



For a
workers'
government

Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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FIGHT EVERY CUT See page 5 **BACK EVERY STRIKE**



Bromley council workers strike against mass privatisations

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 shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, 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 recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for the labour movement to break with "social partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers' struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups.

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and alliances.

We stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. 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 capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.
- If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!

Contact us:

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Orgreave: no time limit on truth

By Dave Kirk

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has announced it will not mount a formal investigation into the policing of the so called "Battle of Orgreave" and its aftermath during the 1984/85 Miners' Strike.

The IPCC's own initial investigation found evidence of police brutality, officers fabricating evidence and committing perjury. The IPCC's argument for not continuing the investigation — that it is too long ago and they don't have the resources to investigate Orgreave and the Miners' Strike whilst its conducting two other major investigations into South Yorkshire Police over Hillsborough and child sexual exploitation and grooming — is feeble.

Campaigners from the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign are disgusted

but not surprised at this decision from the IPCC. It has a woeful record of holding the police to account. Its under resourced, has very limited powers to demand evidence or call witnesses and much of its staff are ex police.

The "Battle of Orgreave" on the 18 of June 1984 was just the most spectacular set piece of the Miners' Strike which pitted the striking miners, their communities and their supporters against the entire might of the state. The police were the cutting edge of that assault unleashed on the miners.

8,000 miners tried to picket the Orgreave coking plant, the similar number of police present launched a sustained violent assault on the miners, hundreds of whom were injured and arrested. 95 miners were charged but eventually acquitted of rioting when it became obvious the police



Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign activists are disgusted at the IPCC report

witnesses had conspired to fabricate much of their account.

We should accept no time limit on exposing the truth about that strike and demanding justice. Inquiries into institutional child abuse and Bloody Sunday have been held after longer periods.

The Orgreave Truth and Justice campaign have been campaigning over the last 3 years for a full independent judicial enquiry into all aspects of the strike including its policing. Support them in that fight!

• otjc.org.uk

Chile: ex-prisoners fight for compensation

A group of ex-political prisoners in Chile are on hunger strike demanding better pensions and compensation for the torture they endured under Pinochet's dictatorship. Workers' Liberty activist Max Munday spoke to Ben Veraga-Carvello a Chilean refugee living in Britain.

Ben arrived in Britain in 1976. He lived initially in a reception centre for Chilean refugees in London before moving to Sheffield.

As a prominent student activist and a leading member of revolutionary group M.I.R. who had supported the left-wing President Salvador Allende, Ben had been targeted by Pinochet's regime. He had joined the resistance to the 11 September coup alongside many who had placed their faith in the country's democratically elected socialist leader.

Under General Pinochet's regime it is estimated that between 2,000-3,200 people were murdered, up to 80,000 were interned in prisons and concentration camps and as many as 30,000 were tortured. According to Amnesty International and the U.N. Human Rights Commission, a total of 250,000 people were detained for

political reasons during the 17 years of dictatorship.

Ben was arrested and held in the prison in Temuco, and later in Santiago. After a period in jail he was taken under heavy military and police escort to the airport. Ben had five minutes to say goodbye to his mum and family before being put on a plane. His girlfriend Jacqueline disappeared in August 1974 and was never seen again. She is one of an estimated 1,200 of the "disappeared" of Chile whose fate remains unknown.

Ben doesn't go into detail about what happened when he was caught and imprisoned. However he is clearly still traumatised despite living in another country for 39 years. The sight of someone in uniform shocks him, and when he hears the sound of a helicopter, he remembers the time when he was thrown out of one. Torture was not just common for political prisoners, it was central to a regime that used the lasting memory of an initial 4 months of intensive executions to maintain its power — people could imagine what could be done to them.

Ben still has to walk with two crutches. He says that people often react by showing pity, but that there is not the specialist medical



Ex-political prisoners in Chile on hunger strike for better compensation

and therapeutic support for survivors, based on a thorough understanding of what happened in the 1960s, 70s and 80s under the military dictatorships that covered South America.

Now, Ben and other Chilean refugees in Britain are supporting other former prisoners who have been on hunger strike in their country since 13 April. They are demanding compensation, a permanent body to oversee the rights of those persecuted under Pinochet's regime, and an increase in the measly pension paid by the state in recognition of former prisoners' inability to work after what they suffered.

The payments were calculated on what the Government thought of as adequate for survivors' in-

dividuals needs, around US\$240, not what the (mainly) sole breadwinner of a family and household requires to live.

Some of these men are old and their campaign has recently fragmented with some of the strikers suspending their actions in order to consider the Government's response in a commission formed with the Church, state and other organisations. Others however, continue to refuse to eat, hoping this will pressure the Government.

An inadequate response by the Chilean state to the hunger strikers will further reinforce the feeling in the country and the exiled and refugees, that Chile has not properly confronted its brutal recent past.

Afghan teachers' pay strike

By Patrick Murphy

Since 31 May teachers in Afghanistan have been on continuous strike to demand that they are properly paid.

As *Solidarity* went to press the teachers had been on strike for two weeks.

The strike started in Kabul where it shut as many as 80 schools (the government claim 27) but spread across the country in rolling action affecting 18 out of the 34 provinces.

Afghan teachers are the lowest paid public servants and often have to wait months before receiving their salaries due to the government's permanent financial problems and incompetence.

There are 200,000 teachers in Afghanistan and they are among the lowest paid in the world earning between 7,000 and 18,000 Afghanis or £80-145 per month.

One of the issues in the dispute is a promise by the President Ashraf Ghani to increase teachers' salaries and provide them with a



A meeting of striking teachers in Kabul

piece of land. Ghani has broken these promises or offered poor and unproductive land which leaves teachers in poverty. He also promised to establish a commission which would provide loans for teachers so that they can buy homes.

One striking teacher Amadullah Alkozai from Kabul's Ghazi High School told Associated Press that he had been teaching for 27 years and still had no home. "I am so upset for my students that the school is closed, but I had no other choice," he said, adding

that the strike will continue until the teachers' demands are met.

The newly elected leader of the national teachers' council Fazel Ahmad Fazel said that "All our demands are legitimate and we will not attend classes until we get our rights. We are very sad because of our students, but this government has left us no other choice."

Afghanistan itself is an extremely poor country in which 36% of its 30 million people live below the poverty line. Education is a vital tool for raising people

above poverty and developing society. In Afghanistan, however, teachers work with children starting from a very low base with 76% illiteracy and, according to Unicef, two million children working in brick making, carpet weaving, construction, mining, farming and other jobs. Children and teachers have found themselves under assault from the Taliban who have bombed schools and attempted to prevent girls from accessing education as well as from Western military forces whose occupation and drone attacks have ravaged the land and been responsible for thousands of deaths.

During the occupation money seemed to be no object to the US in particular. According to their own government sources \$104bn was spent on reconstruction and infrastructure projects while the war cost over \$700bn.

This makes it all the more outrageous that US foreign aid to Afghanistan was halved from 2014.



Student activists organise

By Workers' Liberty students

On 10-12 June, the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts (NCAFC) held its Summer Conference in Sheffield.

Students and education activists came together to discuss and vote on the next steps in the fight for free education. The first day was given over to the women's section of the campaign, with a discussion on perspective for the NCAFC's feminist work, with a panel discussion under the banner "organising for workers' rights as a feminist issue"

The conference saw over 100 delegates representing student groups from Aberdeen to Surrey. This shows that the campaign has renewed itself — most of the leading activists on the National Committee of the NCAFC are students who became politically active years after the student upheavals of 2010-2011.

A couple of weeks before it took place, the outgoing National Executive Committee of the NUS voted against organising a national demonstration against tuition fees in the Autumn term. As the major grassroots organisation of the student left, NCAFC issued its own call for a November march for free education, democratic universities, and defence of migrants' rights.

Comrades discussed how positive slogans, like "free education" and "expropriate the banks", were important for educating the movement and asserting a distinct vision, rather than negative slogans like "fuck the Tories".

The conference discussed repression on campuses, with workshops on

the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill and anti-migrant policing and their impact on education. Comrades reported on the fight against the deportation of the Balochi activist Majid Ali and demonstrations against Yarl's Wood detention centre. A workshop led by Workers' Liberty activist Omar Raii and NUS Vice President for Welfare Shelly Asquith discussed the importance of defending freedom of speech and organisation — against college managements, but also within student unions and the student left more broadly.

Following on from the vote at London Young Labour conference to back a left-wing campaign against withdrawal from Europe, a caucus of activists from half a dozen campuses met during a break to plan to launch a campaign for workers' solidarity and migrant rights across Europe, and against nationalist "Brexit" arguments in the run-up to a referendum.

In the motions debate, the NCAFC debated national and international issues, endorsing the fight against Euro-withdrawal; the importance of freedom of speech; the struggle for free education within the Labour Party waged by Labour Campaign for Free Education; and plans for the national demonstration. After much controversy, the campaign also voted to endorse boycotts of Israel — a position which Workers' Liberty argued against on the grounds that it is counter-productive in the fight for Palestinian freedom.

Future issues of Solidarity will look in more detail at some of the big political issues raised at the conference.

Justice for Azelle and Jean

By Gemma Short

Anthony Long, the police officer who fatally shot Azelle Rodney in 2005, is on trial for murder.

Prosecutors have told the jury that Long had no lawful reason for shooting Azelle. The court has also heard that Long opened fire less than one-tenth of a second after unmarked police cars boxed in the car Rodney was travelling in. Long fired eight shots in total, hitting Azelle in the arm, body, twice around his right ear and then after a pause, twice through the top of his head.

Prosecutors argue that Long "opened fire extremely quickly ... he cannot have taken any time to observe anything happening inside the car before he opened fire." Yet police shootings in a situation where they "cannot have taken any time to observe" are not unusual.

The family of Jean Charles de Menezes, also shot dead by police in 2005,



is challenging the decision not to bring charges over his death at the European court of human rights.

Jean was shot at Stockwell underground station after being mistaken for one of the suspects of attempted bombings the previous day. Police reports of the shooting are unclear and contradict each other, and it is unclear whether any warnings were issued to allow Jean to surrender.

Justice for victims of police violence is rare. Cases rarely get to trial as the Crown Prosecution Services judges they are unlikely to win, and those that do make trial often do not result in conviction.

By Hugh Edwards

Italy's 31 May regional election results signalled a crisis, or dramatic curtailment of what so far has seemed the irresistible rise of Matteo Renzi's Democratic Party.

From its extraordinary success in last year's European election, when it took 41% of the vote, the Democratic Party plummeted to 23%, in the seven regions contested, while still securing victory in five other regions. The result underlines once more the increasingly unstable and volatile profile of the political situation.

There was also a further significant increase in the number of abstentions — 1 in 2 didn't vote! The 18% achieved by Grillo's 5 Star Movement, in spite of losing around two million votes, represents its highest ever vote in regional elections, and gained it the position of the country's second party after the Democratic Party. But in the general mayhem of massive haemorrhage of electoral support there was one omi-

nous exception and overall victor, the violently racist, anti-Europe Lega Nord of Matteo Salvini.

Quadrupling its vote across the whole of the North, including the prize of the historic stronghold of "socialist" Liguria, and increasing its support in Italy's "red" belt of the Marche, Umbria and Toscana, Salvini's outfit, in an electoral alliance with Berlusconi's weakening Forza Italia, while-arm-in-arm on the streets with the fascist Casa Pound, has now assumed the leadership of Italy's fragmented centre right, which though deeply fragmented and divided tactically and organisationally since Berlusconi's cynical "pact" with the rising star of Renzi, now constitutes a clear arithmetical majority in the country.

Renzi, predictably has attempted to dismiss the results as of mere local significance, irrelevant nationally. He is fooling no one!

Full article at: bit.ly/RenziBuffer

Keep the UK in the EU, for a Workers' Europe

An open letter to the members of the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Party

Both the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) and Socialist Party (SP) have declared that they will vote for UK withdrawal from the EU.

The SWP is for withdrawal because, "[The EU is] a bosses' organisation designed to ease the exploitation of workers and sharpen the capacity of European capitalists to beat other capitalists." The SP say similar: the UK should get out because the EU is a "bosses' club."

So the first problem is that the SWP and SP deliberately misunderstand the question in the referendum. We are not being asked to vote for or against capitalism. We will be asked our opinion about European unity and (given the tone of the debate) about migrant workers. The left should say we are for European unity and for migrants. We should vote to stay in the EU.

These two socialist organisations, with a combined membership of, perhaps, 3000 — along with a couple of trade unions and what remains of British Stalinism — say they will campaign independently from the political right.

So the second problem with a "left" Out campaign is that it will be utterly overshadowed by a vile, xenophobic, often openly racist, campaign led by UKIP, the Tory right and the tabloid press. This, the real Out campaign, has a long tradition in UK politics, will be very well-funded, has scores of established politicians and other public figures which will make its case through much of the national press and media.

The danger, of course, is that workers who listen to these leftists will only hear "No," ignoring the details. The far left will give a gloss of socialist respectability to workers tempted to vote with UKIP.

The SWP and SP think that by bending towards nationalist anti-boss feeling among some workers they might recruit. SP leader Peter Taaffe declares: "The alleged benefits of the 'free movement of labour' are in reality a device for the bosses to exploit a vast pool of cheap labour." The SP is making an unpleasant accommodation here, tacking towards British workers who want to restrict the right of migrants to work here. The benefits of the free movement of labour do not exist in inverted commas, nor are they "alleged"; the benefits are real and to be defended. Just ask any Polish worker.

The third problem with a "socialist" campaign for withdrawal is that if the country votes to pull out of the EU those who will implement the decision, and benefit from the vote, will be the right and far right — not the left. Laws that protect workers' rights will be abolished. Racism and the right will grow and migrants' right to work will be further restricted; many migrant workers will simply find it impossible to work in the UK.

It seems that the SWP know this, writing, "Philip Hammond [and] Michael Gove [say they will] back a British exit if there was an immediate referendum. Either Gove and the

others are so stupid that they don't realise this will make UKIP even stronger, or they don't care." We might add that by voting for exit the SWP will strengthen UKIP, and that they are either stupid, or don't care.

Of course the SWP declares it is voting to get the UK out to defend migrant workers. This is a silly argument. Whatever next? Vote Tory to nationalise the banks? Vote UKIP for women's liberation?

Of course the SP is right when it claims that the Tory party might split, and Cameron might go, if the referendum result is to leave Europe. But who will gain? Cameron will then be replaced by someone who is worse, with policies that are vile! Not all damage to the Tories is good for us.

The fourth problem with the "left" vote for UK exit is that it is a howling example of mainly negative political sloganising. "F**k fees!", "Gove out!", "Britain out of the EU!"

Take "Gove out!": Michael Gove was replaced by someone more PR friendly, but with the same policies. The problem wasn't Gove at all, but Government policy. We need a focus on articulating our positive programme. We need to understand the dangers of negative slogans: to win an argument we need to be able to explain what we are for, not just what we oppose.

The SWP, in particular, seems to continually focus on the damage they can do the existing system — supporting, for example, any force attacking "imperialism" no matter how reactionary. Of course a UK exit will disorientate and damage mainstream British politicians. That's true. But the positive question to ask is: who will benefit? Not us. Not the migrants.

FEDERAL EUROPE

In fact "Out of the EU! is worse than "Gove Out!" because it stands in direct contradiction to our programme for a Federal Europe.

The European bourgeoisies have substantially united Europe, politically and economically. They have done it in their own way, in their own interests. Nevertheless, despite all qualifications, that work is positive and progressive. Our job is not to try to destroy that work — any more than socialists would bulldoze the capitalists' factories, rip up railway lines or pull down libraries and museums.

And this is the fifth problem: what is wrong with the anti-Europe left? These groups misunderstand the relationship between the socialist project and advanced capitalism. They set themselves against the flow of history. Socialism comes out of advanced capitalism, and is made possible by advanced capitalism. Socialism requires the scientific, economic, technological, cultural and democratic progress made by capitalism. We don't want to destroy everything capitalism has produced — very far from it.

Who would suggest, for example, the destruction of our NHS — built within capitalism — so we can rebuild a socialist NHS at some point in the future? It is obvious to us that

the route to a better NHS lies in defending the existing one, and planning to reshape it after the working class comes to power. The question of Europe is no different. The SWP and SP want to destroy the existing unity in Europe so they can build a socialist united Europe in the future. They can't see the contradiction because voting for a UK exit is a political collapse under nationalist pressure — and that pressure doesn't exist on domestic questions such as the NHS.

In Europe we want to build on what is positive, not start again from Year Zero.

European unity, and the reduction and abolition of the borders that separate the peoples of Europe are gains made under capitalism that we will maintain and extend, not something we want to abolish. European unity is part of our democratic programme. So to agitate to pull the UK out of Europe so that, in the future, it can form a part of a European federation makes no sense at all.

We want the left to unite to fight for a Workers' Europe, defending and extending the rights workers have won across Europe, and defending free movement. That means we will vote "Yes" to keep the UK in Europe.

Mark Osborn

Charlie Kimber's shame

By Sacha Ismail

At the end of May, the SWP published an article by their national secretary Charlie Kimber under the title "EU referendum debate can't be left to racists".

"Every flag-waving nationalist and bigot will crawl out from underneath their rock to argue against the EU shackling "our" freedoms."

Yes, indeed. So why not argue against withdrawal?

Most of Kimber's argument it is hung on a negative proposition: "We won't side with any 'keep Britain in' campaign". So an abstention? No, towards the end of the article, Kimber comes out for a "No" vote, though still shamefacedly: "A vote against the EU could also cause a crisis for our rulers."

What underlies the SWP's position is not a rational explanation about the logic of the struggle, but negativism: whatever is bad for or opposed by the ruling class must be good for us. The logic of reactionary anti-capitalism in the SWP's politics is working itself through.

They say: "Lined up on that side is Tory prime minister David Cameron and the majority of the British ruling class... A vote against the EU could also cause a crisis for our rulers. The Tory party could rip itself apart over its divisions on Europe."

But a crisis driven by the nationalist right, weakening the Tory party by strengthening UKIP, will not help the labour movement and the left.

• Full article: bit.ly/1cYJkmJ

Campaign for a Workers' Europe!

This letter will be circulated to gather support for left opposition to UK withdrawal from Europe.

With the formation of "Conservatives for Britain", the right-wing campaign to exit the EU has begun. Unfortunately, it is likely to be mirrored on the left.

A number of Labour MPs and trade unionists and the *Morning Star* newspaper will group themselves behind the banner of "Labour for Britain", saying life will be better for British workers outside the EU.

Far-left groups are likely to dissociate from the nationalist name and from Labour. They say they will organise an internationalist anti-EU campaign, one that defends the rights of migrants.

They are all setting themselves an impossible task: the automatic right of EU workers to migrate to the UK, and of UK workers to migrate to EU countries, will be ended by UK exit. Those that do arrive after a UK exit are likely to come on worse terms than workers currently do, and they will arrive to a climate poisoned by the xenophobia of the referen-

dum campaign, an atmosphere in which the left itself cannot thrive.

A UK outside the EU will offer worse prospects for fighting for workers' rights than we have staying in. The nationalist right, no friends to workers, will have the political upper-hand in a post-exit UK, and UK workers will lose the possibility of organising a common struggle for better rights by workers across Europe.

The left cannot be anti-EU without being dragged behind the right-wing and anti-migrant backlash. It will raise a tiny voice, inaudible against the right-wing anti-EU campaign which has money, press backing, and establishment support, a campaign that is all about putting up borders and actively restricting migrants coming to the UK. The left-wing voice will be drowned out in the growing nationalist gale.

The concessions Cameron is seeking from the EU also threaten workers' rights: in the first place, migrant workers' rights to in-work benefits. He is also likely to seek further opt-outs from those European regulations that benefit workers. Many other EU governments will be sympathetic to

Cameron's vision of the EU: less regulated, more ruthlessly neo-liberal.

The Tories that want to get out and the Tories that want to stay in offer no choice for workers. But we should not be indifferent to the question posed in the referendum. The integration of capitalism results naturally from the process of outgrowing national boundaries, and workers do not have any interest in seeking to turn back the clock of history or re-erect national barriers. We oppose UK exit from the EU.

At the same time, we recognise that the EU, like its constituent member states, is organised primarily in the interests of capital, an increasingly pressured capital, forced to compete with growing industrial powers such as China and India, and therefore looking to liquidate those elements of "Social Europe" that still remain. We should not join any cross-class alliance with pro-EU Tories or business leaders: we do not positively support bosses' Europe.

Instead, voices on the left are discussing a campaign for a workers' Europe in the coming referendum. We will:

- defend migrants' rights and oppose racism;
- vote against UK withdrawal from the EU;
- campaign for a workers' Europe, based on solidarity between working people.

Vicki Morris, Workers' Liberty



Fight every cut Back every strike

The “End Austerity Now” demonstration on Saturday 20 June will be an opportunity for thousands of labour movement, community, student, anti-cuts and left activists to come together and regain confidence that opposition to the Tories is urgent, necessary and possible.

But when we go home, let us also organise meetings, to discuss what we need to do next.

One of the central reasons the Tories feel able to do what they plan — to massively curtail the right to strike, to make deeper cuts in benefits, to keep our NHS short of staff — is that trade union leaders absolutely failed to fight during the last five years of coalition government.

The labour movement had a chance to mount a more-or-less united battle over changes and cuts to public sector pensions in 2011; that fight was de-escalated, and eventually sold out. A fight over public sector pay in 2014 took the same course, with perfunctory one-day strikes and demonstrations that failed to organise action that could break the pay freeze.

At the same time fantastic campaigns by Living Wage activists, housing campaigners and disability rights campaigners did not have the wholehearted support of the millions-strong, well-resourced trade union movement. It was support that could so easily have been given.

If we want to get rid of the Tories and all they stand for we have to make our movement fight. We need to stop token one-day strikes. We need to be on our guard against delaying the fight until “the next time”: the next time will never come. Every campaign, every local dispute, every strike must be given backing and helped to win. To make that happen, what do we need to fight for?

- Put pressure on union leaders to back workers every time they face job and wage cuts. Too often union leaders give in without any kind of fight. They do this not because it is “unrealistic” to fight, but because high-up well-paid union leaders feel under threat when ordinary members take action.

So to get union leaders to fight we need unions in which local branches can make their own decisions on strikes and other kinds of industrial action. All union officers and organisers should be elected, be accountable to members and paid an average workers’ wage. The union should belong to its

members!

- Begin a campaign to stop the planned assault on union rights, starting with a mass street demonstration. In strike ballots the Tories want to count non-voters as voting against. Strike ballots will also be invalid if the turnout is less than 50%. But ballot votes for strikes should follow the same rules for other votes! If the unions do not fight this fundamentally undemocratic proposal the Tories will be able to do anything they like to us: drive down our wages, cut back on safety at work, make us work harder.

- In the next three months we can use Jeremy Corbyn’s campaign in the election for the next Labour Party leader to build political support against the cuts, for the NHS, against anti-union laws and for migrants’ rights (see back page of this paper).

- Organise the unorganised! Trade union, student union and community activists should be advocates for the work of campaigns like “Hungry for Justice”, a campaign for fast food workers’ rights, sponsored by the Bakers’ union. That means strengthening and deepening local solidarity work and not just for unorganised workers, but also for every strike that takes place; such as long-running Glasgow homelessness workers’ dispute, or strikes by further education workers in London. No worker should feel isolated when they go on strike.

- Restart and rebuild local anti-cuts groups, linked to these trade union campaigns, support campaigns against the many cuts that will be pushed through by local councils.

- Finally we must develop policies and demands that can link struggles against benefit cuts, privatisations and injustice at work with a struggle against capitalism and for working-class social power, such as expropriate the banks and tax the rich; mass programme of council house building; free education; end the scapegoating of migrants and open the borders. Such demands can help develop our political imaginations — and raise the possibility that society can be better, more equal more just.

This is the spirit we need to sustain us as we fight the Tory government in the coming months.

Help us raise £15,000

On June 20 thousands will march through central London demanding an end to austerity.

This is a good thing, yet the political content and demands of the march may be quite limited. With the rise of whistles and vuvuzelas, branded with union logos, on marches and demonstrations, a long running tradition of political chants and songs is dying out.

Workers’ Liberty has criticised the death of this culture and we will be making an intervention on the 20 June demonstration to encourage chants and singing.

We have recently bought a new set of megaphones for our comrades to use on demonstrations, and we will be printing some leaflets of chants and songs for the 20 June demonstration. We will also be agitating for our political answers to austerity, by selling our paper and other literature on stalls with posters of our political slogans.

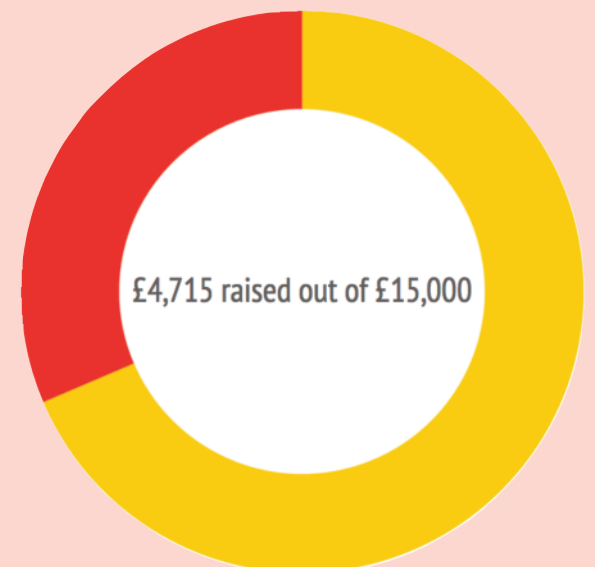
Will you help us with that job on the demonstration? Selling our paper and helping out on our stalls on the demonstration builds our profile and generates money to fund such activities.

In addition please consider:

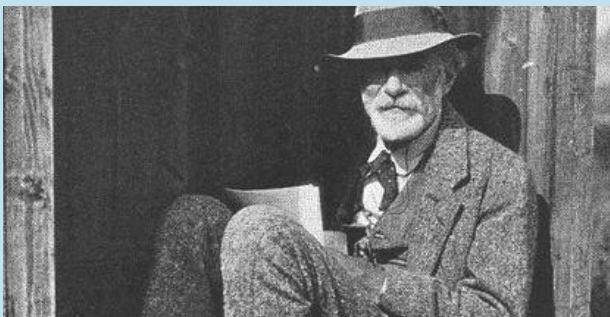
- Getting a subscription to our weekly newspaper, *Solidarity* — workersliberty.org/subscribe
- Taking out a monthly standing order.
- Making a one-off donation
- Organising a fundraising event in your local area
- Committing to do a sponsored activity and asking others to sponsor you
- Buying some of our books, posters, autocollants or pamphlets

For information on standing orders or how to donate visit workersliberty.org/donate For more ideas and information on fundraising visit workersliberty.org/fundraising

Thanks this week to Bryan and Jon. So far we have raised £4715.



Shout something instead



Pioneer British socialist Edward Carpenter used anti-Semitic tropes. Our movement has often had elements of reactionary politics and it is important to acknowledge this.

A world to win

By Max Munday

The Independent Working-Class Education group's "A World To Win" event took place at Northern College at the end of May.

Educationalists and labour movement activists discussed key moments in the development of trade unionism in Britain — from the Combination Acts to modern blacklisting, violent rioting in 1700s Liverpool to the GMB organising in ASDA. We discussed what working-class education should entail and considered the three tenets of Marxism: economics, industrial history and philosophy. We also laid the basis for running IWCE forums and talks in our towns and cities in the future.

Key to the weekend's success was the open and enquiring approach taken by the participants, the flexibility in how we learned and presented that information, and the combination of detailed history, such as the Ruskin College strike of 1909, through to the broad perspective of class struggle and the role of the state since 1800.

A workshop hosted by GMB activist Dave Berry, was important in helping to understand the class character of the state, to question the trade off between the state's protection of workers and its facilitation of exploitation, and to what extent we as workers want to be brought in to companies' decision-making or want the labour market to be regulated.

The tension between maintaining the independence of workers in dealing with capital in the face of the lure of a "protective" is an important one to be aware of. Having grown up in an "Old Labour" household and with much longing for post-war statist solutions on the left, it was very useful to explore how and why governments get involved in industrial relations.

Exploring the contradictory politics of the pioneers of British socialism was also informative. Anti-semitic tropes appear in Edward Carpenter's writing, despite his endeavors to spread humanistic politics and early synthesis of socialism and ecology, and support for women's liberation. Robert Blatchford, whose *Clarion* magazine and associated leisure clubs were important in integrating revolutionary ideas in the normal, social routines of workers' lives also took a chauvinistic pro-war position in 1914 and was virulently xenophobic.

Contradictions and reactionary ideas in our movement's history are important to acknowledge, to ensure a continual development of ideas and strategies and avoid misty-eyed nostalgia that is likely to lead to stagnation at a time when we vitally need militancy and vitality.

We need to encourage greater reflection on our movement's history, if only to realise that the fights we are facing now — in organising precarious workers, in supporting migrants' rights, in challenging bourgeois education — are not new and that whilst we cannot simply reproduce past struggles, we can draw both strength and practical guidance from them.

Educating ourselves in a dynamic and inclusive way is vital, and as the IWCE says: there's a world to win.

• www.iwceducation.co.uk

Ukrainian left fights for work

Andrej from the Ukrainian Left Opposition (LO) spoke to *Solidarity*.

The LO was created in 2011, after a split in a broader group which included Stalinists. LO aims to unite Marxist workers and intellectuals. (The Stalinists are now grouped in Borotba). From then our priority has been to find connections.

We united young people from universities with some activists from trade unions. We tried to promote independent trade unions in enterprises where this was needed. We have activists, sympathisers and members in several cities. During the Maidan protests, Borotba was implicated in pro-Russian, anti-Maidan events. We stayed aside a bit, to analyse and watch what was going on. Maybe this was a tactical mistake.

Our main group is in Kiev (where I work). We have a large and militant trade union organisation in Odessa. They have organised many strikes, so we are proud of them. In Krivoi Rog, an industrial city further to the east, the miners organisations support our project. They are not Marxists but very leftist-inclined. The miners have a strong trade union. We are in the process of re-structuring the Left Opposition into a political party, and we need to collect 10,000 signatures to legally register it to create a party, and the miners' union of Krivoi Rog is helping us do this. There is also a union in Dnieperpetrovsk which is politically close to us.

We have several websites, the news site Agenda of Everyday Struggle; an intellectual Marxist journal Spilna, the Common; and we have a site for the party project – Assembly of the Social Revolution. For now, that's it. We have some newspapers for workers, but they are more like leaflets; they are called Social Revolution.

We use the term social revolution not just to avoid saying "socialist revolution". Many people in Ukraine still believe that the Third Maidan is possible. People think that social problems are not resolved, so we need a Third Maidan. All the politicians in our country use socialistic rhetoric to get votes and then it's business as usual. So we talk about a social revolution.

The Maidan was a huge popular pro-European wave, an orientation towards raising the standard of living. People wanted better lives, they had a utopian idea of Europe. But it was also a fight against the authoritarian regime of Yanukovich. We supported the emancipatory aspects of Maidan, but not all these patriotic and pro-European capitalist tendency. We did not believe in capitalist Europe and do not want to join it. We chose a critical attitude towards Maidan.

After the Bonapartist coup of President Poroshenko, we were critical of the militarisation of Ukrainian society. The politics of the Maidan were not to support this so-called anti-terroristic policy; it was not a popular action, but a statist action. We want to see peace, and after that we want negotiations. People are dying, starving, homeless, displaced and it is not openly discussed in the press. We are not for the anti-terrorist operations. We must stop the war.

We also do not believe in the so-called peoples' republics. Many people locally support them and believe that Putin can help them survive. Our activists frequently visit that zone and we know the situation very well. People there do not care about the geopolitical stuff, they want to live under any regime — even Putinist or fascist. They want to live in peace. And they will support whatever power imposes that peace.

We do not believe Putinist propaganda about Ukrainian "fascists" and "junta" — it is used to continue the war. We are also critical of the propaganda of the Ukrainian regime. We call this regime Bonapartist because Poroshenko won the elections in the first round on the back of populist, militarist elan — he is the president of the war.

We oppose the US-EU propaganda of the "war of civilisations". The Eastern Partnership policy, as it was called, was set up with the help of Poland and Sweden, countries bordering Russia. They have a bad relationship with Russia, and so tried to promote this Eastern Partnership. But the rhetoric of the EU was only ever a bait to hook Ukraine and push IMF credits. Ukraine has a lot of IMF credits and will get more; it looks like the Greece situation here.

The situation in Donetsk and Lugansk is changing. When



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Workers' interests

the anti-terrorist operation started, there were events which mirrored the Maidan in Kiev, but anti-Maidan. The people in Donetsk and Lugansk just wanted to stay as they were. In Lugansk and Donetsk people are spontaneously pro-Russian. They are not really politically conscious, but they did not want what they saw in Kiev. They organised the anti-Maidan, to resist change. It was a democratic movement at first, but then it entered a terroristic stage. Some paramilitary commanders arrived, maybe it was a Russian project, but we never knew. Then some leaders, like Strelkov and Borodai told the truth, that it was a Russian project to move things in a more violent direction.

It was really a violent seizure of power. Ukraine responded with its anti-terrorist operation and Ukrainians became conquerors. When the Ukrainian army came to the borders, they were bloodily beaten in Debaltseve and the government realised that it was not just local forces who were fighting, but the Russians were sending serious military aid. After the Minsk dialogue the shooting and the bombing continued.

More recently, Putin met John Kerry and they agreed on a ceasefire and a peace process. The Russians don't want a big imperialistic Novorossiia state, but two autonomous republics in Donetsk and Lugansk within the Ukrainian state. Kerry agreed that if things worked out they would stop the sanctions against Russia. In Donbass things are getting better and we can hope for some precarious peace.

DONETSK

We should be aware that the people in Donetsk are mostly workers.

They are not politicians, not politicised. Also there are 1.6 million internally displaced people in Donbass. Those who stayed in their homes are the poorest strata, who just want to preserve their houses and gardens, to stay with their single cow to have milk in the evening. They live under permanent bombardment, staying in underground shelters. The leaders are not laying the basis for peace. We say that we need a complete end to the war and then we can start to negotiate.

A revolution happened in Ukraine, but there were also revolutionary events in Donetsk, whether we like it or not. We should negotiate, step by step, with the present authorities in Donbass. Of course they don't like the authorities in Kiev, the feeling is mutual, but they must negotiate. We must release prisoners of war, compensate the victims, pay the pensions, rebuild the infrastructure. The next question is one of territories. We believe in people's lives, not territories. If we can save hundreds of lives, that is better than territories.

Solidarity. Putin wants Donetsk and Lugansk as leverage, to give Russia power over the Ukraine. Neither they, nor Crimea, are of economic advantage. Putin has said what his programme is: domination. Despite what everyone says about the EU and the US, it seems that they would be happy to do a deal which gave Putin most of what he wants, and then to get out of it. Poland doesn't want that. But Western EU members don't care.

A: If you want to see what Putin will do, you should look at Georgia and Syria — destabilising the region and increasing uncertainty. We've seen in Ossetia and Chechnya, that warfare has reinforced Putin's power. But this adventure in Ukraine is not so easy for him. The situation will change and not to Putin's advantage.

I think that the Russian president after Putin will be elected on the basis of this Ukrainian issue. I think it will be a more pro-European candidate, because after Putin, the economy will be in ruins. They will use the rhetoric of regaining the economy, and to do that they will need to rebuild their European and American alliances. The European countries have no strategy about Russia. The Ukrainians believe that they would be backed by the EU militarily, but the EU is only providing financial aid.

A few months ago there was a collapse in the value of the Ukrainian currency Hryvnia, and a move to uncouple it from



Kiev tramworkers, striking to get their wages paid, December 2014

the dollar. The IMF wants to cut the social budget and increase the retirement age to 65. But most people only live to 65. 70 is very good. The increase to 65 is based on Western standards. We are moving towards Europe in terms of prices, but not in terms of wages. That is our road towards Europe — a painful road.

We need some very simple reforms just to counter all those anti-social IMF reforms. We need a trade union-based party, which will fight on very basic, concrete, specific social issue, at different levels. Our strategy is to unite leftists and leftist-inclined people, “unconscious leftists”, just to confront the anti-social politics. Then we are ready to discuss history — the difficult past during the Soviet Union, all the debates between Trotskyists, Bukharinists and Stalinists. In principle, we are uncompromising about Stalinism. But right now we just need to stop society collapsing.

We inherited a good Labour Code from the Soviet times. But there are dozens of politicians who want to reform it along neoliberal lines. That is the terrain they have chosen to fight on.

S: Russian comrades in Workers' Platform said that people understood that what Stalin represented was not real communism, that there is a powerful anti-communist propaganda in schools, but nevertheless they are finding groups of workers who have a positive idea of socialism. Are people in Ukraine resistant to mentions of socialism, communism and so on? Does the national question in Ukraine make people more hostile to such words?

Putin uses the image of Stalin as an “effective manager”. They celebrate the image of Russia's glorious history, when Russia had prestige in the world, after the victory over Hitler. But they are worried about communism as the real movement for the abolition of the status quo. In the newspapers, schools and so on, there are endless so-called “memory wars”. Some people say that the USSR was not only the gulag, but also cheap food, security, social standards, and an easier social life. The same in Ukraine. Maybe there was no freedom of speech or freedom for other parties, but they had a secure standard of living. The memory wars include a fight over the image of the USSR.

In the Ukraine we have very violent advocates of de-communisation. As in Poland, in the Ukraine the “Institute of National Memory” was set up to impose a so-called proper view of our history. Eventually a package of four de-communisa-

tion laws were implemented, which prohibit the use of Soviet symbols, the glorification of the Soviet past, and mandate the demolition of Soviet monuments. Breaking these laws carries a penalty of five years in jail. But we should not use the term “Great Patriotic War”, we should say “Second World War”. All the forces which fought for the independence of the Ukraine are said to be heroes. Russia and the USSR are seen as equivalent with each other. The de-communisation package is severe and anti-democratic.

DE-NAZIFICATION

S: Wasn't some degree of this inevitable after Ukraine finally gained its independence? For example, de-Nazification was often used to settle all sorts of scores, neighbours denouncing each other and so on.

A: I understand your point, but I think it is absolutely wrong to compare de-Nazification and de-communisation. These two ideologies cannot be compared. De-Nazification is really a Western European issue. Historians such as Enzo Traverso have written a lot of books on this and proved that nationalism, fascism, the Nazi party in Germany was very rooted in European history of the 19th century, of European experiences in India, Africa and so on, and Hitler wanted to imitate that, to conquer Eastern Europe in the same colonialist way. Nazism is a bit of a Western European, colonialistic ideology. But when we talk about communist totalitarian regimes, it is specifically a Stalinist one, we should take a different history into account: the 1917 revolution, then the Thermidor and the coup d'état by Stalin. Stalinism is the product of counter-revolution, against the Bolshevik revolution. So when we talk about de-communisation, demolition of statues of Lenin, we cannot see it as de-Nazification. It is a political technique to see these ideologies as equal totalitarianisms, what right wing parties do to put these ideologies on the same level. We need not de-communisation, but re-communisation. And in the framework of re-communisation in the 21st century, we can talk about de-Stalinisation, de-Totalitarianisation, but we should not ban communism as a concept in the 21st century.

In Ukraine we have what Tariq Ali called the “extreme centre”, the political power of the neoliberals. Everything that is happening in the world is shown within our local situation. In Ukraine we have the dictatorship of the oligarchs. We need in its place the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We should put workers' interests front and centre and make the argument for that politics.

Scottish Labour: turn outwards, or close down?

Scotland
By Dale Street



“Can the Scottish Labour Party listen and learn from its defeat on 7 May?” asked Katy Clark, former Labour MP for North Ayrshire and Arran, at last Saturday’s Campaign for Socialism (CfS) conference in Glasgow.

The 70-plus SLP members attending the event were clear about some of the things that Labour needed to do in response to that question. The same cannot be said of the SLP Executive Committee, meeting at the same time.

Speakers at the CfS conference emphasised the need for local Labour Party branches to turn outwards and campaign alongside of trade unionists and community groups, instead of just going door-knocking and asking for people’s votes.

As an appeal from one of the strikers in the Glasgow City Council homelessness caseworkers dispute highlighted, this includes campaigning against Labour-controlled local authorities which implement Westminster and Holyrood austerity dictates.

The need to expose the SNP’s record in power at Holyrood since 2007 was also emphasised: cuts in Further Education, growing inequalities in educational attainment in schools, real cuts in NHS spending, undemocratic centralisation, and not a single redistributive policy.

(Other than the council tax freeze, which serves as a tax cut for the better off.)

In fact, the SNP’s only real achievement over the past decade has been to replace class-based political affiliations and voting patterns by ones based on Scottish national identity, for which the enemy is not unaccountable wealth and power but “Westminster”.

In a conference session on trade unionism in Scotland a speaker from the Fire Brigades Union highlighted the reality of what the “left-wing” SNP and its policies mean for unions.

The last FBU Scottish Regional Secretary, himself a member of the SNP, had failed to lead a fight against SNP cuts of 400 frontline jobs, cuts in non-operational staff, and the closure of control rooms.

By agreeing to work in “partnership” with the SNP government and Fire and Rescue Service bosses, the FBU found itself discussing where cuts should be made, rather than challenging the supposed need for cuts to be made at all.

A similar approach has been adopted by the Scottish TUC. “Working Together” is not just the name of a recent report jointly produced by the SNP government, trade unions and employers. It also sums up a political philosophy now shared by the SNP and the STUC:



Kezia Dugdale: voted for all the reforms

Unions, employers and the Holyrood government supposedly have a common interest in building a strong Scottish economy. This requires partnership between workers and bosses, working together in the national interest — rather like Peronism, but without the sunshine and the musical.

“Cognitive dissonance” is how one speaker described the behaviour of SNP members in the EIS, the union covering Scottish schools and Further Education. FE has been one of the prime targets of SNP cuts — and yet many SNP members in the EIS still cannot bring themselves to criticise the party’s policies.

Other speakers pointed out that the much-vaunted “SNP Trade Union Group” consists of SNP members who happen to be members of a union (and not necessarily active ones), not trade unionists organising in the SNP to advance a specifically trade union agenda.

In fact, the group’s only publicly declared policy is to campaign for trade union disaffiliation from the Labour Party: The idea of trade unions having their own form of political representation is anathema to the SNP’s corporatism.

While the CfS conference grappled with the problem of how to rebuild the SLP as a democratic campaigning organ-

isation, committed to socialist policies, and rooted in the community, the workplace and the trade unions, the SLP Executive Committee was carrying on with the job of killing it off.

At its May meeting failed SLP leader Jim Murphy had announced, albeit reluctantly, his intention of resigning. But, as a parting shot, he had promised to rewrite the rules for the election of SLP leader and deputy leader.

With opposition virtually confined to the trade union delegates, last Saturday’s meeting of the SLP Executive Committee dutifully voted through:

- Abolition of the electoral college; elections to be held on the basis of one person, one vote.

- Franchise for leader and deputy leader election to consist of: SLP members; trade unionists who have signed up as SLP affiliated members; SLP registered supporters (i.e. anyone willing to part with £3).

- Candidates for leader need to be nominated by at least 15% of SLP MSPs, MPs and MEPs. (Such is the parlous state of the SLP that “15%” works out as: 7.)

- Councillors to be eligible to stand for deputy leader if they obtain the required number of nominations (which means that the Blairites have a councillor lined up to be deputy leader).

- Nomination period for leader and deputy leader to last for a week (in fact: next week). Voting will take place from mid-July to mid-August. This leaves affiliated trade unions with less four weeks to encourage members to sign up as affiliated members.

- The “regional lists” of SLP candidates for next year’s Holyrood elections to be “reopened” (presumably to allow failed right wing ex-MPs to be given top positions) and non-members to be allowed to join the SLP and promptly be nominated as an SLP candidate.

- Iain Gray to be appointed interim SLP leader for the duration of the leadership contest. (Gray led the SLP to defeat in the 2011 Holyrood elections. He is remembered solely for having been filmed running away from a couple of hecklers in Glasgow Central Station.)

A dozen motions from CLPs opposing rewriting the rules without consultation with CLPs were not even discussed by the Executive Committee. And Kezia Dugdale — who, only a couple of weeks ago, was making overtures to the left in preparation for her leadership bid — voted in favour of all the “reforms”.

News of the SLP Executive Committee’s decisions arrived too late to be discussed at its conference. But the substance of those decisions underlines the readiness of the Blairites-Murphyites to see the SLP killed off rather than move to the left.

“Looking forward to Holyrood”

By Dale Street

“I welcome that the Labour Party was defeated so comprehensively in Scotland, this was a step forwards” said Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) co-convenor Colin Fox at a meeting of the Unite United Left (Scotland) a fortnight ago.

Fox was at least being consistent. After last year’s referendum the SSP had proposed that the SNP, Greens and SSP form an electoral bloc (“Yes Alliance”) which would stand a single joint candidate in each constituency in the general election. Unsurprisingly, the SNP and the Greens were not interested.

The SSP ended up standing just four candidates on the basis of a manifesto which declared the key thing in the election to be “inflicting (the) most damage on Labour and maintaining the strength of the broad independence movement.”

Labour certainly did suffer massive damage in the election. But the SSP cannot take any of the ‘credit’ for this. On average, their four candidates polled slightly over 200 votes (0.5% of the constituency vote). This was around half their average constituency vote in the 2010 general election.

So SSP is consoling itself by welcoming Labour’s “compre-

hensive defeat” and looking forward to the 2016 Holyrood elections, when, according to Fox, “our turn will come.”

“Solidarity — Scotland’s Socialist Movement” — a rump organisation which serves as a vehicle for Tommy Sheridan’s ego — was shameless in calling for a vote for the SNP in the general election:

“The blue, red and yellow Tories are united for Trident, cuts and more austerity. On May 7th THE ONLY WAY to stop Trident renewal, more cuts and more poverty is to VOTE SNP.”

Like the SSP, “Solidarity” looks forward to its “turn” coming in 2016: “Next year a clear socialist alternative to current SNP policies must be presented for the Holyrood elections.”

In previous elections the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Socialist Party (SP) have collaborated with “Solidarity”. But this time the SWP and SP contested the election under the banner of a Sheridan-free Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). Reflecting the decline in the SSP vote, votes cast for the ten TUSC candidates were around half of what they had been in 2010. The average vote of their ten candidates on 7th May was 177 (0.4% of the constituency vote).

The SP’s post-election analysis focused on Labour’s virtual annihilation on 7 May and put an idiot-optimist gloss on TUSC’s miserable election performance: “Although the votes

were modest(!), given the tsunami towards the SNP, TUSC received the two highest votes on the left, in Dundee West and Glasgow South.”

Undaunted, the SP now also looks forward to the 2016 Holyrood elections: “By standing widely, despite the objective difficulties, we laid the basis for a much stronger challenge in 2016.”

All groups would do better if they looked at their own political record.

In the referendum campaign — and even well before then in the case of the SSP — they acted as bag-carriers for the SNP, selling the SNP’s nationalist political project of independence as a way to fight austerity — and British imperialism!

They also helped the SNP to shift Scottish political “discourse” away from an even vaguely class-based one to one based on national identity, and one in which the basic class divide in society is replaced by the notion of a Holyrood-Westminster divide.

In the general election campaign they chimed in with the SNP’s denunciations of Labour as “Red Tories” who had betrayed Scotland and its working people by campaigning for a “No” vote in the referendum.

Life in the West Bank

By Ira Berkovic

Israeli assaults in 2009 and 2014 have foregrounded Gaza in the popular imagination of Palestine throughout the world. But the West Bank, where 2.7 million Palestinians live (compared to around 1.7 million in Gaza), is the site of daily brutalities that, while perhaps less spectacularly savage than the bombardments of Gaza, give just as clear a picture of the Israeli state's colonial project in Palestine.

The West Bank is an area of around 5,640km². In the UN's 1947 partition plan for Israel/Palestine, the West Bank was intended to be the territorial core of an independent Palestinian-Arab state, but was occupied by Jordan during the 1948 war.

Since 1967, it has been occupied by Israel. In the 1993 Oslo Accords, Israel ceded limited control of certain areas of the West Bank to a Palestinian Authority, giving what Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem called "an illusion of autonomy".

The Accords divided the West Bank into three areas — A, B, and C. Area A, where 55% of the Palestinian population lives but which comprises only 18% of land in the West Bank, was placed under the notionally full control of the Palestinian Authority. Area B, comprising around 21% of land in the West Bank, is under the "civil" control of the Palestinian Authority but remains subject to Israeli military law. Area C contains the vast majority of the West Bank's natural resources and spaces suitable for construction and development. Control of this area was intended to be handed back to the Palestinians in 1999. Israel never honoured the agreement, using Area C to construct Jewish-only settlements, cutting the Palestinian population of the area off from the services and infrastructure of Palestinian society elsewhere in the West Bank.

In 1972, the Jewish settler population of Area C was around 1,000. Today the settler population is over 350,000. Another 400,000 live in disputed territory in East Jerusalem. In the years since the Oslo Accords, the settler population has more than doubled. Settlers make up around 4% of the Israeli electorate. Some settlements are now large enough to effectively constitute cities. The Ariel settlement has a population of nearly 19,000.

Israel's encouragement of Jewish settlement, pursued with varying degrees of vigour depending on the political character of the government but never meaningfully confronted, is an essential means by which it retains its colonial control over Palestine and prevents the emergence of a viable Palestinian state. Even where the Palestinian Authority has control, it is prevented from much economic and social development by its exclusion from the most viable and resource-rich areas.

According to the Israeli group Peace Now, construction began on 3,100 new "residential units" in 2014. Of these, 287 began without official permission from the Israeli authorities. A substantial system of internal checkpoints (both permanent and temporary "flying checkpoints"), and, since 2002, the so-called "security fence", sub-divide the West Bank, cutting off Palestinians from their land, or requiring them to obtain permits to travel to and from work. For a society for which agriculture has been historically integral, to be prevented from accessing land is both a severe socio-economic



impediment and a form of brutalisation. The main employment options for West Bank Palestinians are to work in a public-sector job for the PA, to work on a settlement (either as a labourer in settlement construction, or in the internal industry of larger settlement towns), or to find work in Israel itself.

Around 40,000 Palestinian workers work in Israel "officially", travelling through one of several checkpoints on the border. They arrive from 2am in order to make it to work on time (most checkpoints open at 4am). Some checkpoints are operated directly by the Israeli military but some, like the Eyal checkpoint, through which 4,500 workers pass every day, are outsourced to private security firms for fees of between \$50-100m.

STRIKE

In December 2014, Palestinian workers using the Sha'ar Ephraim checkpoint organised a wildcat strike in protest at overcrowding and poor treatment, refusing to pass through and go to work.

They forced some concessions from the private operator which agreed to open more checking lanes to process workers more quickly (reducing queuing time, overcrowding, and meaning workers did not have to arrive as early). Things soon regressed, however, just a month later Adel Muhammad Yakoub was crushed to death at Sha'ar Ephraim due to overcrowding.

In March 2015, Israel ordered that a checkpoint outside the town of al-Sawahra al-Sharqiya, south east of Jerusalem be upgraded from a roadside sentry hut to a more substantial checkpoint, with the installation of electronic gates and facilities to search individuals and vehicles.

House demolitions are also a common feature of life in the West Bank, with armoured military bulldozers routinely demolishing houses, and sometimes entire villages, either for alleged military reasons or because the houses are claimed to have violated building codes or regulations. Much social-movement activism in the West Bank centres around community opposition to these demolitions. Anti-demolition demonstrations are regularly subject to heavy repression from the IDF, with soldiers using tear gas and rubber bullets against demonstrators.

There is a domestic Palestinian economy, with a construction industry, a finance sector, retail, and more. However, with tax revenue and the flow of raw materials substantially controlled by Israel, the domestic economy is fragile and unstable. Some Palestinian towns, such as Bethlehem, benefit from tourism, due to their religious and historic significance, but checkpoints and restrictions on access make this revenue unreliable. The security sector in Palestine is growing, with 28% of the PA's total budget allocated to security services in 2014 (up from 19% in 2013). Many believe the Fatah-run PA is building up the security sector in order to bolster itself against Hamas.

The Palestinian labour movement is largely based in the public sector. The main union federation, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) is Fatah-led. It is integrated into the international labour movement to a relatively high degree and has some links with the Histadrut, the main union federation in Israel. Independent labour-movement initiatives in Palestine such as the Democracy and Workers' Rights Centre in Ramallah, or the Workers' Advice Centre (Ma'an, which is based predominantly in Israel but has organised in the West Bank, for example at the Salit Quarry) are weak, and in great need of international solidarity. Increasingly despairing of any progress through negotiated agreements between the PA and Israel (or, indeed,

between the Fatah-led PA and the Hamas-led administration in Gaza), or of any social upheaval either internally or in Israel, much of Palestinian civil society, and much (although not all) of the labour movement, now looks to various forms of boycott as the only means to pressure Israel.

For the past six months, daily life for Palestinians in the West Bank was largely defined by the consequences of a freeze by Israel in December 2014 of the transfer of tax funds to the Palestinian Authority. Tax collected by Israel on behalf of the PA accounts for around 66% of the PA budget, at around \$120m per month. Israel froze the funds to punish the PA for having the temerity to make a limited push towards independent statehood, including joining the International Criminal Court. For the 60% of West Bank Palestinians who work in the public sector, the financial crisis meant a de facto months-long pay cut, with workers paid at only around 60% of their full pay. Palestinian teachers' unions held a one-day protest strike against the non-payment of wages. With workers less able to purchase goods, the freeze also had a knock-on effect into private-sector industry. As well as wage freezes, various infrastructure and construction projects, such as road rebuilding, were suspended. The freeze was finally lifted in late March 2015, shortly after the Israeli elections.

Israel's strategy has been to prevent the development of anything that might form the basis of a viable Palestinian state. The West Bank is a quintessential colony, criss-crossed with military checkpoints and divided by a wall, where the indigenous population must obtain permits from the occupying power to work, travel, study, or access land, and where their options for finding work consist either in working for a domestic administration beholden to the occupier for its tax revenue; working in Israel, necessitating the daily exhaustion and humiliation of passage through an overcrowded checkpoint; or working on a settlement. The effect is to systematically grind down the Palestinians' basic sense of human dignity and national consciousness; after all, if working on a settlement is the only way to feed one's family, how can the settlements be opposed?

Ending the Israeli colonisation of the West Bank, and its siege of Gaza, are prerequisite foundations for any lasting settlement in the region: dismantling the checkpoints, tearing down the wall, and restoring Palestinian access to the land and resources necessary to establish a viable domestic economy.

Socialists have a duty of basic solidarity to those struggling against the daily effects of that colonisation — the anti-demolition movement, Palestinian human rights and refugee aid organisations, and the labour movement.

Dissent in Israel

A substantial social upheaval inside Israel itself will be essential to any progressive settlement in the region. Currently, left-wing, internationalist, anti-racist forces within Israel are weak and embattled.

Around 5,000 Israelis demonstrated in Tel Aviv against "Operation Protective Edge", the Israeli assault on Gaza in July 2014. Demonstrations have also taken place against racist attacks on African migrants. Both demonstration were subject to physical attacks from right wingers.

Gush Shalom, the "Peace Bloc", is perhaps the best known and most well-established anti-occupation organisation in Israel. Other groups, like Anarchists Against The Wall and the Israeli Coalition Against House Demolitions, are also active. There is a long tradition of refusal to serve in the army (national service is compulsory and refusal is punishable with imprisonment), with networks of organisations which exist to support refusers.

The mainstream union federation, the Histadrut, has policy in favour of an independent Palestine, and has links with the PGFTU, but is tied to the Labor Party which has been complicit in the oppression of the Palestinians during periods in government.

There is a small milieu of independent workers' organisations, such as the Workers' Advice Centre (WAC/Ma'an) and Koch La'Oved which aim to organise workers marginalised by the mainstream unions, and seek to unite Jewish and Arab workers in common organisations.

What is Fatah?

Fatah is a nationalist political party which leads the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

It was founded by activists in Palestinian diaspora in 1959, and formally constituted as a political party in 1965. Historically its roots are in radical and leftish secular nationalism.

It leads the Palestinian National Authority in the West Bank and is substantially enmeshed with the semi-state that exists there. It is the subject of widespread allegations of corruption. Since 2006/2007, it has been engaged in a bitter and bloody conflict with Hamas, the far-right Islamist party linked to the Muslim Brotherhood which has a strong base in Gaza.

In June 2014, Fatah made a deal with Hamas that led to the constitution of a "unity government", involving both parties, in Gaza.

Sanders: mobilising an anti-austerity movement?

A discussion piece by Barry Finger, member of the editorial board of US socialist journal *New Politics*, on the campaign by Bernie Sanders to get the Democratic Party nomination for President. Sanders calls himself a social democrat and supports reforms on a range of issues including the introduction of universal health care.

As proponents of independent political action, we believe that the Democratic Party is a deathtrap for progressives. History has demonstrated time and again that progressive movements immersed in the Democratic Party are stripped of their potential political power.

Nevertheless, we cannot judge the potential of the Sanders' movement solely by our attitude towards the Democratic Party, any more than we can evaluate the Democratic Party by the enormous potential contribution an unshackled Sanders movement may yet contribute to fundamental political change.

The totality with which socialists have traditionally viewed the Democratic Party has been as follows. The agenda of the Democratic Party is determined by its corporate financiers. It is they who keep the party competitive, who write and prioritise legislation and it is they who provide lucrative post-electoral revolving door employment opportunities for faithful party standard bearers. The two parties provide a full spectrum career subculture, designed to incentivise, entice and indoctrinate candidates and office holders to ruling class perspectives.

BASE

The Democratic Party base, organised as voting blocks, has no membership privileges.

Indeed, the two parties are not private, voluntary organisations sustained by membership fees, but political utilities of the ruling class, which, like other public utilities, are internally regulated by the state and protected from outside competition by upstart third parties through a dense network of legal encumbrances to market entry. Because the Democratic Party is sustained and disciplined by the mobilisation of outside capitalist wealth, the voting blocks aligned to the Democrats cannot compete for influence on this terrain. Their power is limited primarily to the threat of abstention from electoral participation.

As socialists we compromise the content of our politics by supporting candidates irrevocably tied to the apparatus of the status quo. That the Democratic Party's voting base have, for a variety of outmoded historical reasons, remained tied to a "company union" party, providing nominal representation while committed to the well being of capitalist accumulation, cannot determine our attitude toward that party. No more than say, working class and minority backing for imperialist war and interventions can establish our attitude towards such conflicts. This is not a sectarian insistence on retention of ideological purity, but a substantive reflection arising from our understanding of how the political process preserves capitalism, an insight that defines and distinguishes us as socialists. Militant opposition to the power structure cannot flourish in the party of the power structure or on a purely ideological basis without a party of its own.

It is obvious that even under the most propitious of circumstances the trade union movement and its allies are not going to transition from a capitalist party to a highly so-

phisticated socialist ideology in one lurch. What we aspire towards instead is an independent framework in which socialists can be a loyal — or if not loyal, at least a tolerated — opposition, a framework conducive to exposing the dynamic that governs a capitalist world view as detrimental to the interests of the oppressed and exploited. And this urgently requires a fracturing away of the Democratic Party mass base.

If, in the past, the Democratic Party could parade itself as a lesser evil and appeal to its base on that level, on the defining issue of our time — austerity — this is simply no longer the case. The industrial deregulation momentum begun under the Carter administration came to full fruition under Clinton, extended to the financial sector, supplementing workplace exploitation with ever more robust commercial exploitation. Welfare was effectively eliminated; union power decimated. Trade agreements which offshore jobs, enhance profit margins and place additional corporate restrictions over democratic mandates have and are being systematically imposed as hallmark Democratic templates. And a balanced budget fetish has replaced social spending as the bragging point of successful Democratic governance.

VULNERABLE

This means that the Democratic Party is vulnerable.

As an austerity-first party, its traditional role as the political agency through which the ruling class implements its programs and through which — by presenting itself as a progressive alternative — it can continue to placate its base and coopt its opponents has lost its allure.

But if Democratic lesser-evilism no longer has feet, what are we to make of Sanders' bid for nomination? How do we assess his abandonment of independent politics? History is not devoid of lessons. But lessons are contingent on context. To repeat the arguments of 1968 and 1972 seems now bizarrely inapt. The Kennedy and McGovern campaigns re-consolidated key voting blocks whose loyalties were wavering under pressure of mass movements. To invoke this argument today against Sanders, in the glaring absence of mass alternative poles of attraction, suggests little more than a sectarian incantation for preserving the cadre in the remote hope that this inspired few may yet ignite a political fuse.

For those who make this argument it is perpetually a "Peace and Freedom Party moment".

But, if the Sanders campaign catches momentum by challenging austerity and reviving rank and file activism he may yet just spark a "Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party moment". If so, the Sanders movement will, as did its historical precedent, ultimately face a defining dilemma — capitulate to the Democratic Party establishment or break away and chart an independent course.

Sanders himself is far from the perfect candidate, and a less than inspiring "socialist" leader for this struggle. Yet, consider this. His chief economist, Stephanie Kelton, is an advocate of a far ranging challenge to austerity. She advocates a guaranteed basic income; federal jobs for anyone on demand at a living wage and the pre-distribution of resources — consistent, for instance, with a federally funded bank account for each child. She is a consistent champion of single payer. Her heterodox economic co-thinkers and associates have demanded the financial sector



be reined in and "banksters" jailed. And she has consistently argued that government surpluses are actively destructive and balancing the budget is generally pernicious. If these proposals were implemented, the "fight for \$15" demand would be comprehensively exceeded. Wages would be set at the federal level as private employers would have to bid workers away from decent paying federal jobs.

This is not your friendly, respectable Keynesianism. It is not Krugman and not Stiglitz. It is a rejection of all prevailing economic orthodoxies. It is a powerful anti-poverty program based on full employment, not piecemeal remediation. And it is one that offers a level of plebeian economic security — and therefore a breakdown of social discipline based on want — that could only instill the fear of god into the ruling class. It will be a lightning rod for all the forces of reaction, from the Democratic mainstream no less than from the Republican right.

MUTINY

If the Sanders campaign is competently run, Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party establishment will be confronting an incipient rank and file mutiny demanding the complete overhaul and repudiation of what the party currently stands for.

An increasingly politically conscious grassroots movement motivated by a militant and credible anti-austerity message heralds the development in the foreseeable future of a "split" situation in the Democratic Party when these demands are blocked, watered down, frustrated or compromised with, as they invariably must.

As socialists, we should welcome that split and assist from the outside in hastening the conditions under which that split may become more likely. We believe that only by joining forces with those outside the Democratic Party on an independent basis can the Sanders movement make a lasting contribution to the development of an oppositional current in American politics.

The Sanders movement, or key sections of it, will only find its path to independent politics through struggle, a struggle we should enthusiastically embrace. People are won to ideas not by the logic of the ideas themselves, but by the creation of a political force that generates the need for an organised alternative that can make those ideas effective.

We can assist them in reaching this point. We can address the Sanders movement by emphasising our support for their struggle against austerity and indicate our willingness to work on issues they raise. We can organise

joint forums, debates and meetings to discuss the way forward for progressive and radical politics. But in doing so, we should take the opportunity that these gatherings may afford to emphasize our conviction that the Democratic Party orientation, based on analysis born of historical experience, is a dead end and to impart the sense of an alternative direction to the Sanders' rank and file.

But engaging with the Sanders campaign cannot mean joining the Democratic Party or participating in its primary struggles. As independent socialists, radicals, and progressive activists, we best assist the Sanders movement by relentlessly attacking the existing Democratic Party, its commitments to austerity and its pervasive hostility to the grassroots it ever more anachronistically claims to defend. We need to keep our focus on the duplicity of Clinton and hold Sanders' feet to the flames if he wavers or temporises his stance against the Party establishment.

The Sanders' movement opposition to the prevailing austerity orthodoxy yet current disregard for the task of breaking with the Democrats is self-defeating and cannot be sustained. Once an anti-austerity movement coalesces around Sanders, the movement will rapidly assume a half-in, half-out posture towards the Democratic Party as it tries to expand its base in the teeth of fierce bipartisan resistance. If Sanders, for abandons the anti-austerity movement to reconcile himself with the party loyalists, he will also have abandoned a newly seasoned coterie of left-moving liberals and progressives. Or, if, as we believe, the Democratic Party establishment defeats the Sanders' campaign for nomination and he can't or won't run as an independent the movement will be faced with the MFDP dilemma: reconcile with Hillary Clinton, on the basis of minimal face-saving concessions; or refuse to backtrack to the Democratic Party, and adhere instead to its progressive principles. If so, it can bring a wealth of experience in organising and coordinating a large-scale, national electoral operation in service to independent campaigns that are already in full swing, most likely the Green Party.

We should, in short, see our role as contributing to the radical resolution of the pull between the Democratic Party and the fallout possibilities of an emerging anti-austerity movement in favour of the latter. Radicals should encourage it to struggle into the primaries and beyond, into the fall elections and after, in the Democratic Party through the primaries and, when that fails, out. Preferably with Sanders, but, if need be, without.

Anger over pay claim in Unison

By a Unison Delegate

Delegates gathered in Glasgow for the Unison Local Government Conference on 14-15 June.

Following the special conference in March, pay was very much on the minds of many. Questions about what had happened to our pay claim were a hot topic among delegates. A fringe meeting was called by Salford City branch on Saturday night to discuss the way forward and build support for their emergency motion on pay.

The motion called for the union to carry out the decision of the special conference and noting that the claim put in by Unison was almost immediately rejected, but that members would not have known about this prior to the deadline for motions, and many within branches would still be unaware.

The motion stated that unless a reasonable offer is made by the employer by 31st August then there should be a ballot for industrial action.

The motion was ruled out of order on grounds of

“legal jeopardy”. Calling on the Service Group Executive (SGE) to ensure that there is an escalating calendar of action, coordinated where possible with other unions, was said to be calling for illegal action as the SGE are not able to call strike action!

A day later an article appeared in the Independent where Dave Prentis, Unison General Secretary was quoted saying

“Industrial action for us is the last resort, but we are not going to have employers being able to act in brutal ways and our people not to be able to stand up for themselves. If it means taking unlawful action, that is something we will have to look at — because it’s the law that has moved against us.”

That our own conference cannot discuss this sort of action while Dave Prentis is free to speak like this to the press will not surprise many.

Speeches criticising the leadership on pay got the loudest applause of any during the conference but a strategy to win our pay claim remains far off.

Reinstate Candy!

By Tom Harris

On 11 June workers at the National Gallery struck again in an on going dispute over privatisation of visitor services.

The strike took place shortly after a judge at an interim employment tribunal hearing found that Candy Udwin, PCS rep sacked for revealing the cost of the use of private companies, was likely to have been unfairly dismissed. Candy was sacked for “gross misconduct” the day before the first of the strike days protesting against privatisation.

Workers have now been on strike for 35 days. Picket lines were outside the gallery from early morning, and all but one entrance into the gallery was closed off. A rally was held in Trafalgar square at lunchtime, addressed by Labour leader-



ship candidate Jeremy Corbyn among others.

The PCS says it will push for Candy’s reinstatement at a full tribunal if necessary, but that the gallery should give her back her job at once.

The findings of the preliminary tribunal mean that Candy Udwin can now get full pay and benefits until the full tribunal takes place in October.

Homelessness caseworkers fight on

By Anne Field

Labour-controlled Glasgow City Council has a special present for delegates attending Unison’s local government and national conferences which are being held in Glasgow this week — a 12 week old indefinite strike of homelessness support workers.

Since March — following on from seven weeks of action short of strike action — 70 City Council homelessness caseworkers have been out on indefinite strike in a dispute over pay grading.

As reported in *Solidarity* management have now effectively conceded the case for regrading — but demand that the regrading be “self-financing”. This meant cutting the workforce by around a third (23 posts). More recent management proposals involve a cut of around ten posts.

Strikers were invited to apply for what were effectively their own posts. But since there would not be enough posts to go round, this would mean some strikers doing themselves out of a job. It would also allow management to target strike leaders.

The strikers have unanimously rejected all proposals for cutbacks. They are not prepared to accept a single job being cut — not just because it would be contrary to their own interests, but also because it would mean a worse service for their clients.

The strike has also highlighted the abysmal role played by Glasgow City Council Labour councillors who see their role as being “managerial rather than political”. All they could do, they claimed, was to “run the council” on an ever shrinking budget — instead of campaigning against the



Strikers this week received this message of support from the Progressive Social Work conference in Hong Kong

SNP’s cuts in council funding.

But the strike has shown them up for not even playing a managerial role.

Challenged as to why they have not done anything to bring the dispute to an end, their response has been that the dispute is not their responsibility(!) but something for social work management to deal with.

Management and councillors are both aware that there are more regrading claims in the pipeline. They do not want to set a prece-

dent by conceding the claim.

To coincide with this week’s Unison national conference, the strikers have called a mass rally outside the Glasgow City Chambers at 5.45pm, Thursday, 18 June, City Chambers, George Square

• Send donations to strikers’ picket lines, or by cash or cheque (Glasgow City UNISON branch) to Unison, 84 Bell Street, Glasgow G1 1LQ.

Solidarity with Robert O'Donnell

By Dale Street

As *Solidarity* goes to press, Glasgow City Council Unison is considering the next steps in its campaign to secure the reinstatement of health and safety rep Robert O'Donnell.

Robert was sacked in late May by the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC). On Friday 12 June he was informed that his appeal, held earlier in the week, had been rejected.

Robert was sacked following an unwitnessed alleged incident with his

supervisor. He was sacked despite having worked for the SECC for twelve years and despite having a clean disciplinary record throughout that period.

Robert’s Unison branch has said “[we are] totally convinced that this was a trumped-up charge and that the dismissal relates to Robert’s role as a trade union activist. Over recent years the SECC has refused to recognise trade unions for collective bargaining purposes and has been hostile to trade union recruitment activities.”

Among the organisations

which use the SECC as a conference venue are trade unions. The STUC, Unison and the UCU have all held conferences there. UCU congress was taking place the day Robert was sacked, and Unison is holding its conference there this week. Delegates at Unison conference have organised solidarity protests for Robert.

The SECC is 91% owned by Labour-controlled Glasgow City Council. But e-mails protesting Robert’s dismissal have received a standard reply from the Council’s Chief Executive — “Mr. O'Donnell is an em-

ployee of the SECC and should follow the procedures open to him to appeal against the decision to dismiss him.” — and no reply at all from Council leader Gordon Matheson.

E-mails protesting Robert’s dismissal have also received a standard lengthy reply from the SECC Chief Executive rejecting any suggestion of hostility towards trade unions and no reply at all from the SNP councillor who sits on the SECC Board of Directors.

• More information: bit.ly/RobertSECC

Steel workers strike Bromley fights cuts

By Charlotte Zalens

Steelworkers across the country are set to strike on 22 June in a dispute over pensions.

The strike will be the first national strike of steelworkers in 30 years. Tata Steel, which has owned British Steel’s remaining production since 2007, is closing a final salary pension scheme to existing members and scrapping provisions which allow workers to retire at 60 — effectively raising the retirement age to 65.

Union members in Community, Unite, GMB and UCATT will all take part in the strike. Members in Community voted by 88% for strikes on a 76% turnout, with similar results in the other unions. Workers will also take part in a work to rule and overtime ban around the strike.

Tata steel has operations all over Europe, and one Dutch union, LGV, has already pledged that its membership will refuse any work sent to plants in the Netherlands from Britain during the strike.

By Gemma Short

Strikes over privatisation continue at Bromley Council.

Workers are on strike between 10-20 June in a series of selective strikes. Unite members in adult services and transport workers will strike from 10-15 June, library staff between 13-20 June and central council workers on 16 June.

The council’s cuts plan involves outsourcing most of its services, reducing the number of council employ-



ees from 4000 to 300, and privatising 14 libraries. Unite, Unison and community campaigns organised a march through the borough on Saturday 13 June.

As well as the privatisation plans Bromley council has withdrawn facility time arrangements from Unite.



Support Corbyn for Labour leader!

Use campaign to educate, agitate, organise

Left-wing Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn's success in getting the MPs' nominations necessary to stand for party leader is very good news.

Corbyn's campaign represents a clear left-wing alternative to the various shades of Blairism on issues like cuts, the NHS, taxing the rich, the banks, anti-union laws, and migrants' rights. It gives socialists the opportunity to build up, mobilise, and politically educate the labour movement and left as energetically as we can.

The historic project of Blairism is to drive the organised working class out of official politics; a left-wing, class-struggle challenge for the Labour Party leadership provides a sharp counterpoint to their aims.

For any serious attempt to re-assert the principle of labour representation — a working-class voice in politics — the trade unions, and in the first place the Labour-affiliated unions, are key.

Socialists in the affiliated unions can use Corbyn's candidacy to put their leaders on the spot and demand that the unions use their weight inside the party to support his campaign. Unlike all the other candidates, including Andy Burnham (the candidate who has most explicitly sought to position himself as "the union candidate"), Corbyn stands for union-backed policies; unlike the others, he is a champion of trade unionism and workers' struggles.

To their credit, the Bakers' union backed Corbyn early on, and transport union TSSA publicly called for him to be on the ballot. Activists in Unite should demand to know why their left-talking leaders are still not backing Corbyn — and organise to put pressure on them to do so.

Activists in Unison have already initiated a "Unison for Corbyn" network, and are having him to speak at

Unison national delegate conference in Glasgow this week. There are moves among Young Labour and student free education activists to set up a youth wing of the campaign. A "Rail and transport workers for Corbyn" page, and a general "Trade unionists for Corbyn" page have been set up on Facebook.

But the leadership election is not an end in itself. Whoever wins, the contradictions in the Labour Party — between its largely pro-neo-liberal central machinery and its working-class base — will remain unresolved. Corbyn's campaign can do much to sharpen them, and could be the launchpad for wider campaign of grassroots and union self-assertion against a resurgent New Labour narrative. Those supporting Corbyn's campaign, either in the Labour Party or by registering to vote as a "supporter", should get involved in a wider fight in

Labour and in trade unions.

The momentum Corbyn's campaign has already generated is impressive, and indication of what might be possible.

Whatever the Labour right's calculations in not putting the pressure on to block his nomination, the pressure MPs were visibly placed under to nominate him undoubtedly reflects the outpouring of grassroots enthusiasm for his candidacy across the labour movement.

We do not agree with Corbyn on everything. While we share some of his basic opposition to imperialism and militarism (including nuclear weaponry),



Jeremy Corbyn with John McDonnell on PCS picket lines

his wider stance on many international issues is part of the "my enemy's enemy is my friend" politics widespread in many parts of the left. His stance on Europe is equivocal. So we will continue to openly criticise Corbyn during the campaign and seek debate on the issues where we dis-

agree. It should be noted that none of the other leadership candidates have a good record on international issues.

None have given any indication, for example, that they would end the British state's alliance with the Saudi monarchy.

Support fight against cuts in FE

UCU members at Lewisham and Southwark College (LeSoCo) will strike on Thursday and Friday 18-19 June in an on going fight against 165 proposed job cuts.

Over 50 union members met at the Lewisham site on Monday 15 June to make plans for the strike and many new people got involved. Picket lines will be held at all college sites from 7.30-11.30am both days. On Thursday a rally will be held at the Lewisham Way site from 10.45, and on Friday at 10.30am a "hands around the campus" rally will be held at the Camberwell site.

College management are trying to create a climate of

fear in the college, using aggressive lesson observation policies and redundancy processes. Staff are going through the stressful a process of reapplying for their own jobs — knowing that some will be left without a job. The first stage of this process can only be passed if the member of staff had one of the top two grades on their last lesson observation, regardless of their previous record.

Staff are being left with the fear that if they go on strike this will be another black mark against their name. In such a situation solidarity amongst staff at the college and between staff at other colleges facing redundancies is crucial.



UCU members in Hackney have organised a "march to the city" to protest cuts at Hackney Community College

On Monday 23 June colleges across the country could strike to defend jobs and courses in FE. Branches including Kingston, College of Haringey, Enfield, and North East London, Tower Hamlets, North West London, City and Islington, South Thames, Lambeth, Greenwich Community, Westminster Kingsway, Leeds City, Bradford, Barnsley and Mid Cheshire Colleges are all currently balloting for action.

On Thursday 18 June activists from Hackney Community College have organised a "March to the city" to protest against continuing cuts to further education funding.