



For social ownership of the banks and industry

PEACE



Vigil against war in Lebanon and Gaza.
Tel Aviv, Israel. Photo: [OrenZiv](#).

Far left: "Stop the assault on Lebanon;
overthrow the bloodthirsty government;
end the war, rebuild and welfare,
everyone for everyone"

Left: "In Beirut and in the Krayot, girls
want to live"

Top: "Third time war in Lebanon – no
ice cream" [reference to a Hebrew idiom]

Right: Not in our name

Israel out of Lebanon!
An independent Palestine
alongside Israel!

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Ceasefire, peace, two states



Editorial

Israel's war has reduced most of Gaza to an uninhabitable wasteland, pock-marked by tent cities housing desperate and starving refugees. Israel continues to issue evacuation orders, but the designated "humanitarian zone" to which it instructs Gazans to flee has been hit by air strikes at least 18 times. 97 Israeli hostages also remain captive. In its intensified war on Lebanon, Israel has pursued similarly destructive tactics, flattening entire buildings to target a single Hezbollah commander or rocket launch site.

Colonial violence in the occupied West Bank has also intensified, perpetrated both by armed settlers, and Israeli military and security forces. Displacements and disposessions of Palestinians have accelerated.

An immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon is vital to stem the tide of slaughter. But without a longer-term peace settlement guaranteeing equal rights, the cycle of violence will continue. Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, an injustice that poisons both domestic Israeli and wider regional politics, must end. The Palestinians must be able to claim their right to national self-determination, in the first instance via a sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Other currents on the radical left take a different view. Some advocate one democratic state, in which all citizens, Arab and Jewish, have equal rights, as the immediate answer. That is laudable as a long-range aim, but what is the agency? There is no historical precedent for two distinct national groups, let alone two in long bloody conflict, dissolving claims to self-determination into a unitary state.

A stable political framework in which both peoples' right to self-determination is secure is a necessary prerequisite for any future moves towards a single state.

Practice

In practice often radical currents end up urging or supporting Iran or Arab states to overrun Israel and thus create this "one state" (obviously not then democratic or equal-rights). Some are clear that the single state they aim for is an Arab state of Palestine "from the river to the sea", not a binational confederation of any kind. Banners, placards, and chants on pro-Palestinian protests declaring "we don't want two states, we want '48" express this perspective.

Palestine before the foundation of Israel in 1948 was not a sovereign Arab state, but a colony of the British Empire. The 1947-9 war between Zionist forces and Arab armies, some led by British colonial officers, had a dual character. It was a war including settler-colonial displacement of the Arab population



Pic: [MauricioLapchik]

by the Zionist proto-state. It was also what the contemporary Palestinian Trotskyists called "a racial war on the Jews of Palestine", a reactionary effort by feudal monarchies and authoritarian dictatorships, some semi-colonies of Britain with British officers leading their armed forces, to suppress Jewish self-determination and the drive to allow Holocaust survivors from Europe to join with the largest Jewish population-concentration in the world. Imagining that war could be re-run, presumably with Iran's "Axis of Resistance" standing in for the Arab armies, is a reactionary fantasy no socialist or consistent democrat should indulge.

Reality

In reality, there is no prospect of Israel being militarily overrun. But while currents on the left cling to the fantasy that it could be, activist energies that could contribute to building solidarity with forces organising to change the political reality on the ground are misdirected into "destroy Israel" agitation.

Workers' Liberty advocates three focuses for practical activity in solidarity with the Palestinians, and for peace and equality. Firstly, efforts within domestic politics, via trade unions, especially Labour-affiliated unions, and the Labour Party itself, to push the British government to increase diplomatic pressure on Israel, including by fully withdrawing the state licences via which UK-based firms sell arms to Israel.

Secondly, contributions to humanitarian efforts such as Medical Aid for Palestinians, Doctors Without Borders, and others organising material aid aimed at stemming the mounting humanitarian crises in Gaza. The labour movement could do more to contribute to such efforts. Some global union federations have conducted fundraising drives for Palestinian trade unions. Much more could be done.

And thirdly – and, in political terms, most importantly – practical solidarity with movements in Israel-Palestine taking direct action against war and occupation, in the name of peace and

equality. Without significant social upheaval in Israel itself, including and perhaps especially amongst its 20% Palestinian minority, a political transformation of the country is impossible. And without such a transformation, any genuinely democratic settlement is impossible. That the forces seeking such a transformation are currently a minority is all the more reason to redouble efforts to support them.

Ultimately, the workers of the region, of all nationalities – Arab, Israeli Jewish, Kurdish, Iranian – hold most power to transform their societies. If we truly believe in the possibility of socialism, then only a movement based on cross-border unity between workers, which struggles consciously for equal rights for all national groups in the region, can achieve it.

That movement exists currently only as a distant potential. We must focus our own efforts on building solidarity with forces across the region, however currently weak and marginalised, seeking to make it a reality. □



Activist Agenda

Meetings

Wed 16 Oct: How to defeat the far right. London AWL. 7pm, Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, WC1N 1AB

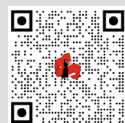
Sat 26 Oct: Stop Tommy Robinson. Counter-protest assemblies 11:30 south of Piccadilly Circus (Regent St St James's, SW1Y 4QF). Email awl@workersliberty.org for AWL assembly point. Tommy Robinson is assembling his forces at Victoria station 11am-1pm.

At work or on campus

We organise: among health and local government, school and education workers, on the railway and London Underground, in the civil service, on uni campuses, and more. See workersliberty.org/work-unions, Insta [@workerslibertystudents](https://www.instagram.com/workerslibertystudents), and email awl@workersliberty.org for more.

Template motions

Texts: to adapt for union branches and Labour Parties: bit.ly/mo-pe



Scan the QR code to see our events & meetings page.

Socialist-feminist book clubs

workersliberty.org/sf-book-clubs

Wed 16 Oct: Online. Women and the Subversion of the Community. 7pm on Zoom bit.ly/sf-bcz

3 Nov: The Second Sex. 2pm, Effra Social, Brixton, SW2 1DF

3 Nov: The Right to Sex, by Amia Srinivasan. 3pm, The Gallery Cafe, M2 3JL

4 Nov: Bodies Under Siege, by Sian Norris. 6pm, University Arms, S3 7HG

Campaigns

For: UK Friends of Standing Together, Labour Left Internationalists, Workers Against the CCP, Free Our Unions, Solidarity With Iranian Workers, Neurodivergent Labour, Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, Labour Campaign for Free Movement – contact details, activities, template motions, etc. – see workersliberty.org/agenda. For environmental campaigning email awl@workersliberty.org. □

UK Friends of Standing Together

Standing Together, Israel's fastest-growing grassroots movement over recent years, unites Jews and Palestinians within Israel to fight for an equal and just society, for peace, and against the occupation.

UKFoST promotes their work in the UK: for peace, justice, and equality for Israelis and Palestinians – Jews and Arabs – including an equal right to self-determination, and for the full equality of Palestinian citizens of Israel.

UKFoST promotes the benefits of joint struggle by Jews and Palestinians to this end. • ukfost.co.uk

• [@omdimbeyachaduk](https://www.instagram.com/omdimbeyachaduk)

Israel out of Lebanon!

By Ira Berkovic

Israel has continued to conduct air strikes against targets throughout Lebanon. The bombing campaign is expanding; on Saturday 12 October, the town of Deir Billa in northern Lebanon was targeted for the first time. Israel also issued new evacuation orders for towns in the south of Lebanon. 15 people were killed, and 37 wounded, in the 12 October strikes. As of 12 October, the death toll since the start of the current Israel-Hezbollah war was 2,267.

Significant amounts of civilian housing infrastructure has been destroyed. This, combined with mass evacuations, has led to a growing displacement crisis, with over one million Lebanese people displaced. 400,000 have fled to

Syria, mostly Syrian refugees. The number of displaced people is now higher than those displaced during the last major war between Israel and Hezbollah, in 2006.

According to healthcare charity Doctors Without Borders, Israeli attacks have killed 50 paramedics in the past fortnight. On 5 October, three hospitals in southern Lebanon were forced to close, after one was struck and two others ran out of supplies. Five hospitals in the city of Baalbek were struck during bombing. Israel has also fired at UN peacekeeping troops.

Hezbollah has launched rocket barrages and drone attacks against targets in Israel, including civilian targets in Tel Aviv and Haifa. On 9 October, two Israeli civilians were killed by a Hezbollah

rocket. Some civilian property has been destroyed. However, the Hezbollah rockets have been few compared to previous estimates of Hezbollah's capacity, and most have been intercepted, fallen in open areas, or caused little to no damage, an indication that Israeli attacks have succeeded in degrading Hezbollah's military capabilities. The rocket strike on Majdal Shams on 24 July, which killed 12 Druze children, remains the deadliest Hezbollah attack of the war so far. A barrage of 200 rockets fired by Iran at Israel killed one person, a Palestinian civilian in the occupied West Bank.

Israel began the recent phase of attacks on Lebanon by stating its aim was to create safe conditions for those Israelis evacuated from communities in

northern Israel to return to their homes. It has since launched a ground invasion.

Although an Israeli military establishment that can remember the bloody cost of an 18-year-long occupation of southern Lebanon from 1982-2000 may be keen to avoid a similar experience this time, there is a chance Israel may become bogged down. As yet, there are no signs of the evacuees being able to return home, something Israeli military officials say will not be possible for an unspecified number of "weeks".

In recent speeches, Netanyahu has made a combination of appeals and threats directly to the people of Lebanon, and to the official Lebanese state. Netanyahu said: "You have an opportunity to save Lebanon before it falls into the abyss of a long war that will lead to destruction and suffering like we see in Gaza. I say to you, the people of Lebanon: Free your country from Hezbollah so that this war can end."

Sunni, Druze, and Christian factions in the Lebanese state (some backed by Saudi Arabia), operating in a complicated sectarian constitutional structure, would undoubtedly like to be able to break their long-standing forced de facto coalition government with Hezbollah, which theoretically only has 15 seats in the 128-member parliament. The official Lebanese army has kept out of the war, even when Israel has been bombing Beirut and invading Lebanon. But the constitution is largely in abeyance, and the state is in chaos. For some time now there has been only a caretaker prime minister, and no president. In the midst of Israeli bombing and economic chaos it is doubtful whether the other factions are willing or able to move against Hezbollah.

We say: ceasefire now! Israel out of Lebanon! □

Anti-government protests in Israel

Mass anti-government protests, led by families of hostages, have continued in Israel, with demonstrators blocking a major highway in Tel Aviv on 11 October.

Although demonstrations foreground the issue of the hostages, rather than solidarity with the people of Gaza, they have become increasingly explicit in their opposition to the war and are clear that freeing the hostages requires a ceasefire deal. In a statement to the media on 11 October, Einav Zangauker, whose son Matan is a hostage in Gaza, said: "To the criminal Netanyahu, we say: time is up! Accept the principles that Hamas accepted at the beginning of July or immediately put a new Israeli proposal on the table. There is no forgiveness or atonement for abandonment."

Yehud Cohen, father of hostage

Nimrod Cohen, said: "Security officials have said that Hamas captors have received clear instructions to execute the hostages if they sense that the IDF is approaching, as has already happened. Today, it's clearer than ever before: military pressure does not lead to the liberation of hostages. It kills them."

Sadly, there is currently greater social consent for Israel's war on Lebanon, seen by many Israelis as a necessity to push Hezbollah back from the border and allow Israeli evacuees to return home. The military successes in that war, especially the assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, have led to some recovery for Netanyahu's personal standing and his polling figures. Should Donald Trump win the US presidential election, Netanyahu will be able to operate under

far less diplomatic pressure from the USA.

There is a consensus across "mainstream" Israeli politics in support of military action in Lebanon, with Yair Golan, leader of the centre-left party the Democrats, calling for Israel to occupy a "security strip" in southern Lebanon. Only the Palestinian parties in the Knesset, and the left-wing party Hadash, have opposed war and called for a ceasefire.

For now, the best hope for building a major force for peace and equality in Israel remains largely outside electoral politics, in the social movement Standing Together. The election of two Standing Together leaders as individual members of left-wing coalitions in municipal elections in Haifa and Tel Aviv shows some potential for electoral intervention too. □

Food and medical supplies worse in Gaza

The people of Gaza face multiple humanitarian crises, which will be worsened by the onset of winter.

According to the commissioner general of Unrwa, the United Nations agency responsible for the provision and distribution of aid in Gaza, over one million people, around half of the territory's population, did not receive food rations in August.

And since then levels of aid provision to Gaza have fallen dramatically. (They had briefly improved). Unrwa attributes

this to "Israeli-imposed bureaucratic hurdles, lack of security guarantees within Gaza, insufficient border crossing points and risk of criminal gangs looting humanitarian convoys in southern Gaza." Prior to 7 October 2023, around 500 aid trucks entered Gaza each day. In September 2024, the average was 52 per day.

At least 71 schools have been destroyed, with 86% of all schools administered by Unrwa having been directly hit by bombing. Unrwa says "criti-

cal sectors including Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Protection, Food, Shelter and Health urgently require an increase in the volume of humanitarian supplies to maintain operations."

Military

Some in Israeli military circles, such as retired general Giora Eiland, explicitly advocate a "surrender or starve" siege that cuts off aid supplies from northern Gaza entirely.

1.9 million people, around 90% of Gaza's population,

have been displaced, many multiple times. The total destruction of vast swathes of civilian infrastructure, especially housing, means displacement equals homelessness.

Without urgent action, these intersecting crises could kill as many as military bombardment. We must demand our own government does more, including via direct humanitarian provision, increased funding to Unrwa, and increased pressure on Israel to ease restrictions and facilitate the provision of aid. □



WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

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Women's Fightback.

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One year on from 7 October



Antidoto

By Jim Denham

According to the *Morning Star* of 8 October: "In Birmingham, Muslim leaders were joined by Jewish rabbis, Christians and representatives of other faiths and none for a candle-lit vigil in the city centre in solidarity with the people of Gaza."

This would appear to be a welcome demonstration of inter-communal solidarity, though it might seem strange that on the anniversary of 7 October, and with rabbis present, there appears to have been no mention of the 1,139 people killed and the 250 taken hostage by Hamas on that date.

A brief investigation reveals the likely explanation: the rabbis were, in fact, members of Neturei Karta, the misogynistic ultra-orthodox anti-Zionist sect that regularly aligns with antisemites and whose presence in Hasidic garb is often used to give the impression that devout Jews support anti-Israel events.

Did the *Morning Star's* reporter look into who these rabbis were? Did they even care?

Sadly, this misleading report is all too typical of the paper's coverage of Jewish reactions to 7 October and its

anniversary. The front-page story the previous day began: "Pro-Palestinian marches erupted all over the world at the weekend, demanding a ceasefire ahead of today's first anniversary of the Hamas attacks in southern Israel". What went unmentioned is the fact that at least some of the marchers were not calling for a ceasefire, but celebrating the Hamas attack, or calling for the destruction of Israel (the real meaning of "From the River to the sea, Palestine will be free"). A few, according to mainstream press reports, taunted Jewish counter-protesters in London with cries of "freedom fighters, they will finish you all off!"

Large and vocal parts of the marches (elsewhere and in the UK) have been not so much pro-Palestine as anti-Israel, with overtly antisemitic slogans and images (such as replacing the star in the Israeli flag with a swastika).

The *Morning Star* and its Communist Party of Britain masters are surely aware of this, but the last time they gave a hint of concern was 13 October 2023 when editor Ben Chacko wrote: "The *Morning Star* supports a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine and the chant ['From the river to the sea' etc.] has long been controversial on the on the left because of its implied backing for a single state, with organisations like the Communist Party always having advised members not to chant it."

Since then, of course, the paper's



coverage has been dominated by one-state advocates like Vijay Prashad, Ramzy Baroud and John Wight, all of whom also regard Hamas and Hezbollah as "the resistance".

The paper regularly (and correctly) denounces Islamophobia but has little to say about antisemitism. Little also about the fact that since 7 October 2023 the Met Police have recorded 2,170 antisemitic crimes, a 400% increase and three times the rate of 2020 (the Met has recorded 1,568 Islamophobic hate crimes over the same period).

The MS does sometimes mention antisemitism, but condemnation tends to be cryptically qualified, as in this from an editorial (1 November 2023): "Both types of racism [antisemitic and Islamophobic] must be condemned unreservedly and opposed practically by all on the left. The only distinction between the two today is that the Establishment unites in denouncing antisemitism, where it exists and where it doesn't." (My emphasis).

The paper's reaction to 7 October

itself is worth remembering. An editorial (11 October 2023) headed "The violence of the oppressed", began: "No-one should cheer the slaughter in Israel. Those Israeli families in their homes, the young people at the music festival, deserve to be alive. The young Israeli boy taken hostage and videoed being tormented deserves to be home and safe" ... before going on to state: "But to forebear from cheering is not to condemn." □

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Socialist Worker returns to "Cairo" line



Eye on the Left

By Matt Cooper

The SWP has, since the mid-1980s anyway, argued for the destruction of Israel and as "running through Cairo", i.e. achieved by a rising of the Arab working class in the surrounding states, particularly Egypt.

That rising will, they claim, will return Palestine to its 1948 borders, incorporating Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs into a single state, allegedly democratic and secular. How the subjugation of Israeli Jews will be an act of democracy is something that the SWP never addresses. The best-case scenario is that most will flee.

Over the last year, though, SW has had little of the "Cairo" line. Their initial reaction was

to "rejoice" at Hamas's slaughter of 7 October 2023. Charlie Kimber, then editor of SW, mentioned the "Cairo" line later in October 2023, but otherwise, SW did little but hail Hamas as "the resistance".

SW's attitude to Hezbollah was much the same. As late as July this year SW described it as "the Lebanese resistance group" without further qualification.

In recent weeks there has been a shift. It was presaged in an article in the SWP's *International Socialism* journal (April 2024) by Simon Assaf, who had been SW's Lebanese correspondent at the time of the 2006 war. Assaf believes Hezbollah was a healthy political force prior to 2006 (he glosses over its foundation on the back of support from 1,500 members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard sent to Lebanon in 1982), but now recognises it



has become part of the Lebanese state, sending troops to aid Assad in his brutal civil war in Syria from 2012 and using armed force to put down the strike wave that exploded in Lebanon in 2019.

As late as July 2024 SW was simply referring to Hezbollah as a "resistance" force. But this month, an unsigned article saw the re-emergence of the SWP's "Cairo" position. Against seeing Hamas as the engine of change, it argues "revolutionary socialists argue that the road to a free Palestine and Palestinian liberation runs through Cairo... Egypt has the largest working class in the

Arab world with an immense power to strike back" ("Free Palestine", SW 2925).

The following week Arthur Townend wrote that "Hezbollah has wedded itself to... Lebanon's ruling class and to the regional power, Iran... Building structures of resistance that prioritise working class resistance is the key to challenging imperialism." (SW 2926)

The new tilt is equally off-beam. It rules out any form of relief from war and oppression for Palestinian people short of a workers' revolution in Egypt. And would *Socialist Worker's* advice to an emerging workers' state in Egypt really be: go to war with Israel? Surely, our first advice would be to help Israel's working class rise up against their ruling class too. But the restored "Cairo" line reads more socialistic.

Why the shift? Maybe it is that Kimber, who had edited

SW since 2014, has turned 67, and was replaced this summer by Tomáš Tengely-Evans. At the same time, Sophie Squire, who had written much of the Israel-Palestine coverage, left the paper. Much of the Israeli-Arab material now written by Thomas Foster (who has been writing for the paper since earlier in 2024) and in the last few weeks Arthur Townend.

Maybe it is more the fact that saying that Hamas and Hezbollah are "the resistance" gives people no reason to join the SWP. More talk, even if vapid, about revolutionary socialism is, perhaps, more "on brand". □

Eric Lee

Eric Lee is away in Georgia. With other commitments he has been unable to write a column this week. □

Rape courts and half-measures



Women's Fightback

By Katy Dollar

Labour has announced it will establish new rape courts across England and Wales to tackle backlog in sexual assault cases. Courts, which have faced years of cuts, have historically high backlogs. Rape has low charge and conviction rates. Just 2.6% of rape cases result in a charge.

The Tory government had also been considering the proposal. Years of reports and inspections have shown long waits for justice and poor practice can re-traumatise victims and survivors. These factors increase chances of victims dropping cases before trial.

A report *Suffering for Justice* by the charity Victim Support found:

- One-third of victims were asked what they did to stop the offence while it was happening.
- One-third faced accusations that pursuing justice was a way of seeking revenge.
- One-third experienced questions

about their alcohol consumption or substance use.

- 15% faced questions about what they were wearing.
- 12% faced accusations that the incident was just regretful or bad sex.
- Half of the cases analysed were adjourned, some up to four times, often at the last minute, with no explanation.
- Lengthy waits of up to 11 months persisted at sentencing and, even when there was a guilty verdict, offenders who lived close to survivors were sometimes not remanded in custody.

There are good reasons to feel uncomfortable reporting sexual assault. Until recently, a clause in the Crown Prosecution Service's guidance on pre-trial therapy prevented victim-survivors from discussing the details of their case in therapy whilst awaiting trial due to this being considered oral evidence. Victim-survivors had to choose between using the criminal justice system or access therapeutic support. Although this clause was removed in 2022, the police and prosecution may be able to request to view the notes of their psychotherapy sessions and can call their psychotherapist to trial as a witness. Many victims cite, as a factor in dropping cases, the invasion of pri-

vacy of police access to therapy notes or having to hand over mobile phones.

Specialist Courts may provide some improvement in the treatment of sexual assault victims but should learn the lessons of previous pilots. Evaluations of the Specialist Sexual Assault Courts in South Africa, New Zealand and the UK, reported that court workers were constrained by their workload and felt that meeting the model's objective of improving the timeliness of cases coming to trial compromised the quality of their investigation of the case and preparation for trial. Courts should not concentrate not only on hard outcomes timescales and conviction rates but also on victim-survivor experience and the specialist conduct of personnel.

Where specialist courts have been established reports have shown their effectiveness weakens over time due to lack of resources for refresher training and support for staff carrying out work that itself can be traumatising. Court personnel should apply an awareness of the intersection between domestic abuse and sexual violence to their work. Training and specialist practice at the courts also raises questions about other courts. Don't all courts require an understanding of dynamics or sexual



Pic: [Ben Schumin]

and domestic violence?

Specialist courts are more effective when victim-survivors can access wraparound support and advocacy from specialist sexual violence services whilst in contact with the criminal justice system. Given low reporting rates these services need to be available whether victims choose to use the criminal justice system or not.

Labour cannot reach its target of cutting violence against women and girls whilst pushing on with austerity. Without massive funding of support available across civil service, NHS, local government and the third sector services, specialist courts will be another slight adjustment in a broken system. □

Turkey's drive against Kurds: and now talks?

By Pete Boggs

Over the last few months, Turkey has stepped up its attacks into Iraqi Kurdistan, but a new report from [Al-Monitor](#) suggests peace talks could be on the cards.

Turkey has been conducting raids into Iraqi Kurdistan for decades, ostensibly limited to anti-terror operations to root out the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), the Kurdish nationalist militia. The recent escalation has seen Turkey deploy infantry and tanks, and set up checkpoints. They have killed a number of civilians in bombings and raids, and displaced thousands of people.

Ostensibly, Turkey wants to create a "30-40km security corridor" to separate Turkey from Iraq and Syria. This should be seen as code for a Turkish-occupied zone. In 2019 a buffer zone was agreed between the USA, Turkey, and the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces – the military of Rojava, the Kurdish-controlled region in north and eastern Syria which is linked to the PKK). Shortly after

this Donald Trump withdrew US forces from Syria, and Turkey invaded this area, adding to its existing territory in northern Syria. The Turkish government rules alongside allied Islamist militias, and has since attempted to resettle parts of its large Syrian refugee population in the area, prioritising Arab refugees in order to make the area "less Kurdish".

Both the central government in Iraq and Masoud Barzani's KRG (the Kurdistan Regional Government, which rules over Iraqi Kurdistan as an autonomous region of Iraq) have stayed largely quiet about the invasion into Iraqi Kurdistan. Turkey and Iraq are engaged in a large-scale infrastructure project along with Qatar and the UAE, the "Development Road". This is a \$17 billion dollar attempt to build rail and road links between Basra on the Persian Gulf and Mersin, a Turkish city on the Mediterranean. After a state visit from Erdoğan the Iraqi government banned the PKK in a sop to Turkey.

After visiting Baghdad in

April this year, Erdoğan also went to Erbil, the capital of the KRG. The Turkish government has long enjoyed relatively friendly relations with Barzani, at least economically: until last year, the KRG exported oil to Turkey without the agreement of the Iraqi central government. It is unclear to what extent the KRG, and their military force the Peshmerga, have collaborated in the invasion.

Speculation

Much of the speculation about peace talks comes after the Devlet Bahçeli, leader of the far right MHP (National Movement Party) linked to the Grey Wolves, shook hands with Kurdish deputies from the DEM Party (the successor to the HDP) at the opening of parliament.

In addition to this, according to the *Al-Monitor* report, Turkey recently allowed jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan to communicate with the PKK leadership in Iraqi Kurdistan. He supposedly told them "it was time to discuss laying down their arms". Öcalan's in-

volvement in these discussions should not be mistaken as a shocking new development.

Since his capture in 1999 he has variously been used as an interlocutor in discussions between the Turkish state and the PKK, such as in the 2013 peace talks: in 2015, the PKK stated that any decision to lay down their arms is neither Öcalan's nor the HDP's to make.

Why is this happening now? Turkey is worried about increasing instability in the Middle East, vocally about Iran's and Israel's supposed actions against Turkey. They accuse Iran of secret arrangements with the PKK on the Iranian-Iraqi border, and Erdoğan has claimed that after Lebanon Israel will target Turkey. Perhaps more importantly, Erdoğan's presidential term limit will come to an end in 2028 as things stand, and it is likely that he will seek to extend this: previous large electoral wins for the AKP have often relied on its sporadic Kurdish support.

As things stand, any peace talks will be on the terms of the Turkish state, which has

continually proved itself an existential enemy of Kurdish self-determination and safety in the region.

Within Turkey itself, the state has continued to repress Kurdish society. Both a demonstration in the majority-Kurdish city Diyarbakır in defence of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and screenings of the Kurdish-language film *Rojbash* have been banned.

DEM Party activists and politicians are still being harassed and arrested. Recent police raids targeted their party officials in Iğdır. It is common practice to depose local elected officials based on "terror links", as happened to the mayor of Hakkari shortly after his election earlier this year.

There has been overwhelming international silence on Turkey's invasion into Northern Iraq. We have republished [online](#) the statement by the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, who demand that Turkey stop shelling, withdraw from Iraqi Kurdistan, and compensate those affected by the invasion. □

“Aviation workers must grasp future”



Environment

By Tahir Latif

Tahir Latif, former President of civil service union PCS's Aviation Group, is a leading figure in labour movement climate campaigning, through organisations including the Greener Jobs Alliance and the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group. He spoke to Sacha Ismail.

From 1979, I worked for the Civil Aviation Authority, then a civil service subsidiary, which meant I joined CPSA – now PCS. These were the early days of Thatcherism and attacks on workers and our unions, so an embryonic sense of injustice led to my becoming a local rep in the mid-80s, later being elected to the PCS Aviation Group Executive and finally Group President.

National Air Traffic Services [NATS] was hived off into the private sector [by New Labour], separate from the regulator, CAA, with a commitment to bottom line profit and delivery of shareholder dividends. High union density in NATS, and the criticality of the staff to a safe air navigation service, meant that relatively speaking, pay, pensions and terms and conditions, while chipped away, declined less drastically than in other industries where the trade union presence was not as prominent.

My awareness of aviation's impact on the environment was closely aligned with the privatisation of air traffic control, which tied the organisation's financial success to delivering on the growth aspirations of the airlines and airports. My thinking gravitated towards the restoration of a publicly owned NATS, with the wider public interest at its heart. This wider public ethos would require a workforce whose numbers would be tied not to the amount of air traffic but towards ensuring safety and reducing climate effect.

It was clear was that simply saying “flying is bad for the environment” would not work with PCS members, for understandable reasons. The most common view, perfectly understandably, was that more aeroplanes in the sky was good because it meant more jobs, while the reduction demanded by the climate movement was bad because

it would reduce the number of jobs. Within the context of a highly commercialised industry, that is undoubtedly true. We all have to put bread on the table – who will volunteer for the axing of their own job, however concerned you may be about the threat climate change poses?

However, this also meant that workers were seeing their own fortunes, their continued employment, as synonymous with the success of the airlines and airports, the same employers who were demanding staff reductions to lower cost overheads, and relentlessly attacking pay and conditions. This is a defeatist approach to industrial relations.

Any policy had to start with establishing the public service commitment to improving the environment of the industry as a whole, and to the number of workers required to achieve that commitment. Returning air traffic control and airports to the public sector, as part of an integrated public transport system, dispensing with the profit motive as a part of the act of getting people from A to B, is the prerequisite to retaining jobs and skills of workers in the industry while also ensuring aviation's impact on climate reduced.

Support

I support the kind of policies advocated by [aviation workers' group] Safe Landing and [international network] Stay Grounded, which I also wrote about in an appendix to the [2021] *Climate Jobs* pamphlet.

Start with a recognition that the amount of flying has to reduce; the expansion plans of airlines and airports is simply unsustainable and have to be curbed. What we do to support and protect workers has to take place within that framework.

Bottom line protections for all workers through a Just Transition, exactly as we are demanding for other sectors such as energy, steel and construction. This to include a jobs guarantee and protection for those temporarily out of work during any transition period.

Debunking of false solutions like SAF [so-called Sustainable Aviation Fuel] and CCS [Carbon capture and storage] as the greenwash they are. Deployment of workers to support research and development into genuine alternative technologies should be a priority.

A range of flight reducing measures

including:

- Frequent Flyer Levy and ending of frequent flyer miles
- No private jets, this grotesque trend should be banned with immediate effect
- No night flights
- No domestic flights wherever other public transport methods can be used, in conjunction with an expansion of, and investment in, rail and bus networks to facilitate this, including night trains
- Expansion and use of trans European rail network to replace as much continental flying as is practical
- Public ownership of transport system to end the distorting effect of the market that makes flying a cheaper option, within the context of a policy of cheap-to-free local transport.

The day-to-day defence of members in the industry is essentially the same struggle for all unions. Where we differed is by also looking over the horizon at the long term future for our members. In general, the aviation unions tend to lean into prevailing political situation, meaning short-range job protection is allied to expansion plans and backing those without thinking about the broader picture and its potential impact on the work force.

The absence for flying during the Covid pandemic briefly raised the profile of public ownership as a measure to protect members through the crisis, which in my opinion was a dry run for the impact the climate crisis will have on the industry. Unfortunately things have slipped backwards since.

There's little in the way of long term thinking. Aviation is highly insular, very sectoral, it's aviation vs other modes rather than integrated with them for a common good.

[The government just greenlighted expansion of City airport]. The orthodox economic case compels politicians in power to support the industry as an essential component of economic life (imports and exports, business travel etc.) We are well aware by now that Labour in power is very much geared towards the orthodoxy; John McDonnell's views on Heathrow expansion are obviously not going to be typical of the current government's thinking.

The principles embodied in [Compos-ite motion C18](#) at TUC need to be applied to aviation workers and transport in general. The struggle is to achieve

the reduction in demand required, and the development of the sector as well as its integration with the transport system, without adverse impact on the workers in the industry, i.e. to make them part of the solution: not the victims of fig-leaf greenwashing in the manner of Port Talbot steel workers.

We talk a lot about a worker-led transition, and aviation is a perfect example of possibilities for that, with lots of very skilled and knowledgeable workers whose role, and continued employment, can be utilised in the transformation of the transport system, rather than remaining dependent on the unchecked expansion of the emissions that are killing us. That's not an easy place to get to, but workers in aviation could lead the way in that different vision of how we utilise our work force, simply because of the skills and expertise embedded there.

Debates

The debates and votes at the TUC were very encouraging, with the “regressive” climate motion passing very narrowly on a card vote, and the “progressive” motion only facing a few abstentions. The direction of travel is in a progressive direction, and it's unlikely to reverse. It suggests there is a process of opening one's eyes and minds to what's happening in the world and what the real threats to workers are, i.e. market-driven solutions imposed on us, low-paid and non-unionised labour. Union members are getting to grips with the idea that we have to take over this agenda and define what the future looks like, not succumb to it.

Burying your head in the sand and hoping things don't change is not the answer. Cheerleading for ongoing fossil fuel extraction or aviation expansion, relying on fake solutions, will lead workers over the cliff edge. We have to defend jobs in the current industry with all our strength, yes, but we also have to grasp what the future beyond that looks like and demand workers are at the forefront. Climate change is a grave threat, but also opens an opportunity to mobilise workers and communities and bring greater equality. This idea demands wholehearted trade union support. □

• Abridged. More: bit.ly/avia-f

Free movement campaign makes new plans

From LCFM

The [Labour Campaign for Free Movement](#) has sent out information from the organising Zoom call it held on 10 October after its achievement at Labour Party conference (22-25 September) in getting the Border Security composite withdrawn.

There will be a demonstration "Against Detention", on 19 October, at Hassockfield/Derwentside Immigration Detention Centre, Consett, County Durham, with coaches from [several cities](#). On 26 October, 10am, there is a mass picket at the Science Museum London SW7; and from 11:30 am a counter-demonstration against the far-right, assembling at Piccadilly Circus.

The diverse workforce of security guards at the Science Museum in the UVW Union will be on strike for better pay and conditions. And the racist, anti-migrant far-right led by Tommy Rob-



inson will be on the streets of London. LCFM has always said "build unions not borders" – workers uniting across divisions of birthplace and immigration status is the real answer to the social deprivation that the far-right blames on immigration. So let's support the picket line before joining the counter-demonstration against the far-right with a strong message for migrants' rights and free movement.

Please propose our model motions in your union branch or local Labour party: bit.ly/fm-mo. □

Stop victimisation of Madeleine Norman

By Will Roberts

Palestine Action activist [Madeleine Norman](#) has been in debilitating prison conditions for three weeks, after being labelled an "escape risk" while on remand.

Norman is currently on remand in HMP Bronzefield for taking part in a disruptive action at the Elbit Systems manufacturing hub in Filton, Bristol.

Norman was labelled an escape risk due to a drawing of their cell, which prison staff have never actually seen. Conditions include clothes being taken away, hourly checks, no access to books or a phone, and no contact with their legal representative for another case.

Palestine Action are calling for supporters to contact the prison and complain. □

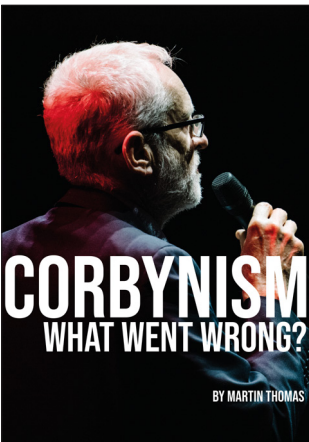


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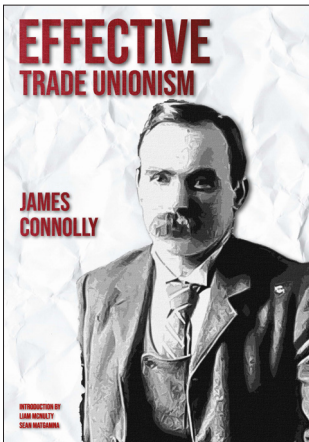
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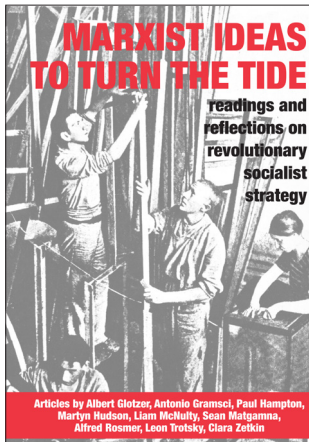
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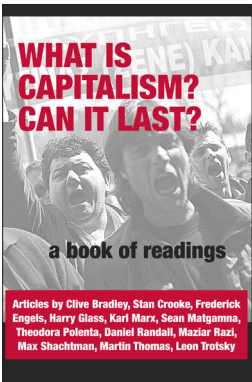
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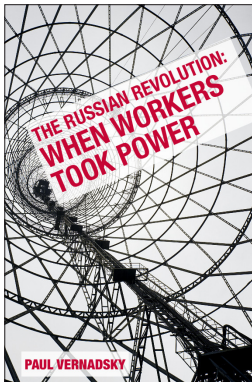
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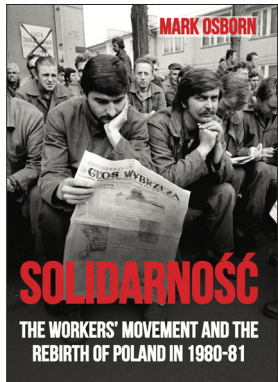
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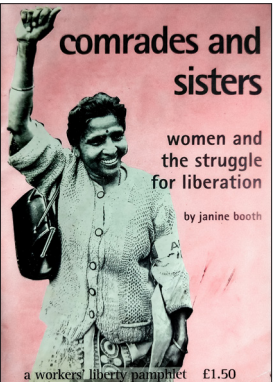
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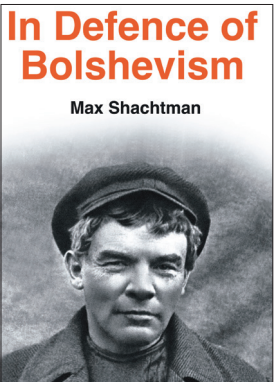
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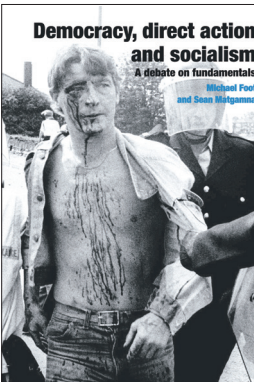
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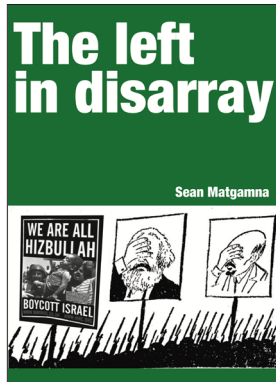
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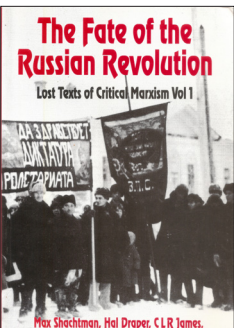
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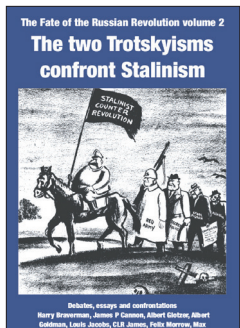
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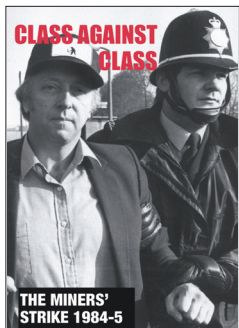
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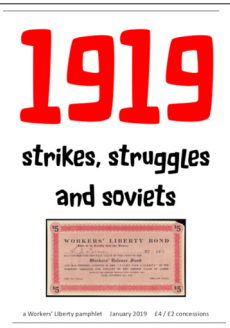
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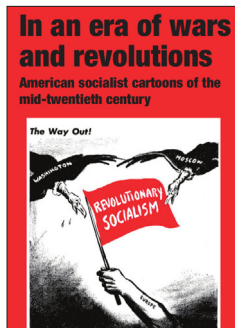
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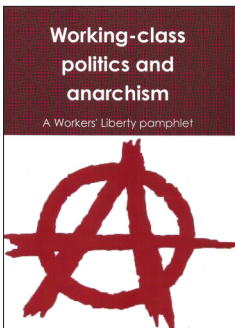
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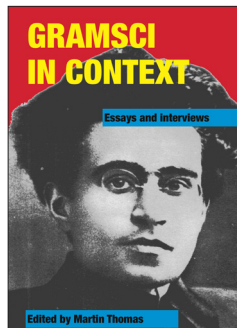
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Marx and Eng



By Sean Matgamna

"The attempt to 'fix' for all time the point of view Marx had held in a different epoch was an attempt to use the letter of Marxism against the spirit of Marxism" – Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin), The Right of Nations to Self-Determination

If political virtue lies, and I think it does, in supporting "Ireland" against British rule and British interference – that is, after the 1798 rising and Robert Emmet, mainly, the struggle of the nationalist, Catholic Irish – then the Marxists, beginning with Marx and Engels themselves, have a record to be proud of.

That is part of the explanation of how "Marxists" (in fact Stalinists) won over a big part of the Irish Republican Army in the 1930s, and a majority in the 1960s, a majority, despite the intense, widespread, and long-term Catholic Church campaign against "communism".

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were actively involved in the Irish struggle and three of Marx's daughters, Jenny, Laura, and Eleanor, as well as Marx himself and Engels, championed the Fenian prisoners in the 1860s and 70s. Marx made Ireland a central concern of the International Workingmen's Association, the First International.

Frederick Engels was born in Germany in 1820. He came to live in England – Manchester – in 1843, and worked in the cotton industry. His family had shares in a firm there.

He wrote in 1844 *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, which is what it says it is. He went back to Germany and took part in the revolution

which failed there in 1848. He came back to England at the end of 1849, and lived in Manchester until he retired from business and moved to London in 1870. He used the money he made to finance himself and Marx. He lived 12 years after Marx, dying in London in 1895 as the widely-revered patriarch of revolutionary socialism.

Engels was a communist before Marx was. He was, I think, at the beginning a utopian socialist, a follower of Fourier. He was a vicarious Irish-adoptive nationalist for nearly all his life, learning Old Irish in his old age, when he wrote an unfinished *History of Ireland* (to 1014: he amassed material on later Irish history).

The Act of Union between Britain and Ireland in 1800-1, through unregulated competition between Britain, the "workshop of the world", and Ireland, was devastating Irish industry. Those made redundant by changes on the land found work in Britain and America, not Ireland. Daniel O'Connell had led the Catholic Irish to Catholic Emancipation (1829), with the priests as his organisers. He then switched to agitation for the Repeal of the Union. O'Connell was a Whig, a sort of pre-historic liberal.

What was later Home Rule was in the 1840s "Repeal" – the repeal of the 1800 Act of Union. The Catholic Irish had initially favoured the Union, but now they wanted Repeal. The Protestant Irish had opposed the Union, but over time came to favour it and become willing to fight to keep it.

In 1843 Engels wrote about O'Connell and the Irish migrants in England and Scotland. Those of us who are Gaels are not necessarily flattered, but there is no doubting Engels's good will towards the Catholic Irish or that he stood with them.

"How much could have been done if a sensible man possessed O'Connell's popularity or if O'Connell had a little more understanding and a little less egoism and vanity! Two hundred thousand men – and what men! People who have nothing to lose, two-thirds of whom are clothed in rags, genuine proletarians and sans-culottes and, moreover, Irishmen, wild, headstrong, fanatical Gaels. One who has never seen Irishmen cannot know them. Give me two hundred thousand Irishmen and I will overthrow the entire British monarchy.

"The Irishman is a carefree, cheerful, potato-eating child of nature. From his native heath, where he grew up, under a broken-down roof, on weak

tea and meagre food, he is suddenly thrown into our civilisation. Hunger drives him to England. In the mechanical, egoistic, ice-cold hurly-burly of the English factory towns, his passions are aroused. What does this raw young fellow – whose youth was spent playing on moors and begging at the roadside – know of thrift? He squanders what he earns, then he starves until the next pay-day or until he again finds work. He is accustomed to going hungry.

"Then he goes back, seeks out the members of his family on the road where they had scattered in order to beg, from time to time assembling again around the teapot, which the mother carries with her.

"But in England the Irishman saw a great deal, he attended public meetings and workers' associations, he knows what Repeal is and what Sir Robert Peel stands for, he quite certainly has often had fights with the police and could tell you a great deal about the heartlessness and disgraceful behaviour of the 'Peelers' (the police). He has also heard a lot about Daniel O'Connell.

"Now he once more returns to his old cottage with its bit of land for potatoes. The potatoes are ready for harvesting, he digs them up, and now he has something to live on during the winter. But here the principal tenant appears, demanding the rent. Good God, where's the money to come from?

"The principal tenant is responsible to the landowner for the rent, and therefore has his property attached. The Irishman offers resistance and is thrown into goal. Finally, he is set free again, and soon afterwards the principal tenant or someone else who took part in the attachment of the property is found dead in a ditch.

"That is a story from the life of the Irish proletarians which is of daily occurrence. The half-savage upbringing and later the completely civilised environment bring the Irishman into contradiction with himself, into a state of permanent irritation, of continually smouldering fury, which makes him capable of anything. In addition he bears the burden of five centuries of oppression with all its consequences. Is it surprising that, like any other half-savage, he strikes out blindly and furiously on every opportunity, that his eyes burn with a perpetual thirst for revenge, a destructive fury, for which it is altogether a matter of indifference what it is directed against, so long as it can strike out and destroy? But that is not all.

"The violent national hatred of the

Gaels against the Saxons, the orthodox Catholic fanaticism fostered by the clergy against Protestant-episcopal arrogance – with these elements anything can be accomplished. And all these elements are in O'Connell's hands. And what a multitude of people are at his disposal! The day before yesterday in Cork – 150,000 men, yesterday in Nenagh – 200,000, today in Kilkenny – 400,000, and so it goes on. A triumphal procession lasting a fortnight, a triumphal procession such as no Roman emperor ever had.

"And if O'Connell really had the welfare of the people in view, if he were really concerned to abolish poverty – if his miserable, petty juste-milieu aims were not behind all the clamour and the agitation for Repeal – I should truly like to know what Sir Robert Peel could refuse him if he demanded it while at the head of such a force as he now has. But what does he achieve with all his power and his millions of valiant and desperate Irishmen? He is unable to accomplish even the wretched Repeal of the Union".

II

Engels was on the side of the Irish outcasts. His later political views were influenced and perhaps formed in the hellish place which Manchester was for the proletariat, and especially for the many Irish there, who tended to live in ghettos such as "Little Ireland" (in Red Bank, down from the beginning of what is now Cheetham Hill Road).

Frederick Engels arrived in Manchester years before the Irish potato blight and the Famine it brought. Ireland's population was 8.5 million. It would lose two million to the famine and cholera which followed, and dropped to little over 4 million by the 1930s – of those, perhaps, a little under three million in the 26 Counties. Of those perhaps a thousand a week left. It is now only a bit over 7 million for the whole of Ireland.

In large parts of Ireland, the only diet for the millions of smallholders was potatoes. They ran out before the next crop came in. Large groups of Irish women and men went to England (or America), joining those already there. In England, they jobbed or begged until the next crop of potatoes came in in Ireland and then went back.

Thomas Carlyle, arguably the most influential writer in English then, wrote: "Crowds of miserable Irish darken all our towns. The wild Milesian features... restlessness, unreason, misery and mockery, salute you on all highways



For socialists to understand and confront left antisemitism from primitive or Stalinist roots to the "anti-imperialism of fools". 265 pages, £9.99 ☐ bit.ly/shop-wl

els on Ireland

and byways".^[1]

There was conflict between British and Irish workers. The Irish were used to a lower standard of life. The English workers tended to see the Irish as cheap labour undermining them, and the politically conscious of the Irish workers saw the English workers as dupes of the English ruling class. English and Irish workers resented each other.

In the 1840s the British working class, in Chartism, had made a tremendous mass political movement to win the vote for the working class – so that the workers could use state power as the upper class and the middle class newly enfranchised after 1832 had used it. Chartism opposed the New Poor Law of 1834, under which workhouses were built and indigent workers forced into those “Bastilles for the poor”. It was the first mass working-class movement in history. It had as many sub-groups and factions as there were tendencies within it.

It declined after 1848. One reason was that capitalism began a long and steadier expansion.

The young Engels plunged himself into this movement, and above all, perhaps, saw in it and the working-class potential it proclaimed, as the answer to the questions which utopian socialism had left open.^[2]

British and Irish politics overlapped. Feargus O'Connor, a prominent Chartist, and leader of the physical-force Chartists, had been an O'Connellite (Repeal) MP. Another Irish migrant, Bronterre O'Brien, was a leader among the socialists of Chartism, and a pioneer among socialists.^[3]

Marx followed Engels on Ireland. He came to England – to London – in 1849, after the defeats of the revolutions in Europe (Germany, France – where the working class had been to the fore – Austria, Italy, Hungary). In 1850 he was embroiled in an immediate but also symbolic conflict within the Communist League with August Willich and Karl Schapper, who refused to recognise that the revolutions of 1848 and after had been defeated. Marx insisted on facing the defeats and learning from them. Famously, he said to his opponents: “Whereas we say to the workers: ‘You will have to go through 15, 20, 50 years of civil wars and national struggles not only to bring about a change in society but also to change yourselves, and prepare yourselves for the exercise of political power’, you say on the contrary: ‘Either we seize power at once, or else we might as well just



Irish Famine Memorial, Dublin

take to our beds.”

Marx settled in cosmopolitan Soho, and studied political economy, which he knew to be the great gap in communist knowledge. In the late 1850s he solved one of the great mysteries of capitalism: how formal equality before the law produces and reproduces economic inequality. The worker sells a commodity, labour-power, which in use by the capitalist produces, for the capitalist, more than its own cost to maintain and reproduce it.^[4]

III

The Famine in Ireland did not become “The Famine” of the nationalist propagandists until about 1860, and it took time for it to be attributed mainly to English rule. James Connolly argued that no-one who accepted the principles of the conventional political economy, as the Irish bourgeoisie did, had a right to deplore the Famine.

“It is only when we reject that system, and the intellectual and social fetters it imposes, that we really acquire the right to denounce the English administration of Ireland during the famine as a colossal crime against the human race. The non-socialist Irish man or woman who fumes against that administration is in

the illogical position of denouncing an effect of whose cause he is a supporter. That cause was the system of capitalist property”.

The cholera epidemic that followed on the heels of the Famine did not, in its indiscriminate slaughter, pause to ask its victims what their income was, and what class they belonged to. It spread throughout Irish society.

The Great Hunger was more specific and more discriminating. It hit only the poorest, those who lived on a diet of potatoes and salt. Large areas of Ireland, the towns for instance, did not experience the great starvation as starvation, though they were inconvenienced by the movements of those who starved.

Starving families were given the bleak hospitality of the workhouse only on condition they gave up their land. The workhouses, the Ennis workhouse for instance, which opened in 1841 under the Irish Poor Law of 1838 (modelled on the British law of 1834), took in two times their capacity and more. Large areas were disrupted, but there was not an overall shortage of food in the Ireland of the Famine. Food was reasonably plentiful; the shortage was in people's capacity to buy the available

food and in relief to the starving. That was limited by the dogmas of the dominant political economy of “the haves”, Irish as well as English.

Those who lived on potatoes, and starved when the potatoes were destroyed in the ground by blight, could not buy food, though large areas of Ireland could, and Ireland produced food other than the only food of the very poor, the potato. The potato crop failed all over Europe, and in England, during the mid-1840s, but only in Ireland did large numbers of people starve.

When the London government in 1849 passed the Encumbered [by debt] Estates Act, the estates were mainly bought as an investment of capital by Irish Catholics.

The later nationalist saying that “God made the blight, but the English made the Famine”, was true only in the sense that England had overall control and thus responsibility. But large parts of Irish society also helped make the Famine, and later benefited from it via the Encumbered Estates Act.

Yet the UK government in the Famine did behave as the active enemy of the people who were dying of hunger. When some landlords were reluctant

continued on page 10→

→ from page 9

to evict hungry tenants, the government made them liable for the tenants' rates and thus forced them to evict. The government was afraid that people, if "given" famine relief, would (those who survived) lose the will to work in the future. It was better to let them die of hunger than to risk damaging their will to work.

The most you can say for the "nationalist" view is that a native Irish government might have been more responsive. But the Irish society that lived in relative prosperity throughout the years of the famine was not adequately responsive. It did not stop the Famine, or adequately help those dying of hunger. And it benefited from the Encumbered Estates Act to become capitalist landlords. Within eight years of the Act, one third of Irish land had changed hands. It enormously benefited those Catholics who were rich enough. The Encumbered Estates Act began 70 years of "modernising" Irish agriculture.

The English government did know how to use the Famine, and used it. In 1846 it used it as reason to repeal the Corn Laws from the time of the Bonaparte wars, under which corn could be imported into the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland only when the price of corn had reached an unusually high level. The old laws had favoured the Irish economy. It was the victory of Free Trade.

The three years of full-scale Famine 1846-7-8, or five if you add 1845 and 1849 when there was a partial failure of the crop, started an exodus from Ireland which continued into the 20th century and even the 21st.

Marx wrote: "The Irish famine of 1846 killed more than 1,000,000 people, but

it killed poor devils only. To the wealth of the country it did not the slightest damage. The exodus of the next 20 years, an exodus still constantly increasing, did not, as, e.g., the Thirty Years' War (in Germany, 1618-48) did, decimate, along with the human beings, their means of production. Irish genius discovered an altogether new way of spiriting a poor people thousands of miles away from the scene of its misery. The exiles transplanted to the United States, send home sums of money every year as travelling expenses for those left behind. Every troop that emigrates one year, draws another after it the next. Thus, instead of costing Ireland anything, emigration forms one of the most lucrative branches of its export trade. Finally, it is a systematic process, which does not simply make a passing gap in the population, but sucks out of it every year more people than are replaced by the births, so that the absolute level of the population falls year by year" (*Capital* volume 1).

IV

Marx came to support Irish Home Rule as a possibility late, surprisingly late. Repeal of the Union (of Britain and Ireland, enacted in 1800-1) was already part of the common programme of the left in Britain from Chartist times and considerably earlier. The serious left in Britain had taken sides.^[5]

Marx had examined Ireland and its economic relations with England. There is a great deal about Ireland and its role in the development of early British capitalism in *Capital*. It was the activities of the Fenian, militant and generally left-wing Republican, movement of the 1860s, and the British reaction to it, that won Marx to firm support for the separation of Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom as a real possibility. He explained his conception of the Irish Question as it was then in a famous letter to Engels of 30 November 1867:

"What the English do not yet know is that since 1846 the economic content and therefore also the political aim of English domination in Ireland have entered into an entirely new phase, and that, precisely because of this, Fenianism is characterised by a socialistic tendency (in a negative sense, directed against the appropriation of the soil) and by being a lower orders movement. What can be more ridiculous than to confuse the barbarities of Elizabeth or Cromwell, who wanted to supplant the Irish by English colonists... with the present system, which wants to supplant them by sheep, pigs and oxen!...

"Clearing of the Estate of Ireland! is now the one purpose of English rule in Ireland... The question now is, what shall we advise the English workers? In my opinion they must make the Repeal of the Union (in short, the affair of 1783, only democratised and adapted to the conditions of the time) an article of their pronunciamento... Experience must show later whether a mere personal union [a common monarch] can

continue to subsist between the two countries. I half think it can if it takes place in time.

"What the Irish need is: 1) Self-government and independence from England.

"2) An agrarian revolution. With the best intentions in the world the English cannot accomplish this for them, but they can give them the legal means of accomplishing it for themselves.^[6]

"3) Protective tariffs against England. Between 1783 and 1801 every branch of Irish industry flourished. The Union, which overthrew the protective tariffs established by the Irish [in fact, Protestant-Irish] Parliament, destroyed all industrial life in Ireland. The bit of linen industry is no compensation whatever... Once the Irish are independent, necessity will turn them into protectionists, as it did Canada, Australia, etc."

Marx explained his view further in a note for the First International (28 March 1870):

"If England is the bulwark of landlordism and European capitalism, the only point where one can hit official England really hard is Ireland.

"In the first place, Ireland is the bulwark of English landlordism. If it fell in Ireland it would fall in England. In Ireland this is a hundred times easier since the economic struggle there is concentrated exclusively on landed property, since this struggle is at the same time national, and since the people there are more revolutionary and exasperated than in England. Landlordism in Ireland is maintained solely by the English army. The moment the forced union between the two countries ends, a social revolution will immediately break out in Ireland, though in outmoded forms. English landlordism would not only lose a great source of wealth, but also its greatest moral force, i.e. that of representing the domination of England over Ireland. On the other hand, by maintaining the power of their landlords in Ireland, the English proletariat makes them invulnerable in England itself...

"Quite apart from international justice, it is a precondition to the emancipation of the English working class to transform the present forced union (i.e. the enslavement of Ireland) into equal and free confederation if possible, into complete separation if need be".

Marx was not then or ever with the metaphysical Irish separatists. He took account of geographic and political and demographic considerations. But: "separation if need be". The British Marxists following Marx (SDF, British Socialist Party) called for "legislative independence for Ireland"

But why did Marx assume that the English capitalist class did not also see what he saw, and act to avert it?

V

Once he had made up his mind Marx's commitment was whole-hearted. Marx threw himself into the struggle against British rule in Ireland. He exerted his influence in the General Council of the

International Working Men's Association (the First International) to get it to try to persuade the international labour movement to back the people of Catholic Ireland against Britain.

He discerned the start of a rural Irish working class. "Formerly, the agricultural labourers were but the smallest of the small farmers, and formed for the most part a kind of rear-guard of the medium and large farms on which they found employment. Only since the catastrophe of 1846 have they begun to form a fraction of the class of purely wage labourers, a special class, connected with its wage-masters only by monetary relations".

Frederick Engels toured Ireland in 1856, not long after the Great Hunger, and wrote this report for Karl Marx.

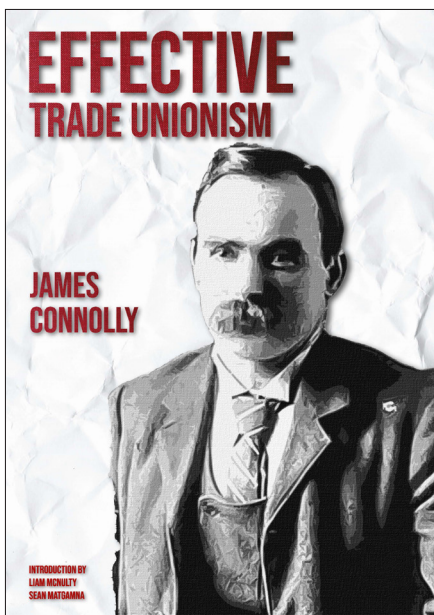
"During our tour in Ireland we came from Dublin to Galway on the west coast, then twenty miles north inland, then to Limerick, down the Shannon to Tarbert, Tralee, Killarney and back to Dublin – a total of about 450 to 500 English miles inside the country itself, so that we have seen about two-thirds of the whole of it.

"With the exception of Dublin, which... has quite the character of a small one-time capital, all English-built, too, the look of the entire country, and especially of the towns, is as if one were in France or Northern Italy. Gendarmes, priests, lawyers, bureaucrats, country squires in pleasing profusion and a total absence of any industry at all, so that it would be difficult to understand what all these parasitic growths live on if the distress of the peasants did not supply the other half of the picture. 'Strong measures' are visible in every corner of the country, the government meddles with everything, of so-called self-government there is not a trace.

"Ireland may be regarded as England's first colony and as one which, because of its proximity, is still governed exactly in the old way, and one can already notice here that the so-called liberty of English citizens is based on the oppression of the colonies. I have never seen so many gendarmes in any country, and the sodden look of the bibulous Prussian gendarme is developed to its highest perfection here among the constabulary, who are armed with carbines, bayonets and handcuffs.

"Characteristic of this country are its ruins, the oldest dating from the fifth and sixth centuries, the latest from the nineteenth – with every intervening period. The most ancient are all churches; after 1100, churches and castles; after 1800, houses of peasants. The whole of the west, especially in the neighbourhood of Galway, is covered with ruined peasant houses, most of which have only been deserted since 1846.

"I never thought that famine could have such tangible reality. Whole villages are devastated, and there among them lie the splendid parks of the lesser landlords, who are almost the only people still living there, mostly lawyers. Famine, emigration and clearances together have accomplished this. There



Aiming to replace capitalism with socialism, James Connolly's organising and ideas evolved considerably. One idea he clung to from the turn of the century to his death was industrial unionism, workers' solidarity across grades and trades, and sympathetic strikes. That is how he saw his work in the Irish Transport Union. 64 pages £5 □

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are not even cattle to be seen in the fields. The land is an utter desert which nobody wants. In County Clare, south of Galway, it is somewhat better. Here there are at least cattle, and the hills towards Limerick are excellently cultivated, mostly by Scottish farmers, the ruins have been cleared away and the country has a bourgeois appearance.

"In the south-west there are a lot of mountains and bogs but there is also wonderfully luxuriant forest land; beyond that again fine pastures especially in Tipperary, and towards Dublin there is and which, one can see, is gradually coming into the hands of big farmers.

"The country was completely ruined by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850 (for in reality both the wars and the state of siege lasted as long as that). It has been established as a fact that most of the ruins were produced by destruction during the wars.

"The people itself has got its peculiar character from this, and for all their national Irish fanaticism the fellows feel that they are no longer at home in their own country. Ireland for the Saxon! That is now being realised. The Irishman knows that he cannot compete with the Englishman, who comes equipped with means superior in every respect; emigration will go on until the predominantly, indeed almost exclusively, Celtic character of the population is gone to the dogs.

"How often have the Irish started out to achieve something, and every time they have been crushed, politically and industrially. By consistent oppression they have been artificially converted into an utterly impoverished nation and now, as everyone knows, fulfil the function of supplying England, America, Australia, etc., with prostitutes, casual labourers, pimps, pickpockets, swindlers, beggars and other rabble.

"Impoverishment characterises the aristocracy too. The landowners, who everywhere else have become bourgeoisified, are here reduced to complete poverty. Their country-seats are surrounded by enormous, amazingly beautiful parks, but all around is waste land, and where the money is to come from it is impossible to see. These fellows are droll enough to make your sides burst with laughing. Of mixed blood, mostly tall, strong, handsome chaps, they all wear enormous moustaches under colossal Roman noses, give themselves the false military airs of retired colonels, travel around the country after all sorts of pleasures, and if one makes an inquiry, they haven't a

penny, are laden with debts, and live in dread of the Encumbered Estates Court.

"Concerning the ways and means by which England rules this country – repression and corruption – long before Bonaparte attempted this, I shall write shortly..."

The convulsions on Ireland's land in the 1840s-60s led to mass migration not only to the USA but also to Britain. By 1858, when the Irish Republican Brotherhood was founded in the UK, including Ireland ("the Fenians" was the name for the IRB in America), its strongholds were in places like Liverpool, with its many Irish migrants. As the joke went, Liverpool was the capital of Ireland.

The transformation of Ireland to pasture-land was, in Karl Marx's opinion, what turned Fenianism into a mass movement.

VI

Engels and Marx were not in favour of the "militarism" of such Fenian spin-off as the "Invincibles" who set off bombs in London.^[7]

Engels to Marx (19/12/1867): "The stupid affair in Clerkenwell [a bomb at a jail which freed no-one but killed 12 civilians nearby] was obviously the work of a few specialised fanatics; it is the misfortune of all conspiracies that they lead to such stupidities, because 'after all something must happen, after all something must be done'. In particular, there has been a lot of bluster in America about this blowing up and arson business, and then a few asses come and instigate such nonsense".

Karl Marx wrote his friend Kugelmann on 29 November 1869: "Both my utterance on this Irish amnesty question and my further proposal to the General Council to discuss the attitude of the English working class to Ireland and to pass resolutions on it have of course other objects besides that of speaking out loudly and decidedly for the oppressed Irish against their oppressors. I have become more and more convinced – and the only question is to drive this conviction home to the English working class – that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland most definitely from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801 and replacing it by a free federal relationship.

"And this must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading strings of the ruling classes, because it will have to join with them in a common front against Ireland. Every one of its movements in England herself is crippled by the strife with the Irish, who form a very important section of the working class in England. The prime condition of emancipation here – the overthrow of the English landed oli-

1867 PROCLAMATION OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC

The people of Ireland to the world,

We have suffered centuries of outrage, enforced poverty, and bitter misery. Our rights and liberties have been trampled on by an alien aristocracy, who treating us as foes, usurped our lands, and drew away from our unfortunate country all material riches. The real owners of the soil were removed to make room for cattle, and driven across the ocean to seek the means of living, and the political rights denied to them at home, while our men of thought and action were condemned to loss of life and liberty. But we never lost the memory and hope of a national existence. We appealed in vain to the reason and sense of justice of the dominant powers.



Our mildest remonstrance's were met with sneers and contempt. Our appeals to arms were always unsuccessful.

Today, having no honourable alternative left, we again appeal to force as our last resource. We accept the conditions of appeal, manfully deeming it better to die in the struggle for freedom than to continue an existence of utter serfdom.

All men are born with equal rights, and in associating to protect one another and share public burdens, justice demands that such associations should rest upon a basis which maintains equality instead of destroying it.

We therefore declare that, unable longer to endure the curse of Monarchical Government, we aim at founding a Republic based on universal suffrage, which shall secure to all the intrinsic value of their labour.

The soil of Ireland, at present in the possession of an oligarchy, belongs to us, the Irish people, and to us it must be restored.

We declare, also, in favour of absolute liberty of conscience, and complete separation of Church and State.

We appeal to the Highest Tribunal for evidence of the justness of our cause. History bears testimony to the integrity of our sufferings, and we declare, in the face of our brethren, that we intend no war against the people of England – our war is against the aristocratic locusts, whether English or Irish, who have eaten the verdure of our fields – against the aristocratic leeches who drain alike our fields and theirs.

Republicans of the entire world, our cause is your cause. Our enemy is your enemy. Let your hearts be with us. As for you, workmen of England, it is not only your hearts we wish, but your arms. Remember the starvation and degradation brought to your firesides by the oppression of labour. Remember the past, look well to the future, and avenge yourselves by giving liberty to your children in the coming struggle for human liberty.

Herewith we proclaim the Irish Republic.

The Provisional Government
March 5th, 1867

The Fenian Manifesto of 1867

garchy – remains impossible because its position here cannot be stormed so long as it maintains its strongly entrenched outposts in Ireland. But there, once affairs are in the hands of the Irish people itself, once it is made its own legislator and ruler, once it becomes autonomous, the abolition of the landed aristocracy (to a large extent the same persons as the English landlords) will be infinitely easier than here, because in Ireland it is not merely a simple economic question but at the same time a national question, since the landlords there are not, like those in England, the traditional dignitaries and representatives of the nation, but its mortally hated oppressors.

"And not only does England's internal social development remain crippled by her present relations with Ireland; her foreign policy, and particularly her policy with regard to Russia and the United States of America, suffers the same fate. But since the English working class undoubtedly throws the decisive weight into the scale of social emancipation generally, the lever has to be applied here. As a matter of fact, the English re-

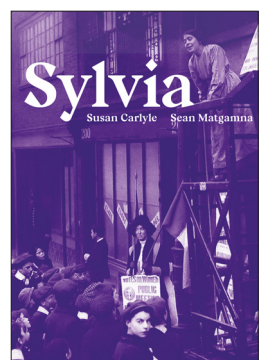
public under Cromwell met shipwreck in – Ireland. Non bis in idem! [not twice in the same]

"But the Irish have played a capital joke on the English government by electing the 'convict felon' O'Donovan Rossa to Parliament. The government papers are already threatening a renewed suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, a renewed system of terror. In fact, England never has and never can – so long as the present relations last – rule Ireland otherwise than by the most abominable reign of terror and the most reprehensible corruption".

Marx to Engels again, on 4 December 1869:

"The resolutions were carried unanimously, despite Odger's constant verbal amendments. I let him have his way on one point only, agreeing to omit the word 'deliberate' before 'insults' in paragraph 1. I did that on pretence that everything a Prime Minister publicly did must be presumed eo ipso to be deliberate. The true reason was that I knew that as soon as the first paragraph was

continued on page 12 →



The story of Sylvia Pankhurst including her working-class organising in the East End of London. £4 (inc. post) ☐ bit.ly/shop-wl

→ from page 12

accepted in substance, all further resistance would be useless.

"I'm sending you two *National Reformers* containing a report on the first two meetings, but nothing yet about the last. This report is also badly written and lots of things are definitely wrong (due to misunderstanding), yet it is better than [George] Eccarius's reports in *Reynolds's* [a radical weekly]. They are by Harris, whose currency panacea you'll also find in the latest issue of the *National Reformer*.

"With the exception of Mottershead, who acted like John Bull, and Odger, as always, like a diplomat, the English delegates behaved excellently. The general debate on the attitude of the English working class to the Irish question begins on Tuesday.

"Here one has to fight not only prejudices, but also the stupidity and wretchedness of the Irish leaders in Dublin. The Irishman (Pigott ^[8]) knew about the proceedings and resolutions not only from *Reynolds's*, to which he subscribes and which he often quotes. They (the resolutions) were sent him directly by an Irishman as early as November 17. Up to now, deliberately not a word. The ass acted in a similar way during our debates and the petition for the three Manchester men. The 'Irish' question must be treated as something quite separate, apart from the rest of the world, namely, it must be concealed, that English workers sympathise with the Irish!

"What a stupid beast! And this in respect of the International which has press organs all over Europe and the United States! This week he received the resolutions officially, signed by the Foreign Secretaries [of the International]. They've also been sent to the *People*. Nous verrons [We shall see]. Mottershead subscribes to *The Irishman* and will not fail to use this opportunity to poke fun at the "high-souled" Irishmen. But I'll play a trick on Pigott. I'll write to Eccarius today and ask him to send the resolutions with the signatures, etc., to Isaac Butt [a Home Rule leader]. Butt is not Pigott".

THE EASTER RISING AND IRISH HISTORY



An attempt at a Marxist account. £4 (inc. post) □
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Engels to Marx, 9 December 1869: "On the one hand, the Irish are warned, and quite rightly, not to let themselves be inveigled into unlawful action; on the other, they are to be prevented from doing the only lawful thing that is pertinent and revolutionary and alone able to break successfully with the established practice of electing place-hunting lawyers and to impress the English Liberals. It is obvious that Pigott is afraid that others might outstrip him. You will remember, by the way, that O'Connell always incited the Irish against the Chartists although or, to be more exact, because they too had inscribed Repeal on their banner".

Marx to Paul and Laura Lafargue, 5 March 1870: "Here, at home, as you are fully aware, the Fenians' sway is paramount. Tussy is one of their head centres. Jenny writes on their behalf in the *Marseillaise* under the pseudonym of J. Williams. I have not only treated the same theme in the Brussels *Internationale*, and caused resolutions of the Central Council to be passed against their gaolers. In a circular, addressed by the Council to our corresponding committees, I have explained the merits of the Irish Question. You understand at once that I am not only acted upon by feelings of humanity. There is something besides. To accelerate the social development in Europe, you must push on the catastrophe of official England. To do so, you must attack her in Ireland. That's her weakest point. Ireland lost, the British 'Empire' is gone, and the class war in England, till now somnolent and chronic, will assume acute forms. But England is the metropolis of landlordism and capitalism all over the world".

Engels to Bernstein, 26 June 1882: "Without war or the threat of war from without, an Irish rebellion has not the slightest chance; and only two powers can become dangerous in this respect: France and, still far more, the United States". After the US Civil War, "Had it come to a [US-UK] war, Ireland would in a few months have been part of the United States or at least a republic under its protection. The sum which England so willingly undertook to pay, and did indeed pay in accordance with Geneva arbitrators' decision on the Alabama affair, was the price she paid to buy off American intervention in Ireland".

In fact, when it came to the Fenian rebellion in March 1867, the danger of war with America had passed, and: "The police was strong enough to deal with the Fenians".

VII

Marx and Engels thus established a "Marxism" on the Irish question which survives to this day. People like Karl Kautsky and Ulyanov-Lenin – though, interestingly, not Rosa Luxemburg, who was concerned with Poland, "the Ireland of the east" – followed Marx and Engels and took their views on Ireland as a paradigm on the national question in general and on agrarian questions. Kautsky made studies of Irish agrarian

conditions.

Naturally, the Communist International backed Ireland during the war of independence in 1919-21. It supported the non-compromise Republicans in the civil war of 1922-3. The Bolshevik government was the first to recognise the Irish Republic proclaimed in 1919.

Ulyanov-Lenin took Marx and Engels on Ireland as a model on the national question. That was reasonable, up to a point. But, as we shall see in later articles, Ireland had evolved, and England had evolved too. □

[1] Carlyle (1795-1881) was a critic of early capitalism, but looked to the restoration of an idealised half-imaginary past for redress. He also believed in Black slavery. He was in principle anti-Irish, but said he made an exception for Gavan Duffy and he was in fact influential in Young Ireland, which has won undeserved acceptance as part of the Irish physical-force tradition. Possibly Carlyle's influence affected John Mitchel's later support for the South in the US civil war. Carlyle, for his criticism of early capitalism, remained influential in the labour movement until well into the 20th century. Marx and Engels used a phrase of his in the Communist Manifesto – the "cash nexus" as the prime tie in capitalist society. He was central in the rehabilitation of Oliver Cromwell, who had been a great villain in official (royalist) English history for two centuries. Hitler kept Carlyle's life of Frederick the Great, a hero to both of them, by him, even in his final bunker.

[2] A few of O'Brien's supporters lived to join the Marxist Social Democratic Federation in the 1880s. John Doherty, leader of the first attempt at a union centre, the National Association for the Protection of Labour, in 1830, was also Irish.

[3] Hal Draper, in *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, writes: "Engels... formed a liaison with Mary Burns, an Irish workingwoman, who was to be his companion until her death. This link was no doubt important in giving him access to the life of the working class and its movements, for Mary Burns was a revolutionist of the plebeian Irish nationalist type which, under English industrial conditions, was one of the greatest leavens of the proletarian and socialist milieu of the time. Engels has been accused of seeing England through her 'prejudiced' eyes..." He also lived with Mary's sister, Lydia (Lizzie) Burns, and married Lizzie after Mary died. Whether his relationships with Mary and Lizzie were together or separately is not clear. Engels, the former Fourierist, did not share the conventional morality. His biographers may have forced the Burns sisters and him into patterns that were alien.

[4] We should not forget that Marx and Engels lived in a social and political world very primitive compared to ours. The rural Irish, a big majority, did not get the vote until Gladstone's Reform Act of 1884, when Marx was already dead. The first Irish election under it (1885), so Gladstone said, changed his mind on Home Rule. The railways did not start to come into use at all widely, even in England, until the late 1830s. The telegraph came in from the 1850s; the telephone from the late 1870s; electricity and the shipping of frozen food started from the 1870s and 80s; the internal combustion engine from the 1890s. Radio did not "come in" until the eve of the Great War; air travel began experimentally in 1904 and did not "come in" until the Great War of 1914-8 and its aftermath. Plastics, and chemical industries generally, began in the 1930s.

In Britain from the 1880s the two main parties actively pursued antagonistic policies, the Liberals Home Rule and the Tories "killing Home Rule with kindness", reform of grievances.

[5] In 1812 Shelley wrote of Ireland's foes and of Robert Emmet: "When Erin has ceased with their memory to groan/ She will smile through the tears of revival on thine".

[6] In fact, as it turned out, the English, in a number of Land Acts, did do it "for" the Irish.

[7] One of them was Thomas Clarke, who would sign the Declaration of the Republic in 1916 and be court-martialled and shot by the British Army.

[8] This Pigott, then a prominent nationalist, would live to accuse Charles Stewart Parnell of involvement in the killing of two English officials in the Phoenix Park assassinations of 1882. He would commit suicide when his forgeries were shown up.

• Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky image on page 8 is from Deviant Art bit.ly/m-e-l-t

If Trump the Dem



By Claireen Ryan

Tens of millions will vote for him, but I don't think that Donald Trump can win a majority of the popular vote in the US presidential election.

There is too much against him, and he has never won the popular vote. Hillary Clinton got three million more votes than Trump in 2016. He won the presidency by getting a majority in the Electoral College.

In 2020, when he lost both the popular vote and the Electoral College to Joe Biden, he tried deliberately to do by fraud and force what the system did for him spontaneously in 2016.

Trump and his supporters say they will accept the results of the 2024 presidential election only if Trump wins. They have already made preparatory legal challenges. If they don't win? They will try to do what they did in 2020-1, if they can, only more so. Trump has told Republicans that he doesn't need their votes. That means that he thinks he can't win: all his hopes rest on the Electoral College, the courts, and Republican party fraud.

Meanwhile his campaign has become a drunken orgy of undisguised racism and promises to arrest and deport millions of people. In his TV debate with Kamala Harris, Trump accused Haitian "legal" migrants to the USA of stealing and eating household pets. If that is said on TV, what are they saying on the ground? ^[1]

The Trump campaign is a devastating mix of truth and lies. Trump lies all the time, in big things and in small. He make it up as he goes along. He lies as casually as he breathes. But thereby he shows the truth of what he is. He wallows in it.

Irish nationalists, when the candidate was in jail, had a slogan: "Put him in to get him out". Trump has not said that, but he is running to keep out of jail, perhaps for the remainder of his 78-year-old life.

Harris is campaigning to keep Trump fascism from breaking the Republic. But it has broken down already. What is in question is whether they can restore it.

The Harris campaign says that a win for Trump would be a win for fascism, and I think that is right. And the left is not large, or organised, or capable of organising independently on any scale. It is in the unions that back Harris and

Who wins the Electoral College, will Democrats fight?

Walz, and treat the Democratic Party almost as a subsection of of their movement.

Biden was the first president to walk on a picket line. Kamala Harris and Tim Walz, while accepting capitalism, are pro-labour-movement. But the Democratic Party is not a labor party.

Here, we are not in a situation like pre-Nazi Germany, when the Social Democrat voters backed Hindenburg against Hitler as the lesser evil, and Hindenburg soon called Hitler to power as Chancellor. The Communist Party and the Social Democrats let Hitler take power peacefully though each had a big militia of its own – and Hitler was peacefully master of all Germany.

Rather, the nearest comparison is France in 2002, when on the second round the left had to choose between the fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen and the mainstream right-winger Jacques Chirac, and leftists raised the slogan “Rather the crook than the fascist”.

For the American left, that would be something like: better Harris and Walz than the Trump fascists.

The American republic is broken. Broken? The Supreme Court, one of the three institutions which share power, is openly partisan for the Trumpites and openly grabbing power. It is itself monarchic. Each of the nine justices is appointed for life. In the court, each president can perpetuate himself politically by appointments.

The Supreme Court ruled to make the President above and outside the law when acting as president. Presidents from George Washington, the first, all the way to Biden, who is still in office, had managed without that kingly prerogative. The Supreme Court acted according to a right-wing political agenda. They acted to overthrow Roe v Wade, which had allowed abortion for 50 years. It was a coup, abusing the archaic power of the Supreme Court, and the majority of Americans did not want that.

The Supreme Court acts without a code of ethics. At least two of the nine justices are corrupt in the sense of taking bribes. It is discovered by Americans now that a right-wing network of lawyers, the Federalist Society, backed by a cabal of billionaires, has manoeuvred for decades to gain a majority on the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court was created by the Founding Fathers in the time of the French Revolution, almost 250 years ago, to be a failsafe against democracy. It is appropriate that it has allowed the

millionaires and the billionaires, burrowing away on the quiet, to impose their backward-looking, undemocratic, counter-revolutionary agenda on Americans.

It was meant to guard against democracy, that is, against the vote – to be an element of royal rule in the US constitution, and so it is. Britain removed its nearest equivalent to the Supreme Court as one of three co-equal elements of rule 113 years ago when amidst great uproar it abolished the Lords’ absolute veto over the House of Commons. The USA is not yet a bourgeois democracy even in the sense that bourgeois Britain is a democracy.

Of the nine Supreme Court justices, five were appointed by Trump (three) or the Bushes.

Various ideas have been aired such as increasing the number of judges so as to dilute the reactionaries. But the Supreme Court should not be tinkered with. It should be abolished as an arm of government.

Where the Republican party has a state majority, restrictions have been adopted to make it difficult for people of colour to vote. Attempts are being made to stop African-Americans voting – what was done in the past by imposing such things as poll taxes is now being attempted in other ways.

The treatment of Trump has been extraordinary. Prosecuting him has been delayed so long that Trump has not been tried for the insurrectionary riot of 6 January 2021, the invasion of the Capitol and the attempt to murder vice-president Mike Pence and (Democrat) Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

There are laws against allowing someone who has acted as Trump did on 6 January 2021 to stand. Yet Trump is allowed to stand – and on an overtly fascist platform. When Colorado tried to stop Trump as an insurrectionist standing in the Republican primary, the Trumpist-majority Supreme Court licensed him to stand.

Trump is in many ways – in his speeches, for instance – a raving and incoherent lunatic. The millionaire and billionaire press, TV, and radio “sane-wash” Trump – that is, they translate what he rants and raves into a seeming sense it simply does not have.

The Fox network owned by Rupert Murdoch has not hidden the fact that its supreme values are to entertain, and to make influence by bias and propaganda. It is still doing that, more cautiously perhaps after settling with Dominion Voting Systems for \$800 mil-



lion.

Here the break in the system is grievous and obvious. It is no longer possible for Americans to deal with facts that are matters of fact, with expert judgement, with commitment to establishing truth. Everything is a matter of opinion, of contention, of “alternative facts”, of what you feel and want.

That is not new, but it has grown to near-dominance with Trump, who lies and invents and denies all commitment to objective reality. His partisans, Kellyanne Conway for instance, has been open and explicit about it.

That method, and short way with factual truth, is applied to science as well as to things like religion and judgements that are properly a matter of individual choice. Freedom of religion long ago turned into freedom of charlatanism and tax breaks for pseudo-churches.

Belief in the separation of religion and state long ago ceased to have much meaning in the USA, though lip-service is paid to it.

The Trumpite craziness that has engulfed so much of America is the arbitrariness and subjectivism and sheer craziness that has long, long existed in areas like religion overflowing its banks and spreading more intensively to new areas of society. And, so far as the Trumpites and Republicans can control what happens, engulfing society.

The same is true of the virtual reality of TV. Trump became known to Americans as the host of a “reality” TV show, that is, in reality, a heightened and assisted pseudo-reality of role playing and ascription.

All that has risen up and now threatens to bring fascism to power in the USA. Nothing is as crazy in this saga of craziness as the widespread acceptance of Trump – billionaire Trump, who has had everything given to him in super-abundance, whose legal “strategy” of delay and delay and delay is possible only to the very rich – of Trump as a rebel.

Or yes, perhaps as crazy is the fact the discussion of Trumpism and democracy has avoided the mammoth-large elephant in the room: money.

The rule of money in US politics has been faded out from discussion of democracy and authoritarianism in

America. Yet money is central in American politics, from the privately-owned media where Trump is sane-washed to the financing, and too often the buying, of individual candidates.

Sufficient money for a candidate can sometimes be pooled together from dribbles and drabbles, but that can never match or compete on a large scale with the mountains of money on top of which some citizens sit.

To discuss the threat from authoritarianism without questioning the role of money in the US plutocracy is sheer hypocrisy, but such omission pervades the discussion of the US body politic, threatened now by a demented, perhaps an especially demented, form of fascist authoritarianism. (What political leader in the past or present was or is as demented as Trump?)

The crisis now brought to a head by Trump, who is a deeply contemptible person, an ignoramus, a narcissist, is not new. It goes back to the now-sainted Ronald Reagan, and further back.

George W Bush, who helped to form the present majority on the Supreme Court, lost the popular vote the first time, and was made President by the Supreme Court ruling on the Florida recount; he won the second time because he was the incumbent.

The Republican party has let itself be transformed into a fascist party because it faced being consigned to a permanent minority.

If Trump wins this presidential election, it will be in the Electoral College. But will the Democratic Party, and the unions which back it, meekly accept such a result and such consequences, and let Trump, the unashamed fascist, and his reactionary enablers and supporters, run riot? To create a fascism that will not let itself be ejected from office. □

[1] The UK version of this, back in the day, was that West Indian migrants were eating tins of cat and dog food. The existence of social media in which people with no standards of fact and truth, and sometimes malicious, are influential, is now a problem; but the social media echo large parts of the media and are taught by such as Rupert Murdoch.

“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

Settle for the minimum?



Diary of a Tube driver

By Jay Dawkey

"What would you settle for?" It's not an odd question to ask. E from a depot down the other end asks me after reading a union bulletin in the messroom.

Every time pay talks are due, people want to know what you are looking for. "I know what I think a lot of people would go for, but I think it is the wrong question". "I'd take 4.5%", E says. "I think most drivers would be happy with that". And it is true that lots of them would. But when we have yet to hear from the unions what action they plan to take, we don't need to be willing to accept the bare minimum that may be offered.

Plus, the threat of pay banding and job families has to be dealt with and quickly. Rumours abound that Transport for London has hired an account-

ancy firm to look at what the "market rates" are for various jobs so they can band pay and group people in these job families. The end result would be the capping of pay rises, and some people would not get pay rises. It is a direct threat to collective bargaining on the job.

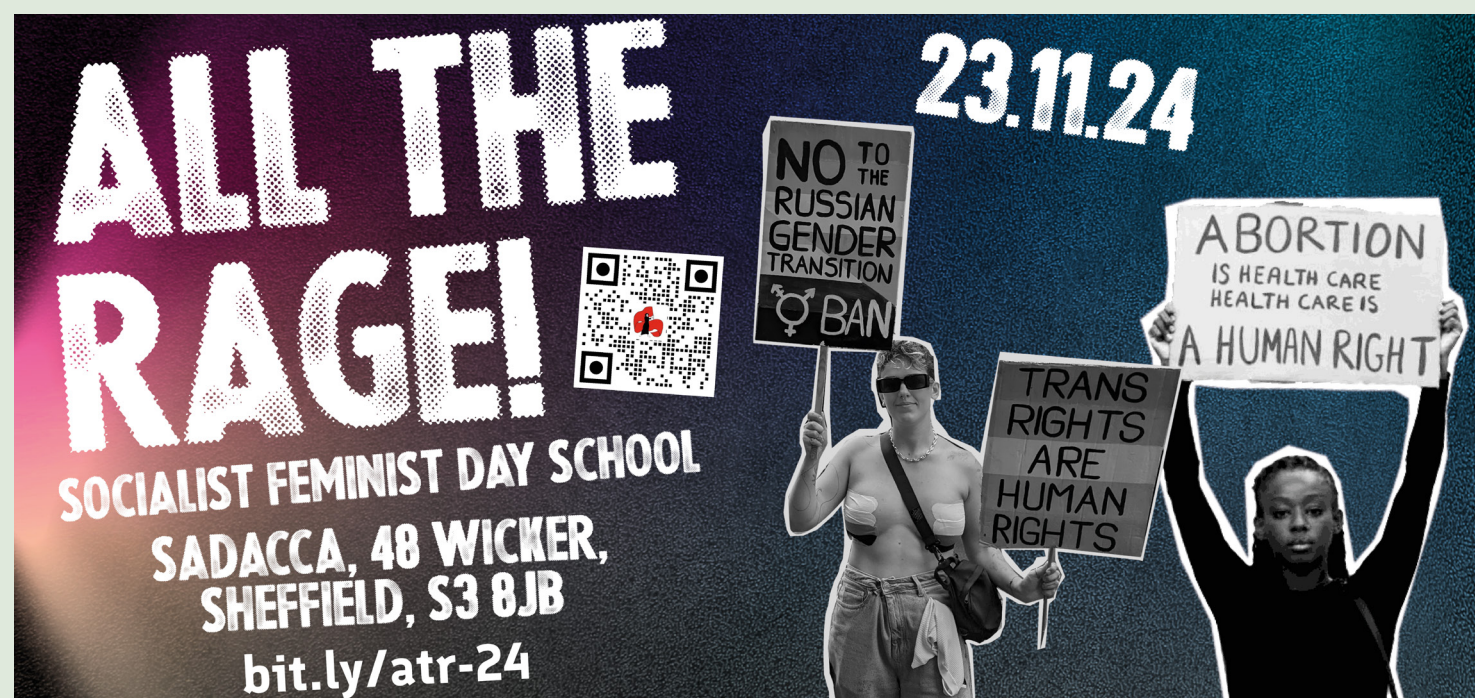
Aslef is the first out of the gate with strike dates. 7 and 12 Nov. My depot is majority RMT. "What do you make of the Aslef dates then?" S asks. "Bring it on", Q says, "if they go ahead with them". "But what should we (RMT) do?" I guess that we will coordinate action for the first date, probably a week of action, taking out different grades at different times across seven days. This is designed to inflict maximum damage to the service while no one grade will lose more than two days' wages. The so-called "gradewave" is popular; it was planned for the last pay dispute, and then when the Mayor found the extra £30m, the action was pulled.

"So will Aslef go ahead with the second date if we coordinate with the first?" "Who knows, but if they do, we



need to take the hit (as RMT drivers) and stay out with them. No one here should cross their picket. But, it'll probably take more than a week of action anyway, so whether we think it is a good date, we'll need to be prepared to take more action".

S says: "A lot of people reckon they'll pull that second date. But we need to announce soon, get ready to inflict some pain". □



10.30-11am: Registration and Introduction

11-12.15: Plenary: Feminism and the rise of the far right, with:

- Sian Norris, author of *Bodies under Siege: How the Far Right Attack on Reproductive Freedom Went Global*.
- Kavita Krishnan, author of *Fearless Freedom*.

12.15-13.15: Lunch

13.15-14.25: Workshops 'Organising for Trans Liberation' and 'Taking Control of Our Work'

14.25-14.45: Break

14.45-15.45: Plenary: Building Solidarity, Not Borders. Defend Migrant Rights! with:

- Ewa Pospieszynska, Razem London & Labour Campaign for Free Movement
- Zimbabwe Women, a campaign for

family rights for migrant care workers and others.

15.45-16.15: Break

16.15-17.15: Workshops: 'The War on Woke' with Cath Fletcher and 'Peace and Justice in Israel Palestine', with Standing Together and others.

17.15-18.00: Plenary and Close: Labour in Power – What Next for Class Struggle Feminism?

13.15-17.00: Practical sessions suitable for children and adults. Including banner/placard making, lego building and zine creation.

+ after-party at SADACCA.

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Firefighters' rally pressures Labour

By an FBU member

A thousand fire and rescue workers – operational firefighters, fire control workers, fire safety workers and others – from across the UK joined the Fire Brigades Union's ["Time to Deliver"](#) rally in Westminster on 8 October, promoting the FBU's demands for the new government to "Rebuild our fire service", followed by a lobby of Parliament.

In November last year the FBU launched a ["Firefighters' Manifesto"](#)

with detailed demands and arguments for rebuilding and transforming fire and rescue services. That formed the basis of FBU campaigning during the general election. The union won pledges from Labour on defending collective bargaining arrangements, reintroducing national standards for services, and creating an advisory body for the sector with FBU representation.

It was a Labour government that abolished the previous, decades-old advisory body (the CFBAC) in the af-

termath of its defeat of the 2002-3 national firefighters' strike – paving the way for spiralling deregulation, a race to the bottom on standards, and a huge transfer of power into the hands of chief fire officers.

Out of the extensive and detailed demands of its manifesto the FBU has produced [ten key demands](#), and out of those several immediate focuses – including around the nature of a new advisory body (it needs adequate FBU representation and like the old CFBAC should be statutory), fire service funding, and repealing anti-union laws so that collective bargaining is meaningful.

At the 8 October rally, FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack stressed that there are "no guarantees in politics" or in workers' struggles. Rather than relying on the Labour government, he argued, we should see it as an opportunity to push harder for our demands. Employers, including in the fire service, will certainly be pushing the other way.

Funding is key. Over the last decade and a half UK fire services have been gutted, losing roughly 30% of their funding in real-terms. This has led to the loss of 12,000 firefighter jobs – over one fifth of the total. Crewing levels

have been driven down, leading to the previously unheard of phenomenon of three on a fire engine (instead of five); during some emergencies fire engines have sat unused because there are not enough firefighters to crew them. Response times have risen significantly. 82 fire stations and 17 fire control centres have closed. Pensions have been attacked and pay held down, though strong FBU campaigns on both have now made up some ground.

The FBU has developed clear policies for its sector (and beyond), and mobilised members in the start of a serious campaign to impose them on the Labour government, in a way no other union has. Its campaign should be reported and discussed in other unions and sectors.

The campaign must continue and step up. Certain aspects need developing and sharpening. For instance, repeal of the most recent anti-union laws should [re-activate](#) the question of the older ones – which the FBU campaigned on actively in 2018-19, and still raises, but should renew its activity on.

The union is about to begin its General Secretary election, with incumbent Matt Wrack being challenged by Executive Council member Steve Wright. Branch nominations opened on 8 October and will run till 5 November; voting opens 10 December and will run to 14 January. □

• Abridged. More: [bit.ly/ff-rally](#)



PCS passive over cuts drive

By a PCS member

Shamefully, the civil service union, PCS, is quiescent in the face of cuts and devalued pay because an undemocratic, incompetent, "Left Unity" cabal of full time officials and senior lay representatives is bureaucratically blocking decision-making and effective campaigning by the National Executive majority, now held by the Coalition for Change.

In [Fixing the Foundations](#), the Government said that civil service departmental budgets will "absorb" [i.e. take cuts of] at least £3.2 billion of the public sector settlement this financial year. On 1 October the *Guardian* [reported](#) that Ministers have been asked to model 10% cuts – billions of pounds – to their departments' annual capital spending over the next 18 months.

£225 million of "savings" is scheduled to come from a 2% reduction in civil service day to day running costs, supposedly "cutting down on waste while prioritising the frontline."

The cut was announced without any effort to show that £225 million is being "wasted"; ignores the importance of "non-front line" work to "frontline" delivery (for example, through recruitment, training, IT support); and will result in job loss.

The Labour leadership's adoption of

two "non-negotiable" fiscal rules – the current budget must move into balance so that day to day costs are met by revenues and debt must be falling as a share of the economy by the fifth year of the forecast – combined with their unwillingness to consider "radical" revenue raising measures, always portended the continuation of austerity.

Post election, the Labour leadership claimed to have discovered an undeclared, largely recurring, financial "black hole" – £21.9bn of unsupported expenditure bequeathed to them by the Tories. Typically, Keir Starmer, and the Chancellor Rachel Reeves, saw a need for "tough decisions" (for the defenceless) and removed the winter fuel allowance from all but the very poorest pensioners. On 10 September Starmer warned the unions that future pay would be shaped by tough decisions, after 13-plus years of falling public-sector real wages.

For this pay year (2024/25), Starmer and Reeves accepted the recommendations of the public sector Pay Review Bodies for awards of between 5-6% and, separately, authorised average pay awards up to 5% for non-senior civil servants. But those awards did not come close to restoring the lost value of public sector wages: we won't win that unless the trade unions fight on pay and tie that fight to the defence of

the public sector.

Meanwhile, in [evidence](#) to the Treasury ahead of Reeves' 30 October budget, the Local Government Association noted that councils are currently in an "incredibly challenging financial position"; have made an estimated £24.5 billion in cuts between 2010/11 and 2022/23; and face a £6.2 billion shortfall over the financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27.

There are revenue-raising alternatives. In June the campaign group Tax Justice set out ten tax reforms that would raise [£60 billion](#) a year. In August Larry Elliot [reported](#) on an option favoured even by some conservative economists: Reeves could save over £22bn a year and reduce the national debt figure by about £400bn if she decided to pay interest on only one-third of the £700 billion commercial-bank reserves at the Bank of England.

Starmer and Reeves look likely to re-define their fiscal (debt) rule, to enable much greater headroom for capital investment, and to consider increased capital gains tax. This possible movement reflects the pressure they are feeling. They will move substantially only if they feel a great deal more pressure from the trade unions.

Serious activists and socialists must make their leaders across the unions feel the heat of their anger. □

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Some positives, but not good enough

By a trade unionist

Many Marxists describe the Labour Party as a bourgeois workers' party. Certainly that duality can be seen in the Labour document *Making Work Pay*, which says: "Labour is pro-worker and pro-business, and we will work in partnership with trade unions and business to deliver our New Deal... We will bring in a new partnership with business and trade unions"

That duality is reflected in the [Employment Bill](#) published on 10 October. Angela Rayner claims it's good for business and good for workers. We say it is not good enough for workers, either as individuals or banded together in unions.

The Bill is lengthy, with 119 clauses and seven schedules. We will concentrate here on collective and trade union rights only. That's not because we are indifferent to individual employee rights but in our view, those individual rights can only be effectively exercised in unionised workplaces.

Start with the positives in the Bill.

Promising to scrap the 50% turnout threshold for industrial action ballots is important, as is rescinding Minimum Service Level requirements.

The scrapping of the turnout threshold means unions can run aggregated large-scale ballots and win e.g. balloting all members in the NHS rather than, say, balloting individual Hospital Trusts. In an accompanying [document](#) to the Bill, the government talks of its "... commitment to allow the use of modern and secure electronic balloting for trade union statutory ballots".

Of course, a whole raft of anti-trade-union laws will remain on the statute book, in particular the cumbersome rules established in the 1980s and 90s around giving notice to employers before action, etc. Lawyers will still have a field day seeking to injunct unions.

Labour had promised to introduce sectoral bargaining across the economy – this would mean postal businesses (DHL, United Parcel Service) forced to bargain collectively with the CWU. Instead, the only sectoral bargaining will be for Adult Social Care. Many commentators think that won't come in until 2029! The School Support Staff Negotiating Body is being reinstated which again is good, but vast swathes of the private sector will have nothing.

If wholesale changes to recognition law were



being proposed, with very strong rights of union access to workforces, then an argument might be made that these routes would allow unions to recruit en masse and so establish de facto collective bargaining across the private sector. That is not the case. Labour are making some changes, and promising others, but GMB will still find it very difficult to unionise Amazon.

Labour promised the greatest wave of insourcing this country has ever seen. That is not happening. Indeed, in the NHS, more outsourcing seem on the cards. The Bill does allow the relevant Minister to make regulations for "the purpose of ensuring that... transferring workers... are treated no less favourably as workers of the supplier than they were as workers of the contracting authority". Again good in itself (if the Minister actually makes those regulations – the Bill does not compel them to do so) but the promised regulations would appear to cover only new contracts, so the vast bulk of outsourced staff will see no benefit.

To sum up: the Bill is deeply wanting, and this reflects Labour's desire not to "go too far" and confront business. The TUC proclaims that it is "a massive boost to workers' rights". That reflects the TUC's inability to be truthful and to confront Labour.

Given the deliberately long timetable adopted to see the Bill through both of Houses of Parliament, and the extensive consultation promised on possible changes, there will be plenty of opportunities to seek amendments and to campaign around its defects. Rank and file activists have to pressure their unions to do this; and we must seek to work across the unions to achieve it. □

Take from the rich, rebuild society

By Martin Thomas

In the run-up to the Budget on 30 October, there has been a raft of speculative media stories about tax rises by the Labour government not "working"; and a push by Labour MPs and others for an easing of the "fiscal rules". The rules-easers include Josh Simons MP, former director of the right-wing faction Labour Together, and Ryan Wain of the Tony Blair Institute.

The stories about tax rises not "working" look to have been planted by big-business lobbyists or conservative Treasury officials. Higher taxes on the rich have often "worked" in the past, and can be made to work again.

A longer answer: if millionaires flee the country to evade taxes, then the labour movement should demand the government seizes their real property in the UK to make good, and brings in exchange controls to stop a "strike" by high-finance capitalists moving their cash abroad.

In 1923 high inflation in Germany made taxes on business notional. The left demanded the "taxation of real values": the government should take chunks of real business wealth instead of notional paper taxes. The same principle applies here.

Two changes to fiscal rules are mooted: to exclude from public spending losses by the Bank of England from Quantitative Easing and its unwinding, and to count increases in public assets against increases in public debt.

Advocates

Both have very "mainstream" advocates. Enough to avoid overseas holders of British government bonds (IOUs) panicking that those bonds will lose international value through high British inflation? Probably, but we don't know.

A workers' government would take the whole of high finance within Britain into public ownership and democratic control, and thus generate alternative publicly-owned buyers. It would also want to curb inflation and limit budget deficits. (The Bolsheviks suffered roaring inflation in Russia in 1917-22, but in economic chaos and civil war had few options).

Fiscal-rule changes will probably be good, but are limited. The left can claim no special expertise in designing the detail. Our headline message must be: tax the rich, and take further measures



against ultra-wealth if the first ones prove not enough.

The NHS has 7.2 million cases on waiting lists. Hospitals have a big backlog of repairs. Social care is in meltdown. Social housing is acutely scarce. In courts, serious criminal cases wait years for a date: both the accused and victims suffer.

Public sector pay is still way down in real terms on 2009-10. It is even worse for "contracted-out" workers doing jobs like cleaning, catering, and security in the public sector. Now the winter fuel allowance is cancelled for most pensioners, and the two-child benefit cap and overall benefit cap remain.

Meanwhile the millionaires have flourished.

The labour movement should not be deflected from the basic answer: tax the rich. And as the taxes prove insufficient, or are evaded, go forward to public ownership and democratic control of the banks and industry. □



Solidarity

For a workers' government

Putin grinds on despite losses

By Dan Katz

On 26 September Russia attacked the Ukrainian defenders outside the town of Kupiansk. The Russians were aiming to take territory east of the Oskil river in the eastern part of Kharkiv oblast.

The Russian army attacked in two columns, with 1,000 troops and over 50 armoured vehicles and tanks. In less than 30 minutes most of the troops were dead or injured and 40 of the vehicles were either destroyed or damaged; a staggeringly rapid loss of lives and equipment.

The Russian forces had been quickly and badly trained and they had driven headlong into well-prepared Ukrainian defences.

Russian casualties are running at around 1,270 a day (killed, wounded or missing). The British MoD believes Russian losses in September are the highest in the war so far.

President Putin and his generals are staggeringly casual with the lives of their soldiers. Ukraine estimates Russia forces have taken 650,000 casualties since the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Nevertheless, the Russians continued to grind forward. In early October the Russians overran the heavily defended

town of Vuhledar, in Donetsk oblast. Russia's immediate aim is to take control in the remaining unoccupied areas of Donbas.

In an effort to replenish its forces while avoiding a politically difficult compulsory mobilisation Putin is ramping up financial incentives for those joining the army. According to the Russian Defence Ministry, by the end of 2023 there were 640,000 contract soldiers in the Russian army and every day they allegedly recruited 1,500 new volunteers.

On average a new recruit will receive 1.7mn rubles (\$17,500) immediately.

Record

On 7 October Belgorod region set a record and increased the signing-on payment to new recruits to three million rubles (\$31,000). A person who signs an armed forces contract in Belgorod could earn 5.52mn rubles (\$57,000) for a year fighting at the front. By comparison the average monthly wage in Belgorod is the equivalent of \$950.

According to a recent decree Putin aims to increase the size of his armed forces to 2.4mn.

Ukraine, with a much smaller population and economy is also having serious difficulties in recruiting. Ukraine's armed forces



number around one million.

In April 2024 President Zelenskyy signed a mobilisation law that reduced the age of conscription to 25 (the maximum age is 60) and abolished some exemptions. Men between 18 and 60 are forbidden to leave the country and have to carry their military-status documents at all times.

Over the weekend of 12-13 October military recruitment officers raided bars, restaurants, a concert hall and an upmarket shopping centre, Goodwine, in Kyiv, and venues in other towns including Kharkiv and Dnipro, detaining men who were not in compliance with mobilisation rules.

However, numbers are not the only issue for Ukraine. For example, Ukraine has 30 territorial defence brigades which are only armed with light weapons and mortars; 14 reserve brigades cannot be used on the frontlines as the promised delivery of equipment by Ukraine's allies has not been completed.

Ukraine needs to receive adequate arms supplies from the UK, US and EU states in order to defend itself from Russian imperialism, and those arms must be given promptly. Victory to Ukraine! □