RACIST POLICE:

- 120 police officially found “racist” by Met: just 1 dismissed
- 58% of those prosecuted after August 2011 riots were non-white
- Black people 7 times more likely to be stopped and searched
What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty? 
Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, which owns the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists’ relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overcrowding, and the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class has one weapon: solidarity.

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 accountable at any time and to 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 struggles.

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. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.
- Black and white workers’ unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalists or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace to community to global social organisation.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics — equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predicates militantly.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.
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By Charlie Salmon

Galloway’s victory is not a victory for the working class, trade unionism and ideas. He is best remembered for using the back-benches as a platform to promote himself and his allegedly anti-imperialist credentials. For Galloway, anti-imperialism looks like siding with Saddam Hussein against the Iraqi people, siding with the Iranian regime against the French people, and lauding the murderer Assad for being the “last Arab leader”. Galloway even informed the people of Syria that they are a “free people!” The story of Galloway’s anti-imperialism is a book-length catalogue of demagogy love-making to some of the foremost charlatans of the planet.

The result in Bradford West will no doubt breathe new life into the idea that there is an electoral short-cut to dealing with the political problems our movement faces.

It will boost the idea in unions and amongst leftists to back candidates who are also TUSC and characters like Galloway. And that we do not need to organise a fight inside Labour against the remnants of Blair and New Labour.

Such false conclusions will generate a false political outlook for our class and our movement. The left — even those who have been at the receiving end of Galloway’s politics in the recent past — have learned nothing because they seem to care nothing for consistent working-class politics.

We must learn the lessons, get a grip on reality, call Galloway cut for what he is and build a serious working-class politics.

Galloway’s victory is not a victory for the working class, trade unionism and ideas.

We know that Galloway and his campaigns push aside class approaches to politics and focus on his record as a “fighter for Muslims”. We already know that during the Bradford West campaign, Galloway supporters distributed a leaflet which contains the following: “GALLOWAY who is a Muslim. And he KNOWS who is not. Instinctively, so do you. Let me point out to all the Muslim brothers and sisters what I stand for: “I, George Galloway, do not drink alcohol and never have. Ask yourself if you believe the other candidate in this election cannot say that truthfully. I, George Galloway, have fought for the Muslims at home and abroad, all my life. And paid a price for it. I believe the other candidate in this election cannot say so truthfully.”

COMMUNALIST

A determined communitarian stance from the Galloway campaign definitely played a part in the victory.

However, Labour’s candidate, Imran Hussein, was a son of Pakistani heritage, and for the past five elections Bradford West has returned a Sikh man to Westminster. So while we should criticise Galloway’s antics and note that communalism played a role, let’s not paint a complex picture in just one shade as some right-wing critics have done.

The election in Bradford West was a by-election and in such circumstances, strange voting patterns can occur.

By some accounts, although Galloway had the support of Labour’s former election agent and, one assumes, a number of former Labour activists, his campaign team was not substantial. It’s doubtful if the campaign managed to visit many houses in the constituency and win an argument on the doorstep.

It is claimed that the Respect campaign focused on mobilising people who would not have otherwise voted — the young, students etc... Even then, can such a swing be explained by such tactics?

The facts of the current political situation must have fed into Galloway’s victory. These are:

- a very government determinedly seeing through an anodyne campaign;
- a massively unpopular traditional “third party”, the Liberal Democrats, who look on the brink of electoral collapse;
- a Labour Party that seems to have learned nothing from the experience of Blairism and New Labour’s “heads- line” campaign message – against war and cuts – will have chummed with a great many people.

The factors leading to Galloway’s victory are a complex mix of communalism, anti-government sentiment, the “celebrity” status of the candidate and the political ineptitude of Labour.

The overriding feature of Galloway’s victory is the fact that Galloway has been returned to national politics and the fact that many on the left have fallen behind “Galloway the personality”. This is most definitely a bad thing.

In parliament, Galloway never acted as a tribune of the working class, trade unionism and ideas. He is best remembered for using the back-benches as a platform to promote himself and his allegedly anti-imperialist credentials. For Galloway, anti-imperialism looks like siding with Saddam Hussein against the Iraqi people, siding with the Iranian regime against the French people, and lauding the murderer Assad for being the “last Arab leader”. Galloway even informed the people of Syria that they are a “free people!” The story of Galloway’s anti-imperialism is a book-length catalogue of demagogy love-making to some of the foremost charlatans of the planet.

BREATHE

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Such false conclusions will generate a false political outlook for our class and our movement. The left — even those who have been at the receiving end of Galloway’s politics in the recent past — have learned nothing because they seem to care nothing for consistent working-class politics.

We must learn the lessons, get a grip on reality, call Galloway cut for what he is and build a serious working-class politics.
Demonstration for Amina Filali

By Dan Katz

MOROCCO: WOMEN ACTIVISTS FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

On 10 March 16-year-old Amina Filali killed herself by swallowing rat poisons.

Amina had been badly beaten during a forced marriage to Mustapha Kelak, a man who had raped her. Although there have been some limited legal improvements in the position of women in Morocco, the state still allows a rapist to marry an underage victim as a way of avoiding prosecution. The law that Article 475— says a “kidnapper” of a minor can marry his victim so that dishonour is not brought on her family. Legislation designed to outlaw all forms of violence against women, planned since 2008, has yet to appear.

Amina’s parents say a local court pressured them to accept the marriage. They are from a backward, conservative rural area.

On 17 March several hundred women’s rights activists demonstrated in the Moroccan capital. Rabat, demanding that the man who raped Amina be jailed and that Article 475 be abolished. Outrage continued after the Al-Musawar newspaper invited the rapist to discuss the matter at a conference in Casablanca.

Eric Goldstein from Human Rights Watch says that many other barriers to equality persist in the Moroccan legal code, including a provision that makes it a crime to give refuge to married women who have escaped their husbands. Another article in the code makes sex outside marriage a crime. If a woman reports a rape, and she doesn’t prove her case, she is then admitting to sex outside marriage, opening up the possibility of prosecution.

Women’s rights in Morocco are becoming a battleground between liberals and the left, and the Islamists who have been brought to power in the wake of the Arab Spring.

To head off a revolution, the regime made concessions and allowed the formation of a government led by the Islamist Justice and Development Party. Bassima Khakass, minister of women and the family — and the only woman among 29 ministers in the government — acknowledged that there was a “real problem” and called for a debate on changing the law. But Khakass also claimed that Amina Filali had consented to the marriage.

And Justice Minister El Mustafa Ramid denied Amina Filali had been raped. 19-year-old Layla Belmahi, a founder of a women’s rights group denounced the Minister.

“He was talking about it like something that was wonderful, that the only thing that really shocked him was the fact that she killed herself.”

“The problem wasn’t the fact that she killed herself, it was that she was forced to marry her rapist.”

By Barry Finger

The contentious character of the Republican primary has revealed one startling fact.

The Republican Party under Obama has tried to occupy so much of the political terrain, from moderates to right-wing extremists, that there is no space for the Republicans to define themselves beyond the realm of sheer lunacy.

The Republicans’ Obama Derangement Syn- drome, as this condition has become to be known, is characterised above all by a shared certainty that the US is marching in lockstep down the path to a Fascist-Stalinist-atheist-Islamist hellscape bankrolled by Hollywood liberals and abetted by a sinister agit-prop media taking its marching orders from some mist enveloped Democratic Kremlin. Teabaggers on the right have emerged from the "tea party" and "occupy" movements in the study of the abject failure of capitalism, with a renewed zeal for "free market" solutions reinforced by an unbelievable conviction that socialistic regulations both caused the system to collapse and prevent its recovery.

Ironically, the Republicans are about to nominate Mitt Romney, a candidate characterised by his detractors as a “Massachusetts moderate” who, by any light, is more compatible with the blue-dog wing of the Democratic Party than with the current mood of conservatism.

Were it not for the sheer number of inept contenders to his right splitting the reactionary vote, Romney may well have been disqualified from the race.

Still, in his path to victory Romney has chewed up and repudiated virtually every belief he once professed to hold, lending to the term “opportunism” an unchallengeable new standard.

The Republican primary process at its margins detaches and condemns all critical fissures within the Democratic façade.

Were the future prospect of Ron Paul’s son, Rand, in the Republican Party not in the balance, a third party run by the “libertar- ian” Paul senior would have otherwise pealed a part of the anti-war left from the Democratic Party. Paul is a dyed in the wool reactionary, homophobic and racist, but he is also the only serious anti-interventionist in either party seeking a public platform.

It makes little immediate difference that he dates American imperialism from Lincoln dehumanising the slave-holding south to its putative right to self-deter- mination.

What makes him appealing is at least part of the left is his relentless attack on the military-industrial complex.

CONDEMNING

Paul is virtually alone in condemning the surveillance state fertilised by this dynamic, which presents a simmering threat to civil liberties not only of the Muslim community but also of the anti-war and Occupy Corps.

Current law, signed by Obama, surpasses even the Patriot Act in its authoritarian intrusion, now permitting the indefinite detention without trial of American citizens sus-pected of terrorist affiliations.

And Obama has perma-
nently rendered the War Powers Act, requiring prior Congressional approval, a non-starter in the newly defined presidency.

As the right war on drugs, and enriches health insurance companies and big business, while failing to hold the line against run away costs?

DISMEMBERING

Why is a programme of dismantling the Fed and public austerity more reactionary than shielding the Fed from transparency?

Or protecting mortgage borrowers from prosecution, standing idly while millions lose their homes, repeatedly reneging on promises to labor and environ- mentalists, empower- ing former Goldman Sachs executives and other bankers to write law and pursuing policies that re- distribute income from workers to corporate con- glomerates?

Were it not for a conflict of interests between the two parties, the left could not avoid facing up to its own self-imposed dilemmas. As it is, American progressives have been pressed to the need to choose between civil liberties and legal abjection; between a permanent peace dividend and social entitlements; between dismantling a racist and repressive system and maintaining the right to collec- tive bargaining.

Yes, the choices that Ron Paul represents should be utterly unacceptable to any healthy left. That a former libertarian is positive in his program would come at the cost of a massive setback for workers, the poor, the sick and the elderly. It would not be a victory, but a tragedy.

But what line would Obama and the Republicans have to cross before the same could be said about them?

At what point would the labor movement and the opposition first pursue instead a course of class independence?
A miners’ strike moment? We wish!

The two Bayyars

The exchange on Bayyars Rustin (Solidarity 239, 240) was fascinating.

I first met Bayyars in 1949, when I was a young student at UCLA. He had a profound effect on me, and when I came to New York in 1956 to work for Liberation magazine, he was one of the editors (the others being Dave Dellinger, A. J. Muste, and Roy Finch) who met weekly and then I went to work for War Resisters League, where Bayyars, as Executive Secretary, was my boss. He and Muste were my two primary mentors.

We have essentially two Bayyars. The one up to 1963 was a radical pacifist. He was not linked to Max Shachtman or to the Socialist Party. But after 1963, when his house, ‘Honeymoon’ had been ‘outed’ by a US Senator in a failed effort to derail the great March on Washington, he finally gave in to his colleagues (a member of Shachtman’s group) and to Mike Harrington (also a Shachtmanite), and left the WRP for the ‘more important work’ he could do as the director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute [a not-for-profit organisation focused on making the link between the civil rights movement and the trade union movement].

I note in Eric Lee’s piece (Solidarity 239) that Bayyars did get to Israel to raise questions about the black Jews, but nothing about the Palestinians. And he acted on the ‘boat people’, but had been silent all through the Vietnam War.

Why Bayyars was drawn to a defence of Israel I have several times brooded over. In his obituary, published, after 1963, toward the social democrats (read: early neocons), a defence of Israel was part of the liturgy. I know there have been some tendencies to see Bayyars as always having been influenced by Shachtman, but I am quite sure that did not happen until fairly late in the game, and that he did take his role in the social democratic (of which he was a co-chair) at all seriously.

I’ve written recently about ‘a life after life’ as a part of the establishment was explained by Brecht’s poem To Posterity.

David Reynolds, USA

• More first-person accounts of the US “third-camp” will appear in future issues of Solidarity.

The Bayyars

Toby Abse, London

Strong women in Italian politics

Whilst I was delighted that Solidarity 240 contained not just one but two articles about Italy (Hugh Edwards, “Strike wave sweeps Italy”, and Kate Devine, “Italian feminism resurgent?”) and agreed with much of their content, I did feel that cumulatively they gave a somewhat skewed impression of the current role of women in Italian politics.

Although the Berlusconi period marked a nadir in this respect, the controversies of the last four months or so over penitentiary reform and Article 18, have once again highlighted the continuing need for the representation of alternative structures of power and the replacement of the capitalist system with socialist democracy.

As an Italian socialist, I would like to end by pointing out that Mara Cafagna’s leadership and the subsequent resignation of the former minister responsible for the entertainment programme TeleGatti was what he was a co-chair) at all seriously.

Mara Cafagna’s resignation which has forced the PD to backtrack over the last week and talk about watering down Monti’s labour market “reform”, just as it had been her intransigence that has led the leaders of not just the vacillating UDI, but even the surly CDS in starting to have retrospective reservations about the proposals.

I would agree with Hugh that an earlier date for the proposed general strike would have been preferable, and I acknowledge that having a craven careerist like Sally Hunt as the General Secretary of my own union may soften my reservations about a union leader like Cafagna.

I would like to end by pointing out that Mara Cafagna is about the worst possible example of a woman in Italian politics that Kate Devine could have picked.

Unlike Letizia Moratti, the education minister in Berlusconi’s 2001-06 government and until recently mayor of Milan, Moratti did not have the same competence as a bourgeois politician, even if family wealth may have assisted her rise. Cafagna’s appointment was entirely due to Berlusconi’s attraction towards her.

The flirtatious exchange between the two on national television, the entertaining momentTeleGatti was what led to the first public protest by Veronica Lario, Berlusconi’s second wife, even if the marriage survived on a precarious basis. And then there was the last minute decision of Anna Geletti, the UDI leader, of which was unaware until they had left the PD but did not want to hold back Angelillo’s endless, ugly, amusingly close exchange with Mario Monti to create a clear class line.

So it was Cafagna’s intransigence which has forced the PD to backtrack over the last week and talk about watering down Monti’s labour market “reform”, just as it had been her intransigence that had led the leaders of not just the vacillating UDI, but even the surly CDS in starting to have retrospective reservations about the proposals.

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On 30 March the Guardian published a video recording showing Mauro MacFarlane, a twenty-one year old from Beckton, East London, being subjected to racial abuse and violence by police officers in the back of a police van after his arrest during the riots in August 2011.

In the soundtrack, one officer admits to strangling Demetrio and calls him a “cunt”. Another officer, PC Alex MacFarlane, can be heard justifying the assault because Demetrio would “always be a rigger”.

A couple of days after the Demetrio recording, evidence was published that on the same day in August 2011, also in East London, PC Joe Harrington, assaulted a 15 year old black male.

Harrington has been put on desk duty; MacFarlane has been suspended, 21 people are being currently investigated, and eight have been suspended, in an ongoing Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) investigation.

Yet Channel Four TV has reported that 120 police were officially found guilty of racist behaviour by the Metropolitan Police between 1999 and 2011; and only one was dismissed.

During and after the riots in August 2011, sparked when police shot dead Mark Duggan, police arrested about 3000 in magistrates’ courts, 42% received immediate jail, though the rate was 12% for similar offences in England and Wales in 2010. The average sentence was 5.7 months, though for similar offences in England and Wales in 2010 it had been 2.5 months.

MACPHERSON

Back in 1999, the Macpherson enquiry into the killing of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 officially declared that the Metropolitan Police was “institutionally racist”.

Everyday experience — waiting outside school gates, use of metal detectors in public, interactions with victims of crime, and the daily harassment of stop-and-searches — shows the same.

On Home Office figures, black people are seven times more likely than white people, and Asians twice as likely, to be stopped and searched by the police. There were over 1.1 million searches in 2008/09 alone.

The Newham Monitoring Project, which has worked since 1980 at monitoring the police in east London, warns that things will get worse in east London with the Olympics.

For under 16s alone, the use of powers to stop without reasonable suspicion under Section 13 – which are incidentally those that are most prone to accusations of racial profiling – saw a staggering increase in Newham of 2,540% from 2007-2010... we are gravely concerned about how local communities will survive the anticipated militarisation of Newham [during the Olympics].

The police are racist!

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• Organising a fundraising event...

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• Get in touch to discuss joining the AWL.

More information: 07796 687874 / awl@workersliberty.org / AWL, 22E Tower Workshops, 58 Riley Rd, SE13 0DG.

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Thanks to Justin, Eric, David, AWL students, Chris, Ed, Elise and Gemma

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HISTORY

6 SOLIDARITY

The Irish Trotskyists

Introduction

On Easter Monday 1916, some hundreds of republicans and socialists rose in arms in Dublin to overthrow the centuries-old British rule in Ireland. Among their leaders was James Connolly, who for most of the years since 1982 had been the leading writer and agitator in the RSP.

Ever since 1916 Connolly’s name has been widely honoured in nationalist Ireland, and ever since then significant minorities have tried or pretended, in one way or another, to continue his combination of revolutionary socialism and revolutionary commitment to Irish freedom. Mostly the “Connollyites” have been people who see socialism as a vague add-on to militant Irish nationalism. Some of them have been Stalinists, or Stalinised republicans.

The authentic revolutionary Marxist strand has been weak. Before the 1960s, the only Trotskyist group to have existed in Ireland was one called the Revolutionary Socialist Party, active in the 1940s.

The article we reprint here, from Labor Action (paper of the US Trotskyist group led by Max Shachtman, Hal Draper, and others) of 9 June 1947, is reprinted here as coming from “the first issue” of Workers’ Republic, the “new organ of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, Irish Section of the Fourth International.”

The leaflet reproduced on this page, originally published in 1948, also comes from the RSP. In that leaflet the RSP advocated a policy which resembles what AWL has long argued on the question of relations between the Protestant (or British-Irish) or Catholic communities in Ireland. It called for a “wide degree of Protestant autonomy in Northern Ireland”.

It seems to us that a federal united Ireland is the only feasible arrangement now, but our fundamental idea has been expressed like this since 1969: “As much autonomy for the Protestant Irish minority as is compatible with the rights of the Irish majority.” The exact details will be worked out in negotiation.

The RSP was initially linked to the British Revolutionary Communist Party, and then a separate organisation. In the late 1940s discussion amongst Trotskyists about the class nature of Stalinist Russia, it adopted the position of Shachtman, Draper, and their comrades, that it was bureaucratic-collectivist. One of its members was Matt Merrigan, who wrote on Ireland for Labor Action in the 1950s, and was secretary of a major union in Ireland, the ATGWU, from 1960 to 1986.

The RSP’s secretary and most prominent activist was Bob Armstrong.

A note accompanying the Connolly article in Labor Action reports that the RSP had recently organised a Connolly commemoration meeting with 600 workers attending, but the RSP itself was always tiny, and it disappeared at the end of the 1940s.

Very little is known today about the RSP. We have been unable to trace any surviving copies of its publication Workers’ Republic. The Labor Action reprint of the Connolly article was billed as an abridgement, and on internal evidence may include typographical errors (though we have corrected obvious ones); but is the only version available.

The Connolly article gives little attention to the question of relations between the Protestant and Catholic communities, or how the partition of Ireland might be overcome given the solid opposition of the Protestant workers in Northern Ireland — to Dublin rule. It appears to dismiss fears of Protestant workers suffering disadvantage in a Catholic-majority united Ireland as mythical, and thus to dismiss the Protestant workers’ national question as a negative perspective. It is dealing with strong agitation against capitalism; but the 1948 leaflet shows that this was not the RSP’s settled view.

Dublin after the Easter Rising

socialist and labour groups with which it had to compe. The Irish political scene then was very different from today.

The IRA scarcely existed. It was demoralised and discredited by its attempt to cooperate with Nazi Germany during World War Two.

The Communist Party had divided itself into two parties, North and South, during World War Two, the better to navigate the constraints imposed on it by Russia’s wartime alliance with Britain. The Communist Party of Northern Ireland had become effectively a Unionist party, and won a large following among Protestant workers and trade unionists.

The Northern Ireland Labour Party was a major force, winning 19% of the vote in the 1945 Stormont election. Other “Labour” groupings had some weight in Northern Ireland.

The Commonwealth Labour Party, discussed in the article, had been formed in 1942 by former NILP leader Harry Midgley when he split from the NILP on anti-Nazi grounds. By 1947 Commonwealth Labour was in sharp decline. It would dissolve later that year, and Midgley eventually joined the Unionist Party.

Another former NILP leader, Jack Beattie, won the Westminster seat of Belfast West in 1945 as an independent, more pro-nationalist than the NILP: he would later join the 26 Counties-based Irish Labour Party, which for a time contested elections in Northern Ireland. Harry D’Amont was elected as a “Socialist Republican.”

The Irish Labour Party prospered: its vote had gone down from 16% at the 1943 general election in the 26 Counties to 9% in the 1944 and 1948 elections. It was weakened by a split (broadly right-wing, but unclear) which formed a rival “National Labour Party” between 1944 and 1950, and by the rise of a leftish republican-turned-parliamentary party, Sean MacBride’s Clann na Poblachta.

As the RSP said, the Irish Labour Party was heavily hegemonised by the main bourgeois nationalist parties. Subservient to De Valera’s Fianna Fail at the time of the 1947 article, the Irish Labour Party would join a coalition government under Fine Gael, the more conservative of the big nationalist parties, after the February 1948 election.

The coalition government formally declared the 26 Counties a republic, breaking the last tenuous and notional link to the British Crown, and started a noisy campaign of “Anti-Partition” publicity, response to which may well have informed the 1948 RSP leaflet.

They were even compelled to acknowledge him as a national hero.

For, as the Irish capitalists are unable to falsify the history of Easter in the manner that Stalin has falsified October, it remains common knowledge to every schoolboy that he was one of the two outstanding leaders of the Easter rebellion. Thus it is that Connolly, the revolutionary socialist, has suffered the unusual and curious fate of becoming an object of involuntary homage rendered by capitalist exploiters.

To revive the genuine tradition of Connolly among the youth, and among the members of the labour movement generally, is the major task of Workers’ Republic. This tradition, however, is not like a dish of Irish stew which can be apportioned to the various sections of the labour movement, in accordance with the requirements of each of them. If by Connollyism is meant uncompromising class struggle against every shape and form of capitalist exploitation — and an honest study of Connolly’s teachings cannot lead to any other interpretation — then only the shrinking of socialist workers grouped around the banner of the Revolutionary Socialist Party have the true right to designate themselves Connollyites.

We assert this tranquilly and confidently, happy in the knowledge that we shall hardly offend the leaders of official labour who love to drape themselves in Connolly’s cloak on holiday occasions. For most of them won’t even read our paper and, if they do, they will give broad, tolerant grins.

REALISTIC

The class-war doctrines of Marx seem realistic to these people only when they seem to relate to past history and are no longer to rest in the works of someone already dead and famous.

Long experience has likewise habituated us to the sarcastic jibes of the so-called Communist Party. North of Ireland and British, the “Connolly Club” — a part of the Stalinist solar system — is designed to divert the patriotic and class-military elements of Irish emigré workers into channels useful to Stalin’s diplomacy. We recall how, during the Stalin-Hitler pact period of the war, the Irish Stalinists played the role of anti-partisan crusaders, and how later, during the Churchill-Stalin pact, with beatific looks on their faces, they proclaimed themselves adherents of the constitutional position of the Six Counties.

They hailed Brocke as the leader of the “progressive” wing of the Stormont Tories. They flew the Union Jack, symbol of imperialist oppression, at their demonstrations. And — make sense of this who can — they demanded the substitution of the Civil Authorities Special Powers Acts by British Emergency Powers (which in the hands of the Tory Unionists would have fulfilled precisely the same function). And during this period, the bust of Connolly escaped the indignity of being decorated by an orange sash by a hair’s breadth; for while bowing and scraping before Brooke and “our” Irish generals, the Communist Party continued to profess allegiance to Connolly, Lenin, and Marx.

Connolly, first, last, and always, based himself on the class struggle, and his Citizen Army grew directly out of the picket lines of 1913. Connolly’s art was that of an internationalist whose fiery denunciations of imperialist brigands of 1914 are still the most provoking invigartions that have ever appeared in the British labour press.

Lieberknecht’s slogan, “Down with war! The main enemy is at home!” and Lenin’s, “Turn the imperial war into civil war!”

Only the Unionists unreservedly scorn Connolly’s memory. The Eire ruling circles have to be more circumspect. They are even compelled to acknowledge him as a national hero.

From Workers’ Republic, 1947

The Irish Trotskyists

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found a ready echo in Ireland. Connolly was full of praise for the heroic Liebknecht. In his Forward articles he urged the leaders of the European labour movement to throw their influence into transforming the imperialist war into a struggle for socialist liberation. The northern star gleaming beyond the shadows of night is no further distant from this orb of ours than Connolly’s programme of class struggle is from the reformist vapourings of the republican socialists of today.

However, it was the tactic of harnessing to the goal of socialism that earned Connolly a distinctive place in history. All other aspects of his greatness he shares with others. But this uniqueness lay in the circumstances themselves.

What, then, was the Easter Week tactics? Was it a putschist effort? An act of desperation arising out of a loss of faith in working-class mass action? Was it a descent of the socialist goal, as Connolly’s socialist critics allege? Putchism, whether left-wing or right-wing in character, is characteristically based on the notion that the mass of people will remain passive untilers, while an attempt is made at the seizure of state power by an elite of politicians turned militarist, or, more familiarly, by the members of the officer caste itself. The insurrection of October 1917, for example, was not in any sense the word a putch, although accomplished by a comparatively small number of Red Guards. The Stalinist and capitalist reaction inside the country was demoralised, and foreign intervention had not yet begun. The mass of workers, fully conscious of all the issues at stake, stood ready to answer a call to arms as they had done against the putschist attempt of General Kornilov.

REVERSE

The popular uprising of the Warsaw Jews against the Nazis, in the latter part of the war, was strikingly reminiscent of the Easter Week rebellion in some of its features. Here were representatives of a people doomed to physical extermination who rose against the oppressors and fought with legendary courage until they were overwhelmed and massacred.

The situation of the Irish under British in the 20th century did not parallel the plight of the Jews under Hitler. But in the threat of the Northern Carbonite, the presence of a strutting alien soldiery in the land, the slaughter of Irish youth enlisted with the British, there was inflammable material enough at hand to light the flames of the Easter insurrection.

The patriotism of capitalist exploiters is a quality altogether different from the selfless idealism of rebels fighting to free their land. To insist that Connolly was above all an internationalist is not thereby to fall into the error of supposing that the passion of patriotism was absent from his feelings. His patriotic fervour was intense, and his fiery hatred and contempt for his country’s oppressors inevitably betrayed him into occasional exaggerations. For instance, in his War Against the German People he favourably contrasts the German industrialists to the brutal, mean, and slothful ruling class of England. On the other hand, in other articles of the same period, he heaps equal hatred and contempt upon the German imperialist brigades.

It is worth noting that the Stalinist party, during the Staling-Hitler pact period, published Connolly’s War Against the German People without a word of criticism. Within two years, however, they were describing the German people as “Fools.”

An erstwhile revolutionist, Koestler, makes a mock of those Marxists who continue to harbour feelings of passionate personal animosity toward their political enemies, in apparent contradiction to the doctrine that the evil lies not, in man but in his circumstances. But this is theorising out of time and space. Connolly was familiar with the society which shaped the soul of the revolutionist long before he had worked out his philosophy of life. Lenin understood this when, writing of Gallagher in his youth, he spoke of “his noble proletarian hatred.” And noble, too, was the patriotic wrath of Connolly and Pearse, contemplating the tramplide pride of the Irish people.

It is not the military debacle in itself which is of first consequence when a popular insurrection goes down to defeat, but the political conduct of the insurgent leaders. The magnificent struggle of the Asturian miners in 1934, although bloody suppressed, left the Spanish workers undismayed and passed on to the bitter resistance to Franco.

On the other hand, the battles which raged in the streets of Madrid in 1939, between the forces of the Spanish “Communist” Party and those of Colonel Casado — their erstwhile ally in the Popular Front — were prestige-saving putschist actions. The rival factions grappled while the victorious fascist army stood at the gate, and while the Spanish working masses, bewildered by betrayal and bled white by the war, looked on impotently.

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Continued on page 8
constituting bankrupt capitalism; and far from entering into political partnership with Badoglio and de Gaulle, he would have described them as criminals on an equal plane with their Irish and British counterparts.

It may be added that whereas the Stalinists incessantly preached racial hatred against the German workers there can be no doubt as to Connolly's conviction that the closest bonds between the Irish and British workers, on the other hand the tradition of greatest political consequence to the Protestant working class is the Labour Party.

Its position is bound to become precarious and to equip them with a programme for power.

the sectarian hatreds can be finally burned away only through working-class unification around a programme of socialist revolution.

The sectarian hatreds can be finally burned away only through working-class unification around a programme of socialist revolution. Down with the factory bosses and the landlords, the partitioning of the six Northeastern counties. Two generations of ardent youth expended themselves in the apparently hopeless effort to oust the British from their Orange bridgehead in the North. The more fiercely and resolutely glowed the spirit of struggle among the baffled republican forces, the more ferocious was the Tory regime consolidated in its support in the ranks of a misguided, bigoted working class. Today, the proof that the Irish working class is the most conservative in Europe lies in the fact that the rival Labour parties, basing themselves on the left of the political action of the capitalist parties of either side, would die away.

without the revolutionaries, and because of the aid afforded from a foregone conclusion that, on the British power had been vanquished, a new native capitalist state would take its place.

At the moment when the connection was divided, the implication of a chance phrase, a single word of insult directed against the English working class.

The Catholic Church, as demonstrated, for instance, among the Spanish workers. However, while it is true that speech, literature, history, and art have been used to redeem unionism, its most effective and closest bonds between the Irish and British workers, on the other hand the tradition of greatest political consequence to the Protestant working class is the Labour Party.

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By its typology of the church, which is divided, the Labour movement would have described them as criminals on an equal plane with their Irish and British counterparts.
The Falklands and the War of 1982

Britain's war over the Falklands/Malvinas was designed to shore up the prestige of British imperialism. A defeatist stance towards Argentina's soldiers, sacrificed in a reactionary cause.

British war was therefore the no. 1 campaigning priority for Marxists in Britain.

In its seizure of the Falklands/Malvinas, designed to boost its position at home and in the region, the Argentine regime miscalculated the British reaction, and the US response to the British reaction.

Such action did nothing to build anti-imperialist consciousness in the working class, but rather served to generate chauvinism and “national unity.” We did not support this action, and called for the withdrawal of Argentinian troops.

In its seizure of the Falklands/Malvinas, designed to boost its position at home and in the region, the Argentine regime miscalculated the British reaction, and the US response to the British reaction.

This miscalculation could not however make the seizure, or the war to maintain the seizure, progressive.

Galtier’s invasion did not liberate anyone from colonialism or imperialism. It did not loosen the burden of imperialist exploitation, or improve the conditions for the fight against it, for a single Argentine worker.

It embodied the Argentine people in a war in which they could hope to win nothing of significance, a disastrous war in a false and reactionary cause.

On both sides therefore the war was reactionary. The job of Marxists in both Britain and Argentina was to oppose the war, to counterpose international working-class unity, to determine the class struggle for the overthrow of both the Tories and the military regime.

Support for the Falkland Islanders — a distinct historical, ethnic, linguistic, economic and geographic community 400 miles from Argentina — to determine their own future is axiomatic for Leninists in the given conditions, where that community exploited no other community, threatened no other community, and was not used as, or likely to be used as, a base for imperialist control of another community.

The Falkland Islanders’ right to self-determination cannot be ignored in their desire to adhere to the now-imperialist state that they are now a part of.

The Falklands and the War of 1982

The Falkland Islands, small specks in the South Atlantic, were annexed by Britain and settled by British people in the 1830s. There had been no previous indigenous population.

A century and a half later, in the 1970s and 80s, the islands were an odd little relic of empire. They had no huge economic or strategic importance. Their 1,000 or so inhabitants, many of whom would move on to more clement climates after the war, in the Falklands, had no desire to separate from Britain.

Argentina had long laid claim to the islands — calling them the Malvinas — on the grounds that it was the nearest landmark. It was not very near — 400 miles to the islands from the closest point on Argentina’s coast, 2,000 miles from Argentina’s capital city, Buenos Aires.

Over the islands was longer-settled than the core of the Argentine nation, also European settlers, mostly from Spain and Italy.

The British government found the islands more a nuisance than anything else, and talked with the Argentine government about schemes to link them with Argentina while keeping some special rights.

In early 1982, however, Argentina’s military dictators faced mounting popular revolt. They wanted a diversion to recover the islands from Britain, which they had seized in 1982.

They hoped that Britain, which had long since abandoned any attempt to be a world military power, would provide the diversion and resources to resist.

The British government of Margaret Thatcher did, however, send in the Falklands after the end of the war. His military successor, Reynaldo Bignone, organised elections which brought back civilian government from October 1983.

The new government brought Galtieri to court for his crimes.

Socialist Organiser, forerunner of Solidarity, opposed Britain’s war, but denounced the Argentine military’s side of the war too.

Oddly, in view of its stances today, the Socialist Workers’ Party (SWP) had much the same line as the AWL. Later, other leftists also came to scorn Galtieri’s anti-imperialist views.

The AWL (Workers’ Lib and Luis Lorenzano. Most would be revolutionary socialists, however, thought differently. They saw the conflict as one between “imperialism” (Britain) and “anti-imperialism” or at any rate “non-imperialism” (Argentina), and felt duty-bound to take the “anti-imperialist” side.

Bourgeois foreign policy, at the time, the “back Argentina” view was put by a section led by Alan Thornett, who now supports Socialist Resistance.

We reject the notion that military dictators in the Third World are simply the creatures of imperialism: that their existence is strengthened, weakened when imperialism is weakened.

Military dictatorships are as common in Third World countries, which are relatively unimportant, and therefore unimportant to the big imperialist powers — Libya, Algeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Syria, etc. — as in those closely linked to the big capitalist powers (Chile, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, etc.).

The political regime is fundamentally a product of internal class relations. Frequently, of course, imperialist powers do intervene to prop up or install dictatorships when suits their purpose. But dictatorial regimes in the Third World are quite capable of pursuing policies hostile to the big capitalist powers without thereby becoming progressive or unleashing a progressive “process.” Iran is a clear example.

Argentine workers had no interest in the armed occupation of the Falklands against the wishes of the population; they should have pursued the class struggle regardless of the effects of such struggle on their rulers’ ability to maintain the occupation, and it was none of their concern to protect the Argentine bourgeoisie state against the humiliation it suffered from being unable to maintain its occupation.

These points should have been the basis of Marxist policy in Argentina.

The tactical ways of expressing this principal position could of course be very flexible (following the method according to which Trotsky developed the “proletarian revolution in one country” theory of the Soviet Union in World War Two).

We shall use the job of Marxists in Argentina to seek to develop the genuine anti-imperialist elements in the confused nationalist reaction of Argentine workers, with demands for the forming of the workers’ government, with protection of property and seizure of the factories.

While making their own views on the war clear, they should have sought to develop common class actions with workers who confusingly saw Argentina’s war as an “anti-imperialist” but wanted to go further in anti-imperialism.
The “second coming” of George Galloway

Dave Osler

Some parts of the left have greeted Respect’s success in Bristol West as proof that they can properly be described as religious enthusiasm. Writing over the Easter weekend on Britain’s most widely read socialist blog, one long-time activist even described the spectacular by-election turnout as “the second coming”.

What George Galloway — a politician who frequently plays on his Catholic devotion — makes of such implicit comparisons between him and Christ, I cannot guess. But while his victory may not be quite the equivalent of walking on water, the sheer scale of what was achieved is beyond dispute.

Many have been quick to make hard and fast pronouncements about the implications for the future of left-wing politics in this country. In particular, leading lights in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition insist that Galloway’s triumphant augurs well for their London assembly campaign.

THRESHOLD

Good luck, guys. The 5% threshold needed to gain a seat is not beyond reach, at least in principle.

In fact, were TUSC to ditch its incomprehensible acronym and stand under a simple description that gave the voter some hint of what it stands for, its chances of surmounting the hurdle would probably be improved.

But there are a number of ways this one could go, and in the meantime some comrades are discussing the possibilities of wider left regroupment around Respect. The most obvious response from those sceptical on this score is to note that this has been tried in the past, with results of which we are well aware. Why should anything be any different this time round?

Back in 2004, the Socialist Workers’ Party effectively impugned the Labour government for its refusal to support the British armed forces in the Iraq war.

By Dan Katz

Anti-semitism explained away

The slippery, urban face of Islamism, Tariq Ramadan, has revealed himself as the mastermind behind the actions of Islamist murderer Mohammed Merah

By Eric Lee

Sympathy for the devil

Mass murderers, and especially those who execute children at point-blank range, are not normally objects of cult-like worship. It is good, I suppose, for Nazis to “understand” the motives of a mass murderer, especially one who targets Jews. But one hardly expects the same sort of understanding or sympathy on the left.

And yet this is precisely what we find in the latest issue of Socialist Worker.

In a full-page article following up on the Toulouse killings, Jim Wolfrey’s mentions in the second paragraph that Mohammed Merah’s first attack took place on the very same day as an American soldier, Robert Bales, went on the rampage in Afghanistan.

One’s first reaction is to think — that’s a quick response by Merah to an attack on his fellow Muslims. But it wasn’t, and that’s not Wolfrey’s point at all.

His point is that “the media tried to comprehend what Bales did by reference to a breakdown brought on by injuries and trauma.”

COMPARE

Now that’s not strictly speaking true. What most of us saw in the media was shock and horror at what Robert Bales did. The only attempt to "comprehend" his actions in this way came from his lawyer.

Everyone else, including his Commander in Chief, condemned what Bales did without hesitation.

“Few have tried to do the same in the case of Mohammed Merah,” writes Socialist Worker.

In other words, according to the SWP, Merah needs an advocate.

He needs someone to explain what motivated him to brutally murder unarmed civilians, to deliberately target Jewish children, as well as to execute French soldiers.

Jim Wolfrey’s complains that “virtually no coverage has been given to claims by Merah’s lawyer that racism was to blame for his actions.”

That may be because of Merah’s own statement explaining what he did — claiming that it was perfectly alright to murder Jewish children because Palestinian children had been killed.

Wolfrey’s and the SWP want to play the role of advocate (almost literally in this case) and consider Merah’s own words irrelevant.

He murdered Jewish children not because he was an anti-semitic fascist, trained in the Al Qaeda camps in Pakistan, as Merah himself claims. Rather, Merah is depicted as a lackey of the SWP’s so-called anti-racist strategy to “break through the barrier of racism”.

But why even make the comparison?

Back in 2004, the Socialist Workers’ Party effectively impugned the Labour government for its refusal to support the British armed forces in the Iraq war.

It’s worth adding the footnote here that among the majority of councillors who demonstrated their improvisationalism by siding with the Libyan rebels against the British government are members of the SWP.

Perhaps the present leadership of the SWP now believes that Merah’s argument amongst the poor people of Bradford too.

But there is a lasting record of the SWP’s position at the time of the split, written by the late Chris Harman and published in the quarterly International Socialism Journal. It is still available online, at least for now, at bit.ly/harmar.

Much of the article is palpably self-serving obfuscation. Particularly laughable is the insistence that the SWP and a handful of its supporters in the project constituted “the main body of Respect”, in contrast to “the breakaway of the Galloway group”, which briefly traded as Respect Renewal.

Renewal is even accused of lying about the attendance at one of its rallies, an underhand play of which the SWP would surely never dream.

But underneath Harman’s manifold distortions is a critique of some weight. Most importantly, there is an acknowledgement of Galloway’s ties to rightwing Islamists implicated in the attempted bloody suppression of Bengali independence.

Yet although this observation is relegated to a mere footnote, there is probably the only time they would have felt slighted in the SWP press, even though they were widely known at the time Respect was established.

WARNING

Harman also has words of warning for those revolutionaries who signed up with Respect Renewal: “They will face a choice between having to avoid speaking on a whole range of issues or saying things that upset one or other of its components.”

“Tensions will be quite visible on a daily basis by Galloway, with his disdain for what ordinary supporters think about his media performance and his opinions of issues such as crime, by those Tower Hamlets councillors whose main concern is their own careers, by those who mistakenly believe the only way to win the votes of Muslim workers is to keep quiet in the face of male chauvinist attitudes, and by those who despise their demands have tried to play the communal card in the past and will do so again in future.”

In those matters, Harman was not wrong. The same issues will face revolutionaries who sign up for the second coming, too.

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The “second coming” of George Galloway

George Galloway back in the days of Respect Mark 1

George Galloway back in the days of Respect Mark 1 was left to be co-operative, in order to throw itself wholeheartedly into Respect mark one.

The liaison was brief. Just three years later, the first incarnation of that party fell to pieces, with Galloway famously branding the SWP as Leninist “Russian dolls”, in the process famously telling his erstwhile allies to “fuck off, fuck off the lot of you.”

None of this has been deemed worthy of mention in the glowing assessments of Bradford West published by the SWP. Galloway is even speaking its Marxism 2012 event, and promotionally telling his erstwhile allies to “fuck off, fuck off the lot of you.”

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Teachers plan grassroots fightback on pensions

By an NUT activist

Divisions and associations in the National Union of Teachers (NUT) that want to continue the battle over pensions came together at NUT conference (6–10 April) to form the “Local Associations for Action on Pensions” network. Associations from all over the country organised a fringe meeting on Friday 6 April during the peak of the pension debate to agree an amendment that included a clear strategy for ongoing action and fighting to win. This was followed on Monday 9 April with a meeting to discuss how to organise the union to this strategy.

This was a spectacular meeting with over 300 people, from a wide range of associations. The discussion covered not only on what had gone wrong on conference floor, but also debated what viable strategies there are for the coming weeks and months. This debate is a healthy breath of fresh air in the union, and whilst there was some disagreement on strategy those who attended were unified on the need for further days of national action. Members of Workers’ Liberty argued for the need to combine national strike action with a series of fast-moving, rolling local strikes. This strategy is about making sure action is maintained, rather than descaled, in between national strikes. Not a week should pass between national days without some form of continuous disruption in some part of the country. This is a major positive development within a union where the organised left groupings — the Campaign for a Democratic and Fairer Pension and the Socialist Teachers Alliance — have become very cosy, and therefore very compliant, within the official structures.

The Socialist Workers’ Party (SWP) failed to back the amendment agreed by the Associations for Action meeting, preferring to stick with their own, softer, more moderate line on similar issues. Since the conference, SWP teachers have admitted that they “missed a trick” by failing to get behind the self-organised, rank-and-file initiative and have indicated that they will be getting involved.

The initiative taken by Associations for Action could open up opportunities for a clear strategy for ongoing action and fighting union leaders. They could open up opportunities for a clear strategy for ongoing action and fighting un

AWL member and NUT activist Tom Utertterman speaks at NUT conference

“...there was one delegate who claimed that it was “too soon” for the NUT to fight against employers’ attempts to refuse annual leave, for example to Travel Information staff. The delegate wanted to protect existing collective agreements against management attempts to suspend or cancel them for the duration of the Olympics. But AWL members working on the Tube will be arguing for an effective strategy for each of these disputes, while promoting coordination where possible, to allow workers to fight together to apply maximum industrial pressure to management in order to win their demands.

For more, see teacherslib.org/holding

MMP lock out battle needs industrial action

By Sally Gallagher

Bosses at the Mayor Melnhof Packaging (MMP) plant in Deeside locked up the facility in advance of a community picket organised by workers locked out of MMP’s Bootle plant and their supporters.

The picket was part of an attempt by the locked-out Bootle workers to build solidarity for their dispute by reaching out to Deeside workers.

On Sunday 1 April, UTL held a meeting to discuss its strategy for the campaign. This focuses on legal action in court and strike by the end of June. Regional meetings of division secretaries were held after close of conference on Monday 9 April, and were largely tightly controlled by regional secretaries. In almost all regions division secretaries were informed that they would be surveyed, and asked to provide data on membership density and the number of schools they think will close down further strikes.

A general division secretary at the Yorkshire/Midlands meeting raised serious questions about how quickly a decision based on this data will be made if we are to have a regional strike in the week beginning 5 May. Many union activists will need convincing that regional or local action, without a clearly defined follow-up of national action, is even possible. AWL teachers want to see the NUT Executive name a whole calendar of joint-up actions, including national and regional strikes.

Along with others in the newly-formed Associations for Action network we want to see the NUT participate in any strike on 10 May — now a real possiblility following the decision of Unite’s health sector to aim for action on that day.

A recent decision by Unite “aims for” strike on 10 May.

Meanwhile, the Public and Commercial Serviccs union (PCS), the only union in Britain led by people who consider themselves revolutionaries, has announced that “the next step in the PCS campaign” on pensions will be a “top secret, lobbying of MPs”. The union is issuing guidance on how to lobby their MP. We will leave it to them to decide whether this is a helpful strategy for the government into a last-minute reversal, and instead we’d like to see the strategy matches up with the PCS and its members’ much-vaunted self-definition as a “fighting union”.
Spain pushes “pay for health care” plan

By Rhodri Evans

Spain’s new conservative government is planning to change Spain’s health service so that the sick will have to pay a fee for medical examinations, doctors’ visits and prescriptions. Health care in Spain is currently free at the point of need, as in Britain’s NHS.

Already (on 14 March) Catalonia has legislated a one-euro fee for prescriptions, on top of a means-tested requirement to pay up to 40% of the cost of medications. Britain’s Health and Social Care Act (passed on 20 March) points in the same direction. By thoroughly “marketing” health provision, it makes the introduction of fees for health care a logical and all-too-easy next step.

Spain’s Economy Minister Luis de Guindos, in an interview with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on 7 April, promised austerity measures in “all public services, but above all in health and education”.

To soften the blow, the Spanish government talks of pushing Spain’s autonomous regions, such as Catalonia, to impose the medical fees, rather than the fees being decreed across Spain, and of the fees being at first “nominal”. Once the principle of paying for health care is established, though, it will be easy to lever up the fees.

The Spanish government’s plans are part of a drive to reduce its budget deficit to 5.3% of output (a target set after haggling with the EU, which at first wanted 4.4%). Whether they can succeed even in that is doubtful. As well as cutting public spending, the government’s measures will cut output and employment, and thus tax revenues.

Unemployment in Spain is rising, and now near five million overall, and 50% among young people.

On Thursday 29 March, Spain’s two big union federations, CCOO and UGT, struck against government plans to weaken workers’ protections against unfair dismissal. The unions say that 10.4 million workers, 77% of the country’s workforce, struck.

There were big demonstrations in Madrid (nearly one million people, according to CCOO; 170,000, according to the daily El País) and Barcelona (275,000, according to El País).

For a few months, the business pages of the press have been relatively smug. They suggested that the LTRO, the scheme under which the European Central Bank (ECB) has lent over a trillion euros, at very low interest and for an indefinite period, was a salve for the eurozone and its banks.

But there is now (on 14 March) a growing awareness that the ECB’s LTRO is not going to “cure” the eurozone’s debt, which is running at a trillion euros overall, and 50% of one country’s workforce.

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