



& Workers' Liberty Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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Corbyn pledges more public ownership

NATIONALISE UTILITIES AND BANKS!

Speaking at a Labour Party event on 10 February, Jeremy Corbyn reaffirmed Labour's 2017 manifesto pledge "to bring energy, rail, water, and mail into public ownership and to put democratic management at the heart of how those industries are run".

"By taking our public services back into public hands", he said, "we will not only put a stop to rip-off monopoly pricing, we will put our shared values and collective goals at the heart of how those public services are run".

He promised "a society which puts its most valuable resources, the creations of our collective endeavour, in the hands of everyone who is part of that society".

More page 5



A protest by Fuel Poverty Action

Inside:

A year of strikes in Iran



Morad Shirin reports on workers organising in Iran.

See page 3

Why you should be a socialist



We publish an extract from our new book, *Socialism Makes Sense*

See pages 6-7

The story of Votes for Women



Jill Mountford begins a series on the story of the women's suffrage movement.

See page 9

Join Labour!

Fighting council cuts

See page 10

Share-price wobble gives warning

By Rhodri Evans

As *Solidarity* goes to press on 13 February, the Dow Jones and S&P 500 share-price indices in New York have been recovering since 8 February, though they are still at a lower level than when they suddenly dipped on 1 February.

The FTSE 100 index in London, the DAX index in Frankfurt, and the CAC 40 index in Paris, have all been recovering since 9 February, but are

lower than their recent highs on 29 January, 23 January, and 26 January respectively.

So far, the early-February downturn looks like a limited wobble in a pattern of rising share prices since 2009. The S&P 500 has risen from an index value of 683 in 2009 to 2873 in late January 2018: if you had shares worth \$1000 in 2009, by late January 2018 you could sell them for \$4204.

The "price-earnings ratio" for FTSE 100 shares, that is, the average share price per £1 annual corporate profits, is currently around 29, way

higher than the average over the last 14 years, which is 12.6.

The wealthy have believed that profits will rise, and so bought shares, and bid up share prices, on that assumption. Government bonds have been paying low returns, so more of the wealthy have preferred to buy shares instead.

A trigger for the recent wobble has been that the US Federal Reserve pushing up its interest rates and making it clear that it will push up those rates further, thus promising better returns on bonds.

But wobbles can turn into crashes. Sooner or later, they surely will. Once the wealthy see profits sagging, they sell off shares, and the price-earnings ratio crashes down to its norm, or below.

The effect is quicker and more drastic in particular sectors. We recently reported in *Solidarity* on an Oxford finance professor's take on the "private equity" industry, which works by borrowing money cheap, buying up firms' shares, remodelling the firms by slash-and-burn to boost profits, and then

selling shares again at a higher price.

"A cataclysm is bound to happen. The combination of overpricing and high leverage [debt] cannot lead to anything other than a lot of defaults... It is quite amazing that there is no collective memory that goes beyond five years, or that the world is organised in such a way that history keeps on repeating".

No public control over high finance has been established since 2008 to stop that repetition.

Tesco equal pay fight

By Charlotte Zalens

Tesco faces an equal pay claim over pay gaps between its mainly female shop floor staff and its mainly male warehouse and distribution staff.

Law firm Leigh Day has submitted claims through Acas on behalf of 100 shop workers. This is likely to be followed by a submission to an employment tribunal.

Similar cases are currently in the employment tribunal process against Asda and Sainsbury's. In the Asda case the latest ruling from the employment tribunal was that shop workers have the right to compare their jobs to workers in distribution centres.

The legal case has argued that the jobs contain a lot of similar tasks, with shop workers also doing a large amount of lifting and carrying. Shop workers actually carry out a wider range of tasks such as dealing with customers and handling money.

Jobs seen as "women's work"



have historically been underpaid, with men in these roles also tending to be underpaid. Cases involving council-employed cleaners and school lunchtime supervisors who were paid less than refuse workers or street cleaners were settled by several councils.

Employers across all industries are watching these cases, fearful that a precedent is being set for cases elsewhere.

The *Financial Times* carried an article on Thursday 8 February discussing how companies might respond.

Tesco's best option, the FT commented dryly, might be to outsource both operations, so that a pay gap becomes just a gap between different firms.

South Africa needs a workers' party

By Luke Hardy

As *Solidarity* goes to press on 13 February, the ANC, the ruling party, has officially asked Jacob Zuma to step down as President of South Africa.

Zuma has been under increasing pressure to resign since December, when deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa was narrowly elected leader of the ANC at its conference.

The ANC has been the ruling party in South Africa since the end of apartheid in 1994. Yet in the same period deep disillusion has set in.

The country has one of the most unequal income distributions in the world. About 60% of the population earn less than R42,000 per annum (about US\$7,000), whereas 2.2% get over R360,000 per annum (about US\$50,000).

South Africa has well-regarded universities; but elementary education for the poor is worse than in some much poorer countries.

There is a growing black middle class; but many people are still living in shanty housing in the townships, and 27% are unemployed.

Amidst the pauperisation, violence has escalated. Rape Crisis South Africa reports that twelve times more women are raped and then murdered in South Africa every year than in the USA, which has a much larger population and is much more violent than European countries.

It also reports that every six months in South Africa a woman is killed by an intimate partner.

Both Zuma and Ramaphosa were heroes of the anti apartheid struggle. Zuma was sentenced to 10 years on Robben Island for his political activities as a ANC leader and Ramaphosa was jailed as a student activist.

Both were seen to be somewhat on the left, Zuma a long-term member of the Communist Party (SACP) and Ramaphosa the founder and leader of the militant National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and a big figure in founding the then-radical COSATU union federation in 1985.

In the transition to democracy, Ramaphosa was a negotiator for the ANC, and Zuma, as the most prominent Zulu in the ANC leader-



Ramaphosa: nothing to offer working-class people

ship, played a role defusing the tribal violence incited by Zulu royalty in the KwaZulu Natal region.

Once in power the ANC leadership wanted to open the country up to big business. They set up quotas for black representative on company boards. Often the people who took these lucrative roles were leaders of the ANC or their relatives.

Ramaphosa lost the battle in 1997 to succeed Mandela as ANC leader, and went into business instead, becoming one of South Africa's richest capitalists and a member of the board of Lonmin, a mining company founded by the arch-imperialist Cecil Rhodes.

MARIKANA

In 2012 miners striking against Lonmin at Marikana were machine-gunned by the police. Ramaphosa condemned the miners, not the police.

Zuma became deputy leader of the ANC under Mbeki until charged with corrupt involvement with an arms deal in 2005. Later that year he was also charged with rape. Eventually the cases against him were dismissed, but with serious questions still to answer.

On the strength of populist calls for greater black power, he was elected leader of the ANC in 2007, and won the presidency in 2009.

There have been a series of splits from the ANC. The most notable is the left-populist Economic Freedom Fighters.

Meanwhile Zuma has faced more corruption allegations, such as about the cost of his lavish personal country home, which has been charged to the state, or his relationship with the wealthy Gupta family.

Ramaphosa re-entered politics by becoming deputy president in elections in 2014.

In 2016, the ANC lost some key cities in municipal elections for the first-time, including Johannesburg and Pretoria.

At the ANC December congress, Ramaphosa narrowly won the leader election against Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Jacob Zuma's ex-wife and ongoing ally.

Zuma retains support in some sections of the ANC and loyal appointees in the state security services and judiciary, and is said to be holding out for a promise of immunity or presidential pardon before stepping down.

A Ramaphosa presidency holds little promise for the working masses. His idea of economic reform seems to mean making South Africa even more open to big business. His ideas on rebuilding public services seem similar to Tony Blair's marketisation of these services. At best Ramaphosa promises a more competent and even-handed administration of neoliberalism.

Despite their histories both Zuma and Ramaphosa are now key figures in the South African ruling class. South African workers need a party of their own committed to working-class power and genuine racial equality.

In the recent rank and file struggles in the unions breaking away from the COSATU leadership, in the struggles in the townships, in the women's protests against rape culture, and even among some of the rank and file of the ANC, lie the building blocks for a workers' party that can fulfil the true promise of the long struggle against apartheid.

Trans women arrested in Aceh

By Peggy Carter

On 27 January 12 trans women were arrested in Aceh province in Indonesia and made to undergo a "re-education program".

They were subjected to beatings, had their hair forcibly cut, were stripped and forced to wear men's clothes, and otherwise humiliated.

Trans women are reportedly fleeing the province, an area with an autonomous status meaning it can have some of its own laws, including on homosexuality.

Many run beauty salons which have been shut fearing a wave of attacks after far-right and Islamist organisations put out calls for regular Friday protests to "cleanse the province".

The attacks on LGBT+ people are not confined to Aceh. There has been an ongoing campaign against LGBT+ people all over Indonesia. In April and May last year 150 gay and bisexual men were arrested and two young men publicly flogged.

The Indonesian parliament is currently considering proposals to criminalise gay sex, and all extramarital sex.

• Indonesian LGBT+ organisation G.A.Y.a Nusantara is fundraising. Their website is gayanusantara.or.id (not in English). You can donate to the fundraiser at: www.youcaring.com/gaya-nusantara-549353/donate/general#pp

Iran sugar workers demand control

By Morad Shirin

Recent events have shown that Iran's working class is willing and able to fight consistently against the capitalist class, the regime and the state.

By the end of the current Iranian year (on 20 March) the number of workers' strikes and protests in the course of the year could reach the 1,000 mark.

Recent struggles or issues include: Esfahan Kashi (tiles) where production has come to a halt and workers are threatened with unemployment; Iran Chooka (wood and paper) where jobs are under threat; Palood Dairy, five months' unpaid wages; Tabriz Combine Sazi, where workers prevented plant equipment from being removed; increased workloads for nurses; Foolad Shafagh (steel) where 100 workers were on strike for over four days; oil workers demanding the removal of the new cap on their end of service bonus; Jahan Electric, five months' unpaid wages; Sad Siazakh (water network), nine months' pay; Vahed Bus Company workers protesting about a housing co-operative that should have delivered their flats five years ago!

The two most important strikes were firstly the workers of HEPKO (Heavy Equipment Production Company), a company producing road construction equipment, went on strike and gathered in a big square in Arak demanding eight months' wage arrears.

And secondly, a new strike by Haft Tappeh Sugar Cane complex's workers. On 6 February, the seventh day of their strike, the workers closed the sugar warehouse and



Haft Tappeh strikers

prevented any sugar from being taken out of the complex. They emptied the lorry that had already been loaded with sugar. A few days into the strike over 30 Tappeh workers were arrested (but released quite quickly).

Those arrested included Esmail Bakhshi, a representative of the Haft Tappeh workers, who said in a speech on 15 January the following: "They [the management] claim that they don't have any money. Neither have we! But we differ from them in that we have the expertise to produce sugar, so we'll manage it ourselves."

There was also the very welcome news of Reza Shahabi, a member of the Executive Committee of the Trade Union of the Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company, being released on medical leave earlier of five days on 8 February. Earlier 32 lawyers had demanded his release. It is vital that he now stays out of prison. He has served his sentence and his latest stretch in jail led to two strokes!

Is pay a purely economic de-

mand?

Pay is a big problem for Iranian workers. On the surface strikes and protests demanding unpaid wages — or even higher pay — might look like purely economic struggles. However, given the explosive situation in Iran any such demand, no matter how meek or defensive it might appear, leads to direct confrontation with the repressive forces of the capitalist state.

In addition, the state sector and what many call the quasi-state sector (e.g., the Pasdaran and religious foundations), control the overwhelming majority of the Iranian economy. So when workers take action against their employer for very basic demands they are effectively taking action against the regime and the capitalist state.

We have seen how the Haft Tappeh workers have raised the issue of taking over production and have prevented the distribution of sugar. They are talking about workers' control of production and distribution while also issuing a joint statement with the Vahed Bus Company workers and retired workers about the minimum wage that will be set for next year (the regime decides what is the poverty line, the minimum wages and so on)!

The Haft Tappeh workers don't see these as separate struggles, especially in today's Iran.

Workers' control of production and distribution should be coupled with opening the books so that workers can see why their bosses and the regime are not paying them on time, how much profit is being made, and so on.

Italian fascism feeds on xenophobia

By Michael Elms

On Saturday 3 February, exactly one month before Italy's 3 March general election, an armed rampage took place in the Italian town of Macerata. Eight people, African migrants to Italy, were shot by a white Italian — Luca Traini.

Traini, 28, is a fascist; his motivations were political. Following the attack, he draped himself in an Italian flag, and headed straight for a fascist-era war memorial, where he gave a fascist salute.

On the way, he visited the spot where the remains of a young white Italian woman, Pamela Mastropietro, had been found a few days previously. A Nigerian man had been arrested in connection with her death.

An unsuccessful candidate for the far-right Northern League party, he is also an associate of more straightforwardly fascist outfits like CasaPound and Forza Nuova. And the far right did not abandon Traini after his crime: Forza Nuova made a declaration

of solidarity with him; fascist Roman football ultras unfurled a banner in his honour; Matteo Salvini, leader of the Northern League, placed the blame for the attack on "an organised, determined and financed invasion" of immigrants into Italy.

The Northern League, now restyling itself simply "Lega", in an effort to move from Northern-Italian regional chauvinism into a broader far right project, is one of a number of far-right parties contesting the general election in alliance with former Premier Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party.

Berlusconi himself, a friend of Tony Blair, is barred from standing for public office until 2019 due to his criminal record. But he is widely seen as the public face and architect of the coalition which could bring Lega and other far right forces into the cabinet.

The Italian far right has agitated so effectively around the issue of immigration that more-mainstream politicians are swimming in the same current. Interior minister Marco Minniti has said that his anti-migrant crackdown is the

kind of policy needed to head off violence like Traini's. Former Premier Matteo Renzi remarked that "Italians should be defended by the police, not mad gunmen" — implicitly agreeing with Traini that his shooting spree was an attempt to defend Italians against Africans.

Berlusconi has issued a promise to deport six hundred thousand people: an attempt to outbid Lega's policy of deporting 100,000 — a repeat of the kind of grim auction conducted between right-wing and far-right parties that saw France's Front National extract a series of xenophobic policies from President Nicolas Sarkozy, ultimately to the FN's political benefit.

Across Europe, the labour movement should unite in a bold campaign against xenophobia and anti-migrant prejudice, before it strangles our movement and brings thugs like Traini to state power.

Xenophobia is not a vote-winner for us, or a political toy that the labour movement should play with — it is a mortal danger.



Mary Lou McDonald is the new President of Sinn Féin,

Going coalition-ready

By Clive Larkin

Dublin Central TD Mary Lou McDonald has been elected unopposed as President of Sinn Féin, replacing Gerry Adams who held the job for almost 35 years.

McDonald joined Fianna Fáil in the late 1990s, before switching to Sinn Féin. She was elected as the party's first MEP in 2004, before gaining a seat in the Dáil in 2011.

Along with the election of Sinn Féin's northern leader Michelle O'Neill as the party's vice president, McDonald's elevation signals a handover to a "post-conflict" generation. Both are long-time Adams allies but Sinn Féin hopes that passing the leadership to figures with no IRA background will help it broaden its base of support in the Republic of Ireland.

Recent years have also seen significant strategic changes in Sinn Féin's approach. After losing the Dublin South-West by-election in October 2014 to the Anti-Austerity Alliance (Socialist Party of Ireland) candidate Paul Murphy, Sinn Féin attempted to tap in to growing anti-austerity sentiment and anger against water charges by posing as the "Irish Syriza."

As was pointed out by political opponents, this stance sat uneasily with its leading role in the government in Stormont, where the "Fresh Start Agreement" with the DUP in late 2015 paved the way to welfare cuts and a planned cut to corporation tax to bring it in line with the 12.5% rate in the Republic.

In January 2017, McDonald signalled that the party would drop its existing policy not to enter into government unless Sinn Féin was the largest party — opening out the possibility of a coalition government with one of the main establishment parties.

This was formalised in November 2017 at the party's Ard Fheis (conference), with McDonald announcing that "this isn't about us saying we are signed up to be a junior partner. This is us saying we are willing and able to be part of government," adding that Sinn Féin is willing to talk to "everybody".

Since taking office, McDonald has also signalled a willingness to resolve the impasse in Stormont, which has left the North without an Executive since early 2017. All but dropping its stipulation that DUP leader Arlene Foster should not be First Minister until her role in the Renewable Heating Incentive (RHI) scandal is investigated, McDonald

told Sky that Foster is someone her party can "do business" with, and that "the issues are clear, the issues are resolvable".

One of McDonald's major challenges in the coming months will be to determine Sinn Féin's policy on the upcoming referendum on appealing the 8th amendment of the Irish constitution. Sinn Féin is currently committed to repeal but has not, as yet, endorsed the recommendation of the Citizens' Assembly to allow abortion on demand up to the first 12 weeks.

Instead it currently supports abortion only on the condition that a woman was been raped, is suicidal or has a fatal foetal abnormality — clearly not a pro-choice position.

Meanwhile, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Ireland has announced it is dissolving itself into its front People Before Profit (PBP). The SWP will now be called the Socialist Workers Network (SWN), organised around "a major new website".

GNOMIC

In a statement, the SWN said that the change "reflects a decision to focus on building People Before Profit, and within that to win and educate as many members as possible in revolutionary socialist politics."

"To that end, the Socialist Workers Network will be operating as a component part of People Before Profit and, more occasionally, as an independent external force."

It promises, gnomically, "to produce high-quality Marxist literature that is written in the language of the 21st century and attractive to a new generation of anti-capitalists."

Whether or not this reflects a USFI-style advocacy of a "new epoch, new programme, new party", leading to the effective disavowal of the need to build an explicitly revolutionary party, is as yet unclear.

However, PBP released a statement on 11 February congratulating Mary Lou McDonald "for assuming the leadership of Sinn Féin", and praising her as "an articulate voice against austerity".

The statement criticised Sinn Féin's position on abortion and expressed concern that it may enter government with Fianna Fail or Fine Gael.

But the tone, the advice of a friendly critic, will not reassure those concerned that the dissolution of the SWP signals a move to the right.

The People of the Book

By Martin Thomas

Books have been a great factor in human culture.

The Qur'an says: "Do not argue with the People of the Book except only by the best manner, except the unjust among them. Tell them, 'We believe in what is revealed to us and to you. Our Lord and your Lord is one. We have submitted ourselves to His will'."

By "People of the Book" it meant principally Jews and Christians. These book-based religions were an intellectual innovation. The book-basis gave Christianity and Islam an expansive power and a cultural breadth that earlier religions had not had.

Through books, at least for a minority, religious doctrine, which to many people then was substantially the total of abstract and theoretical thought, became something which could be glossed, analysed, and argued over in a way requiring detailed study.

From the late 10th century, in Europe, it became standard to write manuscript books with spaces between the words. Before then, with materials to write on expensive and rare, texts had been written with the words run together. To read them demanded exceptional skill and training, and was most done aloud, to an audience.

It appears that silent individual reading was known in earlier epochs. But the new way of writing made it easier and more widespread. From about the 13th century in Europe, with the rise of universities, the process of reproducing books by writing them out again by hand became more systematic and larger-scale. Then, from the middle of the 15th century, printed books appeared.

TRANSFORMATION

As Lucien Febvre puts in his classic history: "The printed book was... one of the most potent agents at the disposal of western civilisation in bringing together the scattered ideas of representative thinkers.

"It rendered vital service to research by immediately transmitting results from one researcher to another; and speedily and conveniently, without laborious effort or unsupportable cost, it assembled permanently the works of the most sublime creative spirits in all fields...

"By so doing, it gave their ideas a new lease of life and endowed them with unparalleled strength and vigour. They came to have a new kind of coherence and, by the same token, an incomparable power for both



transformation and propagation... The book created new habits of thought not only within the small circle of the learned, but far beyond, in the intellectual life of all who used their minds".

The printed book transmitted ideas from ancient Greece and Rome; it became a factor in the spread of new thinking in the Renaissance and Humanism; it enabled religious disputation on a wide scale, notably in the Reformation; it led to increasing numbers of religious people wanting and being able to study the Bible themselves, to evaluate and compare passages according to their own reason, rather than being limited to follow the priests' digests; it was the precondition for the development of natural science; it was the precondition, in general, for thought becoming more reflective, critical, and analytic.

Euclid's *Elements* had been transmitted in manuscript for hundreds of years. It became the second mathematical book ever to be printed (the first, a few years earlier, being a practical guide for commercial arithmetic).

The printed book then became the basis of all mathematical education for hundreds of years, and was at first, in the early 20th century, superseded only by textbooks like Durell's heavily based on it and giving a digest of it. Only since the 1960s have mathematicians ceased to be "People of the Book", with the book being Euclid.

In 1886 Engels described Marx's *Capital* as "the Bible of the working class". His thought was not at all that it was a "religious" text, above criticism. Rather, that it was a text through which the processes of silent individual reading, careful comparison of passages and analysis of arguments, and acquisition of a common framework of references, could develop in the workers' movement. It developed more in some countries, less in others. Antonio Gramsci considered it a fundamental flaw of the pre-1914 socialist movement in Italy that its culture had been based on speeches and short agitational articles rather than books. A stronger movement required "an unyielding struggle against habits of dilettantism, of improvisation, of 'rhetorical' solutions or those proposed for effect..." It was necessary "to combat the habits formed in public speaking — prolixity, demagoguery..."

Books or even pamphlets have come to have less weight in the British left in recent decades. It has become not unusual to find long-active people who have studied few or none of the basic Marxist texts and rely for their "education" on tweets, Facebook statuses, memes, and such.

Paradoxically, one of the drivers here is that more left activists have had higher education. With the huge expansion in academic publishing, no university degree can cover

more than a small fraction of the literature in its subject. So lecturers go for the easily available, the quick summary, the overview, the extract, the digest.

Most students read few books. The skill of quickly skimming a range of material, absorbing a suitable fraction of it, and rehashing it fluently in an essay or assignment, is encouraged. That's enough for the student who will go from a humanities degree to a job in accountancy or finance or PR or such.

The system works positively to deter people from systematic study of substantive texts, rather than processed rehashes, and to train them in the idea that deep study is too difficult. Then, if the student comes into the socialist movement, the way to seem on top of current debates is to skim blogs and Facebook, not to read books.

Skill in skim-reading is enough for those who want to go with the flow and make a career. It cannot be enough for those who want to question and challenge the prevailing order of society.

We need to make the left again "People of the Book".

• Paul Saenger: *Space between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading.*

• Lucien Febvre and H-J Martin: *The Coming of the Book. The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*

Momentum dominates left slate for NEC election

LABOUR

By Simon Nelson

Momentum has proposed a slate for the elections to the constituency section of Labour's National Executive, to be held this summer.

As we understand it, this slate has also been (narrowly) approved by the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance.

The first-time additions of Ann Henderson, Huda Elmi and Nav Mishra to the slate do make it the most diverse it has ever been.

However, not everyone is happy. The departure of Rhea Wolfson and Christine Shawcroft, possibly to help them secure parliamentary seats is regrettable.

Christine Shawcroft is a long-standing activist on the Labour left, has regularly reported on National Executive meetings and has undertaken some of the work of trying to prevent the Labour Party excluding and expelling left-wing members, including supporters of Workers' Liberty.

Rhea Wolfson deserved our solidarity for the abuse she experienced on social media, far worse than any of the other left candidates. That was for being Jewish and stand-

ing up to antisemitism within and outside the party, and more recently for her stance in defence of the rights of trans women to be allowed to stand on All-Women-Shortlists.

But the headline news about the slate was that Ann Black will no longer be supported by the CLGA. This has led one of the affiliate organisations, Open Labour, to split away and declare they will back Black standing against the slate and to look at supporting other candidates.

Some Momentum members, supporters of the LRC, and others, have demanded that a vote is taken of all Momentum members to decide on the candidates. The selection pro-

cedure, in effect a job application, was certainly inadequate, as were the telephone interviews given to those who got through this first stage. But the problem cannot be solved by an OMOV vote of Momentum members. And the principle of the constituent parts of the CLGA meeting together to decide candidates is not the problem here.

With fuller democracy, Momentum could have thrown open the process, sought nominations from local groups, and chosen the nominees at a democratic conference.

Those candidates could then be put forward to the CLGA, discussed and voted on by CLGA members.

Corbyn pledges more public ownership

Nationalise utilities and banks!

Speaking at a Labour Party event on 10 February, Jeremy Corbyn reaffirmed Labour's 2017 manifesto pledge "to bring energy, rail, water, and mail into public ownership and to put democratic management at the heart of how those industries are run".

"By taking our public services back into public hands", he said, "we will not only put a stop to rip-off monopoly pricing, we will put our shared values and collective goals at the heart of how those public services are run".

He promised "a society which puts its most valuable resources, the creations of our collective endeavour, in the hands of everyone who is part of that society".

He argued that the energy industry must be remodelled to abate carbon emissions, and declared that "in public hands, under democratic control, workforces and their unions will be the managers of this change, not its casualties."

"The growth of green energy and green tech offers huge opportunities for job creation. Our publicly owned energy system will ensure a smooth transition and protect workers and communities, seizing those opportunities for the many, not the few..."

"The next Labour Government will guarantee that all energy workers are offered retraining, a new job on equivalent terms and conditions, covered by collective agreements and fully supported in their housing and income needs through transition".

Speaking to BBC Radio 4 the same day, shadow chancellor John McDonnell refuted claims that the nationalisations would be unaffordable. He said that shareholders in privatised utilities, which include pension funds, could be given newly-issued government bonds in return for their shares.

A survey by YouGov around the time of the 2017 election showed that these policies are popular.

It showed an 84% to 5% majority for the NHS being in the public sector; a 65% to 21% majority for Royal Mail; a 60% to 25% majority for rail; 53% to 31% for energy; 59% to 25% for water; and 81% to 6% for schools.

The case for public ownership, and against



outsourcing to private contractors, has been strengthened since then by the Carillion scandal. Carillion bosses siphoned off huge sums in salaries and bonuses for themselves, and dividend payouts to shareholders, and let the services they were supposed to operate run into a wall.

At present, in Britain, 60% of all financial wealth — stocks, shares, bonds, and such, as well as cash — is owned by the top 10%.

That financial wealth represents the accumulated proceeds of the profits and other surplus value extracted from workers' labour over years, decades, and centuries. It is not something that the rich have generously brought to the economy from a stash of their own creation.

Ownership and control of corporate wealth by the rich few means that all our labour, all our productive efforts, are geared to and shaped by the drive to get bigger profits for

those few.

It means wages are held down, and that we are bossed around and controlled, in jobs which are made ever more draining and stressful, for the sake of those few.

Since the 2008 crash, profit rates have revived nicely. Top pay has zoomed again. The High Pay Centre's report in August 2016 found that average pay for a top company (FTSE 100) CEO was 33% up on the 2010 average of £4.1 million. The ratio of FTSE 100 CEO pay to the median full-time worker across the whole UK economy had risen to 183:1 in 2014 from 160:1 in 2010.

Real wages rose a bit in 2015 and 2016, for the first time since the crash, but since then have been falling again.

The worst-hit have been the lower-paid — often suffering also from big cuts in working-age state benefits — and younger workers. Since 2008, young people's wages have fallen 16 per cent, taking their pay to below 1997 levels.

The gearing of economic life to the competitive profit drives of a few also brings market chaos in crashes like 2008's, and short-sighted spoliation of the environment.

Corbyn and McDonnell are right to put public ownership back on the agenda.

Labour activists should take up two particular questions.

Corbyn's pledges of "democratic management" and "democratic control" of a renewed public sector are welcome. They should be amplified. The commercial books of these public utilities should be open to inspection. Managers should be elected by the workforce, and serve on workers' wages, rather than remaining the same sort of people as under private ownership, with similar privileges and similar lack of accountability.

And the banks should be added to the list to nationalise.

In 2012 the TUC voted for nationalising the banks and creating a "publicly-owned banking service, democratically and accountably managed... [to] play a central role in building a sustainable economy".

The banks are not just one big economic sector alongside others. They are hubs of the economy. They determine where investment goes in times of prosperity, and they are central to crashes and slumps.

The TUC has never campaigned for that 2012 policy. Despite a series of big scandals about the banks coming out since 2008 — mis-selling of pension protections, rigging of key interest rates, and more — public support for public ownership of the banks has been allowed to fall to 28% for (53% against).

Even more fundamentally, the labour movement needs to build up the ideological, political, and organisational strength to push through such pledges.

In 1981 the French Socialist Party took office with a pledge to public ownership. The government took over the major industrial groups CGE, Pechiney, Rhône-Poulenc, Saint Gobain, and Thomson; arms manufacturers Dassault-Breguet and Matra; steel companies Usinor and Sacilor; computer firms Bull and ITT-France; the pharmaceutical firm Roussel-Uclaf; and the country's thirty-six biggest banks.

Then, faced with a flight of capital in 1983, the Socialist Party government did a u-turn and started privatising.

Syriza in Greece was long committed to wide public ownership. By the time it took office in 2015 it had sidelined those commitments. In office, it has privatised rather than taken sectors into public ownership.

Necessary to push through public ownership and win real democratic control, in current conditions, is a labour movement which is strongly organised and which, through open debate and education, has made its activists aware and mobilised on the fundamental issue of socialism (public ownership, democratic control, social solidarity as the guideline) versus capitalism.

To play our part in this, Solidarity supporters are canvassing activists with, and seeking discussions on, our new book *Socialism Makes Sense*.

A note to readers

A recent anonymous blog said that the author, an ex-member of the AWL, was sexually assaulted by another ex-member in 2005.

The incident has never been made the subject of a complaint to the AWL. We have responded to the blog with an initial assessment which says: "It is our understanding that, at the time, the [few] individuals to whom the writer disclosed these events felt they were acting not only in accordance with the writer's wishes [to keep disclosures confidential] but also appropriately. That was a serious mistake. He was a sixteen-year old and the incidents should have been reported to appropriate bodies inside or outside the AWL, as an issue of safety." No such report was brought to those bodies.

We are taking this matter seriously by further investigating our own actions at the time and subsequently, so we can find out more, learn the lessons and take appropriate

action. At the same time we will be respecting the author's current wish to not take the matter further.

We have set up a Working Group to do this work and it will be reporting in a few weeks' time.

We are determined to make this an open process which will be helped by outside expertise and scrutinised by people outside the AWL.

We are entirely willing to be held to account on the process and the findings of the Working Group. However, where comment is knitted into preconceived hostility to the AWL we will respond on the politics as necessary, while doing our best to keep the political response and the Working Group process separate. Two political responses are published at bit.ly/2BWrFNE and bit.ly/2sqNxwN

As regards process, we have set up a page with links to the original blog, our response, and updates on our work on this matter, which can be found at bit.ly/awlresponse.

Hugh Masekela 1939-2018

By Bruce Robinson

South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela died aged 79 on 23 January following a recurrence of prostate cancer. He was famous internationally for his playing and singing; for blending South African musical styles with jazz and pop; and as a prominent anti-apartheid activist.

Born in Witbank, a mining town near Johannesburg, Masekela started his musical career in a school run by the British anti-apartheid priest Trevor Huddleston. After seeing a biopic about jazz trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke, he agreed to stop getting into trouble at school in exchange for learning the trumpet. He then became part of the "Father Huddleston Band", which made several recordings in 1956. Huddleston famously convinced Louis Armstrong to give Masekela one of his trumpets.

This was a period when the style labelled "Township Jazz" was thriving in areas of South Africa's big cities. It combined American swing with a range of local styles, ranging from close harmony singing via the penny whistle jive known as kwela to marabi, the equivalent to the blues. In 1958 Masekela formed the Jazz Epistles with some other key figures, particularly pianist Dollar Brand (later Abdullah Ibrahim), trombonist Jonas Gwangwa and "South Africa's Charlie Parker", saxophonist Kippie Moeketsi. They made the first LP by black jazz musicians, drawing on modern American jazz styles in a fusion with South African elements.

APARTHEID

By this time it was getting more and more difficult for black musicians to work and survive apartheid.

Inner city areas such as Sophiatown which had served as cultural centres were demolished to make way for whites only housing, and the black population transported to townships outside the cities. The state broadcaster banned any music other than "Bantu" folk music, anything that might show black people to be capable of sophisticated and modern musical creation. Repression grew following the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and Masekela has said he was already known as an underground activist.

Many musicians who had the opportunity left. Masekela ended up in New York via London with help from John Dankworth, Yehudi Menuhin and Harry Belafonte. He was faced with a musical dilemma hinted at in the title of his 1965 album 'The Americanisation of Ooga Booga'. "I just wanted to play bebop", he said, inspired by seeing many of his US heroes in the flesh. It was perhaps a safer choice when there was little awareness of what came to be known as World Music. He recounted being convinced by Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie to retain the South African sound, finding sympathetic American musicians to play with, particularly pianist Larry Willis with whom he worked intermittently for the rest of his life. In 1968, he had a number one hit in the pop charts with 'Grazing in the Grass' with



trumpet over a catchy African riff. His continued allegiance to both African and American musical genres was later well captured on his 1988 album 'Uptownship', which consisted of his jazz covers of Motown hits alongside African tunes.

Masekela moved to Africa in 1972, partly to escape conditions that fed addictions, playing with local musicians in a number of countries including Fela Kuti. He was involved with organising a music festival on the occasion of Ali's "Rumble in the Jungle" in Zaire in 1974. In 1980, he settled in Botswana, close to South Africa, setting up a recording studio where he made several albums. He returned to South Africa immediately after Mandela's release and worked with young musicians, while also recording albums such as 'Sixty' which were more rooted in the crossover sounds he had pioneered.

From the 60s onwards Masekela was a public face of opposition to apartheid, combining his music with what was often a directly political message: 'Stimela', the story of migrant workers forced to work in the mines of South Africa, which featured his voice telling their story and imitating the train bringing them; 'Soweto Blues' written about the 1976 uprising; 'Bring Him Back Home' for Nelson Mandela; 'Blues for Huey' for the Black Panther leader Huey Newton; and others. He appeared at the concert for Mandela's 70th birthday at Wembley in 1988.

But Masekela was not just a mouthpiece for the orthodoxy of the ANC or broader anti-apartheid movement. Together with his ex-wife Miriam Makeba, he appeared with Paul Simon on his 1986 Graceland tour despite it being subject to pickets for breaking the UN cultural boycott of South Africa — by giving prominence to black South African musicians who would otherwise have remained little known outside their country. Also, after 1994, he was critical of aspects of the new political settlement, including the widespread xenophobia towards migrant workers. His last album was titled 'No Borders'.

Masekela's trumpet or flugelhorn playing could be strong and angry or soft and caressing. It was also joyful. I saw him a number of times in the last few years and remember how he would not be happy until he had got the audience dancing. So successful was he that I remember the Hackney Empire almost literally rocking.

He was not merely a virtuoso jazz trumpeter or a political activist, but also a key creator of a musical form that continues to inspire South African musicians and provide enjoyment for listeners.

Hope and fight:

By Sean Matgamna

"Why waste your life on this foolish quest?", we are asked by anti-socialists and sceptics. "Why invite us to do the same? Why fight for a cause that may suffer nothing but defeat, in your lifetime, or forever?"

Our new book *Socialism Makes Sense* replies:

Are we nothing higher than a commercially-conducted and regulated edition of animals, amongst them primitive humankind, spending an entire lifetime browsing and grubbing for food? That is the "shop until you drop" ethos which this society glorifies and depends on for economic dynamism. Leavened maybe with a bit of religious uplift, a half-tongue-in-cheek consultation with a horoscope to see what "the stars" are going to do to you? Maybe the small and tame bacchanalia of a pop festival once a year or so?

If you are a worker, are you content to spend most of your life doing work you don't care about — or do care about, but are forced to do in a way you can't find fulfilling — for an employer whose only concern is to coin profit out of you and the work you do? Will you settle into being a docile wage-slave, breeding and rearing children to be the next generation of wage-slaves?

Or will you rebel? Will you be content with the story the bourgeoisie and their media tell of themselves, and of you, or will you inquire for yourself, and study the literature of the rebels against capitalism, the Marxists? Will you join the labour movement, help build it up, fight for it against the masters of capitalist society?

If you are a student, what are you going to do when you leave university? If you are a one-time left-wing student, now working, what do you do?

LIVE

Of course, you have to live, and you live in this society, not in the sort of society you might choose. You will have to get a job. If not an ideal one, you may still get a better job than you would have without your studies.

Maybe one where (as some people say) you "love your work but hate your job". But can you, should you, put your best energies into "making a career"?

Will you teach? In a school in a low-income area, where you will participate in the heart-breaking reality of kids going through school and emerging semi-literate? When you know that only changes in society, not just the efforts of individual teachers, will change that? And where you will have to use more energy on complying with the box-ticking, exam-obsessed, impositions of school management and exam boards than on responding to the needs of your pupils?

Will you become a university teacher, re-tailing second and third hand opinion and received capitalist wisdom, with a bit of academic-Marxist criticism, perhaps, for leaven and for the sake of your conscience? If you get an academic job with more scope, will you be a left-wing academic consumer of "revolutionary" anti-capitalist theory, but not

do anything about it in practice by spreading understanding to the people at large, specifically to the working class, and helping them organise to fight for it?

Will you be a nurse? A doctor? You'll see the heartbreak of a National Health Service in chaos, with desperately needed medical care "rationed" by way of waiting times and increasingly by markets, and the enormous and crippling amounts of money paid out to the pharmaceutical companies.

Will you become a chemist working for a pharmaceutical company? You might help invent a great medical step forward — and see it used as an expensive commodity, available only to those who can pay or have the welfare state pay, in order to make profit for the bosses and shareholders of the company.

Will you go to a poorer country and make life a little better for people who, in a rich and supposedly civilised world, are dying for lack of money to buy food and even comparatively cheap medicines? Will you be a social worker? You will be providing inadequate help to the victims of poverty, poor education, unemployment, and migration far from home.

At best you'll help them organise their lives a bit better, with inadequate means and devastatingly arid prospects.

Will you be an immigration official? Help regiment migrant workers and their families; sort out the "legals" from the "illegals"; be part of a system which demonises, hunts down, imprisons, and deports the "illegals"?

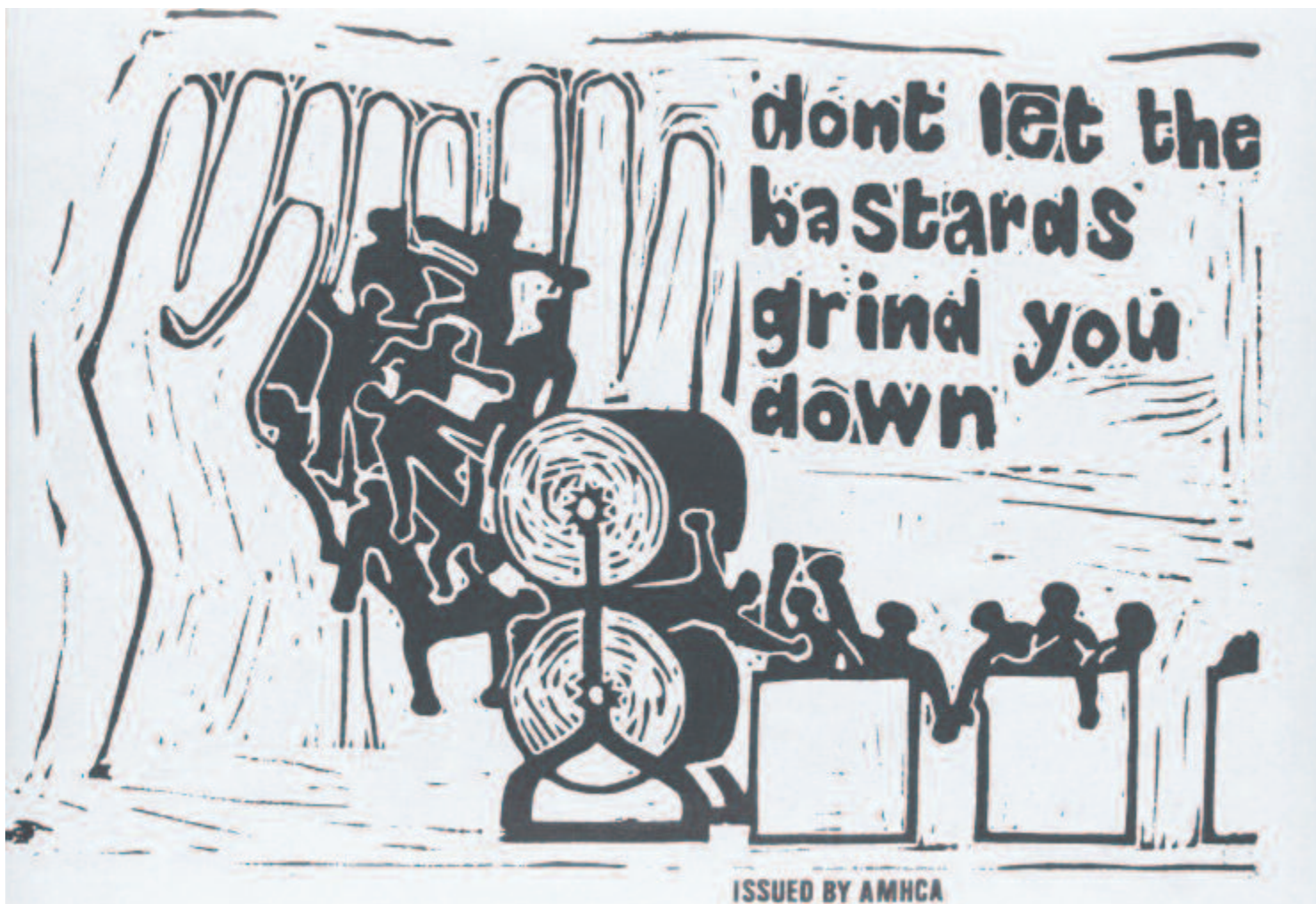
Be a journalist? You won't be a privileged columnist, with some right to express a personal opinion (within the limits regulated by the choice of the newspaper and TV owners who can grant you that privilege). There are very few such jobs. As a run-of-the-mill newspaper or TV journalist, you can't help but contribute in some degree to the selection, slanting, and "balancing" of the millionaire-owned opinion-forming machine in which you will be a voice in a chorus singing what the others sing, what you are told to sing from the bourgeois hymn-book.

You can't help but participate in a biased selection of what is "newsworthy", in presenting capitalism and "all its works and pomps" as something immutable and fixed; in suppressing discussion of the socialist alternatives that the crisis of capitalism has given a relevance which they seemed not to have in the days of the long capitalist boom before 2007-8.

Will you become a professional politician? Go from school and university, perhaps through office in a student union, on to be a "researcher" and maybe then a parliamentary candidate? That is, mould and shape yourself to fit into the political machinery that runs the system? The modern mainstream politician is a rancid mix of actor, reciting prescribed lines, and lawyer, arguing a brief from whichever side of the issue is indicated, without real conviction or real concern for what is true or best for society.

Will you become a trade-union official? You will be in the labour movement, but "professionally" barred from being able to tell workers openly what you think about the issues that arise and about the union leader-

why you should be a socialist



A print by Association of Members of Hornsey College of Art during an occupation in 1968

ship and its policies. Will you limit yourself to helping workers get a little more wages in the labour market — some of the time! — but also inadvertently helping the union machinery and the top leaders regiment and limit working-class responses to their own exploitation, bamboozlement and degradation?

Will you become a civil servant and keep your head down? Become some other sort of official, functioning as a cog in a bureaucratic machine, serving capitalism?

ENERGIES

You have to get a job. But to put your best energies into any of those jobs, or similar ones, is self-serving in the narrowest financial and consumerist sense. It would be, for you, self-submerging and self-destructing in the sense of destroying your critical overview of what is right and wrong. It would, I put it to you, be deeply irresponsible.

Most students — most rebellious students too — go on as they get older to excise parts of themselves so that they can fit in to a career like those I've just surveyed. Don't you think that we socialist militants have a better idea? You have to live in society as it is, but you don't have to fool yourself and, as you get older, mutilate and repudiate your better, younger self. You don't have to prostitute yourself.

You can be better than that. You are better than that! You can be an enemy of capitalism and of its political machine and its opinion-industries. You can study the Marxist critique

of capitalism — and maybe develop it — and be active, in your workplace, in your everyday life, on the streets, to prepare the working class to rise and make a better society, a far better society, one free from the evils that make capitalism an abomination, and all the more abominable because something better is possible now.

Individual life should not be clad in narrowly personal and familial asbestos-skinned egotism — "I'm all right, Jack, fuck the others" — conscience-salved perhaps with a donation here and there to charitable institutions such as War on Want or Oxfam. Anyway, "society" may not leave you alone. An awful lot of people hypnotised by the values of commercialism have had to wake up from that sleep to the fact that they have been like the legendary St Brendan, the Dark-Ages Irish monk who made his camp on a solid island in the sea, lit his fire to cook, and found it moving under him: it wasn't an island, it was a whale.

I put it to you that a better philosophy of life than the prevailing one is to face the fact that we are, each of us, part of a broader social entity, and that we should concern ourselves with its well-being as a necessary way of securing our own and our children's and grandchildren's wellbeing. I recently came across the following words, said to a journalist by the actress Marilyn Monroe, a woman of the left who had had to fight her way through the sewers of capitalist society.

She summed up much of what socialists seek in simple words that might have come from William Morris: "What I really want to

say is that what the world really needs is a real feeling of kinship. Everybody, stars, labourers, Negroes, Jews, Arabs: we are all brothers. Please don't make me a joke. End the interview with what I believe".

We should concern ourselves with the moral climate around us, if only in the interests of our children and their children, and do something to counter the mind-rotting morality bred in us by capitalism and rein-

forced by it. The morality for which, as someone well said, everything has a price but nothing an intrinsic or transcendent value. We should not peacefully exist in and with a society in which the precondition for workers to live is that they submit to being wage slaves, and accept that their productive energies are owned and controlled by employers who take a large part of the new wealth the workers create.

We should not settle into accepting fatalistically that a large part of humanity, including many in whose midst we live, suffer in hunger, ignorance, and needless disease. We should not live without trying to do something about the slaughter of millions of children in worse-off countries on the altar of capitalist necessity. We should not be passive consumers only, but also try to create something better, or contribute to its creation.

All that aside, the root argument why you should join us is that you know that humankind under capitalism lives in a world of savage exploitations, inequalities, and profound injustice. Needless, shameful, damnable injustice. At stake here is the future of democracy, of equality, of all that is good in the society humankind has so far created, and of humankind itself. Have the courage to hope and to fight to realise your best hopes and desires. Slough off and break your paralysing sense of irony, unworthiness, absurdity, and, as James Connolly used to put it, dare to hope and dare to fight. Entrench yourself in the attitude expressed by one of Connolly's comrades of the 1916 Rising:

"Did ye think to conquer the people,
Or that law is stronger than life,
And than our desire to be free?
We will try it out with you,
Ye that have harried and held,
Ye that have bullied and bribed.
Tyrants... hypocrites... liars!"
As the early socialists said: "A full, free, happy life — for all or for none!
Hope, and fight."

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Let's call it a day on the "Cambridge Five"

By John Cunningham

Yet another book on the "Cambridge Five" rolls off the press (*Enemies Within: Traitors, Spies and the Making of Modern Britain* by Richard Davenport-Hines), and it's time to stifle yet another yawn as this mini-industry and apparent national obsession with posh spies.

I don't want to review Davenport-Hines' book. In my opinion, most of the writing on the Cambridge Five is bog standard when it is not dreadful, and I want to discuss is why this is so.

The Cambridge Five were: Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Anthony Blunt, John Cairncross and Donald Maclean. From the early 1930s, despite being members of the British elite, they spied for Soviet intelligence. In the 1950s/1960s Burgess, Maclean and Philby defected to the Soviet Union and the other two became "inactive".

The Five were classic "moles", burrowing deep into British Intelligence and state apparatus, revealing so many secrets to Moscow Centre that, at times, the Russians simply could not keep pace.

Previous books on The Five include: *Anthony Blunt: His Lives* (Miranda Carter); *Stalin's Englishman* (Andrew Lownie); *A Spy Among Friends: Kim Philby and the Great Betrayal* (Ben Macintyre); *The Great Betrayal: The Untold Story of Kim Philby's Greatest Coup* (Nicholas Bethell); *The Master Spy: The Story of Kim Philby* (Phillip Knightley); *Guy Burgess: A Portrait With Background* (Tom Driberg) and *Donald and Melinda Maclean: Idealism and Espionage* (Michael Holzman). There are at least six PhD theses on the Five, at least two feature films ('Another Country' and 'An Englishman Abroad'), numerous TV documentaries, a couple of stage plays and a number of fictional spy stories which feed off the Cambridge Five legends in various ways such as John Le Carré's *Tinker Tailor, Soldier, Spy*. Here I must confess that I once added to this dreary roll-call by giving a presentation on "British Spy Films" at a conference in Budapest in 1998. I belatedly offer my apologies to those who sat through it.

Because of the Cambridge Five's activities, it is probably true to say that for decades there was very little that Moscow did not know about the operations of MI6 around the world. Kim Philby, single-handedly, was responsible for sabotaging one of the Cold War's earliest anti-USSR operations. Just after the war he organised three successive operations to send trained and armed Albanian exiles back to their country of origin to fight the regime of arch-Stalinist Enver Hoxha. With just two exceptions who managed to escape to Greece, every one of these insurgents was captured and executed within two days of landing in Albania. Philby, of course, had notified Moscow who then alerted the Albanian security forces who were waiting for them.

Cairncross, when working at the British decoding centre, Bletchley Park, was able to send full details of the positions and strengths of German army units to Moscow just before the key battle of Kursk on the Eastern Front.

There are some myths about the Five that need to be dealt with. I would suggest that it is the failure of those who have written about them to deal with these myths that have contributed to the poor quality and tedium of their output.

Myth Number 1: The Cambridge Five were exploited by Soviet intelligence because their homosexuality made them vulnerable to blackmail, pressure and extortion. In fact

only two of the Five were homosexual: Blunt and Burgess. There are no indications that Moscow ever used homosexuality as a tool against any of the Five. It was a very different story when visiting British diplomats got themselves caught in compromising situations on secret cameras.

In fact one biographer has suggested, probably rightly, that Burgess and Blunt's homosexuality was seen by Moscow as an advantage. The English upper class homosexual community had an extremely well-developed contact network which Blunt and Burgess exploited and the British establishment tolerated homosexuality as long as it was discreet and hidden from view. It was only when Burgess's outrageous drunken behaviour led to him openly flaunt his homosexuality that it became potentially compromising (particularly when he was in America).

Myth Number 2: The Cambridge Five were young and naive. This doesn't stand up to critical examination. All five carried on their activities way past their youth and Philby, Burgess and Maclean were all unrepentant to the grave. More importantly, all the Five were intelligent, resourceful in the extreme and well-versed in their various special fields in "civilian life". Blunt, for example was a well-known art expert and Cairncross published a number of highly praised works on French literature. Burgess was extremely well-read in Marxist theory and when working on the MI6 China Desk developed an analysis of the revolution there which opposed the simplistic attitudes of the CIA who simply saw the Chinese revolution as the Bolshevik revolution mark two.

SUSPECT

Myth Number 3: The Five were not suspected of being Soviet spies and were very good at deception.

In fact there were many suspicions about the Five. It's just that nobody did much about it. Burgess, who was rarely sober for more than a day at a time, even bragged about being a Soviet sympathiser, while staff at Buckingham palace where Blunt worked as an art adviser to the Queen (!) were heard to openly refer to him as "our Soviet spy". It was no secret that all Five had, at various times, been associated with the British Communist Party.

Burgess, while at University, had openly (to his credit) campaigned in support of striking Cambridge bus drivers. Blunt had published articles on the Marxist interpretation of art. Kim Philby even went so far as to hold a press conference in his London flat to demonstrate he wasn't a spy. On the orders of Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan charges against him were dropped.

A number of quite powerful people did suspect one or all of the Cambridge Five of being spies including the Director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, and Dick White, the Director General of MI5 in the 50s (who later became Director of MI6).

The Five had powerful and influential friends and connections. Either they didn't believe that the Five could have done what they did or, they kept quiet about it so as not to embarrass the establishment (which included themselves). Spies who were caught but were not part of the old boys' network were not treated in such a lenient fashion. George Blake, who did not attend Eton or Harrow or graduate from Cambridge and — heaven forbid — wasn't even British, received a prison sentence of 30 years when he

was caught. None of the Cambridge Five were ever charged with any offence or put on trial. Anthony Blunt even received a (very discreet) pardon for his activities.

Myth Number 4: The Five did what they did because: they were alienated from society / they had overbearing, authoritarian mothers / fathers / they were isolated and felt a need to belong / they loved secrecy / they loved the idea of power that being a spy brought (delete as you see fit).

What all writers on the Five ignore is that they actually believed in what they were doing. Although there is much in that belief that can and should be criticised — it was after all, ultimately a belief in Stalinism — they held to their beliefs doggedly, over many years in often stressful and demanding circumstances. Possibly what helped them tough it out is that they were isolated.

All those who were members of the Communist Party resigned when they "signed up" for Moscow Centre. This was part of the overall deception involved. They therefore did not participate in Party debates and perhaps this rendered them somewhat immune to the disillusionment associated with the Hitler-Ribbentrop Pact, revelations about the Gulag, the repression of Hungary in 1956 etc. If your only serious political contact is your "minder", then it is not likely you will develop a critical view of the Soviet Union and Comrade Stalin.

Myth Number 5: The Five were "traitors". This answers nothing and merely panders to a kind of weak "shock, horror" about their supposed lack of patriotism. All of them originally aligned with the Communist Party in Britain because of their hatred of fascism and it appeared to many of that generation (and not just those at Cambridge) that it was the Communist Party who were the only ones actually doing something about the growing threat of fascism in Germany and elsewhere.

Their second hate object was the United States. At least in their early days the Five appear to have done little that would have damaged British interests. Philby, Burgess and Maclean all loved England and it was a wrench when they had to flee to the Soviet Union. To call them traitors answers nothing and merely appeals to a tribal *Daily Mail* editorial mentality, clouding a proper understanding of what they did and why.

Myth Number 6: The repressive Public School system, with its brutality, rigid hierarchies, and excessive discipline, produced a resentment and revulsion within the Five that encouraged them to turn to the Soviet Union. This is the theme of the film 'Another Country'.

It is a neat formula. However, none of the Five appears to have been all that upset or traumatised by their school experience. Burgess proudly wore his Old Etonian tie even when living in Moscow. Cairncross never even went to a public school, nor did



Kim Philby at the press conference in his home

he attend Cambridge as an undergraduate (His father was an ironmonger in Scotland).

Myth Number 7: The Five were "tragic" figures. For the commentariat the Five's tragedy was that they sacrificed their lives to a belief that ultimately was shown to be erroneous and the system built on that belief ignominiously collapsed. Whether or not any of the Five saw things this way is open to question. The real tragedy about the Cambridge Five is that in supporting the Soviet Union they, in reality, supported Stalinism. There is little to suggest that they ever seriously questioned that.

Myth Number 8: British Intelligence is now a reformed body and no longer run by the incompetent former public schoolboys of yore. Reading Stella Rimington's monumentally tedious memoirs of her time as head of MI5 does not inspire one with confidence. She seems to seriously believe that the British Communist Party's policy statement, *The British Road to Socialism* is a revolutionary document. Has she ever read it?

Rimington also probably had a hand in Roger Windsor's visit to Libya during the Miners' Strike of 1984-5. Windsor, who was an executive officer for the NUM, was almost certainly an MI5 agent of some description. The Libya visit was a set-up which caused a scandal at the time, and it certainly caused some problems for the NUM, precisely what it was aimed to do. However, this sting operation is hardly an advertisement for the impartiality and openness of the "new" British Intelligence service.

There's much more that could be said. But why do we still have to rely on the guesswork of ill-informed journalists passing themselves off as historians, or the supposed "confessions" of delusional nonentities who might once have passed Guy Burgess in the corridors of Trinity College or once joined the Communist Party for three weeks after attending a meeting in Saffron Walden in 1936? It should be the right of the citizens of this country to have access to the historical records of British Intelligence so we can make a reasoned and informed judgement about the things done in our name. However, even today, years and years after the events some archives are still closed or have been mysteriously "lost". What we are forced to turn to is a mountain of largely regurgitated drivel.

Let's get a Freedom of Information Act with teeth and then, to use the words of the competent and serious Neal Acherson back in 1983 when also reviewing the literature on the Cambridge Five, "Let's get the blanket over this parrot and enjoy a spell of peace."

The story of Votes for Women

By Jill Mountford

The first leaflet in Britain to “insist” on woman’s suffrage was written in 1847 by a prominent woman Chartist, Anne Knight. Seventy years later women over 30, with certain property qualifications, were granted the right to vote as part of the Representation of the Peoples Act in February 1918.

The fight for women’s suffrage is best known for the militant campaign waged by the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) and conducted for almost a decade from 1905 to 1914. However, the history of the fight for women’s suffrage goes way beyond those militant nine years and the activities of the WSPU.

From the very beginning there were women who argued clearly and specifically for votes for women but did so from a belief in universal suffrage. Anne Knight argued the Chartists should campaign for “true universal suffrage”, asking “can man be free, if a woman is a slave?”

In that first women’s suffrage leaflet she wrote, “Never will the nations of the earth be well governed, until both sexes, as well as all parties, are fully represented and have an influence, a voice, and a hand in the enactment and administration of the laws”. Anne’s demands for “true universal suffrage” came just before the decline of the Chartist movement from 1848.

It was Anne Knight and Anne Kent, founders of the Sheffield Female Political Association in 1851, who published the first petition demanding women’s suffrage in England. It was presented to the House of Lords and defeated.

A year later, in the 1852 General Election, Anne Knight wrote, “...forbidden to vote for a man who inflicts the laws I am compelled to obey — the taxes I am compelled to pay... taxation without representation is tyranny”. More than fifty years later Dora Montefiore, socialist feminist, adult suffragist and member of the Social Democratic Federation organises a “tax resistance siege” demanding, “Women should vote for the laws they obey and the taxes they pay”.

Seventeen years after Anne Knight’s leaflet a group of women suffragists, including Dr Elizabeth Garrett (later Anderson and sister of Millicent Garrett, later Fawcett), Barbara Bodichon and Dorothea Beale from the Kensington Society launched a new petition for votes for women. For some women. Established in 1865, their group was made up of women of “above average thoughtfulness and intelligence who are interested in common subjects”. This was admirable aim, but theirs was, inevitably, an exclusive club of educated middle-class women with independent means and time to think.

With three radical MPs supporting their demands — the recently elected John Stuart Mill, Henry Fawcett and Peter Alfred Taylor, — an amendment was put forward to the 1867 Reform Act to grant women the same political rights as men. The amendment was defeated by 196 votes to 73.

After this defeat the Kensington Society formed the London Society for Women’s Suffrage. Similar groups were being set up elsewhere in the country, one of the more prominent being the Manchester National Society for Women’s Suffrage. Previously it had been the Manchester Committee for the Enfranchisement of Women. It was established by Elizabeth Wolstenholme-Elmy with Richard Pankhurst being an early member, 14



Selina Cooper (seated centre) speaking in Hyde Park in 1913

years before he met and married Emmeline Goulden.

Richard Pankhurst, a radical barrister and advisor to Lydia Becker (who was now the Secretary of the MNSWS), drafted a successful amendment to the Municipal Franchise Act, giving the vote to women rate payers in local elections and granted women the right to stand in elections as Poor Law Guardians.

As an active member of the MNSWS, Pankhurst drafted the first women’s enfranchisement bill to go to Parliament in 1870. He also worked with Wolstenholme-Elmy to draft the Married Women’s Property Bill. Elmy was secretary of the Married Women’s Property Committee. The Bill became the Married Women’s Property Act in the same year.

MARRIAGE

Barbara Bodichon had been infuriated by women’s non-existence in marriage decades early and in 1854 she researched and wrote a pamphlet, *A Brief Summary, in Plain Language, of the Most Important Laws concerning Women*, listing all the laws that negatively impacted on women’s lives and opportunities.

In 1856 she wrote another, more radical pamphlet entitled *Women and Work*. In it she argued “No human being has the right to be idle... Women must ... be trained to do some work in the world”. She argued that existing laws were degrading to women, that a lack of women’s rights within marriage made marriage little more than “legal prostitution”.

In that same year Bodichon set up a small committee to petition for women’s rights within marriage and gathered 26,000 signatures calling for a change in the law. Self-conscious of the size of the petition bundle, she asked an apple seller outside Parliament to keep it under her stall until she was able to meet John Stuart Mill who was receiving it. The apple seller asked what it was about and insisted she added her name to the petition.

It is crude and short sighted to dismiss the work of middle class or bourgeois feminists as only being concerned about the lives of

middle-class and well-heeled women. Bodichon mixed with socialists, radicals and artists; she was insatiably curious, thoughtful and open minded. Along with other middle-class feminists they challenged the status quo, broke the norms imposed on women and, as Mary Foster, an Independent Labour Party (ILP) member from Leeds wrote “the bourgeois women’s movement in all lands has tended to open up the minds of women generally to an examination of the questions which especially affect their sex”. She went on to say but “it cannot be compared in importance and significance with the organisations for working women ... to advance the cause of labour and political freedom.”

From 1867 to the 1884 women’s suffrage was debated almost every year in Parliament. Supported by radical Liberal MPs, under pressure and persuasion from a variety of women’s suffrage societies armed with petitions and always prepared to lobby, Bills and amendments were drafted, argued and defeated time and again.

The 1884 Reform Act increased the number of men who could vote in Parliamentary elections by around six million. It gave the counties the same voting rights as the boroughs, that is, to male householders and £10 lodgers. Around 60% of men now had the right to vote.

Despite petitioning and lobbying from 100 women of “liberal opinion” led by Millicent Garrett Fawcett, and 79 Liberal MPs supporting votes for women on the same grounds as men, the Liberal prime minister, Gladstone, refused to include women in the Bill. He claimed that doing so would lead to the whole Bill being defeated.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the movement for women’s suffrage started to gather pace. This coincided with a huge wave of industrial militancy around the “new unions” and the beginnings of organised labour developing its own political representation.

The movement for women’s suffrage was, inevitably, dominated by middle-class women but for the first time working-class women found a voice and articulated that the

right to vote was of interest to them. Women such as Selina Cooper, an early member of the ILP and a seasoned trade unionist who had campaigned against sexual harassment in the workplace and for women’s equality in her union, became key figures in organising working-class women around the fight for women’s suffrage.

In 1897 seventeen women’s suffrage groups from around the country joined together to form the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS).

Millicent Fawcett was the president from 1907 to 1919. NUWSS had 50,000 members at its peak and organised thousands of working-class women, particularly mill workers in Lancashire and Yorkshire. As a “constitutional” campaign, the NUWSS was a cross-party organisation that lobbied, petitioned, and evangelised all over the country about a woman’s right to vote.

The history of women’s suffrage has been a bit too dismissive of the NUWSS and the working-class women involved with it, instead focusing on the militant campaign of the WSPU.

Many prominent women in the labour movement, around different socialist groups, were not persuaded that women’s suffrage was the priority campaign above that of workers’ rights and particularly women workers’ rights.

Women such as Margret McMillan, Katherine Bruce Glasier and Enid Stacey all became more active in socialist politics as a direct result of the industrial militancy of 1888-89. Stacey thought women’s rights to be a “middle-class fad”. It was not until 1898 that Julia Dawson, creator of the Clarion Vans*, said she was “converted to women’s suffrage”. However from the 1900s she focused on the fight for adult suffrage.

Others such as Mary Gawthorpe, Ethel Annakin (later Snowden) and Teresa Billington (Grieg), were all involved in socialist politics in the 1880s and 90s before women’s suffrage became a central political issue. All then placed their full-time focus on the fight for votes for women.

Dora Montefiore started out as a campaigner for women’s suffrage in Australia. When she returned to Britain in 1892 she continued this work with the NUWSS. But not until 1898 did she get involved in socialist politics, firstly with the Clarion Van. As her politics evolved she joined the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), did a short stint in the WSPU, and then campaigned for adult suffrage.

Isabella Ford, Selina Cooper and Ada Neild Chew all managed to maintain their work as socialist propagandists while travelling all over the country campaigning for votes for all women.

Five years after the launch of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) a growing group of women were getting frustrated by all the “fiddle faddling” and lack of progress, as Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, at the age of 70, complained.

Sylvia Pankhurst recalls how on, “the 10 October [1903], at 62 Nelson St a few women members of the ILP [met and] the Women’s Social and Political Union was formed.”

And so began a new phase of struggle for women’s suffrage.

• Part two of this article will appear in the next issue of *Solidarity*.

* Horse-drawn carriages which toured small towns and villages in England and Scotland spreading socialist ideas.

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

17-18 February

Student Feminist Conference
10am, Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL
bit.ly/2FDYkpT

Wednesday 21 February

On New Terrain: With Kim Moody
6.30pm, Bookmarks bookshop. 1
Bloomsbury Street, WC1B 3QE
bit.ly/2GVfC2i

Wednesday 28 February

Defend Education — march for pensions and pay
Noon, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HY
bit.ly/2C0VyI9

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

Wednesday 7 March

Saudi Prince Not Welcome — protest Mohammad bin Salman visit
5pm, Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA
bit.ly/2o3cc57

Saturday 17 March

March Against Racism — UN Anti Racism Day
Noon, Portland Place, London W1B 1LY
bit.ly/2GbepCR

Saturday 17 March

Marxists and national questions: AWL day school
Noon, Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL
bit.ly/mx-nq

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

Northamptonshire council goes bust

LABOUR

By a Northampton Labour Party member

The Tories who run the Cabinet of Northants Council County have been condemned — by local Tory MPs and Tory council backbenchers — as the “worst-run local authority in the country”, “not up to the job”.

The condemnation came in response to the imposition of a section 114 notice on the council, which means that no new expenditure is permitted, “with the exception of safeguarding vulnerable people and statutory services” (sic). The notice comes as the council appears not to be able to set a balanced budget despite already imposing millions of pounds of cuts in recent years.

Of course, the local Tories' condemnation is laughable. These are the same people who for years have consistently supported savage cuts by central and local government. They are shameless hypocrites who don't give a damn about working-class people, but now are concerned about distancing themselves from the mess the council is in.



A protest against library closures in January

Local anti-cuts activists in Save Northants Services are organising a protest in Northampton town centre from 12 noon on Saturday 17 February. Councillors have 21 days to discuss the implications of the section 114 notice and this is due to be addressed at the Full Council meeting on 22 February.

Tory MPs have called for government commissioners to take control, something unfortunately echoed by recently-elected Labour Prospective Parliamentary Candidates in Northants.

I have submitted an emergency motion to Northampton Labour Party which meets on Thursday 15 Feb. The motion has the following

demands: All Tory County Councillors to resign as they are all responsible for this debacle; The restoration of funding to a level which enables the County Council to provide services on the basis of what is necessary and desirable; An end to austerity and PFI; To prepare to put to the people of Northants an alternative that will safeguard all jobs and services, based on what is necessary and desirable rather than based on the artificial constraints of austerity politics.

To support and mobilise for the protest in Northampton on Saturday 17 Feb, organised by Save Northants Services.

Haringey Labour members discuss manifesto

By Micheál MacEoin

On 4 February, over 200 Labour Party members gathered for the Haringey Labour local government conference.

The conference passed all the motions submitted to shape the Labour manifesto for the next council elections. Those included:

- setting up a wholly-owned development vehicle to replace the discredited Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV)
- campaigning for the restoration of the local government funding cut by central government since 2010
- reinstating council tax support and ending the use of bailiffs
- bringing waste management back in-house
- initiating an empty homes audit and deploying compulsory purchase powers to buy properties to rent as required
- resisting academisation
- keeping all libraries open, with the same opening hours, for the next four years.

The event, perhaps the first of its kind in recent years, deserves to be more widely known about and imitated in the Labour Party.

All too often, Labour Party local government manifestos have been written by a clique around the Council leader, with little or no consultation with the rest of the party or the trade unions.

The victories of the left in recent months and years in Tottenham

and Hornsey and Wood Green CLPs made something different possible in Haringey.

Labour Party branches, the Women's Forum, Young Labour, etc. met to discuss motions to send to the conference. The trade unions had a separate event on 6 February to feed in their proposals.

The manifesto will still be written by the Labour Group and, in theory, all the proposals from members could be ignored. Not only would this be an affront to democracy, but it would be extremely short-sighted and politically damaging to the local Labour election campaign.

The decisions of the conference should set the tone for what Labour

promises to do if, and it is very likely, it remains the largest party on Haringey Council after May.

In future, we should investigate a national-level rule change to cement democratic members' control over the manifesto process.

The organisers of the Haringey conference should be congratulated for a well-organised event, and for setting down an important precedent, which the left in other boroughs should take up in future.

Ahead of the next local elections, a sign that the democratisation of the party is moving forward would be to see Labour local government conferences across the country, with democratic discussion and voting.



**21-24 June • Central London • workersliberty.org/ideas
Super-early bird tickets now available**

Royal Mail deal: demand more!

By Gemma Short

As previously reported in *Solidarity* (461, 7 February), the Communication Workers' Union Postal Executive has endorsed the agreement reached between CWU negotiators and Royal Mail, which will now be put to a vote of the membership.

The outline of the deal is: the creation of a new single pension scheme for all workers; extension of all current agreements and protections until 2022; two one-hour reductions in the working week (in October 2018 and October 2019) without loss of pay; a later last delivery, but not as late as Royal Mail wanted; a three year pay deal which the CWU claims equates to 12.33% (with two basic pay rises totalling 7% plus the reduction of the working week without loss of pay).

While this agreement represents a significant step back for Royal Mail from the company's position prior to the strike ballot, the potential to push for more should not be given up so soon.

On pay, the company has been forced into a higher pay offer, but the actual deal means some years will see a below-inflation pay deal. The whole pay offer is likely only



to take workers marginally above inflation over the three years of the deal.

The creation of a single pension scheme is a significant victory for workers currently on an inferior pension scheme. Royal Mail bosses have also stepped back from introducing a defined contribution pension scheme which would have left workers' pension pots at the mercy of the stock market. However the proposed "collective defined benefit" scheme while meaning a "wage in retirement" like currently, would have only "targets" rather than a guarantee for how much this

"wage" will be.

Such schemes are not currently legislated for in the UK. Implementation requires secondary legislation to be added to the Pensions Schemes Act 2015 before the scheme can be launched.

If this much was got from Royal Mail with the threat of strikes, more can be obtained by rejecting the deal, returning to negotiations but scheduling strikes to keep them on the mind of Royal Mail negotiators.

• The deal can be read in full here: bit.ly/2E7sP6q

No academy at Childeric!

By a teacher

Around 50 people attending a public meeting about the proposed academisation of Childeric School in Lewisham on Tuesday 30 January.

The audience comprised around 20 workers from the school, a couple of parents, and labour movement and anti-academy activists. We heard from GMB and NEU activists as well as from local councillor Joe Dromey, and received a statement from Vicky Foxcroft MP. All were clearly and vehemently for the school remaining a local authority school.

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) based in Southwark has ap-

proached the leadership of Childeric Primary School wanting the school to join. The leadership and some of the teachers at the school feel Lewisham Local Authority has poorly served them. This is based on a mixture of the problems all schools face due to cuts and some genuine failures on part of Lewisham education.

At the meeting, people argued that the solution was not joining a MAT but joining together to improve education in Lewisham. It was also pointed out that there was no more money for the school joining a MAT. The only way the MAT would deal with the pupils requiring more resources was to remove them from the school. At the end of the meeting several people said

their views had shifted against academisation.

Lewisham has managed to keep the vast majority of the schools under local authority control thanks to campaigns by unions and the labour movement. The council now say it isn't interested in pushing academisation as a solution.

Parents from Childeric, supported by the local councillors, are now urgently seeking a meeting with the school governors to discuss their concerns. The unions have written to the head and chair of governors asking for clarification over the consultation process.

A petition calling on the governors not to academise has been launched and is rapidly gaining signatures.

South Western Railway guards strike

By a train driver

RMT Guards at South Western Railway (formerly South West Trains) are taking action short of strike for four days on 16-19 February.

Their members have been instructed not to undertake any rest day working during that period and to refuse to carry out "key" aspects of their jobs — it is not clear

from RMT press releases which parts of their jobs they will be refusing to do.

RMT also says that SWR has been writing to its members threatening unlawful deductions from wages if they participate in the action.

The action is being taken over Driver Only Operation, also the subject of RMT disputes with Arriva Rail North (Northern), GTR Southern, Abellio Greater



Anglia and Merseyrail. However, this action is confined to SWR.

Cinema workers strike for seven days

By Gemma Short

Workers at Picturehouse cinemas will strike for seven full days starting Saturday 17 February.

Workers at the Ritzy cinema in Brixton, Picturehouse central in Soho, and Hackney, East Dulwich, and Crouch End Picturehouses will strike from 5am Saturday 17 February until 5am Saturday 24 February.

The strikes coincide with the Bafta awards ceremony, which happens at the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday 18 February.

Picturehouse managers reacted to a period of 13 strikes announced in January by announcing an effective "lock-out" of

workers in the Ritzy cinema, and threatening workers at all cinemas that they would be deducted a whole shift's pay if strikes started part way through a shift.

Faced with these threats, strikes from 22-27 January were called off, but workers still struck on 20-21 January.

• **Bectu strike fund: Account number 33045388, Sort code 60-83-01. When donating send an email to tnandhra@bectu.org.uk copying in ritzylivingwage@gmail.com stating that the donation is for the Picturehouse strike fund and asking for confirmation of receipt.**
• **Donate online at bit.ly/2dFl9KL**

School workers meet

By a teacher

Workers' Liberty members who work in schools met to discuss our political and union work on 3 February.

The meeting started with a useful discussion about Labour's education proposals. We welcomed a more positive tone in the 2017 manifesto than in previous elections but recognised it was light on specifics and detail. It did not commit to stop any new academies let alone bring all schools under local authority control.

The meeting also discussed revitalising critical discussion about education on the left. We agreed that UCAS should be abolished and to continue our fight against testing, which blights every part of education. We are going to draft a longer article discussing the sort of educa-

tion system we want.

The meeting spent much time on the practical preparation for the National Education Union's (NEU) conference at Easter. At conference we will focus on pushing to make the NEU a genuine school workers' union for all school workers, on getting the union to boycott testing in primary schools, on the fight against academies and free schools, on the union's relationship with Labour and stopping the union spending money on sending members for jollies in Stalinist Cuba amongst other issues.

Finally, we discussed with comrades in Unison about how to organise school support workers.

There was agreement that there needs to be one school workers' union, and that the NEU represents a step in this direction that needs to be built on.

Union fighting derecognition

By Charlotte Zalens

Unite is balloting workers at Fortem, which undertakes maintenance and repair work on Rotherham's council housing stock. The company had announced it had derecognised the union.

The derecognition announcement coincides with the company planning to make 20 workers redundant. Fortem derecognised the union without any warning after Unite sought negotiations over the redundancies.

Fortem had previously voluntarily recognised Unite and Unite reps.

More DLR strikes planned

By Peggy Carter

Cleaners, security workers, and travel safe officers on Docklands Light Railway (DLR) in London will strike again on 22-24 February.

Workers previously struck on 1-3 February and the RMT union has also called action-short-of-strike

from 5-10 February, in the form of a work-to-rule around risk assessments.

Workers involved in the dispute are contracted by ISS to work on the DLR. ISS has refused to negotiate over the RMT's pay claim and over changes to working practices at work.



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DEFEND MIGRANTS, DEFEND FREE MOVEMENT, FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM!

By Vicki Morris

Look around the world.

Look at EU migrants who have made the UK their home now wondering how long they can stay and on what terms, all under the threat of Brexit.

If they want to stay, they will have to apply for "settled status". 1.2 million UK citizens living in other EU member states face similar anxieties.

There are 3.7 million non-UK EU citizens in the UK; about 6% of the population and 7% of the working population.

Look just across the Channel — at Calais, which has long been a focus for migrants trying to reach the UK. Now that the French authorities have cleared out the migrant camps, the 1,000 migrants still at Calais live a life worse than that of a stray dog.

HARASSED

They are harassed by the police, and struggle to meet their basic needs of shelter, sanitation, warm clothing, safe food and drinking water, and healthcare.

The situation is similar for around 500 people in Brussels; and 1,500 people in Paris, according to the charity Care4Calais.

Look at Syria. A seven-year on-going war that began as a popular uprising against the dictator Assad, part of the Arab Spring, has created six million internal displaced persons, and more than five million external refugees.

Over half of the 22 million pre-

war population have been forced from their homes and now live in camps in Syria or neighbouring countries, or have migrated to Europe. Germany has taken 600,000 of them; the UK fewer than 10,000.

On the dangerous journey to safety and a better life that many Syrians embark on, they meet many more desperate people fleeing unstable political situations, wars and poverty in countries such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Bangladesh, Gambia, Algeria, Eritrea and Mali. Many of these people are fleeing areas controlled by ISIS and similar groups.

These refugees make hazardous overland journeys or, worse, risk their lives on unsafe boats crossing the Mediterranean. Along the route they are preyed on by criminals, people traffickers or even, in Libya now, people who want to sell them into slavery.

While the number of people trying to cross the Mediterranean has fallen dramatically since its peak of one million in 2015, already in 2018 7,865 have made this journey. Estimated numbers of people drowned or missing in the attempt this year alone are 368 [UNHCR figures].

Look further afield. In the US, President Trump advocates drastic measures to reduce migration from Mexico and countries to the south. He wants to move ahead with his plan to build a wall between the US and Mexico and has asked the US Treasury (not Mexico) for \$25 billion to build it. He wants to de-



port undocumented foreign-born working-class people but not only them — he also wants to deport their children who were born in the US, the so-called "Dreamers".

This is a spiteful, politically motivated measure, designed to shore up support for Trump among his base, but is unpopular with most US voters.

Around the world, there are other peoples suffering forced mass migration.

This includes Rohingya Muslims, 700,000 of whom have fled their homes in Burma following genocidal violence assisted by the Burmese state itself. Most of them

are now living in squalid camps in Bangladesh, itself one of the poorest countries in the world. Now Bangladesh has negotiated with the Burmese authorities to return the Rohingya.

These examples show a wide spread of migrant situations and experiences.

But such movements have always happened across territories during the aeons of human existence where national boundaries did not exist. The recent discovery that Cheddar Man, one of the earliest inhabitants in the UK, from whom 10% of Britons of "white" ancestry are descended, had black

skin drives that point home. Such movements of people are nothing to fear. They are part of the human condition.

In the era of nation states people have moved, with their movements monitored and regulated by states.

In recent times, migrants have come from other EU countries to the UK to plug gaps in the workforce; they make up 5.6% of NHS staff, for example.

There is no evidence that this migratory wave has driven down the wages of the "native" workers, and it has helped boost the UK economy.

Brexit puts this at risk, disrupting the lives of the workers affected, harming the economy, and destroying the opportunity for British and other European workers to understand each other better and build stronger links.

What is the answer to all of this? For countries to raise borders, to keep people out? For people to stay put and put up with what they are given? For mistrust to reign between fellow humans, particularly between workers from different countries?

No! The alternative is to fight for these principles:

- the right of all humans to travel where they want or need to, freedom of movement;
- human equality;
- solidarity between all people;
- the development of society and the economy everywhere.

The alternative is to fight for socialism!

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