



For social ownership of the banks and industry

PUSH BACK BOSSSES TO SAVE THE CLIMATE!

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- » **Organise in unions and workplaces**

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To save climate, push back the bosses!



"System change, not climate change", and similar slogans, were prominent on the 6 November demonstrations for the COP26 summit. Yes, we need to change the whole economic, social and political set-up, not just reduce emissions personally. What new system should we seek? And how?

"One solution, revolution", chanted the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Appeal on the London demonstration. That doesn't help: who are they asking to do that? How? We are for a *workers' socialist revolution*, in which the global working class replaces the power of capital with a new system based on collective ownership and production for need. But "revolution" in general - Stalinist revolution, say - doesn't help. To build up, radicalise and empower workers' movements so we can move towards socialist revolution, and win serious measures to curb climate change and mitigate its impact on the way, requires sustained organising. It requires sustained struggle for measures of what Marx called "the political economy of the working class" which both bring immediate improvements and begin to outline the shape of a new system.

Self-evidently capitalists and capitalist governments *can* be shifted on climate change, since they have shifted repeatedly, over years now. But so far, capital has faced relatively little effective pressure from workers' struggles and labour movements.

Unlike in, say, China, workers' and climate movements in Britain and similar political systems have legal space to organise, protest, bring pressure to bear and win changes. What we have achieved so far is meagre.

Governments have moved mostly under the pressure from warnings from the more far-sighted bourgeois organisations and scientists.

Our movement, hundreds of millions strong globally, with organisation in the key centres and structures of the global economy, needs to be mobilised to shift things much more radically.

The starting point is to counterpose the needs of workers, people and planet to capitalism's drive for profit - to assert against the profit-system what Karl Marx called "social production controlled by social foresight". We must exert pressure for governments to override the interests of profit, and use that as a lever to replace existing governments with ones more responsive and accountable to labour movements and climate struggles.

We need a massive redistribution of wealth and power from capital and the



rich to workers and the poor, across the world, and within that from the rich in the richest countries to the people of the poorer parts.

Green New Deal

In discussions about a "Green New Deal", the labour movement should assert a version with radical, anti-capitalist demands, as the first steps in radically reorganising societies and planning economies to meet people's need.

The 6 November demonstrations were clearly left-wing, but characterised by a severe lack of specific radical demands. General agitation to "do something" is not sufficient. It can lead to movements being fobbed off with tokens, planting token numbers of trees, for example, or diverted, as when Green pressure pushed Germany's government into shutting down nuclear power stations and replacing them, immediately, by coal power.

The [Green New Deal motions](#) passed Labour conference this year and in 2019 laid down some specifics:

- Public ownership and democratic control of the energy industry, allowing decisive action to eliminate fossil fuels and end fuel poverty
- Free or cheap, expanded and publicly-owned public transport
- A mass programme of building, repairing, insulating etc. energy-efficient council housing
- A big expansion of aid and assistance from rich to poor countries
- Repeal of the ban on workers striking over climate issues, and all other restrictions on strikes and workers' actions
- Millions of new well-paid, secure, unionised, "green" jobs of various sorts, in the public sector

Solidarity argues for those "green jobs" - building low-emission infrastructure; reducing energy demand by insulation, re-design, etc; converting transport and agriculture; developing carbon drawdown technology; etc. - to be defined by workers' plans for converting industries while making the rich (not workers) pay the costs. We fight to target the wealth of the rich and super-rich to unlock the resources neces-

sary for our demands.

We fight for the demand made by the Fire Brigades Union - public ownership and democratic control of the [big banks](#) and financial institutions, allowing a decisive break in the financial-fossil fuel link and reorientation of finance's vast resources towards beating rather than fuelling climate change and inequality.

Socialists are vocal advocates for these kind of anti-capitalist, pro-working-class demands. We fight seriously for the labour movement to take them up and champion them, seeking to draw the widest possible layers of both trade union and climate activists into that fight.

This is a matter of democratising our labour movement - by mobilising workers to fight for the policies their organisations' democratic structures have agreed, and for their bureaucratic apparatuses to stop ignoring these decisions and instead help build the fight.

The labour movement has huge potential power, in weight of numbers and workers' role in economies and societies. But for that power to become real, and have an impact, it needs to actually be wielded.

In the UK, though many trade unionists and Labour activists organised enthusiastically for the COP26 mobilisations, the labour movement as a whole did little. The Labour Party machine did nothing. Trade union promotion and mobilisation, certainly by union leaders and officials, was sluggish.

Green bans

The "green bans" by building workers in New South Wales, Australia, in the 1970s, grew out of political discussion and radicalisation, but also out of the union gaining strength and welding solidarity through winning battles on pay and conditions.

As yet, unions often take conservative positions on climate. GMB and Unite, the two biggest private-sector unions, with important bases in many high-emissions sectors and companies, generally advocate a short-sighted and narrow position of defending (supposedly defending) existing jobs at the

expense of everything else. The only climate motion passed by this year's TUC Congress, proposed by GMB, was along those conservative and de facto pro-fossil fuel lines.

The embryo of an alternative approach is visible in the conversion plans developed by the auto and aerospace components workers at GKN Driveline in Birmingham. Threatened with the closure of their plant, they have developed a proposal to retool it for electric vehicle supply chains - arguing for its technology and resources and their skills to be used to contribute to the fight against climate change. (More from Green Party Trade Union Group convenor and Free Our Unions activist Matthew Hull: bit.ly/m-hull)

The venture capitalists who own GKN, Melrose, have dismissed the workers' proposals. Winning such demands is a matter of serious class struggle: of *imposing* them on the capitalist class.

We need conversion and transformation plans of various sorts across the economy, and not just in workplaces facing closures - developed and promoted by workers in the workplace and by unions and the labour movement widely.

We need a fight in our unions - and in the Labour Party - at many levels, from workplace transformation plans to wider climate policies, from industrial action to mobilising on the streets...

To develop these fights, we need to develop networks of trade union green reps and climate groups in workplaces, to formulate demands, discuss what needs to be done, and mobilise.

For now, there are fewer such reps now than a decade ago. The new rise in broader climate activism gives us openings to increase that organising and feed into mass recruitment to our unions, particularly recruitment of young workers. □

From 6 November, comrades in Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield, York, and Liverpool report climate turnouts relatively large for local protests. Others were smaller, but almost every city had something. The mood was generally leftish and receptive. The most common union banners were from the school workers' union NEU (and UCU in London), but branch contingents were often small and of older members. Fair numbers of left-wing students, but organised uni contingents few or small. A relatively visible Labour Party presence in some places, more Green Party elsewhere. Not so much XR. London's protest was maybe 15,000, a varied mix, with many left and union banners, but the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development maybe the biggest single contingent. □

Sudan: neighbourhoods and workers vs the coup

By Hamid Khalafallah

Sudanese civil society activist Hamid Khalafallah spoke to us on 2 November. On 7 November a new wave of protests and a mass strike began in Sudan to overturn the military coup of 25 October.

Many people feel this new coup was almost inevitable, because the arrangements created in 2019 were highly problematic. The military ousted Bashir [authoritarian ruler Omar al-Bashir] in 2019, and then they wanted to hold on to as much power as possible. In the course of the uprising, they killed a lot of people – for instance when they were dispersing the sit-in in Khartoum. These same generals then became part of the new governance structures as part of the power-sharing agreement that was made. They were central to the Sovereignty Council.

Many of those who had been on the streets were very much against this, and continued to advocate much more radical changes, and for the military leaders to be brought to book. However the politicians in the Forces of Freedom and Change coalition led the negotiations, and that is what they agreed to. In this context it was always likely the military would try to use their position to cause difficulties in the transition.

Covid was an excuse for the delays. It wasn't entirely an excuse, but it was partly, and in any case it suited various political actors.

In November the military were supposed to hand over the chair position on the Sovereignty Council, that's why they've acted now. Fundamentally the generals don't want to lose power because at some point that could mean them losing immunity and having to face justice.

Minority

They gained confidence from a few civilian politicians, and leaders of armed movements, who have sided with them basically in order to gain positions. There is also a minority in society who see the chaos and believe only the military can provide a strong government. I want to stress that's a minority – I think the military will have been very disappointed with how little popular support they've been able to create.

Since the coup there been daily demonstrations all over the country. The biggest ones so far were on 30 October. These are the biggest protests since the last uprising began in December 2018. There were also very big protests in the Sudanese diaspora, for instance thousands in London. Moreover the whole tone and atmosphere of the movement seems more militant this time.

The demand is essentially for an end to the coup, for a fully civilian govern-

ment and for the military leaders to be brought to book and held accountable, with speedy trials. Also there are slogans about opposing foreign intervention.

There is a division there between some of the politicians, who mainly want to go back to the pre-coup situation, amended to weaken the military, and the grassroots movement which is much more radical.

There are various types of geographically-based grassroots organisations, where people in a particular neighbourhood come together and organise and in some cases hold elections to represent the area. There are some committees that regulate life in the neighbourhood and oversee services, essentially a form of local government, though not entirely official. Then there are resistance committees which are there to monitor and act as watchdogs, to make sure the revolution's demands are being met and everything is advancing.

Committees

These committees exist all over the country, though with varying degrees of organisation. In almost all cases people involved in the committees want the military 100% out of the political picture.

In 2018 and 2019 the Sudanese Professionals' Association [a union organisation] was actually leading the whole movement. In 2018 they organised protests about wages and so on and then it developed into a wider confrontation with the military regime. Since then the SPA has been divided by a political conflict between the Communist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, which is a sort of religious party with a complicated background. There was a fight over internal elections and last year the federation split.

The result is that the trade union movement is much more fragmented, with different unions acting on their own and less coordination. The unions are still playing a very important role but it is much less coordinated. However, it seems to me there are more groups of workers organising, and not just professional white collar workers – for instance truck drivers and mechanics have been striking and demonstrating, which I don't think was the case in 2019.

In terms of this movement, it's really just demands for democracy – and bringing the military leaders to justice. Over the last two years, however, there have been arguments and protests around the government's economic plans, which involved so-called "liberalisation" at the behest of the World Bank and IMF. People were very divided over this, much more or even more than over questions about the development of democracy. No doubt this will con-



Bin strikes in Sheffield and Brighton

Above: Veolia refuse workers held a mass picket on 8 Nov. at the Lumley Street Depot in Sheffield, demanding a 6% pay increase. They held votes at the picket, deciding to escalate to a full week of action from the 22nd. Meanwhile, refuse workers in Brighton have just won their strike. A shop steward from Brighton bin depot spoke to Solidarity:

"The dispute was about round changes, to working patterns at very short notice and without explanation, about management unilaterally ignoring agreed procedures and just making decisions as and when they felt like it and without consultation with the union and the workers involved. We tried for like 10 weeks or so to resolve it through the 'proper' channels and got nowhere. Our demands were

about respect, about management not just making decisions about our working patterns and our working day on a whim, and about respecting the procedures which had been agreed with the union. That's what we wanted. What we've come out with is a re-grading of the whole service. It was only the HGV drivers who were balloted and were on strike, cos it was them who were getting taken off their rounds, but ultimately what we need - and what we will now get - is a consistent policy for the whole workforce, for drivers, for refuse and recycling, and for Streets [the street cleaning service]. And on top of that, a re-grading of all of our roles which will result in the lowest paid see an uplift in their salary."

• Full interview: bit.ly/brig-bin

continue to be an argument, whatever government we have.

Dissent within the army not visible, but there are reports or rumours that this is going on.

In 2019 when we protested at the army headquarters and held the sit-in there between April and June, there were multiple times when soldiers were ordered to attack us and refused to do so. More than that: when special forces came to shoot us, some of the regular soldiers shot back and cleared them out of the area so we could continue safely. However they would not allow us inside the headquarters. Eventually they cleared us out of the way and dispersed the sit-in.

Islamists and people influenced by these kind of ideas are a very important factor in all kinds of institutions and sections of the economy. In broad terms they have had an alliance with the military leaders, but it is shifting and sometimes complicated. After the coup the military released a load of important Islamists who were in deten-

tion and facing trial after the 2019 revolution. Then the coup leader [Abdel Fattah al-Burhan] dismissed the attorney general and had them rearrested. These people can provide some of the support in society the military lacks; but I suspect their release also pissed off some of its international allies, particularly Egypt given its problems with the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists. So the military may have calculated these international allies are more important than a little more support in the country.

If the struggle against the coup fails I think it will be a defeat not just for us but for struggles in the wider region and beyond. You look across the region and of course the "Arab spring" and so on have not yielded much success. There are many failed democratic struggles in Africa too... Ours was a more positive example and we need to defend it. International solidarity is important. □

• Longer version: bit.ly/hamid-k

Climate change, China, and the Morning Star



Antidoto

By Jim Denham

To judge by the coverage in the *Morning Star*, COP26 has been little more than a China-bashing exercise by hypocritical western governments. As a statement from the Communist Party of Britain (published in the MS of 6-7 November) put it: "Attacks at Cop26 on China by US President Joe Biden and others ignore the fact that China is a developing country whose CO2 emissions per head are half those of the US, and whose solar and wind power generations have over the last seven years outstripped those of the whole European Union."

In fact, the "attacks" on China were mild stuff. Biden claimed that progress in climate change is "going to require us to continue to focus on what China's not doing" – words that may not be

particularly helpful, but hardly amount to rhetoric of the "new cold war" that the CPB and *Morning Star* constantly harp on about.

AMS editorial (1 Nov) claims "In terms of carbon emissions per head, China today stands at 7.3 tonnes and the US at more than double that at 15.2... And in terms of relevant technologies China is well ahead. It produces 80 per cent of the world's solar panels. It has over two-thirds of the world's high-speed electric trains. It has as almost as many electric cars as the US and the EU combined – and 57 percent of its Belt and Road energy investments are for renewables as against 28 per cent two years ago".

China's is also the world's biggest user of coal power and emitter of CO2 (some 28% of global emissions). But its population is vast, and on a per capita basis its emissions are (to quote leading China apologist Carlos Martinez, in the MS of Nov 5), "very ordinary – around the same level as Bulgaria or New Zealand."

For once, Martinez gets it about right: China's record is not as bad as it is sometimes made out. But it is far from the world-leading beacon of environmental progress that the MS and CPB would have us believe.

China has been expanding wind and solar power fast since 2011. But it has also continued to expand fossil-fuel power. Xi has recently pledged to halt finance for building of overseas coal-powered plants, but the 1,000 gigawatts (GW) of coal-power that China generates domestically will continue to grow, at least for a while. This is more than four times the capacity of either India or the United States, which are the next biggest generators of coal power.

The *Morning Star* repeatedly refers to China as a "developing" country, emphasising that emissions accumulate over hundreds of years, whereas China's industrial development is relatively recent.

Yes, Europe and the USA account for the bulk of historic emissions. But gov-

ernments now have knowledge and options about new power-generation which they didn't have centuries, or even decades, ago. We can't undo the past. We must plan the future.

Xi declared that carbon emissions will continue to rise until 2030 and then decline to net zero by 2060. Russia, too has gone for 2060. America, Europe, Britain and Japan have pledged to reach net zero by 2050. The *Morning Star* hails China's so-called "socialist modernisation": "It utilises private capital. But... this is within developmental goals set politically and socially" (editorial 1 Nov).

What China's apologists really mean is that in a one-party state rulers can plan in terms of centuries, while decadent Western democracies struggle to see beyond the next election.

Strange, then, that China's environmental goals are even less adequate than those of America and Europe, and its per capita record on emissions is no better than Bulgaria or New Zealand. □



Couriers are defending jobs and health



Letter

Zack Muddle's letter on cycling ([Solidarity 612](#)) seems misplaced. He was responding to a report that the Stuart couriers in Sheffield (who serve JustEat) are fighting an attempt to scrap their jobs and oblige them to apply for work on a different platform, Scoober, on which they would have to work on electric bicycles, not in cars.

The workers say that this would make them unsafe. Zack writes that obviously he supports the workers, but don't they understand that cycling is good for you?

Zack says that commuters who cycle are healthier and safer. These couriers aren't using their vehicles to commute. They are forced by the nature of the industry to work

10-hour days on the roads six or seven days a week, making every delivery as fast as possible. They are driven to go as fast as they can by low-paid piece-rate work, and by the threat of summary dismissal if a GPS tracking device judges them to be dawdling.

Moreover, Sheffield is a very hilly city. Not all drivers are in good enough physical health to do that kind of work on a bicycle. For them, a ban on using cars is a ban on working, full stop.

Zack concedes that there is one area in which cars have a safety advantage over bicycles – that you're less likely to be injured in a crash if you're in a car. The way the capitalists organise food delivery work means that if you have to do it full-time to support yourself, crashes are almost guaranteed. Couriers' cars are generally covered in dents.

So accident safety isn't a sec-

ondary concern when you're weighing up bikes vs. cars.

Zack misses out another important safety concern: fear of crime. Couriers are routinely targets of violent robberies. The robber's first task is always to lure the courier out of their car. If you're on a bike, your assailant's job is that much easier.

Surely most road users should ditch their cars. And surely the food courier industry needs to be reorganised under workers' control to make it safer, healthier, and more dignified for everyone. Such a reorganisation would doubtless lead to an increase in bike use. Socialists should discuss and advocate such a reorganisation.

But here and now we have a defensive fight against a move which is certain to cost jobs and risk lives. □

Michael Elms, Sheffield

Dave Ward, Billy Hayes, and the CWU



Letter

The article in [Solidarity 609](#) is an interesting contribution to the debate going on within the CWU [Communication Workers' Union], but it is wrong on several levels.

As an activist within the union for many years I am very familiar with the positions taken by its leaders and the discussions around the union's political strategy. In the time Labour was in office there was a lot of criticism of their approach to Royal Mail which was a publicly owned body throughout their 13 years as a government. The stance taken by Dave Ward during that period was a reflection of the anger felt by postal workers who were under attack. As General Secretary Billy Hayes defended the Labour link unconditionally on the basis it brought influence. This "influence" resulted in thousands of job losses, numerous office closures, increased workloads and the closure of the final salary pension scheme.

As for the campaign against Royal Mail privatisation, this was actually won by activists not the General Secretary.

During this period motions on disaffiliation were presented to annual conference and were always opposed by the NEC [National Executive] – an NEC which included Dave Ward.

The 2015 General Secretary election resulted in Billy Hayes being defeated because his 14 years in the job were viewed negatively by the membership, a membership that had dropped substantially in that time. Since taking over Dave Ward hasn't got everything right, but he has attempted to grapple with the many problems facing the union, not least the issue of recruitment and organising. In the political sphere he deserves credit for getting the CWU behind Corbyn – this in contrast to his predecessor who resisted all attempts to nominate John McDonnell in the 2007 Labour leadership election.

The 7-9 November CWU conference presents the union with an opportunity to debate the way forward in a number of key areas, not just politics. For me the most pressing one is, how does the CWU recruit more workers into the organisation, rebuild at the grassroots, and survive as an independent force? □

CWU member, Sussex

Spain extends IVF rights



**Women's
Fightback**

By Katy Dollar

Spain has extended free fertility treatment, including IVF, to women in same sex relationships, single cis women, trans and non-binary people. This restores rights removed by the conservative Partido Popular government in 2013.

The PP government changed the law to only allow straight, married couples to access fertility treatment in public hospitals free of charge, meaning unmarried and LGBT people would have to pay for private health services. This obviously left poorer people less able to access reproductive technologies.

Health minister Carolina Darias (PSOE), signed the order at a ceremony, attended by LGBT+ activists, and later wrote on Twitter:

"Starting today, single women, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people will have access to [reproductive tech-

nology] on the Instituto Nacional de la Salud (national health service)."

Uge Sangil, president of Spain's federation of LGBT+ rights groups, spoke at the ceremony:

"We have always understood that achieving rights such as assisted reproduction benefits lesbian and bisexual women and pregnant trans people, without harming anyone. It is an example of how recognizing LGBT+ rights means recognising human rights for society as a whole. We will not be able to be citizens with all rights fully recognised as long as the conditions of freedom and equality of all people are not guaranteed, whatever their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression."

They added: "We have history, we have memory, we have strength, we have conviction and we are right; they will never stop us."

Spain was one of the world's first countries to recognize same-sex marriage. This summer, the country agreed on a draft bill that would permit those over 16 to legally change gender with-

out having to seek approval from parents or doctors. The legislation has been sent to parliament for approval.

Women's and LGBT rights are not safe from the right. Vox, a far-right party and the third-largest in Spain's lower legislative chamber, has advocated the repeal of some anti-discrimination laws protecting LGBTQ people. This year LGBT activists highlighted the case of a 19-year-old gay woman who visited a gynaecologist over a menstrual condition and was diagnosed with "homosexuality".

As we can see from across Europe and Spain's own history things can get worse as well as better.

Spain needs mass working class women's and LGBT movements, and socialists and the labour movement fighting against oppression and for reproductive justice. □

Because of other commitments, Eric Lee has paused his regular *Solidarity* column for a couple of months. □



Activist Agenda

The recent AGM of the rail union RMT voted: "To call a national demonstration to resist the [new anti-union "minimum service"] law... to approach other transport unions to collaborate with us on planning this demonstration".

The policy conference of the big general union Unite resolved "to call on the TUC to organise a Saturday London demonstration demanding repeal of all anti-union laws".

And policy passed by TUC Congress in September called for a "joint union rally" against curbs on the right to protest and strike.

Free Our Unions is setting plans to work with activists in RMT, Unite, and other unions to ensure these policies are acted on.

FOU also turned its recent joint statement with Earth Strike: Empower the Unions into an [A5 leaflet](#) for distribution at the climate protests around COP26. □

• Links and info for these and other campaigns, suggestions for labour movement motions and petitions: workersliberty.org/agenda

Yorkshire cricket: a racist disgrace

By Dan Katz

Yorkshire County Cricket Club (YCCC) has stumbled into a self-made crisis which has been decades in the making.

Azeem Rafiq, a Pakistani-born Yorkshire cricketer who played for the club in two stints from 2008 to 2018, suffered racist discrimination and bullying which left him close to

suicide. YCCC reluctantly commissioned an independent report into Rafiq's allegations but has refused to publish the final document. The club recently announced that no disciplinary action would be taken against those responsible for the bullying, which it accepts took place, adding that the regular use of a racial epithet ("Paki") against Rafiq amounted to

"good natured banter."

Zimbabwe-born batsman Gary Ballance, who plays for the club, admits racial abuse against Rafiq who was also referred to as "Rafa the kaffir".

YCCC believed it could do nothing and the scandal would be quickly forgotten.

Sponsors

However, sponsors began to withdraw their backing. Yorkshire Tea, Harrogate Spring Water, Tetley Beer, Nike and a number of other corporations all cut ties with YCCC. On 4 November the English Cricket Board suspended Yorkshire's lucrative rights to stage test matches at the Headingley ground.

Yorkshire Chair, Roger Hutton, and two non-Executive directors have resigned. Hutton, a relatively new appointment, had not even bothered to meet Rafiq.

Rafiq commented, "This is about institutional racism and the abject failures to act by numerous leaders at YCCC and in the wider game."

Until 1992 YCCC operated a rule that only people who were born in Yorkshire could play for the team. Talented Asian

immigrants who had lived for most of their lives in the area, but had been born in Pakistan, were excluded.

Throughout the 1970s and 80s club cricket in Yorkshire was run on racially segregated lines (the outlines of which still exist today). The white clubs and leagues fed into the County structure. The Asian clubs even had their own competition, Quaid-e-Azam. Yorkshire only fielded their first BAME player in 1992 (the brilliant Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar). The first British-born Asian to play for Yorkshire was Ajmal Shahzad, in 2004.

Cricket writer and editor of Wisden, Matthew Engel, wrote in 1999 that an informal Apartheid exists throughout the English game and called out Yorkshire and Essex as county

teams particularly blighted by racism. Talented black and Asian players living in Yorkshire often went to Lancashire or Derbyshire, looking for a route to progress. The fast bowler Devon Malcolm left Sheffield for Derby.

White players continued to deny YCCC had a problem. The unpleasant and belligerent former Yorkshire captain, Brian Close, explained the lack of black and brown faces in the Yorkshire squad by saying, "if black families had less children like the whites then they would be able to afford cricket equipment and lessons."

English cricket as a whole is going backwards. For example, the number of black players in country cricket has dropped by 75% since 1990. The Yorkshire scandal is part of a wider crisis. □

Christmas appeal for miners' families



Letter

During and after the 1984-5 miners' strike a large number of strikers were arrested and served prison sentences solely for the crime of defending their communities, their jobs and their union. The National Justice for Mineworkers campaign NJM has, for many years, been collecting money to help these men, some of whom have never been able to find regular work.

Most of this money has been collected at public meetings and labour movement events, but the Covid pandemic has meant that many of these events, such as the Durham Miners' Gala, have been cancelled. As a result there is a special emphasis this year on the Christmas Appeal.

Please help these men and their families have a decent Christmas. Send cheques (made out to "National Justice for Mineworkers") to NJM, 2 Hilden Street, Leigh, Lancashire, WN17 4LG. □

John Cunningham,
Lancashire

Second hand books!

Workers' Liberty is selling hundreds of second hand-books – politics, but also fiction, history and much more. Visit bit.ly/2h-books for the current stock and prices, and to order. □



Climate finance: take it out of the bosses' hands



Environment

By Stuart Jordan

The International Energy Agency (IEA) [roadmap](#) for net zero by 2050 would cost on average \$4 trillion annually until 2050, or just 5% of the new value that the workers worldwide produce each year.

There is no indication that the current ruling class can make this happen. Mark Carney's news of an alliance controlling \$130 trillion "capital committed to net zero" sounds impressive, but is flimsy. Less an attempt to save the planet, more an attempt save face for fossil-fuel expanding capitalist business.

GFANZ is a group of 450 banks, fund managers and insurers controlling 40% of global financial assets. In the same year they signed up to the "alliance", these organisations have made multi-billion dollar investments in expanding fossil fuel extraction and combustion. None has any plans to halt fossil fuel expansion.

These financial institutions are "committed" (voluntarily!) to setting five-yearly targets so that their fossil-fuel operations and asset bases reach net zero by 2050. As with the COP26 announcement that nations containing



85% of the world's trees will halt deforestation in 2030, GFANZ promises to begin the first of the five-year decarbonising plans in eight years time.

As the biggest "alliance" of capitalist firms in the world, these banks and other financial institutions, hold a great deal of power over the Earth's future climate. At present they determine what work we are put to and the future direction of the fossil fuel economy. Their deranged compulsion to invest in fossil-fuel expansion sets the tone for the governments at the COP26.

Norway, Australia, Canada and the UK have all trumpeted their commitments to be carbon neutral by 2050 whilst simultaneously licencing new coal, gas and oil extraction for export. A recent IMF report claimed that com-

panies organising fossil fuel extraction and combustion are receiving [\\$5.9 trillion](#) in public subsidies. Rich nations have still failed to live up to a 12 year old promise to provide £100 billion in "climate finance" to poorer nations for mitigation and adaptation.

Borders

Yet wealthier nations are spending billions on militarising their borders. A recent [report](#) shows that in 2013-2018 seven of the wealthiest nations, responsible for 48% of historic emissions, spent twice as much on border controls as on climate finance.

Most of the impacts of climate change will be felt in the tropics. Those least responsible for the crisis will be the people who bear the biggest burden. Yet workers on the safer side of this murderous climate wall have a common interest with our sisters and brothers in the danger zone in forming organisations capable of seizing productive wealth and ending the rule of profit.

The capitalist class are unable to forgo the profits of fossil fuel expansion and unable to organise international bans that would limit fossil-fuel profitability. Instead they are preparing to prevent the victims of their civilisation-destroying decisions from reaching safety. The chaos of our unplanned, profit-driven economy will lead to political chaos and war. This is the future the capitalist class is currently preparing for us.

Carney's alliance will not put a halt to the chaos. It only shows the profound limitations of capitalism's ability to resolve this crisis. GFANZ is an admission that any plan to halt climate change will require the people who control and direct human work to cooperate and coordinate on a global scale according to a "science-aligned goals". But an alliance of competing private capitalists, who prioritise their own self-enrichment over all else, is unable to enact "science-aligned goals".

Capitalism's own tendency towards expansion and monopoly means there is already a high level of centralised planning and international coordination. Yet 450 firms with 40% of the world's financial assets on their books will always prioritise profit-aligned goals before the needs of people or planet.

Liberating these firms from private ownership is the only way we can hope to enact "science-aligned goals" for a just transition.

Last year, the world saw demonstrations under the slogan Black Lives Matter. If we are to make that a slogan a reality, we need to form our own alliance of workers' organisations to fight for collective ownership of productive wealth and rational economic planning.

If GFANZ wealth were held in common and deployed by democratic decisions, then human labour could

be directed for "science-aligned" transitions to minimise the risk of runaway climate change and limit the damage of the climate change already underway. The lack of profit-chasing and competition would permit a higher level of international coordination.

The only social force that has the interest and potential power to take this private property into social ownership and direct the economy towards "science-aligned goals" is the workers' movement.

Workers' organisations are in a bad shape after four decades of defeats but they remain mass organisations of hundred of millions of wage workers. The power of workers' organisations is based on solidarity across divisions of race, nationality, gender, and sexuality, and on our collective ability to defy the bosses' orders.

In the UK the Labour Party leaders fear even limited restrictions on fossil capital and support immigration controls. At its 2021 conference Labour voted to expand gas production, alongside a vote for greener policies.

But the leadership of the mass workers' organisations is a thin layer of a few thousand bureaucrats and career politicians sat on top of a largely passive, disengaged mass membership.

67% of young people in the UK would prefer to live in a socialist society. When even a significant minority of those young people get organised as a socialist force, involved in weekly political activity, then we will be able to win the battle of ideas within the mass workers' movement, orient it to the climate reality, and build a mass social force fighting for rational democratic planning and collective ownership. □

After Paterson: push Labour to fight Tories

By Martin Thomas

"So feeble that it couldn't run a whelk stall - or would hesitate to try, in case whelks were upset", commented a Johnson-sceptic [Tory columnist](#) on Labour's current leadership.

Former Tory minister Owen Paterson was allotted 30 days' suspension from Parliament for (highly) paid lobbying of government on behalf of two companies, one also a big player in the Covid-contracts-without-tenders scandal. The Tory government tried to change the rules after the event to let Paterson off, and to ease the way for Boris Johnson in his next hearing on paid-lobbying issues.

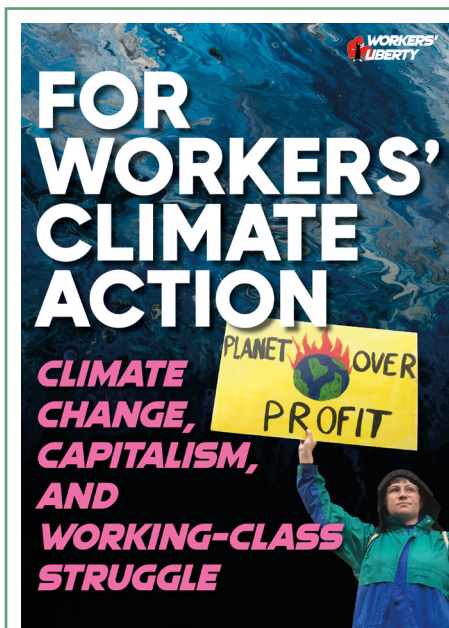
The rule-change only just scraped through, after a Tory MPs' revolt. Shaken, the government u-turned. Paterson resigned. With such a big Tory revolt, Starmer felt safe to speak out. Big-business and conservative "whelks" would not be upset.

Will this set off a virtuous circle of Johnson's support eroding from his repeated "tinpot Mussolini" essays

and repeated u-turns, and Labour's timid leaders being emboldened? Probably not without democratic pressure from the rank and file and the unions. The Labour leadership's latest reported move, however, is another to stall that pressure. According to [LabourList](#), it plans to push through the "trigger ballots" on sitting MPs (to decide whether they are confirmed as candidates for next time without demur, or face contest) by June 2022, and have all candidates selected by March 2023.

The [Boundary Commission](#) is due to announce new parliamentary constituency allocations by mid-2023. The changes will probably benefit the Tories, so there is strong incentive for the Tories to wait until after mid-2023 for the next general election.

But, reports Labour List, "the NEC [National Executive Committee] is set to draw up a formula for how candidates confirmed or selected in 2022 are allocated to new seats" after mid-2023, instead of the new boundaries triggering new selections, as happens with local government wards. □



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Attacks on Sheffield “Girls Night In” spiking protests

Alexandra is a member of the Student Solidarity Group in Sheffield. She talked with Solidarity about the Girls Night In protests in Sheffield and when one was attacked by angry men.

Freshers’ week started, and a lot of reports of spiking started to trickle in. People were talking about it online. Then you started to see stories about injections too. I started to hear about things happening in Sheffield. The next thing I know, Sheffield Night In is set up and I see them on Instagram. I discover that this is a nationwide thing, planning a boycott of nightclubs.

We started thinking about this at a meeting of the Student Solidarity Group. Bar staff from the Students’ Union (SU) came and talked to us about what was happening and shortcomings in terms of training to combat spiking. They had only been given a small number of anti-spiking devices, and they were angry that nothing was being done. So they came to us and raised about things that could be done to support the boycott.

Protest

We decided to have a protest outside the SU club night ROAR, which is the sports teams night out. We knew that the cheerleading team in Sheffield had been badly affected by these recent spikings. We made a banner that said “End spiking: join the boycott”. But the night before, the SU cancelled the club night, and replaced it with a discussion between students at the Students’ Union, which wasn’t very well advertised or explained.

We decided to go and do a rally



outside another student club, which also shut down its club night on that evening. So three of us went with the banner down West Street, and came to Molly Malone’s, a big student venue. Then as we were just preparing to get a picture taken with the banner there, we saw this big group of people marching up the road, and we thought, who’s this?

And they were chanting anti-spiking slogans! So we unfurled the banner and they were really positive about it, and we all gathered around that banner, and we led this rally around West Street a few times. We were talking about who we were and why we’d made the banner, and this larger group, it turned out, had all been organised by this one woman who had just joined a load of group chats and posted about it – which I thought was really cool.

So we pitched up outside some clubs where people were still going in,

we had a few speeches over the megaphone and a few chants: “No more silence, no more lies: we will not be victimised!” and “When I say no, you say spiking”. It went well, there was a lot of energy, and a lot of the people there had never taken part in any kind of protest or rally before. People had written speeches, wanting to tell their story. People had made their own signs, they were eager to get to the front with the banner.

Aggression

Some people on the street were clenching their fists in support or beeping their horns supportively. But things started to take a turn.

It started with some teenagers in a pizza shop shouting at us. They were just shouting nonsense really, nothing about what we were there for. Then you got men coming up and saying things like “It’s an easy lay” or shouting “Rohypnol!” at us, or saying that it was acceptable, or calling us lesbians or calling the boys gay for being there, and childish insults about people’s hair or glasses.

Then outside one club there were guys on dirt bikes in balaclavas who were coming right up near us on the pavement, and they were followed by a group of men in a car who parked up really close to us and stared angrily. That was a bit unnerving but we got our confidence back when they drove off. Another older man in his 60s came and started really yelling at us; and then he was pulling girls by their T-shirts out of the group, getting in people’s faces. He was really angry, offended that we were

out there. I couldn’t figure out what his problem was: with students, or demonstrations, or leftist vibes, or women speaking out against the violence that they experience. A lot of the people there weren’t so experienced with protests, so they didn’t know so well how to de-escalate confrontations.

But all these confrontations happened in such quick succession, as if one person yelling at us brought everyone else who opposed us out of the woodwork. So after a while we called it a night.

Sheffield Night In, after the last boycott, have decided to take a bit of time off, so they are not planning more action.

A rally is planned outside the nightclub CODE on Thursday 4 November at 10pm. That’s good because they quietly cancelled last week’s event in order to cover their own back.

I do think that the boycott on the 27th and the rallies that happened alongside it were really good and they got people out of the clubs and onto the streets. It caught people’s attention. What I want to see is our SU at the University of Sheffield to actually keep their word on the things they have agreed now to do about spiking.

I do think the boycotts should continue regularly, not to let this issue die. I think that people being more aware of the issue might reduce the problem until we can get some more structural changes in place.

I hope this movement teaches people how to hold others accountable – whether it’s a club you go to, or your students’ union, or if you’re a bar worker, your employer. I want this movement to fuel people’s desire for change, so people don’t just think, oh I just work here, there’s nothing I can do. □



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James Connolly and the

Introduction: Partition, democracy, and the AOH



**The unexpurgated
James Connolly**

By Sean Matgamna

The partition of Ireland in 1920-1 was and is an imperialist crime. Why?

In principle Marxists are in favour of the right of compact minorities to separate off the area where they are a territorial majority from an existing state, if that is what most of them want. Vladimir Lenin outlined socialist principles here in a 1913 Bolshevik Party [resolution](#):

"Insofar as national peace is in any way possible in a capitalist society based on exploitation, profit-making and strife, it is attainable only under a consistently and thoroughly democratic republican system of government which guarantees full equality of all nations and languages, which recognises no compulsory official language, which provides the people with schools where instruction is given in all the native languages, and the constitution of which contains a fundamental law that prohibits any privileges whatsoever to any one nation and any encroachment whatsoever upon the rights of a national minority."

"This particularly calls for wide regional autonomy and fully democratic local self-government, with the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions determined by the local inhabitants themselves on the basis of their economic and social conditions, national make-up of the population, etc."

But isn't that just splitting up the working class? Is it not our fundamental concern to unite workers across all borders and divisions?

Yes, and the approach Lenin outlined in 1913, though seemingly its opposite, is designed to win working-class unity where workers are divided. The alternative to Vladimir Lenin's approach is to have an existing state coerce any minority that fights to secede with repression, up to and including such horrors as that inflicted by the Sinhalese majority in Sri Lanka on the Tamil minority in the island - mass slaughter in 2008-9, and after that as much repression as the majority thought necessary.

The principle that minorities concentrated in given areas have the right to secede from a given state brings consistent democracy into play. The workers on both sides combine to oppose any force, threat of force, or reserved



power against the minority (or by the minority against pockets of the majority people, or others, inside their claimed area).

That principle protects and builds and sustains unity of the workers on both sides of any division/border. It works against chauvinism from the oppressed as well as against the chauvinism of the oppressor.

Internationalism

Preserving the borders of any given state, as such, is a matter of indifference to the working-class internationalists on both sides. With commitment to consistent democracy, and good will, practical border difficulties can be resolved easily.

The working-class unity that can be built on such principles despite the possible creation of a new state border is real and democratic, the opposite of the coercion of a recalcitrant minority, and workers of the majority acquiescing in that and sharing responsibility for it.

Within that basic policy of the right to secede, socialists generally oppose the fragmentation of existing states, for example the separation of Scotland from England and Wales, and, most emphatically, the recent separation of the UK from the European Union. However, if it had come to it that the EU could only retain the UK by coercion, socialists would have said that secession was better, and called upon the workers of the EU to support Britain's right to secede.

Spain's coercion of Catalan nationalism could well be building up towards something like the insurgency of the Basques, from the 1960s up to 2011. In Lenin's time, the experience cited to

support favouring the right to separate was the 1905 separation of Norway from Sweden. The Swedish workers' movement opposed any suggestion of coercing Norway. The existing state divided, and yet relations between the two peoples, and the working classes, were not poisoned as they would have been if the Swedes had coerced the Norwegians.

In 1990-1 many peoples previously within the USSR set up new separate states, peacefully (more or less). That included Ukraine, which for decades had been the largest oppressed nation on earth. In 1992 multinational Czechoslovakia subdivided into Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

The other scenario was enacted in multinational former Yugoslavia, where the chauvinism of Serbia led to bitter wars.

Ireland

Why then, given the realities of conflict within Ireland, was the partition of Ireland between the Orange-Unionist-Protestant North and Catholic-Nationalist South a crime? Because the partition was not and is not such a division between two peoples, let alone a democratically agreed division.

In the long discussion on Protestant-Unionist, Catholic-Nationalist relations in Ireland, opened by Gladstone's First Home Rule Bill in 1886, why didn't the Nationalist and Unionist leaders search for and find a democratic inter-Irish solution to the divisions on the island? Because both sides, Unionist and Nationalist, looked to Britain to coerce the other Irish. Britain did coerce nationalist Ireland, long after Gladstone moved the First Home Rule Bill. The nationalists expected the British to force

the Unionists into a united Home Rule Ireland for them.

When the crisis came, about the Third Home Rule Bill, in 1912 and after, the nationalists were in the invidious position of looking to Britain to act on their behalf and coerce the Unionists on their behalf. [1]

Faced with the credible threat of civil war, the Liberal Government rattled on their Irish clients and allies. Nationalists dismissed the militarised Unionists of the North. Most Nationalists said that Carson was bluffing. James Connolly sneered at "the wooden guns of Ulster". By then, this was a form of wilful denial of reality.

Under duress, the Nationalists accepted Partition and set about selling it to their electors. On the eve of the Great War Joseph Devlin convinced a Convention of the Nationalists of the whole province of Ulster to accept Partition, "temporarily"...

It was the worst of all possible solutions. A second, artificial, Irish minority was created in the Six Counties. Where there had been one minority problem, there were hereafter two. In the Six Counties state a Protestant-Unionist majority occupied the north-east corner, Antrim and Down, most of Derry county and a lot of Armagh. Catholics and Nationalists were the majority in Tyrone and Fermanagh. Catholic Nationalists occupied not much less than half the land area; were a two-thirds majority in one of the two big cities, Derry, and almost a third of the population of Belfast. The Northern Ireland Catholics



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Catholic “Orange Order”

in the large border areas with the 26 Counties were kept in the Six Counties against their will by force, by a reign of military terror conducted by a chauvinist Orange-Unionist militia and the British Army.

The Six Counties state was supposed to give Unionists freedom from domination and oppression by the Catholic majority in the 32 counties; but the Catholics were a bigger minority of the Six Counties population than were the Protestants in all of Ireland. It was an imperialist carve-up, not an “objective” or a democratic separation of Irish Protestant-Unionists from Catholic Nationalists.

It was the work of some of the same people who made the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, setting up states that imprisoned many minority peoples, and laid down powder-kegs at the foundations of Europe that would explode into World War 2.

When in that era the Unionists asserted that they were a separate people in Ireland, they meant not the “Ulster Scots” in north-east Ulster, but a people scattered around the island. Protestants were 25% of the people of Dublin; James Connolly married one of them, Lillie Reynolds.

The Unionist leaders acted as people who thought they were entitled to as much of Ireland as they could take, never mind what the people in a given territory wanted. They were used to coercing Irish Catholics. Edward Carson had spent most of his career representing landlords against their tenants in Irish courts. He would have no qualms about having to coerce Catholics in a “Protestant State for a Protestant people” six counties.

Frank Gallagher, in *The Indivisible*

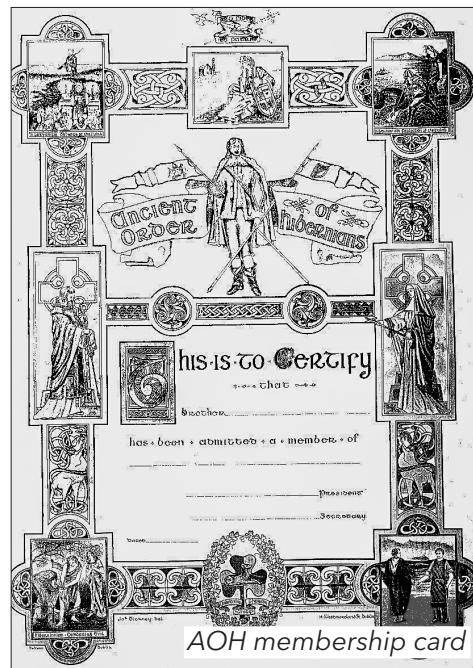
Island, tells a story that as the Irish Home Rule Bill looked to win through Parliament, Edward Carson, the leader of the Unionists, suggested to John Redmond, the Parliamentary leader of the Home Rule nationalists, that he, Redmond, should agree to the exclusion from Home Rule of the whole of the province of Ulster, nine counties, where Protestants were only a bare majority. That, so Carson tried to convince Redmond, would ensure that partition would not be permanent.

Carson was not a partitionist. He was using north-east Ulster as an argument against Home Rule for any part of the island. He may have been sincere in what he said to Redmond. And he may have felt that the Catholics in a nine-counties sub-state could be coerced as they traditionally had been.

Destabilisation

In any case, the actual partition and the coercion the Unionists imposed on the Catholic majority territories along the border was, from their own point of view, very stupid. It destabilised their sub-state. Coercion within the UK could only go so far, and eventually the Catholics mobilised against being second-class citizens. Out of that developed a military uprising that lasted a quarter of a century. Britain, faced with a mass Catholic revolt, abolished Protestant-sectarian home rule in 1972, and began a long-sustained effort to impose statutory Catholic-Protestant power-sharing in the Six Counties.

One of the commonest ideas about partition, even now, is that it divided the workers and the population. The opposite is true: the existing divisions in the north-east of Ireland among the workers and other classes led to parti-



tion, not the other way round.

A no less widespread idea is that malign Protestant sectarianism stood more or less on its own. The truth is that there was a no less malign sectarian force on the Catholic side; a Catholic “Orange Order”: the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Board of Erin).

Led by the MP for West Belfast, Joseph Devlin, the AOH was dedicated to promoting Catholics and Catholic interests, excluding Protestants from jobs and local government contracts, and having Catholics boycott Protestant and patronise Catholic shops.

It was an all-Ireland organisation. After that party's 1909 convention it controlled the Home Rule party, the United Irish League. By its enemies it was sometimes, not jokingly, called the Ancient Order of Hooligans. It broke up meetings, terrorised and beat nationalist and Catholic opponents. During the 1913-14 strike and lockout in Dublin,

the AOH organised gangs of hooligans to attack strikers; they tried to organise a sectarian trade union in rivalry with the Irish Transport Workers' Union.

The convention at which the AOH took control of the Home Rule party was known afterwards as “the ash-plant convention”, because the AOH were armed with ash-plants, used by drovers on cattle and by the AOH on people.

Some Home Rulers split off after the “ash-plant convention” and formed a separate organisation, largely in the Cork area, the All For Ireland League, led by William O'Brien, the Nationalist MP.

By the time the Third Home Rule Bill was introduced in 1912, both the AOH and the Orange Order were working powerfully to sharpen the Catholic-Protestant, Home-Rule-Unionist polarisation.

The article here reprinted in full for the first time (from *Forward*, 18 March 1911) deals with the AOH as James Connolly and others saw it in 1911 and after. The [version](#) of this article in Desmond Ryan's four-volume collection of Connolly's writings, published between 1948 and 1951) is valuable, but the uncut version is more valuable still. We should not undervalue the achievement of Desmond Ryan and the ITGWU leader, William O'Brien in managing to publish so much of Connolly in that repressive clericalist Ireland. □

[1] The Provisional IRA were in the same position during their long war: trying to coerce Britain into “persuading” the Unionists into a united Ireland. Persuasion here did not mean only persuasive words.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians

By James Connolly

This article appeared in Forward, 18 March 1911, where it was titled “Mr John E Redmond MP: His Strength and Weakness”. The endnotes indicate what was cut in the previous reprinted version. Subheads here are Solidarity's.

In endeavouring to give readers of *Forward* in Great Britain some real conception of the realities of Irish political life, one finds the task of explanation made increasingly difficult by the spectacular nature of the campaign waged by the Redmondites on the one hand, and the reactionary, lying stupidities of the Irish Tories on the other. The fact that national political freedom is both desirable and necessary blinds many

people to the truth that the advocates of such freedom on the political field may be most intensely conservative on the social or economic field and, indeed, may be purblind bigots in their opposition to all other movements making for human progress or enlightenment.

On the other hand there are not wanting, even among Socialists, many who seeing the socially reactionary character of much of the agitation for national freedom, became opposed to the principle because of the anti-Socialist character of some of its advocates.

The Socialist Party of Ireland avoids the dangers of either course. It recognises that national political freedom is an inevitable step towards the attain-

ment of universal economic freedom, but it insists that the non-Socialist leaders of merely national movements should be regarded in their true light as champions of the old social order and not exalted into the position of popular heroes by any aid of Socialist praise or glorification. A fact many of our British comrades are apt to forget, and this forgetting of which by those British comrades places many a serious stumbling block in the path of Socialism in Ireland.

We need not beslaver the United Irish League because we detest the Tories. We can detest them both. In fact they represent the same principle in different stages of social development.

The Tories are the conservatives

Continued page 10→

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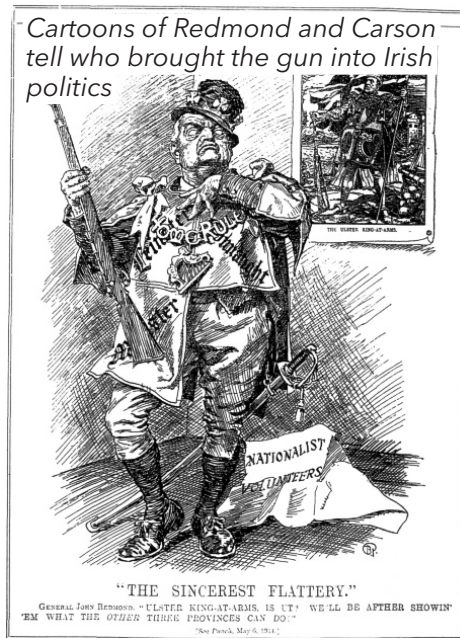
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of Irish feudalism, the United Irish Leaguers are the conservatives of a belated Irish capitalism. It is our business to help the latter against the former only when we can do so without prejudice to our own integrity as a movement.

How difficult this becomes, at times, is best illustrated by the position of Mr. John E. Redmond, M.P., "Leader of the Irish race", as his followers enthusiastically assure us. Mr. Redmond has a record as a reactionist difficult to excel. Long before the Parnell split, he denounced the Irish agricultural labourers in a speech at Rathfarnham, near Dublin, for forming a trade union to protect their own interests. On the granting of Local Government in 1898, a measure that first enfranchised the Irish working class on local bodies, Mr. Redmond made a speech counselling the labourers to elect landlords to represent them – a speech truly characterised by Mr. Michael Davitt in the House of Commons as the "speech of a half-emancipated slave". The labourers in town and country treated Mr. Redmond's advice with contempt and elected men of their own class all over Ireland. Compelled by the imperative necessity of maintaining in power a Home Rule government, Mr. Redmond votes for every measure of social reform the defeat of which would lead to the resignation of said government, but quietly acquiesces in every exemption of Ireland from progressive measures. Mr. Redmond believes that the Irish people are capable of governing their country, but opposed the proposal of Mr. T.W. Russell to allow the Irish people to control their own schools under the Local Government Act of 1898. Mr. Redmond bewails the fact that lack of employment compels the Irish workers to emigrate at the rate of 30,000 per year, but opposed the attempt of the Labour party to compel the government to recognise its duty to provide



work for them at home; Mr. Redmond believes that all public servants and representatives should be paid for their services to the State from the funds of the state, but is opposed to payment of members being extended to Ireland; Mr. Redmond's heart bleeds for the poor of Ireland, but he would not vote for the Feeding of School Children's Act to be applied to Ireland, and Mr. Redmond is a friend of the Labour party in England (!), but his party fights to the death against every independent candidature of Labour throughout the purely Nationalist districts of Ireland.

Canada

If we are, as we are, capable of running our own country, how comes it we are not fit to be trusted with our own schools? And if the public control of schools by the Catholic Irish people would lead to atheism and to the persecution of the clergy, how has it not produced the same effect in Canada which Mr. Redmond is continually praising as an example for Ireland? Here is what a clergyman, the Rev. J.E. Burke, in a recent speech in the Assembly Hall, Belfast, said of the educational system of Canada – that country so beloved of Mr. T.P. O'Connor and Mr. Redmond:

"They had no church schools – nothing but state schools. While the priest and the parson were at liberty to visit the schools and give advice and encouragement, they had nothing to do in the management. The children of all nationalities and all creeds and classes attended these schools and grew up together in them, and he believed that the result of this was a better understanding amongst them in after life".

Mr. Redmond exalts Canada as a model for Irish Government, but opposes in Ireland all these domestic institutions which make free government a success in Canada.

If it was right, as it undoubtedly was, to demand aid for Irish farmers, why is it not equally right to demand state aid or local aid for starving Irish school children?

If, as Mr. Redmond claims, Ireland is overtaxed to the extent of over two millions per year, how will payment of Irish members of Parliament be a gift from



the "British" Treasury? Does one feel like the recipient of a "gift" when you get back some of your own?

How then does Mr. Redmond and his party maintain their hold despite their essentially reactionary position? Simply because the Irish Unionists are still more reactionary. It is almost a choice between the devil and the deep sea.

Ulcer

Observe: In the debate in the House of Commons on the M'Cann case, Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., taunted the Orange bigots with the fact that none of their clergymen had been on the Anti-Sweating platform in the Ulster Hall, Belfast. As a matter of fact, the same was true of the Catholic clergymen. None of them were on that platform either, but the stupid Orange reactionaries could not think of a better answer to Joe than to deny the fact of the sweating. The obvious retort was apparently beyond their capacities.

Another illustration: In the debate upon the issue of the writ for North Louth, an Orange member, Mr. William Moore, moved to suspend the issue of the writ for four months on the ground that "Protestants" had been assaulted. This motion was made despite the fact that the whole trend of the evidence had been to prove that every species of intimidation and bribery had been brought to bear upon Catholics who refused to bow to the dictates of the official Home Rule gang. That, in short, it was Catholics who needed to be protected and not Protestants.

A motion to suspend the issue of the writ pending a Parliamentary investigation into the workings of the organisations responsible for the wholesale terrorism exercised upon the electors of North Louth – irrespective of religion – would have opened the way for a capable man to give such an exposure of the workings of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Board of Erin) and its relation to the United Irish League, as might have led to the extirpation of that pest in Ireland, but no one could expect such statesmanship from the Orange quarter.

But just imagine what a real Irish democrat could have made of such a situa-

tion! Then he could have dealt with the pilgrimage of the M.P.'s to America and Canada to beg from Irish exiles money towards the Irish cause, how our exiled brothers and sisters stinted themselves of, perhaps, even the necessities of life in order to help to "free Ireland and uplift poor Mother Erin", and how the money thus procured was used to debauch Irish men and women, to destroy political purity, to purchase bludgeons to smash in the heads of Irish men, and to terrorise the peaceful countryside?

A real representative of the Irish democracy might go on to show how Mr. Joseph Devlin's organisation, the A.O.H., supposed to be the Ancient Order of Hibernians, but by some believed to be the Ancient Order of Hooligans, has spread like an ulcer throughout Ireland, carrying social and religious terrorism with it into quarters hitherto noted for their broad-mindedness and discernment.

How it has organised the ignorant, the drunken and the rowdy, and thrown the shield of religion around their excesses; how it has made it impossible to conduct a political contest in the South of Ireland except on the lines of civil war; and how, every man who dares to oppose the Redmondite party, or every man within that party who opposes the A.O.H., must be at all times prepared to take his life in his hands.

Indictments

There are two indictments of that most nefarious order from representative Irish sources, and, making all due allowance for the possibility of partisan colouring, they yet draw a woeful picture of the state of matters Mr Redmond permits, or is compelled to permit, in order to maintain his throne. Let me explain that the name "Molly Maguire" is the name given popularly to the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Board of Erin). The quotation is from the *Cork Free Press*, and is a review of a speech by Mr. W. O'Brien, M.P.

"Mr. O'Brien dealt with facts. He said that the Molly Maguire secret society is purely sectarian in its character; that no Protestant can be a member of it; that it has absolute control of the funds and can devote them to what purposes it wishes; that it is employed by unscrupulous politicians to serve their own base purposes; that it is in the main responsible for the multiplied scandals of recent years in our public life; that it is the instrument which has been used to swamp Conventions, to rob the people of their electoral rights, and to deprive them of a voice in the shaping of public policy; that apart from its intrusion into the field of politics, its *raison d'être* is to give a preference to Catholics as against Protestants on all occasions; that its members are under an implied obligation to support each other, and that, therefore, it lends itself to log rolling of the most immoral character; that to give effect to its principles must lead to the boycotting and extermination of the Protestant community; that if Catholics are to withdraw their custom



Women's Fightback Issue 26 out now. Includes articles on protecting women beyond the police, sex positive feminism, solidarity with Afghan women, and more. □

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from Protestants in order to transfer it to rival traders who are Catholics, the result must be to convert the shops of the former into howling wildernesses; that if the Molly Maguires can help it no contract can be given by a public board to Protestants; that they must, under the operation of the same rule, be inexorably shut out from offices of emolument in the public gift as well as from seats in public bodies; that in this way Hibernianism revives and accentuates the worst features of Orangeism; that it has been admitted by one of its Grand Masters, Mr. Sisk, to be a species of Catholic freemasonry; that it is a thing hateful in itself, pregnant with moral evil, and inimical to the great and ennobling doctrines of Irish nationality; that its domination must enkindle the flames of sectarian strife from end to end of the land, and make the concession of self-government to a people subject to its sway an absolute impossibility”.

The other is from the pen of Mr. Lindsay Crawford, leader of the Independent Orangemen, and a name to conjure with among the Protestant democracy of the North. These opinions could be supplemented from every quarter where independent thinking is done in Ireland - North, South, East, and West. Every shade of political feeling in Ireland, outside of the official gang at the head of the United Irish League, agree that this organisation of Mr. Devlin's creation, and of whose work Mr. Redmond accepts the fruits, is the greatest curse yet introduced into the political and social life of Ireland. It is the organised ignorance of the community placing itself unreservedly at the disposal of the most insidious and inveterate enemies of enlightenment. In West Belfast it calls upon the Labour vote, upon the Socialists, to vote for “Wee Joe Devlin”, and in Queenstown it ferments a riot in order to prevent a socialist speaker delivering his message; it is a true incarnation of medieval intolerance masquerading in the guise of Christian charity.

Says Mr Lindsay Crawford:

“The trouble in Ireland is mainly attributable to the extreme sectarian influences – Orange and Green – that are still ranged in opposite camps on the banks of the Boyne. On one hand is the Orangeman, warm-hearted and generous despite his fanaticism, and

who, in the sacred name of Protestantism, opposes the principles of good government imperishably associated with the Reformation and with the revolution of 1688. On the other hand is the Hibernian – kindly and tolerant in his individual capacity – who is kept in ignorance of the real aims and ambitions of his leaders and whose individuality is crushed under the iron heel of the caucus. These two organisations constitute the real obstacle to the peace and progress of our country, and their attitude towards each other is the more reprehensible in that each professes to be rooted in Christian principles. Christianity forsooth! What a profane travesty of the teachings of the gentle Nazarene! If these sectarian societies represent Christianity on its two sides then we may well despair of our country. Do thorns bring forth grapes? Does Christianity express itself in hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness? It were easy, did space permit, to adduce proofs in support of the contention (1) that Protestant opposition to home rule is incompatible with the instincts and traditions of Protestantism; and (2) that sectarianism and nationality (as exemplified in the attempted fusion of the UIL and the AOH) are mutually antagonistic and irreconcilable.”

Socialists

Such is the problem, or rather some factors in the problem, in Ireland. Say, ye British Socialists, have your leaders any conception of this problem, or do they imagine that an Irish branch of a British Socialist organisation can grapple with this problem, or do anything with it save make a mess of it?

Or that it can be grappled with in any manner save from within the Irish nation by the workers of Ireland uniting in a party of their own to throw off the incubus of social slavery and religious intolerance? Such is the work the Socialist Party of Ireland sets out to accomplish. In that work the Socialists of Ireland know well that they can expect no help or countenance from the bigots of either Green or Orange persuasion, and while ever insisting upon the right of Ireland to control its own destinies, it allows precedence in its thoughts and plans to no interest but one, that of the working class. To the Redmonds and the Devlins, the Carsons and the Moores – it leaves the apostleship of

religious bigotry; in our ranks there is no room for that type of politician of whom the poet writes that:-

With all his conscience and with one eye askew,

So false he partly took himself for true;

Whose pious talk, when most his heart was dry.

Made wet the crafty crow's-foot round his eye;

Who never naming God except for gain,

So never took that useful name in vain;

Made Him his cat's paw, and the Cross his tool,

And Christ his bait to trap his dupe and fool;

Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace, he forged,

And, snakelike, slided his victim ere he gorged. □

Endnotes

John E Redmond was a small-scale Irish landlord. He sided with Charles Stuart Parnell when the majority of the nationalists turned against him as he was involved in a scandal. Parnell died in 1891, and Redmond became leader of the Parnellites. The two factions reunited in 1900. Redmond was titular leader but the anti-Parnellite John Dillon had the predominant influence in the party.

The M'Cann case: Mrs McCann, a Northern Ireland Presbyterian married in her own church to a Catholic man, complained of harassment by her husband and his priest, and her husband's abduction of their two children. Hansard reference: bit.ly/mc-c

Joseph Devlin MP: Devlin revived and built up the AOH into a formidable force in Irish Catholic Nationalist politics. The AOH took control of the Home Rule party, the United Irish League, in 1909. The Home Rule party was wiped out in most of Ireland in the 1918 Gen-

eral Election, except in parts of Ulster. A remnant, the Nationalist Party, survived in the Six Counties until it merged with others to form the SDLP in 1970.

The Molly Maguire secret society: Popular name for the AOH.

William O'Brien, Nationalist MP: Very prominent in land agitation, in 1902 he organised a conference of landlords and tenants which agreed on measures to buy out the landlords. It resulted in the Wyndham Act of Parliament in 1903. Taking this as his model he advocated all-round conciliation of the Irish Unionists. He separated himself from the Home Rule Party when the sectarians of the AOH took control, and founded the All For Ireland League. He wound up joining Sinn Féin.

Lindsay Crawford: An Independent Orange Order emerged in 1902 led by Thomas Sloan. It was working-class in composition and aligned with Jim Larkin to (briefly) unite the workers in Belfast in 1907. Lindsay Crawford was a prominent member and his writings gave the IOO an appearance of liberalism and hostility to sectarianism. With the polarisation around the Third Home Rule Bill, Sloan and his friends swung back into mainstream Orangeism. Crawford was expelled. He became a Free State functionary in the 1920s. In the late 60s the IOO aligned with Ian Paisley, who denounced the Orange Unionist Establishment.

Omitted from the previous version of this article, in Desmond Ryan's four volumes of Connolly's writings, are most of the 850-odd words after “... every man within that party who opposes the AOH must be at all times prepared to take his life in his hands”, i.e. the passage starting: “There are two indictments...” and concluding with the end of the citation from Lindsay Crawford, “... antagonistic and irreconcilable”.

Of those 850-odd words only 120-odd were included, the three sentences - “Every shade of political feeling... guise of Christian charity” - just before the citation from Crawford. □



Our videos!

Watch Workers' Liberty's videos and playlists, and subscribe to our youtube channel! Many have subtitles. **Playlists include:**

- The State, Crime, Prisons, and Police
- Socialist Feminism
- Black Lives Matter
- Socialist commentary on the Covid-19 crisis
- ABCs of Marxism, an introductory series
- An introduction to Marx's Capital, in 19 parts, with Martin Thomas
- Tubeworker/Off The Rails, videos by the producers of the bulletins □

Watch, subscribe, like, comment and share: youtube.com/c/WorkersLibertyUK



Upcoming meetings

Workers' Liberty meetings are open to all, held online over zoom or in person.

Monday 14 November, 12-1.30pm: Ecosocialist reading group - Geoengineering, drawdown: what should socialists say?

Wednesday 24 November, 7-8.45pm: South West London Workers' Liberty meeting - Workers and climate change. Park Hill Housing Co-op, SW4 9QA

Wednesday 24 November, 7.30-9 pm: Lewisham Workers' Liberty: We need socialism, how do we get it? New Cross Learning, SE14 6AS.

Thursday 2 December, 6.30-8pm: Workers' Liberty students: Free speech and the university.

Wednesday 8 December, 7.30-9 pm: Socialist Film Club: White Riot

Sunday 12 December, 2-5 pm: Socialist Film Club: Gramsci: Everything that Concerns People. New Cross Learning, SE14 6AS.

Wednesday 15 December, 7.30-9 pm: Socialist Film Club: 10,000 Black Men Named George. New Cross Learning, SE14 6AS.

For our calendars of events, updated details, zoom links, more meetings and resources, see workersliberty.org/events or scan QR code □



Facebook and its plan for “proper empires”

By Matt Cooper

The future is not what it used to be. The tech giants were once seen as harbingers of a new utopia even by some leftists, but no more.

Facebook has seen its moral stock crash, first with its role in the election of Trump and the Cambridge Analytica scandal. Social media is now subject to harsh criticism even by some of those who made it (see Netflix's *The Social Dilemma*). In recent weeks, the cache of documents released by ex-Facebook employee Frances Haugen has further damned Facebook. At the same time, Facebook's rebranding as Meta points to plans that will make its commercial proposition even more harmful.

Haugen's revelations were not the first time that Facebook has been shown to be aware that its products (which include Instagram and WhatsApp) were causing harm, but now the degree of Facebook's knowledge of the extent and nature of this harm is clear.

Damaging

The most immediate revelation was that Facebook was pushing ahead with rolling out Instagram Kids (for ten to thirteen year olds) when it knew it had unresolved issues with the impact of Instagram on teenage girls' mental health. One document reported over a third of Instagram users in the UK who struggled with mental health found that Instagram made this worse, but felt compelled to return to the site for fear of missing out.

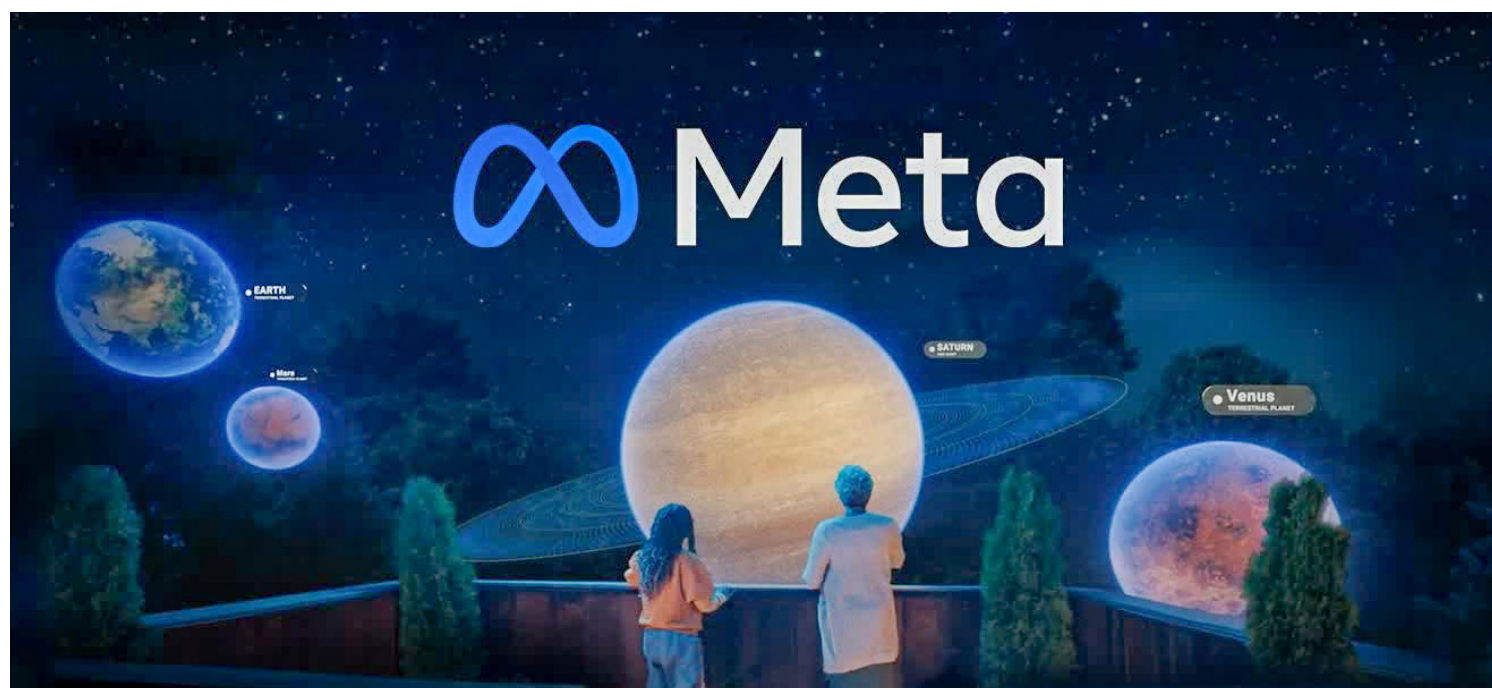
Other documents implicated Facebook in human rights abuses around the world. Facebook's investigators uncovered Facebook and Instagram being used by Mexican drug cartels to recruit and train hit men, by the Ethiopian state to build sectarian armed militias, and by human traffickers in the Middle East. In each case, Facebook's reaction was slow and inadequate.

The use of Facebook by Myanmar's military in whipping up hatred against the Rohingyas is well established. Facebook did too little too late, and was forced to admit as much in 2018. That Facebook is playing the same role in Ethiopia now shows that it has not learnt the lesson.

The Haugen papers show WhatsApp being used in India to spread anti-Muslim hatred, playing an important role in the violence of February 2020 that left 53 dead. India is Facebook's biggest single market. Here, it has staff on the ground and considerable infrastructure. The reason for inaction was not lack of capacity, but a wish not to antagonise the Hindu-chauvinist BJP government.

The list goes on: it is long and revealing of Facebook's attitude.

In the midst of the Haugen accusations, Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg



chose to announce that his company would now be known as Meta (although individual applications will continue to be known as Facebook etc.).

Meta

This has been interpreted as an attempt to rebrand Facebook and distance it from the opprobrium of the Haugen revelations. But it may be the opposite of this: an act of arrogant defiance. Facebook, as Haugen has amply shown, is not fit to run social media sites. The announcement of the creation of Meta indicates that Zuckerberg now has his sights firmly on what comes after social media: the metaverse.

No-one knows what the “metaverse” is, or if it will ever exist. But many think that it is the next stage in the development of people's digital lives.

First, in the late 1960s, came the internet. This was wires (and now wireless connections) joining computers up, for the military, scientists and a few geeks. In the early 1990s: the World Wide Web. Through telephone modems, home computers connected to other computers. This needed addresses (http), and so directories (Facebook was initially conceived of as one) and then search engines became central to the web. This was the “information superhighway”, largely a process of finding fixed data (text, pictures) and a little retail.

Then around 2000 came Web 2.0, characterised by social media (like Facebook) and sites for user-generated content (then My Space, now TikTok). These structures focused less on finding data than users sharing “content”. The emerging giants learnt to monetise their user base largely through data collection to target advertising and refining the “attention economy” to hold their audience. There have been important developments since - the internet of things, Siri-type voice-controlled devices, and streaming - but they have

not transformed the internet that people see.

The investors in tech are now convinced that the next leap forward will be into the metaverse, where the interaction will not be through a phone or a keyboard but Augmented Reality (AR) (that is superimposed on what you see) or through immersive Virtual Reality (VR). The VR version is the more complete metaverse, and that is where Facebook-Meta and many investors focus. The pathfinders for this are “massively multiplayer online games” where a large number of players interact in an online digital environment. While many of these started as shooting games, some always had a more social agenda. The Fortnite group of games built in sociability, many users using the game as a hangout. Fortnite expanded, even before Covid-19 lockdowns, into activity such as online concerts.

Facebook has been developing the potential for this kind of interactive environment for some time. It bought the VR headset company Oculus in 2014, and in 2017 changed its mission statement from “connecting people” to “building communities”. It has since developed Horizon Worlds, a VR platform on the basis for such an online community. Metaverse developers are seeking to create a virtual space where real people can interact, shop, consume media, play games and perhaps even work.

Of course, no-one knows if this is the way that social media will develop. No-one in 1990 had conceived of social media or search engines let alone that they would be the source of grotesque wealth. But now tens of billions dollars in R&D funding are shaping what will come next. The future is no longer being botched together in garages and college dorms.

The danger is that every current problem with social media and exploitation of data will increase exponentially if

the metaverse develops as its financial backers wish. A few examples will have to suffice here.

Problems

First, as internet and the web developed, they retained some aspects of being a public space. The metaverse will be the product of huge investment and will exist inside huge servers with highly sophisticated software and hardware. The metaverse will be to Facebook as a modern factory is to the handloom. It will immediately and aggressively seek a return.

Second. Facebook and the other giants are the tech companies that have been the most ruthless in their drive to become monopolies, to amass a global user base, hold its attention and monetise it while matching this with an utter disregard for the personal and social consequences of these actions. As one of the venture capitalists pushing investment into the metaverse has [written](#), “the Metaverse will be a place in which proper empires are invested in and built, and where these richly capitalised businesses can fully own a customer [and] control [their] data”. The metaverse will be Facebook on steroids.

Third. Social media's problems may well be amplified in the metaverse. The launch of Meta featured Zuckerberg interacting with a younger, thinner, pastier-faced Mini-Zuck avatar. In this vision of the metaverse users will be represented by avatars of themselves. If self-presentation on Instagram is a source of body dysmorphia, how much worse will it be if you spend time with an idealised avatar representation of yourself?

Haugen's point is more than that Zuckerberg is not fit to run Facebook. Even more importantly, he is not fit to run what will come next. It does not look like capitalists generally will be more responsible. □

Time to turn round Unison

By Dave Pannett

Almost five months after the left, under the banner Time for Real Change, won a clear majority on the National Executive (NEC) of the public services union Unison, on 2 November the left won a one-seat majority on the Labour Link National Committee.

Unlike other affiliated unions, Unison has a parallel (though very opaque) structure for its political activity related to the Labour Party, with its own national committee and conference. Perhaps a quarter of Unison's members pay into the affiliated political fund and can take part in that structure.

For years this part of the union has been in the control of the right and the bureaucracy. There are many barriers to holding anyone to account: the Labour Link conference is small, and motions and delegates come from regions not branches.

Elections have often been uncontested. 12 of 23 seats on the Labour Link committee are decided by the union's National Executive. As long as the right had control of the NEC, it would also control the Labour Link committee, anyway.

This year was different, with contests for seven of the 11 seats. The left won four: Ruth Cashman in London, Billie Reynolds in the South East, Aileen McLoughlin in the South West and Paul Holmes in Yorkshire & Humber. Of the uncontested seats, two went to the left and two to the right.

Because some of the new left NEC members are not Labour Link payers, and some seats are reserved for

low-paid members, the new batch of NEC-nominated seats is evenly split, six-six. The overall tally of the new Labour Link committee is 12-11. Paul Holmes is currently suspended by Unison and cannot take up his seat, so there is deadlock, for now.

Holmes

Paul Holmes has also been suspended by Kirklees council, where he is Unison branch secretary, since December 2020. After several weeks of hearings by his employer, the final disciplinary took place on Friday 5 November, with a solidarity rally outside.

No announcement has followed, and we have heard the decision has been delayed. The presumption is that only once the Kirkless process is complete can the separate Unison disciplinary process begin.

The newly-elected NEC is locked in battle with the General Secretary and the permanent officials over who controls the union, and the battle connects with the pay disputes in the union's two biggest sectors, local government and health.

In October the left NEC voted for the NEC to meet more frequently, for the presidential team and sub-committees to have powers between meetings, and on issues relating to suspension of members, including that elected union officers dismissed by employers will not automatically be removed from those elected positions. Those last are pertinent to Paul Holmes and the action against him by Kirklees Council.

Legal advice given by Lord Hendy QC to the presidential team said that these

decisions were within union rules, but the General Secretary claimed legal advice that they were not. There is a stand-off.

Strikes

At the same time we are preparing to ballot for industrial action on pay in local government and doing a second indicative ballot on pay in the NHS.

In Unison it has become usual to be so cautious about strikes, drawing it out with two consultations before a formal ballot, that the members become willing to accept any small concession from the employer (or sometimes none) to achieve at least some pay increase.

In local government, we are in dispute over our pay claim for 10% (after a real-terms 20% pay cut in the last decade), with inflation now close to 5% and with food, energy and fuel costs rising even faster. Members have voted by 79% to reject the 1.75% offer, and Unite and GMB have voted similarly.

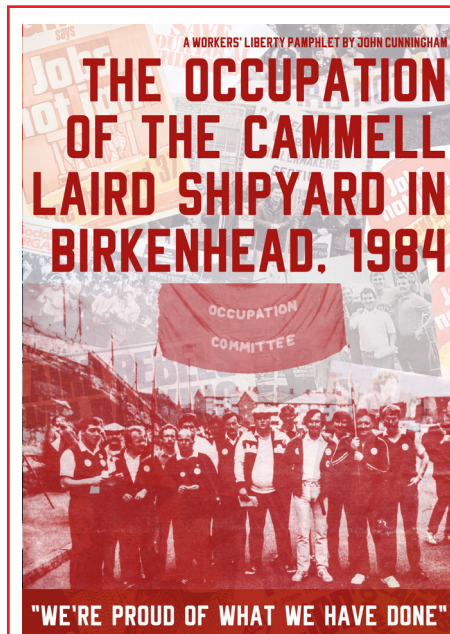
Turn-out is reported to have been low, but that was an indicative ballot with no campaigning. In local government, we are going to a full ballot from 1 December to 14 January.

Turning the union machine into one which can win this local government pay dispute (and win on NHS pay, if that gets to a formal ballot) will be a serious challenge for the left.

We need to look to examples from unions like UCU (recent ballots), CWU (2017 and 2020 ballots), and NEU (2019 ballot on high-stakes testing) on mobilising every branch to run a vibrant campaign. We need to get members to pledge to vote now, and every

rep, team, or workplace engaged with.

And we need a serious strategy for strike action, which should include full strike pay to bring out workers that can have maximum impact. We call on the newly left Labour Link committee and NEC to put out public statements on these disputes, to publish reports of motions and NEC meetings, and to turn outwards towards the members who have kept working through this pandemic on low pay and with poor conditions. Now is the time to turn round Unison. □



This pamphlet remembers the brave workers who occupied their shipyard to try and save not just their own jobs but the jobs of future generations. □

workersliberty.org/publications

Goldsmiths sets 21 days

By a Goldsmiths UCU member

In a ballot on industrial action against threats of (an initial) 52 redundancies at the college, 70.2% of Goldsmiths UCU members have voted. 93.3% voted for action short of a strike and 85.8% voted to strike. At a branch meeting on Monday 8 Nov, members voted for 21 days of consecutive strike action starting on 22 November.

The huge mandate for action came in the face of increasingly desperate attempts at intimidation by the Senior Management. A letter from the Warden to all students highlighting supposed concern for student welfare and promised the college

will continue to be a "beacon of liberal values".

This, while cutting professional service staff whose jobs are to support students, and cutting academic staff in those beacons of liberal values, English and History!

The tactics have backfired. Staff know further cuts will follow if sustained action is not taken now. Meanwhile student solidarity is building. As an escalation tactic, GUCU are also preparing a "a 'boycott Goldsmiths' greylisting campaign which aims at securing the withdrawal of all external involvement in the activities of the College, including external examination, speaker events, workshops and conferences."

Strike fund: bit.ly/gucu-s □

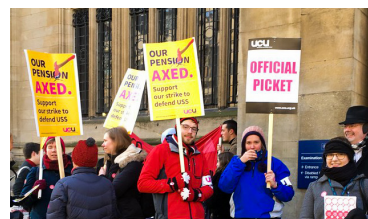
University disputes: how to win

By a Cambridge UCU member

A UK-wide re-ballot in the university disputes (see outside page) would demobilise tens of thousands of our members who could instead be building effective action on campus.

With admissions processes ongoing over the winter and exams at many universities in January, HE staff have significant disruptive power in the immediate future. We need to leverage that, for example through building up marking backlogs and then marking and assessment boycotts, coupled with targeted strike action.

Those who need to re-ballot and get strike mandates ready for next year can and should



join us for a stronger wave of action from January. This set of re-ballots will be more likely to succeed if the 60-or-so branches that can take action start doing so now.

USS pension changes are due to come into effect at the start of April. University terms end for some of us by early December. Reballoting takes weeks, so next year is likely the earliest time any re-balloted branches would be able to join action. We need to get the fight against the USS proposals going now. □

More online

The NHS emergency, Covid, and the coming winter

Campaign to boost the NHS, reverse privatisation, and win the NHS workers' pay demand. bit.ly/nhs-c

Two new reviews on Corbynism

Criticisms from Urte March and Mike Davis of our book *Corbynism: What Went wrong?* bit.ly/urte-c and bit.ly/mike-d-c

A new history of humanity

Clive Bradley reviews a challenge to the historical-materialist account of social evolution, by David Graeber and David Wengrow. bit.ly/clive-dg

“What we stand for

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Independent working-class representation in politics
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement
- A workers' charter of trade union rights – to organise, strike, picket effectively, and take solidarity action
- Taxing the rich to fund good public services, homes, education and jobs for all
- Workers' control of major industries and finance for a rapid transition to a green society
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression
- Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. Reproductive freedoms and free abortion on demand.
- Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans 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 full openness in debate

If you agree with us, take copies of *Solidarity* to sell – and join us! □

• workersliberty.org/join-awl

Bin strike: “someone must be bullshitting”



Diary of an engineer

By Emma Rickman

The ERF [Energy Recovery Facility] where we work is fuelled and funded by bin waste. In a series of morning meetings, we've heard that the city's refuse collection workers are taking strike action over pay and conditions. The first strike day [scheduled for 1 Nov] was called off after the company made a pay offer, but the GMB drivers' branch rejected it. The following week, workers and managers at the ERF began discussing the effect on the plant.

Management estimate (or at least tell us that they estimate) a small reduction in waste. Other waste streams will be tipped at the plant as normal, including commercial collections from supermarkets and fast food chains. One of the Operations Assistants asks if he'll need to work overtime on the weekend to process extra waste deliveries, and he is reassured that he won't be needed. At the moment, the strike is only for half a day, meaning the workers will complete their collections later in the day, but ultimately the waste will get to the plant.

In addition to this, the ERF boiler has a leak, and management set the date

to go offline at the same time as the strike. This minimises the chance that any shortage of waste will affect plant running-times, and also allows us to get essential maintenance work done. You would think considering the minimal impact on plant workers that the strike would have broad support, but those who express opinions are dismissive and cynical, describing the drivers as reckless and stupid. Positive coverage from the local newspaper, "solidarity with the bin workers!", gets some groans from my colleagues – "What do they know about what goes on here?" "I nearly drove over them on my way in this morning!"

After speaking to workers on the picket lines, and pooling information from the plant, I find that the company seem to have about as many agency refuse collection workers as they do in-house. One driver tells me that his dad is agency, and being forced to work at the weekend to undermine his son's strike action on the Monday. They're angry about terms and conditions, but most tell me that they get on well with the plant operatives, and know the names of the workers who help them unload wagons and weigh their loads. However, these are the same plant operatives I've heard moaning about "stupid drivers" behind their backs. Someone must be bullshitting.

The picket lines on Monday [8 Nov] are enormous: 60-70 workers nearly blocking the road at 6.30am. All the

men (they are all men) wear hi-viz and PPE, and the union reps and regional officials have staked banners and placards to the site entrance. The branch secretary stands on a box with a megaphone, and asks the crowd if they are prepared to escalate:

"Are we agreed to continue the strike action, from today, continuous action, until management concede?"

Workers from the crowd comment and respond, then he calls for a show of hands. Everyone on the picket votes in favour, no one visibly abstains. It's very old-school.

Talking to the drivers' rep, I learn he's an experienced organiser who's been with the company a long time, and knew the old plant Unite and GMB reps before they retired. He tells me there are GMB members at the ERF who want to recruit, and names a few people I would never have suspected were quietly organising. I run this by one of the young operators, and he tells me that yes, pretty much everyone is ready to leave Prospect and join GMB, they just want the union to persuade them it's in their interests. I suspect they want some attention from the branch, and are convinced only drivers will have any clout in the union. However GMB is recognised by the company, and is active, whereas Prospect is next-to-useless. "Get us in a meeting, and I reckon everyone will sign up." I ask him if he'd be prepared to stand for ERF rep; he says he would. □

Rosa Luxemburg on film



Kino Eye

By John Cunningham

The article on Paul Frölich (*Solidarity* 612) brought to mind the 1986 film *Rosa Luxemburg*, by Margarethe von Trotta. Despite some faults *Rosa Luxemburg* does justice to the "Eagle", as Lenin once referred to her.

Although she doesn't resemble Rosa Luxemburg, Barbara Sukowa turns in a superb performance as we follow Rosa from her childhood in Poland to her death at the hands of the far-right Freikorps in the dying embers of the Spartacist revolution in Berlin in 1919. All the main elements of Rosa's life are



Barbara Sukowa as Rosa Luxemburg

shown in the film: her fight against the revisionist Bernstein, her friendship with Klara Zetkin, her troubled but comradely partnership with Leo Jogiches, and, by contrast, her growing estrangement from German Social Democratic Party leader, Karl Kautsky.

The main gap, which surprises me, is the scarce mention of the 1917 Revolution in Russia. Even though she spent much of 1917 in prison, the events of that year were among the most important in her life. Rosa's private life is, often, lovingly portrayed, including her fondness for animals: in one memorable scene she walks around the prison yard accompanied by a raven who appears to be listening as she talks to herself. □

Aslef gets 98.8% majority for strike

From Tubeworker

On 8 November, the rail union Aslef reported a 98.8% majority for strikes to defend conditions on London Underground, on a 67% turnout. That's a massive mandate, and a clear indication that Aslef members are prepared to take action. Aslef now needs to use the mandate. If we wait for LU to impose detrimental changes and then strike reactively, it'll already be too late. Currently, Aslef is demanding only that LU "honour agreements", and that changes are negotiated rather than imposed. These are default positions that should go without saying... it would be good to see Aslef making some more concrete, positive demands around pensions and terms and conditions. □

Sticking issue in Royal Parks



John Moloney

In my last column, I reported that the month-long strike by outsourced workers in Royal Parks had forced a major concession, with Just Ask, the outsourced contractor, proposing to increase sick pay entitlement from six days to a maximum of three months, depending on length of service. But they wanted a whole range of differentials to apply, so that only certain workers would get the increased sick pay. They have now backed down from that, so length of service will be the only variable affecting sick pay entitlement.

Obviously, the ideal would be maximum entitlement for all workers from day one, but this is an undoubtedly a massive concession to have forced, and one that has only been won via determined industrial action.

The contractor has also agreed to formally recognise PCS. The other issue in the dispute, job cuts, is still in the background, but the employer has backed away from their specific proposals for cuts this year that were part of what sparked the dispute in the first place, so that is progress too, in that cuts have at least been staved off for now.

One stumbling block is that JustAsk is victimising one of the strikers, and using their participation in industrial action against them as part of a probation process. We believe this is clearly unlawful; I don't think we can settle the dispute with the threat of dismissal hanging over one of the workers involved. If we can get that issue resolved, we will put the employer's offer to a vote.

In our dispute with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), our driving examiner members have accepted an employer's offer with 90% of members voted yes to the deal, on a turnout of 69%. The dispute focused on a plan to impose increased workload, forcing full time examiners to conduct eight tests per day, rather than the current maximum of seven. In the new offer, the employer has committed not to impose that increase for at least 12 months. The workers involved definitely feel that to be a victory.

On Saturday 6 November I spoke at the rally of the trade union bloc, which was part of the large climate change protest in central London. Clearly it's good to see tens of thousands come out onto the streets across the country, and we had a good PCS contingent on that union bloc. The real challenge is what happens now. We need an independent union campaign around

the big political demands, including a worker-led transition to renewables and democratic public ownership of the energy sector. There are splits in the labour movement on some of the key questions, with unions like GMB and Unite backing airport expansion and some continued fossil fuel extraction. Those debates have to be had, but the unions that do share a radical policy approach need to act on it now.

Climate change also has to be made a workplace organising issue. In PCS, I hope committees of reps will develop decarbonisation plans for their own workplaces. This dovetails with our efforts to get building-wide committees of safety reps established in buildings where multiple civil service departments have offices. One of the issues those committees can take up and make demands about is climate change, looking at the carbon footprint of civil service workplaces. This isn't about tinkering-around-the-edges stuff like getting more recycling bins in offices, but rather the big questions, for example where civil service departments are sourcing the energy to power and heat buildings from. □

• John Moloney is assistant general secretary of the civil service workers' union PCS, writing here in a personal capacity.

Scotrail settlement accepted

From Off The Rails

Strikes planned by ScotRail workers during the COP26 conference have been called off, after rail union RMT accepted a deal to end the dispute. A so-called "final offer" from ScotRail included a two-year deal, with a £300 bonus payment for working during COP26, and an increased allowance for working rest days, and a second year including numerous productivity and efficiency savings. Delegates at RMT's AGM, which assumes the powers of the union's National Executive for the time it sits, voted to reject the offer and keep strikes on. It turned out the offer was not "final" after all, as ScotRail issued a new proposal the following day. The new deal was for one year, with a 2.5% pay increase and the same bonus payment and rest day working arrangements as the previous offer, but with the second year and productivity strings removed. ScotRail reps made clear to the AGM that they saw the removal of the second year as a significant step forward, sufficient to justify acceptance of the deal. ScotRail workers have struck numerous times during their long running dispute, including strikes involving guards every Sunday since March 2021. The most recent strike ballot returning an 84% majority for further action. Strikes had been due to take place from 1-12 November. □

John Deere workers hold firm

By Sacha Ismail

The big contingent in the small-scale strike wave sweeping the United States ("**Striketober**") is 10,000 workers at agricultural equipment company John Deere, out since 14 October over wages, pensions, healthcare and a multi-tier workforce.

Having demanded huge concessions from the workers, including a new third tier with no pensions, the company now appears to have retreated from all or almost all of them. It has also signifi-

cantly increased its pay offer – from 5% followed by 2% every other year (and one-off 2% lump sums in between) to 10% followed by 5% every other year (and 3% lump sums).

90% of United Auto Workers members voted down the company's initial offer. 55% voted to reject the second one.

The workers have stood strong despite use of managers as scabs, legal attempts to disperse their picket lines and the death of a striker [hit by a vehicle](#). There is widespread outrage at

soaring profits and management salaries in a company which has demanded and won concession after concession over decades – particularly after John Deere workers were told they were essential and worked through the pandemic.

The workers' demands include the abolition of the second tier and full pensions and post-retirement healthcare for everyone. □

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Barnoldswick workers to vote

By Ollie Moore

Workers at the Rolls Royce plant in Barnoldswick, Lancashire, will vote on a new settlement that includes a five-year no compulsory redundancies guarantee, and a commitment to 10 years' viable manufacturing at the plant. The settlement emerges from lengthy negotiations, following renewed strikes by engineers at the plant in July and August, and a subsequent vote by the rest of the

plant's workforce to take further action. Strikes in 2020 appeared to have won guarantees to protect jobs, but the dispute resumed in spring 2021 when Rolls Royce bosses announced they were reneging on commitments. The five-year guarantee of no compulsory redundancies extends a two-year guarantee won following the 2020 strikes. Unite will hold mass meetings for its members to discuss the deal before conducting a referendum. □

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Universities: act on the strike mandates!

By a Cambridge UCU member

On 4-5 November the University and College Union (UCU) announced that two national ballots have shown a strong mandate for resuming strikes by our members over issues that have long plagued Higher Education.

The first ballot was over new proposed cuts to the USS pensions scheme (covering "pre-1992" universities). During the middle of the pandemic, a USS pension revaluation significantly under-valued its worth and has resulted in the scheme's management demanding raised contributions from its members. Research by the union suggests that the average USS member has already lost £240,000 due to changes made between 2011-19: these new proposals would leave staff in an even poorer position.

The strike ballot to reverse these proposals saw 35 UCU branches beat the 50% turnout threshold with positive "yes" votes for striking. With the two Northern Ireland universities, 37 universities have mandates for strike. 22 missing the threshold polled between 40-50%, and the overall turnout was a solid 53%.

The second strike ballot was over the "Four Fights" issues: equality, workload, pay and casualisation, affecting all UK universities. Four Fights demands include an immediate salary uplift of £2,500 for all pay points, a reduction in weekly hours to 35, and further action to close the gender pay gap. This ballot saw 54 branches pass the threshold with "yes" votes for strikes, a further 39 with turnouts over 40%, and an overall turnout of 50.6%.

There are now around 60 branches that can take strike action on at least one of these disputes. The overall turnout figures were high.

On an "aggregated" ballot all the UCU branch involved in these two disputes would have now had live strike mandate (146 for Four Fights, and 69 for USS).

Nevertheless, the call from our members remains strong: we want to take coordinated action at dozens of university campuses across the country, and we're ready to do so now.

Yet, the General Secretary of our union (Jo Grady) has urged us to wait before taking any sustained action, and instead hold two one-day strikes over the next month.

In the case of the USS dispute, Grady has argued to hold off sustained action to allow the branches who got 40-50% turnouts to re-ballot, and in the case of Four Fights, Grady has urged us re-ballot on an aggregated basis – that is, re-ballot all 146 branches again, to try and get them all live strike ballots. Whilst that would be historic in our sector, this tactic suppresses the clear mandate members have made to take action this term, and use up more activist time on "get out the vote" activities (and for a ballot in which first time round we topped the turnout threshold only by 0.6%).

Fortunately, the General Secretary doesn't get to make this decision: this will be voted on at the UCU's Higher Education Committee (HEC) on 12 November. In the run-up to then, University and College Union (UCU) branches across the UK will be meeting.

Higher education activists in Workers' Liberty will be using these meetings to call on branches that didn't meet either of these thresholds to be allowed to re-ballot immediately, and for all branches with live ballots to commence action this term and avoid re-balloting on an aggregated basis. □

• How to win: see inside, page 13



Solidarity

For a workers' government

COP26: BUILDING OUR MOVEMENT

By Vicki Morris

After Greta Thunberg issued an invitation to Glasgow's striking refuse workers, a sizeable contingent of GMB strikers joined the Fridays For Future march in the COP26 city along with 10,000 or so exuberant demonstrators - mainly school students, and parents with small children.

Other local trade union branches lined the street with their banners to greet the march as it reached George Square.

There's been a big trade union element within the COP26 Coalition, with its explicit slogan of climate justice. However, often the impression here is more of left union bureaucrats being involved than mobilising the grassroots.

The trade union bloc on the huge march on Saturday 6 November - estimates put it at 100,000 or more despite the cold, wind and rain - was one of the smallest and least lively blocs.

Workers' Liberty Scotland comrades and comrades from other areas have been active in Glasgow, joining the marches and selling our publications. We attended social movement assemblies and other events, such as the Just Transition Hub organised by the Scottish TUC. And we were central to organising two meetings at the People's Summit: "Winning global climate justice: migrants' rights and global redistribution" (50-



Glasgow refuse workers on strike lead the climate protest on 5 Nov. Sheffield and Brighton bin strikes see page 3

odd attending) and "Workers' action for the climate and the fight for free trade unions" (40-odd).

We've intervened to promote our ideas about working-class action on the environment, as part of the radical challenge we need to the capitalism that is destroying our planet. So what are the prospects for this?

There are certainly hopeful signs that the environmental movement is alive to the need to ally with workers. The COP26 Coalition have pulled off an impressive range of demos around the country, and in Glasgow helped build the two big marches on Friday and Saturday, held daily "movement assemblies" on different themes from strategy to feminism to decolonisation, indigenous people, youth, and work and unions, and put on the People's Summit for Climate Justice, involving hundreds of meetings.

It's been impressive. To go forward together, we need democratic structures and accountability.

The COP26 conference in

Glasgow has brought together tens of thousands of scientists, politicians, civil servants, campaigners, and lobbyists - including hordes of lobbyists for the worst polluting industries - inside the SEC Centre. Outside tens of thousands of representatives of civil society, encompassing charities, trade unions, environmental campaigns, and political groups, have been feverishly active.

As well as putting pressure on those inside to be more radical against climate change, a movement-building process is going on, as disparate groups with a common goal but different cultures and methods and - crucially - different ideas discuss, learn from each other, test ideas... and compete.

Commitment to workers' action on the climate is there in the talk around COP26, but the unions' contribution to climate activism is still clearly inadequate. A lot of work lies ahead for those of us who want to build working-class climate activism. □