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YOUTH VOTE CAN BEAT TORIES

Policies in the Labour manifesto like a £10 per hour minimum wage and nationalising the railways as franchises come up for renewal have brought Labour denunciation or derision from the wealthy and their ideologues, and a big lead over the Tories among younger voters.

The outcome on 8 June depends on how many of those younger voters can get to the polls. The outcome after 8 June, if Labour wins or if Labour loses, depends on whether left-minded young people organise, mobilise, become a dynamic factor in the labour movement.

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After Manchester: is more police the answer?

By Sacha Ismail

A central part of the Labour Party's response to the Manchester atrocity has been to emphasise its call for more police officers — and now also more intelligence personnel. Labour is also promising more prison guards and borders agents.

With a lead from Momentum nationally, wide swathes of left-leaning Labour activists have picked up this narrative. In many cases comrades go beyond arguing the Tories are hypocrites to agitate against Corbyn on terrorism when their police cuts have made us less safe, to positively advocating more police and even sometimes using slogans like “support our police”.

Is the argument about public safety right? And if not, what should the left advocate?

The work of monitoring, tracking down and dealing with potential terrorists involves a, relatively-speaking, small number of police officers as well intelligence officers working for organisations like MI5.

Unlike the police force in general, which has experienced cuts under “austerity”, these operations have had their funding substantially in-

creased by the Tories — by about 10% between 2014-15 and 2015-16, following repeated boosts in the years immediately before.

A more nuanced version of this argument says that what is needed is more funding for “community policing”. In so far as “community policing” has any distinct meaning, what is generally meant by it has little to do with directly preventing terrorist attacks. But it is said that police based in the community can provide basic low-level intelligence which helps the security forces in their work.

But could the argument around community policing work on a more general level? That community policing helps to strengthen “community cohesion” and social solidarity, thus undercutting the ability of jihadist-Islamists and other anti-social forces to recruit?

The idea that more police is any kind of answer to the social decay, atomisation and despair in which Islamism as well as nationalism have undoubtedly grown (internationally as well as in Britain) is wrong.

The police do not exist to deal with such problems. They exist to keep them from leading to unman-



ageable outbreaks, particularly of a left or anti-capitalist kind but more generally as well, and to repress those outbreaks when they occur.

Look at what the police were used for, only three decades ago, during the last great flare up of working-class militancy in the miners' strike, the Fleet Street printers' strikes, and so on. Then they were used even against relatively unthreatening left-wing student protests in 2010.

Look at the way they relate to people, particularly young people, non-white and migrant people, in every working-class community. Socialists need to inculcate distrust

of and hostility to the police into the labour movement and among workers.

Until we are in the position to build a viable alternative, based on workers' and community organisations, we cannot reasonably advocate abolishing the police. But we can fight for the abolition of special organisations with a particularly repressive role (including MI5, with any legitimate investigatory powers transferred to the mainstream police) and for greater democratic accountability.

Instead of more police, the labour movement and left should advocate more teachers, more youth workers, more social workers, as well as more decent jobs young people can take up. We should advocate the rebuilding of the public services and social provision whose gutting has helped to turn much of Britain into a desert, starting with the reversal of all cuts and privatisation since the Tories came to office (which, let's note, Labour has not clearly promised). We should wage war against poverty and inequality.

Rather than advocating more resources for the prison system and more prison officers, we should ad-

vocate fewer people are sent to prison, which functions as a breeding ground for Islamism as well as other social maladies.

None of that provides a quick or easy solution to a situation where small but significant numbers of young Muslim people are attracted to jihadist groups and white people to nationalist forces, and so on. But — beyond police/security operations of the kind which are already heavily-funded — there is no short-term solution except to make a start changing society.

It is not just a matter of fighting for more resources. That should be part of building up a much stronger labour movement (including the Labour Party), trade unions, community organisations and youth organisations, to create a movement which can reinstate a strong sense of solidarity and collectivity in workplaces and communities.

That is the only way we can effectively take on right-wing movements of all sorts and undermine the ability of extreme reactionaries like Daesh to appeal to some of the most angry and disillusioned.

Daesh resurgence in Libya

By Simon Nelson

The fact that the perpetrator of the Manchester bombing, Salman Abedi, may have been part of a Daesh network in Libya has focused attention on the group outside of its main territories in Iraq and Syria.

Daesh is known to have groups allied to it across the Middle East, Africa and Asia but in recent years their strength has grown in Libya. The fall of Gaddafi led to a series of fractured and splintered militias and rival governments fighting for control.

The roots of Daesh in Libya lie with the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, formed in the 1990s from remnants of the mujahideen who fought the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

That group fought against Gaddafi, with the possible backing of MI6; hundreds of its fighters were imprisoned by the Libyan government in that time. Fundraising for the group was undertaken by exiled Libyans across the world including in Britain where a “charitable” front organisation was raided and closed down in 2006.

In 2007, following an offensive by Al Qaeda to bolster its links to groups across the Middle East, the Islamic Fighting Group formally affiliated. The Islamist movement is fractured in Libya and Daesh have managed to establish formal affiliation from a number of branches of different groups in 2014.

As with their campaigns in Iraq and Syria, Daesh have come into conflict with Al Qaeda affiliates in Libya including Ansar al-Shariya (ASL), which was one of the groups

responsible for the attack on the Benghazi US consulate. ASL has now dissolved and encouraged the militias and shoras in Benghazi to unite, Daesh in Libya appears to have had a resurgence.

Daesh could draw on areas with an Islamist background like Derna where ASL have been at their strongest. Many militants in ASL in Derna went over to Daesh, and this influenced other groups across eastern and central Libya to do the same.

They were boosted by returned fighters from Syria. In 2014 Daesh asked recruiters to stop sending new members from Libya to Syria or Iraq and told them to concentrate on attacks within their own country. Now driven out, they at one time controlled the city of Sirte and took over almost 250 km of coastline around the city.

Early on many of its leaders were Saudi or Tunisian, but there has been a concerted effort to get Libyans into leadership roles.

While they controlled Sirte they aped the actions of Daesh in Syria and Iraq, registering and taxing local businesses and taking over public offices and services. Smoking was banned, barber shops closed, women were made to wear long black robes, and boys were recruited to fight.

Residents accused of spying or opposing Daesh were shot dead, their bodies put on public display for several days.

New Daesh group in Philippines

The city of Marawi in the Philippines remains under siege from the Maute group, which is now a part of Daesh.

More than 90% of Marawi's 200,000 population have left as fighting in the street and government aerial strikes increase.

Maute rebels are one of several factions active in Mindanao, an island state of the Philippines with a population of 22 million. President Duterte has imposed martial

law and given his assurances that troops will be protected even if they commit war crimes including rape during the conflict.

This bout of fighting was triggered by the army's attempt to capture Isnilon Hapilon, previously the leader of the Al Qaeda backed Abu Sayyaf group.

He has brought together AS alongside the Maute, who were mostly a criminal network into the newest Daesh group in the region.

Attacks on Coptic Christians

By Charlotte Zalens

29 people were killed on Friday 26 May in the latest attack on Coptic Christians in Egypt.

Gunmen flagged down a bus convoy carrying people making a pilgrimage to a monastery in south Egypt. Claiming to be security service, the men ordered people off the bus, separated men from women and children and instructed the men to recite the shahada, the Islamic declaration of faith. When the men refused the gunmen opened fire.

Coptic Christians have faced an increasing level of sectarian vio-

lence in Egypt, mainly involving church bombings. This attack has been described by the Coptic community as reaching a new level of savagery.

This attack has been claimed by Daesh; it is the fourth such attack to have been claimed by Daesh since December.

The Egyptian government imposed a state of emergency after a bombing on Palm Sunday which left 45 dead, but Christians have said that the state of emergency is doing little to protect them.

Since 26 May Egypt has launched air strikes against reported terrorist camps in Libya.



Sisters Uncut have occupied the old visitors' centre at the now closed Holloway Prison. The prison is due to be demolished for luxury flats. The occupation calls attention to the fact that 46% of women in prison have been victims of domestic violence. The group calls for funding for domestic violence services, affordable housing and a community building.

Labour and free education

NCAFC activist Cosmo Seamus explains why the Labour Party's Manifesto commitment to free education and a National Education Service is important and badly needed*.

Currently, England is the most expensive country to study in the world.

Since the 2010 Tory-LibDem higher education (HE) reforms there have been cuts to government funding, an expansion of the student loan system and of course the famous trebling of tuition fees to £9,000.

These sets of changes have been come together with an overall neoliberalisation of universities: more casualised labour and decreased pay and pensions for workers in HE, higher salaries for university managers, and more private institutions getting their foot in the door in the HE market.

In turn there is now a lower proportion of working-class students going to university and those leaving HE leave with massive amounts of debt.

The current Conservative government is pushing the neoliberalisation of universities further by implementing a set of Higher Education Reforms which will result in universities being ranked according to a Teaching Excellence Framework, and these rankings allowing some universities to raise their fees and those who are seen to "fail" be closed down or taken over by private businesses.

As it stands many universities across the UK from Aberystwyth, to Manchester, to Durham are announcing a wave a job cuts citing the pressures of marketising reforms as their reason. The current system desperately needs to be overhauled.

The call by the Labour Party in their manifesto to abolish fees and implement a National Education Service is a welcome event. This is a massive change from New Labour which implemented tuition fees back in the 1990s, as well as from a Labour Party a couple of years ago which only promised a cut in tuition fees to £6,000.

An NES would mean a cradle-to-grave system that guarantees access to learning for everyone: free childcare, comprehensive schooling, abolition of fees and valuing properly those who do the work. Furthermore, establishing an NES and deprivatisation of education creates the potential for a more democratic education where those who are doing the work and study call the shots and make the decisions, rather than managers.

Education at all levels is necessary for a democratic society. It allows people to discuss and think creatively and critically about the



Free education is not only about access and funding — it will create new potentials, new ways of collaborative learning and creativity. Education will be free from the economic, political and ideological influences of markets and capitalism, allowing us, as individuals and as a society, to move forward in weird and wonderful ways.

Andy Warren, NCAFC block of 14

world they live in, and is important to allow society to flourish by giving people the means to learn, discuss and teach whatever it is they might want to do. Because education benefits all of us, the costs should be borne by those who have the means to pay for it.

Despite the backlash Labour will get from the press and right wing parties, the abolition of fees and a

Free education has to be about so much more than scrapping tuition fees. The very idea that people should pay for their education means a system more pliant to the whims of profit and big business than one servicing society as a whole; for degrees to be about little more than a pathway to a high-paying grad job makes the experience stressful, atomising and inaccessible, threatening the rights of staff along the way. The only answer is public education funded through progressive taxation on the rich, and democratically governed by students and staff — where a National Education Service is held with as much universal esteem as our NHS.

Mark Crawford, NCAFC Postgraduate Rep., UCLU

NES is necessary and totally possible. HE funding is currently not sustainable and is coming off the back of student loans, much of which cannot be paid back and which the government continuously tries to sell-off.

If we restructure how education is currently funded and tax the rich in our society, the people who hold the wealth that is created by working people — bear in mind that the richest 10% in our society hold half of the £8.8 trillion pound wealth in the UK — then we will have enough money to fund not only the NES, free childcare and Labour's other pledges, but much more.

MORE

We need to argue for more than what Labour is currently guaranteeing.

Maintenance grants must not only be reinstated, but increased to a decently liveable level and extended to all students, and living costs eased by not just restricting rent rises, but reversing them in halls and elsewhere.

Labour should clarify that its pledge to abolish fees will be applied to international as well as British students.

And graduates should receive an amnesty on the student loan debt that should never have been im-

The logic of the current system means that funding is allocated according to students' preferences. What is fashionable, as opposed to what is needed, will determine whether courses are provided and even whether departments continue to exist. It is only with free education, funded through progressive taxation, that we can take democratic control of our education system.

Josh Berlyne, NCAFC North co-rep

Free Education is a reality in many other countries like Germany and Denmark. It works, and it is so important in building a better more equal society for all. Education changes lives, and gives opportunities to people that may not have access to them. If we want a more equal, and balanced society, where the gap between the rich and the poor decreases then we need free education, because everyone should have the right to study and help them achieve what they want to.

Hansika Jethnani, NCAFC international rep, Education Officer at University of the Arts London, NUS National Executive block of 15 elect

posed in the first place.

However, it will not be enough to vote Labour in and hope for them to make good on their promises. This is not how positive social change happens: a left-wing Labour-led government would face obstructions and immense pressure to retreat on its policies.

We will need to continue building a strong student and workers movement in education and beyond which will provide the political pressure for these promises to be made a reality. One of the many reasons why it has been possible for the leading opposition party to take on these proposals is the pres-

Education must not be treated as a commodity but as something that enriches society and benefits us all. The same impulse behind the NHS should be behind education. It should be free at the point of use and available to all.

Omar Raii, NUS NEC block of 15

sure that has come from the grassroots movements. The seven years of protests, occupations, actions, boycotts, solidarity with striking workers, and convincing people of the necessity of free education has put these issues on the table. It is worth recalling that up until a few years ago the NUS was one of the only student unions in the world not to have any policy on free education.

Going forward it will mean continuing and increasing the pressure. Quebec, Chile, South Africa, Germany and many other countries have managed to resist and reverse attacks on education by having organised and militant struggles through direct action and student strikes. NCAFC and education activists have been pushing student struggles in higher education, making the argument for free education, coordinating national demonstrations and pushing nationwide actions like the boycott of the National Student Survey.

Join us to keep it up.

"I support free education because I fundamentally believe that education is a right and nobody should be graduating with an enormous debt. Tuition fees are a tax on learning and aspiration — let's tax the rich instead. What's more, the fee system turns higher education into a commodity and universities into businesses, pushing them to prioritise marketing and income generation over the needs of students and staff. We need institutions that are run democratically, in the interests of students, workers and society, not the market."

Ana Oppenheim, NCAFC block of 14, UAL campaigns officer

* First published on anticuts.com

Religious practices should not be banned

An Indian socialist presents a view different from *Solidarity's* on an attempt to get the Supreme Court to rule unconstitutional the practice of triple talaq (where a Muslim man can divorce his wife in minutes by saying the word talaq three times).

In India banning has become the response to anything that goes against the state. But the practices of nikah halala [women entering second marriages as a precondition for remarrying a first partner] and triple talaq should never be considered for banning because they are derived from religious laws which have roots stretching back 1,400 years.

As India is seeing a rise of extreme right-wing politics, and with Uttar Pradesh chief Minister Yoginath organising anti-Romeo squads to regulate sexual harassment through violence, the banning move epitomises the hypocrisy of Indian politics. The move to ban triple talaq is certainly aiding the rise of Hindu sectarian politics.

The petition becomes unjust because this Muslim law is not in keeping with the Hindu code. Triple Talaq has some conditions within it which boost egalitarian goals of all Muslim women. Claiming it is hierarchical and anti-feminist is a convenient mechanism for those arguing for the ban. On the other hand maybe more laws need to be made to regulate it.

Coming from a minority religious background (Jainism), I am familiar with a ritual of "Santhara", which means "fast unto death". For many liberals this is an act of suicide. But this act has religious underpinnings which mean it cannot be reduced to a form of suicide. Especially when the Indian state hovers around with its particular banner of secularism.

It is against secular ideals to ban something that is held to be important to sharia law, and banning is also a violation of a sacred law.

This issue appears in various ways — from the anti-migrants ban against the Muslims in America or the passing of the parliamentary bill for a Burkha ban in Austria to deter Islamic fanaticism. The issue of triple talaq requires a distinct attention as it is banned in 25 other countries across the world, including many Islamic countries.

In the rural parts of India, it has become a social norm for women to be victims of domestic violence. There is always an argument about not hurting religious sentiments, but why should the innocent suffer so that massive opposition can be avoided?

Judicial activists need to take a pragmatic response towards the triple talaq issue. Why is it necessary that every Pope needs to be male and why is it that many women are not allowed in the mosque? The answer lies in the sacred texts of each religion and their origins. Questioning is must, but forcibly changing things to bring them up to date is a violation of the religious law. A judicial system which favours religious nationalism supersedes that of constitutional nationalism in a country like India, as religion is a precursor to the making of the nation. Nobody has the right to argue how a religion is meant to work. A religious belief cannot be overtaken by the jurisdiction of a court.

Hence, the illusion of changing the Muslim law regarding triple Talaq, polygamy, and nikah halala needs to be countered as it is aimed at suppression of the religious faith.

The Supreme Court has said women should also have to give consent to the triple Talaq, but the law cannot be banned because it holds a sacred place in the Muslim code.

Is Corbyn right on terrorism?

By Clive Bradley*

"Jeremy Corbyn has said that terror attacks in Britain are our own fault," claimed Theresa May on Friday. "I want to make something clear... there can never be an excuse for terrorism, there can be no excuse for what happened in Manchester."

It is a measure of the cynicism — and desperation — of the Tories and their press that Corbyn's speech this week has been attacked in this way. Corbyn did refer to British foreign policy as a factor in any explanation of terrorism, but only in similar terms to many commentators, and indeed some Tories.

What Corbyn actually said was: "Many experts, including professionals in our intelligence and security services, have pointed to the connections between wars our government has supported or fought in other countries, such as Libya, and terrorism here at home."

He went on: "That assessment in no way reduces the guilt of those who attack our children. Those terrorists will forever be reviled and implacably held to account for their actions."

And he concluded: "But an informed understanding of the causes of terrorism is an essential part of an effective response that will protect the security of our people, that fights rather than fuels terrorism." He summed it up — paraphrasing Blair: "Tough on terrorism, tough on the causes of terrorism."

In truth his speech bent over backwards not to be construed in the way May and the Tory press then deliberately misconstrued it. More — it heaped praise not only the emergency services but on the military.

This was a mild, even-handed intervention in the debate, only pointing to foreign policy as one factor in understanding terrorism.

What of the argument itself, though? Is there a train of thought in Corbyn's argument which does, as it is claimed, attempt to excuse the terrorists?

There are different "versions" of the "Blame Western Foreign Policy" argument.

At its most primitive it implies that the terrorists act simply from a kind of Pavlovian reflex to various (especially) US-led policies, most obviously the war in Iraq. This, crudest, version plainly fails to explain much at all: most obviously, why the vast majority of Muslims, for instance, don't, despite these foreign policy outrages, feel motivated to

* First published by the *Clarion* magazine, see <https://theclarionmag.org>



blow up teenagers; why often the terrorists aren't personally from the countries affected (even in the Manchester case, it's unclear if Salman Abedi's action was specifically in reference to events in Libya); why the terrorists' aims are so unspecific, even apolitical, but rather just an expression of general hatred and a desire to inflame more of it.

WESTERN FAILURES

But there's a much more cogent version of the argument, which is more what Corbyn seems to have had in mind.

Islamic State/Daesh, for example, was formed in the aftermath of the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. There were many aspects to Western policy which fuelled the growth of what was to become IS, principally the utter lack of any sort of plan for what would come after the fall of Saddam, the decision to destroy the bureaucracy of the Iraqi state, driving thousands of Sunni Arabs into the arms of the jihadists, and the decision to back a Shia-sectarian government which made this worse.

Libya, where Salman Abedi was born, was in some ways a repeat of the same thing on a smaller scale. In that case the UK and France (with considerable ambivalence on the part of the US under Obama) decided to overthrow the Gaddafi regime, co-opting some of the Islamist forces who had been in exile

(some of whom, indeed, had fought, in the 1980s, against the USSR in Afghanistan), but with scarcely any notion at all of what might replace the dictatorship. The result is more or less a failed state: Libya is divided, battle-torn, and a long way indeed from democracy.

This process took longer than is sometimes implied. Democratic forces did counterbalance the Islamists for a while; and the IS-aligned forces in Libya are now on the retreat.

What this suggests is that Western policy played a part in Salman Abedi's decision to massacre some kids at a concert, but not in the obvious sense. Terrorism is not a knee-jerk reaction to Western wars, but it is something which can breed in the chaos fomented by the failures of Western policy.

And of course the jihadi organisations (IS and al-Qaida and their affiliates) demagogically make use of any and every Western failure to recruit vulnerable, confused, or alienated young people.

To explain the growth of Islamism in Europe — either more broadly defined, or specifically the jihadi movements (the decisions by young people to go to Syria to fight, etc), one needs to look at more than "Western policy". There are many factors at play. But for sure, as part of a wider, nuanced explanation, foreign policy, as Corbyn said, plays its part. To invoke it is not necessarily to relieve the terrorists themselves of responsibility for their own actions (and Corbyn's speech could hardly have taken greater pains to avoid this error).

It is true that Stop the War, with which Corbyn has been personally associated, has denounced all Western wars in a very un-nuanced way. It is the opinion of this writer, for instance, that though the outcome of military intervention in Libya was predictable up to a point, at the time — March 2011 — the only real alternative was to allow Gaddafi to survive and immediately massacre his opponents. Moreover, the rebel movement was calling for intervention. The proper socialist response was not to march in opposition to military intervention — as Stop the War did, if ineffectually, but to support the revolution against Gaddafi and warn about likely future problems.

Still today, to reduce a critique of Western policy in Libya to the fact of intervention is to miss a lot of the point.

Corbyn's background in the Stop the War milieu will inform what he says now about terrorism and foreign policy. But what he has actually said is right, as far as it goes. And the Tories' attempts to attack him for it should be denounced for the dishonest, demagogic scandal they are.

The origins of modern suicide bombing

By Colin Foster

Andy Burnham, now Labour mayor of Manchester, probably wanted to cover for his votes in favour of the invasion of Iraq. But, as it stood, his comment on 28 May was right: "Obviously, the actions of governments can then contribute and help the terrorists to add to their cause, but let's remember that the appalling atrocity of 9/11 happened before interventions anywhere".

Modern-era suicide bombing dates from the 1980s, not from 2003. There was an Islamist-terrorist attack on New York's World

Trade Centre in 1993 as well as the one in 2001, and it was equally designed to kill everyone there, only it failed.

US-led military actions in the years running up to 2003 — the Bosnia intervention in 1995, Kosova in 1999, or the USA's aid to Islamist groups in Afghanistan — favoured Muslim forces against non-Muslim rivals or enemies, rather than the other way round.

Between 1981 and 2016, 80% of suicide attacks and 73% of victims were in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Palestinian Occupied Territories, Russia, or Sri Lanka — not in Europe or the USA. The big majority of victims of Islamist-terror-

ist attacks have been ordinary Muslims. (Source: University of Chicago database).

Analyst Riaz Hassan finds the following common features of suicide attacks: used by weaker groups in high-asymmetry conflicts; used only against (more-or-less) democracies; religion may not be invoked at all, but if it is, it is Islam (bit.ly/riaz-h).

Attacks like the Manchester bombing are not inevitable or logical "blowback" from US or UK misdeeds. They have their own dynamic.

We can best undercut them by rebuilding movements of social hope.

Youth vote can beat Tories

"If 38% of voters genuinely go for pro-IRA anti-nuclear pro-mass-nationalisation Corbyn, UK voters are no longer mature enough for democracy."

The Twitter comment from Andrew Lilico of the right-wing Institute of Economic Affairs sums up how a section of the British ruling class views even the outside chance of a Corbyn victory on 8 June.

For a whole era after Neil Kinnock quelled Labour's rank and file revolt of the early 1980s, Labour was a "safe pair of hands" for the ruling class. Tony Blair set out to identify Labour as "unequivocally pro-business", and on that, anyway, he succeeded.

Millions of working-class people became politically demoralised and unable to see Labour as representing their interests even minimally. Voter turnout among under-25s was estimated at 89% in 1964. By 1992 it had gently slid to 75%. It crashed to 38% by 2005 and had recovered only to 44% by 2015.

Policies in the Labour manifesto like a £10 per hour minimum wage and nationalising the railways as franchises come up for renewal have brought Labour denunciation or derision from the wealthy and their ideologues, and a big lead over the Tories among younger voters.

The outcome on 8 June depends on how many of those younger voters can get to the polls. The outcome after 8 June, if Labour wins or if Labour loses, depends on whether left-minded young people organise, mobilise, become a dynamic factor in the labour movement.

A YouGov Poll from 24-25 May showed the gap between Labour and the Tories down to 5%. Further polls since the Manchester bombings indicate that the Tories' attempts to smear Corbyn as a "threat to national security" are not paying off. As the polling agency YouGov reports:

"If the election were held only among the under-fifties, Corbyn could beat May. And Labour policies are supported across the whole electorate. Capping rents, nationalisation and abolishing tuition fees are popular policies, as indeed are most of Corbyn's manifesto pledges.

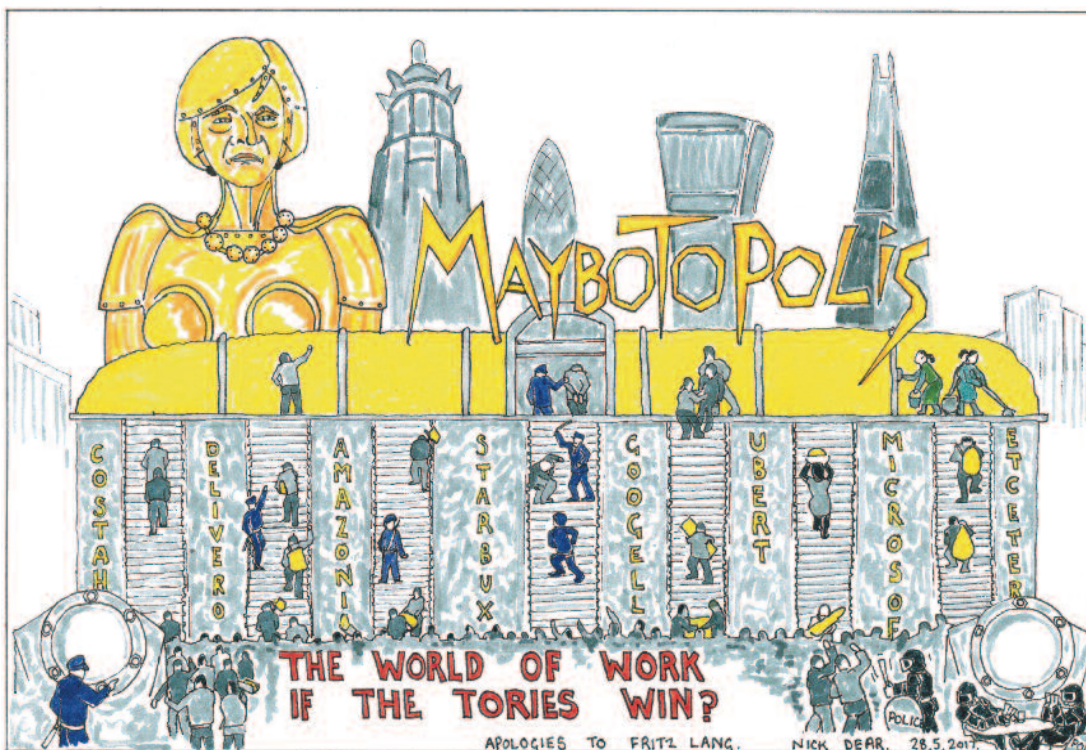
"Scorning Corbyn and his supporters could be perilous... If Labour after this election ejects not only Corbyn but his mission, without a clear idea of embracing both the centre of politics and the frustrated margins, they could be even worse off."

Taking £50 billion extra a year from the rich, out of their many hundreds of billions in revenues, is not going to create the fractures that they say it will.

But modest measures in the manifesto which have enthused Labour activists and voters will require a fight to push them through, even if Labour should win a landslide on 8 June.

A real fight over the minimum wage and banning zero hours contracts will mean gearing up trade unions and the labour movement to organise in workplaces currently unorganised, where workers are hyper-exploited and where a revitalised labour movement backed by a left-wing Labour government could begin to initiate real change.

Scrapping the Trade Union Act will help,



but Labour's omission anything on the older anti-union laws pushed through by Thatcher is a glaring gap. Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell are in favour of the repeal of all those laws against solidarity action, flying pickets, workplace ballots. So, on paper at least, are all the major trade unions.

Right-wing Labour MPs have blocked repeal from the manifesto. Union leaders have been silent, and we suspect that some half-secretly prefer "having their hands tied" by laws which limit rank-and-file action.

A Corbyn government, or a strong Corbyn-led opposition, will be effective only if they link with organising, mobilising, and action in workplaces and on the streets. The support gained by the Labour manifesto must be translated into real action, and not be drained away in behind-closed-doors battles in the right-wing-dominated Parliamentary Labour Party.

ACTIVISTS

Tens of thousands of activists have been on the streets campaigning for Labour. The campaigns have certainly been a mixed bag, varying from constituency to constituency.

A few have been resolutely run and well-organised, with the manifesto and Corbyn's pledges front and centre. Young people have been drawn in to new activity, new members have been recruited on the doorstep, and many previously disengaged have been brought into the campaign.

In other areas the campaign has been long-term activists only, often working with MPs virulently hostile to Corbyn who scarcely mention Labour, let alone the manifesto, or who openly decry the Labour Party's direction.

After the election, there will be a fight both within the Labour Party and about fighting for the manifesto policies on the ground.

We need clarity on some of the manifesto promises. What does the commitment to local energy production mean, beyond what is happening already under the Tories? We should fight for the wholesale nationalisation of the big six energy companies, under workers' control.

How can Labour look two ways on Brexit?

We need a Labour Party that really stands by the manifesto promises to secure the same advantages as the single market, and thus fights the Tory Brexit all the way.

On freedom of movement, or its emphasis on expanding the security services, the Labour manifesto is wrong. Activists will fight on the ground and in the run up to Labour's conference in September to get clear left-wing policies passed and implemented.

Despite all that is good about the manifesto, the last two years have been marked by confusion and the old Blairite way of policy-making. Policy should not be the property of wonks, think tanks, or officials in the Leader's Office.

The fundamentals of the ideas and actions we fight for a Labour Government to take up should be formed by democratic debate through the whole labour movement and the institutions of the Labour Party. The Party Conference must be sovereign, democratic, and a real decision-making body.

YouGov and the other polls still predict a Tory victory. Even if Labour's vote is up on 2015, we could lose seats because of ex-UKIP votes going to the Tories.

After 8 June, the Labour right wing will seize on any pretext to challenge Corbyn's leadership and try again, as they did in 2016, to turn the Labour Party backwards. The fight to transform the Labour Party is still at an early stage. Most of the work remains to be done.

We have to work systematically in wards, CLPs and Young Labour groups to discuss and debate policies, and take them out on the streets. That is necessary whatever happens on 8 June.

John McDonnell recalls that in 1992, when he lost his constituency to the Tory Terry Dicks, he and other activists made a point of organising a stall in Hayes Town Centre the very next Saturday. They showed the constituency that they had not gone away and would continue to fight.

Whatever the outcome is on 8 June, we must go forward in that spirit.

Solidarity 441 will be published on Wednesday 14 June

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.

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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 two weeks *Solidarity* sellers have increased standing orders, and made donations bringing in £125.

- 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
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Take a look at www.workersliberty.org

Workers' Liberty comrade Joe Booth will be doing a sponsored 10 mile dog walk for the website fund on Sunday 11 June. Sponsor him at: bit.ly/2oGBwwd

War and the revolution

TROTSKY'S RUSSIAN REVOLUTION



Continuing a series of extracts from Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, this explains how the Provisional Government worked to keep Russia in the First World War.

On 23 March [1917] the United States entered the war. On that day Petrograd was burying the victims of the February revolution.

Twenty-five days later — during which time the soviets had gained much experience and self-confidence — occurred the 1 May celebration (1 May according to the Western calendar, 18 April Russian calendar). All the cities of Russia were drowned in meetings and demonstrations. Not only the industrial enterprises, but the state, city and rural public institutions were closed.

The war had not yet come to an end; on the contrary it had only widened its circle. It was becoming harder and harder to live. Prices had risen alarmingly; the workers were demanding a minimum wage; the bosses were resisting; the number of conflicts in the factories was continually growing; the food situation was getting worse; bread rations were being cut down; cereal cards had been introduced; dissatisfaction in the garrison had grown.

The district staff, making ready to bridle the soldiers [send them to war], was removing the more revolutionary units from Petrograd.

On the day of America's entry into the war, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Government Pavel Miliukov, greatly encouraged, developed his programme before the journalists: seizure of Constantinople, seizure of Armenia, division of Austria and Turkey, seizure of Northern Persia, and over and above all this, the right of nations to self-determination. "In all his speeches" — thus the historian Miliukov explains Miliukov the minister — "he decisively emphasised the pacifist aims of the war of liberation, but always presented them in close union with the national problems and interests of Russia."

This interview disquieted the listeners, "When will the foreign policy of the Provisional Government cleanse itself of hypocrisy?" stormed the Menshevik paper. "Why does not the Provisional Government demand from the Allied governments an open and decisive renunciation of annexations?" What these people considered hypocrisy, was the frank language of the predatory. Frightened by the stirring of the democracy, Kerensky hastened to announce through the press bureau: "Miliukov's programme is merely his personal opinion." That the author of this personal opinion happened to be the Minister of Foreign Affairs was, if you please, a mere accident.

Tseretelli [Menshevik], who had a talent for solving every question with a commonplace, began to insist on the necessity of a governmental announcement that for Russia the war was exclusively one of defence. On March 27 the government gave birth to a declaration to the effect that "the goal of free Russia is not domination over other

peoples, nor depriving them of their national heritage, nor violent seizure of alien territory," but "nevertheless complete observance of the obligations undertaken to our Allies."

That declaration of March 27 was welcomed not only by the entire Compromisers' press, but even by the *Pravda* of Kamenev and Stalin.

The English press immediately and with satisfaction interpreted Russia's renunciation of annexations as her renunciation of Constantinople, by no means intending of course to extend this formula of renunciation to herself. The Russian ambassador in London sounded the alarm, and demanded an explanation from Moscow to the effect that "the principle of peace without annexations is to be applied by Russia not unconditionally, but in so far as it does not oppose our vital interests." But that, of course, was exactly the formula of Miliukov: "We promise not to rob anybody whom we don't need to."

The declaration of March 27, although totally empty, disquieted the Allies, who saw in it a concession to the Soviet.

BIG GAME

In the hope of help from the Allies, Miliukov had embarked on a big game. His fundamental idea was to use the war against the revolution, and the first task upon this road was to demoralise the democracy.

But the Compromisers had begun just in the first days of April to reveal an increasing nervousness and fussiness upon questions of foreign policy, for upon these questions the lower classes were unceasingly pressing them. The government needed a loan. But the masses, with all their defensiveness, were ready to defend a peace loan but not a war loan. It was necessary to give them at least a peep at the prospect of peace.

Tseretelli proposed that they demand from the Provisional Government that it despatch a note to the Allies similar to the domestic declaration of March 27. In return for this, the Executive Committee would undertake to carry through the Soviet a vote for the "Liberty Loan." Miliukov agreed to the exchange — the note for the loan — but decided to make a double use of the bargain.

Under the guise of interpreting the declaration, his note disavowed it. It urged that the peace-loving phrases of the government should not give anyone "the slightest reason to think that the revolution which had occurred entailed a weakening of the rôle of Russia in the common struggle of the Allies. Quite the contrary — the universal desire to carry the world war through to a decisive victory had only been strengthened." The note further expressed confidence that the victors "will find a means to attain those guarantees and sanctions, which are necessary for the prevention of new bloody conflicts in the future." That word about "guarantees and sanctions," introduced at the insistence of Thomas, meant nothing less in the thieves' jargon of diplomacy, especially French, than annexations and indemnities.

On the day of the May 1 celebration Miliukov telegraphed his note, composed at the dictation of Allied diplomats, to the governments of the Entente. And only after this was it sent to the Executive Committee, and simultaneously to the newspapers.

The Russian revol

By Chris Mathews

It is February 1917. A large crowd are gathered to hear socialists and pacifists denounce the war. As the speeches start the snow begins fall... The hundreds who assembled that snowy night, looking like a scene out of *Dr Zhivago*, were not in Petrograd 1917 but in Waterfoot Rossendale.

The rally held that snowy evening was to support the candidature of Albert Taylor, a local anti-war trade union leader and member of the British Socialist Party (BSP) in a parliamentary by-election; the campaign on his behalf (he had been imprisoned at the request of the Liberal party agent) was a coalition of pacifists and socialists. Their campaign was able to secure nearly a quarter of the vote.

Within a month of the first Russian revolution (in February according to the Russian calendar and March by the Western) British support for that initial revolution garnered support from a similar coalition of pacifists and socialists looking both to end the war and to fight for a more just society. Taylor would go on to support the second October (Bolshevik) revolution and on his release from prison he flew the red flag of socialism out of his bedroom window*.

The British establishment had allied with Tsarist Russia at the outbreak of war and from the outset many in the labour movement had opposed an alliance with what was regarded as the most reactionary and autocratic government in Europe.

The revolution when it came in 1917 was hailed on the left. The BSP, the largest British Marxist party, proclaimed "Long Live The Revolution" in its newspaper *The Call*. The socialist *Daily Herald* declared "a new star of hope... arisen over Europe". At a packed Albert Hall meeting George Lansbury of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and editor of *Daily Herald* said of the February revolution "How much it is by far the greatest and best thing that has ever happened in the history of the world".

While the labour movement cheered on the February revolution the pace of class struggle quickened. Strikes broke out in engineering in Rochdale, Clydeside and the Tyne. There were unofficial strikes in the coal mines of South Wales and the trams of East Lancashire. A "Women's Peace Crusade" was able to mobilise large numbers of working-class women against the war. Probably more worrying for the establishment, just months after a whole section of the French army had mutinied, soldiers of the British army in France at a training camp at Etaples mutinied.

Against this background a broad labour movement conference was held in Leeds in June 1917 in support of the Russian revolution. Convened by the Independent Labour Party and the British Socialist Party it was attended by 1150 delegates from trade unions, trades councils and local Labour Parties, socialist parties, women's and other organisations. It was chaired by Robert Smillie of the Miners' Federation and the speakers included Ramsay MacDonald, Philip Snowden, Ernest Bevin, Mrs Despard, Bertrand Russell, William Gallacher and Sylvia Pankhurst.

Resolutions were passed congratulating the Russians, calling for an end to the war, supporting a charter of liberties and calling for the setting up of Local Councils of Workmen and Soldiers' Delegates or Soviets. Even Ramsay MacDonald, who had resigned the

leadership of the Labour Party in opposition to the war at its outbreak (and who would later go on to be the first Labour Prime Minister before betraying the Party) said of the February revolution, "When the war broke out, organised Labour in this country lost the initiative. It became a mere echo of the old governing classes and opinions. Now the Russian Revolution has once again given you the chance to take the initiative yourselves... the great opportunity which the war gave to the Labour Party to take hold of diplomacy was thrown away, because the Labour Party never saw what the real meaning of the war was, and without the Russian Revolution, the opportunity would not have occurred."

While MacDonald and Snowden, the two leading stalwarts of the post-war Labour establishment, spoke up rhetorically in support of the February revolution and Soviets, nothing very concrete emerged out the Leeds Convention. Some local conferences were held, but no lasting organisation was established.

The unity of the movement in support of the Russian revolution began to fracture as the revolution moved to the left. When in October (November our calendar) the second Russian revolution took place and the "Bolsheviks" took power through the soviets, the uneasy alliance of pacifists, social-democrats, and revolutionaries, fractured over what should be the correct response.

Meanwhile Lloyd George's coalition government prepared to intervene in the Russian civil war, in order to crush the revolution and return Russia to the fight against Germany, spending it has been estimated upwards of £100 million to support the White forces fighting fledgling soviet state. In contrast the January 1918 conference of the Labour Party, only 17 years old and still very much a loose coalition of "liberal" trade unionists and socialist groups, greeted the October revolution with a spontaneous singing of the Red Flag and cheering the names of the revolution's leaders as they were mentioned.

LABOUR PARTY

Labour at that time had no individual membership. Individuals had to join affiliated organisations. In addition to affiliated trade unions, the two largest Party affiliates were the Independent Labour Party and the British Socialist Party.

The ILP was by far the larger of the two, starting the war with 30,000 members. The ILP was an organisation of many contradictions. Founded to fight for independent working-class representation, it has been portrayed as Methodist and Pacifist. However over the years many of its leading lights had gained their initial political training in the Marxist Social Democratic Federation (SDF). While many of its leading members were opposed to the war and actively campaigned against it and led the anti-conscription campaign, others took an active part in supporting the war. While ILP MP J R Clynes became a minister in the Liberal led coalition, other ILP members led rent strikes in Glasgow and were heavily involved in wartime engineering strikes.

Many in the ILP supported the revolution, supporting the "Hands off Russia" solidarity campaign, and later its left tried to move the party closer to the Communist Party and Communist International.

The British Socialist Party (BSP) evolved out of an attempt to unite the ILP and the first British Marxist group the Social Democratic Federation in 1911-12. Unity failed, but some

ution and the British left



Birmingham Independent Labour Party Federation.

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FRIDAY, 11th, Co-op. Hall, Coventry Rd., 7-30 **Cpl. LEES-SMITH**
R. C. WALLHEAD

Kings Heath.
MONDAY, April 7th, Council Schools, High St., 7-30 **Cpl. LEES-SMITH**

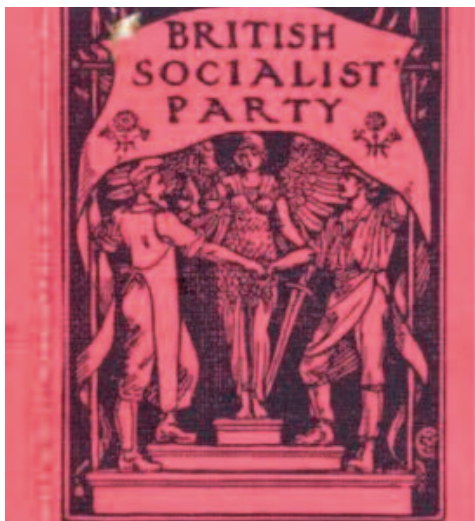
Sparkbrook.
TUESDAY, April 8, Friends' Institute, Moseley Rd., 7-30 **Cpl. LEES-SMITH**

Rotton Park.
WEDNESDAY, April 9th, Barford Road Schools, 7-30 **C'lr. T. HACKETT**
Cpl. LEES-SMITH

Kings Norton.
THURSDAY, Apl. 10th, Stinchley Council Schools, 7-30 **R. C. WALLHEAD**
SUNDAY, 13th, Stinchley Institute, 6-30 **C. R. BUXTON**

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JOIN the I.L.P. and help to FIGHT CONSCRIPTION



A broad alliance of British Marxist, syndicalist and other socialist individuals and groups rallied to the Russian revolution. Top to bottom, left to right: Sylvia Pankhurst, George Lansbury, the Independent Labour Party, the British Socialist Party.

on the left of the ILP and some socialist independents were persuaded to join the SDF and help form the British Socialist Party. The BSP was divided at the outbreak of the war, with its ageing conservative leadership under Henry Hyndman supporting the war and its younger members opposing.

Both sides could agree to campaign around defence of working-class living conditions during wartime by agitating for rent controls and state control of food supplies and employment. They were also able to campaign against the worst aspects of anti-German jingoism, it saying, "... we appeal to you to distinguish between the mass of the German people and the Prussian military caste which dominates the German empire".

By 1916 the BSP had split over the war. The old leadership group around the SDF's founder Henry Hyndman left to form a pro war National Socialist Party. Those who remained went on to be the core group around which the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) was coalesced. After the split the BSP was able to affiliate to the Labour Party and made both anti-war campaigning and industrial struggles more central to its everyday work.

Among those central to the post-split BSP were a number of exiles from the Russian Tsarist empire, and they were central in shaping the BSP response to the October revolution. The exiles included Joe Fineberg, who

was an early, if unofficial representative of the Bolsheviks. For a time Theodore Rothstein was the chief representative of the Bolsheviks in Britain. Both eventually returned to Russia. Zelda Kahan, who remained in Britain, worked alongside Rothstein in honing the BSP's anti war stance, and helped and campaigned for the formation of the CPGB.

John Maclean, probably the leading Scottish BSP member, and well known for his anti-war stance, rejected the majority's semi-pacifist stance, believing the main enemy was at home. He said, "Our first business was to hate the British capitalist system". Because of his advanced anti-war stance he was made Bolshevik consul in Glasgow, although never acknowledged as such by the government. Maclean spent much of 1918 in prison for sedition. Unfortunately he parted ways with his comrades and later took a wrong turn into left nationalism.

The most successful area of work for the left supporters of the October revolution was the solidarity campaign in support of the Bolshevik Revolution, "Hands Off Russia". The campaign was founded in 1919 to organise opposition to the British intervention on the side of the White armies in the Russian Civil War and brought together the disparate sections of the British left. As well as the BSP and ILP, there was the Workers' Suffrage Federation of Sylvia Pankhurst and the Socialist Labour Party, both hostile to working in the

Labour Party, but supportive of October.

The National Committee of the campaign reflected its broad support. In January 1919; the National Committee had representatives from the four organisations like William Paul (Socialist Labour Party), WP Coates (national secretary, British Socialist Party), Harry Politt (national organiser, Workers' Suffrage Federation). David Ramsay (treasurer, Socialist Labour Party) and Alfred Comrie were active in the campaign. The campaign was also able to call upon a broader range of labour movement support including William Gallacher, David Kirkwood, Cecil L'Estrange Malone, Tom Mann, and Robert Smillie. Central to this solidarity work was George Lansbury and his *Daily Herald* newspaper. The *Herald* was able to expose the blockade of Soviet Russia and the plans the government had for intervention.

In 1919, the campaign published a pamphlet which asserted:

"The imperialist Powers know that the very essence of Socialism is its international policy of a World Republic of Labour. They realise that the triumph of Socialism in Russia is but the first step towards the triumph of Socialism internationally. Hence their united designs and attacks to crush the Bolsheviks in order to prevent the spread and triumph of revolutionary Socialism in other countries."

SYLVIA PANKHURST

Sylvia Pankhurst reporting in the *Workers Dreadnought* in August 1919 said, "For months past 'Hands Off Russia' has found its way into the resolution of every labour and Socialist propaganda meeting and literature about Russia has been the more eagerly read than any other".

Probably the highpoint of the campaign came in May 1920 when East London dockers blocked the cargo ship Jolly George sailing to Poland. The arms on board were destined for the Polish war against Soviet Russia. The active participants in "Hands off Russia" campaign would use the experience of working together to go on to found the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Many were drawn to the October Russian revolution, but probably none more strange than Cecil L'Estrange Malone. Malone was a pioneer of early military flight and wartime hero. He was elected as a Liberal MP in the snap 1918 general election, and was a resolute anti-socialist until in 1919 he visited Russia, where he met many leading Bolsheviks including Leon Trotsky. While in Russia he seems to have had an overnight conversion to the cause of socialism. On his return he left the Liberals and joined the BSP as their first MP before becoming the Communist Party's first MP. He was never quite trusted by some on the left due to his military past, and John Maclean refused to appear on platforms with him. However for two years he threw himself into revolutionary politics with gusto.

Klugman, the official CPGB historian, describes Malone like this, "In the first months of the Party's existence Col. Malone was very active not only in Parliament, but addressing mass meetings and rallies all over the country. Whatever his theoretical weaknesses, he was a man of passion, moved by the revolutionary tremors that were shaking the world, full of wrath and indignation against the powers that be, and after a fiery speech in the Albert Hall on 7 November 1920, he was charged with sedition under Regulation 42 of the Defence of the Realm Act... After a coura-

geous self-defence he was sentenced to six months in the Second Division."

Malone himself, talking about a possible future revolutionary crisis, described the possible fate of some of the ruling class, "What are a few Churchills or a few Curzons on lamp-posts compared to the massacre of thousands of human beings?" After his trial Malone was stripped of the OBE which he had been awarded for his wartime work. Some believe his imprisonment could have had more to do with his involvement with a shadowy plan to set up secret "Red Officer" course aimed at training revolutionaries for future "Red Army". It is clear is that he was caught in a MI5 sting operation. For a time after his release he spoke widely in favour of Communist affiliation to the Labour Party and in support of the CPGB. However, by 1924 he had joined the ILP and was back of the road to respectability.

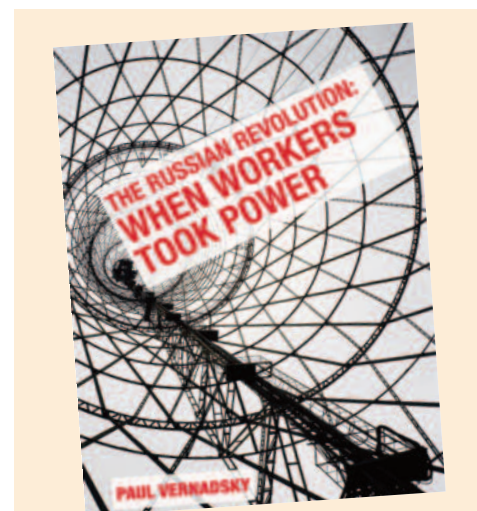
The success of the October revolution and the experience of the Bolsheviks in leading that revolution was of untold importance to British revolutionary left. The foundation in 1920 of the Communist Party (CPGB) was a massive leap forward for class politics in Great Britain.

Initially the CPGB united all the major Marxist groups in Britain, both the political and syndicalist wings of the movement. With the development of united front tactics, and under pressure of the Soviet led Communist International (CI), the CPGB was able to intervene in class struggle at a much higher level than its pre-war components. Under the tutelage of the CI the CPGB created the Minority Movement, as a "rank-and-file" movement in the trade unions and a National Left Wing movement was able to play a similar role in the Labour Party.

British socialists were not manipulated into supporting the October revolution. As Arthur Horner the South Wales miners leader said of this period said, "Above all, the Russian Revolution had inspired millions with the idea that the working people could take power and create a classless society..."

British socialists, with their deep roots in the labour movement, "...came to accept the Bolshevik viewpoint not because it was imposed on them but because they accepted its validity" in the fight for socialism.

* It was later reported in the local Rossendale press that drunken soldiers outraged by his red flags smashed all his house windows on Armistice Night 11 November 1918.



The Russian Revolution: when workers took power can be purchased for £14.80 including p&p. From bit.ly/RuRev. A study guide can be downloaded at the same URL.

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Anti-semitism and the left For much of its history, the socialist movement led the fight against anti-Semitism. But today much of the left is mired in a view of the world that implies hostility to Jews. Robert Fine, author of a recently book on left anti-semitism, will join us to discuss the roots of "left" anti-Semitism.

Socialism and democracy Are socialists democrats? Are we for or against parliament and the rule of law? And how were our democratic rights won?

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1917: February to October We take a look at the timeline of events that join the two Russian Revolutions and ask how one grew into the other.

The party of victory Paul Vernadsky, author of 'The Russian Revolution: When the Workers Took Power' looks at the history of the Bolshevik Party.

The Fate of the Russian Revolution The shadow of Stalinism: How did the world's greatest revolution for freedom turn, within just ten years, to Stalinist tyranny?

1917: the festival of the oppressed The Russian Revolution was a blow struck for freedom — not just the right to vote, but for the all-sided emancipation of people and peoples: from women's liberation to the emancipation of sexual minorities and national minorities; from mass literacy to reproductive freedoms. Activist and writer Jill Mountford will lead a panel discussion on this "Festival of the Oppressed".

Europe's far right on the march Yves Coleman, Editor of French anti-racist journal 'Ni Patrie Ni Frontières' joins a panel of socialists from around Europe to discuss the new right.

Where next for the Labour Party? A panel discussion with activists from across the Labour left to talk about the way ahead for Labour after the election.

Trump and class struggle in America Catherine Liu, Democratic Socialists of America activist from California and Jason Schulman of the 'New Politics' editorial board, discuss perspectives for the American left.

Picturehouse Strikes and the new New unionism How can young workers' struggles renew the labour movement? Hear from the young activists leading the inspiring Picturehouse Cinemas strike.

Breaking the chains: fighting the Trade Union Act Gregor Gall, author of 'Bob Crow: socialist, leader, fighter, a political biography', and Unison activist Ruth Cashman will discuss the fight for trade union rights.

Bottom rail on top: Radical Reconstruction and the US Civil War The end of the US Civil War saw radical governments in the South replace slavery with bold experiments in freedom and the self-rule of the oppressed. Sacha Ismail tells their story.

50 years since decriminalisation: reform and revolution in LGBT struggles A panel discussion on how revolutionary struggle has shaped the LGBT movement.

1967-2017: Fighting for abortion rights worldwide From Poland to Ireland, the fight for reproductive rights in Europe is far from over. On the 50th anniversary of decriminalisation in the UK, we'll hear from organisers of Poland's Black Monday women's movement, and the London Irish Abortion Rights Campaign.

Nationalise the Big Six! To stop catastrophic climate change, we need to end the rule of profit in the energy sector. A discussion on the campaign to Nationalise the Big Six, with a socialist energy worker.

The home front: The Domestic Workers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland 1908-14 A socialist historian tells the story of how class struggle broke into the great manor houses of Britain.

Is neoliberalism dead? Have Brexit and Trump's election killed off open-borders neoliberal capitalism? Martin Thomas, author of 'Crisis and Sequels', looks at the evidence.

Is automation making us free? With Cathy Nugent, Editor of 'Solidarity', IT specialist Ali Crabtree, and a rail worker involved in the fight to save jobs.

Perspectives for Irish politics and the role of the Republican movement in history with Irish journalist and historian Ruth Dudley-Edwards, Liam McNulty, and Donnacha Kirk.

Narratives of resistance: the politics of grime with Dr Joy White, author of 'Urban Music and Entrepreneurship: Beats, Rhymes and Young People's Enterprise'.

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Brazil's crisis of hegemony

By Alfredo Saad-Filho and Armando Boito*

Brazil seems stuck in a permanent political crisis. After three years of agony, President Dilma Rousseff of the Workers' Party (PT) was impeached last August. Now her traitorous vice president Michel Temer's administration is disintegrating under a cloud of scandal, not to mention its mind-boggling incompetence.

Four common illusions prevent us from clearly understanding why this political instability has only intensified under Temer: that Brazil has a unified right wing; that capital acts together; that the bourgeoisie controls the state and the political process; and that social conflicts revolve only around the fundamental disputes between capital and labor.

Instead, rifts within the ruling class are threatening the Temer administration. A rogue judiciary, backed by powerful media outlets, has turned the upper middle classes against the government, stalling the nation's return to neoliberalism. The left can — and should — take advantage of this situation.

Not too long ago the world's moderate left could hold Brazil up as a prime example of success. Global economic prosperity and President Lula's exceptional talent allowed his administration to temper the neoliberal policy framework of the 1990s. He introduced more expansionary policies and unleashed a virtuous cycle of growth that increased profits, created jobs, distributed income to the margins, increased democratic participation, and built a stable political culture. When Lula stepped down in January 2011, his popularity rating approached 90 percent.

Even then, however, his party was riven by contradictions. The PT's remarkable ability to bring together bourgeois and working-class interests, delivering growth with redistribution, made it the best-funded political machine in Brazil. Access to money played an essential role in its success given the cost of winning elections in a large country with a fractured political system. But this cash infusion transformed the purported voice of the working class into the internal bourgeoisie's political arm. Its most influential members became agents for powerful interests.

Even though no one suggested personal gain as a motive, the PT found itself enmeshed in a cloud of financial impropriety. The party became forever vulnerable to accusations of hypocrisy, supported by damaging disclosures from disgruntled funders and hostile media outlets. Its method for gaining electoral traction exposed it to seemingly endless charges of corruption.

As the PT moved to the center, it also lost its political coherence. The party defended both economic stability and structural reform, supported big capital while claiming to represent workers, and promoted a new, inclusive political culture while pursuing alliances with the most unsavory figures in Brazilian politics. Beyond its failure to choose a platform that it could actually defend, the PT neglected its most committed working-class supporters, refused to challenge the interests of the one percent, and shied away from reforming the media, even though mainstream news outlets systematically undermined the party's administrations and repeatedly sought to destroy its leaders.



Rifts within the ruling class are threatening the Temer administration

A worsening economic slowdown, followed by political crisis, has engulfed Brazil since 2011. This economic degradation and the Rousseff administration's repeated political mistakes encouraged a convergence of revolts that would eventually include the media, finance, industrial capital, the upper middle class, most of the government's base in Congress, and virtually the entire judiciary.

While these hostile forces gathered steam, the PT's social base stayed largely inert: most workers remained passive in the face of a strong right-wing opposition, a shrill media, and the economic downturn. The PT, which years ago chose to follow the rules of conventional politics, found itself defenceless against an extraordinarily aggressive constellation of enemies.

SCANDAL

A diet of scandal and hatred for the PT, served by the mainstream media, has nurtured Brazil's upper middle classes. Dizzy with indignation, this group has tended to ignore the economic, social, and political impacts of neoliberalism.

Instead, they blame Lula and Rousseff for intangible but presumably vast damages to the state as a result of corruption and inefficiency. Implicitly, they hold the PT accountable for their own loss of income, privilege, and authority.

A string of corruption scandals energized them. The Lava Jato ("carwash") investigation, which the federal police launched in 2014, gained traction gradually, eventually becoming a juggernaut that overwhelmed the Rousseff administration. Accusations of corruption tainted the entire political system, and the PT appeared as a prime example. The media loudly and daily proclaimed that Lula's party had set up a slick system to rob public assets and defraud the republic.

The wheels of justice have turned surprisingly briskly. Law enforcement has developed a procedure for handling the investigation: arrest carefully chosen businessmen and prominent politicians and keep them in jail until they enter a plea bargain that incriminates others. Repeat as needed. Evidence has become entirely optional: hearsay is good enough.

The investigation inevitably caught other parties in the net, but this didn't matter: only claims against the PT really counted. No credible allegations were made against Rousseff, but the absence of guilt did not slow her political liquidation. The opposition

concocted extraneous accusations, and an overwhelming majority in the chamber of deputies and the senate impeached her in August 2016.

A conspiracy of thieves, hoping to restore neoliberalism and protect themselves against investigation, led the impeachment drive. An increasingly right-wing upper middle class supported it, calling for the end of corruption — code for the destruction of the PT.

Despite promises that removing the president would unleash a brisk recovery, Brazil remains mired in the most severe crisis in its recorded history.

The economy is now a picture of desolation. The slowdown culminated in sharp contractions in 2015 and 2016, reducing income per capita to the level of the early 2000s. The gains achieved under the PT administrations evaporated. Open unemployment has shot up. The fiscal deficit and public debt are mounting, and several domestic conglomerates — especially the so-called national champions, which the PT sponsored in its alliance with the internal bourgeoisie — are experiencing deep crisis.

The political front has offered the putschists only disappointment. Most party leaders have been implicated in the never-ending array of scandals propelled by the media and rogue judiciary. Congress has become utterly demoralized, and the executive is disorganized. Policy-making has become erratic.

A coalition of international capital and the domestic bourgeoisie associated with it supports the Temer administration, hoping to use it to restore their political hegemony and neoliberalism's economic primacy. The government has complied with gusto.

Immediately after Rousseff's impeachment, Temer pushed for a sharp fiscal adjustment, reversed Brazil's independent foreign policy, "reformed" the state-owned conglomerate Petrobras by offering significant concessions to the oil majors, removed local-content rules for government procurement, and reined in the Brazilian development bank's (BNDES) aspirations. The government also denationalized Brazil's vast oil reserves in the South Atlantic, as well as the energy, agriculture, and infrastructure sectors.

Despite these neoliberal successes, Temer hasn't delivered on his promise to reform pensions and labor law. This failure has frustrated his political sponsors, showing that his government cannot create a secure environment for neoliberal hegemony, which requires a stable and effective administration.

Several things help explain Temer's short-

comings. Most simply, he was not elected to office and has no personal legitimacy. Indeed, his administration has implemented the same program the right-wing opposition offered in 2014, when it was defeated at the polls.

Trade unions and the country's mass organizations have challenged his government's policies at every turn. Their resistance has been growing, and the largest general strike in Brazil's history took place on April 28, with promises of more to come.

Further, a minority of the bourgeoisie has always opposed the government's push to restore neoliberalism; for example, large oil and gas firms are suing the government because of the changes to the local-content rules, and domestic conglomerates have objected to cuts in BNDES-subsidized credit.

All this is very important. But the most significant source of political instability comes from the judicial attack on prominent political leaders within the Temer government. Even though the PT has always been the main target of the corruption investigations, key figures in the judiciary have developed a genuine desire to purify the political system. This surprising onslaught has disabled the administration.

Brazilian anticorruption legislation follows American law, and the US Justice Department trained many of the judiciary's leading figures. They, however, are not acting merely as tools of American imperialism: as the investigations have unfolded, these authorities have built their own base of support in the upper middle class. Now, this group identifies with the judicial branch, demonstrating their support on social media and in the streets, further validating the endless investigations.

An alliance with the mainstream media has further expanded the judiciary's power. Daily leaks, media-led worship of telegenic judges and prosecutors, and live coverage of raids strengthens this relationship. The investigations have fed ratings and newspaper sales, while media attention has empowered judges, lawyers, and the police to perform increasingly outrageous deeds, often for publicity and in blatant disregard of the law. This symbiosis between the media and the judiciary has fuelled upper-middle-class outrage against the political system. What started with the PT now transcends Lula's party.

As a result, the coup's plotters have lost control of the corruption investigations, and their own political base in the upper middle class has abandoned them. These two elements — the escape of the judiciary and the desertion of the upper middle class — have created the instability that plagues the Temer administration.

The alliance built to defeat Rousseff and the PT has fractured, compromising the government's ability to restore neoliberalism's hegemony. For example, capital demands the immediate reform of pensions and labor laws, but Henrique Meirelles, minister of finance, cannot accomplish that thanks to political turmoil and a deadlocked congress. A judiciary empowered by the bourgeoisie now threatens that class's strategic program.

This conflict pits two reactionary wings of the political right against each other. Neither upholds a progressive platform or the interests of workers and the poor majority.

This dispute might damage both factions, opening a gap for the left, which now demands the president's resignation and direct elections. This is a fight the left can win.

* First published on Jacobin magazine website, www.jacobinmag.com

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 3 June

Nottingham Picnic and Rally:
People's March for Education
12 noon, The Arboretum, Waverley St, Nottingham NG7 4HF
bit.ly/2rLNTK5

3-4 June

Picturehouse cinemas strike
Various times and places
bit.ly/2qvLrKN

Tuesday 13 June

The Clarion post-election meeting Manchester
7pm, Central Methodist Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ
bit.ly/2qxK7TG

Friday 16 June

'Austerity Fight' film premiere
6.30pm, Rich Mix Cinema, Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA
bit.ly/2qxJRnG

Saturday 17 June

No need for nuclear: the renewables are here
9.45am, Conway Hall
25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL
bit.ly/2s9RkKT

17-18 June

NCAFC summer conference
University of the Arts London, 272 High Holborn, WC1V 7EY
bit.ly/2rABXOm

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

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

SNP smear opponents

SCOTLAND

By Dale Street

When the SNP government's record on the NHS was criticised by a nurse during the Scottish party leaders' debate a fortnight ago, the response from the SNP and their followers was to vilify the nurse.

SNP MSP Jeane Freeman and SNP (ex-)MP Joanna Cherry led the charge, falsely claiming that the nurse was the wife of a Tory councillor. Once unleashed by Freeman and Cherry, the allegation was then taken up by other SNP parliamentarians and by SNP cybernats.

In fact, they ratcheted up the smear campaign to the level of a frenzy, claiming that the nurse had been a BBC "plant" and that she was not actually a nurse. While her criticisms were ignored, the nurse herself became the target of systematic abuse and denunciation.

But the nurse was a nurse. And she was not the wife of a Tory councillor. (Even if she had been — so what? Women won not just the right to vote but also the right to have their own political opinions a long time ago.)

The SNP's social media campaign of smear and vilification crumbled within a matter of hours. But not before it had demonstrated that Scottish "civic and joyous" nationalism is just as putrid as any other variant of nationalist ideology.

The SNP itself is the most undemocratic party in Britain. Policy adopted at its 2015 conference bans its elected parliamentarians from public criticism of any other parliamentarian, and from public criticism of SNP policy.

The SNP's intolerance of criticism by an NHS employee is emblematic of its intolerance of criticism in general. Substituting it-

self for the people which it claims to represent, the SNP responds to criticism of its record by denouncing critics for "talking Scotland down".

The SNP does not use rational political arguments to bond together its cult-followers. Instead, it specialises in emotional denunciations of its political opponents.

Thus, Labour are "Red Tories", even as the SNP simultaneously proposes a "progressive alliance" with Labour, and also sits in coalition administrations with Labour in Scottish local authorities.

And the Tories are defined as the party of the "Rape Clause", even though the SNP ignored the "Rape Clause" until they found a role for it in their current election campaigning.

STRONGER

In 2017, as in 2015, the SNP claims that only SNP MPs will "stand up for Scotland" and "give Scotland a stronger voice" in Westminster.

In fact, its MPs have consistently ignored the majority of the Scottish electorate, which remains hostile to independence and a second referendum.

At Holyrood, where the SNP has now been in power for over a decade and has had a real opportunity to "stand up for Scotland", it has made steady progress backwards.

Cuts in council funding, declining literacy and numeracy standards, less teachers, less FE places and teachers, less working-class access to Higher Education, falling NHS standards, declining economic performance, and more child poverty.

In fact, the SNP's main achievement in recent years has been to revive the Scottish Tories' electoral fortunes. The polarisation of Scottish politics around the single issue of independence has allowed the

Tories to rally support from "No" voters in the 2014 referendum.

Through its sole official spokesperson (i.e. Nicola Sturgeon), in the six weeks since an election was called the SNP has bounced back and forth on whether the election results in Scotland should be interpreted as a mandate for a second independence referendum and for Scottish membership of the EU.

But this is all a matter of political calculation.

To argue openly that the general election in Scotland is all about independence (and for the SNP, it is) would fuel the growing backlash against the SNP. To argue openly in favour of EU membership would alienate the one third of SNP voters who backed "Leave" in 2016.

Sturgeon has dismissed Corbyn as "unelectable" and as someone who "won't be going anywhere near Downing Street." As in 2015, the optimum outcome of the general election for the SNP would be either a Tory government or a minority Labour government.

The former would allow the SNP to run with the theme that only independence could save Scotland from permanent and alien Tory rule, even though over a quarter of the Scottish electorate are now likely to vote Tory.

The latter would allow the SNP, or so it hopes, to demand a second referendum in exchange for not bringing down the government, even though Corbyn has rightly ruled out any deals or alliances with the SNP.

Doorstep canvassing confirms that support for the SNP is in decline. In the time remaining before the general election, Labour canvassers need to push the SNP vote into further decline, and to make sure that the decline is to the benefit of Labour rather than the Tories.

There's an election, let's witch-hunt the left!

By Sacha Ismail

The biggest national decision-making gathering of Momentum that has taken place so far was the Momentum Youth and Students (MYS) conference held last summer.

The 200 Momentum members who took part elected a national committee pretty evenly split be-

tween supporters of what is now the "leadership faction" around Jon Lansman and the more radical, democracy-minded left. In November 2016 the MYS committee voted to support the national meeting to campaign for democracy in Momentum by a majority of one.

Since then the "leadership" people on the committee have pursued two tracks. The first has been gradually adding more people via regional elections, some of dubious legitimacy, so that they have a majority. The second has been to prevent MYS being active, firstly by pouring cold water on campaigning proposals from the left and then by just doing nothing.

INACTIVITY

Now — after months of inactivity, in the middle of the General Election campaign — they have taken an out-of-the-blue online

vote (on Facebook, closing 29 May) to purge the left from what's left of MYS.

The motion calls for the expulsion of committee members who are not members of the Labour Party (i.e. whom the Compliance Unit has expelled) and declares that members of socialist groups like Workers' Liberty and Socialist Appeal will be excluded from any future MYS conference.

Though ineffectual — they are expelling people from an organisation they themselves have pretty much shut down — this is shameful. It also shows how politically corrupt the milieu around the Momentum leadership has become in its struggle to prevent the organisation functioning democratically.

The excluders on MYS committee evidently think the way forward is to copy young Blairites!

On Saturday 30 May the right wing of Labour Students kept control of the organisation by unjustly and bureaucratically excluding around nine Labour Clubs and others from its national conference.

The conference was deliberately called at short notice, in the middle of the exam period, and sidestepped a mandate to elect the committee by One Member One Vote.

EHRC strikers keep fighting

By Dale Street

After one-week strikes in Glasgow and London, PCS members in the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Cardiff office are on strike 29 May – 2 June. 5-9 June, coinciding with the general election, PCS members will be on strike in the EHRC's Manchester office.

The successive one-week strikes are part of an ongoing campaign against redundancies imposed by the EHRC. The campaign, involving a succession of targeted strikes, has been underway since October of last year.

Employees with disabilities, older and ethnic-minority employees, and trade union activists are disproportionately represented among those selected for redundancy. And redundancies are being implemented despite the availability of suitable alternative employment in the EHRC.

An emergency motion unanimously passed at PCS annual conference (23-25 May) pledged full support for the strikers and their campaign against redundancies.

The campaign was also given a boost by the Labour Party election manifesto's condemnation of the cuts imposed on the EHRC by the Tories, and the consequent undermining of the EHRC's ability to fulfil its role:

"Devastating cuts to the EHRC



by the Conservatives reveal their real attitude, beyond the rhetoric, to issues of equality and discrimination.

"A Labour government will enhance the powers and functions of the EHRC, making it truly independent, to ensure it can support ordinary working people to effectively challenge any discrimination they may face."

Union activists can support what is now the longest-running industrial dispute in Britain by:

• Support Cardiff picket line:

Block 1, Spur D, Government Buildings, St Agnes Rd, Gabalfa.

• Support Manchester picket line: Arndale House, The Arndale Centre.

• Send donations to: PCS PSG Hardship Fund, Sort code: 608301. Account no: 20151243

• E-mail messages of support to: londonbargaining@pcs.org.uk

• Send messages of protest to: Rebecca Hilsenrath, EHRC CEO, Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX

• Tweet messages of support at: @savetheehrc

Damning report on Unison election

By a Unison member

The Assistant Certification Officer has delivered their report on the Unison General Secretary election dispute.

The complaint was made by several activists and all General Secretary candidates, except Dave Prentis, over the time used by unelected full-time officials of the union to campaign for a "Team Dave" victory.

The election will not be re-run and that is the short statement that Unison "welcome the decision" with on their website. What they do not detail is the incredibly damning evidence and detail in the report.

The ACO is scathing about the attitude shown in the audio recording of a meeting coordinated by Linda Perks the now redeployed,

but still employed, former London Regional Secretary. The staff member appointed to investigate the complaint failed to carry out a proper investigation or to interview relevant people. Intimidation was used against activists and other members of staff to persuade them not to assist the investigation.

There are a number of recommendations made about future conduct of elections, the deficiencies

in Unison's staffing policies, and the fact that rules were broken.

The fight to democratise the union must be taken up urgently, but will come from activists pushing and winning members over to change rather than rulings from the ACO.

• The report can be read at bit.ly/2rzV4Im

Unison left wins in NEC elections

The Unison Action Broad Left slate, comprising the SWP, SP, some of the Labour left, and others, has won 29 of the 67 seats on Unison's NEC.

The result for the first time means that the current General Secretary, Dave Prentis, does not have an outright majority. The Stronger Unison slate, a sycophantic group to Dave Prentis got 31 seats with the remaining seven a mixture of independents.

Unison Action is currently only an electoral lash up and will need to develop some proper structures and plans if it is to have any role in transforming the situation in branches and workplaces. There is likely to be some resistance to that

as its guiding principles are in reality the "lowest common denominator" that the current leadership are wrong and need to be removed. The candidates elected represent supporters of three different general secretary candidates for the 2015 election.

The turnout was absolutely abysmal, with an average turnout of 4.62% in seats where every member can vote.

The incoming NEC must start to address this decline and first and foremost this will mean building strength in workplaces by winning disputes and fighting to protect jobs and leading a real fight against the pay freeze.

PCS backs freedom of movement

By a delegate

PCS, the civil service union, held its national conference in Brighton 23-25 May.

Workers' Liberty supporters were delegates, as part of the left-opposition "Independent Left". We went into conference with victories in the NEC and Bargaining Group Executive elections.

The industrial landscape is dire, and the leadership's response has been inadequate. The union, despite years of supposedly "left" leadership, now has historically low density-rates in its better organised workplaces, with some bargaining units such as the Ministry of Justice falling below 35%.

We face increasingly hostile behaviour by a confident government, the most brazen being the sacking of reps at the EHRC by email. But a union-wide response has been lacking, largely out of despair and defeatism, but also due to a bunker-mentality of the supposed Trotskyist-led leadership. Substandard deals involving a bonfire of terms and conditions for scraps of pay, selective support to workers who want to defend themselves and a top-down approach to local disputes and organising have left membership confidence at a low and that seems to have worked through to conference floor.

One of the key debates was the unions attitude going into the General Election. At the NEC Independent Left members proposed that the union should follow its support for Corbyn with a Labour vote. The Socialist Party dominated leadership and the General Secretary opposed that call and neither the NEC nor any branches associated with the leadership submitted text to conference calling for a Labour vote.

Independent Left activists passed three emergency motions through branches. One for the union "to offer as much support to Labour Party candidates as is allowable under current PCS policy" and another two explicitly calling for a Labour vote, one in England and Wales only and one for all the UK.

Following shenanigans with the conference standing orders committee, we were left with the "offer as much" motion and one "vote Labour" motion, which bizarrely was judged to fall when the first one passed.

BREXIT

In an otherwise flat conference, a debate on the union's attitude post-Brexit committed it to "promoting the free movement of workers".

Arguments around migrants undermining wages and conditions were defeated, a win in a labour movement were these myths are common.

Conference also debated accepting the "Transgender Report", where confused opposition was turned around.

Conference also heard a report into the extent of state-collusion of the right-wing of PCS's predecessor union CPSA to undermine and victimise left-wing activists.

For all the issues the union has currently, it's a long-way from the witch-hunting, right-wing, Thatcher supporting organisation the CPSA was.

The task this year will be to articulate a positive organisational and political rank-and-file alternative to the bureaucratic malaise and defeatism of the union's broad-left leadership.

• Full article online: bit.ly/2s9mQbR

Cinema workers strike again

By Gemma Short

Workers at East Dulwich Picturehouse in south London struck on Saturday 26 May.

Cinema workers at Picturehouse Central, Hackney, Crouch End and the Ritzy in Brixton will strike on 3-4 June to coincide with Picturehouse Central hosting the Sundance Film Festival.

Support for the strikes is growing. Helen Hayes, Labour MP for Dulwich and West Norwood visited and spoke at the picket line at East Dulwich Picturehouse on 26 May. Supporters of the strike are encouraged to join a demonstration at Picturehouse Central on Saturday evening.

Despite Cineworld bosses



promising talks after being confronted by Picturehouse workers at their AGM on 18 May, no negotiations have yet appeared.

• Support the strikes: picturehouselivingwage.com

Scottish lecturers push back employers
Read online:
bit.ly/2qvjKBS



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Tel Aviv: tens of thousands march against occupation and for two states

By Gerry Bates

On Saturday 27 May between 15,000 and 20,000 Israelis demonstrated in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square to mark the anniversary of the Six Day war the subsequent Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The demonstration called for an end to the occupation and for "two states for two people".

In proportion to population, the turnout was equivalent to 140,000 in Britain. Opposition leader and Labor Party head Isaac Herzog was booed as he came on stage. He, claimed Trump was "determined to bring peace between us and the Palestinians...who understands what his predecessors understood."

That assessment is a rather poor one. When Trump went to Israel he talked about peace a lot but his notion of peace was, as veteran socialist Uri Avnery put it, based on the idea that everyone in the Middle East will do his, (Trump's) bidding: "Trump came to Israel with the impression that the Saudi



princes had just offered him a deal — Israel will free Palestine, Sunni

Arabs and Israelis will become one happy family, they will fight to-

gether against bad old Shiite Iran. Wonderful. Only [Israeli Prime

Minister] Netanyahu does not dream of freeing Palestine. He does not really give a damn about far-away Iran. He wants to hold on to East Jerusalem, to the West Bank and, indirectly, to the Gaza Strip."

Herzog's assessment of Trump may reflect his own political ambition to govern Israel. He used his speech to call for a new opposition alliance with the Zionist Union and others against Netanyahu.

Fortunately other speakers at the rally were much clearer in their opposition to occupation and call for two states. Organisers of the rally also read a letter from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, in which he pledged peace on the basis of the two-state solution.

The rally is a hopeful sign. As indeed is a recent poll (by Israel's Channel 2 TV station) which found that 47 percent of Israelis still support a two-state solution to the conflict with the Palestinians based on 1967 borders. The same poll showed 39 percent being opposed, and 14 percent saying they did not know.

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