The ‘lower classes’ do not want to live in the old way and the ‘upper classes’ cannot carry on in the old way.” Lenin
What is the Alliance for Workers’ Liberty?

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour movement. The Alliance for Workers’ Liberty aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want 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 the labour movement to break with ‘social partnership’ and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses. Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers’ struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups. We are also active among students and in many campaigns and alliances.

We stand for:
- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers’ government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers’ charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers’ movement that fights all forms of oppression.
- Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. Free and equal rights for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Black and white workers unite 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.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.

If you agree with us, please take some copies of Solidarity to sell — and join us!

20 Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London, SE1 3DG.

Open the books, banks’

By Jayne Edwards

In a recent Observer article, and in interviews and conference speeches, Labour leader Ed Miliband has been making statements that make it seem like the Labour Party is beginning to side with protest movements and accepting the demands of public sector unions on pensions and job cuts.

Miliband says the Occupy London protests raise questions that we can’t ignore, that the Tories are in touch with the richest 1% but not the other 99%, that we must tackle the ‘exploitation of capitalist predators’; that we can’t allow high levels of youth unemployment to continue; that we shouldn’t be afraid of taking on the vested interests like we did in 1945 when the NHS was set up; and that the NHS is too important to be left to the market. Yet what does he propose as the alternative? So far we have tuition fees of £9,000 instead of £0,000, and a five point plan which all Labour Party members have been told to remember: this is his plan to take on the predator capitalists. Judge for yourself:

1. £2 Billion tax on bank bonuses to fund 100,000 jobs for young people and build 25,000 affordable homes.
2. Bring forward long-term investment projects, like new school buildings. 3. Temporarily reverse the VAT rise — a £450 boost for families with children.
4. A one year cut in VAT to 5% for home improvements. 5. Reversing for every small firm which takes on extra workers.

Workers lose out as bosses make it in

By Gerry Bates

While workers face wage freezes or real-term pay cuts, companies who have market food chain are enjoying ever-bigger paydays. Bosses of the FTSE 100 companies saw their pay rise by an average of 49% in the last financial year.

The Wall Street investment banking firm fought a five year battle to avoid nationalisation and taxes on bankers’ bonuses, which were paid from offshore tax havens. They eventually settled with HMRC, but tax officials allowed Goldman Sachs to avoid paying an additional £6-10 million in interest.

Top tax chiefs say that they didn’t understand they could charge interest (why not?), and that an official has lost his bonus because of the error.

Phone giant Vodafone has also been subject to government scrutiny after they were not asked to pay interest on a £1.25 billion tax settlement. A key transitional demand for the upcoming tax reform has to be that banks open their books and stop evading tax.

New traveller solidarity network

By Bill Holmes

A new traveller solidarity network has been set up to support families who are being evicted from their homes due to the huge pressure raised by the Dale Farm eviction last month.

The Traveller Solidarity Movement met in London on 5 November to discuss strategy after Dale Farm. The meeting resolved to set up the network, linking local supporter and activist groups, including anti-fascist and anti-racist organisations, with regional travellers.

A website and mailing list is being set up, but to get involved now subscribe to the Dale Farm mailing list.

Travellers themselves will lead the network. At the meeting travellers reported on continuing battles against forced homelessness.

A gypsy settlement in Brighton was evicted on 25 October, with some families leaving voluntarily while others were dragged off the land.

Meanwhile travellers in Beausale, near Warwick, face eviction from land they have occupied since May 2009. Balliffs have finished clearing Dale Farm following the decision by families to walk off en masse, and Basildon Council had an injunction to block travellers returning to the site granted by a court on 7 November.

Many of the families are living with relatives on the legal part of the site, but are still at risk of eviction from the public sector accommodation. Until the travellers have the right... to live as travellers and enough "authorisation" planes are set up, families will continue to face homelessness and be deprived of healthcare and education.

More: dalefarm.wordpress.com

Blood Service win

Health workers have won a small victory against privatisation of the NHS after it was announced the Blood and Transplant Service will not be privatised. The Industrial Workers of the World and Union Unions had led a campaign to stop the service being put into the hands of companies such as Capita, and Capita, who had shown an interest in running the service.

A commercial review of the service reported on 19 October that it should re-main nationalised. Activists must now build momentum from this to stop the whole service being put into the hands of the rest of the NHS to com-mercialise and not save lives, but making profit.

Decent benefits for all!

By Lena Williams

Liam Byrne, Labour’s Shadow Work and Pen- sions Secretary, has told changes George Os- borne that he should not include pensions in a Tory plan to increase benefits in line with the 2.5% inflation not restored in September.

The plan will save £10.4 billion for the government but Byrne stayed silent on other benefits. Does he think that the same value in society could be receiving even less cash in real terms?

Labour should not be calling for only pension- ers to be spared the axe — everyone should see their benefits increase, and financial conse-quences should be scaled up not down.

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Syrian blood still running

Syrian activists were sceptical when the Arab League announced a plan a week ago to send Syrian officials to end the violence against the opposition. Now the League has announced a meeting in Cairo on Saturday 12 November to discuss the Syrian state’s failure to take steps to resolve the crisis and stop the crackdown inside the country.

The Turkey-based opposition group, the Syrian National Council, called on its own elected representatives to be sent to Homs, where they described as “a humanitarian disaster area.”

Fighting in the Baba Amr neighborhood of Homs has continued for days, with dozens of deaths. “Whole buildings have been gutted by tank fire,” a local activist, told Reuters. “Bread has run out and people who get hit in the streets are dying from their wounds on the spot because no one can reach them,” he said.

Significantly, armed forces defectors killed four pro-government militiamen near the border with Turkey. The armed attacks by anti-government forces are continuing.

Syrians were in the streets on Saturday 5 November from the Finsbury Square site. A human chain runs from the Israeli Labour Party to the Israeli Embassy.

By Ira Berkovic

A four-hour general strike in Israel caused what the Ha’aretz paper called “near paralysis” on the morning of Monday 7 November as workers took action in a dispute about public sector contracts.

Schools, transport hubs (including Ben Canion International Airport) and the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange were shut down with thousands of workers took action.

The Histadrut union federation is demanding that the government hires 250,000 public sector workers currently employed through agencies on a temporary or semi-permanent basis on permanent contracts and levels up their conditions to those of other permanent employees.

The strike was limited to four hours by a ruling from the Israeli Labour Court. In advance of the strike, Histadrut leader Ofer Eini said that the Court was “the only thing that can stop us.”

The strike, the first significant industrial confrontation since the explosion of social protests in the summer, has significantly emboldened the protest movement, with some suggesting that the protest movement had acted directly as catalyst for the strikes.

The movement itself is slowly beginning to revive after a two-month lull, with 50,000 demonstraters in Tel Aviv on 29 October. The demonstration’s main demand was for the government to cancel the planned 2012 budget and re-launch a “social budget” instead.

Support the Bedouin!

By Dan Katz

Israel’s right-wing government continues to persecute Israel’s Bedouin population. Plans are underway for the mass resettlement of these communities in cities. But the Bedouin are refusing to go. Israel has 280,000 Bedouin, with a further 40,000 in the West Bank and millions beyond, in Jordan, Sinai and Gaza. Nearly half the Negev’s Bedouin live in un-registered villages. Many setlements predate the state, are unrecognised and so are refused roads, public transport, water and electricity.

In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, 2,000 Bedouin are to be shifted to the edge of a rubbish dump to make way for Jewish settlers.

Many of these herders have now abandoned their camels and goats, and those that survive find themselves raised by settlers and Israeli soldiers.

By Sacha Ismail

The Palestinian bid for recognition of an independent state at the United Nations will hit the headlines again soon, when the UN Security Council publishes an initial report on the application.

Almost a year after Israel and the US are punishing the Palestinians for their campaign, the US has announced plans to accelerate the building of 2,000 housing units for Jewish settlers in the Occupied Territories, and has suspended the transfer of the tax and customs revenue it collects on behalf of the PA. Together with the US, Israel’s freeze in funding, this is potentially disastrous for the PA.

While the Palestinian campaigns are pitting their opponents under massive pressure, the results so far are far from impressive.

On the other hand, what is happening in the Occupied Territories is not from every avenue of liberation, supposed to do.

The Palestinian struggle demands the support of all socialists, and all democrats; the response of Israel and the US demands condemnation.

Israel and US punish Palestinians for UN bid

SOLIDARITY 3

General strike in Israel

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In mid-November trade unionists from more than 30 countries will gather in Istanbul for the second annual Global Solidarity Conference organised by LabourStart. The theme of this year’s conference is “From social networks to social revolution.”

Eric Lee

In the evening, the conference formally opens at the Taksim square, where all the hotels are, but also the square where footballers and, May Day protests last year.

WORKSHOPS
In the evening, the conference formally opens at the Taksim square area — Taksim square being not just the centre of town where all the hotels are, but also the square where following a massacre in the 1978 May Day protests were banned for decades. Unions were only allowed to resume their meetings where we have AWL branch meetings.

Speakers from Turkish unions and global union federations will also address the plenary. The real work of the conference begins the following morning with a series of 24 workshops on a wide range of themes. About half of them are country-focused — so there will be workshops dealing with Palestine, Bahrain and Iran, for example. There will also be country and regional focuses for workshops on East Asia, Pakistan and sub-Saharan Africa. And other workshops will focus on specific issues such as young women, workers in the unions, the fight against precarious employment, labour video, the use of social networks, and how to do an online campaign. The conference ends with the annual meeting of LabourStart correspondents — the volunteers who post all the news stories to LabourStart throughout the year.

The day after the conference ends, the delegates from the Middle East and North Africa will stay on a bit as they get to meet separately at an invitation-only event where they can frankly discuss the lessons learned from the Arab Spring — and where we go next.

The involvement of a dedicated group of young Turkish trade unionists and socialists has been critical to the success of organising the event so far. As has been the support of the global union federations and the ITUC. Fingers crossed, this is going to be an amazing weekend.

I’m very excited about the whole thing (you can tell, right?) and I’m really looking forward to being here in another couple of weeks on how it all turned out.

Mark Osborn (Solidarity 223) correctly raises issues about the intentions of the Bolsheviks, the struggle of Lenin and Trotsky against the bureaucracy, the decisive or not so decisive break between October and Stalinism and, I think, critically the question of what the Bolsheviks did as they were struggling for their existence.

The usual talk of Leninists on this is the following: Bolshevik intentions were good (agreed), Lenin and Trotsky did as much as they could in the struggle (well, this wasn’t what Adolph in Of course). But there you go), that there was a decisive break or river of blood between the traditions, and finally that the Bolsheviks made some mistakes in the heat of the struggle but these were justified and in any case they had no option to do anything else in the context of the Bolshevik party ruling in the name of a working class that no longer existed (I dispute this entirely).

The recent work of Simon Pirani (The Russian Revolution in 1917-2004) persuasively argues against the myth of Bolshevik “parlour work” — that proletarian numbers did fall, but that the working movement, inside and outside of the Bolshevik party, was extremely strong. Much of this was hostile to Bolshevik control but much of it recognised the difficulties in the context of famine, war, and the hostility of external powers. 25% of representatives elected to the Moscow soviet in 1921 were non-partist. In the Kronstadt rising Trotsky himself pointed to 30% of Communist Party members supporting the rebellion, 40% remaining neutral, and only 30% supporting the government. Emptied with this was the resurgent socialism outside the Communist party amongst the Mensheviks and internal to the party in the Workers’ Opposition and the Dem Comp.

There was also a large rump of oppositionists expelled from the party who were liquidated in mass arrests in September 1923. Pirani points to Bolshevik repression as eliminating whole swathes of socialists who to a large extent were committed to the gains of October but were now postulating a different route out of Bolshevik “dictatorship”. And let’s be clear that this was a dictatorship of the Bolshevik party and not the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin was clear that he was for party dictatorship. As Hal Draper notes Lenin never surrendered the idea that “the scientific term ‘dictatorship’ means nothing more nor less than authority untramelled by any laws, absolutely unrestricted by any rules whatever, and based directly on force,” (Marc to Lenin). The Soviet working class were the recipients of this despotism. If the Bolsheviks were compelled to follow this route then, yes, we would be in the position of accepting that historical fact and moving on. But this is just not about hindsight — there were many voices documented internally and externally of the Party postulating other routes. Worse, the dictatorship clearly made it more possible for a nascent Stalinist despotic bureaucracy to emerge. Sam Farber expresses this different route well: “This would have involved the legalization of all parties and political groups willing to accept, and pledge loyalty to, the Soviet system of government. The government would have also immediately closed all puni- tion, because the public order and the needs of the state required it. The result would have been an enormous increase in the number of prisoners and an immense increase in the suffering of those who remained free.” (Against the Current 2011).

For Farber (in his great book Before Stalinism and elsewhere), even though there are clear differences (breaks and continuities as I have already noted) between Stalinism and Bolshevism, this dictatorship politics led in the Soviet working class and destroyed their capacity to resist the rising bureaucracy. For Farber there was absolutely no Marxist justification for Bolshevik dictatorship. The banning of factions in the context of the Kronstadt rebellion in March 1921 dealt the revolution “a definitive and maiming blow” that the proletarian cause would never recover from — not in 1921 or even in 2011. Even worse is the contemporary Leninist abasement to the idea that these dictatorial measures were necessary or even virtuous!

There were other options, there were other routes and other voices. The future liquidated by Bolshevik dictatorship.

Martin Hudson, Trosrail

Radical book-selling

Radical book-selling in Britain has a long history. The second hand labour history book dealer Left on the Shelf (www.leftontheshelfbooks.co.uk) has an incomplete listing of radical bookshops on its website, together with links to the various online publications of such bookshops. Dave Cope — who runs Left on the Shelf — and I are trying now to make the listing as complete as possible. We would be grateful for any corrections and omissions.

I’m currently working on a booklet about radical bookshops that is less list-based and will cover bookshops from Marxist libertarian politics as well as feminist, peace and other issue based radical shops. I’d be pleased to hear from anybody who has worked in radical bookselling, or customers who have interesting stories to tell.

I can be contacted at info@fiveleaves.co.uk or at Five Leaves Publications, PO Box 8786, Nottingham NG1 9AW.

Russ Bradshaw: www.fiveleavespublications.blogspot.com

Socialist feminist tour

AWL news

In the run-up to the AWL’s conference “Is This All? Activism, Socialism and Feminism” on November 30 (see back page) we organised a speaking tour, putting the case for socialist feminism. We have spoken at 10 meetings so far have reported, by and large, a very positive experience.

Some of these events were at colleges, organised with student feminist societies. Others were organised in towns where we have AWL.branch meetings. The discussions have been enormously wide-ranging. At Liverpool Hope University participants wanted to discuss the very basic ideas about why feminism remains a necessary political ideology, despite the formal equality that women now have in large parts of the world, but not everywhere. In Sheffield the discussion touched on why young women today might say “I’m not a feminist”. On the whole the discussions have tried to get to grips with why there is a link between the struggle for female equality and capitalism. Why does the working class need feminism? How are the struggles of different class women?

In Northampton the meeting had a discussion about what the women’s movement of the 1970s and 80s had managed to achieve. What kind of women’s movement do we want to see now and in the future, and what would be its relationship to the labour movement? These discussions have touched on political ideas that do not always get talked about in the labour and other movements.

After 26 November we would like to organise meet- ings in more towns, colleges and union branches. To help us please email women@workersliberty.org.
**WHAT WE SAY**

**The truth about China**

A top Chinese government official has blamed Europe’s economic problems on welfare provision and labour laws.

Jin Lijun, chair of China’s sovereign wealth fund (the body which manages the Chinese government’s overseas investment of its spare loot) told AI Jazeera: “If you look at the troubles which happened in European countries, this is purely due to welfare provisions and the welfare society, I think the labour laws are outdated. The labour laws indux, sloth, indolence, rather than hard work. The incentive system is totally out of whack."

"Why should, for instance, within [the] eurozone, some member-states’ people have to work to 65, even longer, whereas the European government already having to pay at 55, languishing on the beach? This is unfair. The welfare system is good for any society to reduce the gap, to help those who can’t manage. But it shouldn’t be used for a group which doesn’t need a welfare society should not induce people not to work hard.”

**Europe: the “old ways” fail. What new ways?**

The Greek revolutionary socialist group OKKE is calling for the creation of “structures and organs of workers’ control” in districts and industries, and “popular assemblies in neighbourhoods”, taking “the initiative and being elected and recallable.”

These would be something like the “neighbourhood commissions” which emerged in Portugal in 1974-5, after the fall of the military regime, or in Chile in 1972-3, in the ferment before the Pinochet coup.

Building on the strikes and demonstrations of recent weeks, such bodies could challenge all the factions of the Greek capitalist class, and the deal imposed on Greece by the “Troika”, the European Central Bank, the European Union, and the IMF.

In the first place, they could force concessions, and by doing so could encourage and boost working-class struggles in all the other countries of Europe hit by cuts.

Greece is in a pre-revolutionary situation, a situation where the first conditions for social revolution have developed. “The ‘lower classes’ do not want to live in the old way, and the ‘upper classes’ cannot carry on in the old way...” as Lenin defined those conditions, writing a few years after the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Lenin added: “for a revolution to take place, it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, and politically active workers) should fully realise that revolution is necessary, and that they should be prepared to die for it...”

That doesn’t happen unless an organised revolutionary party (the vanguard support among the workers, or at least among the politically-active workers. Greece is as yet far from that.

As Lenin wrote in those years, “there is no such thing as a situation that offers no way out for the bourgeoisie.”

The Pasok government in office in Greece since October 2009 is now “out of options” by going for a coalition with New Democracy (Greece’s Tory party). This coalition, or some new coalition, will “find ways out for the bourgeoisie” unless those rank-and-file working-class coordinations can be formed in Greece.

Pasok, the alternative Labour Party, is discredited and compromised by having accepted and pushed all the cuts. The main Greek union federations have called for “day of anger” strikes, but are very bureaucratic, with leaderships politically aligned to Pasok. New organisation is needed at rank-and-file level.

**CONCESSIONS**

Although the situation is pre-revolutionary, that does not mean that the Greek working class can win nothing short of revolution.

But the Greek workers’ government, and in the course of fighting for a workers’ government, the Greek working class can win concessions.

The big powers of the eurozone have vast financial resources, quite sufficient to afford some concessions to Greece. And there are political reasons if the worst is avoided. The current crisis gives the Greek ruling class, and the EU, a chance to save itself. This chance will be lost unless a united revolutionary front is formed in Greece.

As Mervyn Somerset Webb points out in the Financial Times (5 November): “The really big winner [from the euro] is Germany... its banks have no alarms about a possible coup.”

**Pakos leader Papandreou has sidestepped into a coalition with Greece’s Tories at a discount to the pre-euro price...” [and the introduction of the euro made borrowing very cheap].

Webb, writing from a pro-capitalist viewpoint, recommends that “the euro should survive intact for a bit longer. European politicians might start being a little kinder to Greece...”

The deal decided by the Euro-summit on 27 October will need to be revised at least in its main aim: to save Italy from “contagion”. Much of its terms has been left vague, and can be adjusted one way or another.

On 28 October, all over Greece, official parades on a usually-revered national anniversary were disrupted by vast protests against the plan. On 31 October Greek prime minister George Papandreou announced a referendum on the plan.

It infuriated the eurozone leaders and had financial markets plunging. For Papandreou, however, facing a situation where only 13% of the people of Greece said they would favour a vote of confidence for his Pasok government, it was a canny move. It put the opposition parties on the back foot.

On 2 November, Papandreou’s defence minister replaced the leaders of the three armed forces. Greece spends more on its military, as a percentage of GDP, than any other country in Europe, and has much greater numbers in its armed forces, in proportion to population; and the military is set to suffer relatively little from the country’s vast spending cuts. Greece was under military dictatorship from 1967 to 1974.

A week or so before, a writer in the Daily Telegraph had reported talking among financiers “only half in jest... that a bet on exit from the euro is... just had to be”...

The other way round doesn’t work. Exit from the euro would not automatically, or even probably, push Greece to the left, or make it easier for Greek workers to win concessions. It would deepen Greece’s economic crisis, and set the scene for the exit going to be used by governments to justify market liberalisation, and a radical redistribution of wealth in favour of workers.

The focus on exit from the euro is diversionary. Almost certainly a workers’ government in Greece — which would refuse to pay the debts run up by Greek plutocrats who have salted away 600 billion euros in Swiss banks — would end up being evicted from the eurozone. That would be an episode in the fight by that government to impose similar workers’ mobilisations across Europe and recreate a United Europe on working-class and socialist lines.

The whole range of European workers look like an outrageous departure from what is normal and right.

Would-be leftists in Europe who still regard China as “communist” or “socialist” or left-wing should learn the lesson. “Communism” which relies on such oppression and exploitation, is already happening in China, and is no use in fighting for a genuine Marxist-Leninist revolution. Europe’s workers look like an outrageous departure from what is normal and right.

The Chinese state puts more people to death than all the rest of the world put together, and the country is using its power of life and death, and its power of imprisonment, in its use of capital punishment, but Amnesty International reckons that executions in China run into thousands a year, maybe ten times as many as in the next-worst country, Iran.

Jin Lijun’s statement shows what the Chinese bureaucrats think about this. To them, the oppression in China seems normal, and the relatively repressed conditions of European workers look like an outrageous departure from what is normal and right.

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• aje.me/jinliqun

• https://chinastrikes.crowdmap.com

**BANKS**

It calls for “nationalisation and socialisation of the banking sector for the benefit of society, and the immediate return to public ownership, with workers’ and social control, of the public enterprises and organisations which have been or are being sold off.”

It protests at the “suzerainty” demanded over Greece by Merkel and Sarkozy. It calls for “a new election on 19 February for a new Europe, a Europe that does not follow the lead of the Troika, and the deal imposed on Greece by the famous ‘Troika’, the European Central Bank, the European Union, and the IMF.”

The cuts are Europe-wide, and should be fought on the basis of class unity across Europe, with a Europe-wide programme, without of course suggesting that the most mobilised working-class movements, as in Greece, should wait for the slower movements.

Papandreou hopes that the coalition with the Tory ND will give the Pasok leadership, PASOK, the Greek equivalent of the Labour Party, more time to consider PASOK, the Greek equivalent of the Labour Party, more time to consider PASOK, the Greek equivalent of the Labour Party, more time to consider...
A militant from the Greek revolutionary socialist group OKDE in Athens spoke to Ed Maltry from Solidarity.

Ed: You call for the creation of “structures and organs of workers’ control in workplaces and neighbour-hoods”. Are these things coming into being?

OKDE: At the industrial level this has not gone further than simple propaganda or agitation. At the level of neighbour-hoods there are a lot of popular assemblies. The num-

ber of people participating is fluctuating a lot, both for people in general and people from the left. In general the Communist Party does not participate in any of this.

These general assemblies are dealing with local prob-
lems like people not having the money to pay for electric-
ity; as the new taxes are being applied through electricity
taxes, these committees are a good front for organising re-
sistance.

People are looking at these assemblies as a new way of expressing themselves.

For the majority of the forces participating, the assem-

blys are seen as strictly connected with purely social is-

sues. They do not have a view of how to connect these

issues with the political situation — a lack of confidence

in the political logic of things.

You could say that this new coalition government is a coup with a parliamentary disguise. It makes no differ-

ence what the people want and what the people vote for.

The ruling class will somehow impose this or that coali-
tion. So it is an end for a type of bourgeois democracy

even if it does not take the form of an open coup.

Are you growing?

OKDE: Growing. It has not got further than the pri-

mary accumulation of forces; we are not able to play a

large-scale role, and this is the key problem in which all

other weaknesses of the workers’ movement converge.

There is still not a visible revolutionary tendency or a

centre around which to organise. So all the rebel energy

of the Greek movement, although it is creating huge polit-

cical results, is unirected. The reformist left only begs for

elections. We feel that the basic tendency of the far left is

to start looking for “popular front solutions” with the re-

formist parties. But this also is not clear.

• More on Greece: No to the Unity Government by

Theodora Polenta.

Greece: coup with a parliamentary disguise

The crisis is thus exposed the incoherences of the European construction. Today it is

demonstrably, a crisis of the European construction. Today it is

fundamentally, a crisis of the European construction. Today it is

obvious that neo-liberal-style Europe was botched.

The scenario of federalisation would have meant taking re-

course from above by various methods of which the main one is the mon-

etisation of the European debts by the European Central

Bank. That is in fact the only way to avoid exposing the financ-

ing of the states to speculation on the financial markets.

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way by various methods of which the main one is the mon-

etisation of the European debts by the European Central

Bank. That is in fact the only way to avoid exposing the financ-

ing of the states to speculation on the financial markets.

Finally, the radical scenario would, since the sovereign debts are in large part held by the European banks, mean national-

ising those banks and organising default for the most exposed

countries.

For almost two years the governments of Europe have been feeling their way between several pitfalls. The first is what economists called moral hazard: looking after a Greek default could be a signal encouraging other countries to evade auster-

ity measures. The cost of the default would fall back on the “virtuous” countries, especially Germany, and the financial

6 SOLIDARITY
markets would put the debt of numerous other countries under the rule of speculation. But a break-up of the eurozone is also seen as a major risk, including by Germany, which through such a break-up would lose its advantages in world competition. The 27 October 2011 agreement was, like the previous ones, a provisional and cobbled-together solution which confirmed Germany’s refusal to accept a change in the statutes of the European Central Bank which would allow it directly to finance states. The Greek debt was theoretically cut by half, but at the cost of a veritable placing under supervision, sharpened austerity, and a massive programme of privatisation. Technically, the weak points of this agreement, which was probably stillborn, were obvious. The debt cutback is voluntary, as the text of the agreement explains [1]: “We invite Greece, private investors and all parties concerned to develop a voluntary bond exchange with a nominal discount of 50%”. Indeed, they wanted to avoid declaring a Greek default which would unleash the diabolical mechanism of the different countries of the eurozone.

The serious response would be to introduce mechanisms of harmonisation: a large European budget, a unified system of taxation of capital, funds for social harmonisation, a Euro- pean minimum wage. Such a solution may seem out of range. Quitting the euro is not however a better solution: to think that would be to put the cart before the horse and to make a strategic error.

The debt would indeed be increased in proportion to the devaluation rate, and the new currency would be exposed, without defence, to speculative attacks. Those pressures would then serve to justify an even harsher austerity policy. In France supporters of “deglobalisation” do not all advocate quitting the euro, but their preoccupations are similar. Since they make free trade the source of all ill, they mainly propose fiscal protectionism, or in other words taxes on imports. There, too, the aim is to re-establish competitiveness. It is hard to see how such measures could, as if by magic, re-establish a fairer distribution of income: it is not a border tax that will make the profitiers give up their privileges. In any case, competitiveness depends on many other factors besides commodity prices.

And, above all, this approach would mean getting into a doubly perverse logic. First into the logic of competition: but a country can improve its situation by better competitiveness only by taking market share (and thus jobs) from neigbouring countries. And then into the logic of productivism, which sees no way to create jobs other than more economic growth.

QUITTING EUROPEAN NEO-LIBERALISM

The preconditions for a way out are to establish a balance of forces favourable to the working class and to wipe out at least a portion of the debt. A feasible strategy is thus composed of unilateral measures which clash with the rules of neo-liberal Europe but which would at the extension of progressive measures across Europe. The technical responses exist and are based on this coherent triangle: 1. Monetarisation of the debts by the European Central Bank; 2. Nationalisation of the banks; 3. Cancellation of the illegitimate portion of the debts. This combination of measures would allow for settling the crisis by way of making those who profited from the frenzies of financialised capitalism pay.

But the issues at stake are above all social, and the situation is in the last analysis simple to sum up: thanks to deregulation, financialisation, etc., a small minority grabs the wealth produced, as the rise of inequality shows. It goes further: that minority organises economic and social life in line with its interests, and has the power to decide social priorities and deprive the peoples of any say in their fate. That minority will not give up those privileges without a powerful social intervention which must combine a global point of view with local or sectoral initiatives. In any case, capitalism is an impasse: the neo-liberal model can no longer function, and return to capitalism of the “golden age” of 1945-75 is impossible.

A progressive solution must therefore involve a radical questioning of this system: the redistribution of wealth is the immediate point of leverage, but the approach must include a total inversion of the capitalist logic.

We must make the satisfaction of social needs the decisive priority, and from that work out what are the necessary and useful jobs, and prioritise non-market public services and the development of free time above the search for profit and individual consumption. Those are, besides, basic preconditions if we want to meet aims for the reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions. Since such a project puts the very logic of capitalism in question, a very broad alliance is necessary, between the social movements defined in the broad sense.

All change in Italy and Spain?

Italy’s billionaire “playboy” prime minister Silvio Berlusconi is coming under increasing pressure to step aside as his country slips ever-closer towards economic crisis. Berlusconi’s opinion rating dropped to a record low of 22% after a rally on 6 November. The left was therefore able to command 1000 billion euros, but the states do not want to pay, and this sum was to be got by the same methods which would be the financial crisis: leveraging and a “Special Purpose Vehicle”, with an appeal to the emerging powers and especially China. The banks were also to be recapitalised, but not too soon, so that they should not be obliged to cut back their profits and their dividend distributions. As one of the negotiators of the agreement puts it: “You don’t have to be paranoid to be terrified” [2]. “The euro deal: no big bazooka”, The Economist, 29 October 2011 [2]. The most terrifying thing, however, is the drive of the ruling classes to make the peoples of Europe pay the cost of the crisis.

QUITING THE EURO?

Quitting the euro is presented as a miracle solution. It would allow the country involved, Greece for example, to devalue and re-establish its competitiveness. This claim is based on the observation that the European construction was flawed from the start so far as it did not take account of the divergent trajectories of the different countries of the eurozone.

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We continue our debate on the future of nuclear power with this article by Les Hearn. Les argues that technological developments, such as using thorium instead of uranium, offer ecologically-friendly alternatives to the nuclear industry acceptable to socialists. In our next issue we will print an opposing view.

Why I support nuclear power as one of a range of alternatives to fossil fuels

Back in the 70s, like many on the left, I was alarmed by what seemed to be the cover-up of the risks of nuclear power in the 50s and 60s. The indiscriminate power of nuclear weapons to kill in large numbers also marked many on the left with a fear of nuclear energy. But, as Maynard Keynes put it, “when the facts change, I change my mind”. We only have one planet and it is overwhelmingly likely that “we” (or greedy capitalists, if you like) are altering it for the worse by returning carbon dioxide to the atmosphere a million times faster than it was originally locked away in the ground by photosynthesis. While we may try to reduce carbon emissions, these are actually rising... by over 5% last year, from 29.3 to 30.6 gigatonnes (Gt or billion tonnes).

And nuclear power, by electricity generation, 11.2 Gt is “fixed” for the foreseeable future, since it will come from existing or planned fossil fuel power stations that will be operating in 2020.

The closure or cancellation of nuclear power stations makes this much worse, since these are the main proven alternative source of electricity. Countries which have reacted to recent scares, rather than evidence, include Japan, Germany, Malaysia, Thailand, Italy and Switzerland.

Truthfully, the potential risks of radiation are massively exaggerated. On the other hand, other risks of renewables such as wind power are not assessed. Although the government is committed to achieving 30% of its electricity from renewables by 2020, the new supergrid of thousands of kilometres which would be needed would need to be built from scratch, not just expanded as the government plans.

Unlike nuclear power, wind is not reliable and cannot provide baseline power, which is needed for security of supply. 

Cancelling nuclear power stations would mean, in addition to the actual risks of the fossil fuel industry to workers and the public, in particular, the environmental risks of radiation are meaningless when compared to the emissions from the expansion of the exclusion zone around Chernobyl, as James Lovelock has pointed out, in the words of CND leaders themselves.

In addition, the replacement of nuclear power with the use of renewables would mean that existing energy conservation targets are increased by a factor of five, or energy conservation targets are reduced by a factor of five.

The government estimates that the replacement of nuclear power with renewables would mean a potential increase of 24% in the energy consumed by society. This is a catastrophic development, and one that must be avoided at all costs.

In contrast, the replacement of nuclear power with renewables would mean a reduction in the amount of electricity generated by nuclear power by 50%, while the amount of electricity generated by renewables would increase by 100%. This would mean that the amount of electricity generated by renewables would increase by 150%.

The argument goes that, if the most wide-ranging programme of insulation and energy conservation is undertaken, then the electricity generated by nuclear power would not be needed. As the Socialists once said in a different context, “if not, the party will be out of power”.

Apparently, I fail “to question the projected ‘energy gap’ which is being used to justify nuclear power expansion”. The argument goes that, if the most wide-ranging programme of insulation and energy conservation is undertaken, then the electricity generated by nuclear power would not be needed. As the Socialists once said in a different context, “if not, the party will be out of power”.

Once again, let’s look at the reality of nuclear power. The worst accident of all time, Chernobyl, has killed 43 people. This was due to the criminal negligence of the USSR police state. 28 people died from radiation, irradiated while trying to fight the reactor under control. 15 young people died of thyroid cancer, entirely avoidable had the bureaucrats issued potassium iodide tablets (as was done promptly in Japan recently).

Other estimates of potential deaths range from 9,000 to 90,000 but even the lowest of these seems to be way too low. The actual risks of the fossil fuel industry to workers and the public are minimal—wildlife is flourishing in the exclusion zone around Chernobyl, as James Lovelock has pointed out, in the words of CND leaders themselves.

To replace nuclear power with renewables in the United Kingdom would mean an investment of £50 billion. This is a huge investment, but it is dwarfed by a 24% increase in the energy consumed by society. This is a catastrophic development, and one that must be avoided at all costs.

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The argument goes that, if the most wide-ranging programme of insulation and energy conservation is undertaken, then the electricity generated by nuclear power would not be needed. As the Socialists once said in a different context, “if not, the party will be out of power”.

Another key argument is that the energy from nuclear power is “stable”. This is not true. Nuclear power is not reliable and cannot provide baseline power, which is needed for security of supply. 

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Yves Coleman is a French revolutionary who helps pub-
lish the journal *Ni patrie ni frontières*. This is an extended version of an interview he gave to me in the 2023 confer-
ence in which he criticised our recent polemics against an-
archism.

“When I look for the Occupied movement in London, I con-
tribute to changing the world.” (An interviewee on KFI Radio)

As far as I know, the AWL is the only organisation in
the European far-left which is trying to seriously debate with other reformist or revolutionary currents. I don’t share the AWL’s diachronic reverence toward Leninism and Trotskyism, but we have something impor-
tant in common: the belief that discussions can be useful and fruitful as long as they are not led along sectarian and slanderous lines. I acknowledge your effort to deal with other currents of thought, even when I disagree totally with you.

Anarchist comrades should remember the virtues of po-
litical debates, particularly as Emma Goldman and Voltairine de Clarey — to quote only two famous examples — participated in debates with socialists (Marxists) and were won over to anarchism through such debates! So the question of debate is not where our disagreement resides but in the nature of the forms of debate. The articles in *Solidarity* were too much centred on “old-
style” 19th-century anarchism and not on today’s diverse, confused, libertarian and anarchist currents.

Through my work publishing the journal *Ni patrie ni fron-
tières* (which, for almost 10 years, has published many ar-
chist and Marxist texts together in the same issue and on the same theme to stimulate debate and political reflexion), I have the opportunity to notice “anarchists” (as well as Marxists) placing by former (and founding) editor Gerry Gable.

Matthew Collins and Graeme Atkinson, both prominent
searchlightists, have participated in debates with socialists (Marxists) and were won over to anarchism through such debates! So the question of debate is not where our disagreement resides but in the nature of the forms of debate. The articles in *Solidarity* were too much centred on “old-
style” 19th-century anarchism and not on today’s diverse, confused, libertarian and anarchist currents.

Makhno, because the role of Trotsky in suppressing these
historical episodes mean that anarchists with a love of the historical record will be immune to your

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DIRECT ACTION NOW

Trotskyists should realize that young “anarchists” today
want action and not a long “primitive accumulation” of militants (or cadres) to build the party (a process traditional Trotskyists enjoy

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historical episodes mean that anarchists with a love of the historical record will be immune to your

The most “physical” (and sometimes “macho”) anarchists want to confront physically the cops, to throw Molotov cocktails, to smash the face of fascists, to destroy the head-
quarters of some bourgeoisie party, etc. The more “peaceful”
ones (but sometimes people who are also in the first group) want to build new human relationships here and now. That means organising squats or communes; questioning gender relationships now and in a distant future under com-
munism; cultivating vegetables to have healthy food; “skip-
ing” good food from supermarket dustbins to distribute it or cook it; cooking food for homeless or poor people; sup-
porting illegal workers’ struggles concretely; occupying un-
employment agencies, organising unemployed or precarious workers; creating cooperatives, discussing all sorts of ways of changing their daily life here and now.

NO “THEORY OF EVERYTHING”

Trotskyists should realise that young “anarchists” are not looking for an all-explaining science as Trotskyists are.

They have a spontaneous distrust of “Marxist-Leninist” Stalinism (which is a rather good thing), but they also think that Marx, Lenin and Trotsky are boring guys who lived 70, 100 or 150 years ago and can’t deal with today’s realities. They obviously hate Lenin and Trotsky for Kronstadt, the repres-
sion of anarchists in Russia, etc., but more than everything they are not, unlike Trotskyists, looking for a coherent, sci-
entific point of view. They are inspired by different, hetero-
genous, ideas, which seem to Marxists totally incomprehensible and sometimes even reactionary.

They can be inspired by postmodern or confused multi-
culturalist intellectuals, as well as by obscure vegan or pre-
ecologist thinkers. But you can often be fooled because when they write about “economy” (which every Marxist

knows is not a separate reality but interlinked with human social relations), they often use a vague Marxist vocabulary which may lead you to think they have won the battle “to win” to your beloved Marxist “science”. This is a total illusion.

Generally, the anarchist press places much more value on “narrative” (about daily immediate experiences) than most Trotskyist newspapers. Young anarchists value more creative forms of propaganda: street theater, videos on the internet, and cultural events, which they think are as effective as traditional meetings, newspapers, or leaflets. Trotskyists looked with the tradition of the “atmosphere” (sorts of
cultural centers/libraries, etc.) in the SpanishCNT.

Trotskyists should realise young “anarchists” want to be active in their own milieu — their own community, their own housing estate, their own workplace — and see concrete results of their action now.

That means they don’t give a damn about selling papers or clandestine leaflets if it does not improve the living conditions in people’s lives. It means that they don’t fancy going miles away from their home to distribute leaflets to people they have never met. Or if they do go far away, it’s much more to learn about unknown realities than to propagate a specific ideology to supposedly ignorant workers, peasants or oppo-
sessed people.

They would rather publish, on the basis of confused slogans and politics, resonates among young precarious workers or students, influenced by the anti-globalisation and postmodern ideology (which is, for example) and they are like a fish in water in these social movements because they don’t want to impose an ideology.

MILITANCY AT WORK?

Trotskyists should also know that young anarchists have a different view of militancy.

Trotskyists have traditionally tried to get jobs in big facto-
ries or other large workplaces, and they have occasionally succeeded in getting the trade union bureaucracy out of the public sector.

But young anarchists are often very precarious (as all the members of their generation), working in call centres and temporary jobs. That may explain why they are not inter-
ested in long-term strategies for building tendencies inside trade unions or in trade union routine, and are much more in direct action in their community more than at their work-
place, which is always changing. There also some anarchists not all of them of course, because some anarchists share (Trotskyist tactics of infiltrating the trade union bureaucracy) who think that trade unions represent barriers and brakes of self-organisation. They are therefore a lot more spon-
ted by the trade union bureaucracy. This is a total illusion.

This little article may give you the impression that young “anarchists” are hot-blooded, hyper-sensitive, empathetic and funny individuals, while Trotskyists are cold-blooded, insensitive, indifferent and boring persons. There is a bit of truth in both of these mutually shared clichés.

So if Trotskyists want to discuss seriously with today’s young anarchists they (as well as their organis-
tions) should start by questioning themselves, along the lines I have just described. Who knows — something interesting may happen.

SOLIDARITY

The anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight* announces in its October issue that “No “theory of everything”! The prime creator of the very successful Hope Not Hate [HNH] campaign, de-
cidedly not to use this title as editor” seems to have been re-
placed by former (and founding) editor Gerry Gable.

All fair enough, you’d think. However, only not Lowles stood down, he has completely disappeared from the pages of the magazine. Also notable by their absence are Matthew Collins and Graeme Atkinson, both prominent Scarcightists. In London, *Searchlight* editor Gerry Gable and Sonia Gable. Add to this the obvious links from the magazine’s website to HNH and it looks like more than an amicable parting of ways has occurred.

By Jack Yates

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**What should Trotskyists should know about today’s young anarchists**

**TRAINING**

When Trotskyists discuss with young “anarchists”, they should realise that they did not receive, and don’t value, the same “training”.

Young European “anarchists” political culture is much more diverse: it derives from all sorts of radical or marginal films or documentaries, semantic and music, music, from the anti-globalisation movement and from all sorts of tiny booklets reproduced in “indokissos”, etc.

I must also say that for those anarchists with a solid back-
ground in revolutionary history, there is absolutely no for-
get (nor is there the slightest wish to minimise) the deeds and thoughts of the historical figure known as Leon

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**Why is this important?** Gable and Lowles, through their pages of the magazine. Also notable by their absence are Matthew Collins and Graeme Atkinson, both prominent Scarcightists. In London, *Searchlight* editor Gerry Gable and Sonia Gable. Add to this the obvious links from the magazine’s website to HNH and it looks like more than an amicable parting of ways has occurred.

**nual “conferences” and maintaining a steering committee — *Searchlight*’s campaigning arm appears to have no struc-
ture at all.

At a time when the fortunes of the British National Party look grim, and when the English Defence League’s support seems to be plateauing out, we need a serious discussion about what is to come and how to counteract it. The present social, economic and political conditions are just as favourable for far-right/fascist regroupment as they are for building the labour movement and socialist organisation.

Although *Searchlight* provides useful information and in-
telligence, it has always been a factional publication, repre-
senting a narrow and parochial strand of anti-fascism. Real debate and discussion on tactics and strategy for the anti-fascist movement rarely grace its pages and unlike UAF — which at least goes through the motions of holding an-
It’s good that Qaddafi’s gone!

By Martin Thomas

On Sunday 6 November we got a small down-payment towards the debate on Libya between AWL and the Socialist Party which we have been demanding, and the SP has asked Socialist Appeal leader Peter Taaffe put his pen to work on the first of two long (and inaccurate) polemics against us on the subject back in April.

At a session on Libya at the SP’s annual weekend event, on 5-6 November, Mark Osborn and I intervened from the floor, for AWL. Bear in mind that the SP’s annual weekend event is not like AWL’s “Ideas for Freedom” event. Sessions are almost never set up as debates, and guest speakers of any sort are rare. Almost all sessions are long lectures from members of the SP leadership, followed by a few questions. Lectures are sometimes very valuable, but only if they give listeners facts and ideas they hadn’t come across before. That is rarely the case with SP speakers, and wasn’t the case with Niall Mulholland, the speaker on Libya. Peter Taaffe was at the weekend event, and not speaking in another session at the time, but chose not to come to the session. Asked, as he arrived at the event, whether SP would debate AWL, he muttered: “We have debated...”, and quickly made off.

OVERVIEW

Mulholland conceded that the overthrow of Qaddafi has created openings for the first time in Libya. He was enthusiastic about the initial anti-Qaddafi protests in Benghazi, in February. But he pointedly did not support the actual overthrow.

The overthrow of Qaddafi, he claimed, was much less worthy of support than the overthrow of Ben Ali in Tunisia, or of Mubarak in Egypt.

The new regime in Libya, the National Transitional Council, is bourgeois. That is true, of course, also of the military-run regimes in Tunisia and Egypt since their dictators fled. December 17 saw that the NATO-Dooming of Qaddafi’s forces had spoiled the revolution. We argued it was wrong to fail to take a position independent of the big powers — to be cornered by NATO into saying no whenever they said yes — and so to let your inclinations to support the people of Libya be overwhelmed by your anxiety to have an uncomplicated blanket “no” to NATO.

We do not support or endorse the cops when, on occasion, finding themselves between anti-fascists and a more numerous fascist crowd, they turn against the fascists rather than the anti-fascists. But we also do not “call out” the cops to stop fighting the fascists. It was similarly false to “call out” the NATO powers to topple Qaddafi, and to let that “call out” overwhelm support for the people of Libya.

Several SPers replied from the floor, and Niall Mulholland from the platform. Their points included:

• The outcome has left imperialism stronger. Imperialism has a bridgehead in the troubled Middle East. The Egyptian army, receiving more aid from the USA than any other army in the world except Israel’s, is a more reliable “bridgehead” for the USA! We do not yet know which of the European powers cosy for influence in Tripoli will come out best. In any case “imperialism” cannot be equated with one rival big power or another. And our criterion should not be what is worst for vaguely-defined “imperialism” in general, but what is best for the working class.

• The bourgeois press said that Qaddafi would have carried through a massacre in Benghazi if NATO had not bombed. That is doubtful, and in any case a massacre followed, with over 30,000 dying between March and the eventual fall of Qaddafi. Of course it would have been better if Qaddafi had gone quietly. He didn’t? So? You submit? Civil wars cost lives. The evidence from Libyans who were in Benghazi at the time, and from Qaddafi’s own declarations, was that Qaddafi would have slaughtered great numbers. If somehow the rebellion had survived that bloodletting, and managed to win through without NATO help, the civil war would certainly have been longer and cost even more lives. 30,000 dead, the vast majority were civil-war deaths between the factions in Libya. Even Qaddafi’s reign, who would almost certainly exaggerate, blame no more than 2,000 on NATO.

• NATO’s intervention is in no way analogous to cops clash -ing with fascists because it is the normal job of the police to deal with thugs, and even a workers’ government would have police (of a different sort). (A workers’ government would also, if it could, give military aid — again, of a different sort — to rev -olutions in other countries.)

• Counter-revolution has already happened in Libya, with the NATO intervention. (As if the initial rebellion in Benghazi was a pure independent workers’ movement. Actually, Qaddafi’s dictatorship was such that no workers’ move-ment of any sort existed at the time of the initial rebellion. Only now can an organised workers’ movement emerge. It may be overwhelmed, in the end, by the Islamist forces in the country — who assuredly are Islamists for some other rea-son than that NATO wants them to be Islamists! — but the openings now exist.)

The SP should respond to our demands for a properly organised debate — speakers from both sides, an agreed chair, and so on.

Debating Israel/Palestine

By Liam McNulty

On Tuesday 1 November the Alliance for Workers’Lib-erty debated Socialist Appeal at the Marxist Discussion Group at Cambridge on “Which way forward for Israel and Palestine?”

Such debates are the sign of a healthy socialist movement and contribute towards the collective sharpening of political ideas. It is a pity that similar debates are not more com-mon on a left often characterised by sectarian sniping and hysteria.

On a superficial level, the positions of the AWL and So-cialist Appeal on Israel/Palestine appear quite similar. Both organisations take a class-based approach to the issue and are critical of the politics of boycott on the left. Both stress the need to link up the struggles of Israeli and Palestinian workers and reject the idea that both should be lumped together and branded as uniquely evil.

However, during the course of the debate fundamental differences emerged. John Pickard from Socialist Appeal opened with a lucid description of the oppression facing Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and the discrimina-tion suffered by Arabs living in Israel — very little of which we would disagree with.

However, before the impression that Palestinian national oppression will dissolve automatically in the course of class-struggle on economic issues. Socialist Appeal has nothing to say about the immediate problems — the lack of a Palesti-nian state — and offers only one solution: socialism!

As the AWL speaker, Paul Hampton, pointed out, as much as we all want socialism, we need to say more than “jam tomorrow”. If national differences could be solved by day-to-day struggles over economic issues, national con-flicts such as Northern Ireland would have been settled sev-eral times over with strikes over outdoor relief, the postal service and the NHS.

The issue of national self-determination requires demo-cratic demands which deal with the root of the problem and provide a basis on which to unite workers on a political level. Otherwise, national differences risk shattering the movement when the issue of self-determination inevitably arises.

That is why the AWL advocates “two nations, two states” as a basis to unite the Israeli and Palestinian working classes. This demand recognises that the fundamental issue facing the Palestinians is the denial of their right to self-de-termination. It also recognises the right of Israelis to their own state, which exists and has existed for 63 years. Only on the basis of these mutual rights can workers in both nations be united.

Socialist Appeal’s objection to the AWL was the argument that a Palestinian state under capitalism will not solve the problems of capitalist exploitation. But as Lenin pointed out in The Right of Nations to Self-Determination, substituting the issue of economic independence of nations under capital-ismit the political question of self-determination “is just as intelligently as if someone, in discussing the programmatic demand for the supremacy of parliament... to expound the perfectly correct conviction that big capital dominates in a bourgeois country, whatever the regime in it.”

DRAINING

No-one in the AWL argues that political self-determina-tion is best for the world by the end of the matter. It will, however, be a qualitative step forward and brings with it the possibility of draining the poison of national op- pressure out and uniting the working-class from a position of relative formal equality.

Socialist Appeal also used Leon Trotsky’s theory of per-manent revolution to argue that “there is no solution under capitalism” because democratic tasks can only be solved if the struggle of the working class immediately leads to so-cialism.

But Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution was based on a concrete examination of the relations between classes in Russia (and later in China). On this basis Trotsky established that the bourgeoisie in those countries could not solve ques-tions of political democracy because they were socially and numerically weak. Notwithstanding the fact that Trotsky said little about the issue of national self-determination in relation to this theory, and that the AWL argues that it is the working class who can solve the Israeli/Palestine question, the Socialist Appeal line is “Trotsky frozen”, ignoring his warning that permanent revolution is not a suprahistorical master-key, applicable in all situations.

In response to Paul Hampton’s arguments, John Pickard was left with little option but to mischaracterise the AWL position as one of pessimism regarding the possibilities of socialism. This was rhetorical bluster to disguise the fact that the Socialist Appeal line did not deal comprehensively with the necessity of transitional democratic demands to ad-dress the immediate issues facing Palestinian workers. But the differences between AWL and Socialist Ap-pel were thrashed out in a serious but cordially fash-ion, both by the platform speakers and by members of the audience. It is a credit to the organisers of the Cam-bridge Marxist Discussion Group that such open dis-cussion can take place, and we hope that it will continue well into the future.
Members of the union, the country’s biggest public service union, have overwhelmingly voted in favour of strike action on 30 November.

**Our aim is to close every building**

*By Ed Whitby, Newcastle Unison (pc)*

Newcastle Unison stewards met on Monday 7 November to form plans for 30 November. The mood was upbeat. There was discussion about getting a clear message to members to consider the pros and cons of the strike: that the strikes are not necessary. The meeting was overhwhelmingly in favour of striking.

Unison: massive vote for strikes

By Darren Bedford

Unite and Unison members at Southampton council are currently voting on an offer from management that could end the long-running dispute over pay cuts. The deal, which contains some reductions in the scale of cuts for each grade of workers, also involves the unions calling off an ongoing legal challenge to the council’s cuts package. While Unison, the majority union at the council, is not putting out a recommendation to its members on how to vote on the deal, Unison branch secretary Mike Tucker told the Southampton Daily Echo that, while not formal votes were taken at recent members’ meetings to discuss the deal, “the mood at the meeting was overwhelmingly to reject the council’s offer.”

If the deal is rejected, strikes could begin later this month — or could re-surface if management don’t close the vote. Unite’s shop stewards voted to recommend rejection. Unite regional organiser Dave Prentis said: “Like Unison, our negotiating team came out of the last round of talks not planning to make a recommendation one way or another on the deal. But when we took it back to our stewards they were clear that there hadn’t been enough movement from management.”

They were particularly opposed to the condition the council was putting on us that we had to drop our legal claims, and these reasons felt we had to recommend rejection of the deal. We’ll be calling on TUC or union full-timers by nomeans suggest that leadership, the rally is some what out-of-the-way. We will lobby the TUC for a later start, and a city-centre location for the rally. The branch agreed to work with other unions through the Public Service Alliance to build a day of action in the city centre on Saturday 19 November. Our want to get 10 reps in place at the station, we are looking for support from the union nationally. Brances relied on neighbouring buildings for resources and materials rather than the national union. This decisive result by no means suggests that we can just buckle up and wait for 30 November. There is still a fight to be had in Unison over what form the action will take, with the union’s right-wingsuggesting that NHS workers should take a two-hour strike action rather than a full day’s walkout. A revised offer from the government, floated on 3 November, looks unlikely to please the activists, who say the offer involved the protection of existing terms and conditions for anyone within 10 years of retirement and a slight change to the “accrual rates” — the rate at which pensions benefits are built up. “I think that was a very strong and principled position that our stewards took.”

A longer interview with Ian Woodland will appear in Solidarity 225.

**Unite stewards oppose Southampton deal**

**Sparks fight to maintain rank-and-file control**

*By a Tube worker supporter*

John Laing, a cleaning contractor hired by London Overground, recently tricked nearly 30 of its employees — including an RMT union rep — into registering for work on a part-time basis, and subsequently handed them over to the UK Border Agency.

The workers, who were told to report to a meeting in a school hall on 25 October, were arrested by UKBA cops. They were detained and told they had to produce papers to verify their immigration status. Most workers had valid papers, and were later released. However, one worker —Marciano Flora — now faces deportation.

Marciano has lived in the UK for five years and has a family here. Although his current work visa had expired, he had already applied for a new one to remain and explained to UKBA officers that he had a letter from the Home Office verifying that his application was being processed. Despite this, he was arrested, taken to a detention centre in Dover and told he must leave the country by 9 November.

The RMT is mounting a campaign against John Laing, who say they will not rehire even those workers what the UKBA released. The move is typical of cleaning contractors who routinely use immigration law as a tool for union-busting. As well as organising to defend these members, the RMT and other unions must campaign for Britain’s racist and anti-working class immigration controls to be scrapped.

**Sparks must stay!**

**Marciano Flora must stay!**

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**Workers should have the same freedom to travel the globe as the wealth we create currently enjoys.**

• Online petition: marciano.epetitions.net
• Protest: John Laing’s Allington House building, 8am along the Virgin West Coast Main Line (to Strasbourg); 10.30am (which doesn’t ring); and the rally is some what out-of-the-way. We will lobby the TUC for a later start, and a city-centre location for the rally. The branch agreed to work with other unions through the Public Service Alliance to build a day of action in the city centre on Saturday 19 November. Our want to get 10 reps in place at the station, we are looking for support from the union nationally. Brances relied on neighbouring buildings for resources and materials rather than the national union. This decisive result by no means suggests that we can just buckle up and wait for 30 November. There is still a fight to be had in Unison over what form the action will take, with the union’s right-wing suggesting that NHS workers should take a two-hour strike action rather than a full day’s walkout. A revised offer from the government, floated on 3 November, looks unlikely to please the activists, who say the offer involved the protection of existing terms and conditions for anyone within 10 years of retirement and a slight change to the “accrual rates” — the rate at which pensions benefits are built up. “I think that was a very strong and principled position that our stewards took.”

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Greg Mankiw

Harvard has historically been a training ground for people who go on to be the elite. Harvard graduates become very important people who go on to do very bad things to our financial system. Mankiw teaches us from his own textbook and doesn’t use other journal articles. So we don’t see other perspectives or rigorous debate. It would be good to bring in a greater diversity of reading and views. We wanted to walk out and raise the debate, to communicate to students that instead of taking what our professor says for granted we should think critically.

On 2 November, tens of thousands of people responded to a call for a “general strike” from the General Assembly of Occupy Oakland in California. Tens of thousands of protesters marched on the city’s port, forming flash packs of which were respected by members of the International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU), some using a contra-propo- sition that allows them to refuse to cross picket lines. Others used health and safety loop-holes to refuse to work.

By Isaac Steiner (Solidarity USA)

The general strike and national solidarity actions, built in under a week and with the severe defect of practical knowledge in the tactic that’s to be expected after a drought of over sixty years, has to be judged a success. One month after it, we’re probably uncomfortable that there would be an open-ended protest encamped in downtown Oakland. One month ago, it was unthinkingly that the instant Occupation would mirror a General Assem- bly of 2,000 — much less overwhelmingly pass an ambitious call for a general strike. One week ago, it was unthinkable that this call would meet with success. The strike was about the right to assemble and practice the novel form of organization used at this stage of the movement — securing and defending the democratic right upon which greater rights can be won. That right is being re-established. It would seem that the failure of New York City to clear Zuccotti Park and the failure of Oakland to prevent the retaking of Oscar Grant Plaza are two major tactical blunders on the part of the ruling class. The potential to crush and demoralise the Occupation from using, physical force as some kind of class principle.

A broad movement will have both present, will be led by neither, and would make tactical choices that include “property destruction” as a means to an end (for example, mass squatting or workplace occupation).

Oakland is also, by far, the most multira- cial city in which Occupy’s been seen yet (although not representative of the working class of the city). There are surely lessons in how to advance beyond “symbolic” and “sentimental” and symbolic approaches to building an anti-racist movement into truly linking, incorpor- ating and strengthening movements that are already taking up issues of institutional racism.

In the short term, the main task for Oakland will be evaluating the successes and weaknesses of the strike effort, bringing in new leaders, and identifying a medium-term strategy for expanding the Occupation movement in the city. For the time being, Oakland may take a leadership role na- tionally, in the way that New York has provided.

Whatever happens, the terrain is much more favourable for our side than it was just a week ago.

— acting on the special so- cial power of the university, the major class to stop production, rather than just our num- bers and strength.

It was also the most successful example yet of bringing the physical oc- cupation site with a mo- bilisation of its wider support in the city. The general strike balanced this dynamic — recognising the political role of the occupation (at this point) which is not a critical in- tensity into maintaining the occupation.

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Students gather after walking out of Greg Mankiw’s lecture in protest.

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