramsci wrote about the way in which a society which is, or has the potential to be, culturally diverse, comes to be dominated by the ideas and culture of the ruling class to the exclusion of those that do not fit in with its norms.

Stigma: Sociologist Erving Goffman wrote about the idea of stigma as being socially discrediting, and how society disadvantages minorities who it sees as deviant.

Social model of disability: For hundreds of years, disability was seen as something wrong with the individual, that needed fixing, shutting away or pitying. In the 1970s, the radical disabled people’s movement developed a new approach, distinguishing impairment from disability and arguing that society disables people with impairments by setting up barriers to equal and independent participation.

This is only the start of a discussion about Marxism and autism. There is a lot more work to be done, more avenues of understanding to explore.

Why is the left in disarray?

With the Corbyn surge, the Sanders movement, and more, there is new life on the left. But the left’s positive political ideas, slogans, arguments are still paler than the right’s.

After decades of Stalinist domination and infection, and then of retreats, the left needs rigorous debate to renew itself. It argues through two issues in particular: the endorsement by much of the left of political Islam as a progressive “anti-imperialism”; and the spread within the left of an “absolute anti-Zionism”, unwittingly informed by decades of Stalinist “anti-Zionist” campaigning after about 1949, which becomes effectively antisemitic.

The book concludes by criticising also the mechanical inverse on the left of the addled “anti-war” and “anti-imperialist” negativists: those who respond by going for an idealised bourgeois democracy.

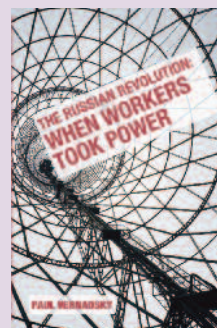


The Russian Revolution: when workers dared to fight

The 1917 Russian revolution was the greatest event in political history so far — the first time working-class people took political power and held it for several years. Yet the real history is buried under myths.

Since the 1960s, and especially since the opening of archives in Russia from the 1990s, much more is known about the Russian revolution.

This book aims to bring original Marxist perspectives together with a wide range of scholarship. It is written from what Lenin and Trotsky called the “third camp” independent working class socialist perspective.



Join the debate

Discussions about Marxism and Autism have taken place under the auspices of PARC: the Participatory Autism Research Centre — further discussions will be scheduled soon.

Two Workers’ Liberty branches are holding public meetings on Marxism and Autism this week, with discussions led by Janine Booth: Leeds: Monday 3 April, 6.30-8.30pm, Packhorse Pub, Woodhouse Lane, LS2 9DX. Newcastle: Wednesday 5 April, 7-9pm, Broadacre House, Market Street, NE1 6HQ

Online material and discussions on Janine’s website: www.janinebooth.com/issues-and-campaigns/marxism-and-autism

Both books coming soon. Available to pre-order now for £8 www.workersliberty.org/books

Stoking up on theory

ANOTHER DAY

The document we reprint here, Liam Daltun's account in a letter to Sean Matgamna of events in the Irish Communist Group, deals with an important episode in the history of the Irish left.

In the early 60s, Stalinist Beijing and Moscow had fallen out. Groups of pro-Chinese "Marxist-Leninists", as they called themselves, formed in and then outside some Communist Parties, criticising them (as they saw it) from the left.

The Orthodox Trotskyists approached them for discussion, common work, etc., but with little success.

In Irish emigre politics the Orthodox Trotskyists had a rare success — sort of. A small Irish emigre Trotskyist group, the Socialist Republican League, which published a paper in London, *Irish Worker*, edited by Liam Daltun, had collapsed. I don't know why exactly: the details are lost in the historical fog.

In September 1963 a small group of Maoists split from the Communist Party and set up a "Committee to Defeat Revisionism (Marxist-Leninist)".

The impulse for an Irish "Marxist" organisation to rival the Communist Party's front organisation among Irish workers in Britain, the Connolly Association, seems initially to have come from the CDRML. As it turned out, the CDRML would not be involved in the Irish Communist Group, which brought

together some Trotskyists, including Gery Lawless, a supporter of the Mandelites, and some Maoists who were persona non grata with the CDRML.

From late 1964 the ICG published a small duplicated weekly, *Irish Workers' News*, and from February 1965 a monthly journal, *An Solas*.

Liam Daltun, who had been involved in the preliminary moves to set up a group, was not involved when the ICG was set up.

EDITOR

Gery Lawless became editor of *An Solas*.

In fact the Maoists dominated both the organisation and its publications. For instance, Lawless docilely let them supply a quotation from Stalin in response to something someone had written in. The quotation was presented in good faith, as if Stalin wasn't... Stalin.

After some months, Daltun came back into activity, joined the ICG, and tried, at the regular Sunday night meetings of the group, to start a discussion about Stalinism in response to an article in *An Solas* by one of the Maoists. That brought the Maoist-Trotskyist house of cards tumbling down.

Lawless had been politically hegemonised by the Maoists for a year. Daltun's criticism of Stalinism triggered him to deliver an abusive tirade at the meeting. The Maoists removed him as editor of *An Solas*. The group began to divide, and would split in September 1965.

That is the background to Daltun's letter. The ICG Trotskyists enlisted the political help of Ted Grant. The Grant organisation, the Revolutionary Socialist League, was still the British section of the reunited Fourth International; it had been the British section of the Mandel-Pablo international, of which Lawless had also been a supporter, since late 1956 or early 1957. As a member of the RSL at the time, I joined the ICG to help the Trotskyists fight the Maoists.

The political battle in the ICG was a battle to win over or neutralise people in the middle between the hard Maoists and the Trotskyists. Most of them were on the Stalinist side in terms of their ideas, but didn't like the "hard" Maoists.

Liam Daltun produced the document which is published in the volume *The Unbroken Thread* of Ted Grant's writings, *Reply to Comrade Clifford*. Gery Lawless persuaded his comrades that the best tactic was to present the Daltun-Grant document as a reason why the Stalinists' political document should not be voted on, rather than as something that itself should be voted for.

It "worked": when the parting of the ways with the Maoists came, most of them stayed with the Trotskyists. The Irish Communist Group was renamed the Irish Workers' Group soon afterwards.

The hard-core Mao-Stalinists formed the Irish Communist Organisation, later the British and Irish Communist Organisation.

The IWG would pay a large price for fudging the political issues in the 1965 dispute.

The accumulated contradictions would shatter the IWG in 1967-8.

Liam Daltun killed himself on the evening of the day, 30 January 1972, that the British army killed 13 young people in Derry (a 14th would die later from his injuries).



Liam Daltun

258 Liverpool Road, Islington, London N1. 19 August 1965.

Dear Sean,

Sorry I didn't get around to writing to you earlier. I've been very busy since I last saw you. Today is the first day I've been able to take off work. Until next Sunday week at least I'll be devoting myself to reading and swotting up on the ideas, history, etc., of the Marxist and Stalinist movements. It's not a lot of time, but it's about all I'll be able to afford.

Philip Flynn, Gery Lawless, and myself met Ted Grant last Sunday and we had a discussion in the course of this week. Ted is preparing some material, quotations, etc., for a reply to the Theses on Trotskyism. We'll meet again next Saturday morning at WIR and have a discussion which we'll tape-record. (I bought two tapes for Arthur Deane's recorder today. They give over six hours playing time for £2-5-0). From this and other material we'll prepare our statement on Stalinism.

I went to Clapham Common today and brought a lot of stuff from G Healy's New Park Publications — mainly pamphlets. I also got *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain* by Felix Morrow. I gave Peter Taaffe the money for Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*. This is possibly the most important — have you got it? — since the Appendix to Volume 3 contains just about all that is required in the matter of quotations from the Bolshevik leaders on the central question in dispute.

I'm re-reading *The Revolution Betrayed* at the moment. It's seven years since I last read it, I'm ashamed to say: at that time I wouldn't have absorbed this kind of thing at all as well as I would now. Peter Taaffe's lent me *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, by Harold Isaacs. When I've got through all this stuff, plus anything else of relevance I can get

round to, I should feel a bit more stoked up on the theoretical ideas and history.

You'll probably be wondering what's happened since you returned to Manchester. Here's what. As I said, we met Ted Grant. With him and later among ourselves we worked out our attitude and tactics for the weekly meeting. We insisted on Gerry making a conscious effort to control himself, even if Brendan Clifford attempted to provoke him to raise a shout. ("Count ten before speaking, etc.")

On membership: Mick Murphy moved that Philip Flynn be removed from full membership and placed on the list of Associate Members (expulsion of a sort). Flynn defended himself in a very good speech and remained a full member by 8 votes to six with a few abstentions (against were P Murphy, Brendan and Angela Clifford, M Murphy, and two others).

AN SOLAS

Nan, my wife, who was formerly a full member but went on the associate list because she couldn't always attend meetings, applied for full membership again. This was opposed by the four above-named.

They said she would have to do a probationary six weeks again. Of course she's been doing a hell of a lot of typing, stencil-cutting, etc., all the time — for example, she did half of last month's *Solas*. She became a full member by ten votes to six.

There was consternation of a kind as you can imagine at this kind of thing. Then two probationary members' names were presented for acceptance — Pat Mallin and William Glenn. The latter is English, from the North of England, and a pro-Chinese Stalinist. He joined the ICG because it was "the only functioning Marxist-Leninist group in London". He was taken aback slightly to find

unanimity on his own and P Mallin's acceptance. (These were, I think, the only two unanimous votes of the night!)

P Mallin you'll meet later, no doubt. Politically he's a bit Stone Age. Became disenchanted with Stalinism when it rejected Joe [Stalin]; suspects any revolutionary organisation that doesn't pay its respects to his memory. To say he abhors Trotsky is to put it mildly.

I enclose a copy of a motion which was dealt with. (I don't think you've seen this?) We had decided to oppose it, seeing in it an attempt to take the coming discussion on vital questions out of the group — or to raise it over the headers of the members.

Apart from B Clifford's slighting references to "this little Trotsky matter which has to be cleared up", it is clear that he and his immediate supporters do not want Stalinism demolished in front of the members.

It will become all too clear to them (the members) that standing as he does (like Desmond Greaves) on Stalinist "theoretical" positions, it is only to be expected that he should say that socialism, socialist propaganda, etc., are inopportune at the present stage in Ireland (as Greaves does). Thus making himself an anti-revisionist revisionist!

Unfortunately, this motion was carried after a discussion that was interrupted by comings and going — these latter, delaying as they did the vote, and causing a new, somewhat neutral, member to withdraw an amendment (which would have been voted on first, and more than likely carried), helped get the motion through. I intend putting a motion next Sunday which will I hope get the support of the majority and destroy this manoeuvre.

By the way, I'd like to know what you think of the motion.

If you've got anything already on paper relevant to our reply to the Theses on Trot-

skyism, would you post it on to me? After Saturday's meeting with Ted we'll draft our reply, stencil it and run it off. All this will have to be done by next Wednesday at the latest, as the vote comes up on the fifth (5th) of September.

Just one more thing. Some people (including Pat Murphy, believe it or not) are asking where the Trotskyists get their funds from. ("The State Department spends a lot of money on anti-communist organisations", etc. etc.) This is now the level. Myths die slowly, eh?

Keep in touch, Sean. I hope this is legible, not too difficult to read.

Yours, Liam Daltun

Brendan Clifford: leader of the Maoist group in the ICG, and later of the ICO and BICO.

Arthur Deane: a leading figure, with his brother Jimmy Deane, in Ted Grant's group. Also, by this time, a trade union official.

Phil Flynn: ICG Trotskyist who later became a leading figure in the IRA and Sinn Féin, then president of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, then a prominent businessman in the 26 Counties.

Ted Grant: leading writer for the group which later became the Militant and then divided into the Socialist Party and Socialist Appeal, Grant himself going with Socialist Appeal.

Desmond Greaves: chief figure in the Connolly Association, the Communist Party's front organisation for activity among Irish people in Britain.

Gerry Healy: leader of what was in 1965 the most active Trotskyist group in Britain, the Socialist Labour League. The SLL, later called WRP, became increasingly sectarian and then, after 1976, a propagandist for Gaddafi's regime in Libya, from which it took money. It collapsed into fragments in 1985.

Gery Lawless: former Republican who became a prominent figure in Irish Trotskyist circles in London, working at different times with the SWP (then called IS) and the Mandeliste IMG. Later became a Labour councillor.

Peter Taaffe: then a young organiser for Ted Grant's group, today the leader of the Socialist Party.

Writing out anti-bourgeois art

Hugh Daniels reviews Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932, at the Royal Academy until 17 April

The first room in this exhibition is dedicated to images of leaders. While one side is dominated by pictures of Lenin, the other largely has images of Stalin.

This opening seems designed to confirm a pre-assumption which many visitors are likely to hold — that the art of the Soviet Union was designed to glorify its leaders and normalise their rule.

Yet, in the wake of Lenin's death in 1924, there was actually considerable debate among artists over how he should be commemorated and how his image should be used.

In 1928 the avant-garde, "left" artist Aleksandr Rodchenko vociferously argued that Lenin ought not to be deified or fetishised and that images should not be used to secure state-authorised truths, but to encourage new forms of critical vision. Rodchenko's own memorial to Lenin, exhibited at the Paris Expo in 1925, was a design for a workers' club, largely centred on spaces and resources for collective self-education. Rather than securing an icon of state power, Rodchenko remembered Lenin by giving workers tools with which they could ask questions and formulate their own ideas.

This curatorial "oversight" exemplifies an exhibition which continually glosses over the complexity of the artistic debates which raged after the revolution.

In a later room dedicated to modernism, a painting by Wassily Kandinsky is placed near another by Liubov Popova. Both are abstract and viewers are led to assume that these artists were working along similar lines. However, Popova was vehemently opposed to Kandinsky and the principles of his practice.

Like most of her constructivist peers, Popova conceived of her paintings not as autonomous art objects, but effectively as props to help both her and her audience to think through design principles. She believed that, by encouraging reflection on the formal and material qualities of different compositional methods, artists could contribute towards a renewal of engineering, architecture and design in the fledgling socialist nation. Like other constructivists, she saw this as a challenge to the power of bourgeois specialism.

Popova thought Kandinsky was a bourgeois artist, producing rarefied commodity objects and thus failing to acknowledge the questions posed to art by the revolution. What form should art practice take in a socialist society? How would it contribute towards the construction of a new world?

However we feel about the different approaches taken by these artists, it is vital to see that their work represents not a shared commitment to modernism, but a debate over the meaning and the fate of the revolution at a time when these questions had no definitive answer.

The RA exhibition makes the relatively unusual decision to combine modernism and socialist realism in one exhibition and to dedicate more space to the latter, whereas western art history has traditionally viewed the former as far more valuable.

It is certainly worth studying the cultural products of Stalinism, just as we study other aspects of its history. Here, however, it feels as if the originality of this gesture is taken as its own justification, especially since the exhibition ultimately does little to challenge re-



Liubov Popova, *Spatial Force Construction*, 1920-1

ceived understandings of its content beyond implying that socialist realist paintings are worth viewing.

The exhibition reproduces a thoroughly standard account of Russian art after 1917. This narrative is extremely convenient for western institutions, because it presents post-

revolutionary Russian modernism as a continuation of liberal, bourgeois, post-enlightenment culture, which was snuffed out in the dark days of barbarous state communism.

Exponents of this perspective commonly suggest that the avant-garde was purged because its complex abstract designs could not

easily be used for propaganda purposes. Communism is thus presented as a thoroughly instrumental worldview, which sees no value in culture except as a political tool.

It is no coincidence that this story was largely fashioned in the USA at a time when American institutions were presenting themselves as both inheritors and saviours of all that was good in European culture. All this exhibition really adds to the standard account is an acknowledgment that Stalinist artists could be skilled in their manipulations, producing a cult of the healthy proletarian body, which has a clear sensual and ideological appeal, rather than being an utterly transparent sham.

This view fails to acknowledge that the most radical avant-gardists made work in ways that were absolutely inimical not only to authoritarianism, but also to capitalism. The Russian avant-garde established artistic and political principles which presented a significant challenge to all forms of hierarchical rule.

In inviting both her fellow artists and her audience to critically examine the formal principles of design, Popova was not just offering new kinds of imagery, but radically questioning what Marx called the "relations of production", challenging the control that technocrats and specialists held over the production of social wealth.

A good art historian should aim to place us back in the moment of an artwork's construction, when the possibilities it conjured were still open. By closing down the debates of this period and failing to properly acknowledge those strands of Russian art which ran against the grain of both the bourgeois tradition and Stalinist oppression, this show instead presents us with a totally binary situation in which the only options are bourgeoisification or barbarism.

Challenging the "lost cause" myth

By Bas Hardy

The American Civil War casts a long shadow over America history. Anyone doubting its pernicious legacy need only note that all of the states of the former Confederacy except Virginia voted for Trump.

However it would be a mistake to believe that the white population of this region have always acted en bloc as rabid racists.

Recently released on DVD, *Free State of Jones*, starring Matthew McConaughey, tells us that even during the Civil War sections of the white population in the south sided with the Union.

The film deals with what was essentially an insurrection against the Confederacy in Jones County Mississippi of poor white farmers and runaway slaves led by Newton Knight. It flies in the face of the "lost cause" myth that the Civil War wasn't about slavery and that all southerners avidly supported secession.

The Mississippi Secession Convention made it quite clear in 1861 what it was fighting for. "Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery — the greatest material interest of the world." Conventions such as this were decidedly controlled by the slave owning class, although

75% of the white population didn't own any slaves. Pressure was put on the yeoman farmer class to join the Confederate army, but the "glory" of the cause was to wear thin as the war dragged on.

The Confederacy lost more soldiers through desertion than any other reason. One factor which accelerated this was the passing of what became known as the "Twenty Slave Law" which stated that men from estates with 20 or more slaves were excluded military service.

To poor white conscripts, it became clear that government represented slaveowner class. Amongst disaffected troops the phrase "rich man's war, poor man's fight" was popular.

Newton Knight was one of those who deserted in disgust at the Twenty Slave Law. He returned to his Mississippi neighbourhood to find it close to starvation as a consequence of the forced confiscation of their food and livestock by the Confederate government. Knight built a guerrilla army to combat this and developed common cause with runaway slaves hiding out in the local swampland. The insurrectionists fought several skirmishes with confederate troops and at one stage succeeded in capturing the county town of Ellisville, where they hoisted the Union flag.

Sad to say, this example of inter racial sol-

idarity did not last long once the war came to an end. Knight supported efforts to give civil rights to Afro-Americans and was appointed US Marshall to serve that end. However, the terrorist activities of the Ku Klux Klan overpowered such efforts and the Federal government gave up all pretence at supporting civil rights when its troops were withdrawn from the South in 1877 the better to meeting the rising threat of organised labour.

After a conflict between two different modes of production, in which Northern finance and industrial capital was triumphant, Washington was quite prepared to let white supremacists back into power in the South.

The Trump victory has given a new lease of life to white supremacists as they seek to suppress the voting rights of blacks in states like Texas and Alabama. In Tennessee and North Carolina moves are afoot to effectively re-segregate schools.

But socialists should not write off elements of the working class who were Trump voters. The campaign by Bernie Sanders supporters and others in southern states in the last few weeks is a welcome effort at raising awareness of the dangers American workers and their families face and the necessity of workers' unity.

Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Events

Saturday 1 April

Protest Against Housing Benefit Cuts For 18-21 Year Olds
12 noon, Parliament Square
bit.ly/2mi4R1Q

Leeds march for the NHS
11am, Victoria Gardens, Leeds LS1 2LH
bit.ly/2naCiNn

Another Europe is still possible
11am, Museum of Science and Industry, Liverpool Road, Manchester M3 4FP
bit.ly/2nihnze

Protest Britain First and the EDL in London
12 noon, Central London (exact location TBC)
bit.ly/2nciyNi

Have an event you want listing? Email: solidarity@workersliberty.org

Lambeth Russian Revolution reading group
12 noon, Perfect Blend cafe, Streatham Hill, London SW16 1EQ
bit.ly/2ne06EG

Tuesday 4 April
Protest the Property Developer Awards
6pm, Grosvenor House, 86-90 Park Lane, London W1K 7TN
bit.ly/2nvL6EQ

Friday 21 April
The Russian Revolution: when workers took power launch
7pm, The Calthorpe Arms 252 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8JR
bit.ly/RRlaunch

More online at www.workersliberty.org



Workers' Liberty



@workersliberty

Re-elect Len McCluskey!

By Ann Field

Ballot papers for Unite the Union's General Secretary and national Executive Council elections have been sent out to the union's 1.4 million members. Voting runs to 19 April, and the result will be out on 28 April.

West Midlands Unite full-timer Gerard Coyne is the right-wing challenger to Len McCluskey, the incumbent General Secretary seeking re-election for a third time. Ian Allinson is also standing as the candidate of rank-and-file democracy.

Coyne's campaign has made right-wing appeals to disengaged members of Unite. Apart from a promise to freeze union dues for two years, Coyne is standing for election on a largely policies-free platform. The vacuum is filled by mud-slinging, honing in on Unite putting over £400,000 into a share equity deal which enabled McCluskey to buy a £700,000 London flat. Coyne's conclusion: "The man who talks about greedy bosses is a greedy boss himself."

Another of Coyne's targets is the £75,000 which Unite lent to Jeremy Corbyn's 2016 Labour Party leadership campaign, and subsequently wrote off as a donation. Coyne's response: "I'll focus on saving the jobs of our members, not the job of the leader of the Labour Party." More recently, Coyne teamed up with Tom Watson to portray McCluskey as being in cahoots with Momentum in a plot to take over the Labour Party.

Coyne's strategy is to portray McCluskey as being engrossed in Labour Party politics and out of touch with ordinary Unite members: "Luxury flat loans and propping up the hard left: McCluskey is losing touch with Unite members."

Coyne is not interested in arguing with McCluskey and winning over his supporters. His target is

the most passive and inactive layers of Unite's membership; for example in late March Coyne was given space in the *Sun*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Express* to attack McCluskey and promote his own campaign.

On the other hand, McCluskey is relying first and foremost on the Unite apparatus and the United Left election machine, rather than on political argument and membership engagement, to turn out the vote for him.

Coyne's alliance with the right wing of the Labour Party has not been used by McCluskey as an opportunity to open up a political debate among the Unite membership about implementation of the union's political strategy.

Instead, McCluskey has argued that a political strategy plays no role in his campaign and that his only concern is members' bread-and-butter issues.

Coyne was (rightly) denounced for having written for the *Sun* — above all in a widely circulated article published in the *Morning Star*: "Collaborating with Murdoch is a taint that never fades".

So, writing for the *Sun* is an irremovable stain. But writing for a paper which acts as an apologist for Vladimir Putin, Bashar al-Assad, left anti-semitism, Brexit, attacks on freedom of movement of labour, and anti-Trotskyist witch-hunts in the Labour Party is an honour and a privilege.

Coyne doesn't care about the opprobrium heaped on him for having written for the *Sun*. Metaphorically and literally, it is the readership of the *Sun* which is his target audience.

Such examples sum up McCluskey's campaign: based on a bureaucratic machine, averse to a real debate among the membership, and "left wing" only insofar as the politics of the *Morning Star* can be deemed to represent what

counts as "left politics".

Despite lacking the vast resources which Coyne and McCluskey have at their disposal, Ian Allinson secured enough nominations to be included on the ballot papers which have just been sent out. This is no small achievement.

But while his campaign has challenged McCluskey from the left and raised basic ideas about what a lay-member-led union — in which full-timers are properly accountable to the membership — would look like, his campaign has not really taken off.

Allinson has not succeeded in defeating the argument that his campaign will achieve no more than taking votes away from McCluskey, thereby increasing Coyne's chances of winning. And Allinson himself accepts that a victory for Coyne would be a disaster.

Nor has he succeeded in defeating the argument that his boast of being more pro-Corbyn than McCluskey himself is incoherent — given that he is not a Labour Party member and refuses to even attempt to join the Labour Party. Allinson's support for Corbyn is not part of any strategy for transforming the Labour Party. And it defines what the Labour Party is in terms of who its leader is at any particular moment in time.

Allinson has made support for freedom of movement a major feature of his campaign, but he is reported to have tweeted in January (though the tweet is no longer visible): "I wasn't in Lexit campaign. Did vote out. Most arguments on both sides rotten. Key issues now workers' rights & movement."

This amounts to defending migrant rights which are under attack as a result of the course of action which he supported last June!

Unite members should vote for McCluskey. But that is no more than the first stage of the campaign needed.

Momentum conference found lacking

By Keith Road

About 500 people attended Momentum's "Building to win" event in Birmingham on 25 March.

As expected there was no chance to have a debate about the way forward for Momentum, just 15 sessions ranging from "Nice people finish first" to "Community organising at the grassroots" and "Momentum Trade Union Solidarity".

Empowerment was the theme, but this did not mean giving people any power, just making people feel good about campaigning or their own importance to the movement. Similarly a lot of the talk about how to engage and debate was aimed at lessening sharp debate, rounding the edges of any disagreements, achieving consensus and being dismissive of "Trots" and the "hard left." But it seemed

this was people had come for — a very apolitical day. On the other hand, the atmosphere was friendly and it was possible to have comradely conversation. Workers' Liberty activists were able to raise support for the Picturehouse strikes.

The overall attendance was younger than the Grassroots Momentum (held on 11 March) but not by a huge margin. The only publications on sale were *Morning Star*, (the paper controlled by the Communist Party which is in fact standing against Labour in the West Midlands Mayoral election), *Labour Briefing* (co-op), *Solidarity* and *The Clarion*.

While many local Momentum groups remain active, it appears that the coup has caused a number of groups to stop meeting. This seemed a particular problem in areas with lots of Momentum

members and a lack of an active Labour Party. The consequences in the May local elections or general election will not be good.

Unfortunately the blandness was echoed by John McDonnell MP who said; "In the recent by-elections it was striking to see members of Momentum and Progress putting their differences to one side and campaigning together for Labour.... Momentum's plans to support and build community institutions — social spaces, cinema clubs, food banks and sports centres — to encourage bottom-up cultural renewal in areas across the UK that have been left behind should be commended."

None of these things have been agreed by Momentum members. A democratic conference that allowed full discussion of the kind of work and role of Momentum is sorely needed.

TAs demonstrate in Durham

By Maria O'Toole and Paul Abbot

The Durham teaching assistants and Derby school support staff disputes have been the most significant in local government over the last year.

Similar pay cuts of approximately 25%; threats of, or in Derby's case the actual, imposition of new contracts; Labour councils doing the dirty work for the Tories and spearheading these acts; but on the workers side a strong determination to resist.

In Derby, the workers have struck for over 60 days. In Durham, fewer strike days but a concerted campaign that has drawn national attention.

The last Derby strike of 15 consecutive days was called off on 17 March whilst a ballot is being held on a new deal proposed after an dramatic backdown by the Labour council.

On Saturday 25 March the Durham TAs held an 800 strong march through Durham. The teaching assistants themselves were the most visible group there, alongside Unison. There was a small Labour mobilisation, with a number of Red Labour and Momentum banners. The Derby strikers also came in force.

At the rally in front of a number of Durham Miners' banners in Redhills Miners' Hall, Durham TA Megan Charlton made the most explicit allusions to the place of the



campaign within the wider labour movement, acknowledging the support of grassroots Labour members against the actions of the Labour-controlled council. However, the final speech by Gillian Iveson was a call to arms against the Labour Party, encouraging those in attendance to vote against Labour in the upcoming council elections.

Local and regional groups which have seized the opportunity to attack the Labour Party throughout the struggle showed up, including the Spennymoor and Derwentside Independents, and the North East Party.

Whilst anger at the Labour Party is fully understandable, the way to challenge capitulations from the elected representatives of our movement is not to turn to local populists, but to join the Labour Party and make these councillors

accountable for their actions. Both campaigns, in Derby and in Durham, are inspiring instances of working-class women taking their fates into their own hands, and organising for themselves.

The actions of both the Durham and Derby Councils have been shameful. Megan Charlton made reference in her speech to the battles looming against this year's massive cuts in education funding in schools. The actions of the school workers in both Durham and Derby show how they can and should be fought. But we need to fight with both hands.

We must oppose Labour councils undermining the unions' actions in defending their jobs and services, and use the whole weight of the labour movement against them and the Tories if they do.

Tube station staff balloted for strikes

By Ollie Moore

Tube union RMT is balloting station workers for strikes to win the reinstatement of Lee Cornell, a Customer Service Assistant at London Bridge station, who was sacked after being assaulted by a fare-evader.

Lee intervened with the fare-evader after he assaulted another member of staff, Kirsty Watts, who is pregnant. Lee was then punched in the head. Two of Lee's colleagues, Dave Sharp and Saeed Sioussi, attempted to defuse the situation and have been given final

written warnings.

An RMT activist told *Solidarity*: "What LU are effectively telling station staff is: if you see a colleague being assaulted, don't intervene. If you are being assaulted, don't make any attempt to defend yourself or restrain your attacker. If you do, you'll be sacked. It makes a total mockery of their claims to support staff who are assaulted; it's no coincidence that LU has recently recalled all the posters normally displayed at Tube stations which say they'll defend staff against assaults!"

"It seems to many of us that LU management, severely rattled by

the strike of station staff at the beginning of the year, are looking for ways to reassert their power and control, and pick a fight with the union. We'll do whatever it takes to get Lee's job back."

RMT has called a demonstration at London Bridge station at 8am on Monday 3 April. The union says it is prepared to escalate the dispute as far as necessary in order to win.

• For regular updates, see rmtlondoncalling.org.uk, and the rank-and-file bulletin *Tubeworker* at workersliberty.org/twblog.

Cinema strikes win celebrity support

By Gemma Short

Workers at three Picturehouse cinemas in London will strike on Friday 31 March in their ongoing fight for the living wage, sick pay, maternity/paternity pay, and union recognition.

Workers at another cinema, East Dulwich in south London, are currently being balloted to join the dispute. That ballot ends on 29 March after *Solidarity* goes to press. The

strikes in Picturehouse have spread fast since the dispute started, which is clearly rattling management.

A boycott of Picturehouse, and parent company Cineworld, has been called by the workers. A raft of celebrities from the TV and film world, including Sir Ian McKellen and Susan Sarandon, signed a letter on Monday 20 March to Moshe Greidinger, Cineworld's millionaire chief executive.

The letter said: "we find it disappointing that you fail to pay

your lowest paid staff the living wage. We therefore support your workers in their call for a public boycott of Picturehouse and Cineworld."

• The Picturehouse strikers have a new website with resources for supporting them: www.picturehouselivingwage.com/
• Lewisham Momentum will be leafletting Greenwich Picturehouse for the boycott on Friday 7 April: bit.ly/2nhXaKd

Not our deficit!

By a Lewisham teacher

National Union of Teachers (NUT) members at Forest Hill Boys' School in Lewisham will strike for two days (Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 March) in their escalating campaign against vicious cuts being imposed by management to fulfil conditions of repayment of a loan to Lewisham council.

The proposed restructure would mean a loss of 15 teaching jobs, an escalation in teachers' workload and a greatly diminished education for the students. Outrageously, it even means the cutting of the English as Another Language (EAL) provision for pupils in a south London school! Management claim this provision can be dealt with by the Modern Foreign Language Department. The French teacher cannot effectively support a student who only speaks Somali!

This week's industrial action follows from a day's strike, a



demonstration and two lobbies of the council and a public meeting, in just the last week! We are backed by an increasingly energetic parents' campaign and now the students are showing an interest in becoming involved as well. The first strike day, as the NUT group intended, closed the school with only Year 11 pupils in for their GCSE preparation. There are plans for further strikes and a Saturday demonstration after the Easter break.

The NUT balloted on no compulsory redundancies and no increase in workload. We have suggested various ways the council might find the money including renegotiating the PFI deal

But our bottom line remains: No cuts, it's not our deficit, open the books!

Cleaners no longer invisible

By Jamil Kowcun, LSE Justice for Cleaners

Cleaners at the London School of Economics struck on 15 and 16 March.

The 5am picket lines were brightened by 48 hours of painting, teach-ins, music, and protest. The high point was the occupation of the grandiose offices of the cleaners' managing company Noonan, based at Number One Kingsway.

The strike was the first of its kind in the 126 year history of the school. Banners were strung across both the steps of the Victorian Old Building and the postmodern glass protrusions of the Saw-Swee-Hock student building. Many of them were emblazoned with the numerous complaints against Noonan. Amongst them were calls to "reinstate Alba" about the arbitrary dismissal of a longstanding cleaner, and "LSE students condemn homophobia", referencing the School's and Noonan's institutional cover up in response to a sickening case of homophobic abuse reported earlier in the year.

DECADES

Yet the campaign for justice by the cleaning staff reaches back substantially further than either of these episodes.

Decades of marginalisation were epitomised in the completing of the outsourcing of the cleaners to Noonan. No article could convey succinctly the pervasiveness of the exploitative culture that underpins a highly racialised division of labour, the institutional cover-up of bullying, unmanageable shifts and a culture of fear, isolation and retaliation.

The central strike demand is parity of conditions (despite attempts

by the school and Noonan to deride the struggle as a misinformed mobilisation over wages). Not only are cleaners afforded a derisory number of paid sick days and offered an insulting amount of holiday, but they are expected to cover the shifts of sick employees and frequently provided with provisions that are totally insufficient to meet even the most minimal health and safety requirements. As for pension provision, there is simply nothing to write about.

The campaign represented more than a dispute over conditions, but sought to challenge the outlook of the university regarding the position of the cleaners, many of whom described themselves as feeling second class, or even akin to the dirt they clean whilst on campus. This perception is visibly affirmed by their notable absence from all university events, and their tucking away through unsociable shifts, tightly controlled rota and strictly specified space.

The strike was undoubtedly successful. Not only as an expression of strength. Not only in the attraction of new union members. Not only in its transformation of the attitudes of students and academic staff towards the cleaners. Not only even in its total transformation of a usually apathetic and dour campus into a beautiful expression of political energy. But, in concrete terms, in winning unprecedented talks with the school, negotiations which will figure cleaners at centre stage.

Regardless of the outcome of these talks, the LSE cleaners are certainly no longer invisible. La Lucha Continua!

• This article is an excerpt from a longer version available online: bit.ly/2mMgsYX



Solidarity

For a workers' government

No 434 29 March 2017 50p/£1

India: Modi's mask is lifted

By Charlotte Zalens

India's ruling party, the Hindu-nationalist BJP, has made significant gains in regional elections in every state other than Goa and won in Uttar Pradesh.

With 200 million people, Uttar Pradesh is India's most populous state.

In Uttar Pradesh the BJP did not identify ahead of the election who would lead the government there should they win and the campaign was led by Modi. After the election the BJP chose Yogi Adityanath as Chief Minister. Adityanath has been linked to a number of anti-Muslim incidents.

For example, in 2015 Adityanath appeared on a platform alongside a speaker who called for Hindu men to dig up the graves of Muslim women to rape them. The former leader of a militant Hindu youth organisation, he has made anti-Muslim statements himself.

EXTREMIST

Milan Vaishnav, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, says of Adityanath:

"He is an extremist in terms of his speeches, a very proud rabble-rouser, and somebody who doesn't have a claim to fame other than a dedication to a strident form of Hindu nationalism."

Since Modi became Prime Min-

ister in 2014 Uttar Pradesh has had a big hike in anti-Muslim violence; several Muslims have been lynched for allegedly eating beef.

In Gorakhpur, where Adityanath was as representative in the state parliament for almost 20 years, the appointment has galvanised the local police to target young Muslim men. Police have been empowered to target people accused of sexual harassment. Under public pressure police have instituted a "crackdown" which has involved targetting mixed-religion relationships and scaremongering about Muslim men trying to "seduce Hindu women".

Modi has up to now not put Hindu-nationalist policies at the forefront of his governance, but



Adityanath with Modi celebrating the state election results

rather pushed policies linked to economic development and modernisation.

The appointment of Adityanath lifts the mask on the nastier side of the Modi regime.

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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