30 June strike is a fight for the whole working class

Tory attack threatens all pensions

See page 5
**NEWS**

**What is the Alliance for Workers’ Liberty?**

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production. Society is structured to the capitalists’ relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, and the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalist class, 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 socialism: 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 more.

We stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers’ government, based on and accountable to the movement.
- A workers’ government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers’ charter of trade union rights – to organise, to engage in collective action, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the profit from 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 and bisexual people.
- Black and white workers everywhere 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 unity in action, and openness in debate.
- If you agree with us, please take some copies of Solidarity to sell — andjoin us! 020 7394 8923 solidarity@workerslib.org

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**Cuts hit disabled hardest**

By Dan Rawlsney

Under the banner “Hardest Hit”, thousands marched on 11 May to parliament to protest against the Welfare Reform Bill and the particular measures which will mean huge cuts in benefits for disabled people.

People who are sick and disabled — in or out of work — will be the big losers from these changes. Disability Living Allowance will be replaced by a less generous Personal Independence Payment. A Universal Credit will replace means-tested benefits and tax credits as much of the extra money that disabled people currently get will go.

I spoke to Brian Davis, a member of GMB union and employee of Remploy, which provides work for disabled people:

“Two years ago they closed 28 [Remploy] factories, this year 760 people have been given voluntary redundancy, and so many factories now have only twenty to thirty people working in them. Trainees are being brought in, but the pay of those who are being taken on. People don’t know what will be going on in their factory next week. People I know who are on anti-depressants, two people who work for civil servants have committed suicide and two are in prison.”

The government expects everyone to work, but benefits are being cut and there aren’t many jobs. We want the government to tell us Remploy is safe.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is facing 68% cuts and a 68% cut in jobs. Around 48% of the EHRC’s revenues are from disabled people. The EHRC workers have been balloted over action.

The rally on 11 May was quite apolitical, with a lot of speakers from charities with unclear views about the government’s cuts programme.

Liam Byrne (Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions) and Dame Anne Begg spoke from the Labour Party. Liam Byrne said that demonstrators needed to “tell the government that there is a differ- ent view” and to support them in “tabling amendment after amendment” to the Welfare Reform Bill.

What about voting against the bill?

It was left to a disabled student, Gerry Hart, from the Darington Association of Disability, to point out that the Coalition’s actions were a response to “inher- ent faults of the capitalist system”, and draw com- parisons with last year’s student demonstrations and the fight against the poll tax.

Mark Smith from the Norfolk Coalition of Dis- abled People pointed out that disabled rights were won through direct action, “both inside and outside of the law” and that disabled people cannot allow the right to education rights to be given up.

The Scottish leftist after the elections: [www.workerslib.org /scot](http://www.workerslib.org/scot)

Tidemill: second push for academy status

By Duncan Morrison

On 4 May the Governors of Tidemill Primary School in Deptford voted to make a second application to become an academy.

The school had hit the national news headlines last year because of the £142,500 salary of the headmaster, Mark Elms. The first application to become an academy was met by a vibrant local campaign led by parents of children at the school.

That application was shelved when the parents exposed misleading financial figures in the initial application, an early indication of the challenge. But, despite the opposition of local MP Jo Ruddock, Lewisham Council, Lewisham NUT and a large number of parents, the Governors of the school have decided to proceed with a second application.

This application, like the first, will be met by a vigorous campaign.

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**Students suspended over academy walkout**

By Bob Sutton, Vice President-elect, Liverpool Guild of Students

Nineteen students were suspended at Shore- fields Technology College in the Dingoe, Liverpool, on 10 May after 150 of them had walked out in protest at management plans to turn the school into an academy.

Their teachers, members of both the NUT (National Union of Teachers) and NASUWT (National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers) trade unions, were going out on strike the following day.

The Dingoe is a working-class area. Academy status — the [irreversible] removal of the school from local authority control — will mean the business of running the school will be under no compulsion to accept students with any extra educational needs, or for whom English is a second language. They will not be bound by existing local or national agreements on pay, jobs or conditions.

Activists from the Merseyside Network Against Fees and Cuts had distributed a leaflet at the school gates on the morning of the walkout. In an interview for the Liverpool Echo the Deputy Head, Liam Byrne (young, fudged and pushed about “propaganda”, but not “control”), said the school’s students had already demonstrated their willingness to fight — over 500 of them walked out before Christmas over the plans.

Several were on the teachers’ picket line the following day. They were joined by parents, younger kids, the GMB (who organ- ised the non-teaching staff), and other students and trade union activists from across the city.

A march followed at 9 am with its way round the area surrounding the school ending with a meet- ing. An NUT rep from Chester was very informa- tive about the rolling out of the Academy pro- gramme across the North West. The “backer” for Shorefields is the Univer- sity of Chester, which has been trying to switch schools — with redundan- cies often following.

A sixth form student also spoke. She had been among those who had pulled together the walk- out in the winter but had not been in school on 10 May. She seemed to think that the suspensions were down to people losing focus and using the walk- out as an excuse to run wild.

We spoke about how, if you didn’t have an ongo- ing core of people organising and direction, it was easier for things to lose focus or management to reim- pose their arguments.

By Gemma Short, Rotherham NUT

Teachers at Rotherham Community School in Rotherham have blocked a significant blow in the battle against job cuts by saving the remaining job under threat.

Although NUT rep Ralph Dyson will not be returned to full-time work, the threat of redun- dancy has been with- drawn and Ralph has been offered a 2.5 day-per-week contract (he will also be on 1.5 days’ union facility time).

The dispute has been long-running and shows very clearly what is possi- ble when unions take ac- tion in pursuit of specific, clear demands (in this case, no redundancies) rather than striking sim- ply to register a protest at this or that action by man- agement.

Rotherham has sent a message already, and another local school has with- drawn a plan for eight job cuts.

Other workers facing job-cut threats should follow the Rotherham teachers’ example.

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**Victory at Rawmarsh**

By Emma Short, Rotherham NUT

Teachers at Rawmarsh Community School in Rotherham have blocked a significant blow in the battle against job cuts by saving the remaining job under threat.

Return to full-time work, the threat of redun- dancy has been with- drawn and Ralph has been offered a 2.5 day-per-week contract (he will also be on 1.5 days’ union facility time).

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Hezbollah, Assad and 15 May

By Rhodzi Evans

On 15 May, groups of Palestinians in Syria and Lebanon gathered and crossed the border into Syria in demonstrations to mark Nakba (catastrophe) Day (the Palestinian name for the anniversary of the declaration of the state of Israel).

The Israeli army responded with a large-scale closure, making it impossible to reach the border from Syria. They closed the border for hours, before finally allowing a few people to cross.

Israel has been trying to prevent people from returning to Syria, but this is not an easy task. They have been using a variety of tactics, including tear gas and rubber bullets, to prevent people from entering the country.

The closure of the border has made it difficult for Palestinians to travel to Syria, and has also made it difficult for them to earn a living.

Some Palestinians have been able to return to Syria, but this is not always possible. They have been forced to leave their homes, and have been forced to seek refuge in other countries.

The situation is not improving, and it is likely to get worse in the future. The Israeli government is continuing to use force to prevent people from returning to Syria, and it is likely that this will continue for some time to come.

The closure of the border has also made it difficult for Palestinians to access healthcare, education, and basic services.

The Israeli government has been closed to any form of dialogue with the Palestinians, and it is likely that this will continue for some time to come. The situation is not likely to improve in the near future, and it is likely to get worse in the future.
It is rare to find an issue that unites all of the press — left, right and centre. Still harder when that issue is con-
sidered controversial, involving complex moral and
legal issues. How then to explain the unanimity of the
press? The matter under discussion is the use of so-
called “super-injunctions” to prevent the publication of
sex scandal stories involving celebrities.

The daily diet of the British tabloids is stodge of tales
of which premiership footballers slept with which model
and which C-list soap star is having it off with which “Big
Brother” housemate. Hence the outrage that they can be
gagged by the courts.

But the problem with premiership footballers, famous ac-
tors and performers is that they are rich and can call
on great resources when they are desperate to defend their reputa-
tions or hold their relationships and families together under
the strain of adversity. Although they are victims of tabloid
culture, they are also one of the very few social groups pow-
erful enough to prevent the papers from printing exactly
what they want regardless of the consequences.

According to the Telegraph, at least 80 celebrities have ob-
tained what that paper calls “gagging orders” in British
courts over the last six years.

Does any of this matter to socialists? The way in which
this debate is being framed encourages us to think of it as a
conflict between free speech and freedom of the press on the
one hand and the power of the rich and famous on the other.

All other things being equal, a libertarian socialist would
be for the right of the press to print stories irrespective of
whether we agree with them or are comfortable with the
content.

The Mirror emphasised this side of the debate with a sur-
vey showing that “eight out of 10 people believe the use of ‘super-
gagging orders’ against the press shows there is one law
for the rich, another for the rest of us.” It turns out that the
survey was paid for by the Mirror! Nonetheless, they are
sure that the result will “fuel the furore over the gagging or-
ders which wealthy celebrities use to hide their indiscre-
tions”.

I don’t have the breadth and diversity of friends that
Hugh Grant, himself a former victim of a “kiss-and-tell”
scandal, has been a leading defender of the injunctions.

On a personal level I would like to see many, many more
court orders preventing the publication of accounts of the
sexual indiscretions of celebrities. Their privacy would be
protected and, no matter how rich, I think they have rights
too. But that would not be the only gain. It might also mean
that some of these celebrities will get less casual sex than
they do now!

If there was little chance of selling scandalous (though usu-
ally tired and predictable) details to the press that would be
a good thing. These stories are “bread and circuses” of the
worst kind, demeaning their readers almost as much as
as their victims. They, and celebrity gossip in general, have
been a huge factor in the evolution of a mass newspaper
market which barely deals in news and politics at all.

There is nothing natural or inevitable about this evolu-
tion. I was brought up in a council house by working-class
parents neither of whom had an education beyond 16.

Newspapers were, nevertheless, a sacred part of everyday
discourse descended on our front room when the news
came on the TV or radio. It may not have been a typical household on our estate, but it was wasn’t particularly rare ei-
ther. Interest in the world is as likely and can be as enthusi-
astic in a working-class home as in those of the wealthy and
more privileged or formally educated.

In recent decades newspapers produced for the mass mar-
ket have moved decisively downmarket. The replacement
of news by celebrity scandal is a significant factor in disarm-
ing and sedating our class. And it is this exclusion of our
class from politics — much more than freedom of the press
—that is at stake in this debate.

And the broadsheet press, which itself occasionally dips
its voyeuristic toe into celeb culture, is entirely comfortable
with a class division of labour within which they provide
serious news to the people who need it while the rest make
do with comics.

As ever the media barons are less interested in gen-
une press freedom than in maintaining their power to
shape what is considered news and what is judged to be
in the “public interest”. The fact that there is a chal-
lence to this agenda, even if it comes from some wealthy
footballers and actors, is on the whole a good thing.

Hugh Grant, himself a former victim of a “kiss-and-tell”
scandal, has been a leading defender of the injunctions.
EDITORIAL

Tory attack threatens all pensions

At its conference on 18-20 May, the civil service union PCS will vote to ballot its members for strikes over the issues of pensions, job cuts, and pay. Pensions will be the headline issue, and the PCS action is designed to link with teachers’ unions, NUT and ATL, which have already decided to ballot.

A strike by all three unions, plus the lecturers’ union UCU, which has already balloted, is set for 30 June. Other unions, including the head teachers’ union NAHT and the giant health and local government union Unison, talk of balloting later in the year, so bigger strikes could follow in the autumn.

In France, in September-October 2010, pensions became the focal issue for a huge wave of protests — including by school students — against the social spending cuts which have followed the 2008 financial crash. Activists will work for the same thing to happen in Britain. In any case, the pensions battle starting on 30 June is not a technical or sectional fight by special groups defending quirky privileges. The unions which take action are leading the way on an issue which concerns all working-class people.

The public sector unions protest against Government plans and measures which:

- Will (from April 2012) increase the pension contributions taken out of workers’ wages by around three per cent of wages. The increased contributions mean no improvement in pensions — rather, the opposite — so this amounts to a three per cent cut in pay.
- Will increase the pension age, even for those workers who kept a pension age of 60 when in 2005 the unions won a shoddy deal with the Labour Government making the pension age rise to 65 for new entrants but stay at 60 for workers already in the schemes.

The Government plans and measures hit teachers especially hard, since they are less likely to opt out of their pension schemes into local government schemes, and more likely to build up a long record of service giving them a relatively sizeable pension. But the measures affect all workers, directly or indirectly, in one way or another.

The Tory press often says that public sector workers have “gold-plated” pensions. It’s more like public sector workers having decent china plates from which to eat a meagre diet for 40-50 years, while other workers make do with cracked and chipped ones, but public sector pensions generally are better than those (except for top managers) in the private sector. That is because unions are stronger in the public sector, and better able to resist the general trashing of workers’ terms and conditions when work is transferred from one employer to another, for example by outsourcing or privatisation.

The need to give workers 90 days’ notice of redundancies.

The cool-headed Financial Times reported lawyer Yvonne Gallagher saying that the workers’ rights in these cases all flow from European Union law, and will be difficult for a British government to change. The government has lawyers too, and may be able to find loopholes.

Osborne’s immediate purpose is to keep the unions on the back foot, off balance, on the defensive — keep them worrying about what will hit them next, rather than rallying to fight back.

The unions must fight back, and demand that the Labour Party leadership supports them in that, to it.

The Coalition Government has talked of simplifying the system by introducing a basic state pension at a much higher rate than now — £140 a week — though only for “new” pensioners. However:

- in the meantime, Pension Credit for the poorest pensioners is being frozen for four years from 2011.
- The Government makes everything conditional on the dogma that “any options for reform must be cost neutral in each and every year”. That means that if some pensioners gain from coalition measures, others must lose out.
- £140 a week is still below the official poverty line. The National Pensioners’ Convention calls for the state pension to be set above the official poverty level of £279 a week.
- The Government’s plans would probably involve the abolition of “contracting-out”, whereby workers with an occupational pension scheme pay less National Insurance.

According to the Financial Times, that means that “the diminishing rump of employers who still provide [defined benefit] pensions will finally give up on them, switching employees instead to money purchase schemes”. “Money purchase” schemes mean that you pay your contributions into a pension fund without any assurance in advance of what your pension payout will be. It depends on how well the pension fund does with its stock-market dealings, and the calculations the financiers make at pension-age time about what “annuity” (yearly income, payable for as long or as short a time as you live) your accumulated pension-fund stash can buy.

The Government has talked of shifting public-sector pension schemes to that “defined contribution” option. In the private sector, “defined contribution” is already more usual than “defined benefit”. In Britain, reports the Financial Times, “people in such schemes have lost an average £10,000 a year of future retirement income over the past decade and will need to save a third of their salary to make up the shortfall.” That is because of stock-market up and downs, and downward shifts in the amount of “annuity” paid out per thousand pounds of pension-fund stash.

A strong turnout on 30 June, and a lively, urgent campaign of continuing action after that, designed to win rather than just to protest, will improve the chances of a decent old age, free from poverty, for all workers. The unions should conduct their campaign in that spirit. As Karl Marx put it, they must “learn to act deliberately as organising centres.

Government steps up drive to “stare down” unions

Emboldened by the Tories’ relatively good showing in the 5 May elections, the Government has called on business to “get stuck in” against “unions and interest groups”.

Speaking to the Institute of Directors, a bosses’ club, on 11 May, chancellor George Osborne said: “If we are going to support private sector growth and create jobs, we can’t shy away from looking at difficult issues like employment law.

“You voice, the voice of business, needs to go on being heard in the battle. Some of these may be controversial. Unions and interest groups may oppose them. I say to the business community... don’t be passive observers. Don’t stay on the sidelines. Get stuck in to the argument”.

Ed Davey, the Liberal Democrat Business Minister, has formally acknowledged that the Government is looking at a series of changes to workers’ rights, including:

- limiting the amount that can be paid in discrimination cases;
- weakening TUPE, the rules supposed to safeguard workers’ terms and conditions when work is transferred from one employer to another; for example by outsourcing or privatisation;
- the requirement to give workers 90 days’ notice of redundancies.

The cool-headed Financial Times reported lawyer Yvonne Gallagher saying that the workers’ rights in these cases all flow from European Union law, and will be difficult for a British government to change.

The government has lawyers too, and may be able to find loopholes.

Osborne’s immediate purpose is to keep the unions on the back foot, off balance, on the defensive — keep them worrying about what will hit them next, rather than rallies to fight back.

The unions must fight back, and demand that the Labour Party leadership supports them in that.
This is the second part of Martin Thomas's three-part review article on "Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Pol-
tics of Anarchism and Syndicalism," by Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt. The first part (Solidarity 203) discussed the many points on which Schmidt's and van der Walt's version of anarchism is closer to Marxism than to traditional anarchism; their claim that Marxism equals proto-Stalinism; and their claim that "the broad anarchist tradition" is equivalent to "socialism from below".

Schmidt and van der Walt insist that anarchism is a "class struggle movement". Or, indeed, the class is the "social movement. Their evidence for this, however, comes down to nothing more than the fact that most anar-
chists, like most activists for radical change generally and for obvious reasons, have seen the disadvantaged and exploited as their constituency, and welcome strife. They claim (wrongly, I think) that is libel to say that Mikhail Bakunin leaned to the "lumpenproletariat", paupers, people who live from begging, theft, dope, etc. I am decrying of revolution, rather than the core working-class. However, they are explicit in rejecting the Marxist views that the problem of the organisation of the means of production is the unique and central agency of socialist revolution, and that the possibili-
ty of modern socialism depends on preconditions which are not to be created by capitalism itself (the develop-
ment of the human basis, the wage-working class, and of technology and communications).

For them, peasants are agents of socialist revolution just as much as wage-workers are, or more so. Schmidt and van der Walt quote Bakunin in polemic against Bakunin: 

"He understands absolutely nothing about the social rev-
olution, only its political phrases. Its economic conditions do not exist for him. As if he were in charge of the economic conditions of the society...the working-class is only the organized part of that substance which is "trained, united, and organised by the very mechanism of the capitalist process of production" — is the unique and central agency of socialist revolution, and that the pos-
sibility of modern socialism depends on preconditions which are not to be created by capitalism itself (the develop-
ment of the human basis, the wage-working class, and of technology and communications).

And here they enter into dispute with the real Marx, not a proto-Stalinist "Marx" of their own invention. "There [is] no need for the capitalist state to be completed or even begun... It [is] not necessary to wait for capitalism to create the material basis for freedom; freedom would create its own material foundation." Although, as we've seen, Schmidt and van der Walt, un-
like most anarchists, uphold the need for a disciplined rev-
olutionary socialist party with a definite programme and a press, they are like traditional anarchists in that their con-
ception of the "party" has little or no dimension of being (in Trotsky's phrase) "the memory of the working class". They disagree of the Spanish anarchists joining the bourgeois governments of Catalonia and republican Spain during the Spanish civil war, but offer no discussion of les-
sions, or differentiations necessary in future anar-
chist movements if they are to avoid such things (which anser from the fact that the anarchists, having "rejected" all government, did not have a clear awareness of the differ-
ence between workers' government and bourgeois government, and so, when faced with the need for some "coordinating centre", hopped into joining bourgeois governments).

"This is the spontaneous syndicalist movement for their "broader anarchist tradition", but comment on that move-
mantiment of a political party which they call that is less than 1872 Split Schmidt and van der Walt are right about one thing. An-
archism as a movement (or maybe the word "movement"
-is too definite, and the French word "mouvement", which has no exact English equivalent, would be bet-
ter) does date from the 1872 split in the First Interna-
tional, Bakunin and Kropotkin were much more its pioneers than Proudhon or Stirner.

But what was that split really about? Was it — as it would have to be, if Schmidt and van der Walt's broad scheme were correct — a split betweenproto-Stalinism on one side, and class-struggle socialism on the other? It was not. The issues, as stated by both sides, were:

One: political action by the working class. Bakunin's wing objected to the following resolution of the Hague Congress of the International in September 1872: "In its struggle against the collective power of the prop-
nertied classes, the working class cannot act as a class except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from and opposed to all old parties formed by the properried classes. This constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the triumph of the social revolution, and of its ultimate end, the abolition of classes." The combination of forces which the working class has already exerted by its economical struggles ought, at the same time, to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of landlords and capitalists.

The "anti-authoritarians" counterposed to the "broad scheme" tended to be arbitrary. Draper put all anarchists as not anarchists, as "from below" types. Since revolution is not just a counterposition of "below" to "above", but an activity in which those "below" move to become "above", "from below" versus "from above" is not an adequate paraphrase of "by class struggle" versus "by petitioning or by bureaucratic or military coup".

Lenin points out, in principle, of revolu-
tionary action to pressure from below and renunciation of pressure also from above is anarchism... He who does not understand the new tasks in the epoch of revolution, the tasks of action from above, who is unable to determine the conditions of the struggle for such action, has no idea whatever of the tasks of the proletariat in every demo-
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1872 Split

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cratic revolution".
The real issue was what Schmidt and van der Walt tactfully called “an occasional tendency [by Bakunin] to stereotype the Germans” (and the anarchist historian Max Nettlau called Bakunin’s “nationalist psychosis”). Whereas Marx, Engels, and their comrades quickly developed an independent working-class stance on the 1870 war, Bakunin explicitly sided with Imperial France. That difference did not become an issue in the split in the International, but Kropotkin’s subsequent support for France against Germany in World War One was a stance with real roots in anarchist tradition as well as a personal lapse.

**POLITICS AND ORGANISATION**

In sum, the 1872 split was not between a Bakunin arguing for class-struggle socialism from below, and a Marx pressing towards Stalinism. The issues were those which Marxists since then have seen as central disputes with anarchists: whether workers should mobilise politically (in battles for political reform, and in independent working-class electoral activity), and whether workers should have a cohesive organisation based on the logic of class struggle within capitalism, or a loose network designed by reading back from a picture of an ideal future society.

A review of the background, in the trajectories of the First International and of Bakunin, confirms that assessment. As Marx described it in his Inaugural Address for the First International, the defeat of the 1848 revolutions in Europe was followed by “an epoch of industrial fever, moral mania, and political reaction”.

By the early 1860s, things were changing. The “industrial fever” had created sizeable industrial working classes in several countries, whereas in 1848 one had existed only in Britain.

The London Trades Council, though feeble by comparison with future trade-union organisations, became a force. The French workers gained some elbow-room. Oddly, in terms of the subsequent polemics, the major expression of this was an independent workers’ candidate in March 1864 by Henri Tolain, who was a Proudhonist (proto-anarchist) and theoretically hostile to political action.

Solidarity with an uprising by the Polish people against Russian rule, in 1863, and with the North in the American Civil War (1861-5), further mobilised workers and the left.

The London Trades Council and Tolain’s group organised a joint meeting in London in September 1864. The common account by biographers, and by Marx himself, is that Marx had withdrawn into his study and the British Library since the defeat of the 1848 movement. In fact he had remained involved in the affairs of the German worker-exiles in London (who were, given the repressive conditions in Germany, one of the nearest things there was a live German workers’ movement). He was invited to the September 1864 meeting to represent the German workers. He joined the General Council set up from the September 1864 meeting, bringing with him at least four veterans of his organisation from 1848, the Communist League. In the earliest discussions, he was able to steer the new movement towards a class-struggle rather than just an abstract democratic political basis. He won acceptance for a “Preamble” to the Rules of the International which stated its aims in the following terms: “The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves... the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule; “The economical subjection of the man of labour to the monopoliser of the means of labour — that is, the source of life — lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence.”

“The economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means; “All efforts aiming at the great end hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labour in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries” — and therefore the International should organise that bond of solidarity.

- The third and final part of this review article will cover the history of the First International and the split of 1872, and the broad outlines of anarchist development since 1872.

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Karl Marx; Mikhail Bakunin

**Songs of Liberty and Rebellion**

Joe Hill, born Joel Hägglund, was a Swedish migrant worker, organiser and the best-known songwriter and balladeer of the Industrial Workers of the World (“the Wobblies”), the revolutionary syndicalist trade union which led some of the most important class struggles in early 20th-century America.

Hill was executed in 1915 on trumped-up charges and, in a letter to IWW leader Bill Haywood, coined the famous phrase “don’t mourn, organise!”

His ballad “There Is Power in a Union” was, like many Wobblie “hymns”, a satirical adaptation of a religious song which took the tune and adapted the content of the Christian song “There Is Power in the Blood”. Hill’s version is distinct from the better-known song of the same name by Billy Bragg.

**There is a power in a union**

Would you have freedom from wage slavery,
Then join in the grand Industrial band;
Would you from mis’ry and hunger be free,
Come on! Do your share, like a man.

**CHORUS**

There is pow’r, there is pow’r
In a band of workingmen.
When they stand band in band,
That’s a pow’r, that’s a pow’r
That must rule in every land —
One Industrial Union Grand.

Would you have mansions of gold in the sky,
And live in a shack, way in the back?
Would you have wings up in heaven to fly,
And starve her with rags on your back?

If you’ve had “nuff” of “the blood of the lamb,”
Then join in the grand Industrial band;
If, for a change, you would have eggs and ham,
Then come! Do your share, like a man.

If you like sluggers to beat off your head,
Then don’t organize, all unions despise,
If you want nothing before you are dead,
Shake hands with your boss and look wise.

Come, all ye workers, from every land,
Come join in the grand Industrial band;
Then we our share of this earth shall demand.
Come on! Do your share, like a man.
Return of the slums?

Bruce Robinson reviews Outside the Law

Outside the Law is Rachid Bouchareb’s second film to deal with the colonial relationship of France to its native Algeria. It focuses on the Front de Libération Nationale’s (FLN) guerrilla war against France in Paris from the early 50s up to Algerian independence in 1962, as seen through the story of three brothers.

The film sets the context in two scenes which show their family being evicted from their ancestral land on the orders of a French colonialist and the death of their father in the Sétif massacre, in 1945, after French police opened fire on peaceful Algerian naturalists demonstrating in the streets. The three brothers then follow different paths. One, Said, moves with their mother to Paris, living in an Algerian shanty town in Nanterre. Trying to avoid working at Reimsillillcourt, he becomes involved in prostitution, running a shady night club and boxing promotion. Abdelkader goes to prison for political activity and while there becomes a cadre of the FLN, which is about to launch armed struggle in France. The third brother, Mousaad, becomes a French paratrooper in Vietnam. Defeat and capture by the Vietnamese makes him realise the French are not invincible and on his return he is convinced by Abdelkader to join the FLN, becoming his brother’s “muscle”.

Abdelkader and Mousaad become single-minded revolutionaries who totally subordinate themselves to the cause at whatever cost to themselves and those close to them. The film’s climax comes as this brings them into conflict with their brother who invests everything in a boxing match the FLN does not wish to take place.

The central part of the film shows the two brothers building up the FLN from nothing to dominate the shanty town and the launching of a war against the police in Paris that draws repression directed against the entire Algerian population. Much of the film dramatises actual historical events of the late 50s and early 60s — the FLN assassination of a policeman, who in turn set up their own underground terror organisation to take revenge, the use of torture to gather information on the FLN, the random killing of Algerians forced to drown in the Seine, the use of unobtrusive French sympathisers as FLN couriers (a role played in reality by Trotskyists among others), the financing of FLN arms through money from Algerians in France, the beating to death by the CRS riot police of demonstrators defining a few on Algerians and much else.

The film does not romanticise the FLN. Its growth in Nanterre begins, alongside speeches to the Algerians in Reims, with the two brothers’ elimination of the local boss of its political rival, the MNA, and the assertion of their power by the killing of a shanty-town dweller who uses “taxes” collected for the FLN to buy a much needed fridge for his family. Later one of the top leaders of the FLN in Switzerland tells Abdelkader, by now risen to command the FLN in Paris, to continue attacks on the police knowing the high price the Algerian population will pay. Yet it is clear where Bouchareb’s sympathies lie and the film shows the backing of the mass of Algerians in Paris for the FLN’s struggle.

In the final scenes, Faivre, standing on a Metro station looking at Abdelkader’s body while the CRS beat Algerian demonstrators in the background, acknowledges that, despite the repression against the entire Algerian population and his own death, Abdelkader has won the war. The film ends with documentary footage of the celebrations of Algerian independence a few months later.

Outside the Law is part thriller, part a study of the brothers’ relationships and, most importantly, a historical drama of the Algerian War of Independence. As a thriller, it is sometimes a bit formulaic, but its basis in historical fact and the portrayal of the main characters sustains interest and gives one the sense that their individual fates are tied to great events in which one has to take sides.

Bouchareb has brought one of the hardest fought anti-colonial struggles back to life at a time when the “Arab Spring” brings a new wave of very different uprisings to North Africa.

Ideas for Freedom 2011: From Tunis to London, the workers’ agenda

8-10 July, Highgate Newtown Community Centre, Archway, London N19 5DQ

Ideas for Freedom is a weekend of socialist debate, discussion and workshops hosted by Workers’ Liberty. Recently-announced sessions include:

• A showing of Sergei Eisenstein’s film Strike, introduced by screenwriter and Workers’ Liberty supporter Clive Bradley
• Ziyad from Morocco’s Revolutionary Marxist Current on the uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East
• London Underground workers, supporters of the rank-and-file Tube worker bulletin, on why and how to produce workplace bulletins
• Edd Mustill, socialist historian and activist, on the 100th anniversary of the height of the “Great Unrest”, the high-point of pre-First World War workers’ struggle in Britain
• London Underground Tubeworker, on why and how to produce workplace bulletins
• Mike Wood of Workers’ Liberty on how Trotskyists debated the creation of Israel and the dispossession of the Palestinians in the 1930s

Tickets are cheaper if booked before the end of May: £18 (waged), £10 (low-waged), £6 (unwaged) Book online: www.workersliberty.org/ideas
The [15 May] Palestinian protests were to some extent inspired by struggles in the Arab world. Young Palestinians have already been organising through Facebook and other means, and had a big success — an agreement between Fatah and Hamas was their central demand — and its achievement is in part due to their pressure.

The idea of a Nakba Day on which a big mass of people would come to Israel’s borders unarmed is a very old one which has circulated among Palestinians since the 1950s. However, until yesterday no one actually tried to do it. It must have taken some courage.

There were thousands there, mainly young people. The external protests were mainly on the Lebanese and Jordanian borders. Egypt stopped people from even getting across the Suez canal. In the West Bank, the authorities tried to keep things at a low level because they want a big show in September when they declare a state. In any case, the Israeli army was in full swing.

The demonstrations on the Syrian borders, of course with Syrian interests in the traction actions from repression. In terms of Syrian government propaganda, the IDF played its role perfectly. The other aspect is showing the Israelis what might happen if the intifada is overthrown. On the other hand, we should not assume the young people who went there support the regime.

I think all the people killed by the IDF were Palestinians, but I don’t think anyone is certain. Last night (15 May) we had a protest in Tel Aviv, organised in just a few hours, which produced a violent reaction against strikers. Another one is being held on 4 June, initiated by Hadash [a breakaway group from the Communist Party, and the main left force in Israel] and Meretz [left liberals], with its main slogan recognition of the Palestinian state when it is declared.

The Israeli government is taking a very tough line. There’s a very right-wing majority in the Knesset [Israeli parliament] which is abusing its power to push through all kinds of anti-democratic laws. There include a law passed at the end of March, about demonstrating or commemorating the Nakba.

What that means in practice is even more discrimination against Arab organisations, including local authorities in Arab areas. Municipalities rely heavily on funding from central government, and Arab ones are already poor and discriminated against. So if Jewish municipalities want to have a law passed which is illegal, no problem, but Arab ones who want to commemorate the Nakba will be starved of funds. Predictably it has made young Arabs in Israel more determined, which has also fed into the protests.

**LAWS**

Two other laws have also been passed: the one on “admissions committees” [allowing communities to prevent people moving in, with clearly racist implications] and one which makes it possible to deprive of citizenship those found guilty of espionage or treason.

A law to criminalise boycotts of Israel has been introduced. A law is also being discussed for greater restrictions on migrant workers, legally tying them to one employer so they can’t move people moving in, with clearly racist implications and one which makes it possible to deprive of citizenship those found guilty of espionage or treason.

There is also a call, though not a specific legislative proposal yet, to restrict strikes. This comes in connection with a railway workers’ struggle against privatisation. The media is demanding restrictions of the right to strike, perhaps a law against strikes in central government services. At the same time, the railway workers’ fight against privatisation is continuing.

By the way, the railway workers’ union is the only one in Israel led by a woman, Gila Haery.

Everyone is looking to this September, when the Palestinians declare their state.

The elections themselves have a bias against new work-class or radical parties even participating built into their rules. To form a new party, its organisers need five thousand signatures in two daily newspapers, and to fork out a million Egyptian pounds or more. Some new radical parties are refusing to pay a penny, but that probably means they won’t be able to stand in September.

The outcome of those elections remains unpredictable. The Muslim Brotherhood, which is for sure the largest organised force, has increased its slate to fifty percent of seats that had said it would stand (a third). It isn’t fielding a presidential candidate.

For sure the Brotherhood’s backing of the timid constitutional changes in the referendum (which left intact Islam’s role in Egyptian law) was important in turning out the vote. And the Brotherhood, long the chief opposition movement, has positioned itself very close to the military government since Mubarak’s fall (when Essam Sharaf announced himself Prime Minister to the crowds in Tahrir Square, there was a representative of the Brothers beside him).

Their caution towards the elections is partly strategic — they don’t want to frighten the USA, so they say. But maybe they are less confident of sweeping the board than they should be.

Since the beginning of the revolution, the Brothers have been facing big internal difficulties. A more radical — and, it would seem, at least in some cases more secular — young “wing” has challenged the old guard. But in the end neither the old nor the young wing has been challenging the recent leadership.

**LIBYA**

The military forces of Colonel Qaddafi have so far held on to power in the west of Libya around Tripoli, though Benghazii in the east remains firmly in “rebels” hands. For those fighting Qaddafi, reports suggest, UN/NATO involvement remains important, although there are frequent criticisms that these forces don’t “do enough”. In Misrata, where Qaddafi has continued to bombard the city, apparently there is a clear link between levels of bombardment and NATO’s enforcement of its no-fly zone. There are frequent reports of civilians being killed or injured in mixed ‘rebels’/government forces. There are former miiles — from a wide variety of political backgrounds, Islamist, liberal, and even self-styled secular governments. The confluence of the Libya crisis is largely self-selected — so far there is no process of election, and criticisms are emerging regarding the transparency of the elections. Defectors from Qaddafi are prominent in the “rebels” — though especially from the professional classes. (To be “political” under Qaddafi meant to support the regime).

In general, Libya has a less sophisticated level of political organisation than, for instance, Tunisia to its north and Egypt to its east. Qaddafi was and is a much more repressive dictator, and organised opposition within the country had been effectively crushed. There are no unions or leftist parties.

But in Benghazi there has recently developed the beginnings of a real democratic, grassroots based culture. Qaddafi’s support seems, despite some western media accounts, quite small. Public demonstrations of loyalty in Tripoli are not very large. Still, he maintains a formidable apparatus of terror.

By Adam Keller

New political voices are emerging within the independent trade union movement which has exploded into existence since January. The unions themselves now have 250,000 members and are beginning to organise groups of workers previously unorganised even by the trade unions. The SWP — group in the UK) has announced him self Prime Minister to the crowds in Tahrir Square, there was a representative of the Muslim Brotherhood...

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Anarchism means a classless society

Recent issues of Solidarity have carried debate on the differences and similarities between Marxist and anarchist traditions. Here, North London Solidarity Federation (an anarcho-syndicalist group) responds to “Working-Class Struggle and Anarchism”, which appeared in Solidarity 3/198.

Anarchism, as the author points out, is a “radically broad label” and so it would be foolish to try to identify a single tendency within anarchism. Similar assertions and criticisms are made regarding Marxism and indeed currently, there is a million and one offshoots ranging from North Korean Marxism through to the present day SWP. Trying to refer to them all in blanket fashion as ‘Marxism’ would be futile.

Many anarchists would see themselves as being broadly in the tradition of anarchism-syndicalism. The Solidarity Federation, for example, takes a lot of inspiration from theCNT in Spain among others, yet we do not see this as the be all and end all of struggle or a blueprint to follow. It is just a series of moments in time — nothing more nothing less. We can learn from its successes and failures like any other movement.

Anarchism means a classless society

Inherent lack of transparency and democratic accountability are not questions about abstract principles; they’re questions about concrete policies, about the technologies of power. To concretely develop the basis for an autonomous socialist movement, we’ll have to begin by attacking the power of capital, the power of the state, and the power of the corporations. We’ll have to begin the process of taking over the means of production and the means of distribution.

We don’t support the Labour Party. This isn’t just because it’s an “stupid party”. It’s because the Labour Party has been used to describe societies and ideas that are very much the opposite of their original meaning. In short anarchists want not “Taxation of the rich” but “abolition of the state”. We don’t see it as a question of whether to have rich or poor; we see it as a question of who makes the decisions. We want self organization on the shopfloor to build the power, confidence, and skill of our class, not depending to bring in union negotiators to speak on our behalf.

Letters

Don’t rule out workers’ power

Les Hearn’s article on nuclear power (Solidarity 3/203) seems to be based mainly on the arguments being put forward by George Monbiot and Mark Lynas.

Though he lists the objections to nuclear power, he doesn’t even attempt to answer many of them, and on the issue of waste disposal, plant safety and cost, he fails to see the reality of nuclear power within the context of a global capitalist economy.

Critically, he also fails to question the projected “energy gap” which is being used to justify nuclear power expansion. And he doesn’t ask what is the best way forward for energy in the interests of the working class.

Capitalism is immensely wasteful of the fossil fuel energy. Insulation and energy conservation could slash by a third the energy consumption of a capitalist economy. The history books has also been called communism and so on. Not every country without it being for all countries, however unstable or tyrannical they are.

If Les is so confident that designers can improve nuclear free-ha had a safe-fueling system been installed — as should and could have been — if only the nuclear’dn’t cut corners and disregarded safety, it would have been virtually free from disasters.

Les doesn’t deal with the proliferation argument at all. But you can’t advocate nuclear power expansion in one country without it being for all countries, however unstable or tyrannical they are.

If Les is so confident that designers can improve nuclear free, they have no faith in the workers in the re-

newables sector to devise better ways of harnessing the sun’s power directly and indirectly.

We need to come forward with a strong and uncom-

promising socialist programme for energy and cutting emissions, and not give more energy to this divisive and hazardous distraction.

When Callinicos was newbie

Martin Thomas is wrong when he says that Alex Calli-

nicos joined IS/SWP in 1973 (“The Quinny Terry of Marxism”, Workers’ Liberty 3/23). It was probably 1970 or before, or failing that 1971.

He was an active member of Oxford IS in 1972 when he was a student and returned to Oxford in 1973 for the next year for paintingweg somewhere in Balliol College to protest at a visit by a South African or Rhodesian govern-

ment representative. He had been a member before this hap-

pened in mid-1971. He was thus not around in Oxford when the branch was formed to support the “international cam-

paign” of Workers’ Fight [a forerunner of AWL] in December 1971 but did play a role on his return in 1972 when, as a re-

member of IS, he did support the RCP in London.

The hotel worker who has accused Dominique Strauss-Kahn of rape is a “bad worker” in some sens, an assault on her would have been justified.

SlutWalk is an interesting departure on the feminist scene. What do other readers think?

Cathy Nuge nt, south London
A activist in RASSA, the section of the Unite union which represents BA cabin crew, spoke to Solidarity about how deals negotiated between the airline and union leaders which workers are now voting on.

There has been much debate in various publications about what is, and what is not, included in the deal. As far as I know all those who have been subject to disciplinary action can have their cases reviewed by ACAS, and ACAS’s decision will be binding on BA. The only people who are outside this part of the deal will be the three people who have already had their employment tribunals (none of them have had an outcome yet).

I believe that one of the reasons that staff travel will be returned to everyone (should the deal be accepted) is because BA management know the punishment someone for taking industrial action is against the law and they are well aware that when the case comes to court, they would lose. Taking away staff travel and the desired effect in that it was one of the main reasons people did not go on strike. As far as [BA boss Willie] Walsh was concerned it was a case of act now and worry about the consequences later.

Many of those who were on strike were not paid, even though their sickness was entirely genuine. Walsh did not care about the legality of deducting pay, only that in the short term he made it clear to those who were afraid to go on strike because of loss of earnings that they could not hide behind a sickness certificate. It seems likely that BA eventually have been forced to pay all those who had genuine sickness certificates, and therefore a review of all those cases is part of the deal.

FACILITIES
Importantly, all the normal trade union facilities are to be maintained, including offices and re-negotiated union reps (rep on facility times), and which works to the day to day problems.

This can only be a good thing. Walsh said that mixed fleet is a failure. Currently they are not anything like up to normal BA standards. The work load is punishing, and BA management themselves admit to finding it difficult to find the “talent” (there weren't words enough) to work on this fleet.

Time only will tell. Guarantees have been given that all workers will be able to travel and will not start to lose money. How ever many years we ago we had a similar “money back guarantee” and this simply disappeared.

My gut feeling is that the crew will accept this deal, because they accept that those who did not support the dispute at the beginning will now leave the door open for BA to act all their plans. An all-out strike right at the start would have changed this. Walsh could not have kept the airline going with just his “volunteers”. This did not happen and now the crew have just the make the best of what we have. If management can get everything they want from the BA cabin crew and their brand doesn’t suffer, then the new fleet will grow as fast as they can train the new recruits.

It is sad to think that a leading company like BA is happy to pay its frontline workers such low wages. Maybe the recession has worked to the advantage of many companies to do less, and we can only hope that changing times and conditions will improve the situation. For now, I feel employers will have the upper hand.

I hope that other workers will learn from what has happened at BA. The union is only as strong as its members, and if they are not prepared to stick together and stand up for their rights, in the end they will suffer for it.

The ballot will run for four weeks so we should know the result by the middle of June.

Tories attack railworkers as “workshy”

By Tony Byrne, train driver and RMT activist

According to an article in the Times (12 May), “David Cameron is facing growing pressure from on rail unions amid anger over his promises that are said to be putting the future of the network at risk.”

So it is the rail unions that are putting the network at risk, is it not? According to the opinions, for on the ground and the courts who already have 20 workers to protest and a decision to only allow drivers to be able to travel and work safely on the rail. Other “workshy practices” include a failure to embrace flexible working and to allow people to be paid a bonus to work overtime. We don’t mind “embracing” these things just as long as we are paid for the sacrifices we are making. I am going to be making more money for a train company I’d like a share of it too.

But that is just what the government and employ ers don’t want to do. The government wants to re duce the subsidy it gives to the railways so that it can use the money saved to pay back the money it spent to bail out the banks. The companies know that subsidies will be reduced in order to maintain their profits they want to attack our terms and conditions, employment law and health and safety regulations. As a reporter, the McNulty Report, is due to be published during May.

The unions need to get together and discuss how to fight the attack, draw the membership into the fight at the same time and link up with all the different workers and their brands. A national meeting of all these workers is a failure. Currently they are not anything like up to normal BA standards. The work load is punishing, and BA management themselves admit to finding it difficult to find the “talent” (there weren't words enough) to work on this fleet. Time only will tell. Guarantees have been given that all workers will be able to travel and will not start to lose money. However many years we ago we had a similar “money back guarantee” and this simply disappeared.

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The deal promises that the earnings of current crew if lack of work means they will start to lose money. However many years ago we had a similar “money back guarantee” and this simply disappeared.

What is the BA union doing? My gut feeling is that the crew will accept this deal, because they accept that those who did not support the dispute at the beginning will now leave the door open for BA to act all their plans. An all-out strike right at the start would have changed this. Walsh could not have kept the airline going with just his “volunteers”. This did not happen and now the crew have just the make the best of what we have. If management can get everything they want from the BA cabin crew and their brand doesn’t suffer, then the new fleet will grow as fast as they can train the new recruits.

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BA deal: ‘employers have the upper hand now’
Mark Britnell, recruited by the government as an adviser on the changes it will force through in the Health Service (Nursing Times, 3 May), has said: “In the future, the NHS will be a state insurance provider, not a state deliverer...” The NHS will be shown no mercy and the best time to take advantage of this will be in the next couple of years” (Guardian, 14 May).

In the Health Service Journal (11 May), Britnell proposes a model: “the government [...] provide people with a sort of individual savings account that enables them to take greater personal responsibility. The central provident fund enables people to pay for their own housing, pensions, health care and even their children’s tertiary education”. He also suggests “co-payment”, whereby people would pay part of the price of care and medicine, while a public fund pays the rest. Lib Dem bigwig Shirley Williams has publicly challenged David Cameron to “dismiss Britnell and specifically reject [Britnell’s] predictions for the future of the NHS.”

**CREDIBILITY**

Otherwise, says Williams, Cameron’s denials that “his party intends to privatise the NHS” lack all credibility (Guardian, 16 May).

Cameron has failed to respond, other than via a government statement insisting, disingenuously that Britnell is not a government adviser (he is on a volunteer panel). Professor Steve Field, chair of another panel of advised by NHS Future Forum, has said Britnell is “wrong”, but then Field already criticises the government’s proposals as “unworkable” and “destabilising” and wants to change them at the edges. Even with the “training exercise” pause (announced early April, and due to run to early June) the process of NHS privatisation is driving ahead. The driver right now is the £20 billion “efficiencies” the government wants to claw back by 2014-15.

- Across the country wards and services are closing down.
- Many non-urgent elective treatments are no longer available.
- Queen Mary’s hospital in South East London has temporarily closed its A&I department and maternity services, a move that potentially spells the closure of the entire 430 bed district hospital. Many lost NHS services will be replaced by pared down versions provided by the private sector (using NHS money). For example, in April 2011 the Tees, Wear and Insh Valley NHS Trust shut down its operation in the local prison service and that was replaced by Care UK. The commissioning board admitted that Care UK would provide an inferior service but that they had chosen it because they were cheaper.

Though it seems some core services will be protected from competitive tendering, profitable services will be hived off and high risk, high cost areas will remain in the NHS. Running down the NHS service creates a market for private healthcare. As the free market becomes increasingly limited and supply standard those who can afford to, will choose to Pay. There are a number of mechanisms which will make expansion of private health care easier, including the lifting the cap on the number of private beds in NHS hospitals and introducing top-up payments. Private providers, running NHS contracts, will always find ways to make money directly from their patients. Early indications from the NHS Future Forum indicate these mechanisms will remain.

The final result of the cuts will be to create a “re-service” army of unremunerated healthcare professionals. By pushing health workers into the dole the government is making a gift of highly skilled (and desperate) workers to the incoming private healthcare corporations. Even a substantially revised Bill will include GP commissioning, and that will introduce market forces and bureaucratic obstacles at every level of the health service.

**TREATMENT DENIED**

For the last 60 years, medical decisions were, for the most part, based on clinical judgement. We are now seeing some treatments being denied for financial reasons. This trend will increase.

The logical end is a US-style fully privatised system, where people die of curable diseases because they cannot fight the faceless market-driven bureaucracies of their private health insurers. As US medic Dr Linda Peeno (former employee of Humana health corporation) explains:

> “In the spring of 1987, as a physician, I defined a man a necessary operation that would have saved his life, and thus caused his death. No person, and no group has held me accountable for this, because in fact, what I did was I saved a company a half a million dollars.”

The old NHS, based on state-planning and risk-sharing, had a “bureaucracy” of 6% of total health spending. Despite its inadequacies, there was a constant, conscious organisational aim of limiting the provision of health care services. The UK, with the introduction of internal markets and outsourcing, the NCAPC is now 15% of total health spend. It attaches price labels to treatments and manages the exchange of money. CEOs do not have the time or expertise to provide commissioning services and will buy-in help from the private sector. The result — an enormous, fragmented, privatised bureaucracy — will produce nothing of any benefit except profit for various private interests.

**OPPOSITION**

If the Tories make enough concessions, middle-class pressure groups like the BMA may drop their opposition. If that happens then there is a danger that the health unions and the Labour Party, which have so far failed to set out a clear ideological defence of socialised healthcare, will fail to mobilise their forces to reverse the privatisation juggernaut.

We need to make the political arguments to build a mass opposition. That means arguments against markets and in favour of human decision-making processes. We need to assert that health needs, not profit, come first.

When the market comes to govern over healthcare, it dictates matters of life and death. It is an expansionary industry that will only be stopped by our intervention.

We need a working-class movement with clear political aims. We need workers’ government that serves our class interests with the same strength that the current coalition serves capitalism.

### June: building for new student struggles

By Daniel Cooper, President-elect, Royal Holloway SU (pc)

On 4 June, anti-cuts groups and activists from across the country will meet to discuss the way forward for the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts.

Founded in February 2010 to coordinate student anti-cuts struggles, the NCAFC gained huge recognition and influence during the big student protests last winter. However, its failure to create accountable democratic structures has prevented it from consolidating and developing.

The campaign is still organising impressive initiatives and actions, but these are spars, rather than part of an ongoing, consistent, planned campaign.

In practice, decisions are made by a small group of activists in London, moderated by discussion on email lists. That is why the five local anti-cuts groups which initiated the 4 June conference (Royal Holloway, Hull, Merseyside, Birmingham and Newcastle) called for “democratic structures through which local groups and activists can coordinate and build an accountable national movement.” It is why Workers’ Liberty students and others will be pushing for a clear democratic national structure to democracise NCAFC and step up its campaigning.

The draft agenda for the event also includes activist training, workshops on ESOL the London Met struggle and solidarity with workers on 30 June, and discussion on next year, including how to make sure a national demonstration against fees and cuts happens.

At a time when students face £9,000 fees and an avalanche of conference, this conference could not be more important. Please send people from your college or university anti-cuts groups, student union or other campaigning body.

* More information: dan.cooper3@gmail.com or www.anticuts.com

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By Gerry Bates

On Tuesday 17 May, Syrian activists used Facebook to call for a general strike throughout Syria on Wednesday 18 to protest against the Assad’s regime use of tanks, bullets, and curfews to suppress the re-belling movement across the country.

As far as can be determined, while outside jour- nalists are excluded from Syria, it continues that the opposition is strong enough to噗起any thing like a general strike. A refugee fleeing across the border to Lebanon told Reuters: “There are still a lot of rebels in Syria. Participants still chanted calls for toppling the regime...”

Assad must go.

Ports from Daraa, “Curfew is in place from 7pm and until 8am. Mosques are closed and many are fore- bidden to come to the streets on Fridays...”

Syria is in the streets especially in the downtown area. “Despite all this, a mostly women and chil- dren’s movement takes to the streets. A protest place on 13 May, and par- ticipants still chanted calls for the ousting of Bashar Assad.”

The British labour movement owes a duty of solidarity to the brave rebels in Syria.