



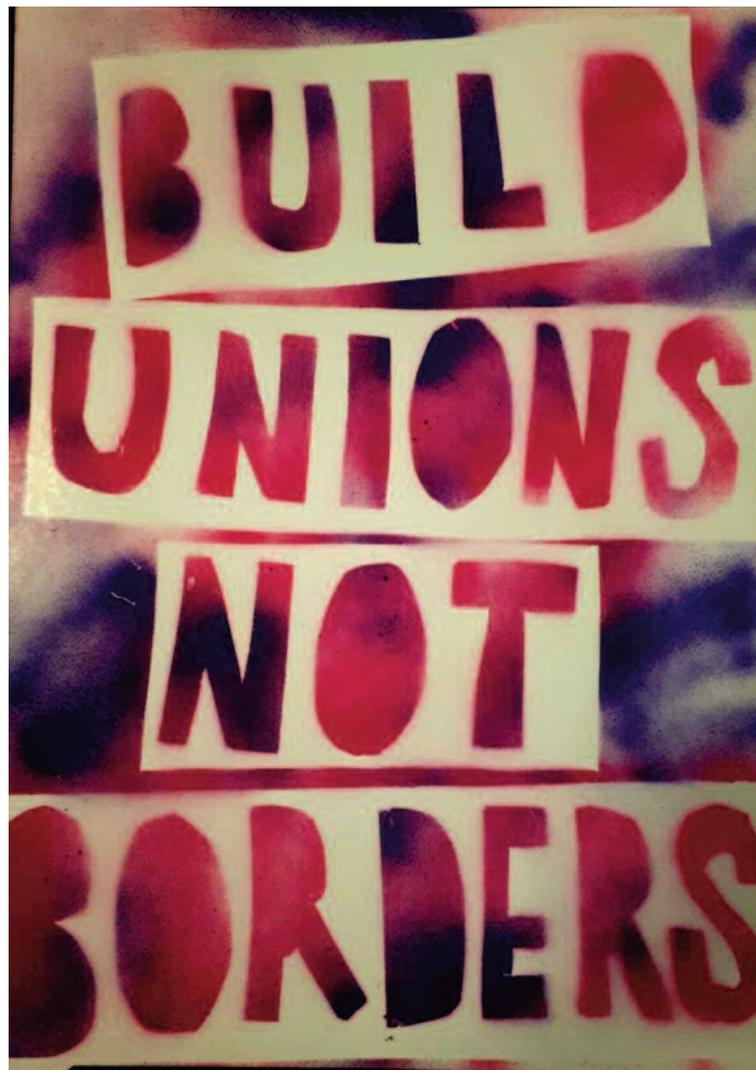
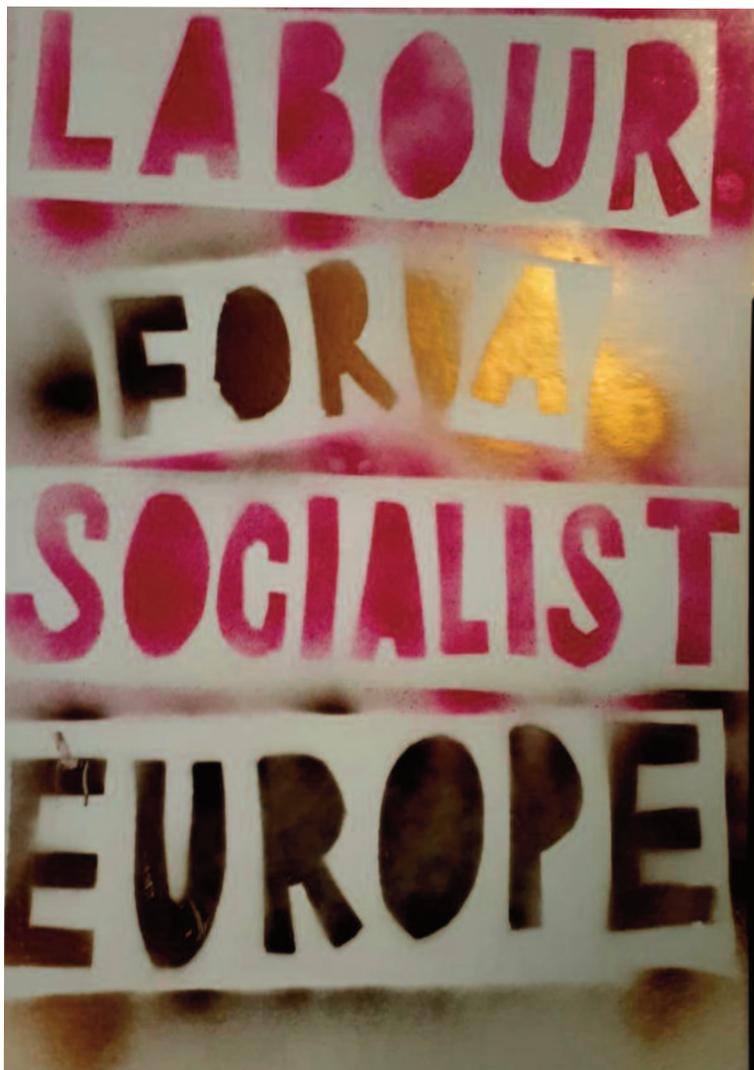
& Workers' Liberty

Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

No 491 16 January 2018 50p/£1

LABOUR: GET OFF THE FENCE!



The roots of Brexit

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Labour voice against Brexit

"Labour for a Socialist Europe" called a Labour anti-Brexit summit on 12 January and mapped campaign plans

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Climate after COP24

Mike Zubrowski says that the Katowice climate-change summit leaves the world still heading to catastrophe.

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After 15 Jan: Labour must back People's Vote

Renew Labour!

How not to fight the witch-hunt

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Protests at the Conference of the Parties demanding more serious action

Katowice and catastrophe



Climate

By Mike Zubrowski

The outcome of the latest international climate negotiations, COP24, in Katowice, Poland, in December, has been widely condemned as completely insufficient by environmental organisations.

Some early proposals would have aimed for a 30% reduction, but then reduction was made voluntary. There were no collective commitments made to increase emission-cutting actions or ambitions. Commitments did not even align with the goals of the Paris Agreements of 2015, themselves widely recognised to be woefully insufficient.

Commitments and reductions are to be monitored, but there is no serious enforcement, no penalties. And the commitments and reductions are all due to come in a few years time.

Many recognise that capitalist interests drove this failure: big fossil-fuel companies, states in which they are based, and governments being unwilling to commit significant finances.

It could have been worse. Some predicted the talks would fall apart

entirely given the USA's withdrawals. Agreements were made. Any time bought by slight reductions is valuable. But the agreements were not worth much.

Climate-change-driven displacement of people is already running at tens of millions per year. COP24 highlighted the issue but offered little concrete action.

The rate of carbon emissions is rising, and at an increasing rate! There is a near-total consensus among climate scientists that this spells catastrophe within decades.

As revolutionary socialists we have no confidence in the ruling class or their governments to take anything like the bold action needed. The organised working-class, globally, must take key industries and the economy into democratic public ownership.

Poland's hard-right president launched a declaration, signed by 50 of the 200 countries present, emphasising the need for a just transition for workers. But really it was populist empty rhetoric serving to justify inaction on climate change. He was notably pro-coal at points throughout.

Global investors managing \$32tn (£25tn) in assets called for an end to coal and greater action on climate change. The EU and various countries, especially poorer countries, made strong statements of their commitments to limit climate

change.

Sections of the ruling class recognise that climate change poses a threat to their ability to extract profit from the working-class, and some think they can make profits from the required re-engineering.

But other, and extremely powerful, sections of the ruling class push for inaction on climate change.

Some of the largest oil and gas producers – the US, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait – refused to “welcome” the recent IPCC scientific report. Australia was notably silent on this. The Trump administration held a side-meeting in Katowice to promote so-called “clean” fossil fuels.

Clearer rules around “nationally determined contributions”, NDCs, are supposed to make it easier to compare and aggregate pledges and emissions. There were slight steps forward but they are still very lax. Instead of requiring scientifically robust methods, it allows countries to use “nationally appropriate methodologies”, i.e. creative accounting.

While countries, especially developed countries, are now required to report on money they put towards climate finance, this reporting is very loose and includes commercial loans, equity, and little detail.

Some councils, such as Southwark, have agreed to fund school meals for children with NRPF, ensuring that no child in their borough starves. They are calling on other councils to follow suit.

Lewisham Deptford Labour has voted to send a motion to London Labour regional conference against NRPF policies and the hostile environment in the context of local government. The motion challenges those Labour-run councils that remain complicit in anti-migrant practices.

(NRPF) designation.

NRPF is a label the government puts on certain migrants, meaning they have no access to benefits. The aim is to leave them at the mercy of hyper-exploitative employers, or drive them out of the country.

All children in school up to Year 3 (age 7-8) get free school meals. After this age, access to free school meals is dependent on claiming benefits. Children who need free school meals, but whose parents are subject to NRPF, cannot get them.

Stop “no recourse” scandal

By David Pendleton

Lewisham NEU (National Education Union) has voted to send a motion entitled “No child should go hungry in our schools” (motion 109) to our union’s national conference this year, and is seeking support to prioritise it for debate.

At present some of the poorest and most vulnerable children in our schools are denied meals under the government’s invidious No Recourse to Public Funding

Leeds socialists attacked

By Luke Hardy

On Monday 7 January, a group calling itself “Justice for Women and Girls”, led by Lee Scheres (aka Lee Baylan), who runs the “Antifa Public Watch” Facebook site, invaded a Leeds Socialist Party closed meeting.

A drunken and wired Lee Scheres and his pals tried to disrupt the meeting, intimidating people, filming them, squaring up to them, seizing papers off them etc.

Leeds Socialist Party report: “Bar staff assisted to escort them out of the venue. No one was hurt during the incident.

“During their interruption of our meeting they accused us of campaigning against women and child victims of abuse and verbally attacked our members as being ‘pae-

dophiles’ and ‘nonces’.”

It’s part of far-right tactics now to paint the left as supporting or colluding in child abuse, and to highlight only child-abuse cases where the perpetrators or alleged perpetrators are of Muslim background.

The Baylan/Scheres Antifa Public Watch Public page is taking up the role of the old Red Watch site, singling out and trying to intimidate members of the left and the labour movement.

Meanwhile far right “Yellow Vests” have threatened pro-Remain and liberal or left MPs, journalists, and staff, outside Parliament.

We need a united, politically sharp and working-class anti-fascist movement to defeat the fascists once again.

Right danger in Gilets Jaunes

By Michael Elms

On Saturday 12 January an estimated 84,000 people joined “Act IX”, the latest round of Gilets Jaunes demonstrations around France. Down from 300,000 back in November, but up from 50,000 on 5 January.

The Gilets Jaunes demonstrators are calling for action against inequality and for renewal of democracy. The demands of the movement are vague but currently centre on restoring the recently-scrapped “ISF” wealth tax on the richest.

Many Gilets Jaunes also demand the introduction of referendums on the Swiss model — a system which socialists have long described as inadequate tinkering, and too easily manipulated by the rich.

French President Emmanuel Macron has tried a combination of concessions — a tricky 100 Euro boost to the minimum wage, funded by taxation to let employers off the hook — with repression. On 12 January, 80,000 police were deployed and tear gas was used in most major French cities; 6,000 have been arrested in all and 14 blinded and one killed by tear gas grenades.

Macron is also offering a “great national debate”, with “registers of grievances” opened in town halls, and an open letter to the nation signalling a consultation project running to 15 March. At the same time, he has been wining and dining global capitalists at Versailles in a drive to boost investment.

The growing strength of the Gilets Jaunes show that the movement is holding firm against the state. More vital is the political bat-

tle within the movement. The influence of the far right within the movement is alarming. Calls for the right-wing general Pierre de Villiers to replace Macron are frequently made on Gilets Jaunes online forums.

In spite of police violence against them, pro-police sentiment is widespread among the Gilets Jaunes, including the slogan “Police: with us!”. In the Paris demonstrations a “Service d’Ordre” or “security force” was assembled by the demonstrators: this corps of men in white armbands was dominated by a 50-strong group of fascists led by ex-paratrooper Victor Lente, who fought as a mercenary for the far-right “government” of the Donbass statelet in Eastern Ukraine and was suspected of involvement in a 2009 mosque-burning.

Lente and his henchmen didn’t protect the demonstrators from the police: they held back the crowd to prevent it from breaking police lines.

But the involvement of the labour movement and the left in the movement is making headway. Local assemblies of Gilets Jaunes in Lille in the north and Martigues in the south have issued declarations calling for unity with the workers’ movement and a general strike (Lille) or joint demands arrived at through discussion with trade unions (Martigues).

The Gilets Jaunes movement is an expression of social crisis and the rage of the exploited in France. The labour movement must make up for lost time, and by asserting itself and its politics, seize an opportunity to move French politics far to the left.

Students should fight Brexit

By Justine Canady

Brexit means higher borders, more xenophobia and racism in public life, and a victory for the far right around Europe.

It is bad news for our movement, and all the oppressed: just look at the spike in hate crimes against women, disabled and LGBT people that took place after the 2016 vote, as well as a spate of racist and anti-migrant attacks.

Our movement needs to loudly oppose Brexit, hand-in-hand with trade unions on our campuses. We need to be a voice of solidarity and hope for all those migrants, families and workers who fear for their future because of Brexit; and we need to offer alternative answers for those who voted Leave as a protest in 2016.

As Students' Union UCL Women's Officer I organised students to take action in support of precarious, low-paid staff at the University of London in their fight for their rights through their union, the IWGB. The leader of that union, Henry Chango-Lopez, has said

"Losing EU employment law protections would mean we lose a vital weapon in our arsenal against exploitative bosses. That's why we need a people's vote".

I agree with the IWGB.

But we can't simply remain in



Justine Canady is running as the left candidate for NUS President, challenging current President Shakira Martin's move to suspend all NUS officer elections this year and shut down NUS democracy and campaigning, on the pretext of a financial crisis. NUS official policy is anti-Brexit, but the NUS leadership has made no campaign on campuses on the issue.

the EU as it is. From the shores of the Mediterranean to neoliberal economic policies that wreck the lives of millions, the EU needs to be radically transformed. But we can't do that from the outside.

And by meekly accepting Brexit because we're afraid of the racists, we won't help a single migrant struggling to cross Europe's borders.

If we roll over and let the Rees-Moggs and Farage turn Britain into a super-sized, unregulated tax haven, we won't be helping anyone rebel against EU austerity.

NUS needs courage and internationalism, not weasel-worded cowardice in the face of bigotry. Stop Brexit!



Protest against Universal Credit

Universal Credit: still hurting

By Luke Hardy

Amber Rudd, the new Tory Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, has scrapped the plans to extend the two-child limit on Universal Credit for those with children born before April 2017

She has also postponed the next stage of Universal Credit roll-out, due to hit three million in-work tax-credit claimants within the next few weeks was postponed.

Just 10,000 will be moved to UC over the summer of 2019.

Universal Credit payments will now go to the main carer in the family, in order to safeguard women in abusive relationships.

Four working single mothers have won a high court challenge over how their UC payments varied enormously month on month, dependent on when their work pay-days fell.

The government must now either appeal, or make changes that reflect the court's judgement.

Yet families with babies born after April 2017 are still on the two-child limit to Universal Credit. The notorious "rape clause" remains, by which a mother can get exempted from the two child limit only by stating on the form that a child was conceived during non consensual sex.

The benefit cap of £20,000 for a family outside of London still remains in place. Child Poverty Action reports that 85% of those hit by that cap are single-parent households.

The move to the payment going to the carer in a family is welcome. It is still open to abuse, as the abuser (usually men) in abusive relationships can force themselves into being declared the carer and receiving all the payments. Under the old system child benefits went to the mother automatically.

People on UC are still are paid in arrears, monthly, with a five-week wait upon claiming. Universal credit still incorporates cuts to benefits and extends the benefits

which can be hit by sanctions.

Four out of ten UC claimants fall into arrears with rent or other bills. When universal credit is rolled out in an area food bank usage rises dramatically.

The Tories' calculation seems to be that the three million in work who were due to be moved to UC are electorally weighty in a way that the more marginalised million already on UC are not.

Yet the older "legacy" benefits have also been squeezed by many cuts.

The Labour Party has made an effort to step up its campaigning on Universal Credit and benefits both on a national and grassroots level. Its policy on Universal Credit is for an immediate pause and fix. The list of items Labour wants "fixing" has grown since the 2017 manifesto. It is now much more clearly opposed to sanctions, for example.

However Labour's current plans, if enacted in government, will leave the benefit system significantly meaner and more coercive than the system under Gordon Brown in 2010.

There is a debate among those fighting Universal Credit and in Workers Liberty' itself about whether the principle within UC of simplification and reduced tapering can be retained by pausing and fixing all of the problems, reversing the cuts etc. They point out the many problems with the byzantine and underclaimed legacy benefits.

Others argue for scrapping Universal Credit and either returning to a reformed "legacy" benefit system or advocating a new benefit system based on principles of solidarity and support. They argue that UC's centralisation of benefits in the hands of the DWP is bad the DWP is experienced by many as much more stigmatising and coercive than local authorities or the old tax credit regime.

This debate has been happening within the pages of Solidarity and needs to happen in the wider movement too.



Rosa Luxemburg giving a speech

Reading about Rosa Luxemburg

As we go to press on 15 January 2019, it is exactly the 100th anniversary of the murder of the Polish-German revolutionary socialist Rosa Luxemburg.

She was killed by a right-wing militia operating under the Social-Democratic government which was heading off the German workers' revolution.

We have a pamphlet in production on Luxemburg and the German revolution. Readers can also find a good summary of Luxemburg's political work in two articles, from 1935 and 1938, by Max Shachtman: bit.ly/ms-rl38 and bit.ly/ms-rl35. The 1938 article is

in print as an item in our book *In Defence of Bolshevism*, www.workersliberty.org/idob.

Much more on Rosa Luxemburg on our website, at bit.ly/ws-rl, including:

- Remembering Rosa Luxemburg — standing against the socialist betrayers, by Clara Zetkin
- The Rosa Luxemburg I knew as a student, by Antoinette Konikow
- The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg, reviewed by Rosie Woods
- How the British Communists responded to Rosa Luxemburg's 1918 criticism of the Russian Revolution

- Rosa Luxemburg on the Trade Union Bureaucracy
- Blanquism and social democracy: Rosa Luxemburg's article of 1906 asserting her alignment with the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks, also in print in *In Defence of Bolshevism*
- The myth of "Luxemburgism", by Leon Trotsky
- Rediscovering Rosa Luxemburg: an interview with Peter Hudis, editor of the Complete Works now underway.
- **Luxemburg, economics, crises, and the national question: on the two volumes published of the Complete Works.**

Trump and the McCarthyites

By **Barrie Hardy**

When faced with criticism it's common these days for right wing politicians to scream "McCarthyism".

Trump regularly does this in angry and irrational tweets to ward off criminal charges arising from the Mueller investigation. The Trump strategy is to accuse his opponents of crimes he's culpable of himself and to establishing himself as a victim of political persecution.

Such behaviour has spread across the far right like fish rotting from the head. Bringing up the rear is the pound shop Breitbart that is spiked.online, which has screamed "McCarthyism" when people have dared criticise it for taking money from those rabidly right-wing corporate capitalists, the Koch brothers.

But consider Roy Cohn, who played a leading role in the actual McCarthyism of the early 1950s.

Thousands of left leaning Americans were persecuted during the McCarthyite period, some imprisoned, many more blacklisted from employment.

Cohn was particularly prominent in the trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, and prided himself on his role in securing the death penalty for them. He claimed that the sentence was based on Cohn's personal recommendation.

The Rosenberg trial had antisemitic overtones, with the right wing associating "Jewishness" with "Godless communism" as an explanation for the treason charges.

Many on the left who attacked that anti-semitism were unfortunately undermined by the fact that an even worse persecution of Jews was underway in Eastern Europe around the same time, with show trials and executions of leading Communist Party figures who were Jewish.

Cohn went on to become Senator McCarthy's chief counsel, the better to pursue the hunt for "commies".

According to former US Senator Alan Simpson: "The so-called 'Red Scare' has been the main focus of most historians of that period. A lesser-known element...and one that harmed far more people, was the witch hunt McCarthy and others conducted against homosexuals".

SEXUALITY

Cohn was gay himself. Like many gay men on the right of American politics at the time, including most probably his pal FBI Director J Edgar Hoover, he sought to cover that up by vigorously persecuting members of the gay community.

Roger Stone, to whom Cohn acted as a mentor, justified the hypocrisy thus: "Roy was not gay. He was a man who liked having sex with men". Covering up his sexual orientation until the end, Cohn claimed he was suffering from liver cancer, but actually died of complications from AIDS in 1986.

When McCarthy turned his attention to phantom communists in the US military, it was a step too far for Eisenhower and the top brass.



Roy Cohn (left), reporter Barbara Walters (centre) and Donald Trump (right)

Following McCarthy's fall from grace, Cohn began a career as an attorney in New York City. He represented such unsavoury characters as Rupert Murdoch, John Gotti and other leading Mafia figures such as John Gotti, and... Trump himself. Cohn defended Trump over his "whites only" housing rental policy.

Cohn's associate Roger Stone ran a PR firm with Trump's 2016 campaign chair Paul Manafort, representing numerous anti communist dictators. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, their circle was amongst the most rabid enemies of anything called "socialism".

The penny dropped when they realised

that the Putin regime was just another gang of rapacious money grabbing capitalists, just like them except that Putin's crew were able to get away with a lot more criminal activities than their newfound American admirers.

The cries of "McCarthyism" from Trump and his associates are a travesty and a stain on the memory of those left with Americans who suffered persecution for their political beliefs or sexual orientation.

That many such victims held the mistaken belief that Stalin's USSR was somehow advancing the interests of the working class only serves to underline their tragedy.

Venezuela, the Morning Star, and the facts



Antidoto

By **Jim Denham**

"Despite being elected with over two thirds of the vote last May in an election given a clean bill of health by hundreds of international observers..." began the Morning Star's editorial on 12 January, under the headline: "Venezuela is under siege - it needs our solidarity."

Working on the principle that getting basic facts straight, and not telling downright lies, is a good place to start, let's deal with that opening statement. The May election that (unsurprisingly) returned Nicolás Maduro as president was marked by low turnout and lack of serious options (the main opposition groups all boycotted the vote).

Estimates of the turnout vary from 28.5% to 46% (the higher figure coming from the government-controlled National Electoral Council), but either way it was the lowest in Venezuela's democratic history. The official figure for the 2013 presidential election was close to 80%.

As for the claim that the vote was given a "clean bill of health" by international observers: well, not by the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, who stated the election "does not in any way fulfil minimal conditions for free

and credible elections".

The EU and the "Lima Group" (the majority of other Latin American countries) took a similar view. Presumably, the *Morning Star's* claim of a "clean bill of health" refers to those bastions of democracy, China, Cuba, El Salvador, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria and Turkey, all of whom did recognise the result.

The rest of the *Morning Star's* editorial is little more than a whinge about how nasty many of Maduro's critics in the rest of Latin America are (true), and how sad it is that the continent's "pink tide" seems to be in retreat.

The editorial denounces the violence that followed the election, but blames it all on opposition forces.

It's certainly true that some of the chaos in Venezuela stems from a US-backed right wing opposition. But the government has prime responsibility for the huge food queues and the hyperinflation. And the Venezuelan government has committed crimes against humanity since at least 2012, according to the Organisation of American States (OAS).

The OAS report says approximately seven people every day have been arbitrarily detained since Maduro was first elected in 2013. Detainees are often subjected to torture, including beatings resulting in untreated physical harm, sexual torture, stress positions, "white torture," electric shocks, burns, tear-gas, food mixed with glass or excrement, and withholding food and water. The report cites at least 289 cases of torture that inflicted se-

vere physical and mental suffering, and backs the claim by Luisa Ortega Diaz (Attorney General 2007-2017) that Maduro was complicit in 8,292 extrajudicial executions.

It is of course the case that the murderous right wing Colombian police state never faced any such charges from the OAS. But the double standard does not let the Venezuelan leadership off the hook.

Since the election, new workers' struggles have arisen and spread. This resistance poses an alternative to both the corrupt and repressive Maduro government and the right-wing opposition backed by the U.S. The *Morning Star* makes no mention of working class resistance, presumably because it does not fit with an essentially top-down view of what socialism means.

To the extent that Chávez proposed a strategy for achieving socialism by accepting compromises with private capitalist control and the political rule of a minority acting on behalf of the masses of people, that has been proven lacking. Like Ortega's compromise-with-capital program in Nicaragua: and the *Morning Star* also uncritically backs Ortega, who has faced mass opposition on the streets triggered by pension cuts.

Socialism "from above", in whatever form, failed miserably in the 20th century and will continue to fail in the 21st.

Whatever social-welfare reform goals Chavez may have achieved in office, in times of higher oil prices, Maduro and Chavez have stifled the democratic instincts of the



Nicolás Maduro

working class. And created an authoritarian, militarised state.

Now we see a Venezuela whose main feature is social collapse and brutal authoritarianism. 2.5 million to 3 million people have fled. Maduro explicitly overrules the elected National Assembly (where the opposition won a majority in late 2015).

You can't help suspecting that the authoritarianism is precisely what the *Morning Star* likes about it.

And that is why it resorts to factual dishonesty and uncritical parroting of Maduro's preposterous propaganda ("Here I am, ready to take our country forward. Here we are with our democracy and our people").

Labour: get off the fence!

90 Labour activists attended the 12 January public event to launch Labour for a Socialist Europe, the left-wing, Labour-focused anti-Brexit campaign endorsed at December's Another Europe is Possible conference as an independent initiative, freestanding from the cross-party AEIP.

The meeting decided to mobilise for a Labour anti-Brexit presence outside Parliament on 15 January. After 15 January the campaign will be fighting to push Labour off the fence and into backing a "People's Vote" and a vote to Remain. It will seek cooperation and unity with other anti-Brexit efforts in the Labour Party.

The campaign will pressure Labour to adopt a clear stance — for a new public vote, anti-Brexit, for freedom of movement, for lowering of borders — and provide anti-Brexit Labour supporters with a network for information-sharing, and coordinated organising. It will produce campaign resources and joint activities.

The meeting endorsed the call made by the

TSSA union for a Labour Party special conference on Brexit.

This is a left-wing, socialist, labour-movement-based campaign that supports Jeremy Corbyn's leadership in the sense of wanting a left-wing Labour Party, but is not afraid to challenge the leadership on Brexit.

The 12 January meeting established a broad Steering Committee and agreed various activities and initiatives, including mobilising around upcoming parliamentary votes (starting, of course, with 15 January), a renewed drive around motions in local Labour Parties, fundraising to allow expanded campaigning, and organising a national campaign conference in March (date to be confirmed very soon).

Solidarity calls on its readers to throw himself into this effort. Sign and promote the campaign's founding statement (bit.ly/2FtNzd1), put a motion to your Labour Party or union branch, organise stalls, hold a meeting or debate and invite a speaker, bring a delegation to the event in

March. For more ideas and updates please follow Labour for a Socialist Europe's social media.

Time is short. Political ferment is high and many more upheavals likely. We don't know what the outcome of the next few weeks will be, but we know it will be something that now seems improbable — because all outcomes now do. In all eventualities, the stronger the campaign we've built, the more likely desirable outcomes and further openings, the greater the chance of blocking Brexit.

We have to reach out and dig down to the Labour Party and unions' pro-Remain base. We must not allow the deference to Corbyn and the leadership which exists many more established activists — who we should also of course, seek to persuade — to hinder us. An active, visible campaign is the condition for that.

For more information, speakers, etc, email info@labourforasocialisteurope.org or visit labourforasocialisteurope.org

£9,618 so far, £5,382 to go

A better week on our fund appeal, with £1400 coming in — £100 from Susan, a reader on the south coast, and £1300 from a comrade who received a PPI pay-out.

The new Stop Brexit group Labour for a Socialist Europe will be launching its own Crowdfunder appeal. We will support that, but we also need our own funds for our own distinctive socialist activity.

A message we often hear from readers is: "I agree with most of what you say, and I support what you're doing, but my personal circumstances..." One reader, largely

£15,000

pulled out of activity because of serious health problems, even wrote to us this week describing our paper as: "the only source of light and hope purifying the ever-threatening smog".

Our chief hope, of course, is for the barriers which hold back those readers from activity to be broken. But even before then, you can help us make a difference now by sending a donation.

If it can be £1300 or £100, excellent. But even small contributions, £10 here, £20 there, add up.

We are almost the only activist socialist group visibly campaigning on a working-class internationalist line against Brexit. If we don't get the message out, no-one else will.

www.workersliberty.org/donate

Billy Hayes, former CWU General Secretary:

"If free movement ends, wages will not rise. What is being presented to us by this Tory government will be a disaster for working people. Reform and remain was right in 2016 — nothing has changed that case. To be a socialist is to be an internationalist and a democrat. We respect how people voted in 2016, but the job of socialists is to stare reality in the face. That's why I welcome this new initiative."

Nadia Whittome, who chaired the L4SE founding meeting:

"With the threat of the internationalist left being crushed between Labour's pro-Brexit wing and the establishment Remainers, Labour for a Socialist Europe has been founded at a crucial time.

We owe it to the large majority of Labour and union members who want to stop Brexit and win an effective radical left government to build the most confident, active campaign we can. Join us!"



Jeremy Corbyn: now back a public vote!

Last week *Solidarity* published an open letter to Jeremy Corbyn from Sacha Ismail, an organiser of the new Labour stop-Brexit campaign Labour for a Socialist Europe.

The conclusion of that letter becomes even more urgent after the parliamentary vote on 15 January. We say again to Corbyn:

Now you should campaign boldly for a "People's Vote", and advocate a vote against Brexit.

The argument that a second referendum would be undemocratic and — if the vote went against Brexit — would amount to cheating the victors of the 2016 referendum out of their democratic victory, actually makes no sense, if you think about it.

Why should the 2016 referendum bind people two and a half years later, if further experience and reason point to the need to reverse it? In fact serious, detailed, public dis-

ussion of what Brexit means came only after that referendum.

The opponents of a second referendum are not consistent democrats, but people who snatched an accidental advantage in 2016 and want politics to end at that point.

If a referendum is as sacred a form of democracy as they insist, then why not have another one to pronounce on the results, in negotiated actuality, of the first? History did not stop in June 2016.

The argument that a new referendum that reversed 2016 would be "divisive" is a no brainer.

The 2016 vote is divisive. Carrying through the decision of 2016 without letting the people vote again, in full knowledge of what they will be voting for or against — that is the worst of all worlds.

Labour should campaign for a second referendum and a Remain vote. Comrade Cor-

byn — serious politics is not just about skimming the surface of existing opinion, taking polls to tell you what to say to get votes. It is about doing serious educational work to mould and shape and reshape how people think about an issue.

PRINCIPLES

Principles matter here. Here, however — and it needs to be said — you and your Leader's Office have something akin to the difficulty you had in condemning anti-semitism in general and destroy-Israel antisemitism in particular.

Your own political history. For decades it was an article of faith on the ostensible left — almost all the left, from the kitsch-Leninist groups through to people like you in the Labour left — to be against the EU and to advocate British withdrawal.

That shifted bit by bit over the 1990s. But reflex anti-EU sentiment is still there. It is strident, for instance, in the Morning Star, for which you wrote a column until you were elected Labour leader. In fact, you see it most clearly there.

The kitsch-left attitude of opposing the bourgeois unification of Europe, rather than seeking to reshape it, was always nonsense. Britain's decision to withdraw is a tragic nonsense. It is still possible for the now better-informed citizenry to avert it. Labour can still avert it.

Drop your ambivalence about Brexit, and campaign for a People's Vote and for Remain vote in a new referendum. Fight for working-class unity all across Europe. Time is very short now.

Full open letter: bit.ly/jc-ol.

The roots of Lexitism

By Paul Hampton

The Brexit crisis at Westminster is also rippling across the left in Britain. Although the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) remains committed to its pro-Brexit position, its report of its conference on 29-30 December show that at least some of its members are uneasy.

The SWP oppose calls for a second referendum. However, they now concede that if a referendum is organised, they would be in difficulties: the leadership would have to call a meeting to decide on the SWP's position. If it is a choice between Remain and May's Brexit, a possible option may be "active abstention" – a campaign to reject both options. The conference report records that veteran SWPer Sabby Sagall opposed Brexit outright.

The latest issue of the SWP journal, *International Socialism*, carries an article by Wayne Asher, "In a hole and still digging: the left and Brexit", criticising the SWP's pro-Brexit line. Much of his assessment of the current situation is rational, although he mangles the debates on the Labour left, especially Momentum.

Asher's biggest mistake is to justify the position the SWP (then called IS) took on the 1975 referendum, when it voted for Brexit.

He wrongly states that: "The left's opposition to the European Union goes back to the early 1970s". Actually, the roots of opposition on the British left to the European Economic Community (EEC, forerunner of the EU) on the British left can be traced to Stalinism. From the 1940s Russian foreign policy, and therefore the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), opposed moves to European bourgeois integration from the 1940s onwards.

HISTORIC INTERNATIONALISM

Until the late 1960s the Trotskyist left, with few exceptions, took an internationalist position on the EEC. IS-SWP, and other groups like the forerunners of today's Socialist Party and Socialist Appeal, flipped only when anti-Europe feeling increased in the "broad" left (not necessarily in the working class: the 1975 referendum returned a 67%-33% vote against Brexit).

Asher is also wrong to state: "Still, it is important for what follows to note that the 1975 analysis was an accurate picture at the time and remains true today." In fact the IS leadership switched to opposing the EEC because of the perceived "mood" on the left. Their volte-face was opportunist positioning.

Many socialists today transpose their current attitude towards the European Union from positions taken during the 1970s or 80s. We should know the history in order to avoid repeating mistakes.

In the early 1960s, when the Tories first applied for Britain to join the EEC, many Labour MPs were opposed, including the

right-wing Labour leader, Hugh Gaitskell, who argued instead for Britain to orient to the Commonwealth (the ex-Empire).

Articles in *International Socialism* journal were critical of the EEC, but at pains to distance from nationalism or reformism. IS was cautiously optimistic about European integration. A 1961 editorial stated: "If, in the long run, Europeanisation hastens this process, as it surely will, cartel Europe will have laid, as surely, the basis for the United States of Socialist Europe. For revolutionary socialists in Britain there is no greater aim. We should be the first to clasp hands across La Manche".

"For us the move to Europe extends the scope of class struggle in which we are directly involved; it worsens its conditions for the present. But it makes ultimate victory more secure" ('Britain and Europe', *International Socialism*, No.6, Autumn 1961: 3).

IS argued to push through bourgeois economic and political integration by seeking to unite workers across borders. Another editorial stated: "Only a sustained campaign carried out throughout the labour movement by socialists will increase consciousness sufficiently for the initiative to be taken in exposing 'Europeanist' capitalism, in establishing direct links with European workers for coordinated action and in building a Socialist Europe". In short, "what business is doing now, the leaders of the labour movement should be doing for the European working-class" ('Labour and the Common Market', *International Socialism*, No.8, Spring 1962: 3. The EEC, or proto-EU, was then also called "the Common Market").

DEBATE IN IS

The magazine also published a letter of dissent from Peter Sedgwick opposing British entry to the Common Market. John Fairhead resigned from the editorial board over the matter: he would later become a right-wing Tory. The magazine continued a debate.

John Palmer argued that: "In or out of the Common Market, the problems facing the British Labour movement are likely to be very much the same. Indeed the point is that the issues facing us are more similar to those facing European and American workers than at any time in the past 40 years". Instead of opposition he argued for a common programme of trade union demands across Europe ('The Common Market', *International Socialism*, No.12, Spring 1963, 26-28).

Also in 1963, IS member Alasdair MacIntyre denounced the Labour Party for posing as "the party of the English-speaking Empire". "Socialism in One Country" was "a sad slogan for a Gaitskell to inherit from a Stalin". He criticised "those socialists who are against Franco-German capitalism, but somehow prefer British capitalism" and said he detested "the anti-German chauvinism of the anti-Common Marketeers".

Although the "last intention of the founders of the Common Market" was "to



A 2016 SWP pamphlet

pave the way for a United Socialist States of Europe", MacIntyre said he was for taking them by the hand as a preliminary to taking them by the throat. ('Going into Europe', *Encounter*, 22, 2, February 1963: 65).

When the 1964-70 Labour government headed by Harold Wilson applied for British membership of the EEC, the majority reiterated an internationalist position while others argued to oppose entry. An editorial denounced on the one hand the "phoney internationalist chorus" of business and on the other the chauvinist, Stalinist "left", who presented "a common illusory British road to socialism, or, more accurately, the road to British state capitalism" (Editorial Board Majority, 'Europe', *International Socialism*, No.28, Spring 1967, 2-3).

The minority around Sedgwick argued that "opposition to the Common Market (which in this country implies opposition to British entry) remains the only possible stance for socialists" (Editorial Board Minority, 'A Note of Dissent', *International Socialism*, No.28, Spring 1967: 3).

During the 1960s almost the entire revolutionary left held an internationalist position on the Common Market. In or out, it was about capitalist integration: workers could not oppose it, and should not endorse it.

DEGENERATION OF SLL AND IS

In 1970 the Internationalist Socialists had around two thousand members. The biggest revolutionary socialist group at that time, the Socialist Labour League (SLL), had already taken a "stay out" position from 1967, part of a degeneration which would lead to complete collapse, politically from the mid-70s, organisationally in 1985.

The International Marxist Group (forerunner of Socialist Resistance today) and *Militant* (Socialist Party and Socialist Appeal today) also fell in behind the reformist and Stalinist left.

IS made the most theatrical volte-face over

the EEC. It voted overwhelmingly at its 1970 conference against a proposal to oppose Common Market entry. At Easter 1971 a motion putting the same position was again overwhelmingly carried. By June 1971, IS leaders began to adapt to the dominant mood among the vocal militants in the labour movement hostile to the Common Market. Tony Cliff and Chris Harman scripted "Theses on the Common Market" to rationalise a change.

On paper, the Theses left the conference policy not to oppose entry intact, and only made a tactical adjustment. The tactical adjustment would soon swallow up the point of principle.

Cliff and Harman wrote: "Our aim in union conferences and the like should be... making clear both our opposition to the Common Market, and our separation from the confused chauvinism of the Tribunes, CP etc. However, if we are defeated on such a stand, we should then vote with the Tribune-Stalinists in opposition to entry." The national committee accepted the Theses. A large minority of the committee, and initially maybe even a majority of the membership, dissented.

The slide towards the "tactical fallback" swallowing the principle began almost immediately. Duncan Hallas, then national secretary of the group, writing in *Socialist Worker* (229), caricatured the "neither, nor" position as remaining neutral in the class struggle. He argued for "No to the Common Market" on the grounds that it would be a defeat for the Tories, the party of big business.

Chris Harman provided further rationalisation in a long article, 'The Common Market', *International Socialism* (Autumn 1971). He offered three reasons for opposition:

"1. Entry is being used, alongside other measures, to hit at working class living standards and conditions..."

"2. Entry is aimed to rationalise and strengthen capitalism. It is an attempt to solve certain of capitalism's problems by capitalist methods..."

"3. The rationalisation of capitalism [is] no longer progressive in any sense, it also speeds up the development of intrinsically destructive forces..."

Yet working class conditions were no less under attack outside the EEC than inside it. Capitalist rationalisation had gone on since the dawn of capitalism, but revolutionaries had not rejected technological change, or defended small business against capitalist concentration. A further claim that the EEC was "really" about a military alliance was tenuous at best.

NEGATIVE POLITICS

Eventually Harman fell back on the negative argument: anti-EECism was good because the Tories would dislike it.

He wrote: "The defeat of the Tory government, in the present context of growing working class opposition to its policies,

would give a new confidence and militancy to workers". He added that "revolutionaries in the labour movement have to make it absolutely clear that they do not abstain on such a question. We are for the defeat of the Tories..."

"Those trade unionists who oppose government policies on the Industrial Relations Bill, productivity deals, etc., also tend to be opposed to the Market". Underlying this alignment was that "many rank-and-file militants instinctively distrust the government's entry policy. They feel that it will be used to weaken their position". So swim with the tide.

Many prominent leading members of IS-SWP opposed the switch — Paul Foot (who soon repented and went over to anti-EECism), Andreas Nagliatti, Jim Higgins, Geoff Carlsson, Ian Birchall. But their stance was really to register a dissent and then to shrug. The Workers' Fight Trotskyist tendency (forerunner of AWL) argued the issues sharply and militantly, and called for a special conference.

The call got support from the 23 branches constitutionally required to get a special conference, but the IS denied receiving notification of the 23rd branch and instead called a special conference to expel the Trotskyist Tendency, in December 1971.

Britain joined the EEC on 1 January 1973. The majority in the Labour Party still opposed being in the EEC; after Labour returned to government in February 1974, Labour leader Harold Wilson finessed the issue by organising a referendum on whether Britain should continue in the EEC.

In January 1975, the IS national committee decided "to campaign for a no vote around the slogans No to the Common Market, No to national chauvinism, Yes to the United Socialist States of Europe" (Chris Harman, *Socialist Worker*, 1 March 1975). The vote was now unanimous: the less obstreperous dissidents of 1971 had drifted away or quietly adapted.

BANDWAGON POLITICS

Hallas, the editor of *International Socialism* magazine, stated in the 'Notes of the Month' for February 1975 that the group's stance was determined by the alignment of forces:

"For: virtually the whole of big business, the Tory party, the right and centre of the Labour Party, the trade union right wing and the whole 'establishment' network. Against: The Labour lefts, the CP, the trade union lefts and some of the centre plus the 'populist' right (including the NF) and a smallish number of Tory dissidents and, probably, the various nationalists".

Hallas argued that "essentially, in the referendum campaign all those with an 'establishment' outlook and perspective will be lined up against all the 'dissident' trends including the far right". However, "the heart and muscle of the anti camp will be the left of the Labour movement".

After garnishing the poison with apple-pie slogans in favour of the Socialist United State of Europe, socialist internationalism and working class unity, and routine warnings against British chauvinism and "popular fronts" with Tories or Fascists, Hallas finished with a flourish.

The Common Market referendum, he wrote, "is a possible source of a 'Bevanite' type of left-wing movement led by left-reformist MPs and their trade union allies".



The *Evening Standard*, from a big-business pro-EU point of view, scores a point with a cartoon in 1975. The front row of the "Get Britain Out" march shows Labour leftists Peter Shore, Tony Benn, and Ian Mikardo arm-in-arm with Tory racist Enoch Powell.

(The reference was to a Labour left movement of the 1950s). Out of a reactionary movement might come progress — hence revolutionaries had to be there to jump on the bandwagon.

Socialist Worker (1 February 1975) soon lamented that the no campaign had meant in practice: "unions forking out money to pay for meetings for an open racist like [Enoch] Powell, and left wingers giving the National Front and other extreme right wing groups an air of respectability by working with them".

Still the IS leadership stuck with the line. Chris Harman argued in *Socialist Worker* (1 March 1975) that for IS to abstain "would be to line up with the extreme right wing within the working class movement". This would apparently "play into the hands of the Communist Party leaders, who would be able to pretend that their own disgusting chauvinism and alliances with Powell were the only alternative to the Jenkinsites and the Market."

Socialist Worker, (8 March 1975) lapsed back on negativism: "A no vote, that is to say a defeat for the big business, Tory, Liberal, and right wing Labour coalition... The arena for our internationalist message is inside the no camp... We are part of the left. We cannot abstain in this confrontation".

This line was repeated in 'The Common Market', *International Socialism* (April 1975). The anti-EEC camp consisted "very largely of the Labour left and the trade union left and centre. Its opposition is based on muddled nationalistic and reformist arguments, although only the Communist Party has descended to the cruder forms of nationalist

demagogy". Yet the place of socialists was, "of course, firmly and unequivocally in the no camp, alongside the great majority of class-conscious workers".

Sixty years before, Lenin had summed up the basic Marxist attitude of opposing capitalism within its development, rather than seeking to halt it or push it back. "The bourgeoisie makes it its business to promote trusts [bigger and more integrated concentrations of capital]. We do not 'demand' such development, we do not 'support' it. We fight it. But how do we fight? We explain that trusts... are progressive. We do not want a return to the handicraft system, pre-monopoly capitalism... Forward through the trusts, etc., and beyond them to socialism!"

That basic attitude ruled out voting against European capitalist integration. And it guided most of the British revolutionary left, more or less, until the late 1960s and early 1970s.

LEGACIES TODAY

But then the bulk of the revolutionary left — the groups which educated many of the today's older Labour leftists when they were young activists — collapsed politically into the "No" camp, dominated by Labour reformists and Stalinists, behind which stood the most reactionary sections of the British bourgeoisie.

Abstract and irrelevant fig-leaves such as "Socialist United States of Europe" were tagged onto the "no" message, but its real motivation was entirely opportunist and negative — the idea that to "defeat the Tories" or "defeat the Labour right" was automatically to serve the interests of the (British)

working class. That was effectively a collapse into chauvinism, disregarding relations with other European workers in the name of notionally giving British capital a bloody nose.

The broad labour movement edged away from Europhobia over the 1990s. The process is usually dated from the speech about a "social Europe" by European Commission president Jacques Delors in 1988 to a TUC congress battered by Thatcherism. The activist left toned down its anti-EU agitation, but never went back to analyse its mistakes in the 1970s.

We should.



Europe: the Stalinist roots of the "left exit" myth: *Workers' Liberty* 3/54 — bit.ly/lexit-r

Socialism and singlejacking

By Martin Thomas

“The term singlejack... On-the-job organisers for the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World... used it to describe that method of organising where dedicated advocates are developed one at a time on a highly personalised basis...”

The leading Minneapolis Trotskyist Ray Dunne was a prime example. An IWW shop steward met Dunne, aged 15, in a lumberjack camp. He identified Dunne as willing to stand up against the boss, and also thoughtful.

The IWWer (according to a later interview by Dunne with Harry Ring) had a stock of books as well as being a trade unionist, and he targeted Dunne with discussion and books.

The crucial book was Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. Although Dunne had had only two years’ formal school, he worked his way through the book, and it changed his life, sending him on to read Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and others.

Dunne remained a low-paid manual worker, but he became, as a left-wing literary critic who met him in the great 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters’ strike put it, “devoted to the values of culture, and determined that the working man should share them”.

He rarely held high union office. He was more like “Marx’s revolutionary old mole”, well-known but working in the background through quiet argument, analysis, and one-by-one persuasion.

The lumberjack camps, where workers were thrown together 24 hours a day, were an important place for the IWW’s singlejacking. But it was not all in the workplace. The IWW’s staple activity, as much as on-the-job organising, was selling its paper *Solidarity*, holding street meetings, and fighting free-speech campaigns when those meetings were banned. Within that activity, too, it developed agitators, organisers, and educators by “singlejacking”.

A later Marxist, Stan Weir (1921-2001), named the publishing house he established in his older years Singlejack Books. The explanation at the head of this article was printed in all its books. And the book of Weir’s writings published after his death is called *Singlejack Solidarity*.

A brilliant chapter covers a dispute in which Weir was active as a seafarer in 1943. He describes a union veteran setting out rules when doing “singlejack” work to educate Weir and other youngsters as trade-unionists.

“Learn your trade. Work good and work hard”. Work safely. “Never, but never, walk away from a beef”. Be polite, but never chummy, with the ship’s officers (the management). Equally, “don’t go putting out on the open table any of the personal private things you were told in confidence by a ship’s officer”.

Weir stresses that workers being able to talk with each is vital for building solidarity and trade-unionism, let alone socialism. Often that is done in breaks, and may even be impossible while on-task.

More and more employers (I think) have reorganised work-breaks so that each individual or small group gets their breaks at a different time. It should be a trade-union priority to block that.



Workers talking over lunch: the “cell” of agitating over workplace issues and persuading individuals of revolutionary ideas.

Elsewhere, maybe because of the increasing atomisation of life under neoliberalism, workers have come to socialise less in their breaks even though no employer’s rule blocks them. They use their breaks instead for computer games, shopping, or the like. Some more sociable workers combat that by such things as regularly baking snacks for their whole workgroup; and socialists should follow their lead.

Weir was in the Workers Party and ISL of Max Shachtman, Hal Draper, and others from 1944 to 1958, and he was the original of the character “Joe Link” in Harvey Swados’ novel about that Third Camp Trotskyist group.

When the group is withering in the late 1950s, a character who has dropped out of activity goes to visit “Joe” in California. Like Weir in real life, “Joe” is in hard manual work (car factories, then a house-painter).

“Joe... said, without looking up, ‘Well, I’m not quitting. I’ve signed up for the duration’.

“Out of politeness, Sy asked tiredly, ‘How are things with your branch?’

“Joe glanced up and grinned his old grin. ‘Schlecht’, he said honestly...”

“I’ve been trying to hold the branch together. They’re all busy buying tract houses and appliances. The automatic dishwasher is the big thing this season. I can understand it... Meanwhile the literature distribution is falling off.

“They’re starting to say to me, ‘Look, Joe, you keep the bundle orders of *New Labor* [fictional equivalent of the real-life ISL *Labor Action*] in your house, not in mine, it makes a mess’... I make the comrades uncomfortable — they’re getting ahead in the world, and just because I’m not they think I’m looking down my nose at them...”

“But I don’t care how many black years we’ve got ahead, I’m not giving up. Maybe it is a question of personality...”

In 1958 the ISL’s leadership dissolved it into the Socialist Party. Weir’s writings about this from much later suggest he was shocked

(“I would have found it hard to believe that [Shachtman] already had plans to dissolve the ISL”) — but had progressively felt “let down” by the ISL.

“The capable people who had built the Workers Party’s auto fraction in the industrial Midwest had become UAW [union] staffers... We were no more than a holding operation”.

One of the items in the volume is a pamphlet on rank-and-file worker rebellions written in 1966 for the revived third-camp socialist group founded by Hal Draper in 1963, called ISC then IS. Dan LaBotz tells us that Weir remained in the IS after Draper quit in 1971.

Evidently Weir quit at some point, perhaps in the late 1970s when pressure from the SWP-UK and disappointments in trade-union work triggered splits in the IS which broke it into six or seven fragments.

In the late 1960s Weir became a professor at the University of Illinois: most of his writing is from that later part of his life, though much of it about the earlier part. In articles of the late 1980s and early 1990s he started to criticise what he called “the vanguard party” concept. That argument reads to me like rationalising his own drift by way of constructing a caricature of that concept he would never have held to in his WP/ISL or IS days.

“The most damaging part of the baggage that comes with the vanguard party idea is that the party you are a member of should and will itself become the state”. Stalinists thought that, but never Trotskyists.

Weir also claims that the WP during World War Two was too hyper-active to integrate workers with more life-burdens than the core members (mostly young ex-students now working in heavy industry), and that WP branches didn’t do enough listening to those workers about workplace issues alongside talking to them about the Russian revolution and Marxism.

He may have a valid point — but he made

the criticism in 1994, fifty years after the event, and did not claim to have made it when he was himself a manual worker in the WP/ISL and could have improved the imbalance if it existed.

Perhaps because of Weir’s later drift, there is actually nothing in the book about “singlejack” political work, or even “singlejack” work in which a trade-unionist in large-scale industry educates a socialist from another background, say a student, about workplace activity.

It should be possible to add a few precepts for political work to the ones about unionist-to-unionist “singlejacking” which Weir got in his 1943 seafarer dispute. Some of them can be got by reading about Ray Dunne.

Dunne made his business to get to know other workers — “probably four or five hundred workers in Minneapolis knew Ray personally”, records Bryan Palmer. He was “deliberate, sober, unobtrusive, known as a respectful listener”.

But “they had always known him as a Red”. He could have achieved that only by always listening for the elements of class-consciousness or socialist feeling in what other workers said, and working to develop those elements and to wither the elements of bigotry, prejudice, and timidity.

Probably he continued the methods of the IWWer who educated him in the lumberjack camp, “appearing to be a literature agent”, always reading himself, being seen to read, having papers or pamphlets or books to offer.

He would have looked out for the quieter workers, maybe quiet because more thoughtful. He would have understood that the breadth of ideas, knowledge, and life-experience even in the most unpromising workplaces is usually much greater than appears at first sight.

Even mass organisations rely on “singlejacking” as one of the pillars of their building; relatively small socialist movements, even more so. There are traditions and experiences for us to learn from.

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.

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- 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.

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No way to fight witch-hunt

By Dale Street

The keynote motion from the steering committee of "Labour Against the Witchhunt" to the LAW conference on 2 February sums up the core elements of left antisemitism (bit.ly/law-coup).

LAW is not focused on the many hundreds of socialists expelled from the Labour Party, without notification of charges, hearing, or appeal, since 2015, on grounds of association (however loose) with left-wing groups such as Workers' Liberty, Socialist Appeal, or Left Unity. Its prime concern is with Labour Party members charged with antisemitism.

The motion says that Corbyn is "totally unacceptable" to "Britain's establishment" — he represents a threat to "the strategic alliance with the US" because of his "critical attitude towards Israel".

Israel is the US's "most reliable strategic asset in the Middle East".

Its "alliance" with the US has the "enthusiastic support" of "the majority of the Israeli-Jewish population", whereas "the Palestinian natives and the wider Arab nation" are opposed to "Israel's ongoing settler-colonialism".

The forces conducting a "war of attrition" against Corbyn therefore include "the Israeli state and the pro-Israel lobby". Their "most potent weapon" is "false accusations of antisemitism", including the equating of anti-Zionism with antisemitism.

Corbyn's response has been to "appease the Zionist lobby". But every concession has "further emboldened the Zionist lobby". This "policy of appeasement" culminated in the Labour Party's adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism. This has "massively expanded" the scope for "false allegations of antisemitism".

LAW will therefore expose the role of "the Israeli state and Zionist

organisations in fabricating the antisemitism 'crisis' in the Labour Party", and preach contempt for "the Jewish Labour Movement, an openly Zionist organisation which supports a racist project of colonisation."

All the main themes of left antisemitism are there: Zionism is "racism" (so the very existence of Israel, above and beyond any particular policy, is "racist"); the only way to be "critical" of Israel is to condemn its very existence; Palestinian Arabs born outside the territory now Israel are "natives" of it, whereas Jews born there are "settler-colonialists"; the first response to any complaint of antisemitism is to interpret it as a contrivance to serve reactionary motives; those reactionary motives, based in Israel, are the central driver of world politics...

No viable campaign against the expulsion of socialists from the Labour Party can be built by tying it to these conspiracy theories.

Cool on Trump, hot against liberals

By Colin Foster

On 4 January US president Donald Trump, in a rambling speech at a meeting of his cabinet, praised the USSR invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

"The reason Russia was in, in Afghanistan was because terrorists were going into Russia. They were right to be there".

In fact the USSR invaded because the Afghan government of the time, led by a radical faction of the PDP (Afghanistan's "Communist Party", chiefly based among armed forces officers trained in the USSR) looked likely to fall.

The invaders installed the more cautious faction of the PDP as a government propped up by USSR military might, but failed to stabilise it, and ended up fighting a nine-year colonial war.

This is the same Trump who back in 2016 responded to an interviewer criticising Russian president Vladimir Putin — "he kills journalists that don't agree with him", by

saying: "He's running his country and at least he's a leader... I think our country does plenty of killing also!"

The flipside of Trump empathising with Brezhnev and the ex-KGBer Putin is the sympathy for Trump for people who think of themselves as "left-wing" because they admire Brezhnev's model of society.

Zoltan Zigedy, (the pen name of the blog of Greg Godels), in the *Morning Star*, 5 January, concedes that Trump is "unpopular" and "right wing". But the gist of his article is to defend Trump against "the liberal establishment".

Zigedy welcomes Trump's talk of the USA conceding to Assad in Syria as opening "the prospect of peace". He exempts Trump from blame for "the recent deaths of two young migrants in federal custody" because previous administrations also harassed migrants.

He sneers at "the cable television warriors" denouncing Trump's government shutdown over his plans for a wall against Mexico on



the grounds that (some of) "these same human rights indignados" didn't denounce Israel's wall.

Zigedy sees the main unfair charge against Trump as "the big lie of Russiagate". "The interminable Mueller investigation" is out of order because... the US too has interfered in other countries' politics.

Zigedy wants "an authentic and committed movement against monopoly capital". But in the meantime his criticism of Trump is cool, his indignation against the "liberals" and "human rights indignados" is hot.

Should left back Corbyn on Brexit?

Solidarity approached Pete Willsman, secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and a member of Labour's National Executive, to give him space in an interview to explain CLPD's line on Brexit, criticised in *Solidarity* 490.

Pete wasn't able to do an interview, but explained his stance in a text-message exchange.

W: CLPD is focusing on defending JC [Jeremy Corbyn], so we go one step at a time.

S: But there's going to be another step on 15 January come what may. And steps have implications for the future. It is becoming too late for a general election to be run before 29 March. So, for example, the issue has to arise of demanding postponement of the Brexit date.

W: Let's see what JC decides. Don't get your knickers in a twist! The Iraq war was a big issue. 10p on a pot of marmite is not so big.

S: End of free movement with Europe and re-raising of borders (including within Ireland) is a big deal.

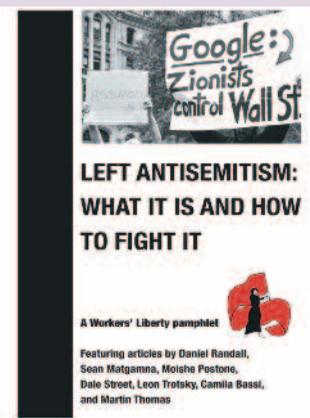
W: Nearly a million were killed in Iraq. How many killed by Brexit?

S: We don't know the implications of re-raising borders in Europe. The first half of the 20th century suggests they can be bad. But the fact that the Tories aren't Hitler or Stalin doesn't mean their Brexit project is all right.

W: The EU is protectionist vis-a-vis the poor in the Third World. Bit like mercantilism in the 17th century. Marx wasn't keen on that.

S: Not as protectionist as a walled-off Britain.

And we gave Willsman the last word: "Under a Labour government we won't be walled off".



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Merseyrail and DOO

Interview

Merseyrail is one of the Train Operating Companies (TOCs), where workers have been resisting the imposition of Driver Only Operation (DOO), which involves the abolition of the safety-critical role of the guard.

Guards are represented by the RMT union, with drivers overwhelmingly members of Aslef. Among the TOCs, the Merseyrail is uniquely strong because it is the only one where Aslef drivers in large numbers have respected RMT guards' picket lines.

However, the Merseyrail industrial action has stalled for months now. RMT is locked in negotiations with Merseyrail bosses and the regional transport authority, overseen by Labour mayor Steve Rotherham. A driver and union activist spoke to *Solidarity* about the dispute.

The guards' reps are still meeting with Acas and the company. They seem to be playing their cards relatively close to their chest, although there's been some suggestion of progress.

The transport authority's u-turn, which saw them say they were prepared to back retaining a second safety-critical member of staff, has been significant, as it's meant the RMT now feel like they can get a deal and are therefore focusing on negotiations rather than continuing with industrial action.

There isn't, yet, a significant call or push from the rank-and-file to return to action. The union's view is that, if the talks break down, it has to be seen that it's the company walking away from them, not the union, and that view does seem to

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Drivers: Don't Sell Your Conditions! Resist the "dash for cash"!

<http://bit.ly/DOOotr>



Hundreds of labour-movement activists mobilised to support striking Northern guards at Manchester Victoria station in their 44th day of strikes on 12 January, after a picket the previous week was attacked by fascists. The guards are striking to resist "Driver Only Operation"

be supported amongst guards.

We've always had a strong culture of cross-union solidarity at Merseyrail, and there's a history of us supporting the guards. When the guards' dispute was developing, senior figures in Aslef locally made it clear they wouldn't be crossing picket lines, and that set the tone. Building the same kind of solidarity elsewhere has been made very difficult by the role of the local Aslef leaderships, which has left a lot to be desired.

SHAMEFUL

Frankly, it's been shameful. The attitude has been, it's not our dispute, we'll fight it when they come for us. But by that time, it will be too late.

The risk now is of a "dash for cash" across several TOCs, with bosses looking to essentially bribe drivers to sell their conditions and accept DOO with the promise of big salary bumps.

Unless the local Aslef leaderships on other TOCs shift to trying to build the same culture of solidarity and militancy we have on Merseyrail, it will be very hard to resist that.

Northern is one of the TOCs where that's a risk. Northern's network essentially covers the old mining areas of northern England, through Yorkshire up to the north east and Lancashire and Cumbria in the west. During the miners'

strike, it would've been unthinkable for a unionised train driver to drive a train moving scab coal. But now, unionised drivers are prepared to drive trains crewed by scab managers during another union's dispute.

There are also issues within the RMT. Aslef drivers at Merseyrail respect RMT guards' picket lines, but RMT members in other grades sometimes don't. We need a culture where everyone in the workplace respects everyone else's picket lines, whether it's your union or your grade.

The new story that Northern Rail [where guards' strikes are continuing on Saturdays] have been receiving additional subsidies is no surprise to any railway worker. We saw the same thing with Southern. This money is about helping them beat the strikes, making sure the financial impact is minimised. The drive to impose DOO is not only about making cutbacks on the railway, it's about smashing a group of organised workers.

With job cuts to signalling and station staff, guards are the last real power base for the RMT. If they beat the guards they will come for the drivers, and Aslef, next.

That's why Aslef's current strategy of refusing to join the DOO fight, even in the way we have at Merseyrail, is so short-sighted.

Tube station workers make gains on staffing

By Jay Dawkey

London Underground workers at five stations on the Bakerloo Line forced concessions on staffing from Tube bosses after naming strikes on 26 December and 14 January.

Both strikes were eventually suspended after bosses committed to cover all shifts on stations and fill job vacancies. They have also promised a review of the staffing

levels at each station. RMT members elsewhere on London Underground stations are now considering similar disputes to demand improvements to the staffing level. An RMT rep told *Solidarity*: "Union reps and activists on the Bakerloo Line organised an outgoing, assertive campaign to win the strike ballot vote, returning an excellent result. Naming two strike dates was enough to force significant concessions from management. We can now use the review

to press the case for additional staff, and with a ballot mandate remaining live for six months, we can take action in future if necessary."

A strike by driver members of the RMT union on London Underground's Central Line, planned for 22 December, was called off after management presented new evidence in a case involving a driver dismissed after a disputed drugs test. RMT says it will now pursue the case via an Employment Tribunal, including challenging LU's

Birmingham bin workers work to rule

By Ollie Moore

Birmingham bin workers launched a work-to-rule and overtime ban on 29 December, in a sequel to a long-running dispute fought in 2017.

The workers' union, Unite, says additional payments were given to members of the GMB union, which did not support the dispute, for not participating in the strike, arguing that this amounts to a form of blacklisting of Unite members.

The action is already having a huge impact, with bags of rubbish mounting up on streets. A union statement said: "Unite members have no wish to inflict disruption and upset to the people of Birmingham, but they have no option but to take action to protect their collective rights. The blame for this dispute lies squarely at the door of the council."

Members of Unison, which has a small membership within refuse services, also recently voted to take industrial action alongside Unite members.

Outsourced workers strike for wages

By Ollie Moore

Outsourced cleaners, catering workers, and security staff at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) are set to strike from 21-23 January, with outsourced workers at the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) striking on 22 January.

The workers, who are employed by agencies including Aramark and Engie, are demanding the London living wage of £10.55. Most are currently paid around £9.

MoJ workers are organised by

the United Voices of the World union, with outsourced staff at BEIS in the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS). The strike is significant as a rare instance of explicitly coordinated action between a "mainstream", TUC-affiliated union and a smaller, "independent" union.

An MoJ worker told the Guardian, "Some of us have worked here for 10 years, all we're asking for is a wage that allows us to make ends meet and live with a little more dignity. Is that too much to ask from the Ministry of so-called Justice?"

Food factory workers strike

By Darren Bedford

Workers at a food factory in Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, East Yorkshire began a four-day strike on 12 January, demanding an improved pay offer.

Bosses at the factory, which

makes ingredients for chocolate manufacture, have offered a 2% pay rise, which the workers' union, Unite, says fails to keep pace with rising living costs. The union is demanding a 3.5% increase.

The strike is due to finish on 15 January.

Bristol riders say enough is enough

By a Bristol Deliveroo rider

Deliveroo riders in Bristol will strike on Friday 18 January, demanding higher pay and other demands which managers have repeatedly ignored.

This follows a national courier strike on October 4, and a spontaneous strike in Bristol on December 11, which brought Bristol Deliveroo to a standstill.

We are only paid per delivery, not guaranteed a minimum wage per hour or any workers' rights. Hourly and weekly pay have steadily reduced.

We plan repeated and escalating strikes until we win our demands. Many struggle financially to participate.

We're planning to build a strike fund — watch this space and start planning fundraisers now!



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Trump holds USA hostage

By Eduardo Tovar

As of Monday 14 January, the US federal government has been partly closed for 24 days — the longest shutdown in the nation's history.

Federal agencies that provide services deemed essential are still running, but "non-essential" services, including those relating to scientific research, food inspection, and the maintenance of national parks, have stopped completely.

At the heart of this institutional deadlock is the infamous wall President Trump seeks to build along the US-Mexico border. Despite his promises to make Mexico pay for the wall, Trump has demanded \$5.7 billion from Congress. The Democrats have refused to vote that through.

Republicans in Congress are backing Trump by refusing to pass legislation proposed by Democrats in the House of Representatives to reopen the government without funding for the wall.

On 19 January Trump threatened to bypass Congress by declaring a national emergency. He has since backed away from

that, for now.

Approximately 800,000 federal employees are going without pay and many of those whose jobs have been deemed essential are being made to work without wages. Many federal workers have opted to file for unemployment benefits amidst fears of missing credit card and mortgage payments.

Vital welfare programmes for low-income households are grinding to halt, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the funding for which has only been guaranteed until the end of February. Despite the very weakened state of organised labour in the US, unions are providing assistance. For instance, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has started an interest-free loan programme for workers affected by the shutdown.

There has been a long and bloody reality of violent border controls under Republican and Democrat Presidencies alike. Under the Obama Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) performed 409,849 deportations in 2012 alone.

Nonetheless, Trump's border

Stansted 15 submit appeal

The "Stansted 15" — convicted under "anti-terrorist laws" carrying sentences of up to 30 years for blocking a deportation flight in March 2017 — have launched an appeal against conviction.

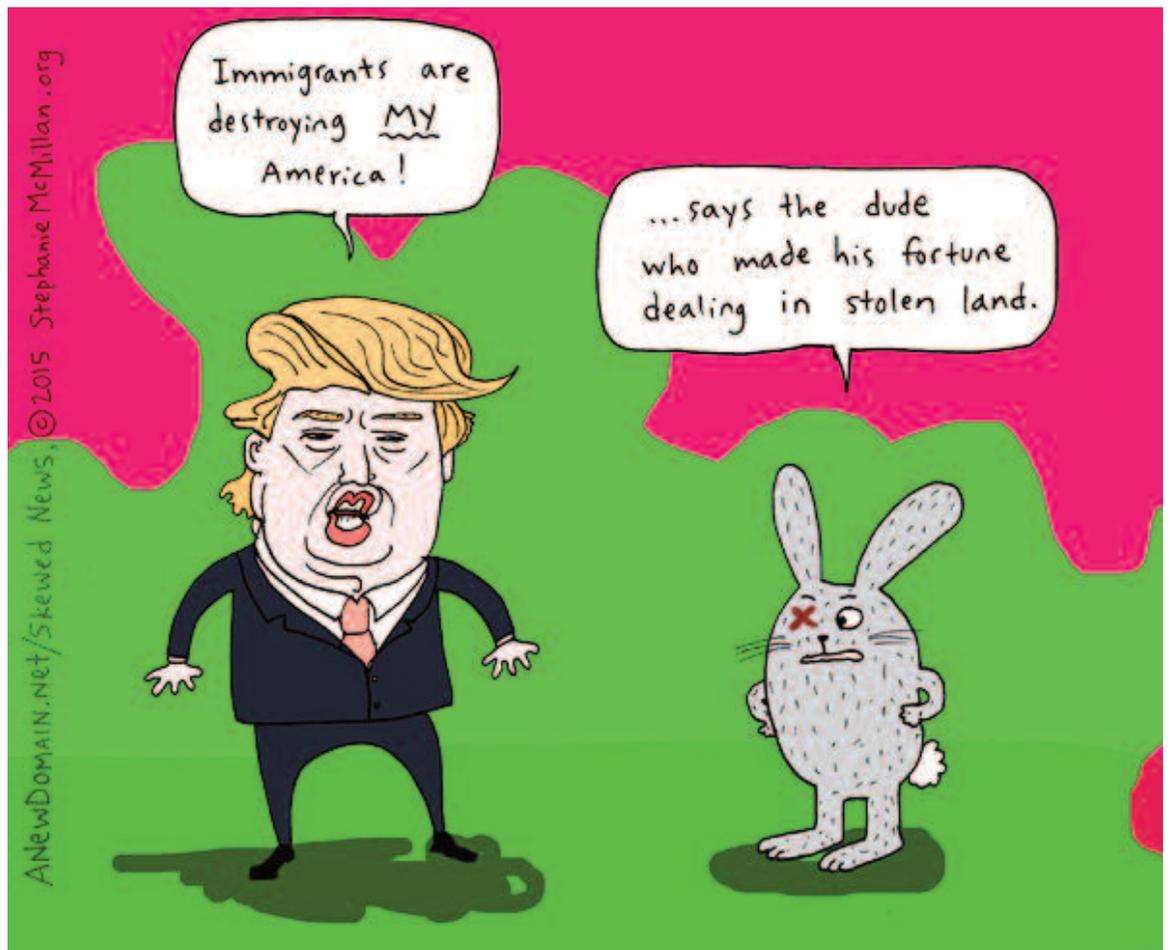
Their lawyers lodged the appeal on 7 January.

Meanwhile, sentencing is scheduled for the week starting 4

February, at Chelmsford Crown Court.

End Deportations (enddeportations.com), which is campaigning for the 15, has called a joint event with other groups Saturday the 19 January.

From 6pm at Portland Hall Lecture room, Lower Ground, 4-12, Little Titchfield St, W1W 7UW.



wall project shows a new pitch of nationalist sentiment and anti-migrant animosity in mainstream US politics.

A recent national opinion poll by Reuters-Ipsos found that 41% of the American public favours additional fencing at the border.

54% of Republicans saying they support shutting down the government until Congress approves the wall funding.

There was even a #GoFundMe

campaign launched online to raise \$1 billion for the wall through private donations. It reached only 2% of its target, but even \$20.3 million, from nearly 340,000 donors, showed how strongly Trump's calls for tighter borders are resonating with many Americans.

Trump's disapproval rating remains high at 54%, but not as high as its peak of 57% in December 2017. Despite Trump's zig-zag bluster, the many departures from

his administration, and the conviction in December of his former national security adviser Michael Flynn on charges of lying to federal investigators, despite that the Republican Party and his core electorate are sticking with Trump.

The class-struggle left has a big job on our hands to rally active opposition which will stem the tide of nationalism across the globe.

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