WHAT'S ON AT IMAGINING THE FUTURE?

REGISTRATION AT 10.45, BIRKBECK COLLEGE

SATURDAY 4 JULY

12 noon Opening plenary: After the election of a Tory government, things look grim. How do we get from where we are now to the socialist future? Martin Thomas, Ruth Cashman and Gemma Short open Ideas for Freedom with some ideas on the way forward.

BIRKBECK B34

1.20-3.10 LUNCH

1.50 - Assaf Adiv speaks on “Arab and Jewish workers together, against the bosses, against the occupation”

Assaf Adiv is the national director of the Workers’ Advice Centre, a radical trade union organising Jewish, Arab and migrant workers together in Israel. He will be speaking about WAC’s struggle to organise the unorganised, their fight against the occupation of Palestine and against racism in Israel, and his vision for the future of the Middle East.

BIRKBECK B34

3.10 WORKSHOPS

i. A History of the Future with Richard Barbrook, author of Imaginary Futures

The model of the future offered to us by capitalist enthusiasts is weirdly much the same as offered at the 1964 New York World’s Fair. Even weirder – according to the prophecies made more than 50 years ago – we should already be living in this wonderful future.

BIRKBECK B02

ii. If workers ran the rails: what would workers’ control of transport look like?

with Janine Booth (Tube worker and RMT activist) and Herman Rosenfeld (socialist and transport trade unionist in Toronto)

Well-resourced, accessible, safe public transport would be a key component of the infrastructure of a sustainable, rationally-run society. But capitalism is not making such a great job of it! London Underground worker and former RMT Executive member Janine Booth and Toronto-based socialist and transport trade unionist Herman Rosenfeld will lead this workshop on how a worker-run socialist society can reorganise transport, and what demands and struggles today point in the right direction.

BIRKBECK B34

iii. The rise of the religious right and the abandonment of secularism in Europe: an Algerian perspective, with Marieme Helie Lucas

Marieme Helie Lucas is an Algerian sociologist who participated in the national liberation struggle against French colonialism. In 1984, she founded the international solidarity network Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) and served as its international coordinator for 18 years. WLUML linked women fighting for their rights in Muslim contexts, throughout Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. WLUML focused on research and grassroots solidarity work aimed at reinforcing local struggles. In 2004, she founded the international Secularism Is A Women’s Issue (SIAWI) network, and serves at its international coordinator. She is currently based in India. She writes: “While the rise of fundamentalism is far too often analysed in Europe as a politically legitimate, cultural-religious response of the oppressed to racism and economic discrimination, many people of migrant descent in Europe witness with growing worry a replication of the steps taken by the religious right attempting to seize political power in their countries of origin.”

BIRKBECK B04

iv. Turin 1919-20 and the seizure of the factories, with Becky Crocker and Martin Thomas

In the “red years” of 1919-20, the Italian working class seized factories and industries. The Italian Socialist Party, by far the strongest party in the country, was part of the Communist International – yet it refused to lead the workers to victory. What went wrong? Becky Crocker and Martin Thomas look at the lessons of the Italian workers’ most heroic struggle and what socialists can do in times like the present to ensure that similar struggles in future win.

BIRKBECK B04

v. Climate Change and class struggle, with Paul Hampton

Climate change is a huge issue now and for the foreseeable future. But climate politics is in disarray. Marxist politics - on science, nature, exploitation, states, international relations, united front campaigns, industrial action and political organisation - has a massive contribution to make to tackling climate change. This, led by Paul Hampton, author of “Workers and trade unions for climate solidarity: tackling climate change in a neo-liberal world”, explains why.

UCL CRUCIFORM SEMINAR 2
## 5.00 Workshops

**i. Should socialists back Scottish independence?**

The question of Scottish independence has divided the left. How should socialists respond to the rise of Scottish nationalism? Stan Crooke from Workers’ Liberty debates Cailean Gallagher, socialist blogger and advocate of independence.

**ii. Capitalist futures, with Martin Thomas**

If we fail to overthrow capitalism, what futures lie ahead? Post-industrial? A world ruled by China? Multi-polar? Borderless? What can we learn from past projections of capitalist futures?

**iii. Anti-semitism and anti-Muslim racism in Europe, with Yves Coleman, *Ni Patrie, Ni Frontières* journal**

Yves Coleman, editor of the French revolutionary journal *Ni Patrie, Ni Frontières* (No Fatherland No Borders), discusses the terrible rise in anti-semitism and anti-Muslim racism in Europe, the complex relationship between the two, and how the left should respond.

**iv. Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, with Stuart Jordan**

Stuart Jordan introduces Friedrich Engels’ famous introduction to Marxism.

**v. How to jump-start your union: with Gemma Short**

Many trade unions branches are virtually dormant. Gemma Short, teacher union activist and member of the Workers’ Liberty industrial committee, leads a workshop on how to get things moving using lessons from the Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE) who shook up the Chicago Teachers’ Union leading to their historic 2012 strike.

## 6.25 Workshops

**i. Does socialism have a future? Dr John Meadowcroft debates Ruth Cashman, AWL and Unison activist**

With capitalism triumphant and the right on the offensive, it is easy to believe that socialism is finished. Ruth Cashman of Workers’ Liberty will make the case that socialism not only has a future but is the future – in a debate against Dr John Meadowcroft of Kings College London.

**ii. Visions of the future in Film and TV, with Dan Higginbottom and screenwriter Clive Bradley**

Screenwriter Clive Bradley and Dan Higginbottom discuss on-screen visions of the future.

**iii. The social strike: a discussion with Plan C comrades**

This discussion, involving Pat Murphy of Workers’ Liberty and a comrade from Plan C, will look at the nature of modern class struggle, including the concept of the “social strike”. Are straightforward workers’ strikes outmoded? Do we need a broader conception of “strikes”? How has the composition and nature of the working class changed, and what are the implications for communist politics?

**iv. “Hell no, we won’t go”: the fight against the Vietnam war in the USA, with Stephen Wood**

Stephen Wood discusses the story of the anti-Vietnam war movement, and the lessons and implications for international solidarity and socialist involvement in mass campaigns.

**v. Trotsky’s bridge to the future: “the transitional programme”, with Liam Conway**

Liam Conway leads a discussion on the relationship between struggles in the here and now and the goal of a radically new society, through the lens of the “transitional demands” idea developed by the Communist International and championed by Leon Trotsky. What is the relevance of transitional demands today?

---

**Saturday Night Social - Fundraiser for Rainbow International**

**8.15 At the Union Tavern, £5 Waged, £3 Unwaged, see page 8 for more information**
## 10.00 Workshops

### i. Should socialists be for withdrawal from Europe?
Vicki Morris, AWL and Labour Representation Committee national committee, debates Michael Calderbank, LRC NC and Red Pepper editor

With a referendum on Britain’s EU membership on the way, what should socialists say? Vicki Morris, Workers’ Liberty and a member of the Labour Representation Committee national committee will be arguing for a vote to stay in; Michael Calderbank, also of the LRC and an editor of Red Pepper magazine, for a vote to get out. How do these positions relate to the fight against nationalism, for migrants’ rights and for international class solidarity?

### ii. Thomas More’s Utopia and Tudor Britain,
with Cath Fletcher, historical advisor to the BBC’s Wolf Hall

Cath Fletcher, historical adviser to the BBC’s adaptation of Hilary Mantel’s novel Wolf Hall, discusses Thomas More’s Utopia and class struggle and politics in Tudor Britain.

### iii. Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Leadership

After the Tory election victory, as Jeremy Corbyn’s election campaign lights up the Labour leadership race, what are the prospects for reasserting a clear working-class voice in politics? With speakers including Maria Exall, Labour Representation Committee Vice Chair and CWU Central London Amalgamated branch secretary.

### iv. What would a democratic education system look like?
With teachers and NUT activists Kate Harris and Jade Baker

Teacher activists Kate Harris and Jade Baker lead a workshop on how an education system liberated from capitalism can be run differently to help create a better society.

## 12.00 Lunch

## 12.55 Workshops

### i. The End of work? Technology and the future of socialism
with Nick Srnicek, Aaron Bastani and Bruce Robinson

Nick Srnicek (author of Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work), Aaron Bastani (Novara Media) and Bruce Robinson (AWL) discuss the relationship between technology, class struggle and creating a different society.

### ii. The Vietnamese Trotskyists, with Omar Raii

Vietnam’s liberation from US imperialism in the 1960s and 70s was led by a totalitarian Stalinist party – yet not long before Vietnam had the strongest Trotskyist movement in the world. Omar Raii tells their forgotten but vitally important story.

### iii. The Conquest of Bread, with Daniel Randall

Peter Kropotkin was perhaps the most sophisticated theorist of anarchist communism. His 1882 work The Conquest of Bread is one of the most detailed expositions of anarchist revolutionary thought, and perhaps the closest anarchist equivalent to The Communist Manifesto. It imagines a future based on decentralisation, and commune-type organisations as the integral units of mutual aid, distribution, and exchange. What can the book teach us about approaches to class society, the state and how to construct a socialist future? This session, run by Daniel Randall, will be accessible to people who have not read the book previously.
iv. Climate change and the future of energy, with Dave Elliott, author of The Lucas Plan, and Dave Kirk, energy worker

Dave Elliott, author of the classic book about the 1970s “Lucas Plan” developed by ‘defence’ workers aiming for a transition to sustainable production, and energy worker and Workers’ Liberty Dave Kirk lead a discussion on capitalism, climate change and the future of energy.

v. The Awami Workers’ Party and class struggles in Pakistan, with Rehan Khushi, Awami Workers’ Party

The left and workers’ movement in Pakistan are besieged by ultra-reactionary political Islam, by an increasingly authoritarian state and by US imperialism. Rehan Khushi of the Awami Workers’ Party will explain how Pakistani socialists are organising to fight back.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12.55 WORKSHOPS CONT ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>iv. Climate change and the future of energy,</strong>&lt;br&gt;with Dave Elliott, author of The Lucas Plan, and Dave Kirk, energy worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIRKBECK BO4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>v. The Awami Workers’ Party and class struggles in Pakistan,</strong>&lt;br&gt;with Rehan Khushi, Awami Workers’ Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL CHADWICK B05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

2.20 BREAK

---

2.30 WORKSHOPS

i. The two Trotskyisms with Sean Matgamna

Sean Matgamna will speak on how Trotskyism split into two rival traditions at the end of the 1930s, and how the “unorthodox” “Third Camp” Trotskyist tradition has rich lessons for rebuilding revolutionary socialism today and in the future.

ii. The far left in Northern Ireland with Marc Mulholland and Liam McNulty

Conventional accounts of the ‘Troubles’ in the North of Ireland have focused on the conflicts’ main protagonists - the British state, Unionism/Loyalism and Irish Republicanism. However, this is far from the whole story. In the years of civil rights’ agitation leading up to the outbreak of sectarian violence, the far left was influential. What can we learn from their experience? What are the tasks facing the left in Northern Ireland today?

Marc Mulholland, who lectures University of Oxford and is the author of numerous books on Northern Ireland, and Liam McNulty, a revolutionary socialist and Labour Party activist from Northern Ireland will discuss the issues.

iii. Revolutionary women in the First World War, with Jill Mountford

2015 is the centenary of the first international socialist anti-war manifesto of WW1, produced by a conference of socialist women. Jill Mountford will explain how revolutionary women spearheaded the eventually mass opposition to the war, and consider the lessons for our battles a hundred years on.

iv. What would socialist America look like? With Elaine Johnson

Elaine Johnson introduces American socialist James P Cannon’s great discussion of what a socialist society might look like, originally delivered as a lecture in 1953, during the dark night of the McCarthyite witch-hunt.

v. Old and New Directions in socialist feminism, with Cathy Nugent and Esther Townsend

Women in Workers’ Liberty have been preparing a new pamphlet on socialist feminist ideas. Cathy Nugent and Esther Townsend will lead a workshop which explores some of the debates we have been having on historical and contemporary feminist theory — on Marxism and oppression, patriarchy, and intersectionality.

### 4.00 Closing plenary: In the closing session, south London teacher and NUT activist Jade Baker will talk about recent struggles against academies and the need to impose our own vision of what education and society should be like; and rail worker Daniel Randall will talk about the relationship between struggles in the here-and-how and visions of the socialist future.

BIRKBECK B34